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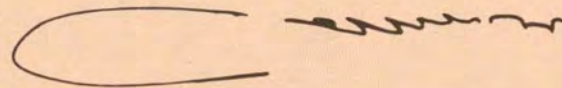
Welcome aboard,

In this issue we take you to the amazing
wildlife reserve at Bensbach, to the historic
Salamaua Peninsula with its undersea delights,
and to the mountain passes of the Bismarck
Range.

We also join a British biology team studying
the Woodlark Island cuscus and look at
Bougainville Copper Mine 17 years after
starting operations.

We also visit Port Douglas in Australia, the little
fishing village that has become a boom town.

Enjoy your flight.



Mr Joseph Tauvasa MBE
Chairman
National Airline Commission

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Photography by Lyn Manly.



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Papua New Guinea's name fills most minds with images of faces thick with drying ochre, singsings, heat, dust, pig tusks and bows and arrows. Travel posters, postcards and books focus on the country's inhabitants, their customs and practices, the changes facing a 'primitive' society in the 20th Century. What rarely receives the 'hard sell' is PNG's beautiful and widely diverse landscape. Having travelled in the country several times, I have been introduced to some of its scenic secrets. From the outer islands and their bleached white beaches you move across the Pacific to the mainland and its plains. Winding rivers and deep-cut gorges lead to the gradually folding mountain ranges of the Highlands.

In all this are numerous hidden havens. One that took me most by surprise was Bensbach, a wildlife park situated close to the Irian Jaya border in the Western Province. Covering 139 square kilometres and known as 'Tonda Wildlife Management Area', the park is an ideal spot for bird watchers and animal lovers. Its diverse and beautiful scenery provides abundant material for photographers. Bensbach Lodge situated on Bensbach River's east bank, is 95 kilometres by river to the sea and about 25 kilometres from the Irian Jaya

border. It is a comfortable base from which to explore the environment's numerous and fascinating incongruities.

Perhaps the most disturbing thing is the sense that you've fallen asleep, missed the right airstrip and somehow landed in the middle of Africa. Savannah stretches for kilometres, deep yellow in the dry season. Tall bottle-shaped century palms reach towards a deep blue and cloudless sky. Cicadas hum and the heat intensifies as the day progresses. Animals seek shelter from the sun's ferocity,

Top Javan rusa deer graze a rain-flooded swale.

BOUND DENS



TIFUL BACH

Story and photographs by Liz Thompson



parched land cracks and all is silent at midday. Afternoons are marked by a slow drop in temperature; animals return and the softer rays of the sun are reflected on the river's mirror surface. Bensbach is a place of extreme juxtapositions, in both its range of vegetation and wildlife. It constantly surprises.

Alongside the palms, the African savannah and the black wattle, laced with profusions of wild orchids, is the English parkland. As if Africa in the tropics isn't enough, the scenery takes you to England's Windsor Park. Near-perfect grass embankments roll towards the river's edge, green and perfectly mown. Small, deep green, domeshaped trees dot the lawns, their undersides clipped and immaculately manicured by the roaming deer. A graceful willow tree would hardly look out of place.



There's an element of mystery which shrouds the landscape's ambiguity. The entire local population of Bensbach was wiped out through some unknown epidemic, leaving only remnants of their ancient agricultural system, one which anthropologists believe has been unpractised for more than 1200 years. This system, they suggest, is different from anything else contemporarily found in PNG and gave rise to the unique quality of Bensbach's environment. In verification of this theory, the jungle is beginning to consume the savannah, as newly migrated inhabitants practise more traditional agriculture. The fascinating, somewhat 'international' aspects of the Bensbach landscape may have a limited lifespan; the green embankments and the African plains may be absorbed by the expanding jungle, caught up over the years in the undergrowth of maluka forests.

Until that day comes, the small river boats will cruise while animals stare at them from the plains. The antlers of some of Bensbach's 60,000 Javan rusa deer can be seen over small hillocks, as they lower their heads to chew the grass. Introduced by Dutch missionaries in 1922, the deer now outnumber the region's villagers. Between these spiraling antlers is the final piece of a jumbled jigsaw. Wallabies, thousands of them, are scattered, hopping across the sea of yellow grass. At home in the Australian Outback with its cracked, red, dry earth, their inquisitive eyes and pouches fat with joeys are the final

From left Magpie geese take to the air; a barramundi took to this fisherman's lure; a riverside village nestles among the palms.



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bizarre though charming touches in a landscape of African savannah and rolling English embankments.

The river flows thick with barramundi. For many people who visit the park, fishing is a passion fulfilled. Birdwatchers find a utopia with more than 200 species in the region, 130 have been spotted in one day. Reeds provide a curtain behind which elegant white brolga hide, exploding into white clouds as they take flight in unison. In early January, skies turn heavy and black and full of noise as migratory magpie geese, spoonbills and ducks make their way back to Australia's Northern Territory, finding shelter in Arnhem Land and Kakadu. Whistling kites and the laughter of a spangled kookaburra rise in the enthusiastic crescendo of a dawn chorus. Straw-legged ibis, with their spindly fragile legs, and the crooked-beaked, black and white stilt birds wander nonchalantly across swampy grasslands. As the day cools, the evening air is thick with settling dust left by wandering animals. Yellow turns to orange and then deep purple, colonies of rusty-red night heron begin to hunt.

As herons fly through the air, the iridescent green tree frogs increase the volume of their croaking. The lodge with its cold beer and fresh, grilled barramundi becomes a welcome prospect. All settles into darkness. Another of PNG's many faces is lost in the night. Only the cicadas continue their play.

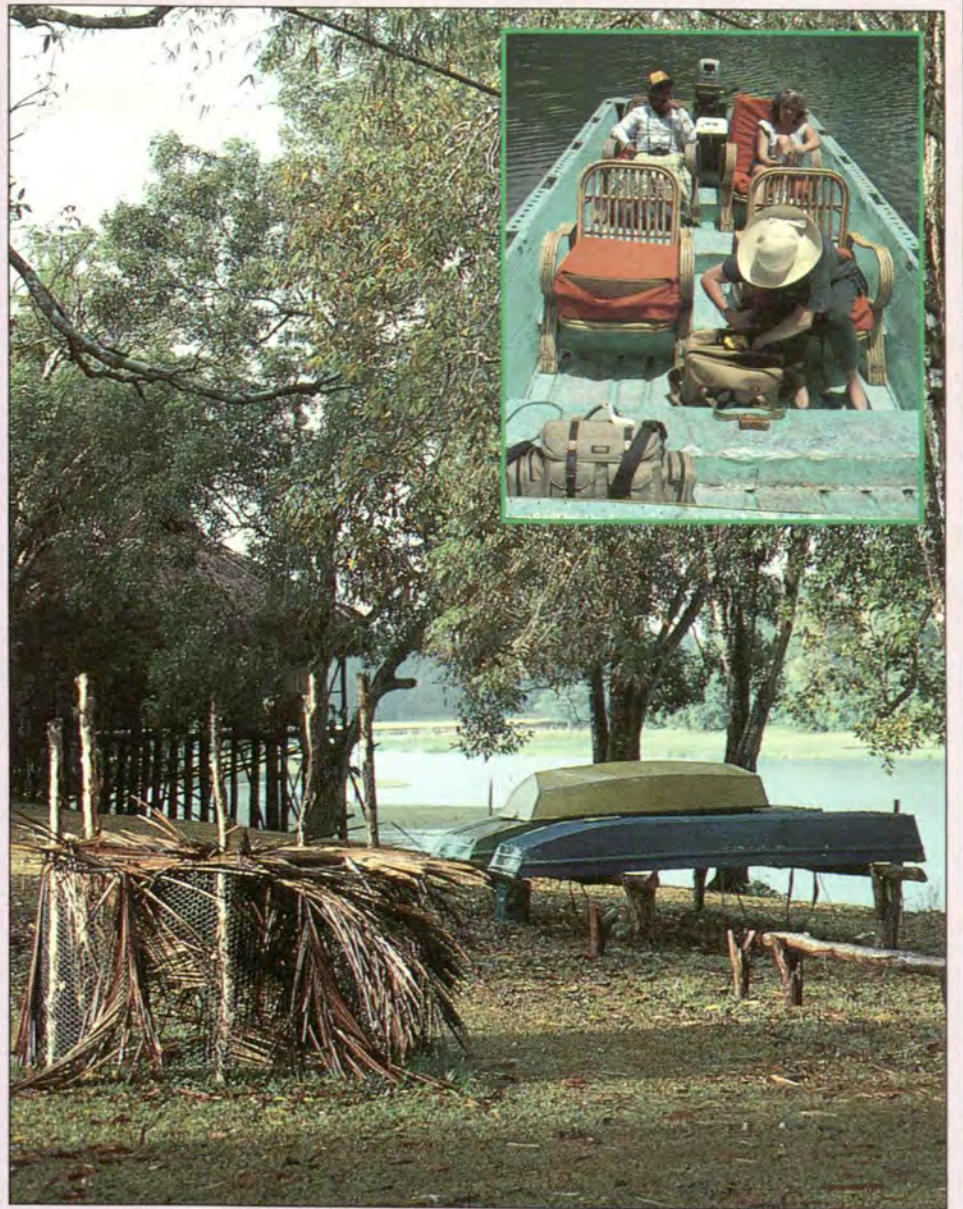
Who would guess that amidst thousands of uninhab-

ited kilometres lies an area abundant in wildlife, rich in scenery, alive not only with noises but with a jungle intent on hiding it. PNG's celebrated cultural extravaganza is equalled only by that of its landscape. Just as the red faces of the Mendi women are startling and the bright yellow skins of the Huli wigmen constantly surprise, so too the stretching ochre plains, the clear blue skies, the wild orchids and the abundant wildlife of Bensbach paints another portrait.

In the midst of this glorious countryside is the haven of the Bensbach Wilderness Lodge run by Doreen and Brian Brumley, expatriates who are long-time residents of PNG. They provide hearth and home to the fisherfolk, the birdwatchers and nature lovers fortunate enough to make the fascinating journey to this special part of the country.

Air Niugini operates regular scheduled flights between Port Moresby and Daru, with connections to Bensbach.

From top right Bensbach Lodge guests ride the river in comfort; the lodge's boat ramp; hosts Doreen and Brian Brumley; trees dot the savannah.



Salamaua is a well guarded secret in Papua New Guinea. This picturesque outcrop is only 25 kilometres south of Lae in the Huon Gulf. A white coral sand beach dominates one side of Salamaua while the other, with a shoreline smothered in dense jungle, drops away into deep water. It is hard to imagine that this sleepy coastal retreat was once the capital of Morobe Province.

A relaxed atmosphere prevails at Salamaua – away from the cities and towns; no telephone, no television and no outside intrusions – and it is the stepping-off point to some of the finest diving in the country.

Rodney Pearce, a PNG resident for most of his life, operates his dive charter vessel *Barbarian* from Divers Lodge at Salamaua. *Barbarian* transports guests from Lae to Salamaua in three hours, cruising along the coast past the steep Kuper Range. Salamaua is extremely isolated and accessible mainly by sea. High mountains surround it like a fortress wall.

The small port of Salamaua sprang up in the 1920s when gold was discovered 50 kilometres inland at Wau. Gold prospectors came by ship in hoards to Salamaua then made their way on foot up the mountains to the goldfields. Screen star Errol Flynn made the journey in search of riches before he went to Hollywood. The journey through dense jungle took eight days. In the late 1920s the gold mining companies began flying equipment into Wau.

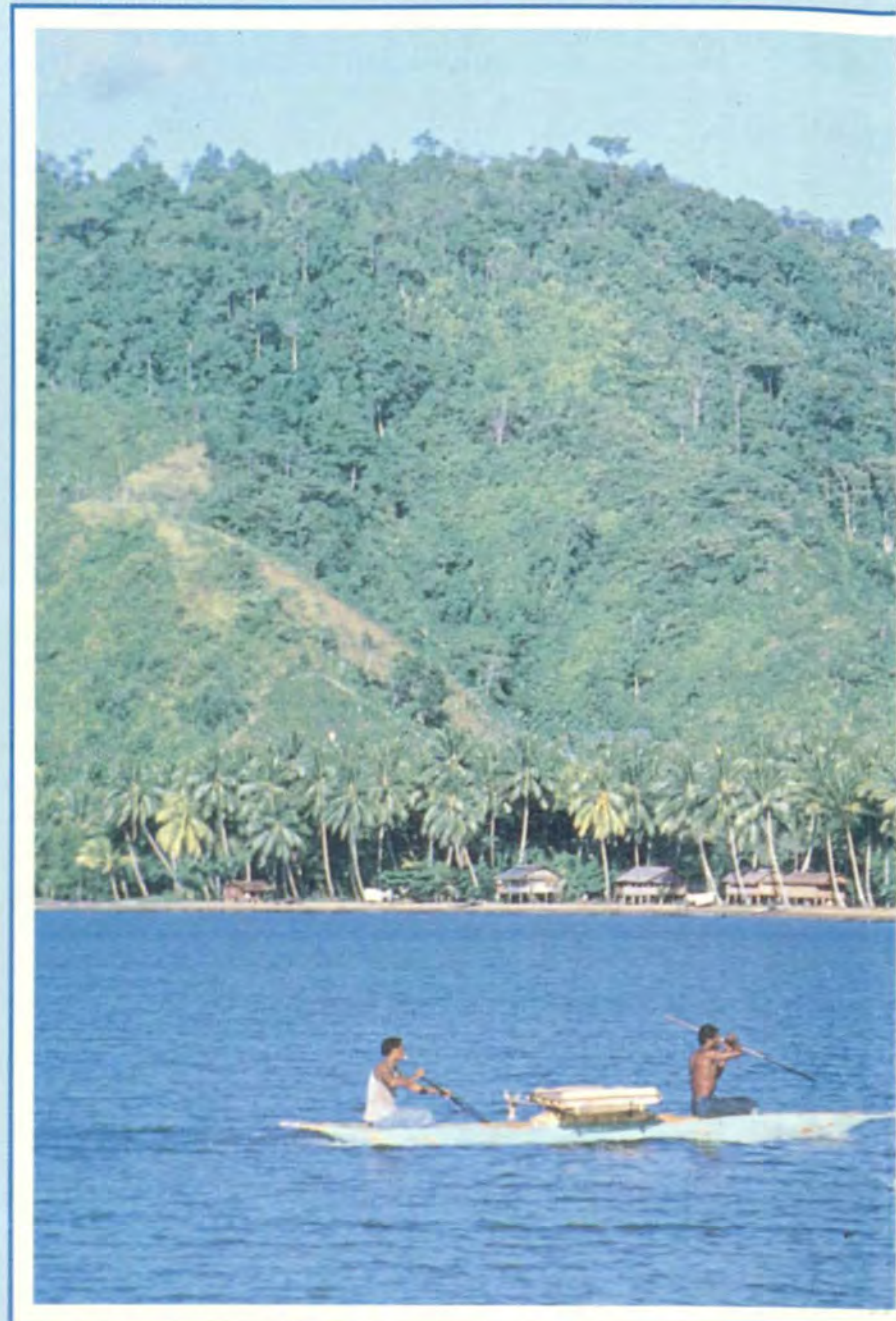
During World War II Salamaua, Lae and Rabaul became the major Japanese base in PNG. At the height of the occupation at Salamaua, Japanese forces totalled 30,000. It was an ideal stronghold; a peninsula surrounded by sea, the mainland to the rear protected by towering mountains too rugged and steep to allow road building. Early in 1943 the Japanese tried to

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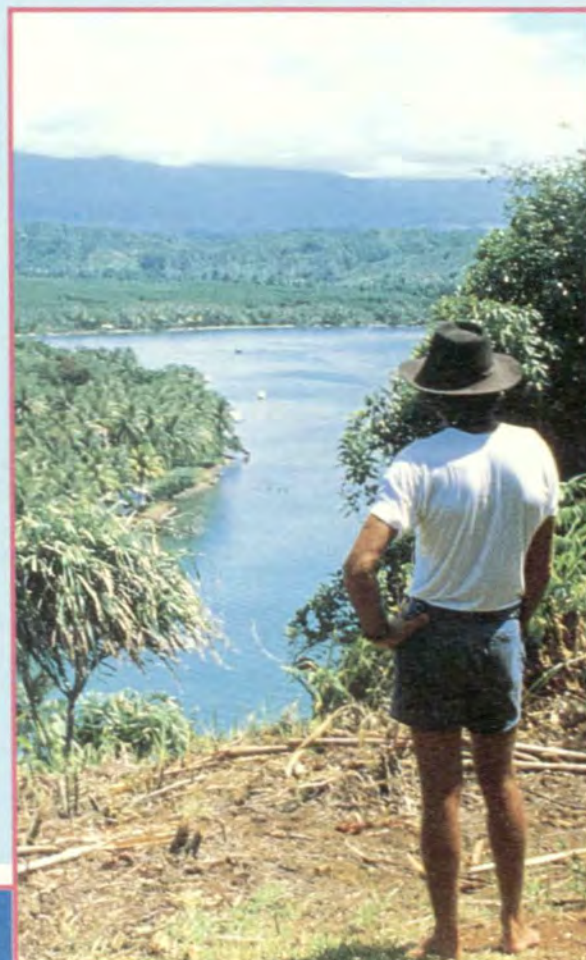
Top left Japanese WWII cannon. **below left** US B-24 bombs Salamaua in 1943. **centre** Villagers canoe home across the azure sea near Salamaua. **top right** Narrowest part of the peninsula. **below right** Lodge manager Shane Crowley surveys his domain.



REDEED

rets

Story and photographs by Lyn and Pat Manly



move a large force of troops from Salamaua over the mountains to Port Moresby but they were driven back by Australians based at Wau.

Allied air strikes on the Japanese at Salamaua were frequent. Bombers would fly overland from Jackson Field, Port Moresby and Dobu Duru Field to drop their bomb loads on the Japanese base as well as the freighters and troop ships at anchor in the bays along the peninsula. The result was the total destruction of the port. Salamaua was captured by the allies on 11 September, 1943, followed by Lae on 16 September in that same year. The Japanese fled into the hills and began the long retreat to Wewak.

The town and the port of Salamaua were never rebuilt. Gold prospectors now flew into Wau and the other goldfields and Salamaua settled into obscurity. The early 1950s saw a new type of development at Salamaua. The peninsula was discovered by the many expatriates living and working in Lae. They leased small pieces of land from the local village and began to build holiday and weekend retreats. Friday afternoons in Lae saw a mass exodus of residents as they transferred their families, food supplies, household goods and linen onto their game fishing cruisers and headed south for a weekend out of town. Soon the narrow strip of habitable land at Salamaua was dotted with beach-houses. Barbecue areas were built and jetties and pontoons and generators installed to provide electricity; house staff were recruited from the local village, and the owners settled in for relaxing weekends of fishing, skiing and snorkelling. In the 1970s many took up scuba diving.

Rodney Pearce, a member of one such family, began exploring the Salamaua region underwater at this time. With friends from Lae he dived on Japanese shipwrecks, lush coral reefs and pinnacles, and

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Above Fairy basslets are a common sight. **left** Nudibranch (sea slug) on host sponge. **below** Tube sponges. **bottom** Lyn with sea whips on a barrel sponge.



even World War II aircraft. Rodney's love of diving in this area has made him the ideal skipper of Barbarian and host dive guide of the Huon Gulf.

Aby assisted by Shane Crowley who is also an excellent skipper and diver, Rod uses Salamaua as his base for trips to Finschafen, South Coast New Britain and the Milne Bay Province. Divers who prefer a land-based trip are accommodated at Divers Lodge on the waterfront. The lodge is comfortable and casual with a dormitory style sleeping area for a maximum of nine guests. The house is screened and has 240 volt power, as well as flush toilets and cold water showers. The climate is hot and the showers are refreshing. A feature of the house is the large verandah overlooking the sea and the mountains.

Visitors to the lodge can have either full board with meals or purchase their own supplies in Lae. International travellers would probably find the meal package more suitable. One of the most relaxing times of the day is sunset, reliving the day with friends around the barbecue, a cold drink in hand and fresh fish sizzling on the grill.

Diving from Salamaua is full of surprises. The sites are diverse and, like many other locations throughout PNG, provide the diver with excellent opportunities to observe unusual marine life on expansive coral reefs, as well as excursions onto unique ship and plane wrecks.

River tides flowing out of the Markham River bring rich nutrients to the network of coral reefs dotting the Huon Gulf. Bannalla Banks, six kilometres off Salamaua, is a snaking system of reef which sits 24 metres below the surface. We dived the Banks from the Barbarian. An echo sounder and sonar assisted the skipper in locating the submerged reef.

We geared up for the first dive and watched in disbelief as the tide carried muddy river water past the vessel and out to sea. In a few minutes the water lapping around the boat turned from blue to brown. The point where the blue current met the river tide was like a boiling pot as the surface of the sea rippled in small peaks. We looked down into a sea of mud. We all wondered if the dive would be worth the effort. Visibility on the surface was almost nil. We pulled ourselves along the current line to the anchor rope, then down through a twilight sea, down to the reef. To our surprise the muddy water completely disappeared at three metres along with the strong current and the sea turned an inky blue. Light was cut down because of the muddy surface layer, but the visibility underneath was excellent.

The coral growth on the Banks was thick and lush. Schools of barracuda cruised high above the crest of the reef. On the leeward side of the reef we discovered an unusual type of coral growing in an undulating formation like delicate lace doilies. Along the ridge of the reef, schools of blue runners intermingled with masses of small pink fairy bassets, each complementing the other by flashing their vivid coloration in the sunlight.

Brittle coral growths decorated the top of the reef. Barrel sponges, fastened on to the hard substrate, played host to small clusters of fire whips and multicolored feathered starfish. We knelt on the coral and could see that the reef was alive and continually moving. Tangerine colored clownfish darted out of their anemone homes to have a look at the strangers invading their territory while a pair of exquisite bicolor angelfish flitted in and out of small niches in the coral, not quite sure what to make of us. We photographed pink and cream speckled nudibranches on a rose colored sponge; and



the beautiful giant murex hiding in the coral rubble; then we stalked a school of saddleback butterflyfish around and around the reef. And, to top off a great dive, we were visited by a large school of big-eye trevally which escorted us back to the anchor rope.

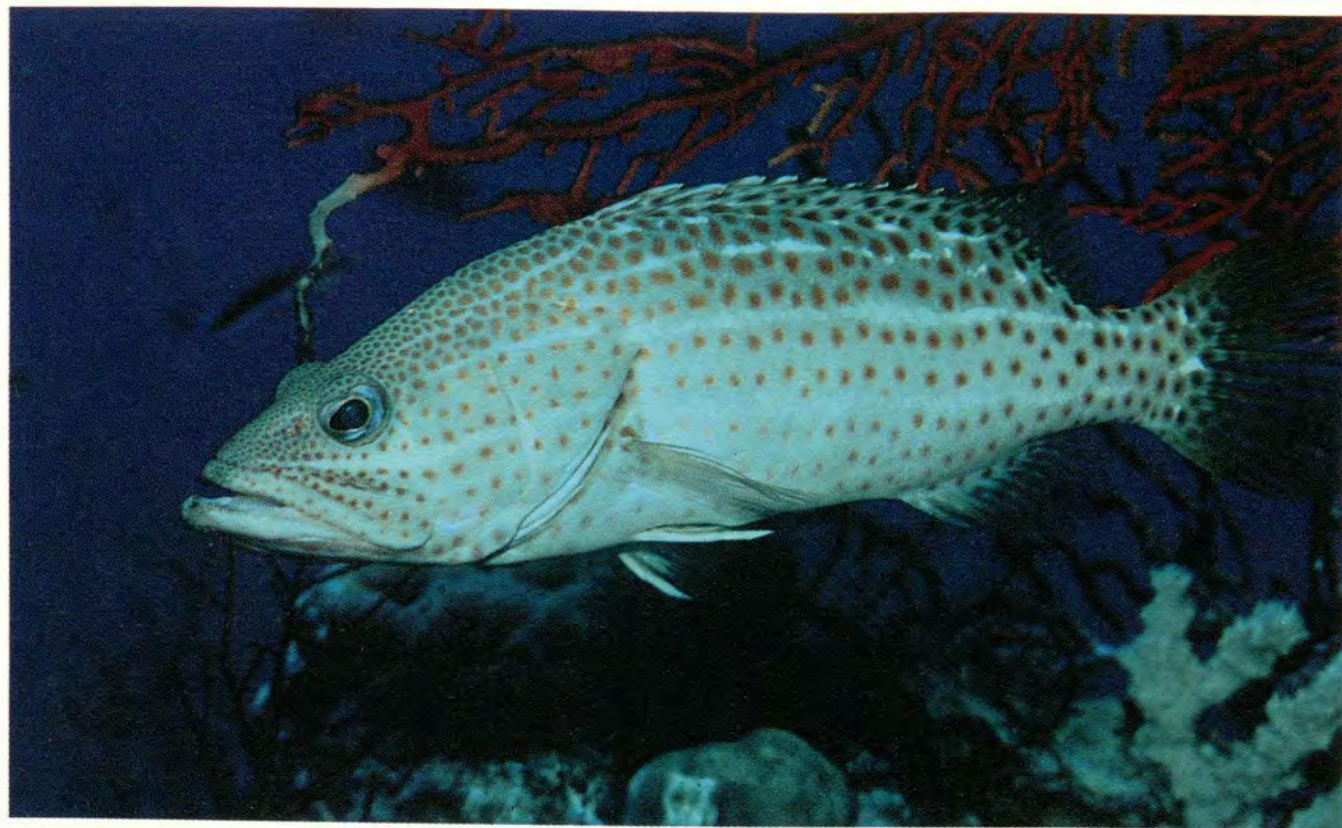
Salamaua's premium dive site is Halfway Reef. As the name implies the reef lies halfway between Salamaua and Lae and as such is in a prime position for catching the nutrient-laden currents of the Huon Gulf. Peaking at 27 metres, this undersea mountain is one of the most beautiful underwater sights in all of PNG. Adorned in huge soft coral trees which displayed

colors and textures so very different from anything else we had so far seen. The trunks and branches of the trees were as thick as a man's arm and hung out into the chasms of the reef.

Halfway Reef was a fairyland, one of those dive sites underwater photographers dream about, packed with sedentary growths and teeming with fish. Splashes of vibrant colors leaped out from the reef; vermilion red sea fans, delicate pastel pink hard corals, apricot and rust brown soft corals, and tangled purple masses of intertwining lace corals. The carnival of colors was broken by patches of feathery black coral stalks

Top Feather starfish, below Kotoko Maru, sunk by Allied bombs.





gently fluttering in the slight current. In the distance we could see sharks and schools of pelagic fishes moving in and out of our range of vision in the ink-blue sea.

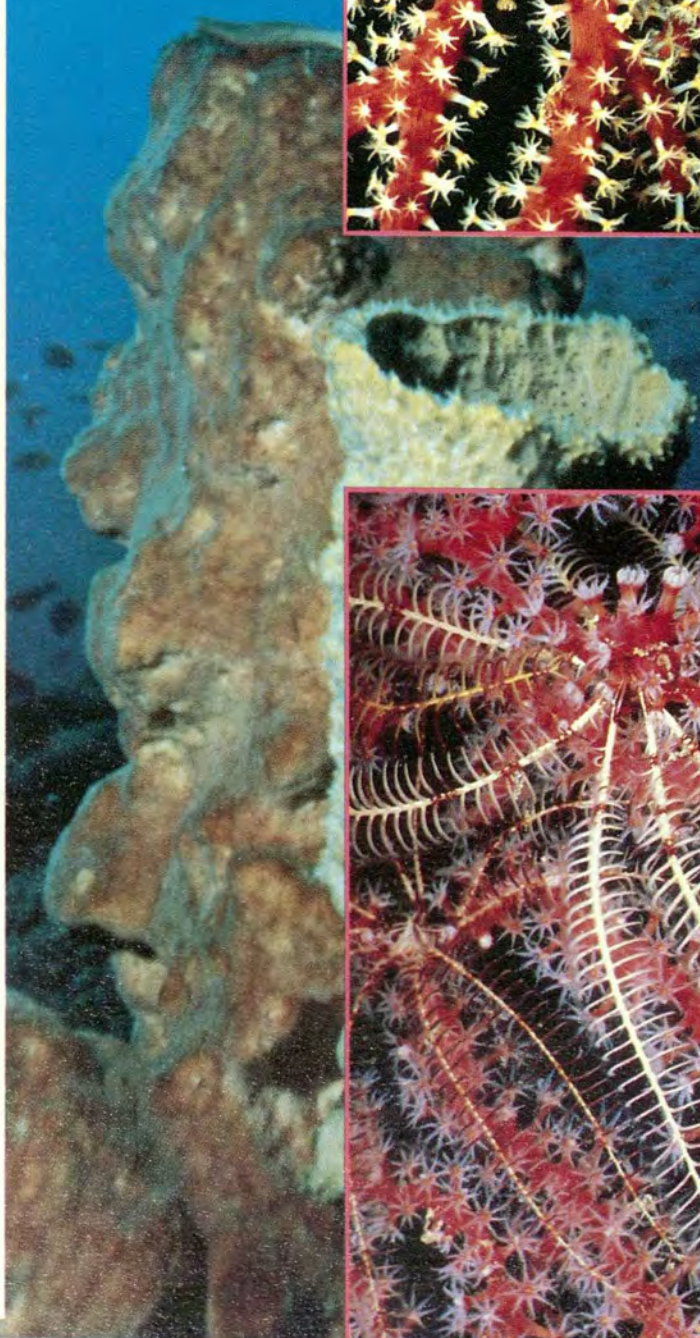
Salamaua is endowed with a shipwreck suitable for snorkellers and scuba divers. Kotoko Maru is a Japanese World War II freighter hit by American bombers. One section of the vessel juts out of the water while the deepest point of the wreckage underwater lies in 27 metres. Badly damaged and broken up, the Kotoko is an excellent introductory dive into the realm of a shipwreck. Divers foraging around the wrecksite have found bicycles, motor vehicle parts, as well as the odd saki bottle and pieces of crockery. The wreck has created an artificial reef and attracted an abundance of tropical fish.

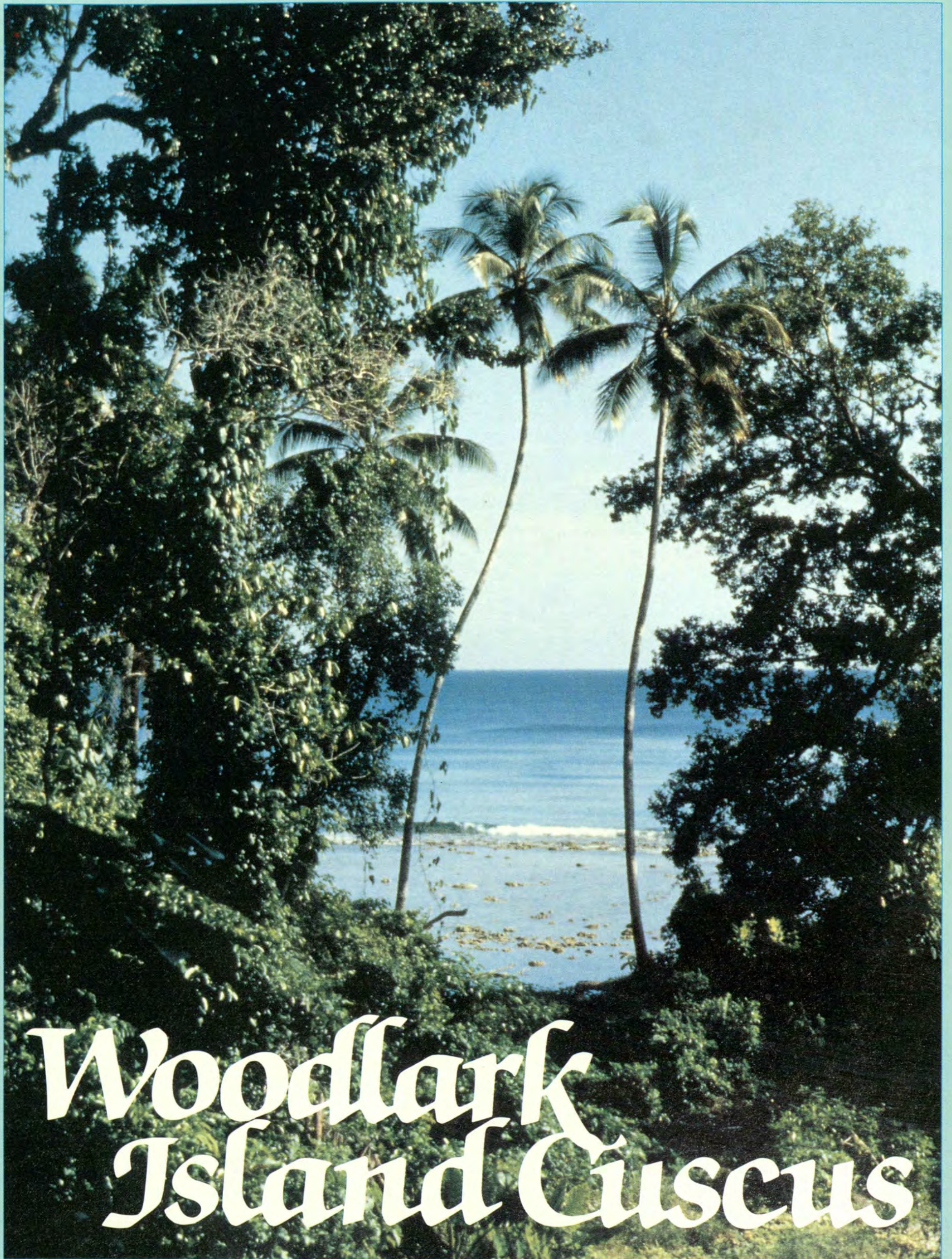
Some of the most fascinating creatures we encountered at Salamaua were the tiny commensal shrimps and crabs living on feather starfish. If the starfish was black and orange, the crab took on the colors of the host. In the same way, shrimp mimicked their host and created bizarre patterns which camouflaged the animals among the arms of the starfish. Occasionally we saw sharks, small reef whalers, inquisitive for a short time and then as quickly as they came they were gone.

Barbarian travels to Finschafen and the south coast of New Britain, and south to Cape Vogel to dive on the World War II bomber Blackjack. Salamaua is an excellent stepping-off point for extended cruises or a relaxed diving holiday staying at Divers Lodge. Salamaua itself offers excellent land-based diving on sites both interesting and diverse.



Top White-lined cod. **centre** Gorgonian sea fan. **bottom** Feather starfish.





Woodlark
Island Guscus

An island is like a jewel, beckoning from a velvet sea. From afar, it glitters alluringly, but only when you get close is it possible to determine its worth. An island is a release from the mainland, but its separation imprisons you between its four salty walls. Is it a risk worth taking – to travel to an island and discover that it is a false jewel, to languish there until the big white bird returns to whisk you away?

For anyone finding themselves in an aeroplane over Papua New Guinea the answer is a simple and emphatic yes. Look out of the window. Perhaps you are flying over apparently featureless water. Don't turn away, though. Something may suddenly catch your eye: an island of lush green forest, surrounded by a pearl white necklace of breakers, an emerald in a sequined ocean of blue.

I was lucky enough to be on what

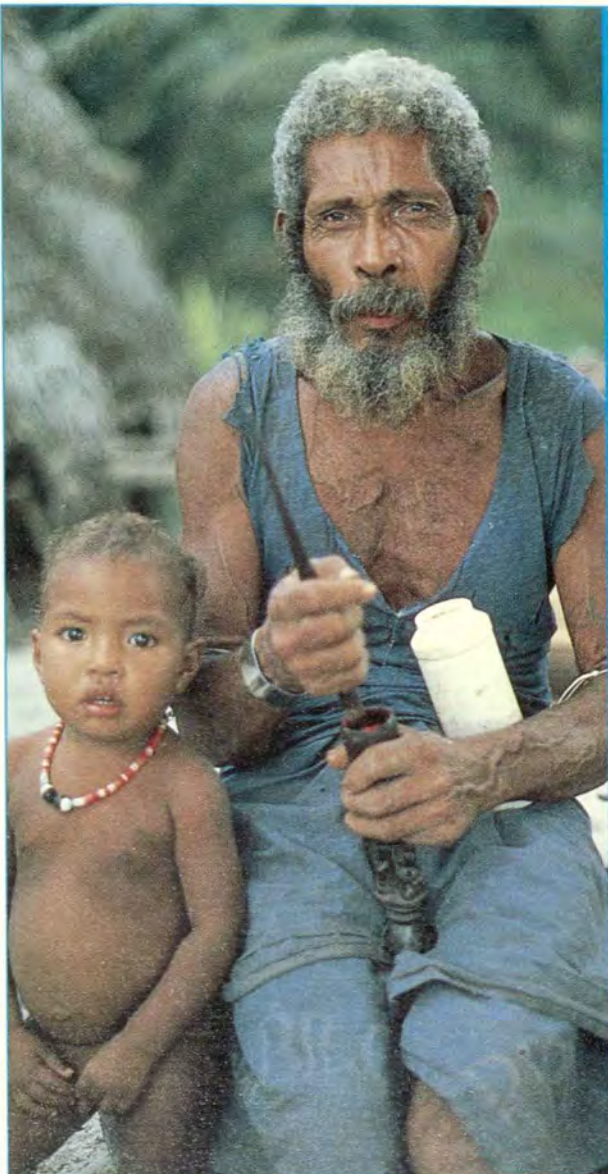
is probably the prize jewel of them all. Not the largest, no. The most beautiful things are never of great size. Neither is it the nearest – beautiful things are often remote. This island is Woodlark: east of the Trobriands and north of Misima, right out in the middle of the Solomon Sea with only a few nearby islets to disturb its solitude. Remote and largely untouched, it is the only home of an animal four of us had come 15,000 kilometres to study.

The cuscuses are a group of about a dozen species. Related to possums, they are nocturnal, arboreal marsupials. Like kangaroos, they possess a pouch rather than the placenta and womb found in cats, dogs and humans. They differ from possums in that they are built like small tanks. A possum would have to

spend hours in a gymnasium in order to resemble a cuscus. Despite this, they are relatively slow-moving, and therefore ideal to study, especially if the biologist is like me who, faced with the prospect of having to chase a fast-moving animal through rainforest at breakneck speed, will waste no time in considering other options.

In general the cuscuses are a woefully understudied group. During six short weeks on Woodlark, four Oxford University undergraduates managed to promote the Woodlark Island cuscus (*Phalanger lullulae*) from the position of least studied form to that of most studied. This is no exaggeration.

Facing page Woodlark Island's north coast. **clockwise, from right** Young cuscus; north coast village; villager and grandson; sunset.





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The project involved biometric analysis (length, weight, age, sex, etc) of all the cuscuses that local people could bring, as well as obtaining as much behavioral and ecological data on the species as we were able. Not only would the results greatly increase the knowledge of cuscuses in general, but they enabled us to estimate the abundance of this otherwise very rare species on Woodlark. In turn, this provides the basis for conservation measures to protect the cuscuses against any future ecological tragedies. Forearmed is forewarned.

It could not have gone better. The

island is crawling with cuscuses, but they are vulnerable. There is increasing interest in the island from the logging and mining industries. These operations, however, are responsible and are kept under strict control. Little forest has disappeared and we were assured little more would do so. What is more worrying is the clearly expanding resident population, and the greater influx of visitors the logging and especially the mining of Woodlark's plentiful gold reserves will bring. No cuscus can be found around the present logging and mining sites because of the noise and general disturbance. The Department of Environment and Conservation is looking into our proposal of establishing a small reserve on a remote part of the island.

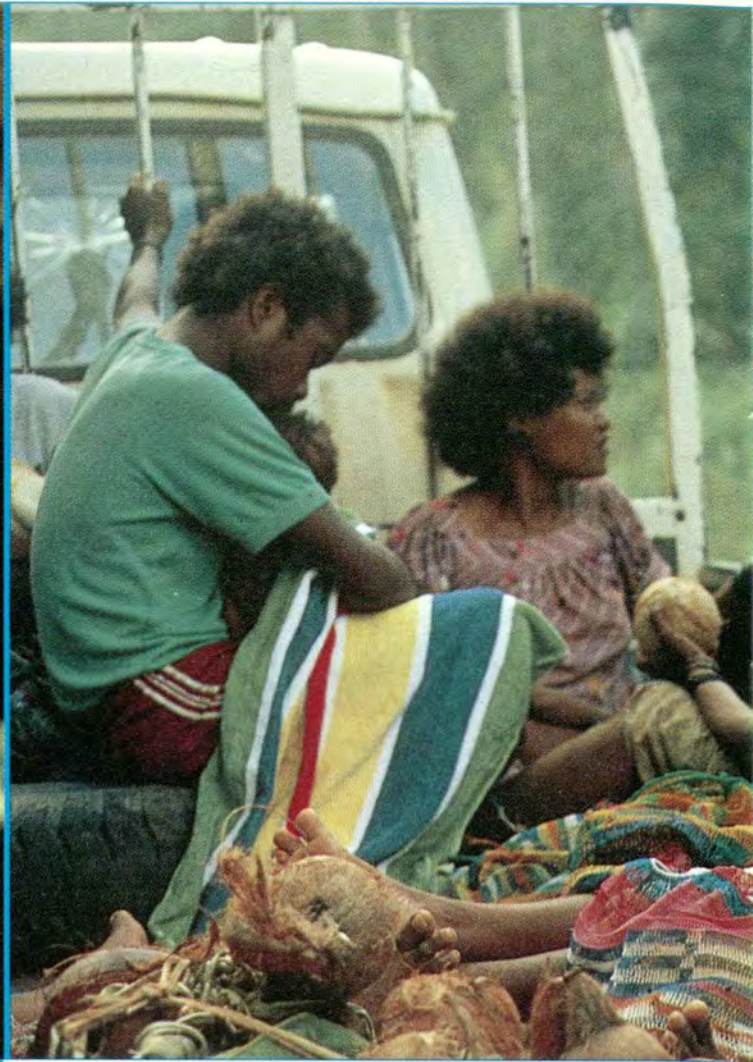
The mainstay of our project was a program of night-time radio tracking to obtain information on movements and home range of the cuscuses. This allowed us to occasionally see the animal itself and was enormously successful. It was particularly pleasing because a number of people back in England had said: "It'll never work in rainforest". The forest on Woodlark is mostly quite easy to walk through. Much of it grows on coralline limestone. In addition, the weather, compared with other rainforest areas, is mercifully dry.

Although I have never travelled to an area where the local people are unfriendly and unco-operative, the local people of Woodlark were not only friendly and co-operative but also genuinely interested and rather amused by us. There are no tourists on Woodlark, so it was with great glee (and some relief) that I could walk around the island causing such obvious fascination to the small children because of my white skin and towering height.



Left Current logging does not threaten the cuscus. **below left** Tracking cuscus by radio. **below right** Cuscus with radio collar.



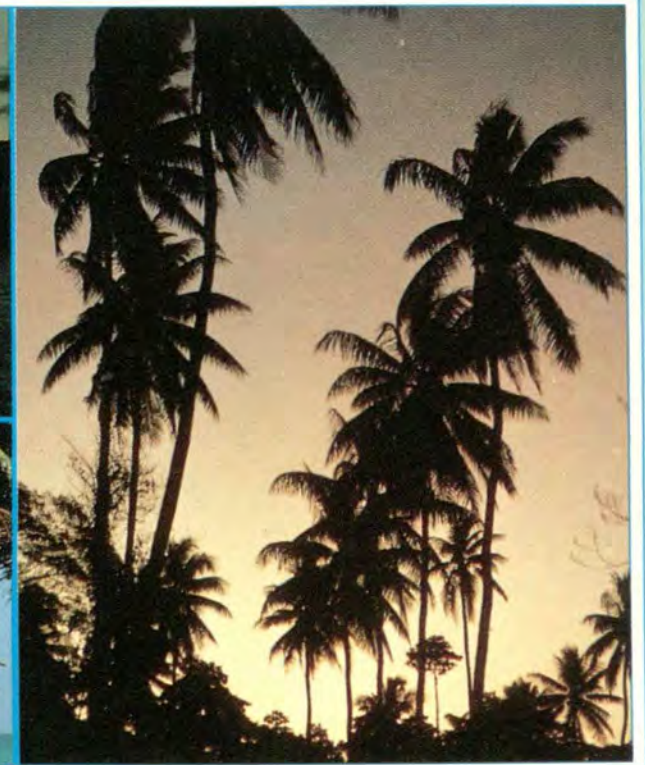


Left Village elder. **below left** Searching for cuscus. **above** Woodlark Island public transport. **next page, top** Sunrise over nearby Gawa Island. **below** Woodlark village hut. **far right** Sunset through the palms.



With the older people the fascination and curiosity was mutual. Questions from both directions never ceased: "Do you live near the Queen?", "What are the names of your spirits?", and so on. When the locals heard that the crazy 'dimdins' were spending nights on end in the forest, there was some genuine concern that the bad spirits would get us.

We made many friends there, most notably with the locals who regularly helped us in return for torches and bush knives. They were invaluable, particularly when it came to recatching two cuscuses which we had finished tracking. These were taken live back to Port Moresby and have become residents of the National Museum, the first city-dwelling Woodlark Island cuscuses.



Catching a cuscus usually coincides with a local farmer felling trees to enlarge his garden. When the tree hits the ground a cuscus may leap out of the tangled branches and bound away, whereupon the farmer and his friends scamper after it whooping with delight; whooping because all that muscle makes for a substantial (and tasty) dinner.

Recatching a cuscus with a radio collar around its neck is a rather different matter. It first means locating the tree inhabited by the cuscus, using a radio aerial attached to a receiver. Of the villagers who helped us, Joe and Kenny particularly used to enjoy this part immensely, and became quite expert at it. Then they would climb this and neighboring trees, leaving us on the ground, feeling awkward and wishing we could climb as well as they. Amid much thrashing in the canopy the cuscus would be spotted making a bee-line for the flimsiest branch and the safety of an unoccupied neighboring tree. Orders and counter-orders are thrown but none are obeyed. Finally Joe, who was the slightest of all, would gingerly make his way towards the cowering cuscus.

"I've got it!" he'd shout triumphantly, as we strain our aching necks to see. He would have it by the tail, shaking it repeatedly to prevent it climbing up his hand and removing one of his fingers with a single bite. Repeated cuscus cries could be heard - like a cross between a baby crying and the hum of high-power electric cables. You have to hear it to know what I'm talking about.

Joe would swing it by its tail into open space and let go. Cuscus are phenomenally gymnastic. As it fell it almost successfully grabbed hold of a number of nearby branches. Near the ground young saplings break its fall, but it still landed with an incredible thud. Was it dead? Certainly not. Without batting an eyelid it was up on its feet again and heading for the nearest tree trunk. It was almost out of reach when a dimdim's hand grabbed it by the tail and dragged it back. It was all over. The radio collar (which would have worn off eventually) was removed and the cuscus started the first leg of its journey to captivity in a canvas bag, back to the house where a cage is waiting, complete with a meal of pawpaw and banana. If this procedure sounds cruel, it looks

even crueller. But only the animal's pride was hurt. We never would physically injure an animal, particularly one needed for captivity, unless it decided upon a violent attack. Wild animals generally don't do that.

I remember my last night on Woodlark, sitting on the jetty at Guasopa, watching the tropical sun drop like a stone behind the trees on the point. The insomnolent heaving water below turned gradually from turquoise to navy blue and, with a sigh, to black, glittering first with the reflections of the sun's dying light and then with phosphorescence, the fireflies of the sea. The roar of the tropical night challenged once again the permanence of the stars in a battle it neither wins nor loses as long as the trees are standing. Below my feet mounds of coral lurked like rumbling dark spirits; above my head, the tireless stars, watched over by the Southern Cross, reclined lazily on the southern horizon. With all this around me I thought of home and, much as I like my home, it occurred to me that I wanted to remain here, perched happily on the emerald jewel of the ocean.

Fraser Smith was project secretary of the Oxford University Expedition which spent six weeks on Woodlark Island.

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Weaving Magic...

Story and photographs by Liesel Strauss



The people of Pangia and Ialibu in the Southern Highlands have been weaving cane for perhaps thousands of years but began making baskets only a couple of decades ago. Until 1970 the villagers used the canes and grasses, which grow abundantly in the district, exclusively for making totems. These figurines are a story in themselves, powerful symbols that played an important part in ritual and belief. Although the totems are still made and used, the weavers have developed a basket-making industry that is taking the results of their skills far beyond the mountains.

Stars and diamonds are the most recognised patterns in the baskets of Pangia and Ialibu and it is rare to find any other main motif. The baskets are justly famous, valued for their durability, usefulness and artistry. They are becoming known throughout Papua New Guinea and, increasingly, abroad. International visitors are enthusiastic buyers, spreading their fame overseas.




The animal spirit 'Timbuwara'

It is hard to imagine basket weavers whose skills are based on more colorful and deep-seated customs than these. The traditional weavers were almost always male and they specialised in two special canework creations representing the spirits, Timbuwara and Vupin. Both spirits were invoked at big pig kills, elaborate ceremonies in which the animals were ritually slaughtered, the meat cooked in pits and distributed to those attending the feast. For the protection of hosts and guests a spirit house was built. The humanoid figure of Vupin was placed inside and the animal-shaped Timbuwara positioned outside. Vupin protected the villagers from war, drought and illness and ensured the success of pig kills. Timbuwara was additional insurance, the name translating as 'the spear or guard of the spirit house'.

Great care and attention to detail went into the weaving of the strange shape of Timbuwara because of the dual nature of the spirit. It could bring harm as well as





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Far left Gathering material ready for weaving.

middle left Being part of the Hagen Show in 1987 for the first time.

far right The Ialibu people travel to Lae or send the baskets to Port Moresby.

centre Double handle basket being completed.

bottom A variety of Ialibu baskets.

protect. After pig kills and associated singsings, the leading males, or 'big men', of the clan would take Timbuwara away into the forest and secretly bury it. Illness or death in the villages at this time was considered to be the result of the spirit being dissatisfied with the design and coloring created for it. Local clays of different colors, baked in fire to bring out their brightness, were used to paint the woven figures. The basket weavers of today do not dye their creations, relying instead on the natural colours of the cane and vine, which do not fade.

Basket making began when some of the young people, who were inheriting the weaving traditions, saw baskets from Bougainville in 1970. The craftsmanship of the North Solomon Islanders inspired the Southern Highlanders. They employed their weaving skills to make baskets instead of totems. The Highlanders developed their star and diamond motifs and adapted design features such as double handles which were an improvement on the tradi-



tional PNG basket.

With the new industry came new demands. The light canes and grasses suitable for Vupin and Timbuwara were not strong enough for hard-wearing baskets to be sold at market. The male villagers now walk hours into the forests looking for the right vines and rope fibres. It takes stamina to gather the materials, strong arms and hands to fashion it and patience to see the whole process through to a high quality, finished product.

The rewards have been worth it. The reputation of the Pangia and Ialibu baskets has spread. They are in good demand throughout the Highlands and beyond. Many of them grace the homes of people in foreign countries. A small industry has been created that brings employment and income to the villages.

Some have wondered if the good fortune stemming from the basket weaving skills may be Vupin and Timbuwara working in their own mysterious ways.

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Horning Bundi Pass

The roads from Kundiawa to Madang are a spectacular run through magnificent scenery. First the Highlands Highway heads east, through valleys, twisting over passes, down to the Ramu Highway which heads north-west towards Madang. It's a long circuitous route three times longer than as the crow flies. That is why a group of us decided to try a direct route through the mountains by four-wheel-drive vehicles and motorcycles.

It is possible to walk across the intervening Bismarck Range in two days. Regular Public Motor Vehicles take you from Kundiawa to the village of Keglsugl. On the other side of the mountains the village of Brahman is just 15 kilometres from the Ramu Highway.

Just north of Kundiawa is Mt Wilhelm, the highest mountain in Papua New Guinea, and the massive bulk of the Bismarck Range. Yet a road has been pushed through the mountains just to the east of Mt Wilhelm. Bulldozers have shifted tonnes of earth and graders have made some attempt to smooth the surface of the road. On most maps there is a dotted line to mark its progress up from Keglsugl to a point which makes it one of the highest roads in the country, more than 3,000 metres above sea level. The dotted line on the map is marked 'impassable due to numerous landslides'.



Heavy rain in the wet season and the general instability of the mountainside cause constant land slips which obliterate large sections of the road from time to time. The bulldozers come out again and the road is cleared until the next land slip.

We chose the 'dry' season to attempt a round trip from Kundiawa, across the mountains to the Ramu Highway and back home again via the Highlands Highway. The drive to Keglsugl took just over two hours. From Kundiawa the road followed the line of the Chimbu Valley, then gently twisted and climbed to offer stunning views of the Chimbu heartland.

Chimbu is the most densely populated region in Papua New Guinea and almost every square metre of land is taken over by gardens. High, in seemingly inaccessible spots, the locals tend their crops. The steepest of mountainsides, the most unsuitable looking soils, are all cultivated. People congregate everywhere and tiny kuni grass huts perch precariously on mountainsides.

The gradient became steeper and the mountains assumed gigantic proportions as we pressed on. Here the rocks had been torn from the mountain to provide a narrow passage along a cliff edge. The river swirled below and PMVs packed with smiling people tore along at frightening speeds. We proceeded with a certain caution.

At Keglsugl the road made a sharp left turn and soon became a walking track heading in the direction of Mt Wilhelm. We continued straight on. The road plunged down to a small wooden bridge and then climbed up towards the Bundi Pass. The ruts became deeper, the gradient steeper and the bends tighter. We changed into four wheel drive as the tyres began to spin out of control on a track which was little more than a bed of tiny pebbles.

Slowly we crawled upwards. The forest took over and suddenly it became cold and damp. It was a different land, the wind whistled through the trees and the rustling of the grass created an eerie atmosphere. Streaks of vaporous ground clouds hung in the valley and crept across the track. Birds flitted amongst branches and a watery sun sent shafts of light to cut into the mist.

Still climbing we left Chimbu and crossed the border into Madang Province. There were no large settlements at this height, frosts limiting the extent of agriculture. Yet we passed the occasional soul striding along with great purpose, many kilometres from any possible destination.

The mist closed in, limiting the views to a few metres. The glorious tangle of vegetation disappeared and the rain fell in torrents. It was a dismal, depressing scene as we continued to climb. Mud sprayed from the tyres as they spun then gripped the slippery surface. In places we inched our way up to the top of the pass. The spectacular views we had expected never materialised.

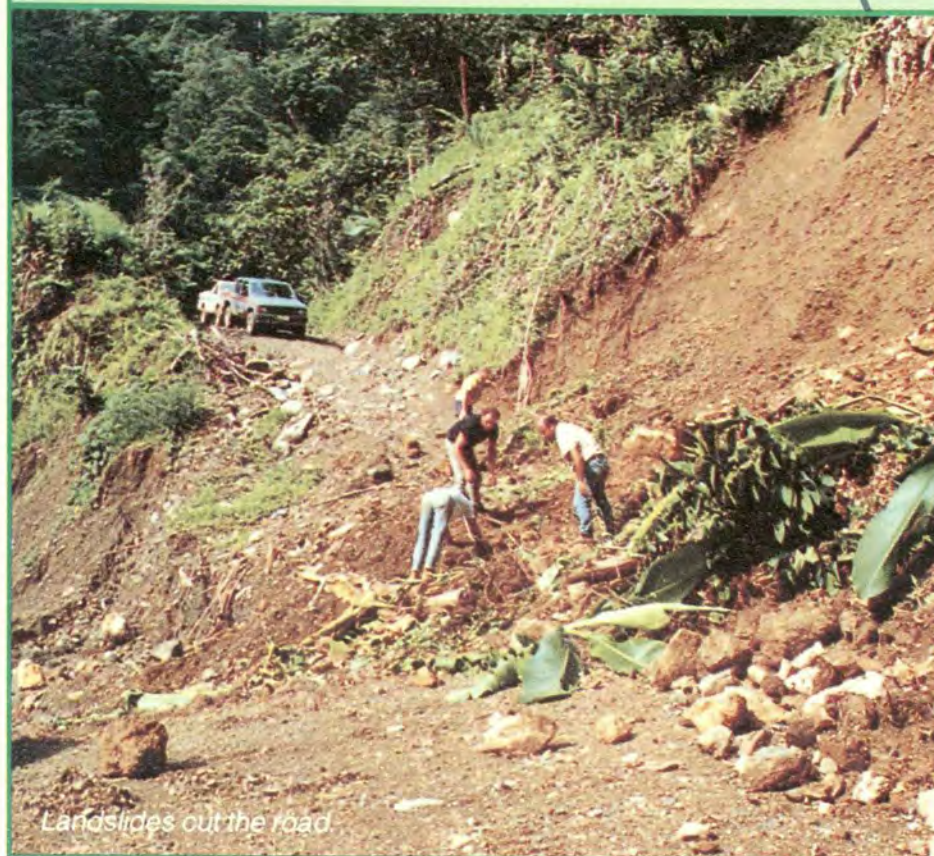
From the top of the pass the track down became a mud slide in the wet. Great ruts full of water, deeper than the axle of the car, wound across the road. The car slid down. Trying to steer was difficult as the ruts took over, guiding the car into even deeper ruts and eventual standstill. The rain had now



Cooking fire smoke seeps through hut roof.



Bundi Pass route across the Bismarck Range.



Landslides out the road.

reduced to a drizzle and working away digging out the two cars was a miserable experience. Again and again we ground to a halt, always lucky to stop centimetres away from the cliff edge. At one point the front end of one car dipped into a gully taking the back up off the ground. It took all six of us jumping on the back and filling in the rut to inch out of the predicament.

Then the track became worse. It narrowed and started to climb through a sea of mud. Low ratio, four-wheel-drive and a fair amount of speed took us up over the brow of the incline. The rocks under a thick coating of red clay bounced the car about, shaking it unmercifully. Then the bolts that held the wheel to the suspension snapped under the strain. The front wheel splayed out at an angle from the car body. As the jack was screwed up it sank into the ground. We started again, this time digging a flat rock into the mud to take the strain of the jack. It took a good hour to replace the bolts.

By now the mist had started to lift, the rain had stopped and the sun lit up a panorama of tree-clad mountainsides. The mountains stretched to the horizon, an endless barrier of sheer rock faces. Just below us was the Bundi airstrip, a thin strip of concrete on the only piece of flat land for many a kilometre. Flying in must be a nightmare with the peaks rising on every side.

We drove a few kilometres towards the village of Bundi in a fading light. The motorcycles had gone ahead and there was no accommodation at the mission. Just outside the village a small flat area gave us enough room to camp. Up went the tarpaulin, stretched between the bikes and cars, our shelter for the night. We ate sausages cooked over a blazing fire prepared by a local who just happened onto the scene. Then down came the rain and we dashed for shelter, climbed into our sleeping bags and slept until dawn.

It takes more than paint to hold Papua New Guinea together

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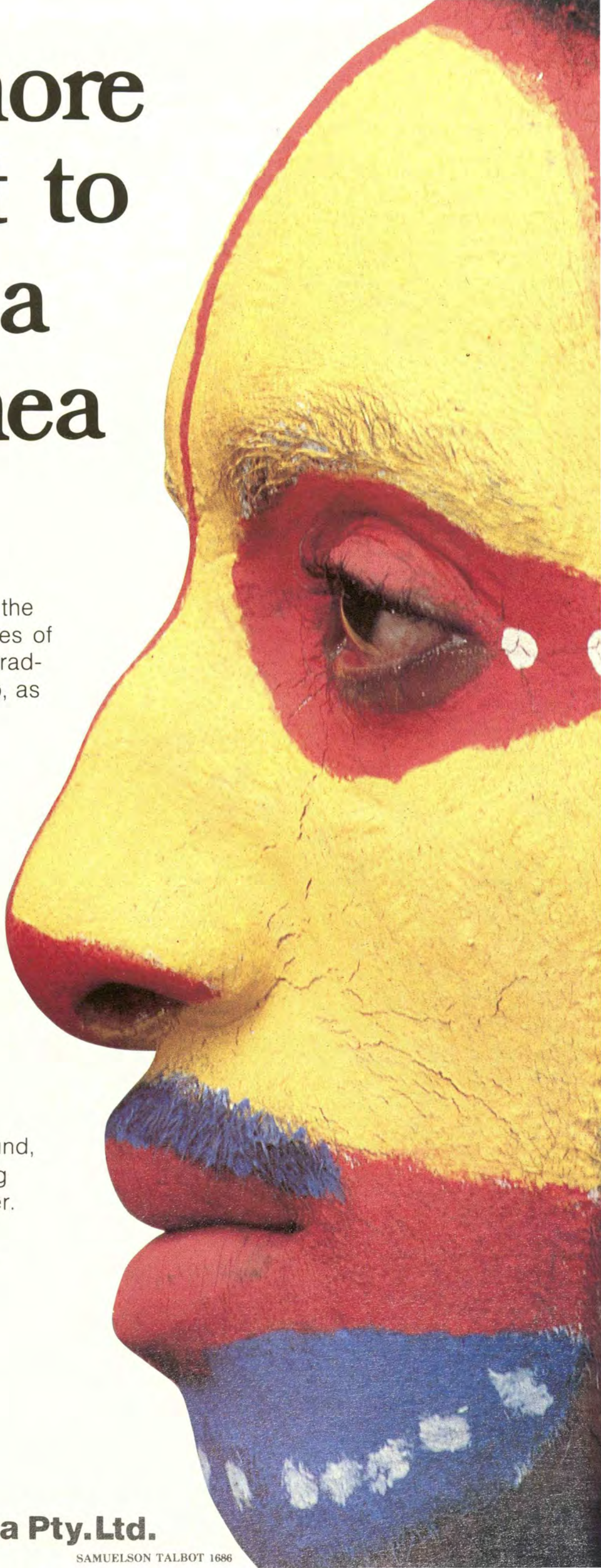
We sell explosives to break new ground, and adhesives, sealants and concreting products needed to hold things together.

All in all, there's a lot more holding ICI DULUX together than just paint. Rather like Papua New Guinea.



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SAMUELSON TALBOT 1686



A clear blue sky heralded the start of what seemed like a perfect day. An early start was essential to get out of the mountains onto the coastal plain and back via the Highlands Highway to our starting point. It was then that it was discovered that the four wheel drive on one car had ceased to work when the wheel had come off. There was no chance of repairing the damage so we set off, hoping for a decent road with no steep gradients.

The track was narrow but the surface solid enough. It wound through jungle, the branches of trees brushing against the windscreen as the cars pushed through. At any ascent we accelerated, changed into lower gear and charged up. It worked well enough until the track began to deteriorate. The ascents became steeper and longer and the engine screamed, forcing the car up. Eventually one long upward stretch packed with mud-covered rocks defeated all our efforts. We reversed, tried again and managed a few extra metres. It was an impossible situation; the back end of the car had swung around and off the track. We were stuck again!

The other car backed down the track and a chain held the two together and took the strain as both cars revved their engines. Slowly we began to move upwards as the tyres spun and the engines shrieked. We made it to the top and repeated the process once more before reaching the top of the last brow.

Below us the flat plain of the Ramu River spread out into the distance, the river winding a thread of blue through a dense blanket of rain forest. Seen from this height the wild, untamed nature of PNG is evident.

Kilometre after kilometre of mountains stretched behind us, in front the steaming mass of the vast tropical rain forests cut by a mighty river. The effects of man are minimal, a tiny road follows the Ramu and



an even tinier track crosses the mountains; just. The settlements and villages seem insignificant against the surroundings.

We had made it and stood in awe, gazing at the magnificence of the panorama.

It was all downhill now, sliding through the tangle of foliage that reached across the track and whipped against the cars. Then we were on the flat and sped along a ruler-straight road, sheer luxury.

The climate had changed, the cool exhilarating breezes had given way to a sultry heat and the mouldy smell of wet earth; we were in the tropics.

In the mountains the huts were closed, a door being the only opening to let in the cold. The fires were lit inside a confined space and the smoke had to find its own escape through the roof. Here at sea level the houses were built high off the ground and open to catch any breeze that may spring up. They were adaptations to totally different environments, and yet a half hour's travel separated the two.

Separated by mountains, jungle and distrust, it is only during recent history that there has been considerable contact between the coastal and mountain peoples.

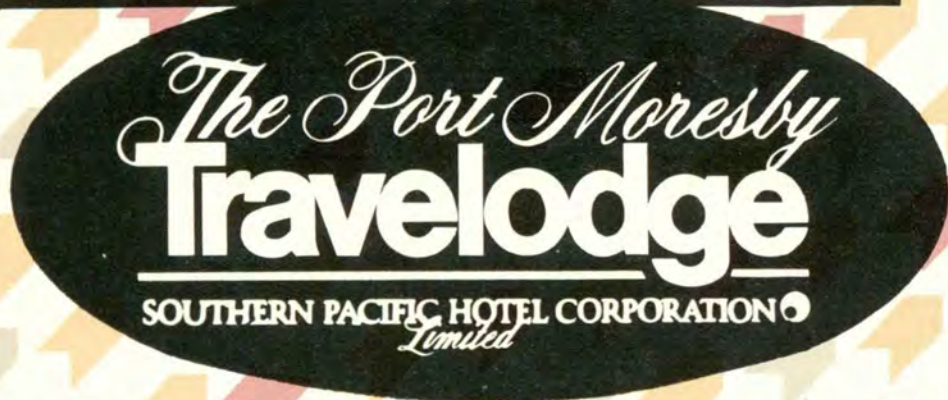
The journey had taken two days and was certainly a trip we will remember for some time. We had chosen the dry season for obvious reasons but it had rained, making our passage more difficult. For the inexperienced, like myself, it would have been folly to attempt it single handed. We had a mechanic in our party and it was only through him that we got my car back in one piece.

Top Negotiating a landslide. **centre** At sea level huts are on stilts. **bottom** Deep cuts scar the road.

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King Solomon's Mine

Story by Dr Roman Grynberg and photographs by Kent Quigley



To the untrained eye the Bougainville Copper Mine (BCL) at Panguna looks like a very big hole in the ground, of little significance to those not interested in copper mining. But the history of the mine and its future are intertwined with the history of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville Island.

Bougainville in the North Solomon Islands was discovered by the Spanish on July 4, 1768. When they discovered the Islands they thought they had arrived at the famed King Solomon's mines. History, I suspect, will prove them correct. The enormous 900 million tonne deposit of copper, gold and silver at Panguna has been the basis of the PNG economy since Independence in 1975.

The mine was responsible for up to 50 per cent of the nation's gross national product in the early stages of its development. It was also responsible for some of the most important events in the nation's history.

The deposit at Panguna was discovered by Conzinc Rio Tinto (Australia) CRA in 1964 by a team of geologists headed by Ken Phillips. The discovery was no accident as the area had been known for its gold deposits since before World War II. Australian miners had panned for gold in the adjoining Karewong river for many years before Phillips and his team struck it rich.

The boom years of the Sixties, with rising copper prices, allowed exploration at Bougainville, in what was then a remote and difficult location.

From the mine's discovery in 1964 until start of operations in April 1972 there was continual re-evaluation of the massive K400 million project. At the time the Panguna mine was the world's largest copper mine. It was not the largest producer of copper because the quality of the ore was very low. On average less than 0.5 per cent of the ore mined at BCL contains copper. This is

remarkably low and less than 50 years ago, no mining company would have considered developing such a project. Before World War II, ore of less than 10 per cent purity was not considered worth developing. The main reason for the change in attitude was that BCL employs capital intensive techniques of open cut mining that significantly reduce the cost of production. Despite the low ore grades the Panguna mine is still a very low cost operation.

When the mine was discovered CRA found that the copper ore was contaminated with by-products such as gold and silver. In the late Eighties, with gold trading at more than \$US450 per ounce it is hard to believe that gold and silver could be considered as impurities. The reason is that, at the time of the discovery, gold prices were regulated and the metal traded at \$US35 per ounce. After deregulation of world markets in 1972, gold prices shot up to \$US90 per ounce and then nearly ten times that amount.

Originally the BCL mine was expected to make only a modest profit and the original agreement signed between the colonial government and the company reflected that fact. The agreement, which was based on a \$US35 per ounce gold price, was quite generous. However, as the company started operations and the gold price began to soar, the company made profits of K158.7 million and paid only K0.3 million in taxes. The ensuing outcry from the new PNG government resulted in renegotiation of the agreement.

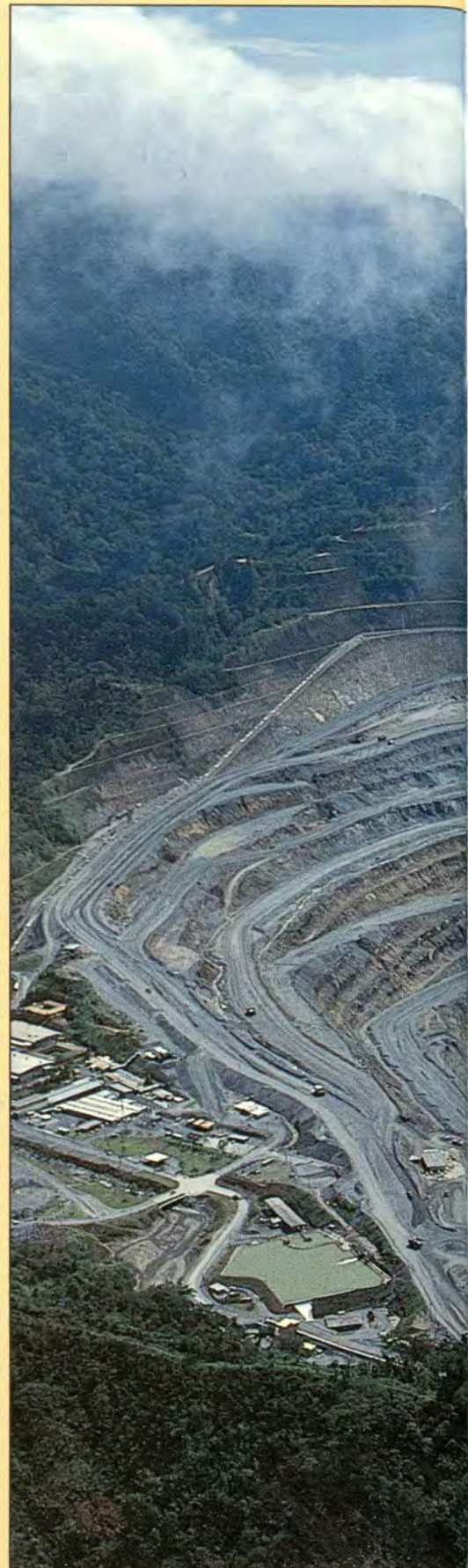
The renegotiations are seen as a crucial milestone in the young country's history and its desire to receive a fair share of its rich mineral resources.

The Bougainville mine is the largest private sector employer in PNG, responsible for 3,500 of the best-paying jobs in the country. Conditions at the mine are very favorable.

Workers receive a base rate of K1.57 per hour as well as food and board for K24 per fortnight. As a result of the relatively high wages and good conditions, not only have there been few strikes but a continual queue of workers seek employment with BCL.

BCL does not export refined copper but a fine grey powder called concentrate. Every tonne of concentrate that leaves the dock at Arawa on its way to China, Europe, Japan, Korea and the Philippines contains 30 per cent copper, 25 grammes of gold and 86 grammes of silver. PNG's concentrate is in high demand around the world because of its purity. It contains the right amount of chemicals for smelting and does not contain large quantities of dangerous heavy metals, like mercury, which are extremely toxic.

The mine is owned by CRA which holds the majority 54 per cent interest, and more than 20 per cent of the company is owned by the PNG Government. The remainder is held by the public. The PNG Government's investment in the mine has been very profitable. It has yielded a 30 per cent rate of return over the last ten years. By all accounts, it has been a very successful investment and, because of recent agitation by landowners, the royalties paid to them were under review when this





Above 'The big hole in the ground' which is Bougainville Copper Mine.
inset top and left Earth moving equipment is on a massive scale.

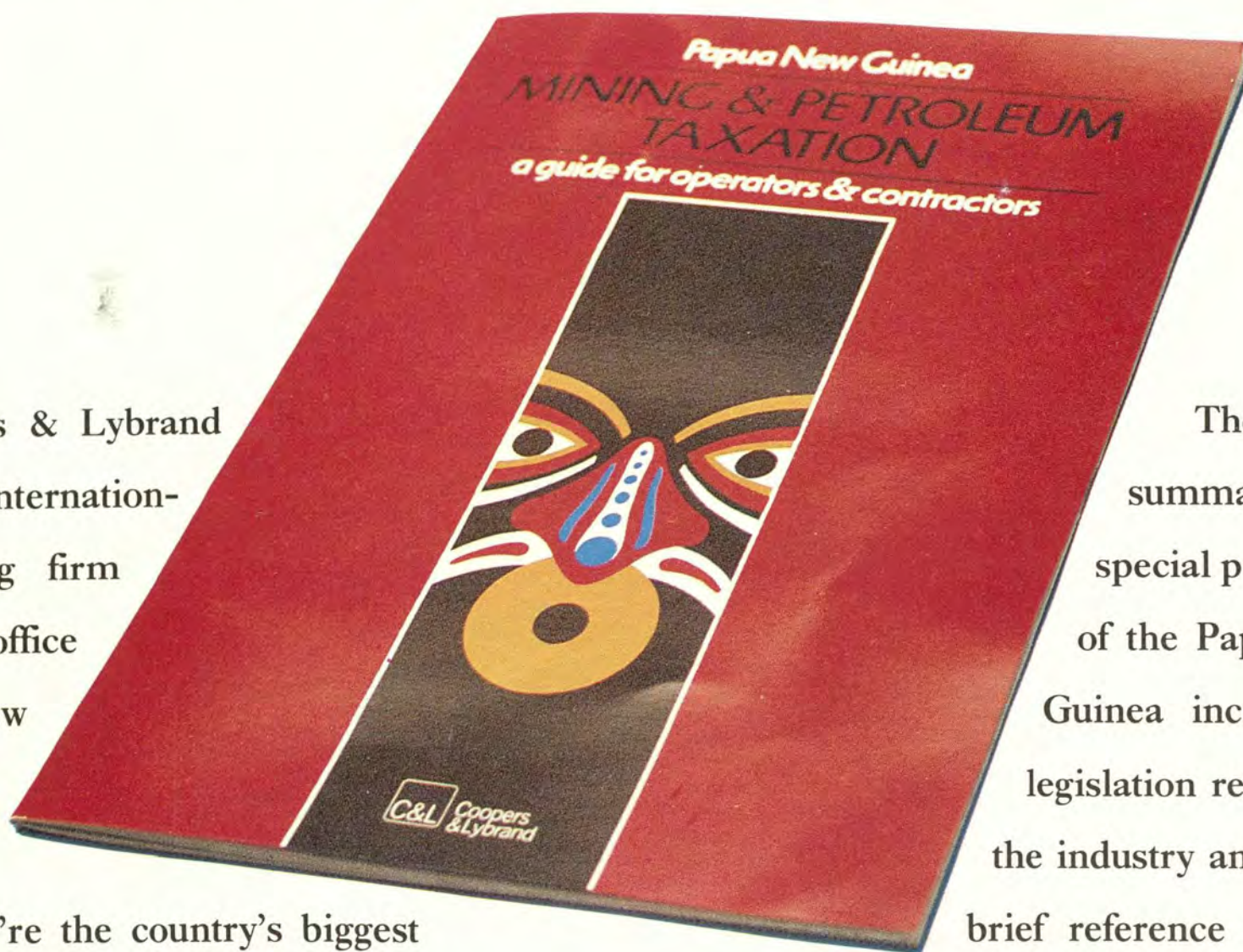
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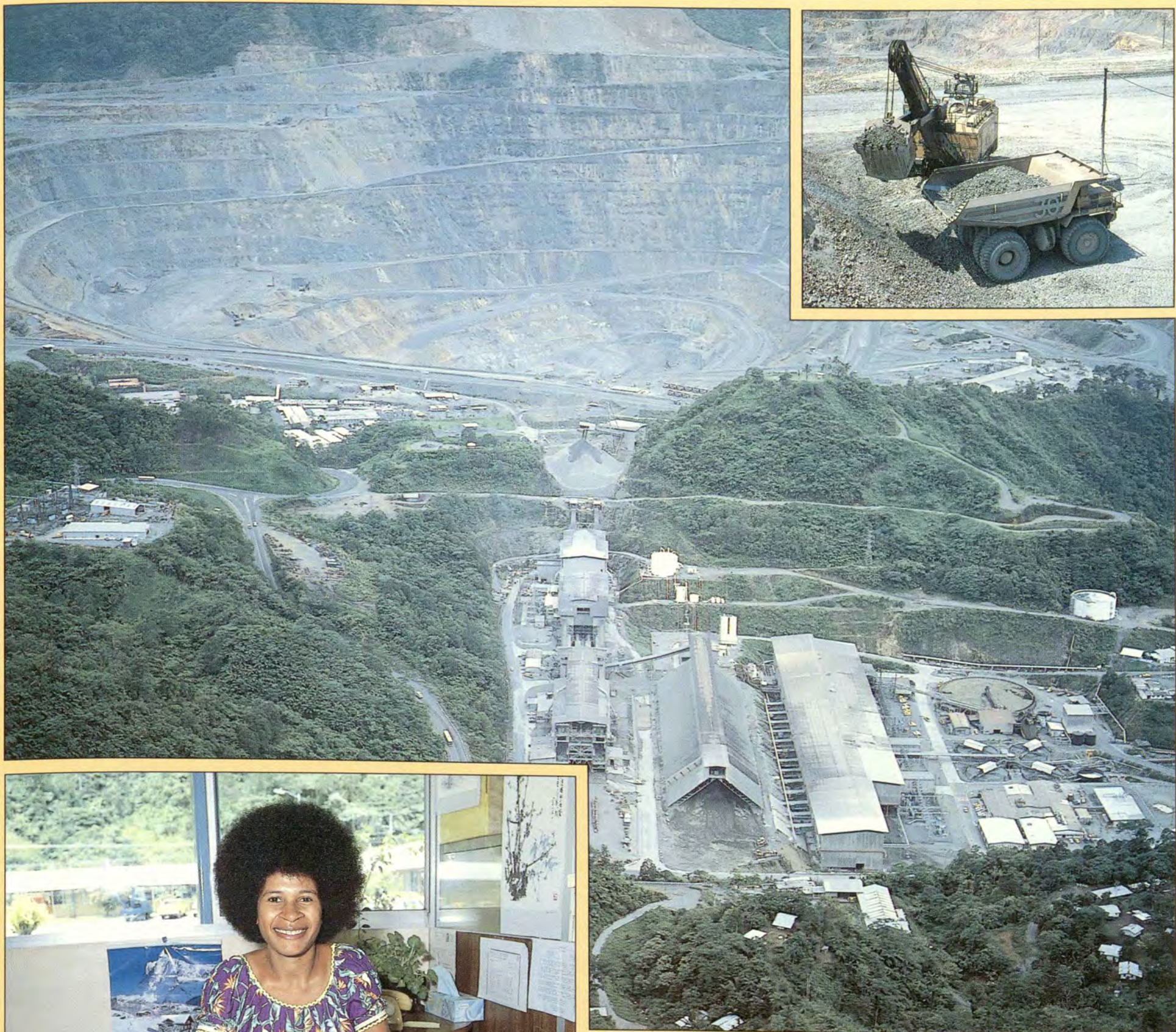
It is essential information for potential and existing investors in the mining and petroleum industry.

For further details or a copy of the booklet, please contact Bob Prosser, Tax Partner in our Port Moresby office, 7th Floor, Mogoru Moto Building, Champion Parade, telephone 21 1500.

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Inset top Dump trucks carry the ore to be crushed into powdered concentrate in the plant **(centre)**. **left** Employees enjoy good working conditions.

tectonic plates meet, creating volcanoes that produce mineralisation such as the Lihir gold deposit in New Ireland and Panguna copper deposit.

A moratorium on the further mineral exploration has been imposed by the provincial government on the island of Bougainville. This step was taken to stop what was seen as harmful social and environmental effects of mining. BCL hopes the moratorium soon will be lifted in time to allow the company to look for new deposits of copper or gold before the mine is scheduled to close.

edition of Paradise went to press.

The Panguna mine is becoming relatively less important since the OK Tedi mine at the other end of the country went into production. The new gold mines at Misima, Porgera and Lihir also will soon make Panguna a much less significant portion of the national economy. For the moment the Panguna

mine is the major profitable one in the country and will remain so until at least 1992 when OK Tedi is scheduled to start making profits.

One often hears speculation about how long the mine will last. The company officially estimates that the mine will become exhausted somewhere between 2001 and 2007. This estimate assumes the price of copper will remain stable.

However, King Solomon's Mines still have a bright future. CRA holds prospecting authorities over most of the northern part of Bougainville and geologists believe that BCL has some of the most promising locations for gold and copper discoveries in the region. Bougainville is located on what is known as the "ring of fire" - that part of the South Pacific where the world's

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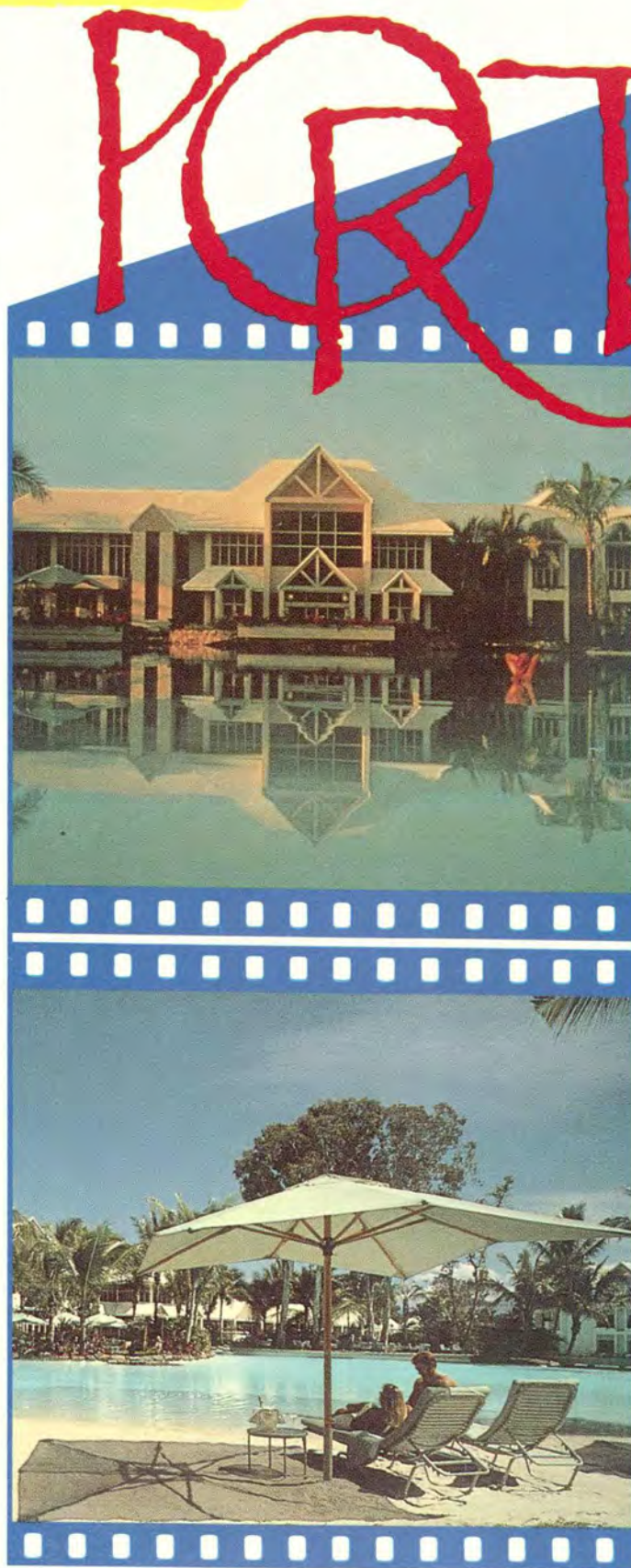
Story by Ken Trezise
and photographs by Paul Newton

The sheer physical beauty of Papua New Guinea may seem impossible to match, but surprisingly, you can find an equally beautiful area less than three hours away. Port Douglas, in far North Queensland, is a comfortable trip from Port Moresby.

After a one and a quarter hour flight with Air Niugini to Cairns, and then a leisurely hour's drive north, you reach Port Douglas and the Mossman/Daintree area. By slightly narrowing your eyes you can quite easily believe you are at Milne Bay or New Ireland. It's all there – rainforest-covered mountains reach right down to coral seas.

Port Douglas has been the 'flavor of the month' for the past few years, and is being promoted extensively in Australia and overseas as a jet-setter's paradise. There is a lot more to the place than a tourist destination.

I first passed through the area in 1964 when on leave from PNG. At that time I was posted as a business development officer in the Mailu area of East Papua, living on a little coral island called Loupomu. Being in Port Douglas in 1964 was like being back at Mailu – unspoilt natural beauty and nicely laid-back people.



Above The luxurious Pt Douglas Mirage Resort.

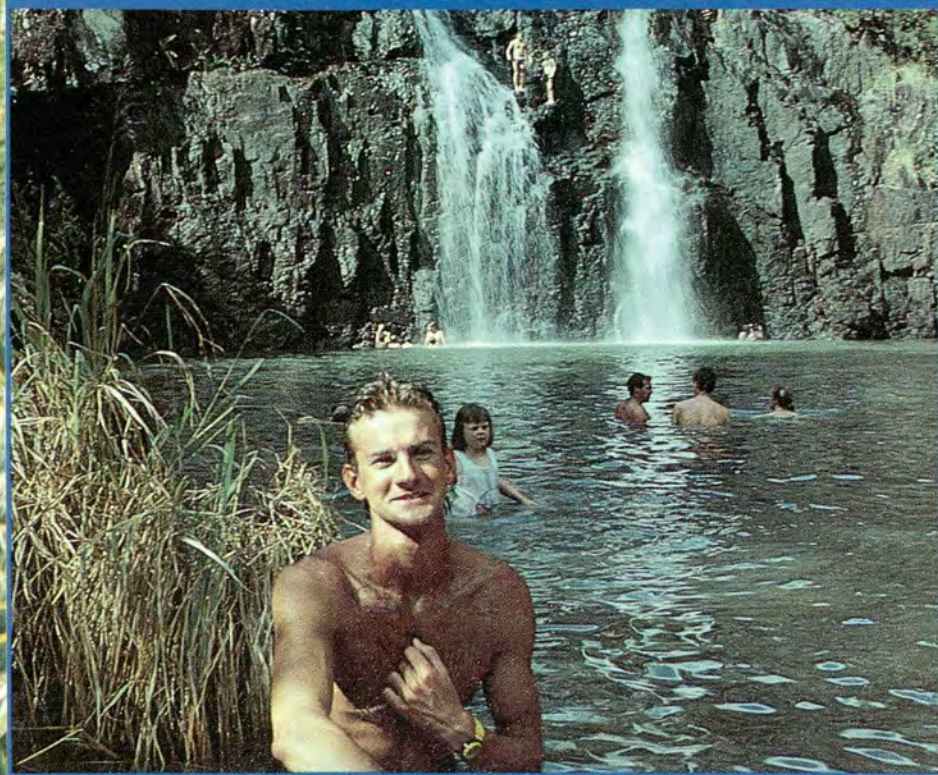
The town was so small it didn't even boast a policeman. A good night's entertainment was always available at one of the two local pubs on a Saturday (or, if you had the staying power, at both of them). You were entertained into the early hours of the morning by local string bands and, more often than not, you were joined by the only representative of authority, the part-time chief of the part-time fire station.

I said then that if I ever settled in Australia I would have to live somewhere like the Port. It took until 1981 to realise this dream.

In the more than seven years since, the area has seen a lot of changes but its essential beauty remains.

Port Douglas used to be described as a 'sleepy little fishing village'. Some tourist brochures still describe it as such, but they are definitely living in the past. 'Sleepy' it no longer is and 'village' it can never be again. More than \$500 million worth of investment has been directed into a small peninsula in a comparatively short time. A further \$800 million is marked for future development. After all this interest, you can't expect the Port to remain unchanged.

Some of the development



Top The Mirage Resort's championship golf course.
bottom Cooling off at a Pt Douglas waterfall.

has been and will be constructive. Even so, the tempo of life has been changed irrevocably. If not controlled, development could easily damage the area's deserved reputation for unspoiled natural beauty.

The jewel in the crown of manufactured beauty is the Mirage Resort. This international standard luxury complex boasts a five-star Sheraton hotel, two hectares of swimming pools and integrated lagoons, a 27-hole first class golf course, numerous private condominiums, and an exclusive country club with all the trappings of a luxurious health centre.

Exclusive is the catchword. The entire complex is designed to lure those who enjoy the best things in life and who can afford to pay for it. Visitors are flocking there from both domestic and international markets.

However, Port Douglas is not just the Sheraton Mirage. There are many other accommodation venues in the area, catering for the family group wanting to holiday inexpensively right through to those who want to 'boogie' with a

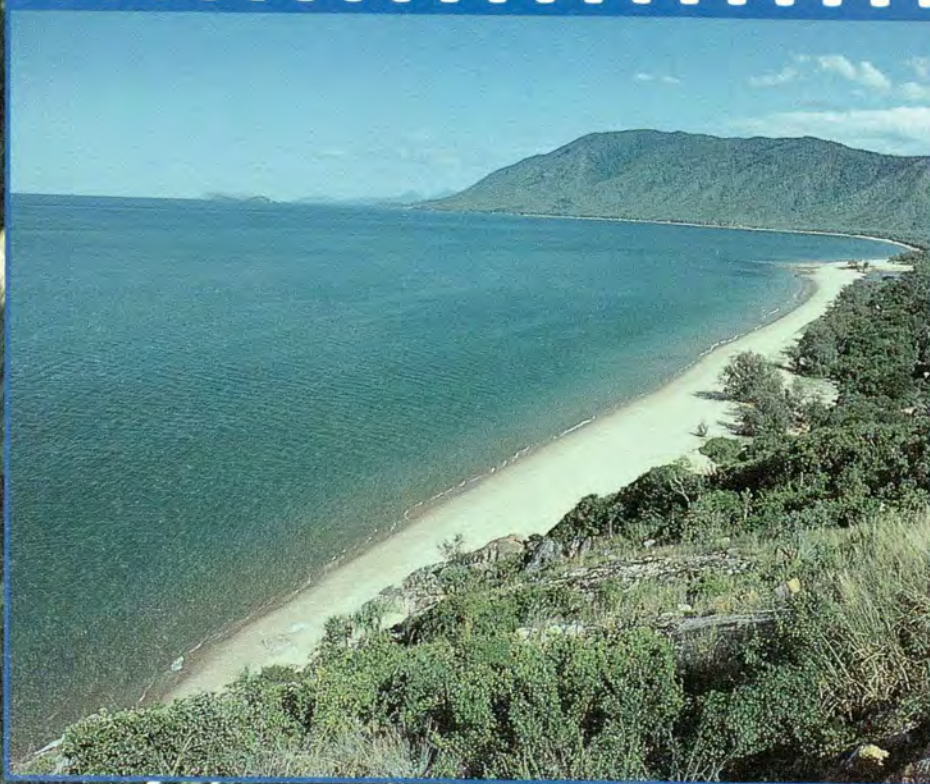
certain amount of style.

Recent attention also has been given to that international breed of traveller, the backpacker. They come from all over the globe, arriving at Cairns and filtering their way northwards to the rainforests and coral reefs.

An interesting development from a personal point of view has been the increasing number of bona fide tourists from PNG, not just jaded expatriates escaping from the demands of life in PNG's urban centres, but Papua New Guineans arriving to sample the Port's delights, in pairs and family groups.

Many have realised that it costs about the same or less to fly from Port Moresby to Cairns, than to travel to Rabaul, Kavieng, Lorengau or Kieta.

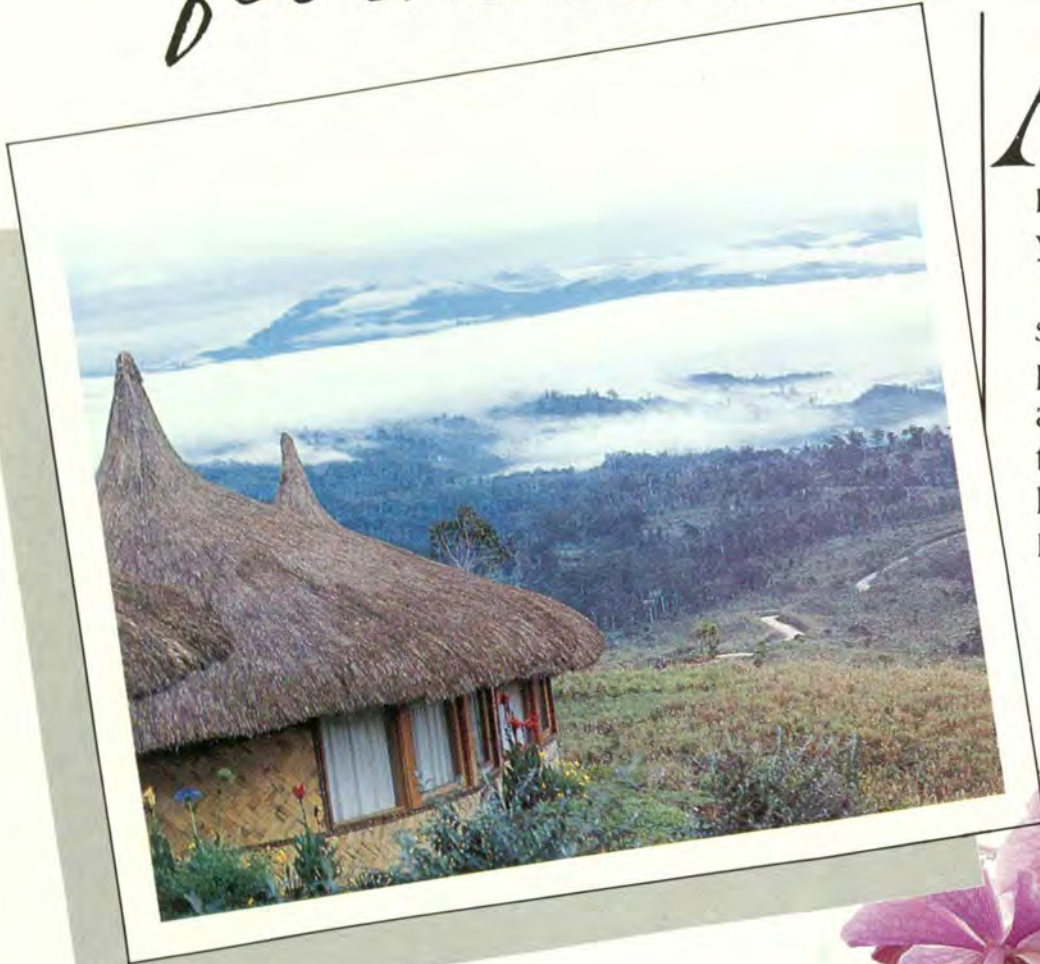
Arriving at Port Douglas, there's a large choice in how you fill in your time. You can spend a fortune indulging your hobbies or simply laze on one of the many sandy beaches. Port is the centre of a prolific game-fishing area and the harbor is the base for many charter vessels of all shapes, sizes and costs.



Top Dickson's Inlet.
bottom Island Point and Four Mile Beach.

Two Great Lodges

-for the traveller extraordinaire



Ambua Lodge, at 7000 feet, has its head in the clouds and looks down on a valley that first saw Europeans less than 50 years ago. Completed in 1985 the lodge has 20 spacious cabins with private modern bathrooms and huge picture windows that look out over the Tari basin. This is home to the Huli people whose body decoration is still a part of everyday custom - bold,



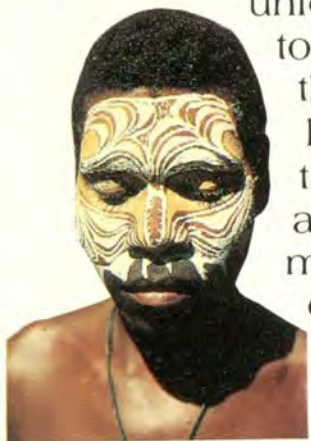
dignified and quite startling. The surrounding mountains are frequented by 13 species of the Bird of Paradise and these can be seen in the orchid studded forests behind Ambua Lodge. Send for our brochure "Papua New Guinea - tomorrow it won't be the same"



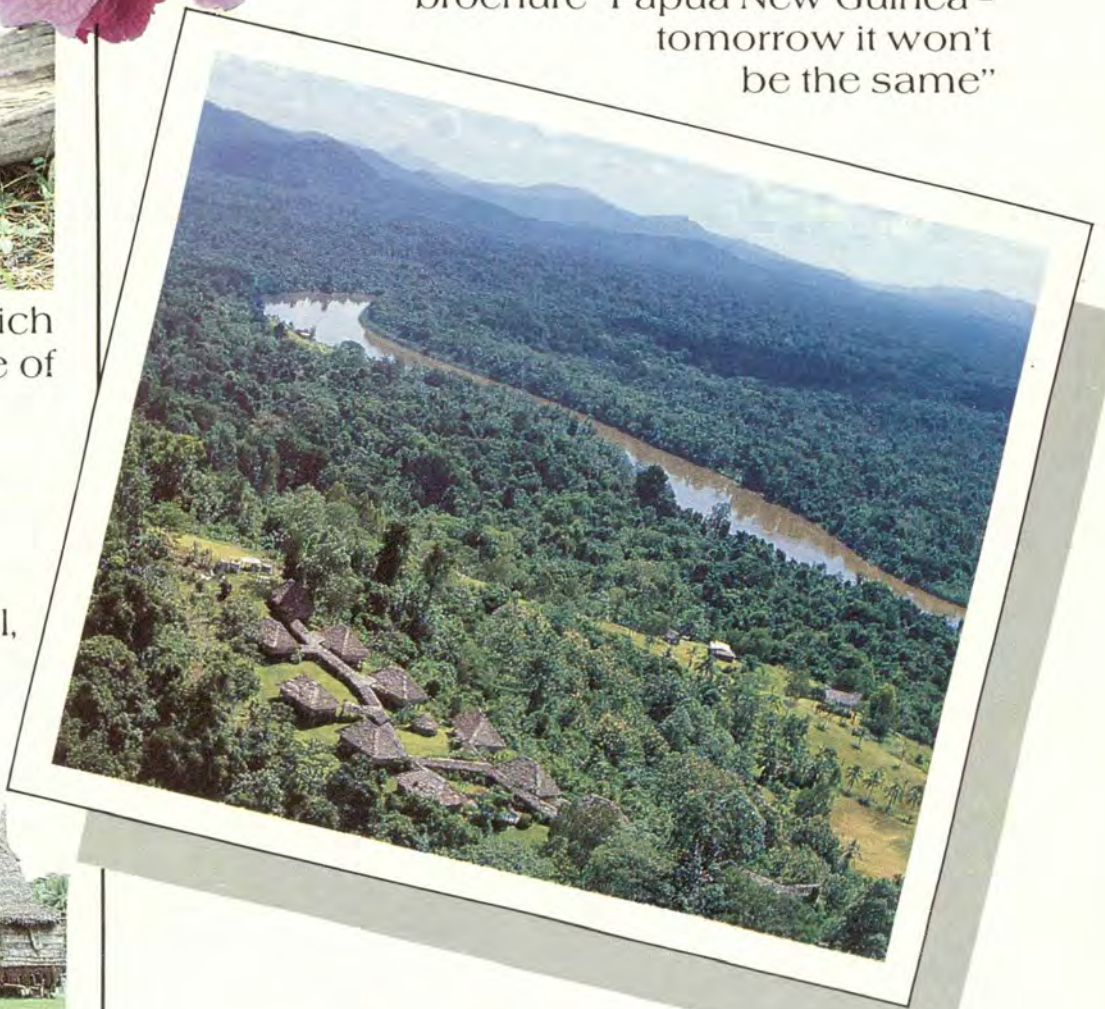
Karawari Lodge takes its name from a tributary of the legendary Sepik River. It is renowned the world over as a luxurious base occupying an



unforgettable setting from which to explore the unique culture of the Sepik basin. The main lodge is designed as a traditional haus tambaran and guests enjoy all the modern comforts of bar, dining and swimming pool, etc. amid stunning examples of Sepik sculpture and folk law.



Karawari is built on a ridge, high above the river, the view goes on forever. Each of the 20 guest rooms have private bathrooms and verandahs - the ideal place for early morning tea with fresh cinnamon rolls. The river is your roadway to villages and people who delight to show you their culture and skills - a glimpse of life generations from the 20th century.



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Top Low Isles reef scene
bottom Central Hotel, Pt Douglas

It is also the closest point on the Australian mainland to the Great Barrier Reef. This alone acts as a magnet for tourists from all over the world and they are well served by a fleet of award-winning large catamarans and 'wavepiercers' which go to the outer reefs every day.

For some time now, Port has been noted for its eating places and three of its restaurants are internationally known. Those who seek out the Nautilus, Danny's or the Catalina are rarely, if ever, disappointed. All three specialise in local seafood and tropical fruits and they do it well.

Night life, at least away from the Sheraton Mirage, is limited if you need organised fun to have a good time, although there is one nightclub and of course the two local pubs. They come to life at night and especially over the weekend. The music is good and loud and counter lunches are available. Observing the antics of other patrons is a treat in itself.

The pubs are still frequented by the local people and, with a little imagination, you feel you

Air Niugini operates daily flights between Port Moresby and Cairns.

are back at the old Samarai or Daru clubs of the Fifties and Sixties. The characters are countless; the tales they'll tell you are almost beyond belief – almost.

But Port Douglas itself is just the gateway of some of the most superb and interesting country in Australia. The area is diverse in its scenic beauty and rich in Australian history. To the north is Cooktown with its tales of James Cook and, later, the goldfields. To the west are the dry reaches of the peninsula and the flood plains of the gulf. Around the small township of Laura and beyond, the country is a cultural paradise, dotted with Aboriginal rock galleries. Many of these were relocated by a distant relative of mine, Percy Trezise, a noted painter in his own right.

Most people, however, are drawn to this region by the twin attractions of reef and rainforest. For someone from a different environment, this is indeed a wonderland. For the PNG visitors it can be a matter of "we've got better back at home although perhaps not packaged in the same way!"



Top Mossman Gorge.
bottom Diver on Low Isles reef.

The New Islander Hotel

papua new guinea's first truly international hotel

Set in ten acres of tropical gardens, the Islander is located midway between the airport and the city centre, within 5 minutes drive of Central Government Offices, Parliament House and the National Museum.

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- Complete secretarial services
- Conference and banquetting facilities for up to 500 people
- Travel agency
- Florist
- Hire car service
- Hairdressing salon
- Boutique
- News agency
- Coffee shop
- Restaurant
- Cocktail bar
- Night club
- 4 glass backed squash courts
- 2 synthetic grass tennis courts
- Fully equipped gymnasium
- Swimming pool
- Complimentary airport transfers

The location is only one reason you will choose the Islander. The luxurious accommodations together with the superb cuisine, whether it be from our Kofi Haus Coffee Shop, from the elegant Sanamarie A'La Carte restaurant, or from our 24 hour room service, and the professional service from our courteous staff are all reasons why the Islander is Papua New Guinea's only truly International Hotel.

The Pacific has great hotels... the Islander is the great hotel of the Pacific.



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