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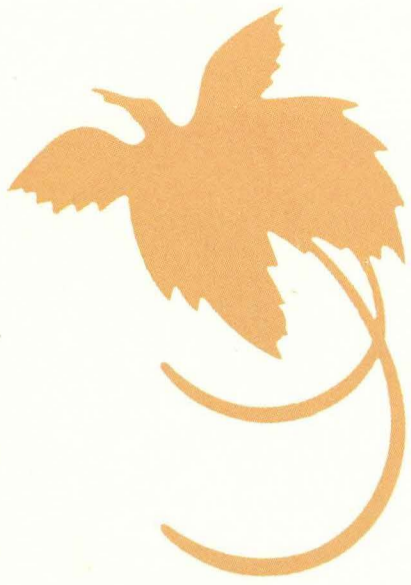
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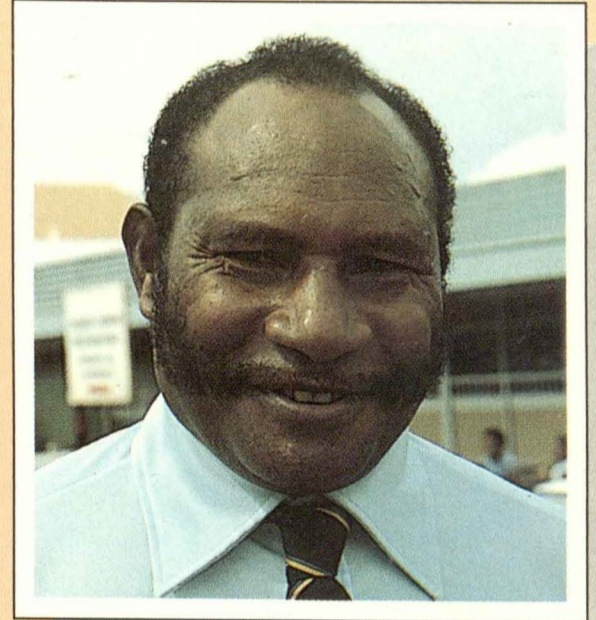
Welcome aboard,

The front cover features the newly acquired
Airbus A310-300 in Air Niugini's livery. I trust that
you like the new changes as much as I do.

Melanesian Tours have recently provided tourists
with luxury plus to journey up to the Sepik River
on the Melanesian Discoverer. Arovo Island is
now catering for both businessmen and tourists.
Diving and snorkelling are special attractions
of this island resort. Read about them while
you relax.

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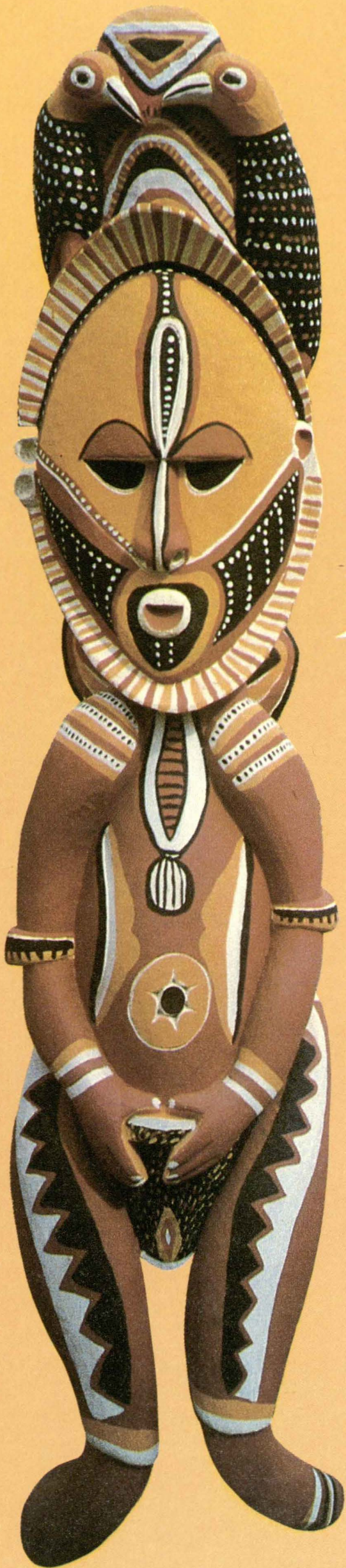
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carvi NIO

evolution of PNG carving, not only adorns many new buildings but is increasingly incorporated into architectural structures.

One of the earliest pieces produced by the group was a nine metre metal wall sculpture designed by Ruki Fame to decorate the Development Bank building in Waigani, Port Moresby, in 1974. Shortly after that, several beautifully carved concrete fascia panels displaying deeply etched designs made up the front facade of Port Moresby Banking Corporation. Decorative work continued, carried out by staff, visiting craftsman and artists from different departments within the Arts School until, in 1981, a Production Workshop

There is a new art emerging in Papua New Guinea and it's coming from beneath the tin shed of the National Art School's sculpture department. It's not produced by the students but by a small group of specially selected sculptors from various parts of the country. Their work, a significant contribution to the



ng a H H E

Story and
photographs by
Liz Thompson

was established. Initially to cater to the design and production needs of all decorative aspects of Parliament House, it has subsequently survived upon the income it has generated. Income was desirable but not, says Archie Brennan, co-ordinator of the workshop in Parliament House days, the primary motivation. More importantly the workshop provided a space where it was possible for village craftsmen and artists to adapt their traditional skills to a changing, developing society.

"We look forward" said Archie, "to a time when these many hundreds of pairs of talented hands are adapting art forms in wood and other indigenous materials to pro-

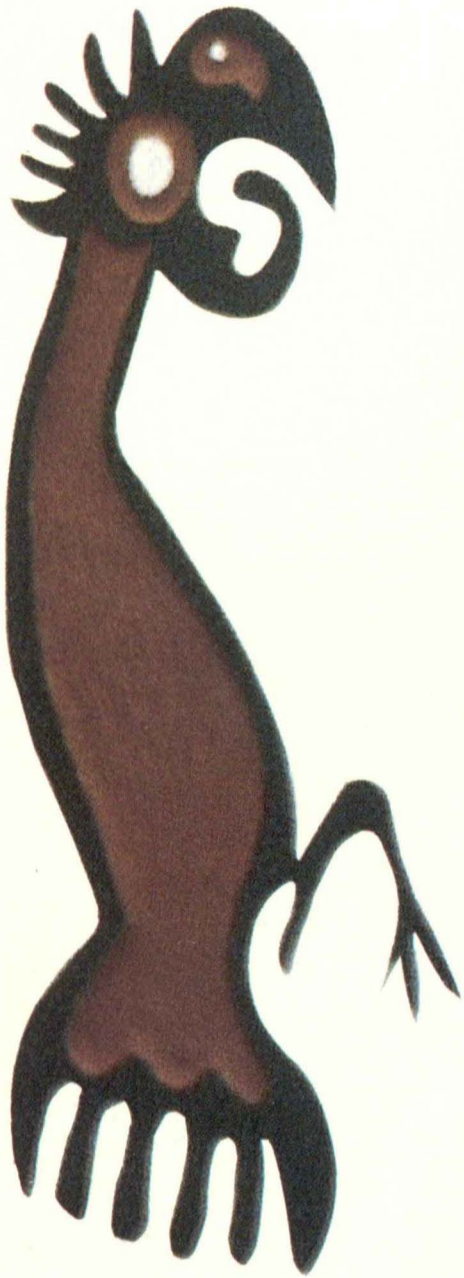
duction of furniture, fittings and the utility objects and artefacts of a modern society. We look forward to artists applying skills and finding employment and income from a marriage of the old and new."

Over the last seven years, since its induction, the workshop has shown that it is a major facilitator in making these links between an ancient tradition and a functionary adaptation to the 20th Century.

Parliament House itself is a monument to these adaptations. It is a permanent building using many modern materials, permanent surfaces with weatherproof and color-fast properties. While learning to manipulate these the team



Insets, far left Ancestral masks and kwila lintel decorate Parliament House entrance. **centre** A panel on the history of PNG law. **right** Front desk, Archive Library, Port Moresby. **Others** Traditional painted carvings.



also enhanced the architecture with something quite distinctly Papua New Guinean. A mosaic mural at the Grand Hall's main entrance, which developed from drawings by two of PNG's leading artists Jakupua and Kuage, is bordered by a carved lintel of kwila wood depicting 19 ancestral masks representing the nation's provinces. Below them the kwila door handles also are carved in the shape of traditional kundu drums.

Some of the most detailed carvings of all can be seen in the Speaker's column in the council chamber. The full stylistic range of motifs used to decorate ceremonial canoes in the Trobriand Islands, Milne Bay, have been adapted in a spiralling and convoluted carving which rises up the column behind the chair and flanks the national emblem. A Speaker's desk carries designs similar to those used on Papua New Guinean orators' stools, commonly used in ceremonies along the Sepik River. Particularly interesting is a tapa cloth mural. Originally intending to use real tapa, it was found to be too small in detail so coarse sawdust, woodstains and

Above Mosaic mural above Parliament House entrance.



glazes were used to produce the character of tapa on a 30 square metre area. Throughout the building there are numerous carved panels, 35 attendant desks with 140 metres of carved panels and barrier poles, functional while traditional.

The production workshop was also responsible for 16 wall panels displaying screen printed masks from the Gulf and Western provinces either side of the Speaker's chair, a ceiling mural based on the bark paintings which line the roof of the Sepik's Ambunti court house and construction of five poles carved by the team. The production workshop is more than its title suggests. It is a place in which artists from previously geographically diverse locations can learn from one another. "Bung wantaim" or "coming together", the title given to the pole construction, emphasises the acknowledgement of such an exchange process.

Now, in post Parliamentary days, the team has grown smaller, decreasing from about 18 to six full-time members. Hansel Sawati from Milne Bay acts as carpenter and workshop manager whilst Terence Tougwabiu and Yabse Yayaki from the Trobriands concentrate on commissions requiring intricate decorative work as is their tradition. Frances Wati the Sepik carver knows exactly what to do if Sepik-style posts are commissioned and Makale Aetul, a senior carver from Tambi Island, with Benny More who does most of the metal work make up the fifth and sixth members of the group. This team has continued the work and, with the assistance of Robert Luske who now heads the National Art School

sculpture department, produces an increasingly broad range of styles and objects. Acknowledgement of the importance of the kind of work they're doing was demonstrated by the Prime Minister who, at the opening of the 18th Waigini Arts Seminar, announced that all future big development and construction would attribute two per cent of building costs to traditional style PNG decor.

One of the most recent illustrations of the 'new' carving involved changing the image of four police stations in Port Moresby. All now have three large totem poles at their entrance with comical depictions of police and rascals. Designed by Grass Roots' cartoonist Bob Browne their production involved six other carvers and four weeks' work on 12 five-metre posts. Amid the traditional Sepik masks, crocodiles and bird figures the carvers cut policemen wielding guns, talking on two-way radios and pulling down rascals' trousers as they ascend the poles in efforts to escape. The posts, 500 millimetres in diameter, cost the Department of Works and Supply K1000. The workshop generally charges



Above Carved pillars for a new building.

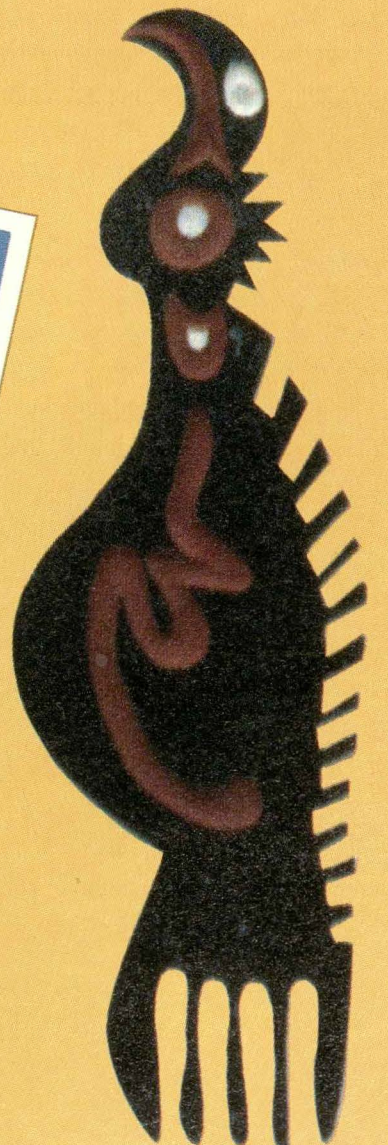
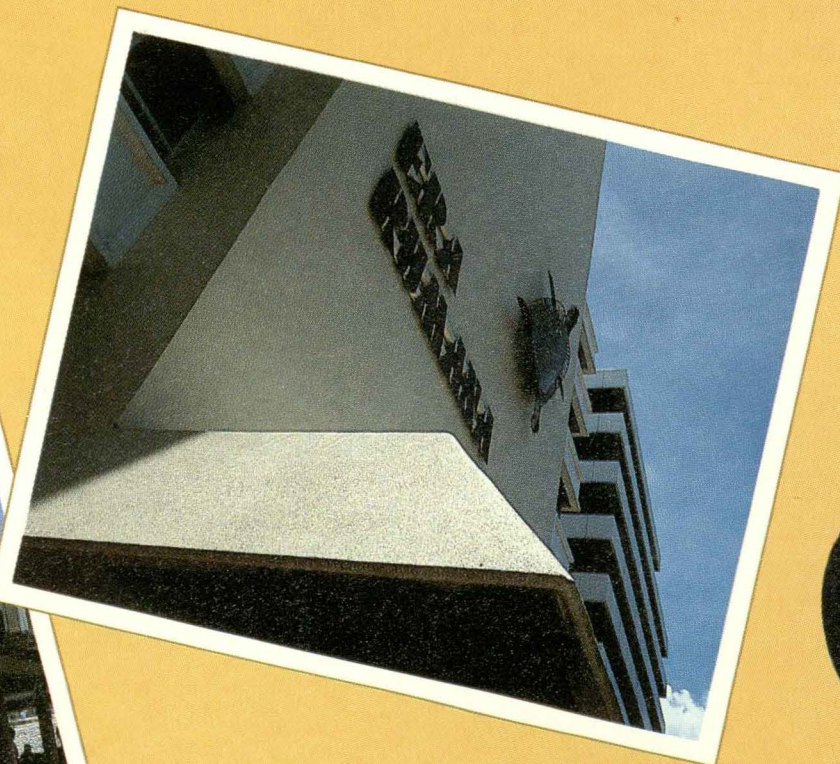
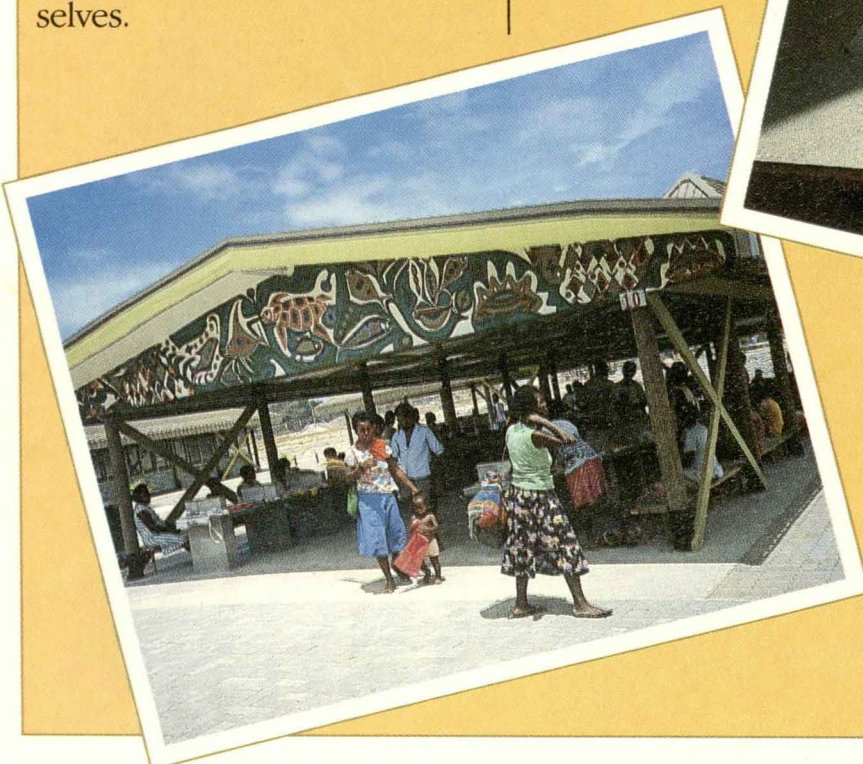
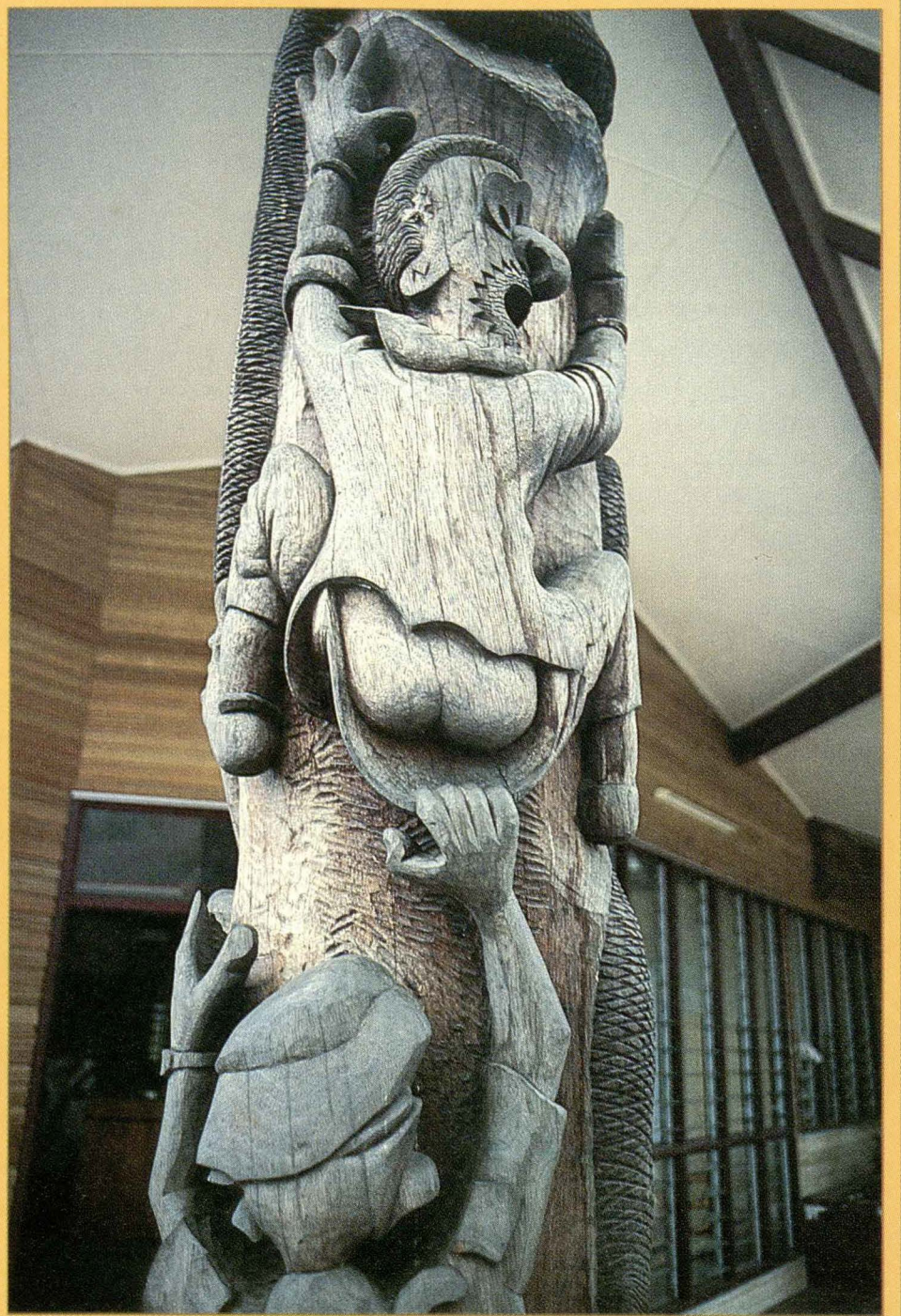


K250 for one running metre. On projects which involve European design Luske is a participant in the production. In others, such as the carved panels in the Moguru Moto building (describing the history of law in PNG, the village court, Taim bilong master, District Court, Supreme Court and modern lawyers' offices) he works as project manager.

Work is ever increasing and commissions are numerous, not only for major constructions but for small decorative door panels, bedheads of ebony, bowls and, says Terence, church collection bowls and candlesticks. Their reputation develops as their work is seen more frequently around the country, whether it be deeply carved signs for libraries or hotels, desk tops, carved illustrative panels or embellishment of architectural structures. Their first international commission came from a Japanese financial project in a new hotel in Singapore, wanting a Melanesian-style restaurant. They bought numerous artefacts from PNG craft at a shop in the Port Moresby suburb of Gordons and commissioned ten different Maprik style carved and painted figures, 50 square metres of carved and painted panelling and several posts, all from the Production Workshop. Luske doesn't doubt that there's potentially a very good international market if the workshop can be set up in such a way that they can successfully promote themselves.

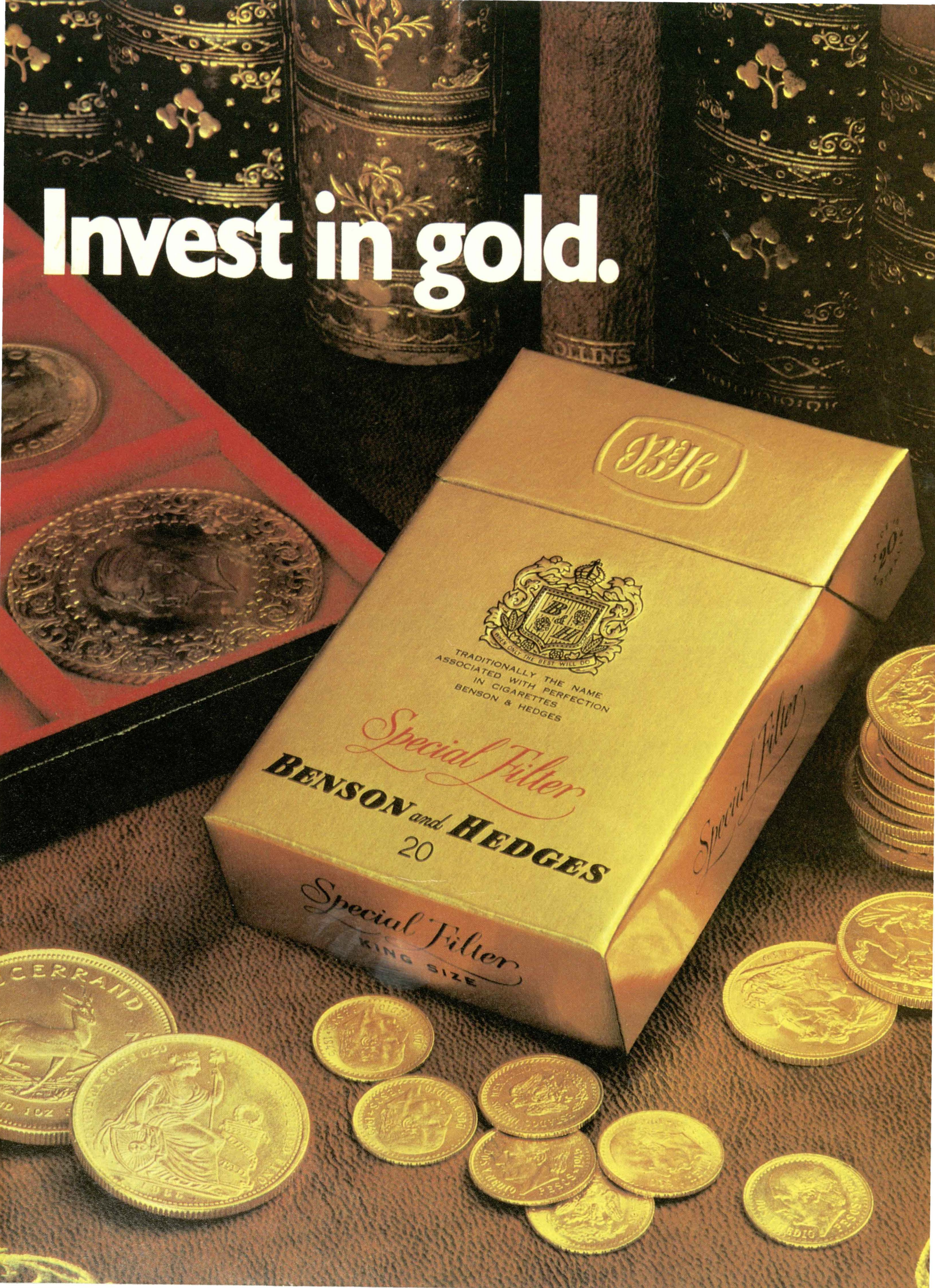
There are plans to extend the workshop into what's been called a 'National Design and Production Centre'. As such it would cover not only carving and metal sculpture but open up commercial avenues for the production of textiles, prints and graphic design. The beautiful fabrics displayed at the textile department's last fashion show lend weight to the validity of this idea.

What has proved itself to be an increasingly popular juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary could, quite feasibly, branch out to enlighten other countries to PNG's cultural heritage and artistic evolution. Just as Central Australian Aboriginal sand painting represents contemporary artistic expression and a culture finding its way in a new world, so too PNG's art and craft has great potential. Promoting and reinforcing cultural heritage as well as providing an income for its creators, it transfers cultural tradition into a 20th Century existence and environment.



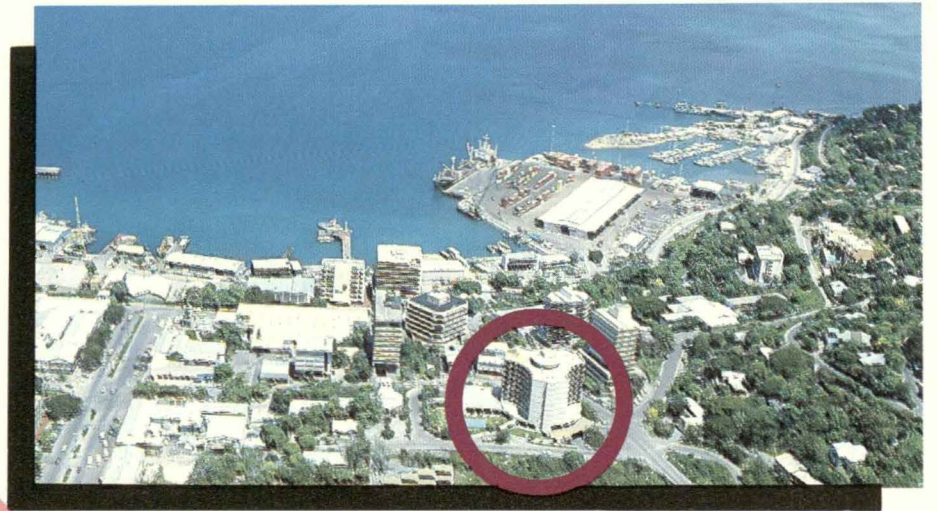
Top An 'arresting' image carved into one of the pillars of the Gordons Police Station, Port Moresby. **centre** Metal sculpture decorating an office building. **bottom** Carved and painted lintel at a fish market.

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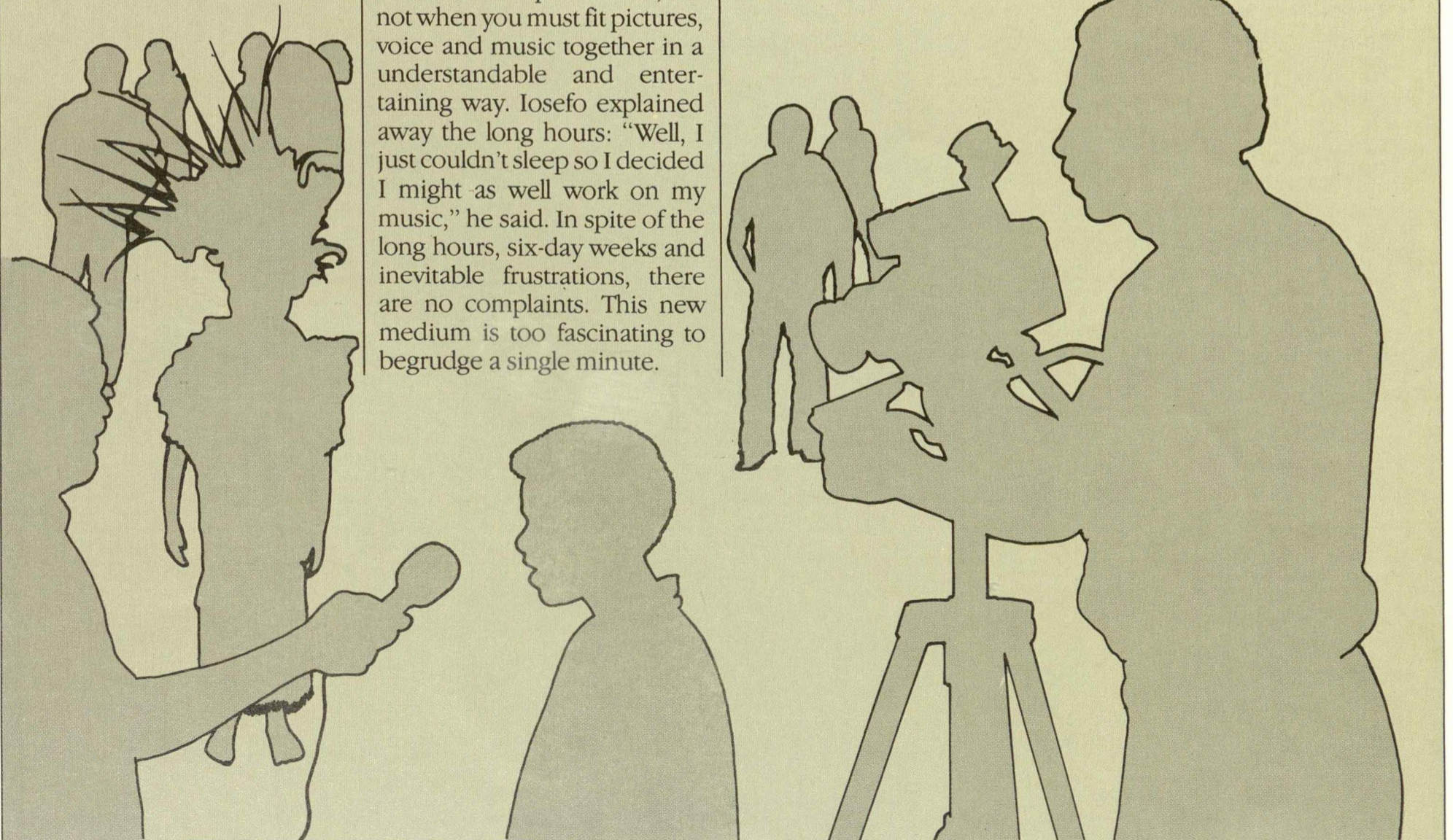
Video Melanesia

Under the weight of a videotape recorder and video camera, Sr Bernadette and Joe Vidiki set out to find the perfect flower for their new assignment: to make a videotape of one flower, close up, medium shot, long shot, tilt up, tilt down and pan. In the past two weeks C/U, M/S and L/S, tilt and pan has become as much a part of their vocabulary as "good morning" and "good afternoon".

Sr Bernadette from Kiribati and Joe, a Solomon Islander, are among the students who are at the Communication Institute in Papua New Guinea to learn how to make use of video in their pastoral and educational work. Their day starts at 8am and frequently they are still in the classroom or the studio at 10 or 11 at night. One night the lights were still burning at 2.30am as Iosefo, a trainee from Western Samoa, worked diligently to add music to his three-minute segment about a coffee processing plant. Three minutes is such a brief span of time, but not when you must fit pictures, voice and music together in a understandable and entertaining way. Iosefo explained away the long hours: "Well, I just couldn't sleep so I decided I might as well work on my music," he said. In spite of the long hours, six-day weeks and inevitable frustrations, there are no complaints. This new medium is too fascinating to begrudge a single minute.

Five years ago videotapes were almost everywhere in the South Pacific, but Sr Mary Hudson, Director of the Communication Institute, questioned the lack of local production. Where were the tapes which truly reflected the traditions and culture of Pacific Islanders? Where were the tapes that dealt with issues through Melanesian and Micronesian eyes, not through the eyes of Western documentarians, social scientists and romantic novelists?

Sr Mary invited a television producer from the United States to visit the Institute and give an introductory course in video production. That workshop marked the beginning of an ever-expanding undertaking. Today the Video Department, under the direction of Sr Maria Burke and Manam Islander, Charles Basse, offers a three-month training program, produces religious programs and makes documentaries and training videos for church groups, religious orders, health professionals and education institutions.



Communication Institute, which is an agency of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and the Solomon Islands, is nine kilometres outside Goroka in the Eastern Highlands of PNG. It was established 14 years ago when Fr Pat Casserly, Director of the new Institute, converted a spare bedroom into a makeshift radio production studio. Recognising the need for good religious programs and for well-trained producers, Fr Casserly began training young men and women in the production skills necessary to produce quality programs. He demanded excellence of his trainees and worked patiently until they met his standards, a policy which has been continued by his successor, Sr Mary Hudson.

The training includes producing different types of radio programs for the National Broadcasting Commission which today are heard on 19 provincial stations and on the national network. The young people who have been through the rigorous training are in great demand in the communications field. Many former trainees hold responsible positions in government, in all areas of radio and television and in private industry.

In 1977 Fr Casserly saw a dream come true. Communication Institute finally had a radio production centre with a well-equipped control room and a professional recording studio. He had also a staff capable of creating and recording a wide variety of radio programs. Trainees were able to get even more valuable experience as they joined staff in recording interviews, music and lectures in the field, returning to the studio to edit and mix the various elements either for the NBC or for audio cassettes.

Audio engineers from the Institute now travel throughout PNG to record lectures and concerts. Music has become a special area of expertise. Choirs, combos, soloists and string bands have all been recorded in live performances. Young singing groups who have adapted traditional music to liturgical worship are especially sought out by the radio producers. Once the performance is recorded, the music is transferred to cassette and a songbook, complete with guitar chords, is prepared. The combined cassette/booklets are in much demand by church organisations, fellowship groups and youth centres in PNG and overseas.

As the reputation of Communication Institute grew, dioceses and other organisations throughout Oceania sent young people for training. More training courses were added until today they range from weekend workshops to three and six-month courses in advanced radio and video. Although many trainees have pursued their careers elsewhere, the primary purpose of the Institute is to train church communications. Most trainees are church sponsored and elect to return to their communities to put their media skills to use in a variety of church ministries.

The Communication Institute produces all programs, radio, video and cassettes, in tok pidgin and in English and always within a Melanesian context. To quote Sr Mary: "Today especially, it is vital that we train national men and women to a high level of expertise so that local programming will be developed to offset the many imported videotapes and audio cassettes which present a lifestyle quite foreign and perhaps harmful to local cultures."

The Pacific faces a great

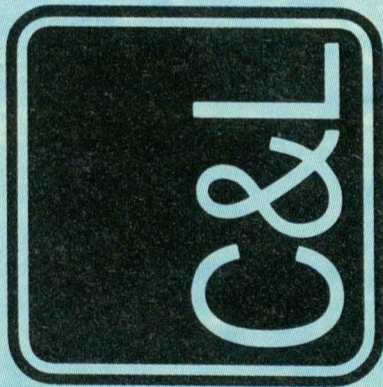
challenge in this day of instant communication. Training and local production are essential, according to Sr Mary. "We must recognise our responsibility to train competent radio and television producers so that Oceania can develop its own styles of programming, one which truly represents the perspective of its regional audience. But before we can think about local programming, we must be sure we have a sufficient number of well-trained men and women who are capable of producing quality programs."

Communication Institute is committed to developing talent and local programming to give the peoples of the Pacific the opportunity to make use of satellite communications and the ever-expanding electronic media, to preserve their traditions and share their special culture with the rest of the world.

Below Director Eileen Tugum working with cameraman Basil Peutal at the Communication Institute.



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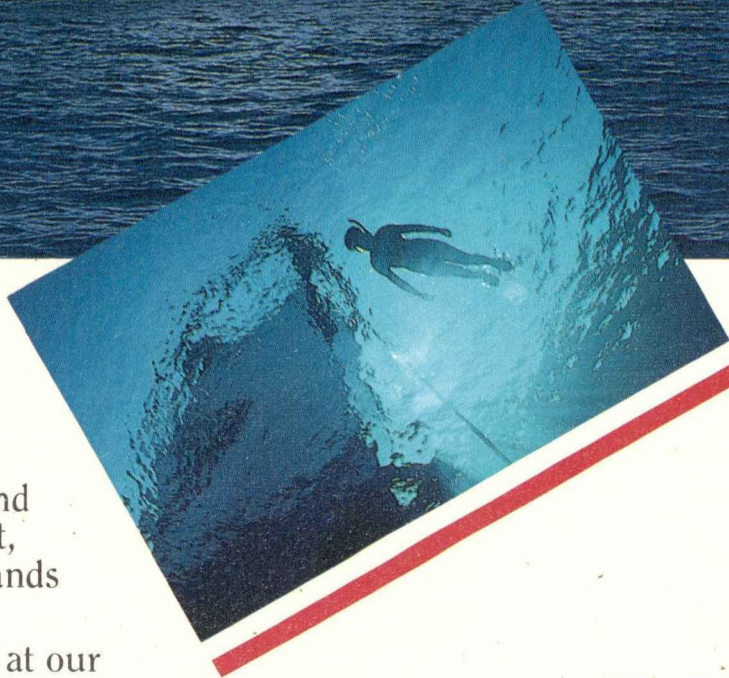
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**Melanesian
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MAKING WAVES

Story and photographs by Michael Gebicki

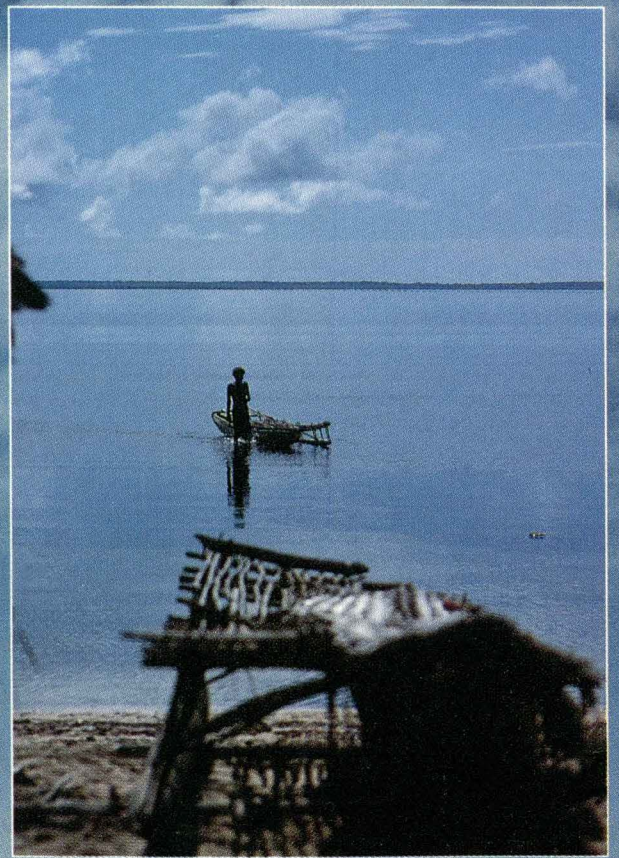


Yanaba is a small, lush tropical island, one of the numberless coral cays that are scattered across Papua New Guinea's northern seas. It is also a long way from the tourist trail and so the islanders were understandably amazed when they awoke recently to find a sleek, glistening blue and white catamaran with 30 foreign tourists aboard anchored in their lagoon. When that same ship visited the island of Aramot, she was met by a fleet of dugout canoes packed with excited children and on her maiden voyage along the Sepik, practically every village on the river staged a spectacular singing in welcome. The ship is the Melanesian Discoverer and if you'll pardon the pun, wherever she is in PNG, she makes waves.

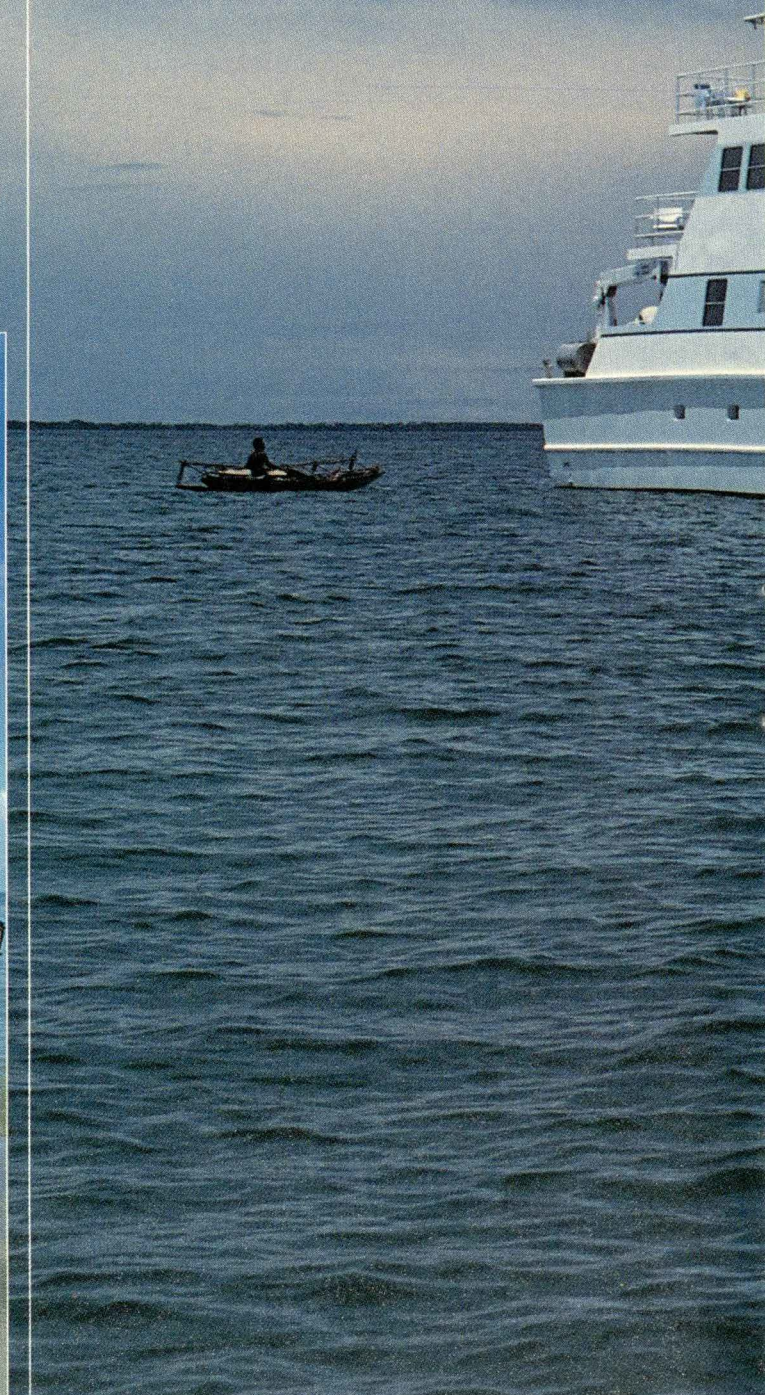
The Melanesian Discoverer, 37 metres of cruising luxury, is a state-of-the-art aluminium catamaran and the latest addition to PNG's growing list of five-star tourist facilities. But the ship also has a tough act to follow. For many years its predecessor, the Melanesian Explorer, took visitors on regular voyages through PNG's waters,

giving them a memorable glimpse of reef-fringed islands and village cultures that are usually found only in the pages of National Geographic magazine. In the process the Explorer established an enviable reputation for excellence. Increasing demand convinced the ship's owner, Peter Barter, that a larger and more sophisticated vessel was needed.

The catamaran design was chosen for several reasons. For one thing, the platform between the two hulls makes a large, stable base which allows for more cabin space and common areas. It has a relatively shallow draught, which gives the ship access to areas too dangerous for a single hulled ship. A catamaran also has a reduced wake, an important consideration on the Sepik where large waves can upset canoes and erode the riverbanks. The combination of speed, versatility and on-board technology demanded by Barter meant that this ship would be unique, the only vessel of its type, class, size and abilities anywhere in the world. After years of planning, building and testing, the Melanesian



Above Outrigger canoes, Trobriand Islands. **below left** Kula canoe, Marshall Bennett Islands.



Discoverer finally sailed from the builder's yard in Western Australia in September last year.

The result is sensational – a crisp, strikingly handsome ship that can be appreciated by even the most committed landlubber. Rising in alternate bands of blue and white the Discoverer's superstructure is sharply raked toward the bow and crowned with a very businesslike array of radar and navigation gear. At her cruising speed of around 15 knots, the ship seems to spread wings and glide above the waves like a majestic sea bird.

The facilities on board the Discoverer are positively luxurious. The ship is fully carpeted and air conditioned and the 24 double and



Above Trobriand Islands girl. **below** Melanesian Discoverer in the Solomon Sea.

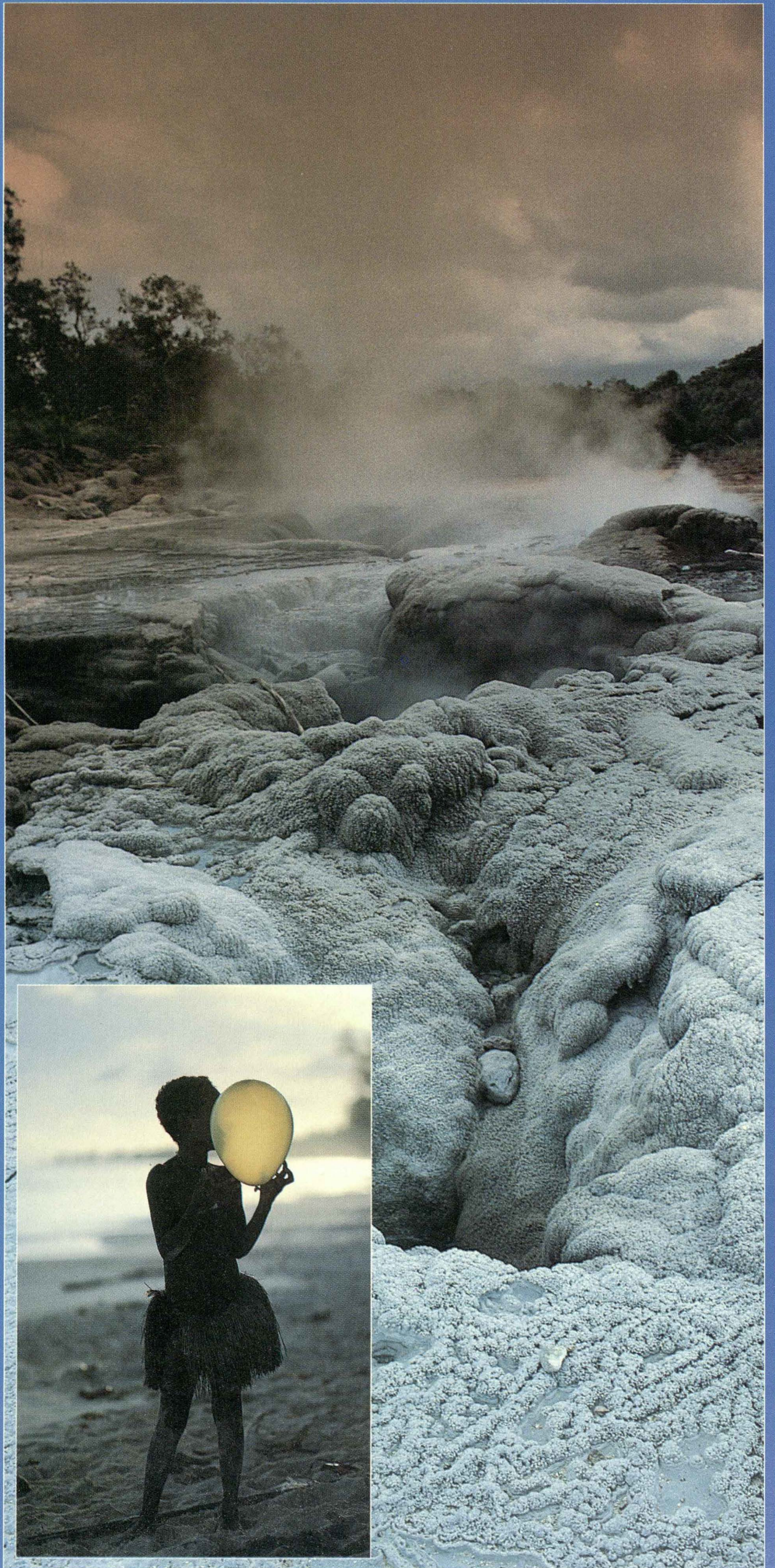


twin-bedded cabins are equipped with large louvred windows, private bathrooms, television screens that transmit documentaries from the ship's video library and telephones that provide instant communication with the rest of the world via satellite. Most of the cabins are located on the main and mid decks. On the top deck is a large, stylish lounge decorated in soft pastel colors with deep, overstuffed couches scattered around the room. The wheelhouse is on the same level where satellite navigation and color radar consoles give the ship a healthy margin of safety. However, some things about the Discoverer date back several years. Passengers who know the Melanesian Explorer's crew will be delighted to find James, as cheerful, macho and muscle-bound as ever, on board the new ship.

From its home port of Madang, the Melanesian Discoverer makes regular seven-day sorties along the Sepik River and through the islands of the Bismarck and Solomon Seas. But these are not cruises in the conventional sense of the word. There are no deck quoits on board and dressing for dinner usually means a clean pair of shorts. Instead, the Discoverer's schedule is designed so that passengers spend as much time as possible on shore, experiencing the incredible cultural and environmental diversity of PNG.

Passengers can expect to attend dramatic singsings, to stroll through villages surrounded by hordes of fascinated, giggling children, to swim in aquamarine waters above dazzling coral formations and shop for artefacts that are still made for daily use in the village rather than for the tourist trade. Along the Sepik River these artefacts include ceremonial masks, drums, flutes, wooden figures and pots that are made by some of the finest primitive artists on earth. Their works sell for a small fortune in the galleries of the western world but here, at their source, they can still be bought at a very reasonable price.

Like the Melanesian Explorer, the Discoverer is an expeditionary vessel. The ship's course depends



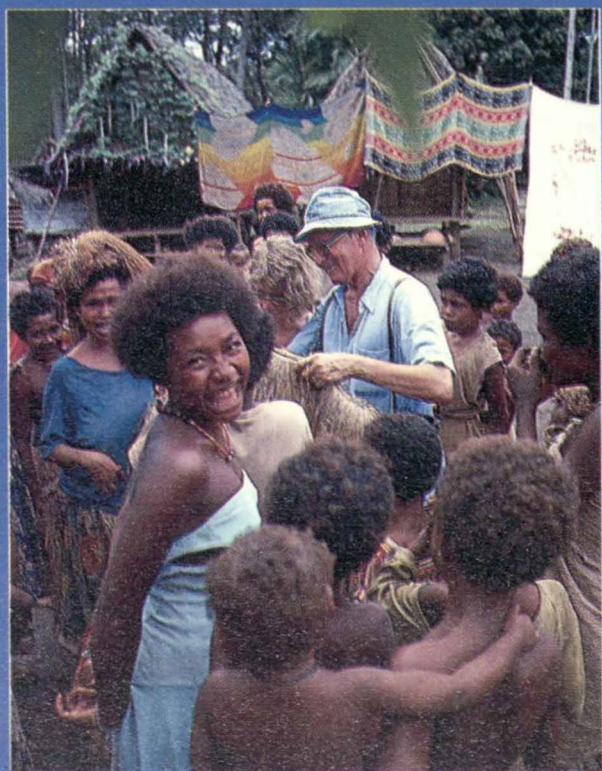


on the weather and any special events in a particular area. However, by virtue of its increased speed, range and manoeuvrability, the Discoverer has many more options within the framework of the same seven-day cruise. On the Trobriand Islands cruise for example, the ship might well call in at the secluded islands of the Marshall Bennett group. After visiting the Trobriands, the ship may sail along the coastline of New Britain and up some of its rivers – a real treat for anyone who wants to see one of the most extraordinary untamed jungles on earth.

In the Sepik as well, the Discoverer promises new adventures. On its first voyage along the river, the ship's abilities were proven in dramatic fashion when she sailed into Chambri Lakes – a precarious

journey along narrow, shallow channels that was previously made only by tender from the Melanesian Explorer. Just how far upriver the Discoverer can go remains to be seen, but Peter Barter has ambitions to take the ship high above the Sepik 'Gates', the whirlpools that make a formidable barrier to river traffic above Ambunti.

The Melanesian Discoverer combines the best of both worlds – the spellbinding grandeur of the primitive with the blessings of the modern. After all, there aren't many places on earth where the evening breeze carries the faint sounds of a singsing from the beach, where you can stand on the deck sipping a whisky with ice as the last outrigger canoe dances across a molten sea toward a darkening shore.



Inset, far left Yanaba girl with balloon, Marshall Bennett Islands.
far left Volcanic springs, Fergusson Island.

This page, anti-clockwise from top Kakeunga singsing; Kitava singsing (both Trobriand Islands); Buying artefacts at Kitava Island; Aramot Island singsing performer; Melanesian Discoverer passengers explore Umboi Island river.



BENSBACH RIVER

Daru FLY RIVER

Kiunga

Ok Tedi Mine

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Popondetta

SEPIK RIVER

Alotau Wewak

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Mt Hagen

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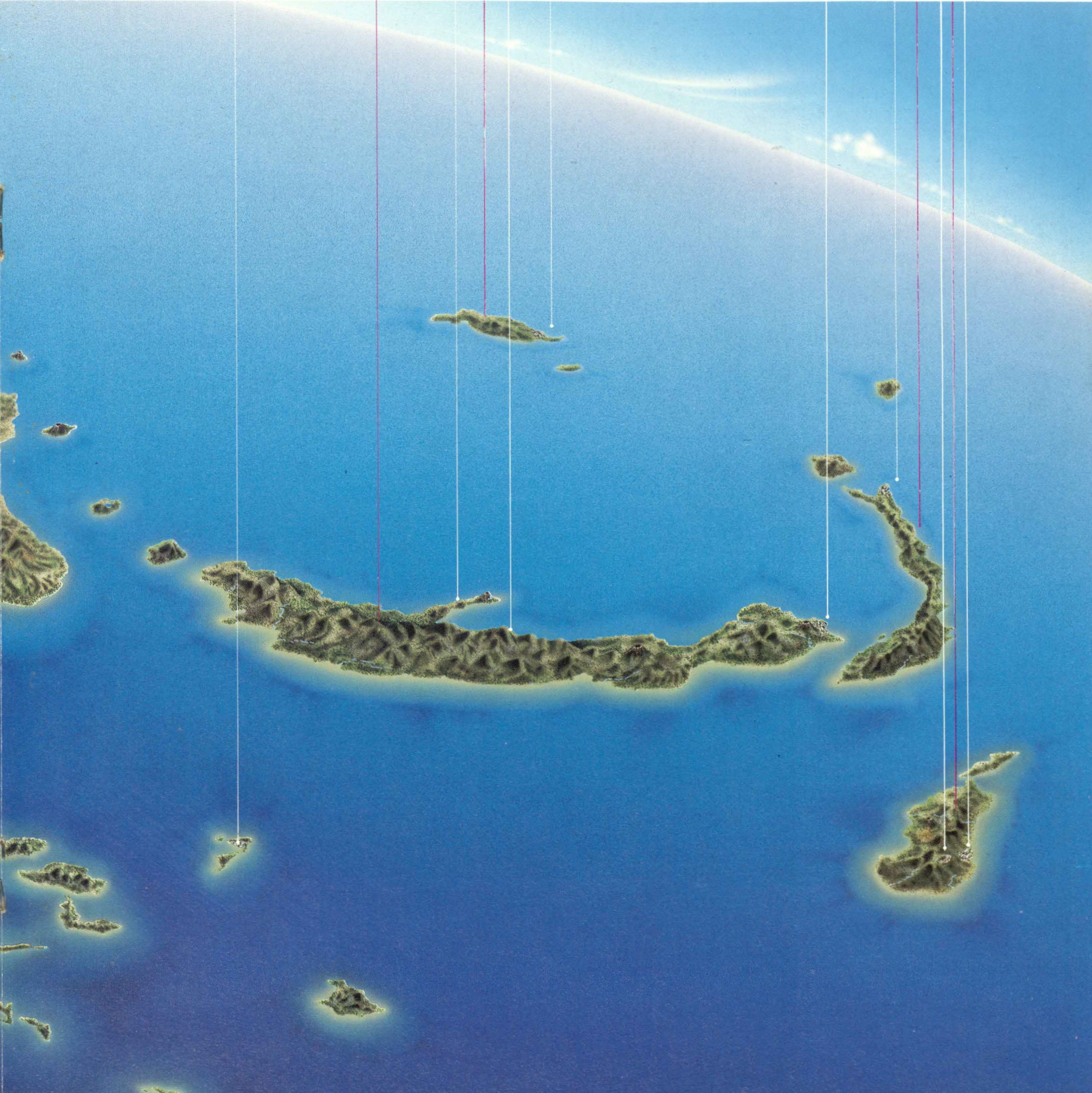
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Papua New Guinea
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“Tenkile Lives”

Story and photography by Tim Flannery



Below: Striped possum, **bottom**
Sunset from Mt Somoro a favorite
habitat of the striped possum.





Above Sissano Lagoon and Aitape area from Mt Somoro. **below** The first photograph of the northern glider, unique to Mt Somoro.



Flying over the rugged mountains of Papua New Guinea is an exciting experience. Below lies a land which as recently as the late 1930s was still revealing unknown human settlements to the pioneer aviators. Even today, a sense of adventure is awakened in many who gaze down on this landscape. This is the story of a remarkable discovery made in those mountains. For in 1988 a new tree kangaroo species was found in West Sepik Province. The new animal is one of the most beautiful of New Guinea's mammals. It is also the largest of all the mammals that are unique to Melanesia. Sadly, it seems to be critically endangered and, without a great effort, may become extinct within a few years of its discovery.

The story of its discovery began in 1985 when staff from the PNG Division of Wildlife and I made a short exploratory trip to the Torricelli Mountains near Wewak. The mountain range is small by PNG standards, only just over 1500 metres high and a few tens of kilometres long.

It is isolated from the great mountainous spine of the island by the wide floodplain of the Sepik, and I was curious to find out what animals inhabited its summit. After only two days in the mountains I became very ill. Day after day I lay in a village hut, thinking that I had a severe attack of malaria. After nearly a week, I was unable to stand, eat or think properly and the people of the village made a stretcher and carried me to a mission station at the base of the mountains. A Catholic nursing sister, Sr Cecilia, diagnosed scrub typhus. Only years later did she tell me that I had been close to death, and that without her treatment I may not have been here to write this story. But even such misadventure often ends well. For one of my stretcher-bearers wore a large, black claw, hung as a pendant around his neck. Somehow I



managed to buy it and, in months after as I recovered, I puzzled over what kind of animal it may have come from.

It was not until July 1988 that I could return to the Torricelli Mountains, this time with senior ranger Lester Seri of the PNG Wildlife Division and Trish Ennis, research assistant at the Australian Museum. To my surprise, I found that a comfortable camp had been built at the summit of the highest peak in the Torricellis so that workers could prepare the ground for the erection of a telecommunications repeater station. We decided to use this camp as our main base, and set to work with the help of the traditional landowners. We spent a week on the summit and discovered many exciting animals, some, such as the painted ringtail, never before reported from the Torricelli Mountains. However, the species from which the large black claw had come eluded us. I had learned from local landowners that a large, black tree kangaroo inhabited the area, and this seemed a likely candidate as the claw's original owner. I was determined to find out whether it was just a previously known species, not reported from the Torricelli Mountains, or a species that was unknown to science and unique to the small range.

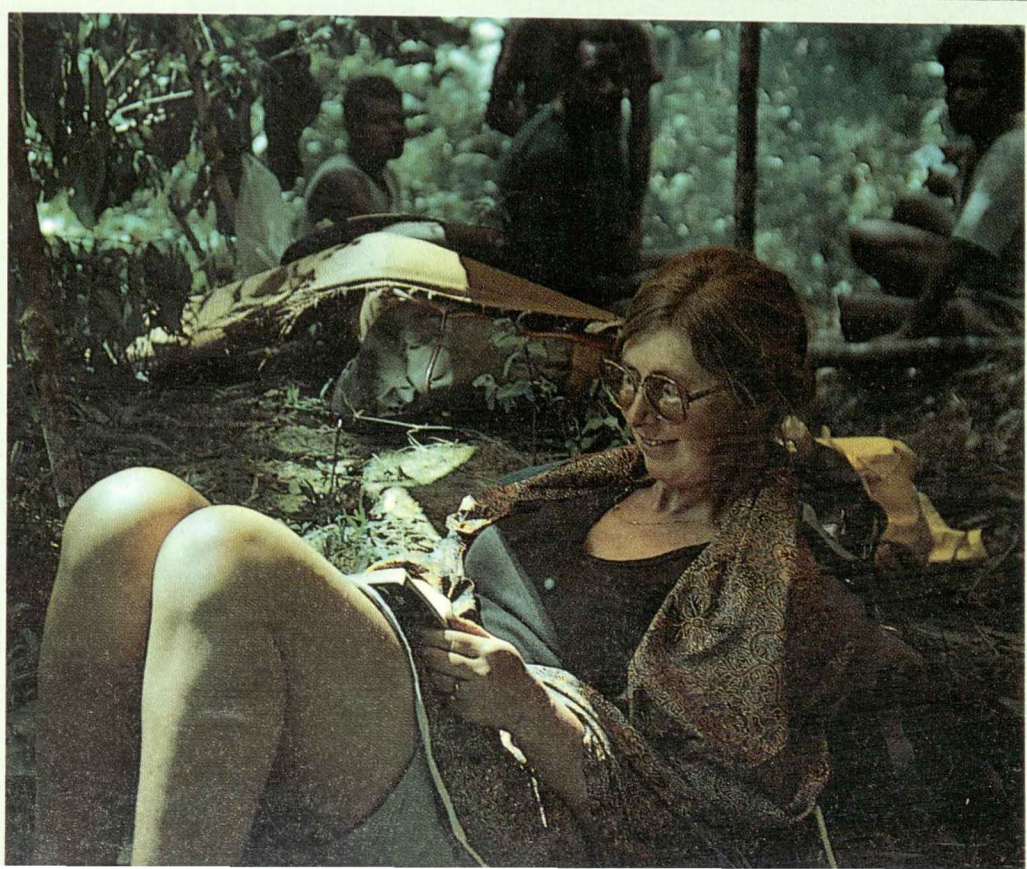
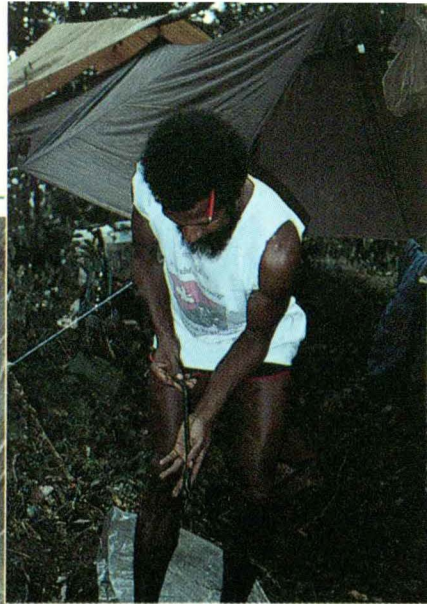
After a week on the mountain I had almost despaired of solving the mystery and had decided to return to the village at its base to carry out further work there. Before leaving I had asked two men to go to their traditional hunting grounds in different parts of the range to see if they could locate the species. On our second-last day at the village, one of the men strode down the mountain track bearing a small, black bundle of fur. It was a very young tenkile, as the black tree kangaroo is known in the area. Unfortunately, it had been abandoned by its mother and

killed by dogs. Still, it provided the basic biological information that we needed. I recognised on its paw a miniature of that large black claw that I had first seen three years before, and could tell from its coloration and bodyshape that it was very different from any tree kangaroo previously known to science.

That night we talked long into the small hours with the local people about tree kangaroos. I found out that one of the three species of tree kangaroo previously found in the mountains had not been seen for about 60 years and was locally extinct. Of the two remaining kinds, the large, black tenkile was found only in the mossy forests of the mountain summit and was rare, while yonki, as they know the grizzled tree kangaroo, is more widespread. Many other fascinating aspects of tree kangaroo biology were revealed by these expert 'bush naturalists'.

Upon returning to Australia I gradually put the pieces of the puzzle together. I re-examined some tree kangaroo jaw bones that hunters had kept as trophies, and that I had purchased in 1985. They also clearly belonged to the new

Far left Mossy forest habitat of the large black tree kangaroo and a painting of the rare animal by Peter Schouten. **top** Senior ranger Seri with large Mt Somoro earthworm. **centre** Goodfellows tree kangaroo, now extinct in the Torricelli Mountains. **below** Research assistant Trish Ellis.



species and showed many differences in the teeth and jaws from other tree kangaroos that related to their diet. They were also very large, up to ten per cent longer than the largest tree kangaroo jaws in the museum collections. But it was only when I tried to determine the potential distribution of the new species that I had the greatest shock. A generous estimate of its habitat in the Torricellis is only 27 square kilometres. For such a large animal, this range is very small, suggesting that perhaps only a few hundred individuals exist.

But even these last few animals are threatened. They are still avidly hunted by a growing and ever better armed human population. Their mountain stronghold is being developed, with tracks and the repeater station and camp bringing more people into its homeland. Finally, the Earth is rapidly warming, due to the Greenhouse Effect. When the Earth last warmed 14,000 years ago after the last Ice Age, some cold-adapted plants and animals migrated up to 2,000 metres on PNG's mountainsides, following the cool, high air. The tree kangaroo is now restricted to the top few hundred metres of the Torricelli Mountains, where cold, mossy forest survives. It has nowhere to go if the Earth's warming eliminates its habitat. Enough warming may occur over the next 50 years to affect it severely.

Since discovering this remarkable animal, I have become obsessed with making sure that it has a future. Currently, the Division of Wildlife and I are developing a plan to ensure the tenkile's survival. We need to undertake several years of detailed fieldwork to understand better the species' needs and distribution. We have to identify the factors responsible for its decline and, if possible, halt them. Eventually we must, with the co-operation of local landowners, create a wildlife management area for the species, and establish a



captive breeding program. But all of this costs money. Far more money than is available at present. We are hoping that we can find sponsors to support the various phases of this work. The initial fieldwork component will cost K65,000 for three years. But we consider it money well spent if it saves PNG's largest unique mammal. I have no desire to be recorded in history as the only European to have seen the beautiful tenkile in the flesh. Hopefully in years to come millions of people will be able to enjoy the sight of this remarkable species in the wild or in zoos as part of a successful captive breeding program.

Dr Flannery is research scientist from the division of vertebrate zoology at the Australian Museum, Sydney.

Air Niugini has provided assistance to Dr Flannery for his fieldwork in PNG.

Left Torricelli Mountains painted ringtail, new to science. Peter, the camp cook, packed up for the return journey.



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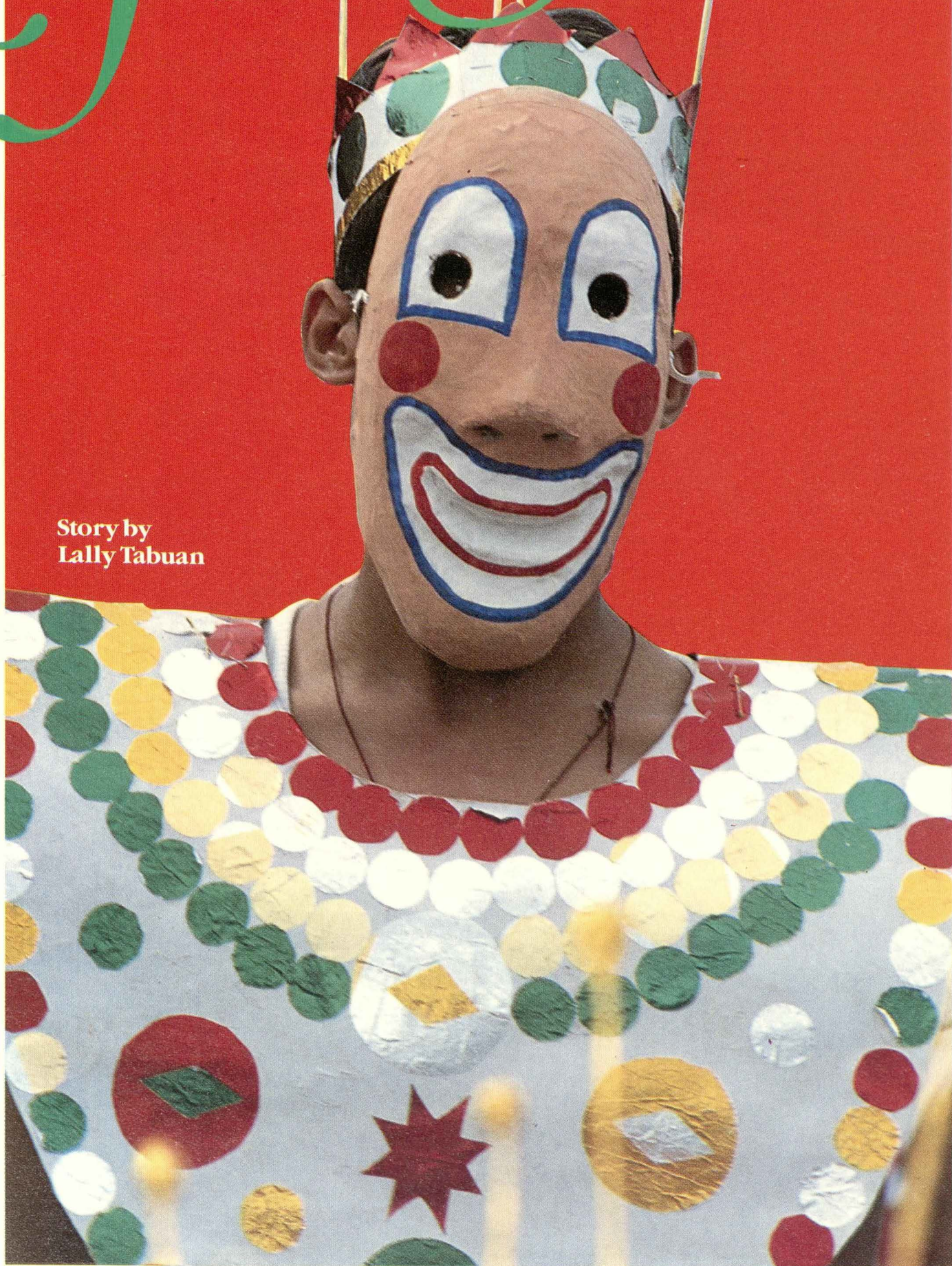
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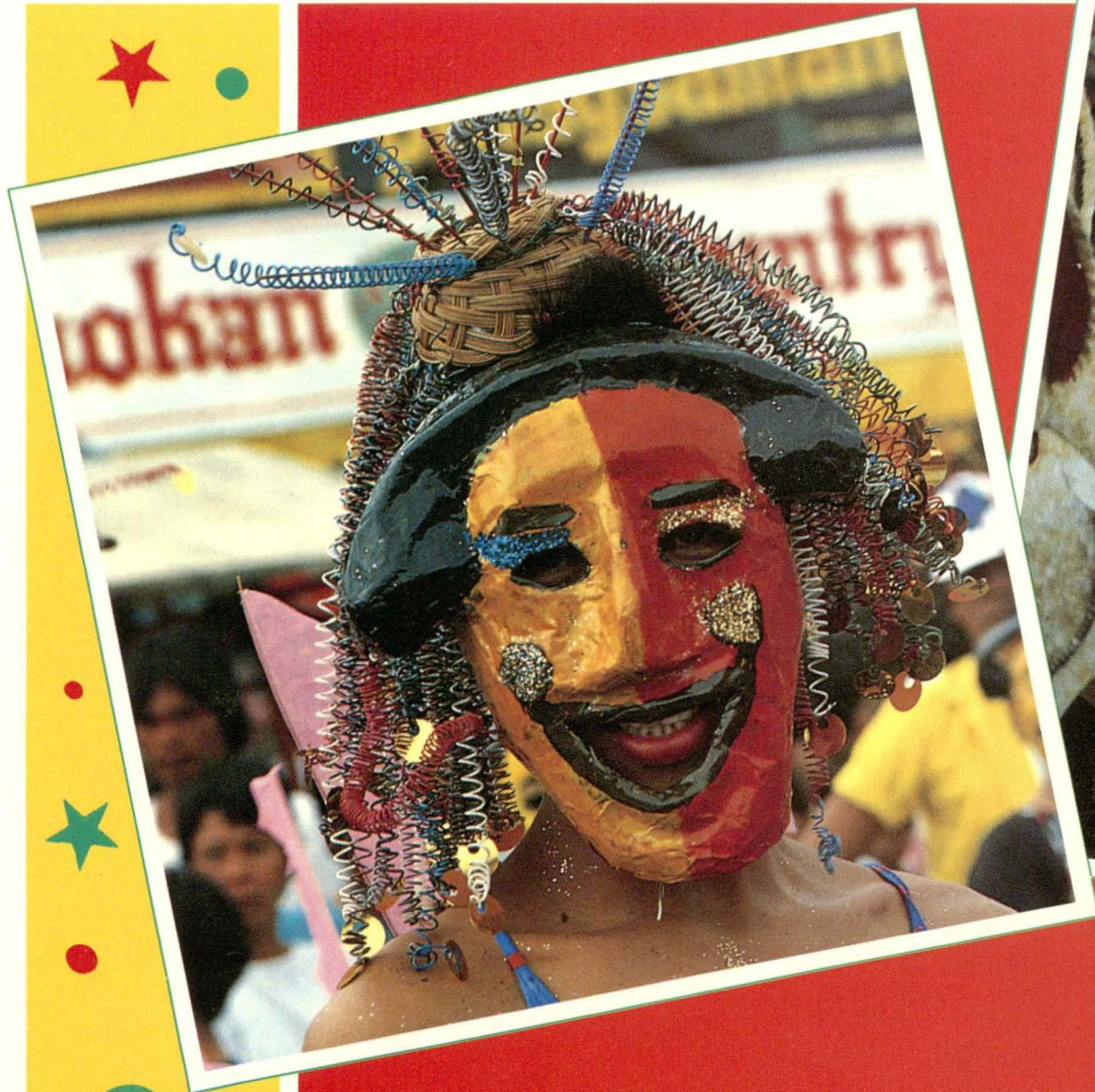
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FILIPINO FIESTA

Story by
Lally Tabuan





Two of the Philippines' gaudiest annual fiestas occur on the adjacent islands of Negros and Panay. Although held at different times of the year they share several features, not least the incessant sound of drums but also gaiety, singing, music, outlandish costumes and the involvement of whole communities in street parades and celebrations.

The Masskara Festival in Bacolod, Negros, is of recent origin, started in 1981 to mark the city's founding anniversary, October 18. It was conceived and created in the misery of slump times in the sugar industry. The Ati-Atihan Festival at Kalibo, Panay, goes back centuries when Borneans sailed from their island home in search of new land to settle. The Atis, after whom the festival was named, were the short, dark-skinned aboriginal natives who once inhabited Panay.

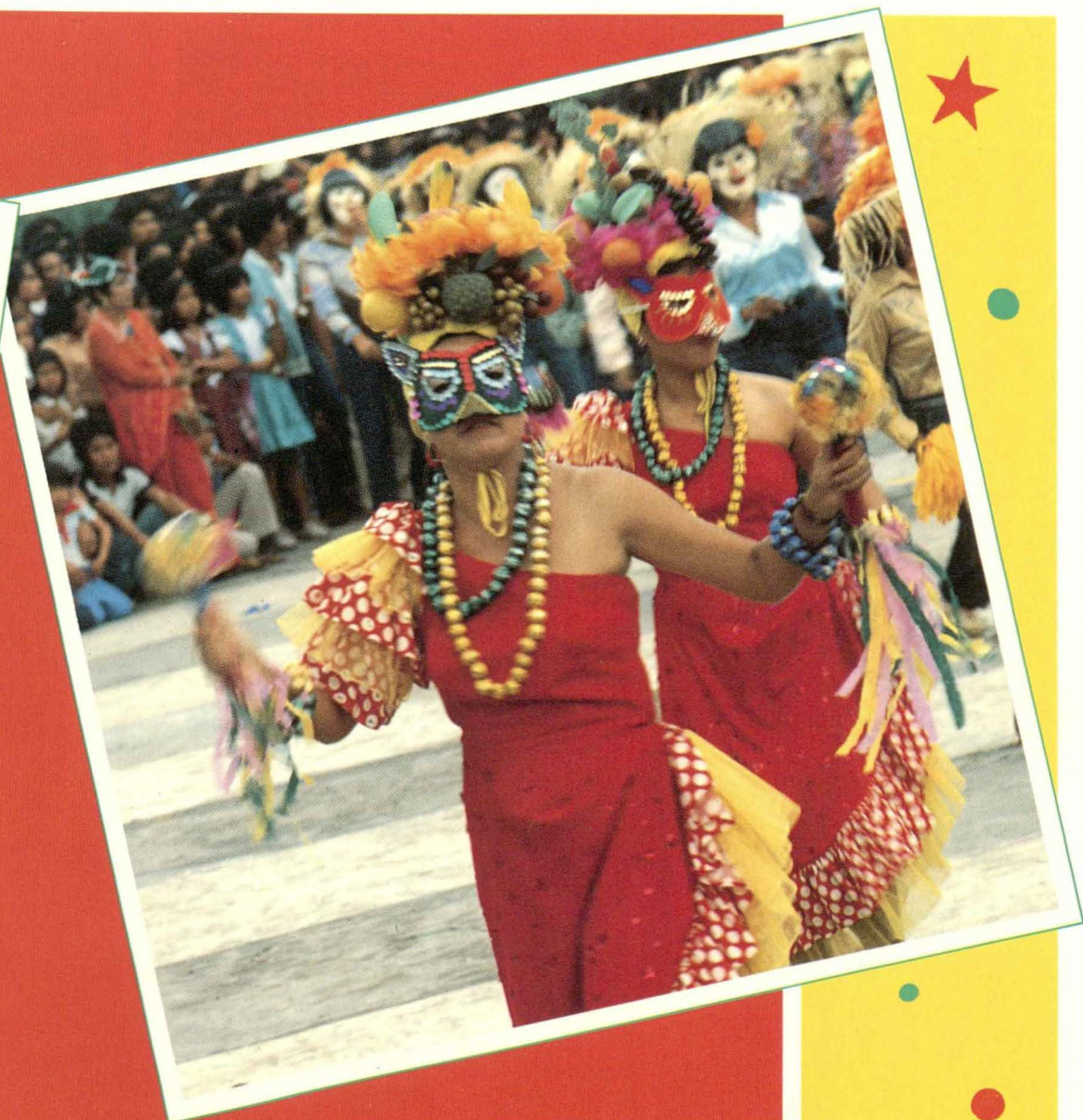
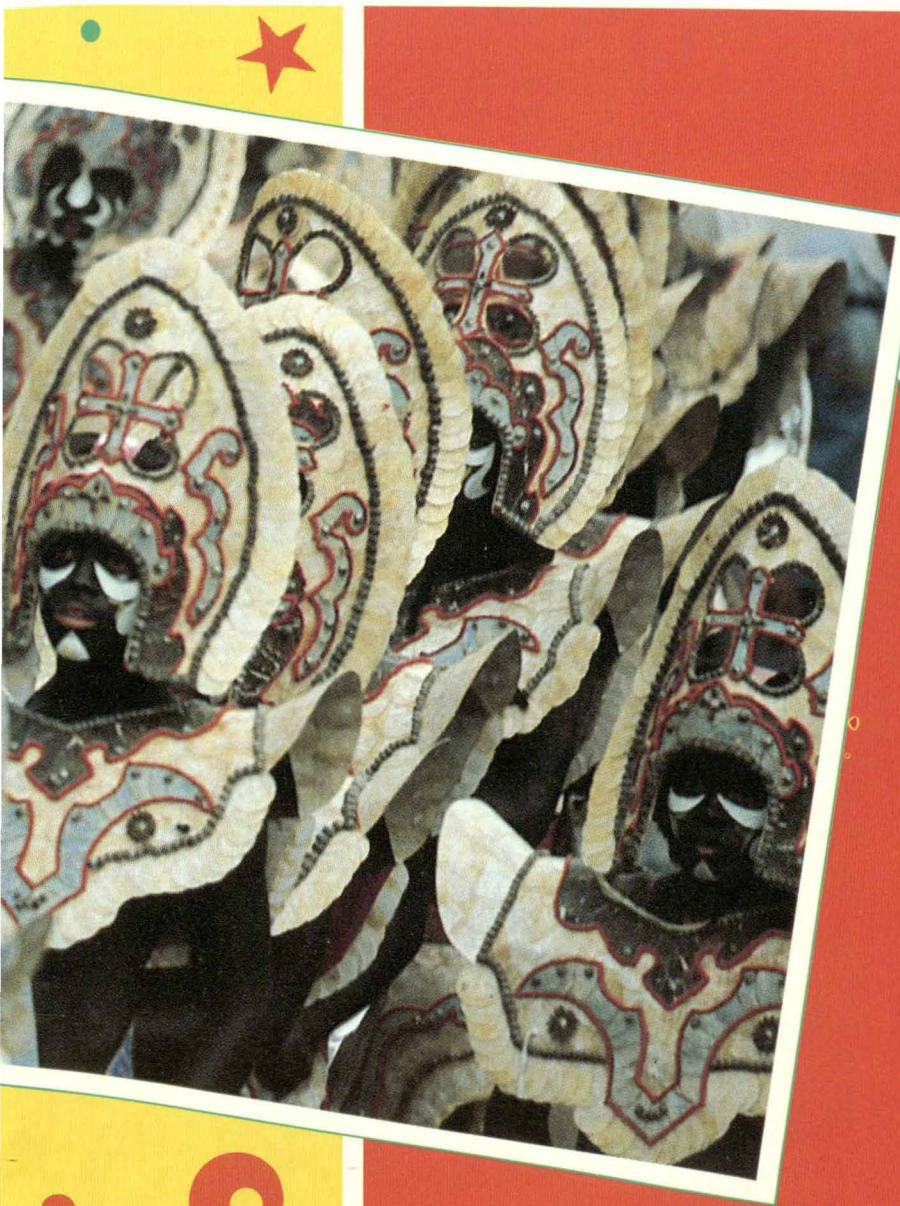
The first Ati-Atihan was celebrated at the original meeting between the immigrant settlers from Borneo and the

Atis. Story has it that the new arrivals were led by a sultan's minister whose name was Puti (which means white). He parleyed with the Ati chieftain, Haring Marikudo. The agreement they thrashed out involved part of Panay Island going to the Borneans in exchange for a golden salakot (wide-brimmed hat) and kris (wavy-edged sword) for Marikudo and a long necklace of beaten gold for his wife, Maniwangtiwang.

The deal was sealed with feasting, dancing and chanting. In a diplomatic move the new, lighter-skinned settlers blackened their skins with soot to resemble their hosts and danced to the Ati music.

To this day the Ati-Atihan revellers smear themselves with soot, don outrageous versions of tribal finery and costumes that almost mirror those of Rio de Janeiro's mardi gras carnival. Unsuspecting visitors are sometimes taken aback by the sheer riotousness of the street parades, the drums and whistles, the stamp and chant routines. Incessant,

Above, left Every mask at the Masskara Festival in Bacolod City carries a smile. **centre** Spectacular costumes of the Ati-Atihan at Kalibo. **right** Masskara dancers.



hypnotic rhythms reverberate against the walls of buildings along with the shouts of: "Hala bira!" ("keep going!"). "Puera pasma!" ("no tiring!").

A tradition of the Ati-Atihan is the carrying of the image of the Holy Child. It commemorates an incident during one of the many pirate raids that plagued the settlers during the first 500 years of their inhabiting Panay. The looters and slave-hunters were from Mindanao and were a constant source of fear. But during one raid, according to tradition, the image of the child Jesus appeared above the pirates and drove them off. The Holy Child was adopted as patron and among the shouts now heard from the revellers are the words, "Viva el Senor Santo Nino!" ("long live the Holy Child!").

Such is the infectiousness of the revelry that visitors are usually caught up in the enthusiasm and emotion. The only risk they run, apart from exhaustion, is to be painted with oil and soot by the more mischievous of the young. The

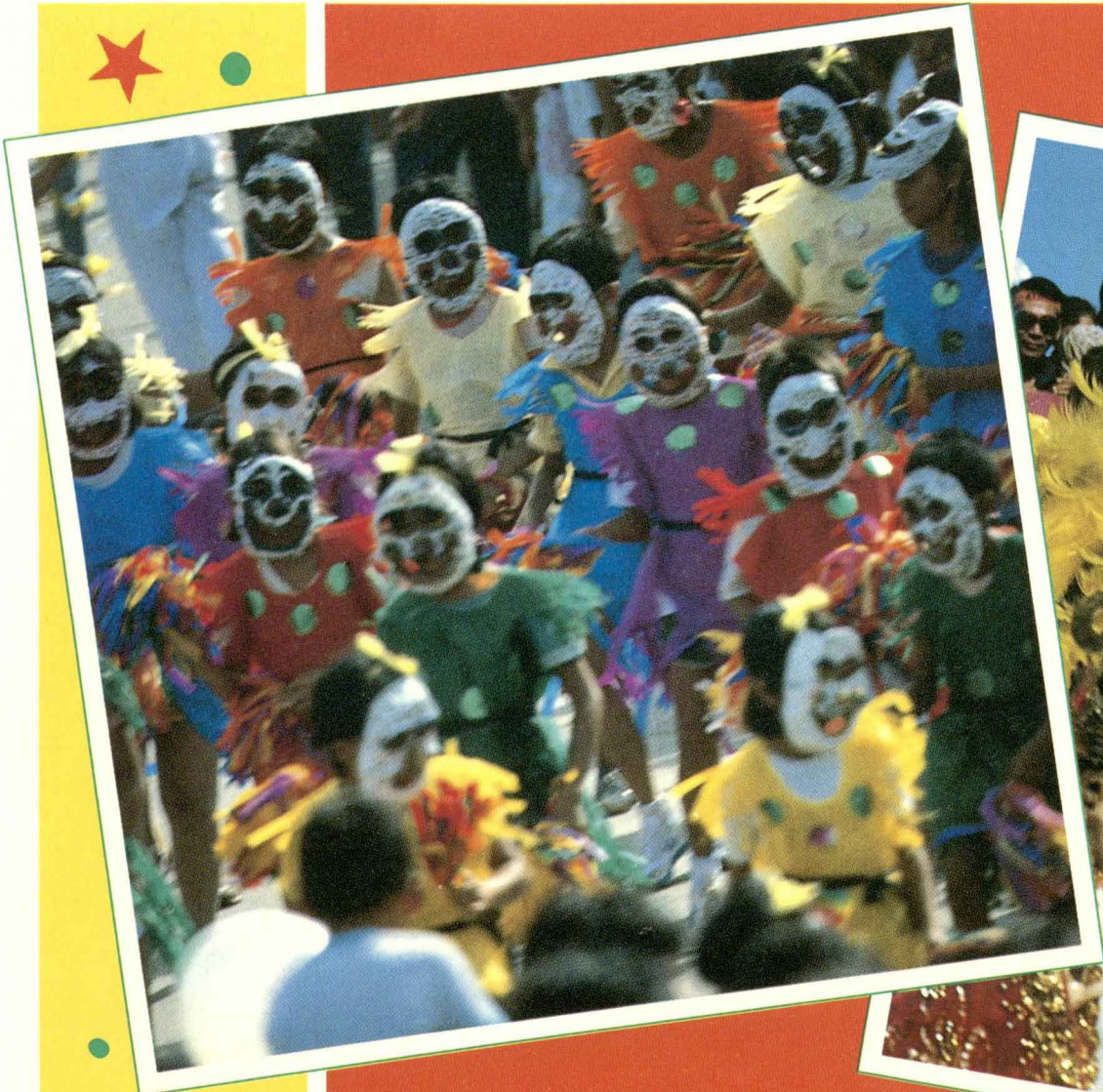
soot and oil mixture is used by everyone because it sticks to the skin better.

The feasting part of Ati-Atihan is still important and older Kalibo womenfolk prepare plenty of native delicacies, lechon (roast pork), crabs and lobsters for family and friends who may drop in.

The Bacolenos, as the citizens of Bacolod are known, have their Masskara Festival in mid-October when all activities emanate from the town plaza. It has no background of patron saints, tribute or thanksgiving; its sole purpose is fun.

The word 'masskara' evolved from a combination of English and Spanish. The English 'mass' (many, as in 'a mass of people') was combined with the Spanish 'cara' (face) and ended up as masskara. Many faces distinguish the celebrations because it is in fact a festival of masks.

Every mask among the thousands worn by the carousing townsfolk is different but all are the same in one respect - they are smiling! Every conceivable design of



Above *Young Masskara revellers.*

paper mache, clay molds or whatever else takes the maker's fancy, in every conceivable combination of colors, has at its centre a beaming smile.

The parades and dancing in the streets are almost eerie because the muteness of the masks contrasts so strongly with the throbbing drums, the beat of Latin music, the songs and the laughter. Visitors must come to terms with the sight of a masked army of perpetual grins.

Only one difficult burden is carried by those involved and that is confined to the judges who must decide from among the milling throngs of happy masks the one they believe is the 'smilingest'. Suburbs and surrounding towns enter their chosen representatives for the finals and the entrants usually number a thousand. It is one contest in which the losers do not frown.

The three-day fiesta was begun to counter the gloom of depression which infected the area when world commodity prices, especially that of sugar,



Below *Image of the Holy Child, patron of the Ati-Atihan Festival, carried by a celebrant.*

plummeted in the 1970s. The Bacolenos wanted to show that in spite of hard times they could still be happy, that they could channel their artistry and creativity into a unique celebration.

The Masskara Festival, attracting visitors from far and wide, is an occasion for Bacolenos also to display and sell merchandise, handicrafts, orchids and delicacies in the flea market that grows up at San Sebastian Church plaza.

In the few years since the festival was inaugurated the people of Negros have turned from reliance on a one-crop industry. They have diversified into crops other than sugar, into crafts and light industry. The economy has picked up. And although the Festival of Smiling Masks will continue, the smiles on the faces of the people will be visible all year.

Air Niugini operates a weekly service between Port Moresby and Manila.

Photographs courtesy of the Philippines Department of Tourism

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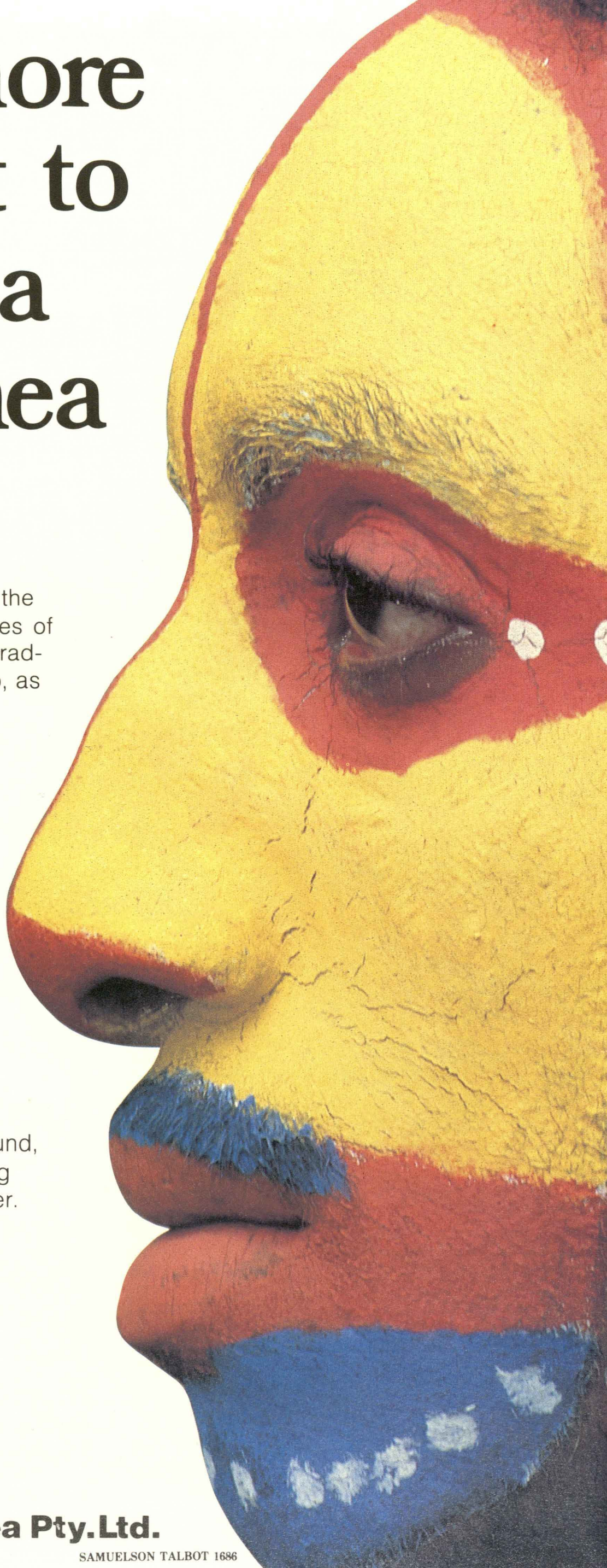
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Holiday Island

Story and photographs
by Elizabeth Kogomoni



People all over the world search, usually vainly, for a 'paradise' in which to spend their well-earned holidays. Fortunately Papua New Guinea has many peaceful and romantic settings for holidaymakers that qualify for such a description.

The country has lodges in several mountain areas, in the middle of jungles, by the riverside or seaside and of course on the many islands. Arovo Island Resort in the North Solomons Province is one such place. It's the sort of tropical paradise dreams are made of - a coconut palm-shaded island surrounded by clear, blue waters and colorful coral gardens. Only a seven-minute ferry ride from the main island of Bougainville, Arovo offers more than asked by any but the most demanding vacationer.

Non-paying guest at Arovo Island, this hermit crab in the surrounding reef waters brought its own accommodation.



Beautiful white sandy beaches bridge the gap between jungle and coral and the reefs teem with marine life. Only the presence of two Japanese shipwrecks indicate that what is paradise to some can be hell for navigation. The wrecks are a diversion though for those who like to explore something a little different. Visitors who are not the type to go looking for treasures in the water, can spend pleasant hours strolling through the garden-like setting of the 10-hectare island that was once a coconut plantation. The background music is the roar of the surf and the cry of the coconut parrots. Company is often provided by butterflies wafting on the warm air.

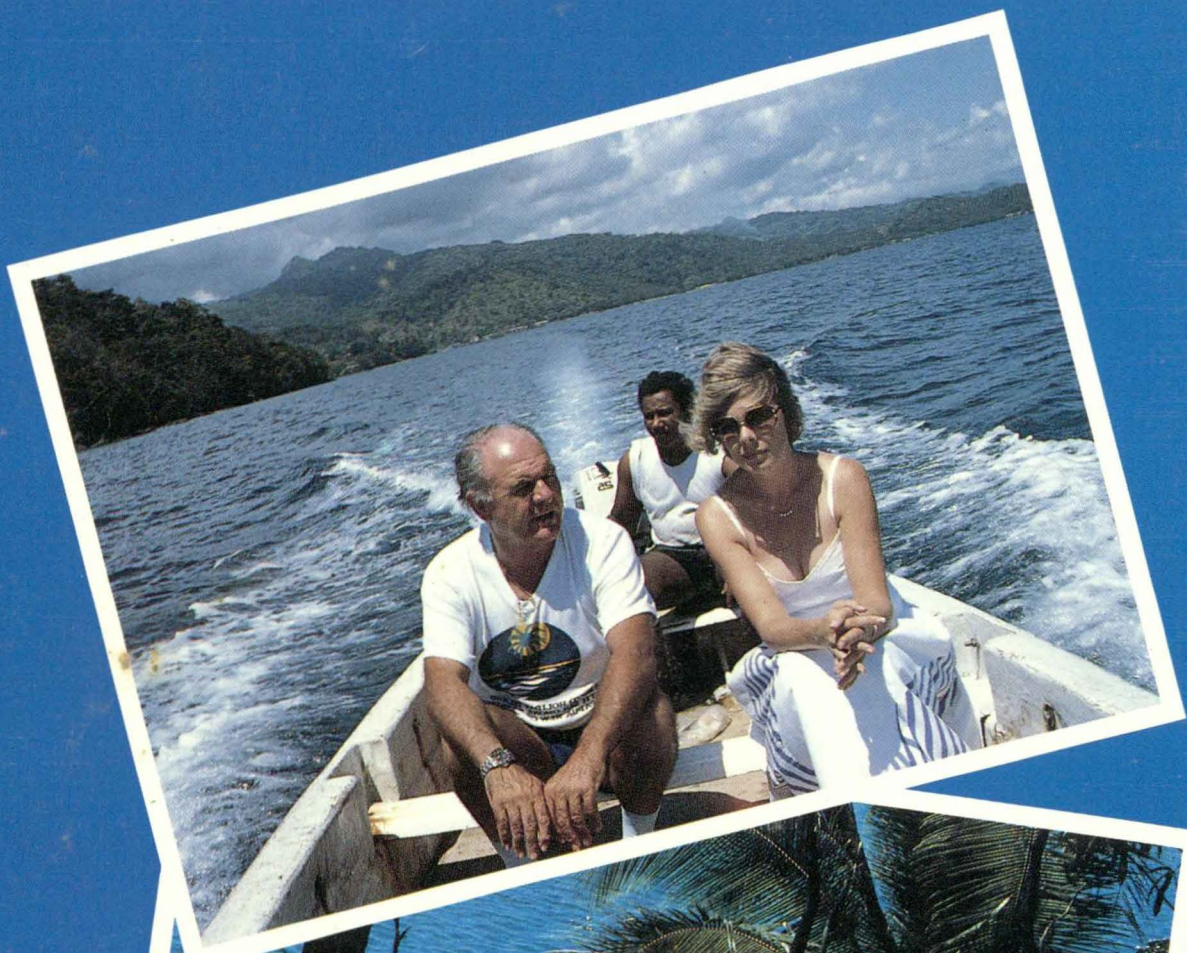
Left Staff, residents and visitors mingle freely on Arovo Island.
below The garden-like grounds of the resort.





The resort, first built in 1970 and recently refurbished and reopened in 1988, is tastefully appointed, providing all the luxuries of a first class international hotel, but with a far more relaxed atmosphere. Rooms are units with bathroom, refrigerator, overhead fans and refreshment making equipment. Well-manicured grounds sprawl around the resort which includes tennis courts, and scuba, snorkelling, fishing and wind surfing facilities.

Above Blue sea, white sand, green palms – the sight that greets visitors arriving at Arovo.



Arovo Channel is rated among the most beautiful scuba diving areas in the world and diving enthusiasts are well catered for. Arovo's 'Scuba Hut' has a complete range of aquatic activities for guests' enjoyment and is open seven days a week. The hut, in pleasant surroundings beside the main resort, is operated by friendly staff and carries a full range of diving equipment, swimwear, souvenirs and books. A qualified instructor is available on short notice for guests who may like to experience scuba diving for the first time or undertake a complete dive course. Resident resort guests are offered 25 per cent discount on all rentals.

Arovo's surrounding waters are home to marlin, sailfish, yellowfin tuna and Spanish mackerel. They can be caught from the resort's game fishing boat, a 10-metre, air conditioned cruiser. For fishing the reefs the resort has an aluminium dinghy with out-board motor.

Arovo is a wonderful place to stay while on a business trip to the North Solomons Province. Arovo is also an ideal place to meet local people who go there to relax and have fun with their families and friends.

Port Moresby to Bougainville Island is less than two hours on an Air Niugini F28 flight. A 30-minute drive on sealed road takes travellers from Kieta airport to the wharf for the ferry-ride to the island.

Left A seven-minute ferry ride transports visitors to the garden island paradise of Arovo.

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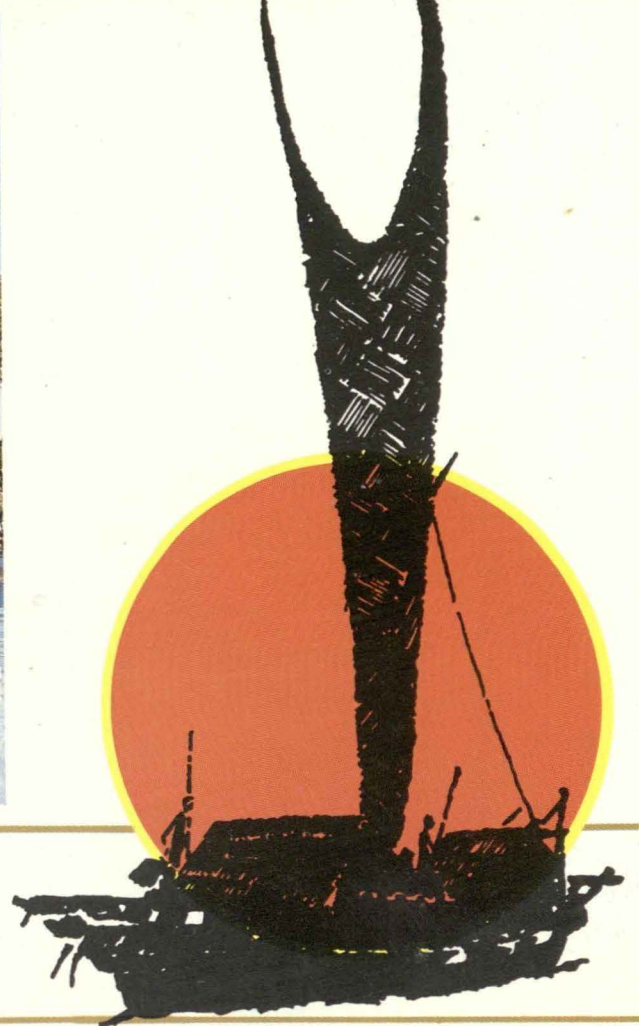
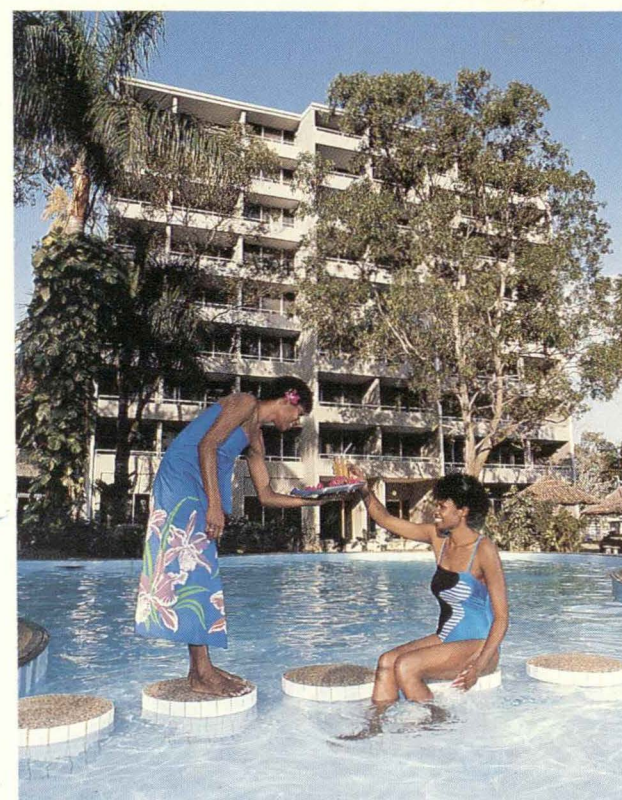
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