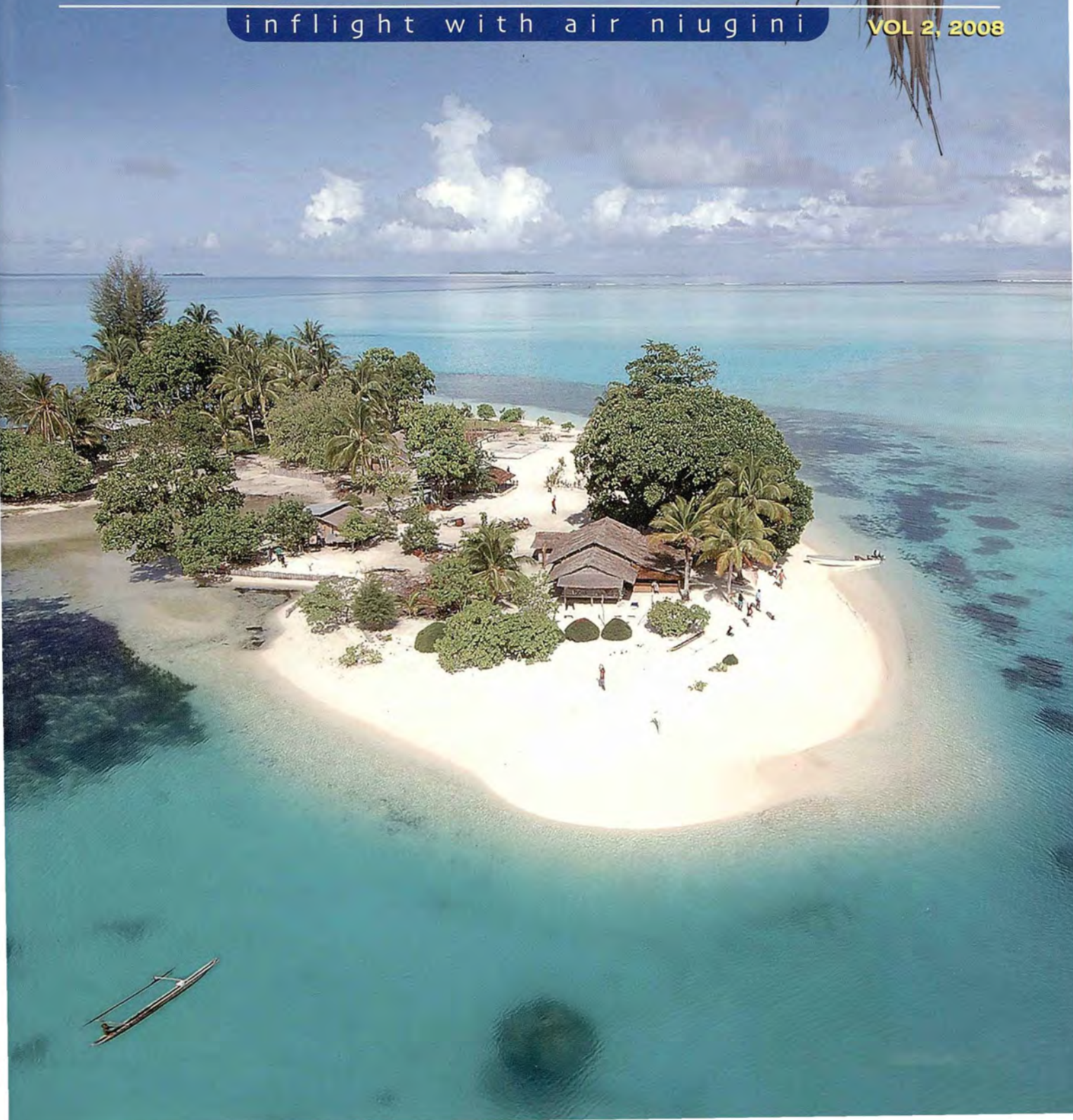




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inflight with air niugini

VOL 2, 2008



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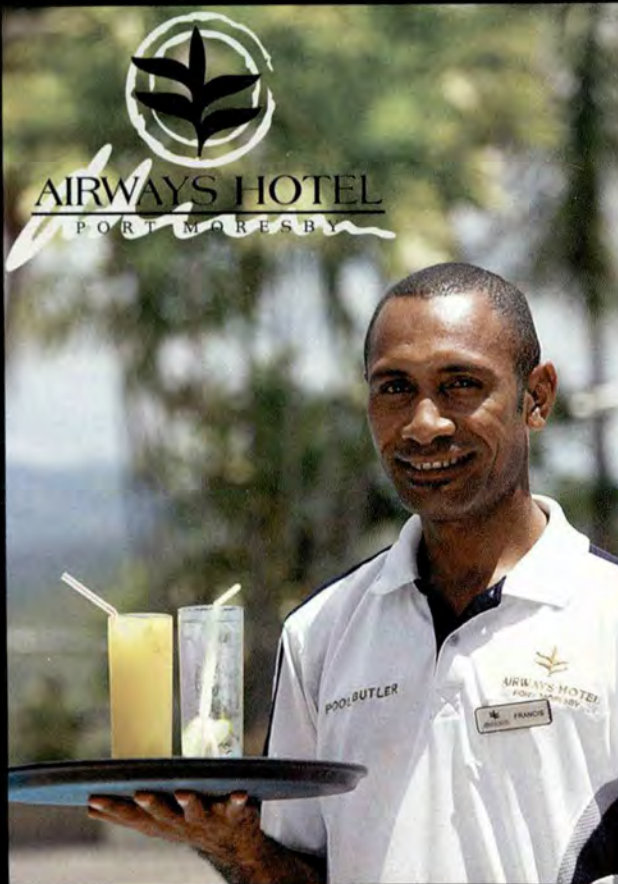
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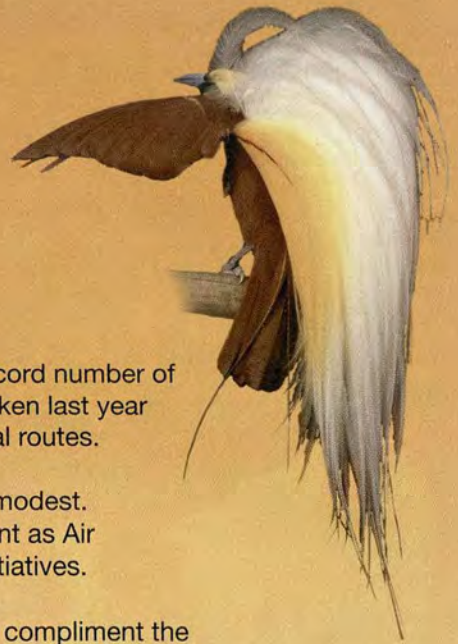
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Chairman's Message



Welcome Aboard.

I am very pleased to announce that Air Niugini carried a record number of passengers in 2007 as a result of a number of decisions taken last year such as fares reduction on all its domestic and international routes.

In global terms, the total number of passengers carried is modest. However, in the PNG environment, the increase is significant as Air Niugini strives to boost volume in order to deliver future initiatives.

On behalf of the shareholder and the board, I would like to compliment the management and staff for this outstanding achievement.

Air Niugini is continually seeking new opportunities to enhance its operation and offer our passengers better travel options and frequencies. In addition, Air Niugini supports its tourism industry partners and will continue to vigorously promote the country's tourism products.

The programme of cultural festivals coming up in the next few months include the Gogodala Canoe Festival from April 23-24, PNG Coffee Festival and Trade Fair in Goroka (May 8-10), Tufi Cultural Show in June, and from July 16-19 Rabaul will showcase the 14th National Mask Festival. The beautiful Trobriand Islands will again host the Milamala Yam Festival in July with dates yet to be announced.

This edition of *PARADISE* features the delightful town of Madang - dubbed the "Pearl of the Pacific" - and its many unique attractions. Read also about the huge array of bird life in the Transfly region and how this country is home to 10% of all known orchid species in the world.

A new synopsis of the existing knowledge of all 3000 Papua New Guinea orchids will soon be available through the publication of a lavishly illustrated book later this year.

Please do not hesitate to ask our friendly cabin crew for assistance during your flight.

Enjoy your flight.

Sir J T Tjoeng, KBE
Chairman

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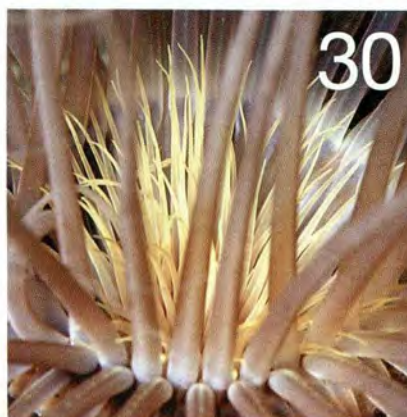
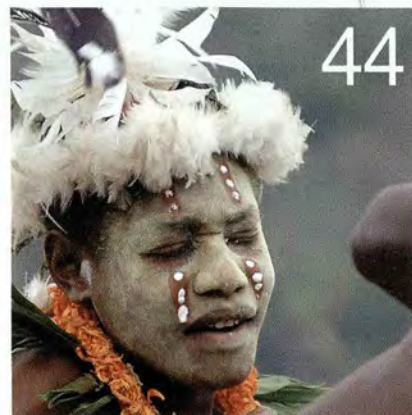
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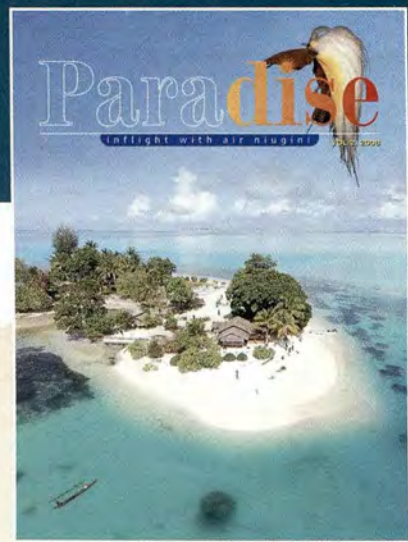
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New Ireland Province.

Photo: Sir Peter Barter



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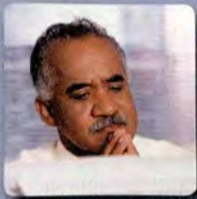


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We hope you enjoy our Bird of Paradise In-flight Service

Please ask us

If there is anything our cabin crew can assist you with during your flight, please do not hesitate to ask them.

Hand luggage

Please ensure that your carry on luggage is placed in the overhead locker or under the seat in front of you.

Takeoff and landing

Ensure that your seat is in the upright position during takeoff and landing. Folding tables must be returned to their original position in the seat back or the armrest.

Safety first

Your seatbelt must be securely fastened during takeoff and landing or whenever the seatbelt sign is on. When the seatbelt sign is off you may move about the cabin as necessary. However while seated, keep your seatbelt fastened securely in case of unexpected turbulence.

Electronic equipment

Cellular telephones, TV receivers or radio controlled devices are not to be used at any time on board an aircraft. Electronic devices such as portable computers, compact discs or cassette players and video games can be used only when the seatbelt sign is switched off.

Children and babies

The cabin crew will also be pleased to assist in preparing your baby's food and bottle. Baby food and diapers are also available. Please do not hesitate to ask our friendly cabin crew.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on any Air Niugini flight.

Entertainment

A selection of movies and music including classical, modern, country and local are available on international services. Programmes can be found in the in-flight entertainment section of this magazine.

Pillows and blankets

On International flights, pillows and blankets are available on request from our cabin crew.

Cuisine

Our inflight meals have been specially prepared for your enjoyment. If you require a vegetarian meal or you are on a special diet, child or baby food, please inform us when making your reservation.

In-flight Duty Free

During the flight take some time to look through our In-flight Duty Free brochure located in your seat pocket. Duty free purchases can be made after Meal Service. All major credit cards are accepted.

Immigration and Customs Forms

During your flight, our cabin crew will distribute Immigration and Customs forms before each landing point. Ensure that you carefully read and complete these documents and have them ready for inspection with your passport at the Immigration and Customs arrival counters.

Before you leave

Please check your seat pocket and overhead lockers before you disembark to ensure you have not left any items of value. We look forward to seeing you when you next fly with us on our Bird of Paradise Service.





AIR NIUGINI FLEET

B767-33AER



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
B767-33AER	59.94m	47.57m	2 PW4000	857kph	11,000-12,000m	250 + bags	8100km

F100



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
F100	35.528m	28.076m	2 Rolls Roys Tay 650	780kph	11,000m	98 + bags	3000km

DASH 8-Q315



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
DASH 8-Q315	25.7m	24.4m	2 Pratt & Whitney PW123	440kph	7,500m	50 + Bags	1,800km

DHC-8-202



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
DHC-8-202	22.25m	25.89m	2 Pratt & Whitney	550kph	7,600m	36 + bags	1700km





IN-FLIGHT EXERCISES

These exercises are designed to encourage a safe way to enjoy movement and stretch certain muscle groups that can become stiff as a result of long periods of sitting. They may be effective in increasing the body's circulation and massaging the muscles. We recommend you do these

exercises for three or four minutes every hour and occasionally get out of your seat and walk down the aisles if conditions allow. Each exercise should be done with minimal disturbance to other passengers. None of the following should be performed if they cause pain or cannot be done with ease.

Ankle Circles

Lift feet off the floor : Draw a circle with toes, simultaneously moving one foot clockwise and the other foot counter clockwise. Reverse circles. Do each direction for 15 seconds. Repeat if desired

Knee Lifts

Lift leg with knee bent while contracting your thigh muscle. Alternate legs. Repeat 20-30 times for each leg

Shoulder Roll

Hunch shoulders forward, then upward, then backward, then downward using a gentle circular motion

Arm Curl

Start with arms held at 90° angle - elbows down, hands out in front. Raise hands up to chest and back down alternating arms. Do these exercise in 30 second intervals.

Foot Pumps

Foot motion is in three stages

1. Start with both heels on the floor and point feet upward as high as you can.
2. Put both feet flat on the floor.
3. Lift heels high, keeping balls of feet on floor. Continue these three stages with continuous motion in 30 second intervals.

Knee to Chest

Bend forward slightly. Clasp hands around left knee and hug it to your chest. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Keeping hands around knee, slowly let it down. Alternate legs. Repeat 10 times

Forward Flex

With both feet on the floor and stomach held in slowly, bend forward and walk your hands down the front of your legs towards your ankles. Hold stretch for 15 seconds and slowly sit back up.

Overhead Stretch

Raise both arms straight up and over your head. With one hand grasp the wrist of the opposite hand and gently pull to one side. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat other side.

Shoulder Stretch

Reach right hand over left shoulder. Place left hand behind right elbow and gently press elbow toward shoulder. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat other side

Neck Roll

With shoulders relaxed, drop ear to shoulder and gently roll neck forward and to the other side, holding each position about 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times





AIR NIUGINI COUNTRY



PVM14022



YOUR HEALTH IN-FLIGHT

At Air Niugini we care about your comfort and safety. We have included the following information about your health in-flight that we hope you will find helpful and useful.

When you are flying you can be seated and be inactive for long periods of time. The environment can be low in humidity and pressurised up to an altitude of 2240 metres above sea level. Unlike other forms of transportation, air travel allows for rapid movement across many time zones, causing a disruption to the body's "biological clock". Although these unique factors do not pose a health or safety threat to most passengers, there are guidelines you can follow that will improve your comfort level, during and after a flight. We hope the following recommendations will help you have a more pleasant flight today and in the future.

Blood Circulation/Muscle Relaxation

When you're sitting upright in a stationary position for a long period of time, several things can happen:

- The central blood vessels in your legs can be compressed, making it more difficult for the blood to get back to your heart.
- The long inactivity of your body muscles in this position can result in muscle tension, back aches or a feeling of excessive fatigue during, or even after, your flight.
- A stationary position inhibits the normal body mechanism for returning fluid to your heart, and gravity can cause the fluid to collect in your feet. This results in swollen feet after a long flight.
- Studies have concluded that prolonged immobility may be a risk factor in the formation of clots in the legs (DVT - deep vein thrombosis). Particular medication and medical conditions may increase the risk of formation of clots if associated with prolonged immobility. Medical research indicates that factors which may give you an increased risk of blood clots in the legs include:

- Increasing age above 40 years

- Pregnancy
- Former or current malignant disease
- Blood Disorders leading to increased clotting tendency
- Personal or family history of DVT
- Recent major surgery or injury, especially to lower limbs or abdomen
- Oestrogen hormone therapy, including oral contraceptives
- Immobilisation for a day or more
- Dehydration - Heart Failure
- Trauma - Varicose veins
- Obesity - Tobacco smoking

Recommendations

- If you fall into any of these categories or you have any concern about your health and flying, Air Niugini recommends you seek medical advice before travelling.
- Follow our in-flight exercises programme

Jetlag

The main cause of jetlag is traveling to different time zones without giving the body a chance to adjust to new night-day cycles. In general, the more time zones you cross during your flight, the more your biological clock is disturbed. The common symptoms are sleeplessness, tiredness, loss of appetite or appetite at odd hours.

Recommendations

- Get a good night's rest before your flight.
- Arrive at your destination a day or two early, to give your body a chance to become more acclimatised to the new time zone.
- Fly direct to minimise flight time. This allows you to relax more upon arrival.
- Leave your watch on home time if you're staying at your destination less than 48 hours. Also try to eat and sleep according to your home time.
- Change your watch to the local time if your stay is longer than 48 hours, and try to eat and sleep in accordance with the local time.

On longer stays, try to prepare in advance, adjust your meal and rest times to be closer to those of your destination.





Try some light exercise - go for a brisk walk, or do some reading if you can't sleep after arrival at your destination. It generally takes the body's biological clock approximately one day to adjust per time zone crossed.

Cabin Humidity/Dehydration

Humidity levels of less than 25 percent are common in the cabin.

This is due to the extremely low humidity levels of outside air supplied to the cabin. The low humidity can cause drying of the nose, throat, eyes and it can irritate contact lens wearers.

- Drink water or juices frequently during the flight
- Drink coffee, tea and alcohol in moderation. These drinks act as diuretics, increasing the body's dehydration.
- Remove contact lenses and wear glasses if your eyes are irritated.
- Use a skin moisturiser to refresh the skin.

Eating and Drinking

Proper eating and drinking will enhance your comfort both during and after your flight.

- Avoid overeating just prior to and during the flight. It is difficult to digest too much food when the body is inactive.
- Drink coffee, tea and alcohol in moderation. These drinks act as diuretics, increasing the body's dehydration.

Cabin Pressurisation

It is necessary to pressurise the outside air drawn into the cabin to a sufficient density for your comfort and health. Cabins are pressurised to a maximum cabin altitude of 2440 metres. It is the same air pressure as if you were at an elevation of 2440 metres above sea level. The cabin pressure and normal rates of change in cabin pressure during climb and descent do not pose a problem for most passengers. However, if you suffer from upper respiratory or sinus infections, obstructive pulmonary diseases, anaemias or certain cardiovascular conditions, you could

experience discomfort. Children and infants might experience some discomfort because of pressure change during climb and descent.

If you are suffering from nasal congestion or allergies, use nasal sprays, decongestants and antihistamines 30 minutes prior to descent to help open up your ear and sinus passages. If you have a cold or flu or hayfever, your sinuses could be impaired. Swollen membranes in your nose could block your eustachian tubes—the tiny channels between your middle ear chamber. This can cause discomfort during changes in cabin pressure, particularly during descent.

Recommendations

- If you have a pre-existing medical condition that warrants supplemental oxygen, you can order from us. Please give at least seven days notice before traveling.
- To "clear" your ears try swallowing and/or yawning. These actions help open your eustachian tubes, equalizing pressure between your middle ear chamber and your throat.
- When flying with an infant, feed or give your baby a dummy during descent. Sucking and swallowing will help infants equalize the pressure in their ears.

Motion Sickness

This ailment is caused by a conflict between the body's sense of vision and its sense of equilibrium. Air turbulence increases its likelihood because it can cause movement of the fluid in the vestibular apparatus of the inner ear. If you have good visual cues (keeping your eyes fixed on a non-moving object), motion sickness is less likely to occur.

Recommendations

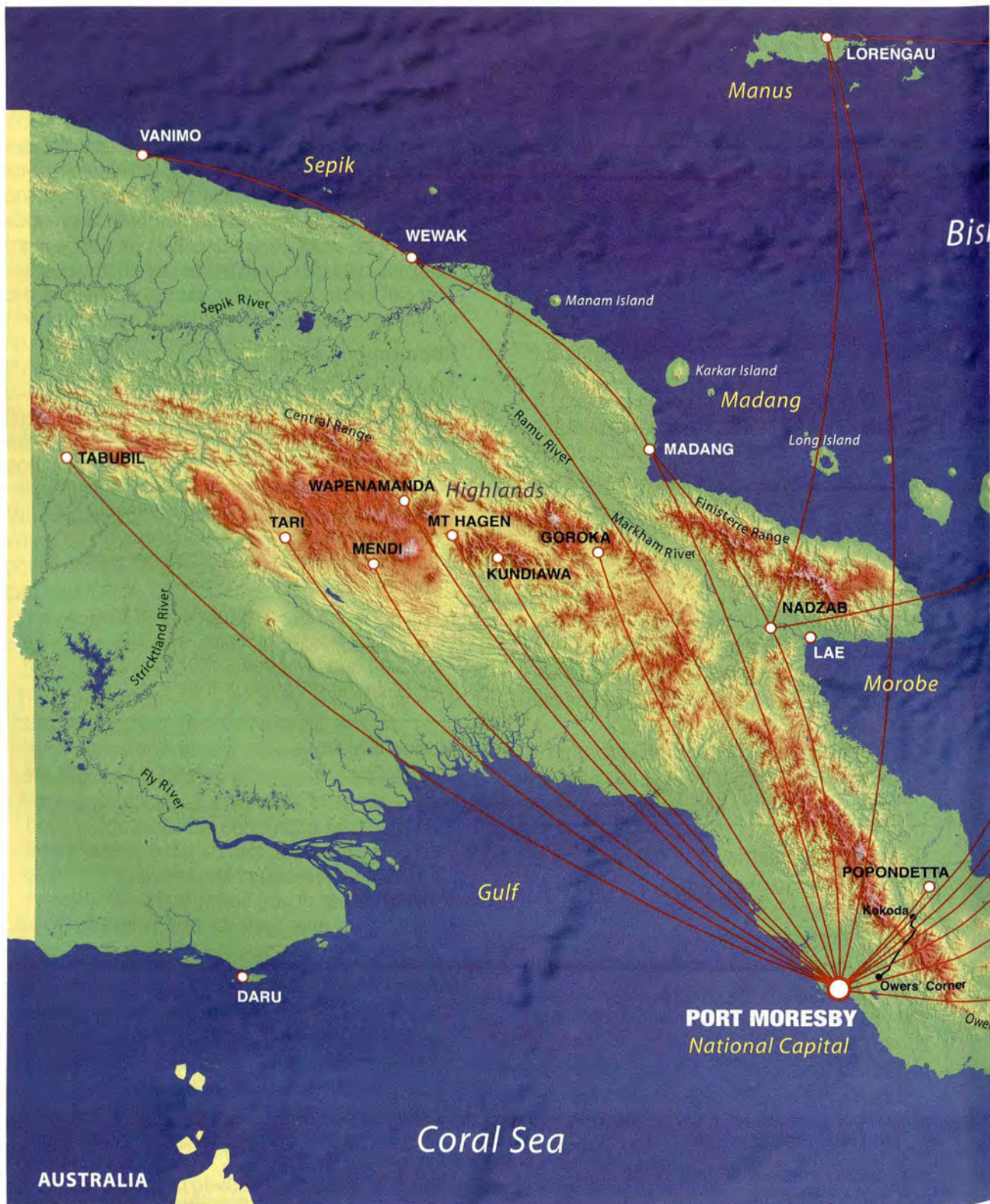
- When weather is clear and you can see the ground, sea or horizon, you are less susceptible to motion sickness.
- You can buy over the counter medications but we recommend that you consult your doctor about the appropriate medications.

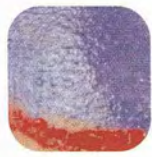
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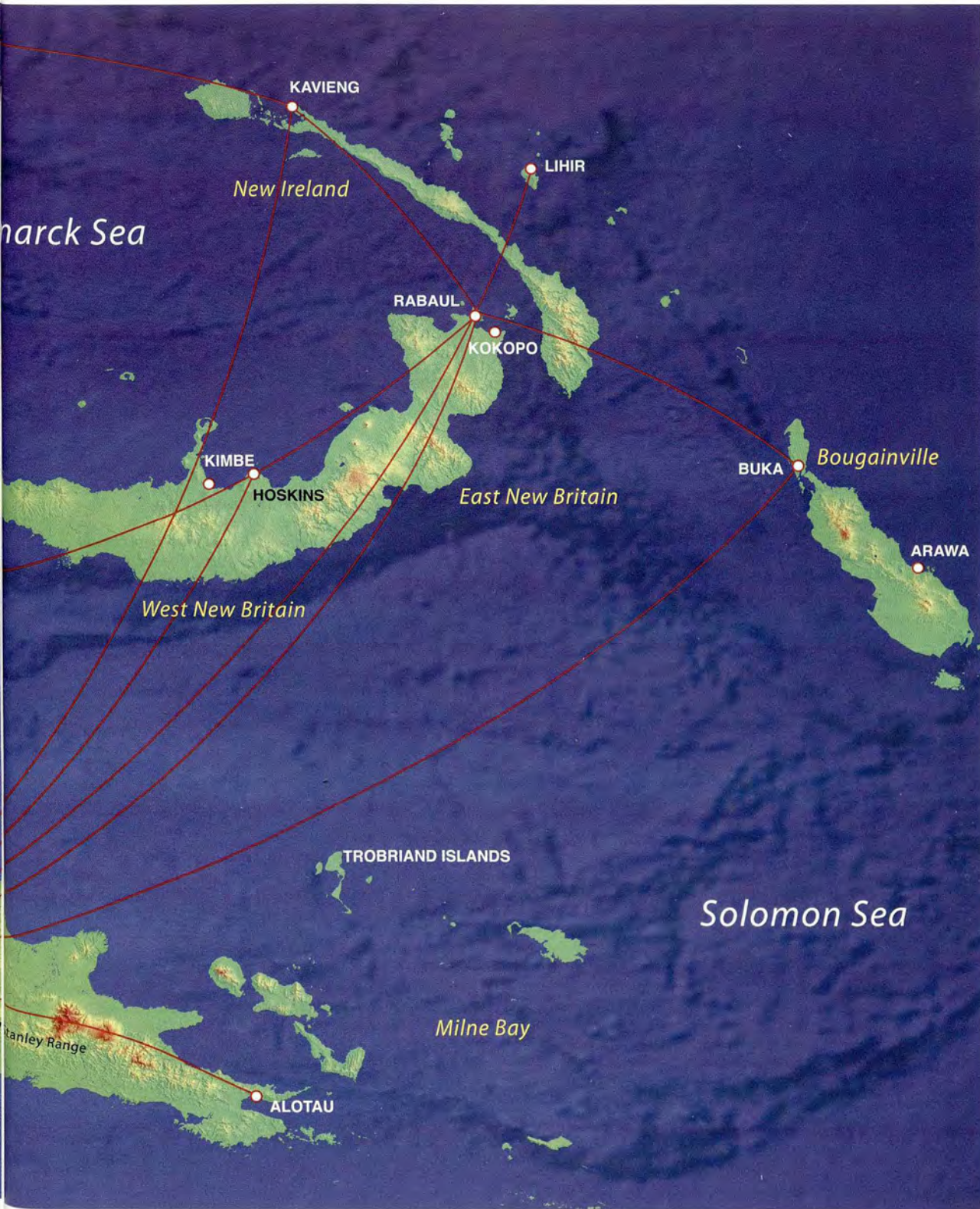


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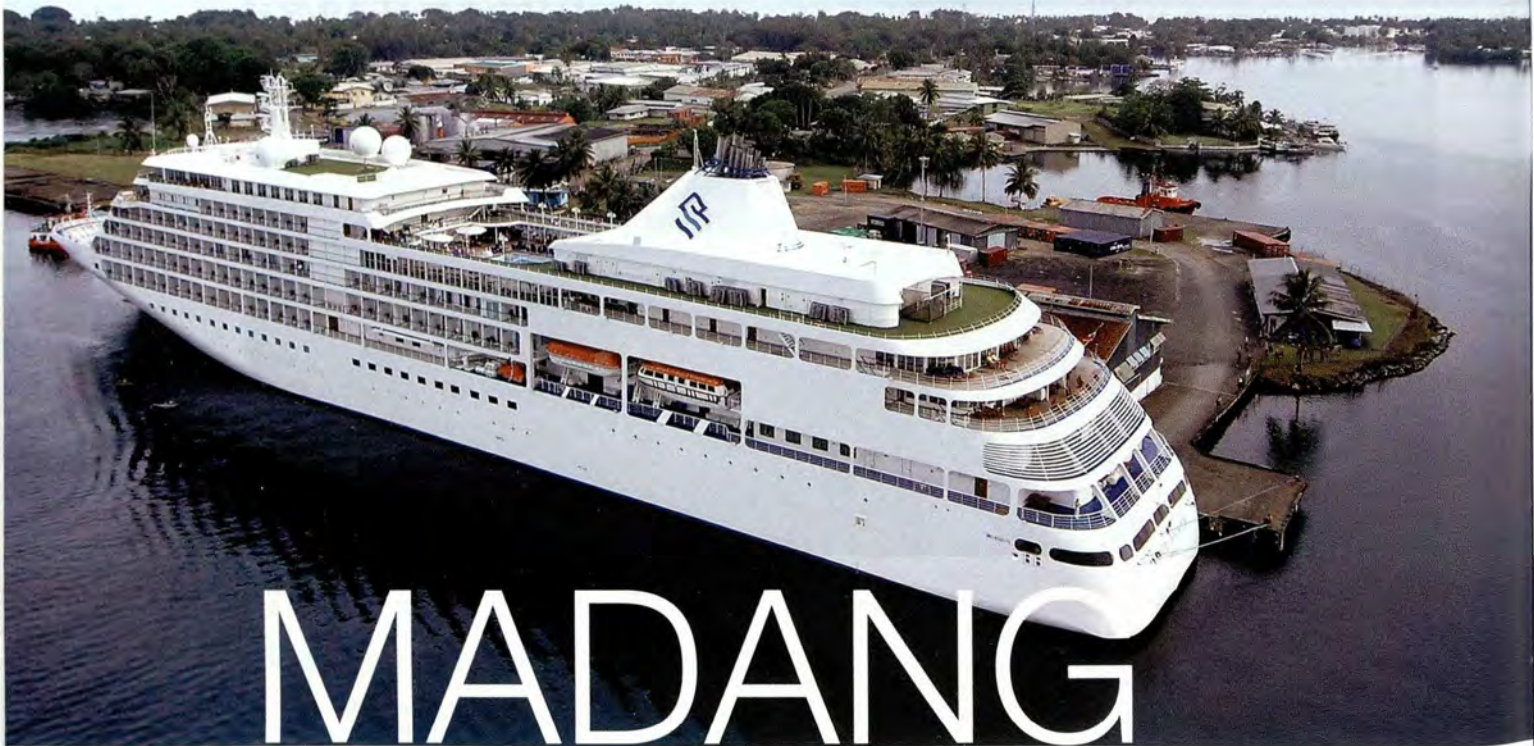
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MADANG

THE PEARL OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

By Patrick Matbob

M

any complimentary phrases have been used to describe Madang since the first explorers passed through the picturesque northern archipelago a hundred years ago.

With a deep natural harbour that opens out to a group of tiny islands of coral and white sandy beaches, it was described as the 'archipelago of contended people' by Russian explorer and naturalist Nikolai Mikloucho-Maclay in the 1870s.

In 1922, the late District Officer Kassa Townsend wrote the following in his diary: "Madang was, and perhaps still is, the most attractive township in the territory". More recently, the town has been hailed as the 'Pearl of the South Pacific' while the locals like to call it 'Beautiful Madang'.



A Simbai man in full traditional dress.

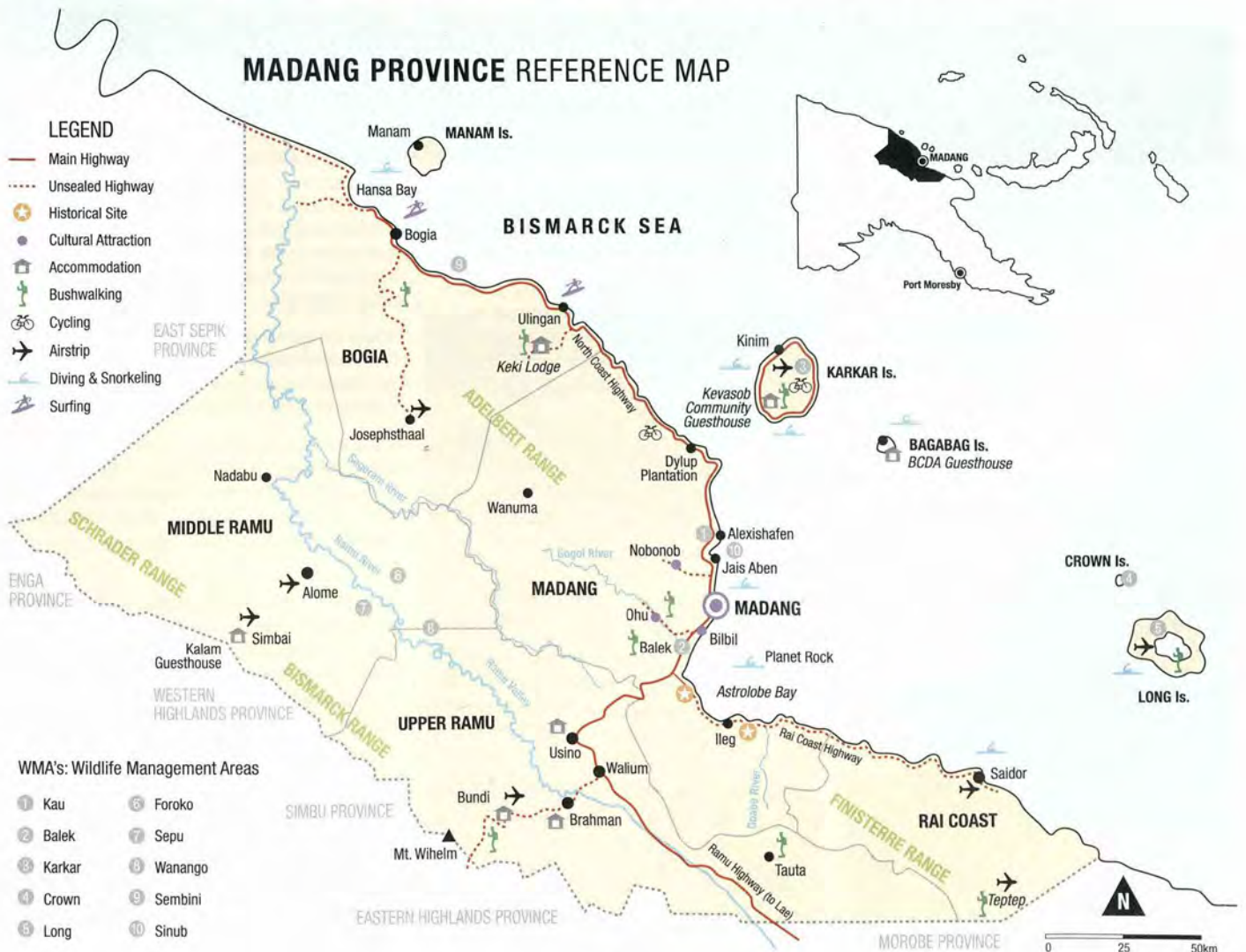
The natural tropical environment is not the only main attraction of the province. The friendly and peace-loving nature of the local people has always made visitors feel welcome. With a reputation like that, Madang has been the tourism and holiday destination in PNG for many years.

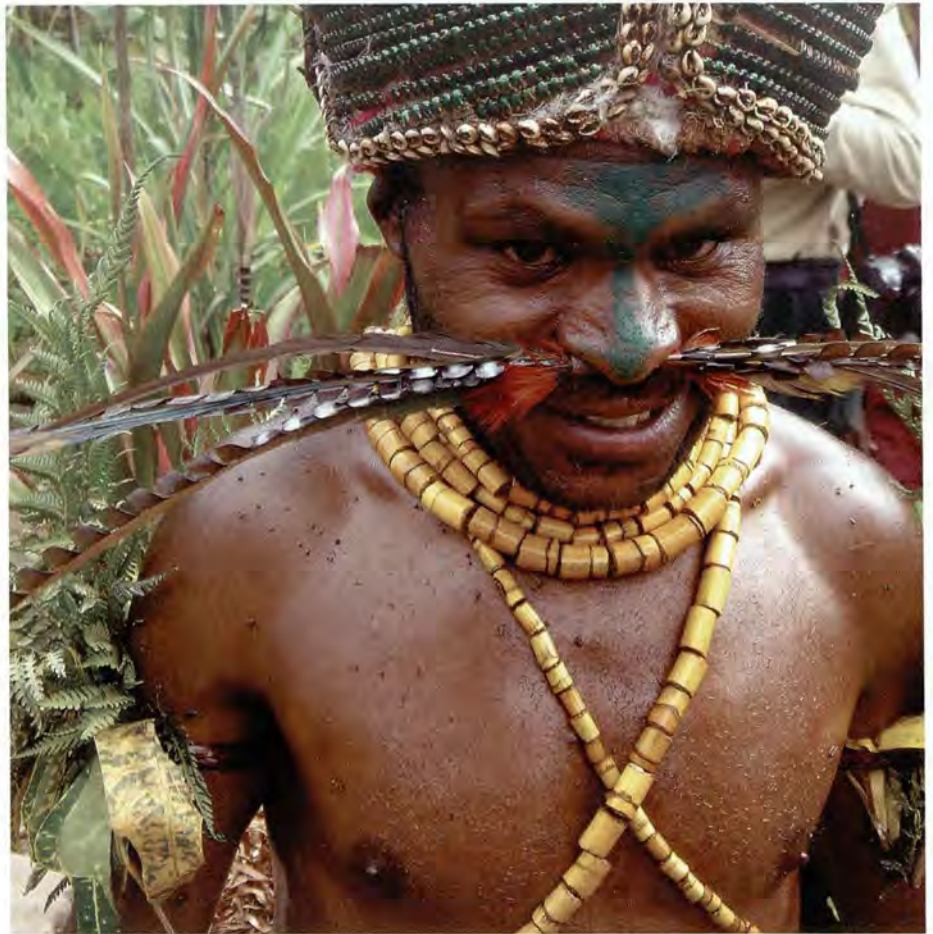
Little has changed today. This is despite the town being one of the major ports in the country and home to several industries including a major mining development. It is one of only two coastal ports in PNG that is linked by an extensive roading network to the Highlands provinces.

This has resulted in the town having one of the best markets in the country selling fresh fruits and vegetables from the highlands and lowlands.

Those who come for business or pleasure find the laid-back and easy-going lifestyle of Madang relaxing.

Madang is also home to some things that are unique and exotic. For instance, the town has always protected its population of flying foxes that inhabit the trees around the urban centre.





The bats have become a feature of the town and a symbol of the province.

And in the hinterlands of the province live the world's most recently discovered tribe of people, the Hagahai. They made contact with civilisation as recently as the 1980s. Of PNG's 800 languages, some 164 are found in Madang, making it a culturally diverse province.

The provincial governor Sir Arnold Amet, a former chief justice of PNG, has recognised the potential of tourism as a major revenue earner for the province and has taken the lead in initiating a regular urban clean-up campaign involving town residents.

The town is looking much cleaner and work has begun on beautifying and restoring public parks and the waterfront.

The Governor has also initiated the redevelopment of the main market and fish market and is working towards restoring and reviving the Madang Visitors and Cultural Bureau.

The annual Madang Festival has also been revived and the Chinese government has been approached to bring a cultural group to participate at the next festival. Similar invitations will be made to other countries such as Malaysia, Philippines, New Zealand and other Pacific countries.

The Madang Government is also following up on outstanding plans to upgrade the airport to international standard and improve all existing town roads.

A provincial land and physical planning board is being established to facilitate town planning and urbanisation policies.

Visitors to Madang have a choice of a range of accommodation that include six major hotels as well as a host of budget accommodation available both within and out of the town.

The affluent have the choice of the premier Madang Resort Hotel, Coast Watchers, Madang Lodge, Jais Aben or Smugglers Inn, while the adventurers can go for budget lodging at the CWA Cottage, Lutheran Guest House or Madang Inn.

Villagers have also taken advantage of the potential for tourism development and have set up numerous guests houses in areas of attraction in the urban and rural areas of Madang.

There are interesting sites to visit beginning with the famous Coast Watchers memorial that has become an official symbol of Madang.

Built in August 15, 1959 at the entrance of the harbour, the memorial commemorates the work of the brave coast watchers during World War II who hid along the coasts of PNG and reported on enemy troops' movements.

The province was also a major battle zone and is littered with war wrecks and some graves of Japanese soldiers. Alexishafen, a Catholic Mission station about 28 kilometres north of Madang, was invaded by the Japanese army in 1942 and later heavily bombed by the Americans. The bombing destroyed the

mission's magnificent wooden cathedral and only the concrete base remains today.

The town market is also a major meeting place and apart from fresh fruits and vegetables, one can buy artifacts, bilums (string bags), baskets, necklaces and local jewellery. One can also enquire about the popular traditional Madang bilum made from local fibre with its unique designs.

There are designated artifact shops at Madang Resort and Madang Lodge where visitors can buy traditional carvings such as the famous story boards of East Sepik river people.

For a cultural experience, there are numerous activities that can be arranged. This can be done by the hotels or through the Madang Visitors and Cultural Bureau which is ideally located on Modilon Drive - the town's main street.

Popular activities include a visit to Bilbil village where visitors can observe the village women making clay pots in the traditional fashion. Bilbil clay pots are famous throughout the coastal areas of Madang and the neighbouring provinces.

It is still a major trade item used in bride price payments and other traditional ceremonies. The villagers also put on colourful traditional dances to entertain visitors.

Alternatively, visit the Butterfly Farm and Conservation at Ohu village to see the varieties of PNG butterflies living in the wild including the country's famous Birdwing



Near Ohu is the Balek Wildlife Sanctuary which is famous for its bluish sulphur creek or smel wara (smelling water) that gives off strong sulphur odour. The creek which gushes out from the bottom of a massive limestone formation is home to freshwater fish, eels and tortoises.

butterfly.

Near Ohu is the Balek Wildlife Sanctuary which is famous for its bluish sulphur creek or *smel wara* (smelling water) that gives off a strong sulphur odour.

The creek which gushes out from the bottom of a massive limestone formation is home to freshwater fish, eels and tortoises.

A number of village guest houses throughout the province also offers accommodation as part of the experience. Notable ones are situated in the rural districts such as Simbai, Bogia, Keki and on Karkar Island.

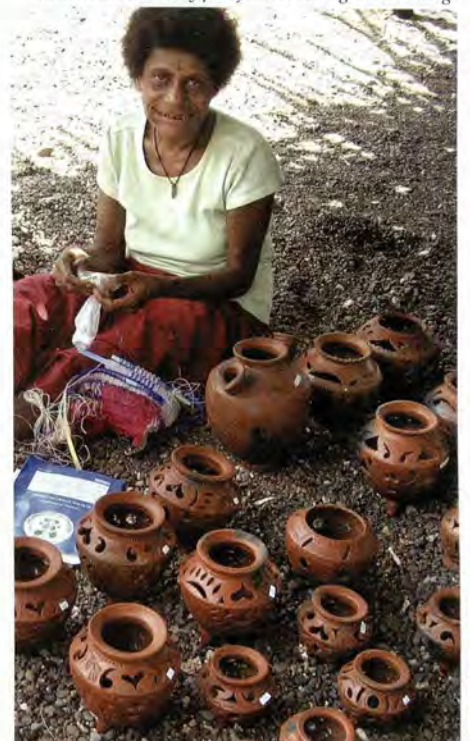
The trip to the cool mountains of Simbai is by air and coincides with the colourful Kalam Festival where locals display their impressive head-dresses decorated with green beetles.

Keki Lodge is a paradise for bird watchers and is set high in the mountains of Madang. One can enjoy the treasures of the deep mountain forests and view the rare fire-mane bowerbird, the lesser Bird of Paradise and the palm cockatoos.

Madang is also home to a number of



Bilbil baskets and clay pots famous throughout Madang.





Fishing with Garg Fishing Tours can also be exciting.

volcanoes and Kevasop Guest House on volcanic Karkar Island includes a trip to the top of the crater.

The volcano is currently active so visitors must first check with the Madang Visitors Bureau.

The Manam Island volcano erupted in 2005 and 10,000 islanders had to be evacuated to

Banara village, north of Madang. Photo: Sir Peter Barter



Passengers heading to the waiting Kalibobo Spirit.

care centres on the mainland.

Long Island volcano is located 136 kilometres east of Madang and its large caldera is filled by Lake Wisdom which is 12 kilometres long and 10 kilometres wide.

Within the lake is a small cone called Motmot. An eruption in 1660 on the island is believed to be the largest ever in PNG. MTC

organises trips to Long Island and other sites on its luxurious vessel Kalibobo Spirit.

Madang Lagoon is a diver's paradise and Niugini Diving Adventures and Aquaventures PNG offer dive services throughout the year.

The crystal clear waters, the rich marine life in the lagoon as well as the underwater wrecks offer a rewarding experience for divers. For those interested in underwater wrecks, Hansa Bay in Bogia, which was a major Japanese base during WWII, is worth visiting. Other wrecks can be visited along the northern coast.

Game fishing off the coast of Madang is also a rewarding experience. Garg Fishing Tours organises outings and anglers can fish for Yellow Fin, Dog Tooth, Tuna, Spanish Mackerel, Wahoo, Mahimahi and Marlin.

From Madang, one can also visit other provinces through packaged tours that can be arranged by MTS which is the oldest and most experienced tourism body in PNG. MTS offers overnight excursions to the Highlands and its luxurious vessel Kalibobo Spirit is available for expeditionary cruises to the Sepik River and throughout the islands in PNG.

The vessels maiden voyage in the New Year included islands off the coast of Manus, New Ireland, West New Britain and Madang.

• For more information on places to visit or things to do, contact Madang Visitors and Cultural Bureau (MVCB).



 Air Niugini flies to Madang daily.





WHERE TO STAY

Visitors to Madang have a range of accommodation to choose from provided by resorts, hotels and guesthouses within and out of the town.

Coastwatchers Hotel

Coastwatchers Hotel is ideally located in the heart of the town overlooking the entrance of the Dallman Passage into the Madang harbour and the famous Kalibobo Lighthouse. Next to the hotel is the Madang Golf Club and five minutes walk away is the town centre and the market. The hotel offers top quality air-conditioned premier and standard rooms that overlook the hotel's swimming pool or the Bismarck Sea. The most attractive location of the hotel is the Coasties Bar & Restaurant which has magnificent views of the ocean and is also popular for its pizzas. There is an air-conditioned Kalibobo Conference Room that caters for up to 150 and Qantas Frequent Flyer member's rates are available so members can earn points.

CWA Cottage

The CWA Cottage is 100 percent nationally owned by the Country Women's Association. Its focus is to generate enough income to cover its operational costs and donate the remaining profits to community services such as health and schools. CWA Cottage is centrally located in the heart of town and only a few minutes walk to the main shopping centre, markets, post office and banks. It is a home away from home. Contact: CWA Cottage, P.O. Box 154, Madang, PNG. Tel: +675 852 2216; Fax: +675 852 1606. For further information or booking assistance please contact the above, or email Madang Visitors & Cultural Bureau.

Jais Aben Resort

Set on an idyllic peninsular overlooking the harbour and islands, Jais Aben Resort features excellent diving facilities and accommodation designed with families and special interest groups in mind. This friendly resort located only 20 kilometres north of Madang, was once a 22-acre coconut plantation. Today, it is home to one of the best diving resorts in Papua New Guinea with Aquaventures PNG. Contact: Jais Aben Resort, P.O. Box 105, Madang Province, PNG; Tel: +675 853 3111, Fax: +675 852 3058, or Email: jaisaben@global.net.pg

Keki Mountain Lodge

Keki Mountain Lodge reminds us of why we come to places like PNG - it's all about the adventure of taking the road less travelled - and the road to Keki is just that. The further you travel into the mountains the more you become one with nature. Contact: Moyang Okira; C/- Madang Visitors & Cultural Bureau, P.O. Box 1071, Madang 511, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. Tel: +(675) 852 3302, Fax: +(675) 852 3540, or Email: mvcb@madangtourism.com for bookings and further information.

Madang Inn

Located amidst the industrial centre of town and neatly snuggled amongst residential and company premises, the Madang Inn shows no sign of the rush and bustle of its surrounding. This establishment offers an easygoing, relaxed and friendly venue with services at affordable rates.

Contact: P.O. Box 515, Madang, PNG. Tel: +675 852 3192/3496; Fax: +675 852 3384; Email: madinn@global.net.pg

Madang Lodge

Situated on the shores of Astrolabe Bay is the Madang Lodge which offers a range of overnight and monthly accommodation set amidst a truly stunning orchid gardens and waterfront swimming pool. The lodge is popular with backpackers, families and executives. The lodge accommodation consists of 34 tastefully decorated rooms with another 8 fully furnished apartments and 10 self-contained cottages available for long-term rental. There are 14 budget rooms with two single beds.

Malolo Plantation Lodge

Malolo Plantation Lodge is ideally situated metres from the clear waters of the Bismarck Sea with picturesque views of the active volcano of Karkar Island. The expansive and neatly kept lawns reach down to the long stretch of black sand beach, which is marked with pandanus and coconut trees. In Tok Pisin, 'Malolo' means 'rest' - and this lodge certainly represents its true meaning. At Malolo, you are cut off from the stresses of everyday life with no telephones or televisions in the rooms. Contact: Trans Niugini Tours: Tel: +675 542 1438; Fax: +675 542 2470 or email: service@pngtours.com; www.pngtours.com

Madang Resort

The Madang Resort is the oldest and most historic hotel in PNG. Its origin dates back to the German colonial period when a guest house was established on what was a part of a coconut plantation. During WW2 it was destroyed and between WW2 and 1975 it was owned and operated by some of PNG most colourful characters. In 1975, the Barter family acquired the property and since then have completely rebuilt and extended what was then known as Hotel Madang. Madang Resort has an absolute water frontage onto Dallman Passage, the beautiful Madang Harbour and Yamilon Lagoon in 15 acres of landscaped gardens. The resort is set adjacent to the newly completed Kalibobo Village where facilities are jointly shared by both resorts. Contact: Tel: (675) 8541300; Fax: (675) 8523543; Email: melanesian@mtspng.com; Website: www.mtspng.com

• More information about Madang, its attractions, accommodation and getting around are available on:

<http://www.madangtourism.com/index.html>

or contact: Madang Visitors & Cultural Bureau located in

'Haus Tumbuna' on Modillon Road,

P.O. Box 1071, Madang 511;

Telephone: +675 852 3302; Fax: +675 852 3540;

Email: mvcb@madangtourism.com

Dive Daze @ Deka Deka

Underwater Extravaganza

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | CHRISTOPHER J. CROWLEY

S

ituated near the epicenter of a tremendous marine biodiversity, Milne Bay Province in PNG rarely produces a dull dive.

At certain locations, though, Mother Nature serves up a banquet of underwater creatures so bountiful that it notably surpasses even the high standards for the region.

It leaves the diver dazed by the surfeit. Even the non-diver may appreciate the diversity of this underwater extravaganza.

The small coral island of Deka Deka is such a place. Deka Deka lies near the better-known island of Samarai at the south-eastern tip of the entrance to Milne Bay.

On a small, sandy reef - only about half the size of a soccer field and at depths less than 25 metres - we encounter a potpourri of marine life. This article describes the very rare, the beautiful, the bizarre and the unusual associations of animals found on this Deka Deka reef.



The Rare Ambon (or "Bugs Bunny") Scorpionfish (15 cm).

Rare fish

Highlights of the fish life include the rare ambon scorpionfish. The highly exaggerated skin flaps protruding above each eye distinguish this fish. Like all its fellow scorpionfish, the ambon lurks on the bottom waiting to ambush prey. It plods awkwardly on its pectoral fins, rather than swimming. Seeing even one specimen is considered fortunate. Here, we find two pairs, all four ambons a fiery red-orange.

Pipefish.



Finger dragonet.



With long tubular snouts and elongated bodies, ghost pipefish are exotic relatives of normal pipefish. They are absolute masters of camouflage.

Usually found near patches of seaweed, they hold station with no visible movement of their fins. Mimicking the seaweed in colour and motion makes them extremely difficult to spot. Robust ghost pipefish are the largest (16cm) of the four recognised species. It is usual to find them in pairs, if they can be found at all, and we locate two pairs at Deka Deka.

Other residents include the uncommon finger dragonet with its tall, flashing dorsal fin. Pipefishes and their seahorse cousins are abundant.

We photographed three different spotted (or estuary) seahorses in shades of white, green and red. Each wears a small crown.



A pair of exotic robust ghost pipefish (16 cm).



A white spotted seahorse (10 cm).

A flamboyant cuttlefish in stealth mode (6 cm).



The venomous blue-ringed octopus (5cm head, 7cm arms).



A flamboyant cuttlefish in full display of its garish colours.

Unusual molluscs

The mollusc phylum includes clams, snails, cowries, nudibranchs, squid, octopus, and cuttlefish. In cuttlefish, for example, the shells evolved long ago into internal structures. The rare flamboyant cuttlefish is another expert at camouflage. This tiny cuttlefish is certainly not "flamboyant" when masquerading as a rock or other bit of flotsam while stalking prey.

However, when it travels or is agitated, it dramatically displays dark brown, brilliant white and yellow patches, along with tinges of bright red near the tips of its tentacles.

The blue-ringed octopus is one of the smallest octopuses. The body is only about 5cm long, and the tentacles are only about 7cm. It changes colour to blend in with the corals or seabed; however, it can also display electric-blue rings from which its name is derived. Never handle this venomous octopus. Despite its small size, a bite to a human can result in severe respiratory problems and a possibility of death.

Crustaceans behaving well with others

Crustaceans belong to the phylum of arthropods, and so they are the “bugs” of the sea. These crustaceans often associate with other species, offering the opportunity to see unusual behaviours.

Deka Deka’s inhabitants include shrimps associated with fish (a snake eel), echinoderms (a sea cucumber), and mollusks (a nudibranch). Unless actively hunting, a snake eel typically lies buried in the sand with only the snout showing.

The small, blue shrimp perched on the nose of a blacksaddle snake eel offers a cleaning service, picking bits of debris or parasites from the eel.

This benefits the shrimp with a meal and the eel with a cleaning. Red imperial shrimps often ride on sea cucumbers, but it is unusual to find them aboard a sea slug.

This particular nudibranch is a giant, big enough to tote two shrimps. By hitchhiking on these other animals, the shrimps gain access to meals - the quintessential movable feast

Cleaner shrimp perches on the nose of a blacksaddle snake eel.



Imperial shrimp (3cm) rides on a sea cucumber.



Imperial shrimps hitch-hike aboard a large nudibranch (15cm).

- while their hosts gain personal hygiene. Both species gain mutual defense against predators.

Crabs also associate with other species from phyla such as the echinoderms and cnidarians. Some crabs make

their homes on the undersides of colourful fire urchins.

The crab snips off the ends of the urchin’s spines to clear a homestead. Since the spines

A crab (5cm) homesteads on the underside of a colourful fire urchin.

An orange spider crab (5cm) lives under a feather star.



of the fire urchin contain poison, the remaining spines protect the crab ensconced amongst them. Other crabs, like a fuzzy orange spider crab, take shelter under featherstars.

The cnidarian phylum includes all animals that have stinging cells, like corals, anemones, and jellyfish.

A pop-eyed swimming crab can take shelter under the tentacles of a tube anemone, since the miniature harpoons (nematocysts) in the stinging cells cannot penetrate the shell of the crab.

Effect on the human species

Deka Deka held our dive group spellbound for five days. Given the penchant for dive boats to island-hop daily, a five-day visit testifies to the attractive power of this site.

Deka Deka is a “must do” diving spot, one worth visiting many times to savour its animal extravaganza.



A swimming crab (5cm) takes shelter in a tube anemone.

A tube anemone.

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Mysterious Dwellers

PNG home to thousands of mushroom species

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | DR RONALD TREU



Mycorrhizal Boletus species...some of the best gourmet mushrooms.

P

apua New Guinea is home to about 20,000 flowering plants, but we still know very little about the number of mushrooms that occur on the island.

Mushrooms are a part of the fungus kingdom, a group separate from animals and plants and not closely related to either of them.

Mushrooms are those fungi that are large and fleshy and visible as they grow out from the soil or form large brackets on trees.

Many other fungi are microscopic in size and therefore more difficult to observe. We know quite a lot about plants and animals, because there is a good number of botanists and zoologists who study their respective groups all over the world.

It is different with fungi because the mycologists (biologists who study fungi) are a much less numerous lot.

Approximately 100,000 species of fungi and mushrooms have been described around the world, but it has been estimated that the total number of species is in the order of 1.5 million.

Like plants and animals, mushrooms and other fungi have their highest diversity in the tropical zones of the world, including of course, Papua New Guinea.



Isaria...commonly found in the Highlands.

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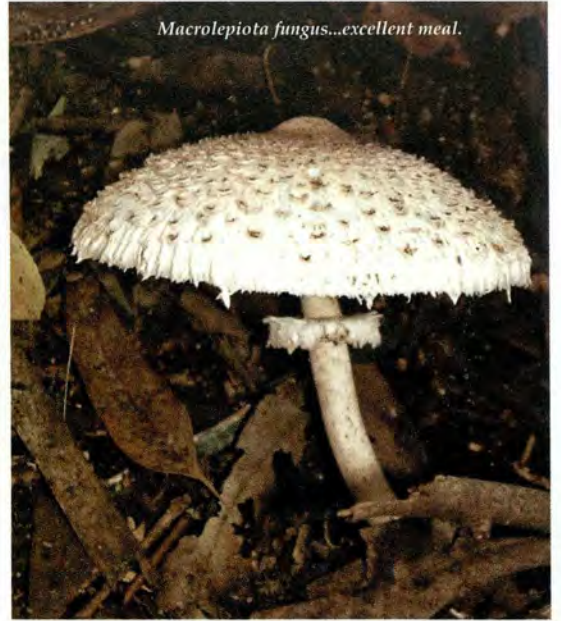
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Ramaria...coral fungus



Macrolepiota fungus...excellent meal.



Unlike plants, fungi do not reproduce with seeds, but with spores. A single large mushroom can produce several millions of spores that are carried away by the slightest air current.

They germinate wherever they find suitable conditions and grow into a so-called mycelium, an extremely fine, interconnected network of microscopic threads. When conditions are favourable, this mycelium will condense and form small buttons.

These buttons will rapidly soak up water and develop into another mushroom fruitbody that will again produce spores. Therefore, when we spot mushrooms, we see only the reproductive organ, with much more of the fungus being below the ground and hidden from our view.

The small number of mycologists belies the importance of fungi. Bread, produced by yeasts, is the nutritional base of people all over the world.

And how dull would our lives be without wine

and beer, each produced by yet another type of yeasts. Modern medicine would be unthinkable without antibiotics that saved millions of human lives after the first one, penicillin, was accidentally discovered in the fungus Penicillium by Alexander Fleming in 1929.

During the middle ages, hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the so-called St. Anthony's fire, a disease which resulted in the loss of limbs, gangrene and eventually a painful death.

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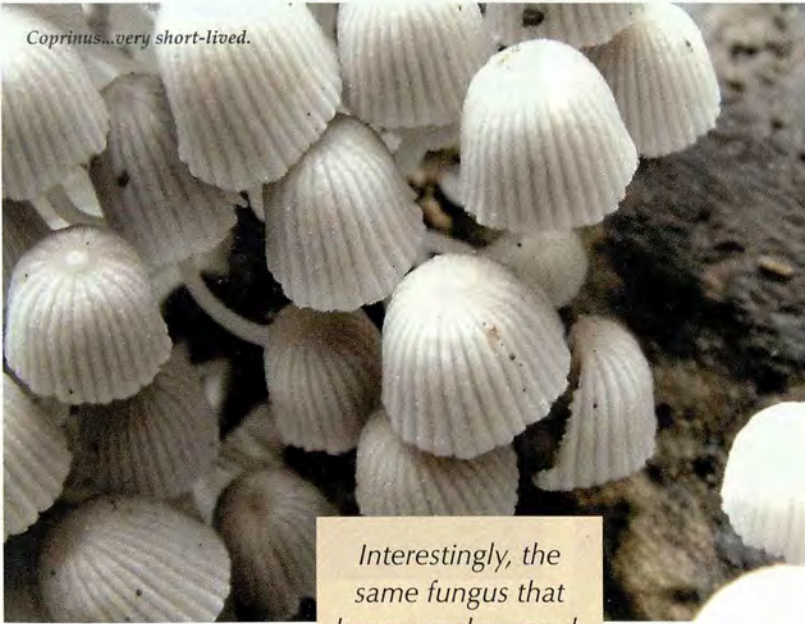


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Coprinus...very short-lived.



Interestingly, the same fungus that has caused so much suffering in the past is also the source of an important medicine...

It was believed at the time that people had evoked the wrath of God, until it was discovered that the disease is actually caused by the small ergot fungus growing on rye.

Infected plants were not separated and the fungus would be milled along with the rye grains to produce contaminated flour.

Interestingly, the same fungus that has caused

fungi can be classified as decomposers of ecosystems, especially forests. Nature knows no waste and everything is recycled.

The fungi, together with the bacteria, are doing

so much suffering in the past is also the source of an important medicine, ergotamine, which induces labour during childbirth.

What is the role of fungi in nature? A large group of

Fistulina hepatica...eaten in many parts of the world.



the job of breaking down all dead organic materials, leaves, twigs, branches and tree trunks.

Imagine a forest without fungi: everything would suffocate within a few months because all the dead material would just accumulate on the ground, without decomposition. Soils would soon deplete completely, making plant growth impossible as the re-supply of minerals resulting from the breakdown of dead matter by fungi would cease.

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Lycoperdon...a puff ball



Russula...another mushroom that forms a mycorrhiza with Casuarina.

Another group of fungi lives in close association with trees and other plants.

In fact, most plants have fungi growing inside their roots and in this partnership the plant obtains water and minerals from the fungus, and in exchange the plant provides sugars and carbohydrates to the fungus.

This symbiosis is called mycorrhiza and occasionally it can be observed even without a microscope when digging out the roots of particular trees that are covered by fungal mycelium.

Foresters sometimes use specific fungi to inoculate roots of trees that would otherwise fail to grow. Trees and fungi cannot exist without each other.

Finally, a third group of fungi can be classified as parasites which cause diseases of plants, humans and animals.

Edible mushrooms are rich in proteins and contain several vitamins and minerals. Traditionally they have played a substantial role as a nutritional source in many parts of the world. Their fat content is very low and

nutritionists consider mushrooms a health food.

More and more chefs discover the value of mushrooms as an upmarket gourmet food. In Papua New Guinea, the important traditional role of mushrooms as a food source is still obvious in many parts of the Highlands: older villagers still have an extensive vocabulary of tok ples terms for different groups and species of mushrooms attesting to their former importance for human nutrition. Unfortunately, this customary knowledge of fungi and their names is vanishing as rapidly as many other remnants of the old cultures.



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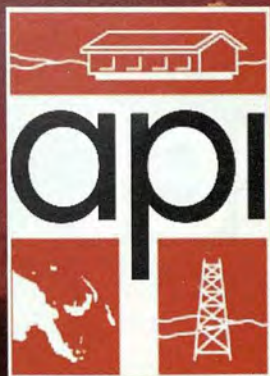


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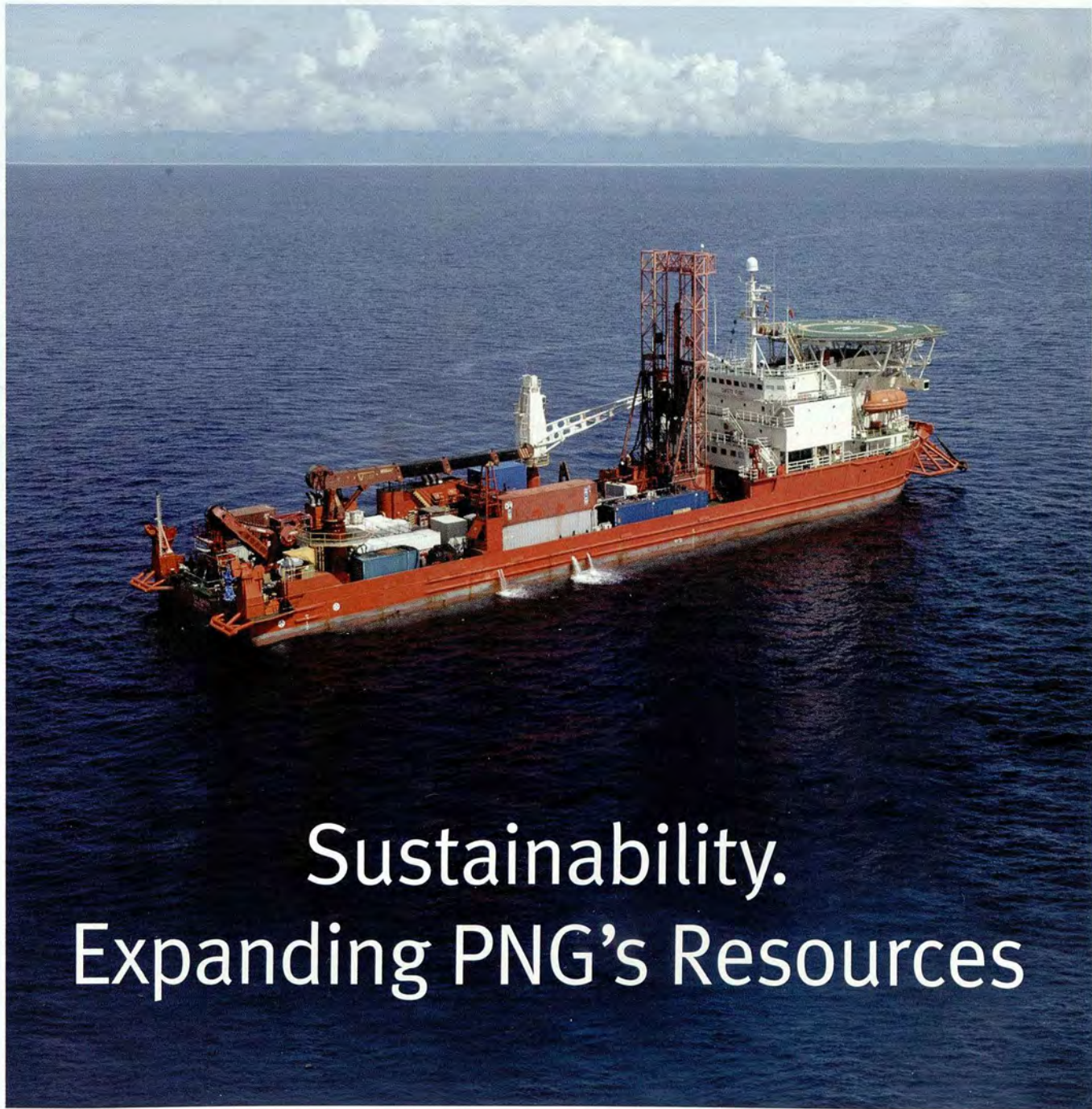
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Young boys performing with heart.



Emerging from the bush their expressions are serious, solemn, intense. They wear bright-red laplaps, feathered headdresses and brilliant orange and green floral necklaces - a striking contrast against their dark naked torsos. Their faces are smeared green and decorated with teardrop-like white dots.



Tolai Warwagira Festival

Singsing Celebration

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | BRIAR JENSEN

Face paint and headdresses
for both boys and girls.

i

n two lines, the boys march forward, the leaders holding exquisite dried arrangements in each hand. They respectfully stop in front of their elders sitting cross-legged on the grass. Behind them Tavurvur volcano rumbles ominously. Deep hollow sounds fill the air as the elders begin drumming, followed by the sweet melodious voices of the boys from Pila Pila Primary School.



Getting ready to perform.

I'm at Queen Elizabeth Park in Rabaul, East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea, on the opening day of the Tolai Warwagira Festival, now in its thirteenth year. Today the local primary schools are performing traditional singsings, and the atmosphere is a bit like a bush eisteddfod.

The programme is running behind schedule due to a problem of getting electricity to the public address system. Local sparkies, up ladders in bare feet, attempt to rectify the problem, their only equipment an old volt meter.

In the surrounding bush, under the shade of giant trees, parents and teachers are fixing headdresses and securing feathers to children's costumes. It's been a long day for performers and their families, many having arrived early this morning on the back of open trucks.

Scheduled to begin at 10am, its 2pm before the first school starts, but the performers appear neither tired nor cranky - this is PNG, things happen when they happen, assuming they happen at all. As the festival programme says on every page, 'subject to change'.

Queen Elizabeth Park, a huge grassed area, was once a large sports oval and central focus of Rabaul before the town was buried in ash following the 1974 eruption of Vulcan and Tavurvur volcanoes. The weight of ash collapsed most buildings - only a few remain, like the Rabaul Hotel. Staying here you can smell the sulphur from the volcanoes' still billowing smoke.

The town was so badly damaged it was never rebuilt. Businesses and townfolk moved to Kokopo, about 28 kilometres away on Blanche Bay. Only the deep harbour keeps Rabaul alive, surrounded by roads devoid of buildings like an apocalyptic movie scene.

Waiting for the festival to start we wander around the park perimeter where numerous traditional huts are being erected - tree trunk frames, bamboo supports, woven palm frond walls. Some materials are carried in, others gathered from the surrounding bush. It's a family affair; men erecting the frames, women sitting on the ground weaving and children making palm frond streamers.

There are large communal huts, which will house visiting tribes for the following Mask Festival, and smaller 'shops' complete with palm leaf streamers, for selling food, artefacts and cans of soft drinks. Away in the bush there is even a tiny outhouse for visitors - a pit toilet, whose hole is so big I'm scared of falling in - surrounded by beautifully woven wall panels.

Thousands of Japanese troops were stationed in Rabaul during World War Two and after exploring nearby Admiral Yamamoto's bunker we climb the road behind the old town to the Japanese War Memorial, a simple but austere structure with a magnificent view over the ruined town to the harbour. We are privileged to witness some local Japanese residents offering food and prayers.

Back at Queen Elizabeth Park power has reached the microphone and formalities begin. Major sponsor, Mothers Choice Rice, has to be thanked before the schools perform. For many children this is their first public performance, so before they commence elders ceremoniously break sugar canes in front of them and sprinkle white lime powder on their feet in an initiation ceremony.

Music to accompany the girls Pinpidik includes bamboo drums and clap sticks, which teachers, mothers and toothless grandmothers pound earnestly while singing to accompany the girls, red stained teeth flashing.

A group of elders play to accompany the performances.





Dressed in matching meri blouses, the girls perform for their elders.



Children watch as their siblings perform.

Dressed in bright matching meri blouses (dresses) the girls' faces are smeared with paint and each wears their best necklace. As I look at their headdresses, some more elaborate than others, I wonder if there is any costume jealousy among the young performers.

Like all school concerts, there is the odd wardrobe malfunction - a fallen headdress or loose laplap slips from under a meri blouse, but denim shorts hidden beneath save their dignity, but I'm sure not their embarrassment. Boys experience costume hiccups too; a leaf

necklace falls and a laplap drops to reveal board shorts, but like all true performers they keep going without the slightest interruption, the fallen garments trampled beneath their bare feet.

The lead drummer accompanying the Pila Pila boys furiously belts a hide covered drum with a rubber thong as though his life depends on it, while the boys stamp their feet in the sweltering sun, sweat beading on their adolescent backs, faces tense with concentration.

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A friendly local invites us to watch his building.

In two or four lines, the performers rhythmically stomp and sway, arm movements accentuated by hand-held bouquets - bunches of leaves for some, feathered sticks for others. Their hypnotic, mesmerising melodies tell the story of their clan or village. Gradually those at the back move forward, ensuring everyone has a turn at the front, resulting in long performances and I admire their stamina. Extended families sit on the grass watching proudly, some taking photos.

Suddenly there's a huge rumble and as heads swivel towards Tavurvur I imagine having to run from falling ash. But thankfully it's just wind blowing through the microphone.

Unfortunately, we are only here for one day and will miss the rest of the festival, which includes choirs, gospel bands, theatre groups and a rock band competition, before the Mask Festival featuring fire dancers and forest spirits.

As we walk slowly away in the exhausting heat, the PA system explodes over the singing, reminding us of our obligation to the sponsor.



• Briar Jensen travelled courtesy of Air Niugini and Imajica Experience.



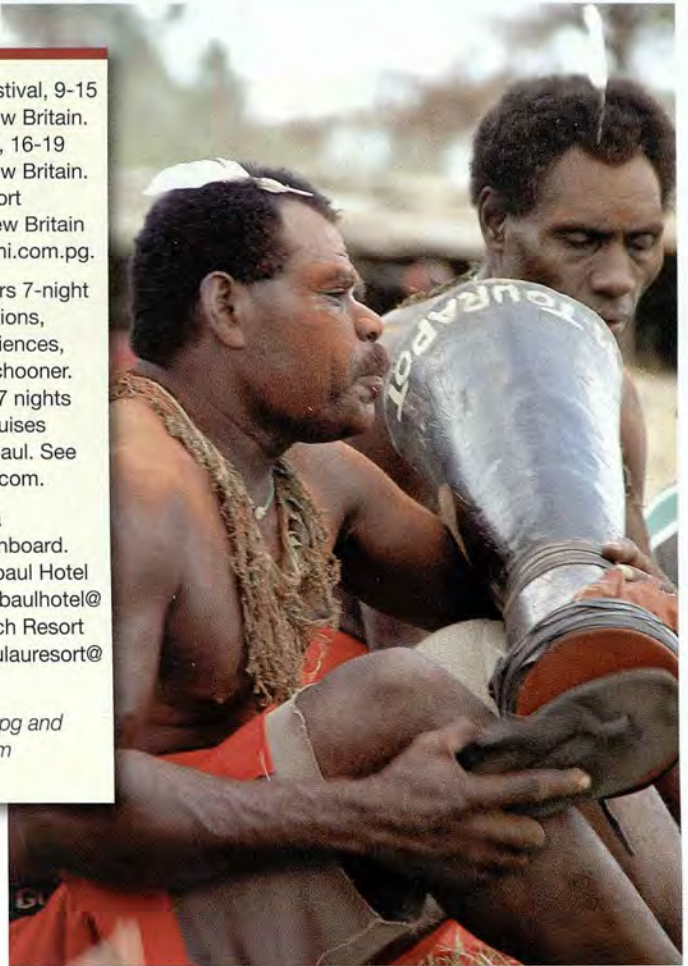
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Bulbophyllum macneiceae.



AN ORCHID PARADISE?

PNG: World's richest orchid hotspot

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | ED VOGEL

b

irds of Paradise, reef fish, corals, hiking and, most of all, enjoying the diverse cultures are major attractions of Papua New Guinea. But plants are not prominent on this list, although at least one plant family deserves to rank high - PNG orchids - unique in the world and deserve a lot of attention.



Tuberolabium rhopalorrhachis.



Appendicula biloba.



Dipodium pandanum.

With 3000 species, Papua New Guinea houses some 10% of all known orchids. That makes this largest tropical island of the world one of the richest orchid hotspots.

Let me be clear. Only a limited number of orchids have big showy flowers that last for over a month. They amaze people all over the world. Among them are a fair number of species highly prized for their horticultural merit and extreme beauty. Many of these have been used for crossings to produce a huge number of hybrids. But who, except a few botanists, have taken a closer look at the large orchids that have flowers one centimetre in diameter or less, which last only a few days?

A close-up of these reveal, very often, that these tiny little jewels have intricate to bizarre shapes of their flowers. Most orchids have beautiful colour patterns, interesting pollination syndromes are common, and when flowering their smell may range from exquisite to absolutely disgusting, or they have no smell at all.

With 3000 species, Papua New Guinea houses some 10% of all known orchids. That makes this largest tropical island of the world one of

the richest orchid hotspots.

You compare this to Borneo or any other region of Southeast Asia: there are more than twice as many orchids in PNG per surface area compared to these regions. And not only that: more than 2750 of these, that is far more than

90% occur only there and nowhere else in the world. Only Madagascar and the Andes in Latin America are at the same level in this respect.

With 3000 species described since before 1900, you would think that the orchids of Papua New Guinea are very well known.

On the contrary, we are only at the beginning of understanding the wealth of this plant family in the region. More than one third of the species is known from only one dried plant, which was collected 50 to 100 years ago.

In PNG, areas exist of up to many thousands of square kilometres which have never been explored, and in West Papua, the now Indonesian part of New Guinea, even less than 1% of the total land surface has never

been visited by a botanist. When a new area is visited, especially at higher altitudes, easily dozens of undescribed species are encountered. In fact, there is hardly an area where no new species occur!

Papua New Guinea orchids have been studied by just a handful of orchid specialists. Only two major scientific contributions to PNG orchids have appeared so far. In 1911, Rudolf Schlechter published "*Die Orchideen von Deutsch Neu Guinea*", containing some 1100 species, followed in 1914 by his "Figuren Atlas".

Unfortunately most of his collected plants did not survive the Second World War when a bomb destroyed the Berlin Herbarium.

J.J. Smith, Director of the Mayor Botanic Garden in Java, published many articles on the results of botanical expeditions in the Western part of Papua New Guinea before WWII. Unfortunately, all these works were written for scientific purposes only, and all descriptions are in Latin and not in English, while their general texts are mostly in German. And who in PNG can read these languages?

Bulbophyllum wakai,
awful smelling flowers
pollinated by blowflies.



Since 1945 no major scientific papers were published on PNG orchids except on parts of the super genera Dendrobium and Bulbophyllum (together far more than 1000 species), and a few popular books by amateur orchid growers appeared.

In 1998, the National Capital Botanic Gardens Port Moresby and the National Herbarium Nederland got together and designed a project to build a new Information System for orchids.

This was backed up by the National Research Institute of PNG and Department of Environment and Conservation. Several joint field trips were made since 2003 to a wide variety of habitats to gather new information. This resulted in hundreds of photographs of plants growing in situ, and thousands of macro photographs of flowers, many not taken before. The teams received much help from local individuals and firms in PNG, including Rimbunan Hijau (PNG) Group, which this year helped the Orchid Project generously by allowing access to their concession area which was never before visited by a botanist. Such help is vital in obtaining information from remote areas which otherwise would remain unknown.



Glomera sp., one of a group of a hundred species.

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Coelogyne beccarii.

Almost 100 years after the first attempt, a new synopsis of the existing knowledge of all 3000 PNG orchids will be available to the PNG public.

Numerous illustrations are present, including published and unpublished drawings, photographs of living and dried specimens, as well as a very large number of high quality photographs of flowers and their details.

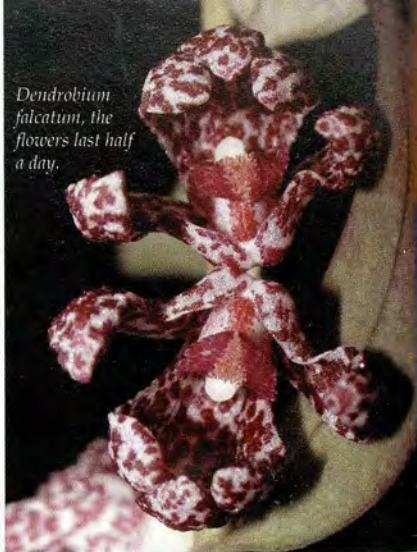
There are two identification keys to the genera, and a large hyperlinked glossary. Four CD-ROMs have been published since 2000, covering all genera and some 1700 species. Volume 5 will be out beginning this year, and the concluding volume during the course of 2008.

Almost 100 years after the first attempt, a new synopsis of the existing knowledge of all 3000 Papua New Guinea orchids will be available to the public. The project will be concluded by a lavishly illustrated book of 800 pages which will also appear in 2008.

Copies of the published CD-ROMs are deposited in the National Library, the National Research Institute, Department of Environment and Conservation, the major Botanical Gardens in Port Moresby and Lae, and in the libraries of the University of Papua New Guinea and Vudal University. They also are on sale.

It is a pleasure to help the PNG people by making them aware of their very special, beautiful, and highly interesting orchids which are unique in the world. Especially the small ones!

• *Ed de Vogel is conservator of Orchidaceae at NHN, coordinator of the PNG Orchid Project, and the author of a large number of articles and book chapters on Southeast Asian orchids. He lectured at 5 consecutive World Orchid Congresses and 5 European Orchid Congresses.*



Dendrobium falcatum, the flowers last half a day.

This Information System of PNG orchids is in electronic form, published on a series of 6 CD-ROMs. Authors are André Schuiteman and Ed de Vogel. All descriptions are now in English, which make them easily accessible. All species are fully described with details on how they grow and on distribution, with a distribution map for each species.



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Did you know that...

The pretty black and orange Hooded Pitohou (Pitohou dichrous) looks such an innocent and harmless bird...but it can be deadly?

Local villagers in various parts of the Papua New Guinea highlands have been aware for centuries that certain brightly coloured songbirds in their jungles were to be avoided. But this fact was unknown to science until relatively recently. We now know that PNG is home to the only known poisonous bird in the world.

Birds of the Pitohou genus - of which there are a number of species - have been found to contain an extremely strong alkaloid poison called a batrachotoxin in their feathers and skins. This chemical is a powerful neurotoxin.

When science first became aware of the toxic qualities of the pitohou birds, they were the only known poisonous birds in the world. Interestingly, the only other natural source of batrachotoxins known was in the Phyllobates poison-dart frogs of western Columbia in South America, which are also brightly coloured.

Now scientists have found another Papua New Guinean bird, the blue-capped ifrita (Ifrita kowaldi) from a totally different family from the Pitohou, which also contains these nasty poisons.

In the Simbai and Kaironk villages of the Highlands of Madang Province, the bird is called slek yakt in their language which literally means 'bitter bird'.

Villagers report that when eaten

it causes a burning sensation stronger than chilli peppers; also apparently even breathing near the bird plumage induces numbness, tingling feelings, coughing and other allergic reactions. In smaller creatures, this poison could be lethal.

As it occurs elsewhere in nature, the bright colouration of these birds serves as a warning to would-be predators that they are unpleasant to eat or even be near. The poisons are concentrated in the skin and feathers of the birds down and when feather particles rub off onto eggs and nest material they provide protection from predators such as snakes, rodents or other birds. These nasty substances may also repel lice or other small parasites.

Scientists have been puzzled as to how the same poison appears to have evolved in different endemic species in places so far apart in the world.

Research has shown a great variation in toxicity between different birds that have been captured and tested. Also experiments on poison-dart frogs grown in captivity have shown that they lack batrachotoxins in their bodies.

Current thinking is that the poison in these creatures is a result of their diet since all are insect eating, although the birds also eat fruit. It is thought that the digestion of Choresine beetles of the Melryridae family produces the neurotoxin, which the birds themselves are immune to.

So to twist the old saying...a pretty bird in the bush should stay in the bush, since in the hand it could be quite unpleasant!



The orange Hooded Pitohou.

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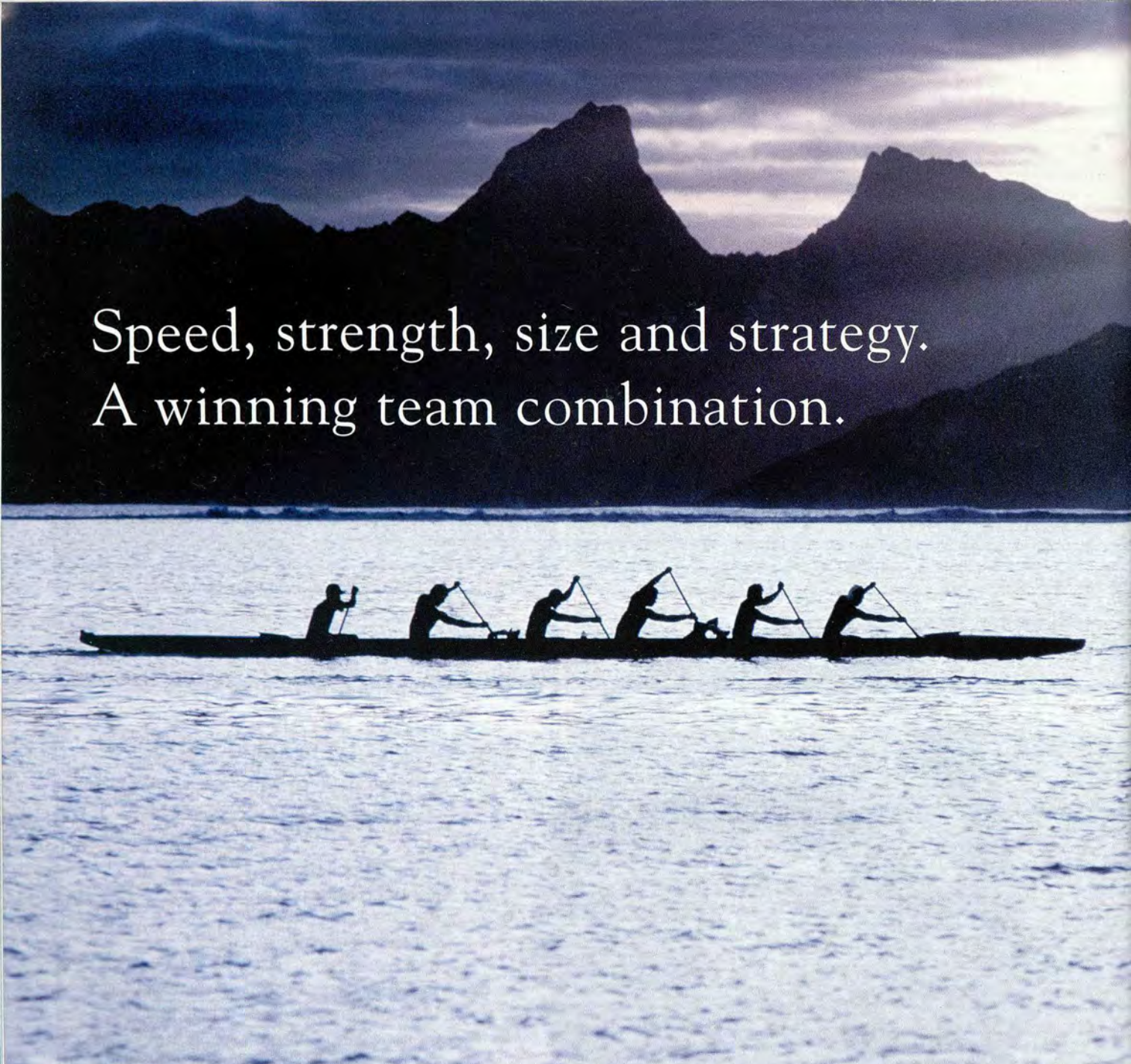
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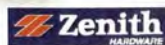
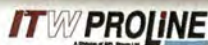
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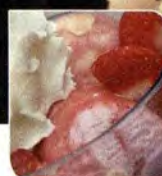
Oil Search manages largest national park in region

WORDS JOHN BROOKSBANK | PHOTOGRAPHY WWF

In the TransFly region of the south coast of the island of New Guinea, there is potential for wildlife management areas on the PNG side of the border to be joined with the Wasur National Park in the Indonesian province of Papua to create a vast protected cross-border wetlands zone.

In birding terms, the huge array of birds in the TransFly, together with other animal species, could draw thousands of tourists a year to the country - and have a standing equivalent to Australia's Kakadu or Africa's Okavango delta.

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In a recent meeting with the management of Oil Search Limited, renowned environmentalist Professor Jared Diamond announced that, "You people think you are managing an oil project - but in reality you are managing the largest national park in the South Pacific!"

Professor Diamond is a celebrity scientist. He is acknowledged as one of the most influential thinkers of our time, who regularly challenges current thinking on a variety of topics.

Fortunately for this country, he has also been an avid birdwatcher his whole life and has regularly visited Papua New Guinea for more than 40 years.

On his latest trip, he spent several weeks mostly in the remote parts of Southern Highlands, Western and Gulf provinces observing his favourite feathered friends. In Western Province, he was guest of honour at a ceremony at Wando village on the Bensbach River in the Transfly region launching another wildlife management area to complement the existing one at Tonda.

"You people think you are managing an oil project - but in reality you are managing the largest national park in the South Pacific!"



The 710,000 hectares of the proposed management area is only a small part of the 10-million hectare Transfly region that stretches from the banks of the Fly River, south to the border with Australia and west into Indonesia. These virtually uninhabited wetlands are frequented by millions of

pelicans, ibis, egrets, herons, brolgas, geese, ducks and waders, many of whom are in transit to or from elsewhere in the world. Because of this, the future of many Australian birds depends on the protection of these Papua New Guinean wetland habitats.

When first invited to visit the Kutubu oilfields by the then operator Chevron Niugini in 1997, Professor Diamond and his associate ornithologist David Bishop were fearful that petroleum development had permanently scarred the landscape as they had observed

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Buff-faced pygmy parrot.



Intermediate egret.

at oil operations elsewhere in Indonesia. However, he found and has continued to find in the years since that quite the opposite is the case.

In fact, species numbers and diversity are far greater within petroleum development licence areas than elsewhere in Papua New Guinea due to the strict regime imposed by the oil companies.

This makes the petroleum licences very

special in the context of the veritable 'zoo' of flora and fauna in this country. Papua New Guinea is important in world terms in terms of species diversity both for endemic birds and those migratory types that spend some of the year in the country - tourist birds from as far north as Siberia and as far south as southern Australia.

The absence of commercial logging, usually sparse populations, minimal firearms usage

and the very small environmental damage footprint of operating companies with their roads, well sites and pipeline routes means that within the petroleum licence areas birds and other animal populations are rarely under any sort of hunting or habitat pressure and therefore thrive.

The Kikori River Basin catchment - amongst the highest in the world - and straddling altitudes that stretch from Doma Peaks near

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Tari at 3500 metres down to the mangrove swamps of the river delta at sea level, houses a huge range of different eco-habitats.

Diamond contends that in a biological sense at least, the island of New Guinea is not the second largest island in the world at all but is in fact its smallest continent.

This is because over time many plant and animal species have developed independently on the island to fill its various ecological niches.

Elsewhere in the world similar niches are filled by different sets of birds and other animal species. This means that Papua New Guinea is home to a suite of some of the most beautiful, remarkable and amazing birds in the world - more than 600 species - a magnet for birdwatchers to the country and the Kikori River Basin in particular.

Oil Search Limited supports the work of the WWF Kikori River Programme, whose area of interest is the river catchment that coincidentally covers all of Papua New Guinea's operating petroleum development licences. For more than 10 years this programme has carried out a range of biodiversity studies, monitoring, community awareness activities and catchment management planning to ensure the unique species found in the region are not lost forever as a result of development activities.

Vulturine parrot.

Papua New Guinea is home to a suite of some of the most beautiful, remarkable and amazing birds in the world...



Diamond is also a director and vice-chairman of WWF in the United States.

Of the 45 species of Birds of Paradise, only five are found anywhere else in the world. Birds that are rare elsewhere in Papua New Guinea can be seen and heard just metres from the Oil Search camps and facilities in the

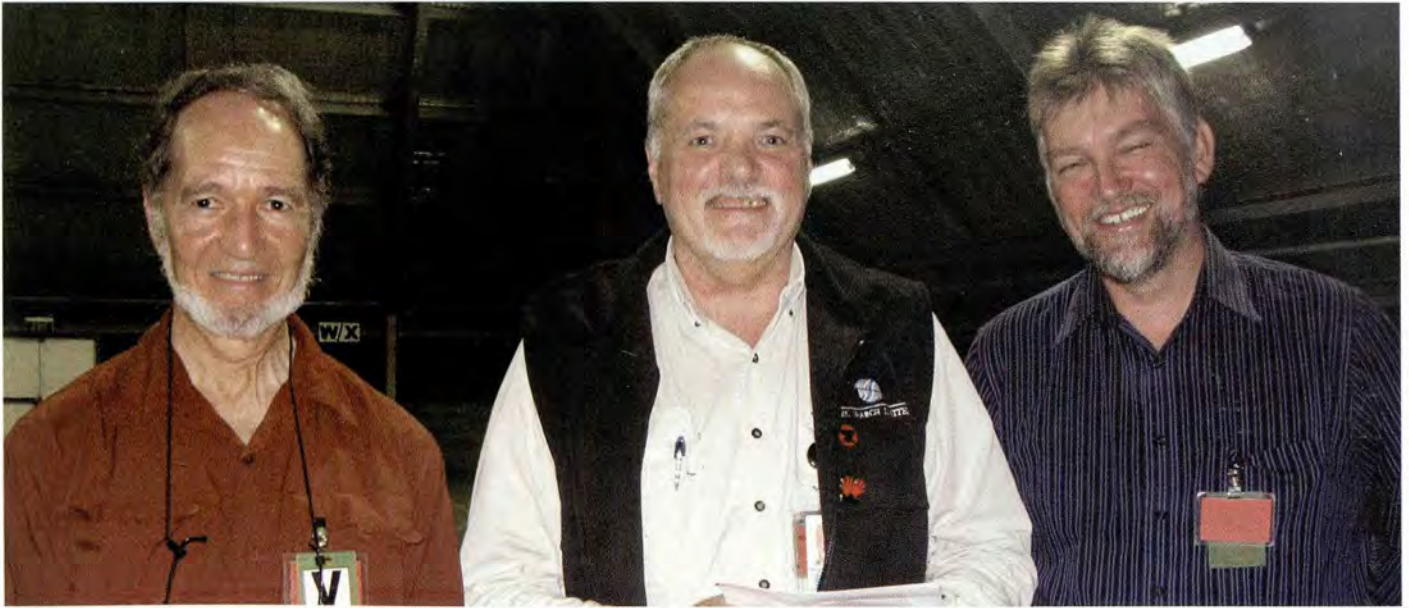
Gulf and Southern Highlands provinces.

Diamond explains that if one listens carefully, one can hear but not necessarily see the interestingly plumaged twelve-wired Bird of Paradise in trees just outside the boundary fence of the Oil Search Ridge camp near Lake Kutubu.



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Jared Diamond and David Bishop flank OSL Field Operations Manager, John Cushworth.

When visiting the oil fields the professor can be seen alongside project roads and camps with his microphone poised ready to record, since he reckons that one hears 500 birds for every one actually seen.

Other strange and unique avian species found in the Oil Search managed "park" include the world's only known underground nesting and roosting bird, the Greater Melampitta; the world's only poisonous bird - the Hooded Pithou; the world's largest pigeon and the country's rarest bird, the Pesquet's Parrot.

For Diamond, being a 'twitcher', as birdwatchers and ornithologists are referred to in some parts of the world, also involves being a birdsong mimic. At a moment's notice he can, for example, give a rendition of the calls of five or six different species of pigeon and other birds found in PNG.

The professor, a Pulitzer prize winner for his book *Guns Germs & Steel* (1997), has incorporated his knowledge of Papua New

Guinea into some of his widely acclaimed books. These include *The Third Chimpanzee* and *Collapse*, in which he is able to use his encyclopaedic knowledge to distil a range of complex scientific facts and theory to describe his reasoning for various events in a language that everyone can understand. All deal in some way with man's impact on the world.

He explains that care for the environment, apart from being 'the right thing to do' and providing a feeling of well-being is also beneficial to the bottom line of companies

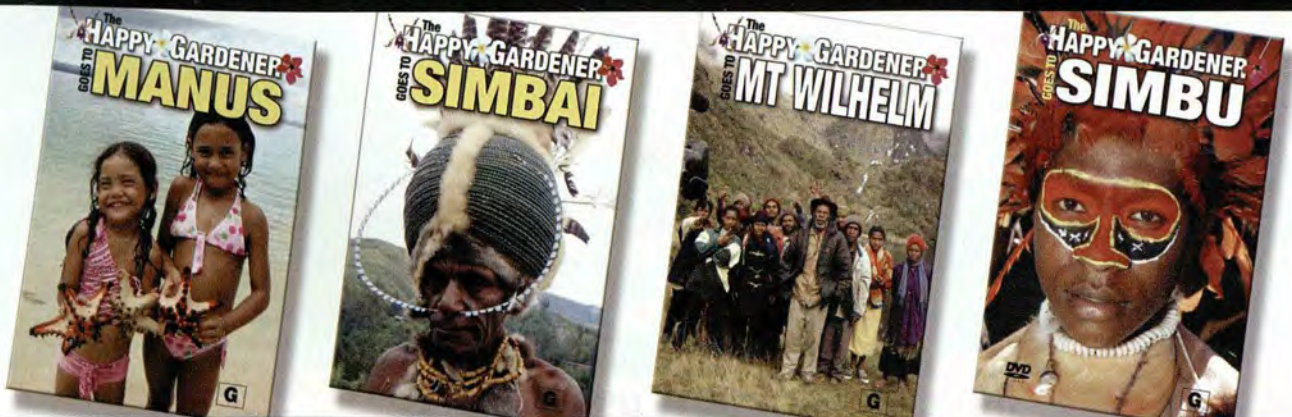
Resource companies such as Oil Search are judged by their industry peers, their shareholders and the world at large on their performance in supporting sustainable development, as well as their ability to generate profits and dividends.

This makes the positive comments made about Papua New Guinea and companies that operate here, by someone as eminent and well known as Professor Diamond, of great importance.

Sea eagle.



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MEMBER



Sister Verdun Sheah.

A SONG FOR SISTER SHEAH

By Bob Piper

In November 1945, a RAAF transport aircraft crashed on a 7000 feet mountain peak during a short flight from Jacquinot Bay to Rabaul in Papua New Guinea. All 28 on board lost their lives. Among the crew was Sister Verdun Sheah, whose remarkable life and premonition of the accident made the loss all the more tragic. The crash of the aircraft at the time also created considerable anguish back in Australia for the RAAF, the Australian government and relatives of those on board. This was the fourth Douglas C-47 transport lost in as many months and three others were still missing.

First, there was a series of thumps and heavy bumps as the plane began bouncing through the tops of the trees, followed by the screech of tearing metal as the aluminium fuselage sank further into the branches and began impacting with heavier branches and limbs.

For those on board, it all seemed to be happening in slow motion. In that same split second of time Sister Verdun Sheah probably knew that the deep premonitions she had recently been experiencing might indeed be now correct.

Not a soul survived. The airforce aircraft lay shattered and silent, just a mere 100 feet from the mountain crest. So close and yet so far. A slight back pressure on the control column by one of the pilots during the flight would probably have brought the plane clear.

During World War II, the Australian Air Force operated a number of squadrons flying the immortal Douglas DC-3, Dakota, "Gooney Bird" or C-47. These plodding transports, some of which are still flying today, operated far and wide throughout Australia and the south-west Pacific.

To complement these Dakota flights, especially with wounded soldiers and ex-POWs on board, the RAAF had created their flying nurses. All trained sisters to begin with undertook a further specialised aviation course to gain their "wings".

The Douglas C-47 aircraft.



Based at Lae, on the northern side of Papua New Guinea, in November 1945 was No. 33 Squadron RAAF. Nearby was No. 1 Medical Air Evacuation Transport Unit (MAETU) and staff member Sister Verdun Bernice Sheah.

The flight for 15 November 1945 was a regular courier run, beginning at Lae and on to Jacquinot Bay and Rabaul on New Britain. Allocated for the flight was RAAF Douglas C-47 No. A65-54 with the civil registration VH-CUP.

It is said that Sister Sheah offered to stand in for another nurse who was rostered for the flight and reported in sick. Sheah who was 29 had been born at Narrandera and trained at Leeton Hospital before enlisting in the RAAF in 1941.

Pilot for the day was Flight Lieutenant Ron Hanrahan, a former Woolworth's branch manager of Sydney.

Hanrahan had some 1382 hours flying experience but only 138 hours on Douglas transports.

The co-pilot was Flight Lieutenant Grahame Lobwein from Toowoomba in Queensland, who had earlier been awarded an Air Force Cross for air sea rescue work in the Darwin area.

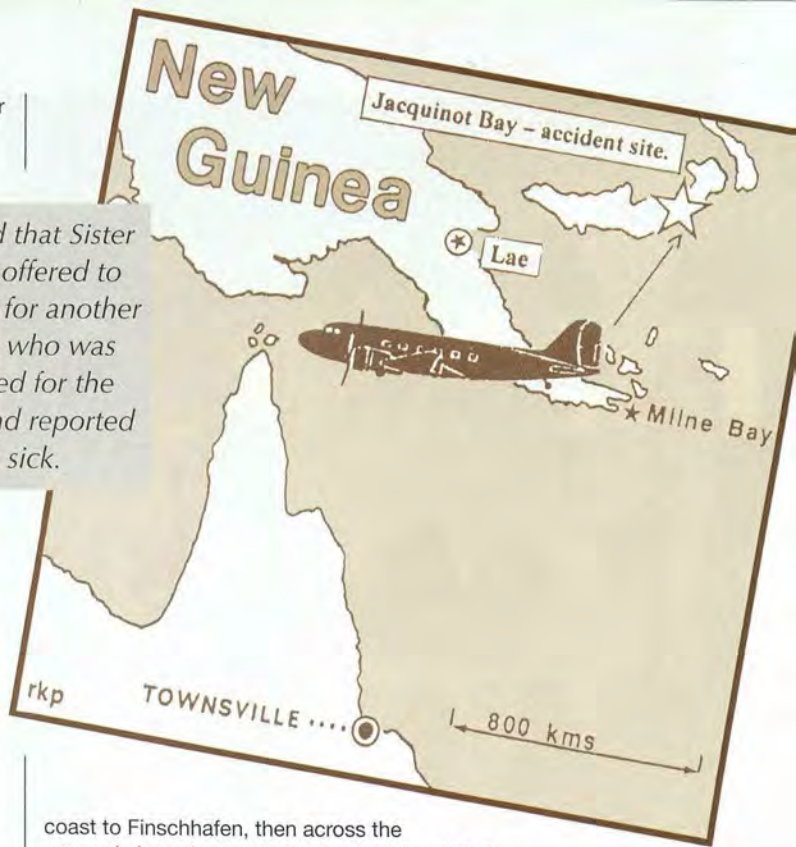
Both men, although with a good flying record and hours in other smaller aircraft, were relatively new to Douglas C-47s and had only started flying them four months earlier.

The radio operator was Flight Sgt Douglas Bruderlin of Singleton, New South Wales. There were also two unusual aspects of the flight.

Eleven former Indian Army POWs, liberated earlier from Wewak, were also on the flight as well as a stowaway, LAC Norman Blake of Melbourne. Three navy passengers, six army personnel and four other RAAF members made the total of 28 and a full aircraft.

It had been an uneventful pre-dawn departure flight from Lae, up the

It is said that Sister Sheah offered to stand in for another nurse, who was rostered for the flight and reported in sick.



coast to Finschhafen, then across the sea and along the southern coast of New Britain.

The aircraft, VH-CUP, had covered the 300 odd miles in about two hours with two stops. At 9am the Douglas transport departed Jacquinot Bay for the 50-minute flight to Rabaul, on the far end of New Britain.

This was tiger country, compared to the earlier scenic trip, with thick jungle and volcanic mountain peaks to bar the way.

Kokoda Trail Wall Map

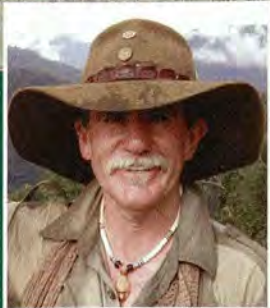
The Owen Stanley Ranges

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Charlie Lynn
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Sometime early in the flight, it was noticed that there was an unlisted RAAF passenger on board. Twenty year-old Norman Blake was apparently brought upfront to the cockpit and allowed to send a radio message back to Jacquinot Bay, to report his absence.

This inflight distraction to the crew 15 minutes into the journey, might have contributed to the looming fatal consequences.

The cool tropical clouds and soothing rumble of the aircraft's twin radial engines were a welcome respite from Papua New Guinea's hot and humid coastal aerodromes. Passengers relaxed in the cooler air as the aircraft plodded for height. It was a steady cruise climb at the usual 325 feet a minute and 130mph.

No two pilots deliberately fly into a mountain top so it must be assumed that VH-CUP continued its cruise climb, possibly on auto pilot, into cloud or rain. Were they checking their maps, slightly off course, or was the World War II map listing the mountains at the incorrect height? It seems a combination of all three.

Slightly to the right of the aircraft's direct track lies an un-named mountain that on modern aviation maps is listed as 7598 feet high. Wartime maps list it, however, as only 7000 feet. It now appears that the two pilots thought they would clear it by a comfortable 500 feet. In fact they were 98 feet short and flew into the mountain tree tops a mere 100 feet from the peak.

Papua New Guinea is notorious for its rock studded clouds. The country's mountain peaks are cluttered with hundreds of aluminium skeletons of crashed aircraft that nearly just cleared them.

Many accidents were due to weather and others to pilots flying without oxygen and suffering from the heightened self confidence of hypoxia. Last but not least, were pilots trusting maps in a time when they were simply not accurate in mountain heights, some peaks being thousands of feet higher and even lower than actually marked?

Sister Verdun Sheah with group.

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"She was loved by other members of the unit and also by the patients and others she worked with."

Sister Verdun Sheah (centre) at Koala Park.

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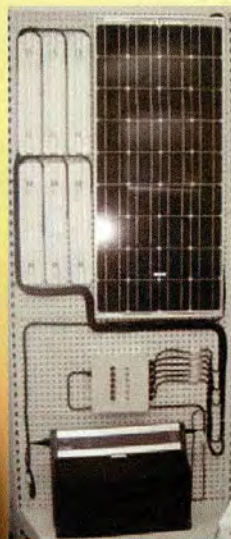


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Solar World "when everyday is a sun day"

Twenty minutes out and 30 miles from departure, RAAF Douglas A65-54 with 28 souls on board, including Sister Sheah, struck the top of the unnamed New Britain mountain peak.

The position was just six nautical miles inland from Wide Bay and a coastal area known as Milim.

When the RAAF courier aircraft failed to arrive at Rabaul, a search was quickly organised. More than the usual panic set in back at RAAF headquarters, the press and Australian government circles. In the preceding four months, three other Douglas transports had disappeared and still not being found.

A Royal Air Force Douglas KN-344 with a RAAF crew had failed to arrive at Milne Bay in July. In August, another RAAF Douglas had disappeared with nursing sister Marie Craig on board, during a flight from Morotai to Horn Island. In September, the RAAF Douglas C-47 VH-CIJ had disappeared within minutes of departure, also at Milne Bay. Now a fourth one was gone. It was a disaster of the worst magnitude.

A Catalina flying boat, some Beaufort bombers and another Douglas transport were quickly dispatched as part of the search. In addition, crash boats were sent to scour the sea and coast near where the Douglas aircraft was thought to have flown.

First to quickly find the missing plane on the following day (16th), was Squadron Leader

Jim Maloney, the commanding officer of 33 Squadron. Maloney radioed back at 1400 hours that from the large area over which the wreckage was strewn, it seemed almost impossible that any of those on board could have survived the crash.

Portion of a wing was sighted hanging from a tree and the tops of other trees were sheared 10 feet down for a distance of 200 feet.

Pieces of silver and green aircraft scattered around suggested the transport did not burn. The last one thousand feet of the mountain peak had a grade of one in two. It was apparent by the wreckage distribution that Hanrahan and Lobwein had tried to desperately pull the nose of the aircraft up and over the peak at the last moment, but the steepness of the terrain had beaten them.

A ground party, which included a doctor and medical assistants, was quickly despatched by foot to the scene.

The group carried Verey pistols to signal overhead aircraft as well as pigeons to send written messages back to base. As the searchers approached the accident site, a Boomerang fighter dropped smoke bombs to guide them on the final stage.

The search party quickly confirmed there were no survivors. After identifying those on board, recovering mail and personal items, the group headed back to Jacquinot Bay to make their report.

The following day, another aircraft from 33 Squadron overflew the crash site and dipped its wings in salute to the 28 below. It dropped two wreaths, one for the crew from the men back at the squadron and one for "Chic" (Sister Sheah). The one from the nursing sisters was made of frangipanni and lilies.

Senior Sister E.C. Smith (Army), who served with Sheah, said she gained her nickname by her immaculate appearance under any circumstances, even after alighting after a long and difficult flight.

"She was loved by other members of the unit, and also by the patients and others with whom she worked," Sister Smith said to newspapers at the time.

Sheah had already experienced some of the dangers of flying before her last fatal flight. In writing to her sister Lorraine back in Australia, she spoke of having her aircraft turn back because of poor weather and on another occasion of an inflight engine failure, forcing the aircraft to limp to Jacquinot Bay on one engine.

In October 1945, an American bomb dumped at Lae went up only 500 yards from Sister Sheah's campsite with blasts and whistling pieces of shrapnel overhead all night. "Nobody had a wink of sleep and I expected pieces of shrapnel to land in my tent every minute," Sheah was to write in her 22 October 1945 letter.



SIR HUBERT MURRAY

A Big Man in Every Way

By James Sinclair



Sir Hubert Murray was one of the most complex, fascinating figures in PNG history. He was Administrator and Lieutenant-Governor of the Territory of Papua from 1907 to his death in February, 1940 - the longest period in office in British colonial history.

He played a controversial role in the downfall of the previous Administrator, Captain F.R. Barton, and inherited a small public service driven with bitterness and distrust. He was initially cordially detested by many of his own officers and most of the small white community of Papua, but by the end was universally revered as a wise, enlightened colonial governor.

For most of his life in Papua, Murray lived alone. His habits were austere, his manner aloof. He achieved a great deal during his

long service with pitifully scant resources of men and money. But by the time of his death, he had become consumed by a profound conviction that his administration had been a failure. Papua had, in fact, fallen behind more advanced colonies towards the end of his long and honourable governorship, as age, disappointment and disillusionment caught up with him.

John Hubert Plunkett Murray was born on 29 December, 1861, at Manly, New South Wales and was educated at Sydney Grammar School and at Oxford University.

A tall man and powerfully built, his academic career was distinguished. He was an accomplished sportsman, becoming the amateur champion heavyweight boxer of England in 1886.

He returned to Australia later that year, where he was admitted to the NSW Bar. He married Sybil Jenkins in 1889, with whom he had two children. He hated the dull grind of routine legal work and took time off to serve as a soldier during the Boar War.

On his return to Sydney, he found it impossible to settle down, and in 1904 applied for and won the position of Chief Judicial Officer (CJO) of British New Guinea, vacant since the suicide of the Administrator Judge C.S. Robinson.

He served as CJO during the years of internal dissension and strife leading up to the assumption of Australian control over British New Guinea, which began with the proclamation of the Papua Act on 1 September, 1906. British New Guinea now became the Australian Territory of Papua.

Murray began his governorship with optimism and drive. He wanted to develop labour and land policies that would protect the rights of the Papuan people, while at the same time encouraging white business enterprise, which he believed would be essential if Papua were to become a self-supporting colony.

But the small white population at first resisted his policies, which they saw to be overly protective of the native population, at their expense.

The outbreak of the Great War, and the post-war application of the hated Australian Navigation Act to Papua brought the territory to a low ebb, further degraded by the effects

of the Great Depression. Murray was blamed by sections of the white population for events over which he had no influence.

When Murray became Lieutenant-Governor, much of the interior of Papua was still unknown. One of the main achievements of his administration was exploration and the extension of government control.

He established government stations in new country and sent out a series of long exploratory patrols, the most famous the North-West Patrol of 1926-1928 led by Charles Karius, Assistant Resident Magistrate and Ivan Champion, Patrol Officer, which crossed New Guinea from the Fly to the Sepik; the Strickland-Purari Patrol of 1935 led by Jack Hides ARM and Jim O'Malley, PO (the first to penetrate into today's Southern Highlands Province); the Bamu-Purari Patrol of 1936, led by Champion and PO Bill Adamson, which followed up the work of Hides and O'Malley; and the Lake Kutubu Patrol of 1937, led by Claude Champion ADO and F.W.G. Andersen, PO, which led to the establishment of Lake Kutubu Police Camp under Ivan Champion and Bill Adamson, from which the exploration of the Southern Highlands was largely completed just before the outbreak of the Pacific War.

These patrols were accompanied by detachments of the renowned Royal Papuan Constabulary, developed and expanded by Murray from the nucleus Armed Constabulary of Sir William MacGregor.

"Judge Murray's police" and their distinctive uniforms of blue serge became known to the tribes of every corner of Papua.

Murray was revered by his "Outside Men". Physically very strong until his very last years, Murray made annual visits of inspection, usually on foot, to the most remote of the stations and kept a close and knowing eye on the activities of his officers, aided by his Government Secretary and friend, the almost equally austere H W Champion.

Walking in the mountainous interior of Papua was not for the faint-hearted, and many of Murray's young officers found it was all they could do to keep up with their elderly governor.

Murray attempted to encourage Papuans to develop cash-crops but with limited success.

He did all he could with the miserable resources available to him to provide the rudiments of a medical service to the villagers. But to the end of his time, almost all village medical treatment and basic primary education services were provided by the Christian Missions.

He developed a system of village councillors and appointed native assessors to assist his officers in the administration of justice.

He strove constantly to bridge the gap between black and white - with not much success. He did not in fact believe Papuans were capable of governing themselves, but this did not lessen his personal feelings towards them.

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White opposition to his policies came to a head in 1920, when a section of the community sent a telegram to King George V asking for his immediate removal from office, on the grounds that Murray's "persistent and persecuting actions" were "leading to serious and dangerous uprising of white people" in Papua. Nothing came of this, and the more responsible elements of the white community were soon shamed into a belated realisation of the seriousness of the step they had so impulsively taken.

Murray was knighted in 1925 and residents were united in their acclaim for a man of whom they were now intensely proud.

An editorial in the only territory newspaper, Papuan Courier, said: "We all know and feel that in intellectual power, in mental accomplishments and in scholarship, Sir Hubert is a Gulliver among the Lilliputs...there is no doubt that our Governor is in every way a Big Man."

Perhaps the greatest disappointment of Murray's time in Papua was his failure to convince the authorities that the former German New Guinea - occupied by an Australian force on the outbreak of the Great War - should be added to the Territory of Papua, with the combined territories coming under his administration. Instead, the League of Nations granted Australia a mandate over the former German colony, and an entirely separate administration was established, which ran the affairs of the Mandated Territory

*"But who is like him in Papua?
There is none. There never will
be one like him. He came among
us and saw our lives. Sometimes
when he was younger, he hunted
and fished with us.
He knew us in all our ways.
Sometimes when his work was
done, he met us on the roads. As
we came home from our gardens
he greeted us. Now we have lost
him, for he is dead. We shall not
know his friendly ways again."*

of New Guinea until the outbreak of the Pacific War. It took the Japanese invasion to force the amalgamation of the two territories.

Murray's wife, Sybil, died in 1929. She was sickly and was able to bear life in Papua for very limited periods. In 1930, he married again to Mildred Vernon, but she, too, disliked Papua and spent little time there. The second marriage failed in 1934. Murray was essentially alone for most of his service.

Leonard Murray, son of Murray's stepbrother, Aubrey Murray, became Murray's private secretary in 1909, and acted as master of Murray's official yacht, the beautiful Laurabada, during his uncle's constant voyaging along the Papuan coastline. Sir

Hubert was on board Laurabada in February, 1940, on a tour of the Trobriands, when he fell ill. He had narrowly survived a heart attack in 1934, and Leonard, worried about the old man, immediately abandoned the tour and set sail for Samarai. There Sir Hubert died, on 28 February, at the age of 78.

His body was flown to Port Moresby in a Royal Australian Air Force flying-boat and there he was buried at Bomana Cemetery. He was deeply mourned by the Motu people among whom he had lived for so long. Forty days of mourning were kept, with great watch fires constantly burning on the bare brown ridges surrounding Port Moresby.

At a great gathering at Tanobada, a village constable spoke his epitaph: "But who is like him in Papua? There is none. There never will be one like him. He came among us and saw our lives. Sometimes when he was younger, he hunted and fished with us. He knew us in all our ways. Sometimes when his work was done, he met us on the roads. As we came home from our gardens he greeted us. Now we have lost him, for he is dead. We shall not know his friendly ways again. There were Governors here before him, but we know nothing of them. Our fathers have not told us of them. There has been only one Governor in our time. He was the best of men; our children and their children will talk of him. He promised us all, 'I will not leave you. I will die in Papua'. His words were the words of a true man, for his body lies in our ground."

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Lodged on a very narrow strip between the Gulf of Thailand and a beautiful lagoon is the principal seaport of south Thailand, Songkhla. A gaping 1,320 kilometres south of the country's capital, Bangkok, this sprawling coastal town of 7,393 square kilometres with a population of 1.3 million is seemingly built on legends.

It is said that Songkhla is the only place in the world where you can see a mouse that is bigger than a cat. Legend has it that a merchant from southern China plied his junk laden with a huge assortment of goods between his hometown and Songkhla. Upon offloading his Chinese merchandise in Songkhla, he would then fully load his vessel with Songkhla products for his return passage. Thus, he shuttled between his hometown and Songkhla running a flourishing business.

One day, while pottering around his hometown in search of suitable goods, he chanced upon a cat and a dog, both of which were cute and adorable to the hilt. So he bought them from their master with a view to raising them on his junk to keep him company on his long voyages.

But the cat and dog soon got bored with being corseted on board the slow boat from China to Songkhla. They wanted to have no more of those interminably long voyages and soon conspired to get back on terra firma.

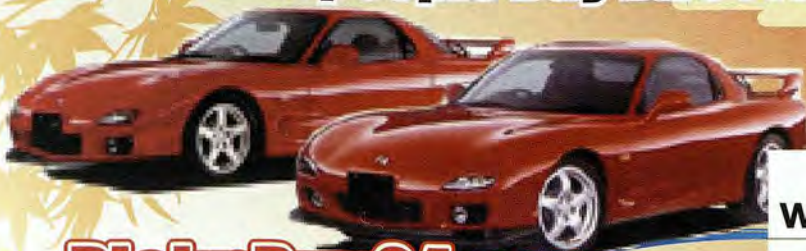
One day, the dog came to know that the merchant possessed a magic crystal which could prevent its owner from drowning. He whispered to the cat about it. Thereupon the cat devised a clever plan to get the crystal by cajoling a mouse, another unhappy cohabitant on the junk, to filch it from their master. As the mouse was likewise bored and equally dying to get away with the cat and the dog, he was more than willing to put himself forth to the risky task.

SONGKHLA

THE STUFF OF LEGENDS

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | TAN HOO CHWOON

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As the junk approached Songkhla, the mouse stole the crystal and have it sequestered in its mouth. And at the appropriate moment and the prearranged signal, the three good friends jumped boat and swam furiously towards shore. Halfway through, the mouse suddenly feared that upon landing on shore the dog and the cat might forcibly prise the crystal away from it. So it decided to give them the slip and have the crystal exclusively to itself.

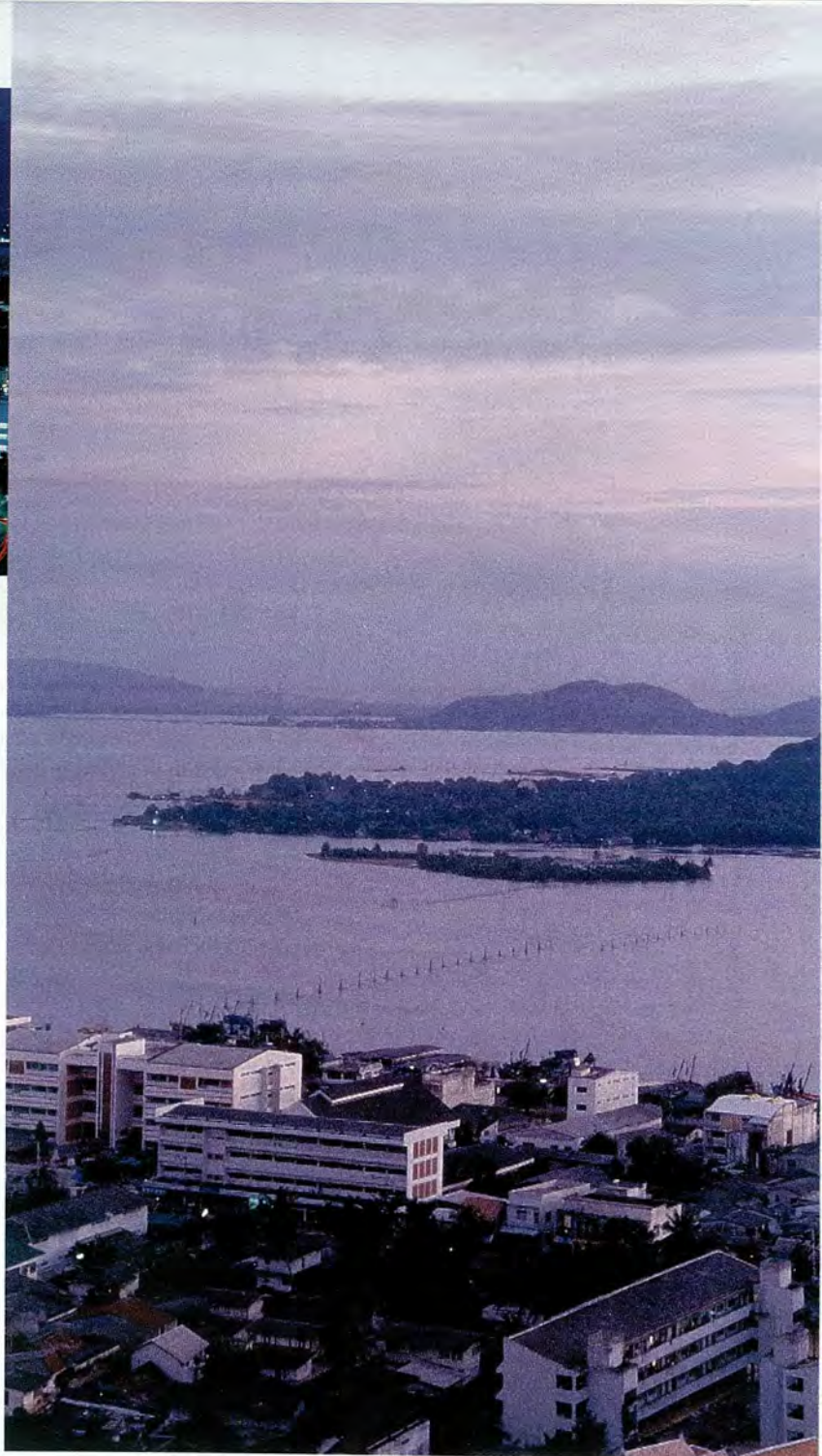
Indeed, the cat did harbour that devious thought of having the magic crystal solely to itself and promptly proceeded to pounce on the mouse which instinctively made a supreme effort to pull away, during the course of which, it accidentally let the crystal slip out of its mouth.

But by now, both animals had become terribly exhausted and finally drowned. It is said that the two animals turned into the islands of Koh Noo (Mouse Island) and Koh Maew (Cat Island) which bear great resemblance to the two animals.

Of the three animals, only the dog managed to get on shore, but it, too, died of exhaustion and turned into a hill called Kao Tangkuan (Tangkuan Hill) which looks down on Koh Noo and Koh Maew, its treacherous friends.

What about the magic crystal? Well, it fell on the sea-bed and fragmented into tiny pieces and turned into a sandy beach stretching north to Songkhla Bay.

To give the legend concrete form, in the millennium year, ten good men and one good woman jointly donated a handsome sum of 1.2 million Bahts to have bronze statues of the mouse and cat designed, moulded, cast and sited on Songkhla's much-beloved Samila Beach so that the moral of the story will never be lost to succeeding generations.



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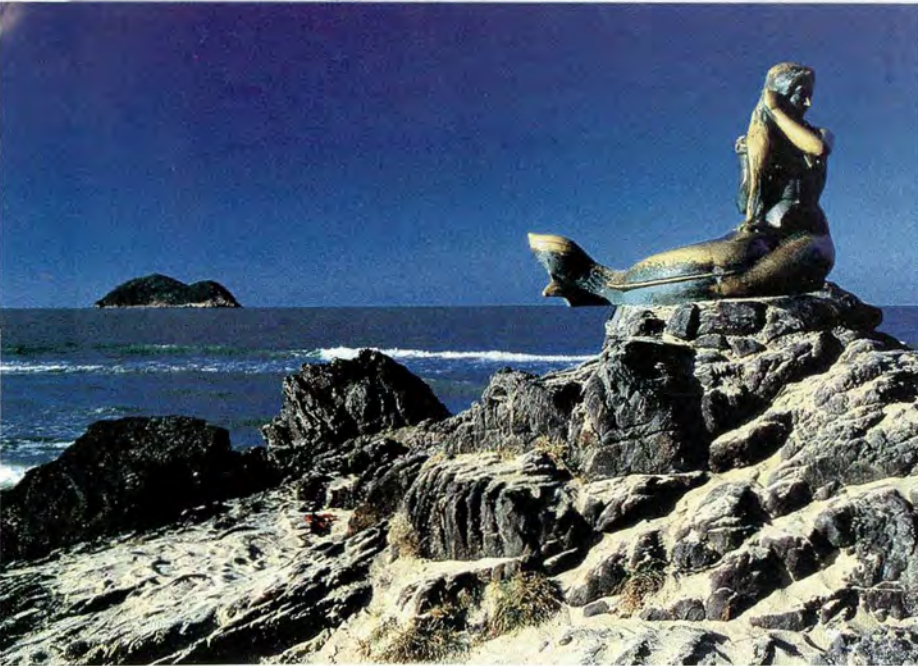


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But these two statues have to compete for attention with that of the much older and iconic Golden Mermaid on the similar stretch of Samila Beach. The mermaid is the protagonist in Phra Apaimanee, an old Thai story penned by Soonthorn Phu, the great poet of King Rama II (1809 - 1824). It tells of a beautiful mermaid who sat down on Samila Beach combing her beautiful hair on a stormy night. A young fisherman, in the midst of rain, thunder and lightning, appeared before her eyes and unwittingly frightened her: She fled into the sea. He waited and waited and waited. But she never returned. And he died

of heartbreak. To appease his spirits, a statue of the Golden Mermaid was built to the tune of 60,000 Bahts by the Songkhla Municipality on Samila Beach in 1966.

Whether a journey to Songkhla for the express purpose of flying a kite on its famous Samila Beach or to savour its fresh, succulent seafood, the local folks will no doubt regale you with these stories. Just tell them you first learnt about them in **PARADISE.**



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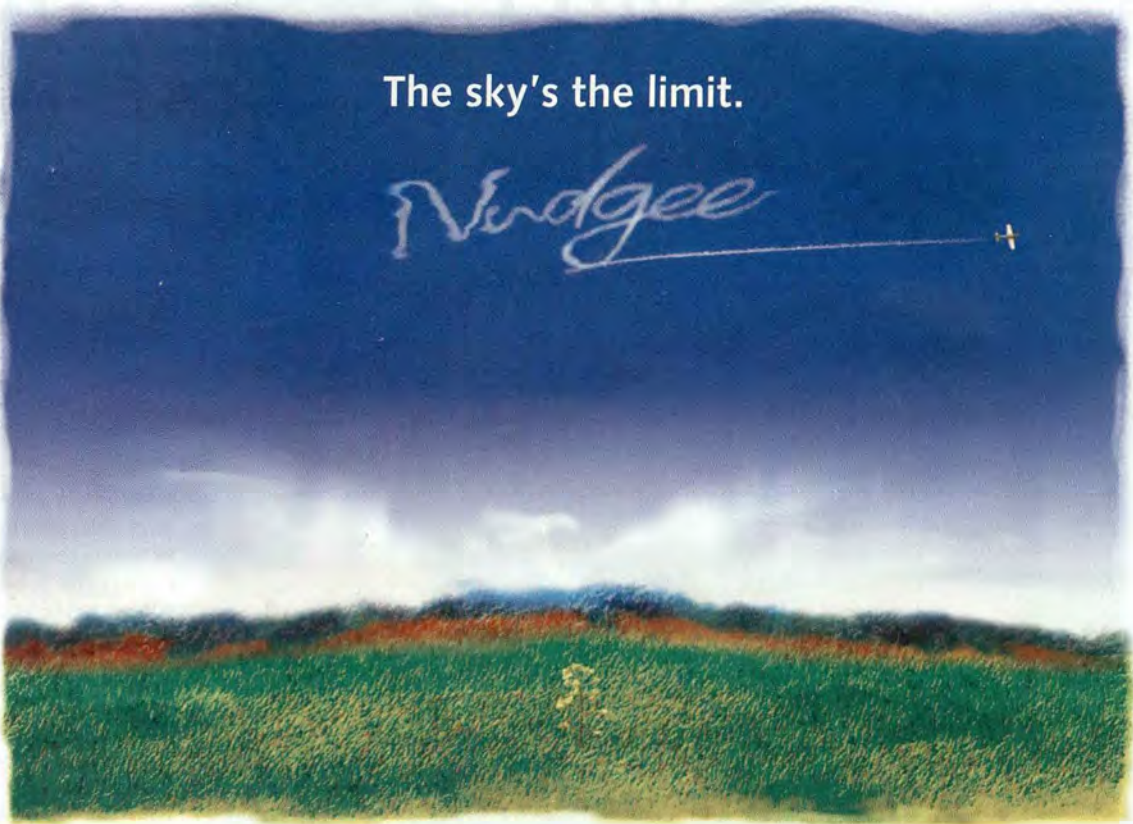
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SWITZERLAND OF THE ORIENT

Nagano's ski areas

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | JOHN BORTHWICK



Amid a grand, snow-clad pine forest near Shiga Kogen, we hike to a little spot called Jigokudani.

The name translates as Hell's Valley because of its numerous hot springs that fume, Hades-like.

However, this is monkey heaven. Here, in the Jigokudani Monkey Park, we find a troop of 30 Japanese macaques revelling in what can only be called a Monkey Spa.

The ground, not to mention the air, may be thick with snow but the red-faced monkeys have their own hot spring. Immersed in it, they preen, simmer and nit-pick before hopping out to chill out to the point of freezing. Then it's back into the anti-freeze pool to thaw out. This simian onsen is a delightful show with the monkey families blithely ignoring we visitors and our eager lenses. Amused, amazed and shivering in the falling snow, we wish that we, too, could warm up in the hot spring.

It's a chalk and cheese experience. You leave winter-grey Tokyo and its subways full of exhausted commuters, zip 90 minutes north on a bullet train, hop on a bus, then step into a bright new world.

At 1500 metres the Japan Alps sparkle all around you, the Nagano light is clear, the Shigakogen snow slopes china-white. And down an endless web of ski runs, Japanese of all ages, at last duded up in colour, are ripping and gliding with gleeful, if not kamikaze cool.

Nagano Prefecture, northwest of Tokyo on Japan's main island of Honshu, is sometimes known as the "Switzerland of the Orient." If Switzerland had 250 hot springs and 160 ski resorts, not to mention snow monkeys, it could be the Nagano of Europe.

We have come to sample just two of Nagano's principal ski areas, Shiga Kogen and Hakuba, both of which hosted major events in the 1998 Winter Olympics.



At 1500 metres the Japan Alps sparkle all around you, the Nagano light is clear, the Shigakogen snow slopes china-white.

Shiga Kogen, Japan's largest ski resort, has 21 ski and snowboard areas and some 70 lifts, ropeways and gondolas.

"It would take at least four days to ski every run here," says my guide. "We've got a mix of beginner, intermediate and expert runs for skiers and snowboarders of all standards."

So, it's my turn, a non-skier. All the hire equipment at my ski-in/ski-out hotel is in top condition. However, someone hands me a jacket and pants that look like they were designed by Ronald Macdonald on a liquorice all-sorts diet. All the better, perhaps, for others on the slopes to see and thus avoid me.

Snowboarder at Hakuba.



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One of Nagano's many onsens... where you can scrub your weary body first then lower yourself into a pool that's steaming like a kettle.

A patient guide spends the next two hours giving me a crash course in snowboarding. Crash course, indeed. However, by the end I am combining both upright stance and downhill motion, and at the same time.

Meanwhile, my more advanced companions head off to do the 1998 Winter Olympics alpine course, a 1900-metre route with a 1000-metre vertical drop.

Back at the hotel, elated or deflated, bruised or ebullient, we are all soon equal in the eyes of the world, because we are naked. That is, one of the finest aspects of Nagano skiing is that any halfway good hotel has its own onsen, hot spring.

Yes, they are segregated. You scrub your weary body first then lower yourself into a pool that's steaming like a kettle.

Shiga Kogen, my view of the mountain slope beyond the pool, stark

with winter trees against a wall of fresh snow, is like an Oriental scroll painting.

I look out to see instead of a meditative sage in robes, a girl snowboarder ripping across the view, dressed like something from a manga cartoon in bright, baggy pants and backward cap.

Our next stop is the Hakuba Valley. Its 10 resorts, with 160 lifts and 200 groomed trails, offer some of the longest vertical skiing in Japan, with runs of up to eight kilometres.

One downside of skiing is the foreplay, so to speak, all the fitting and adjusting of hire gear.

"When one subtracts from life infancy, sleep, eating and swilling, buttoning and unbuttoning - how much remains of downright existence?" asked poet Lord Byron.

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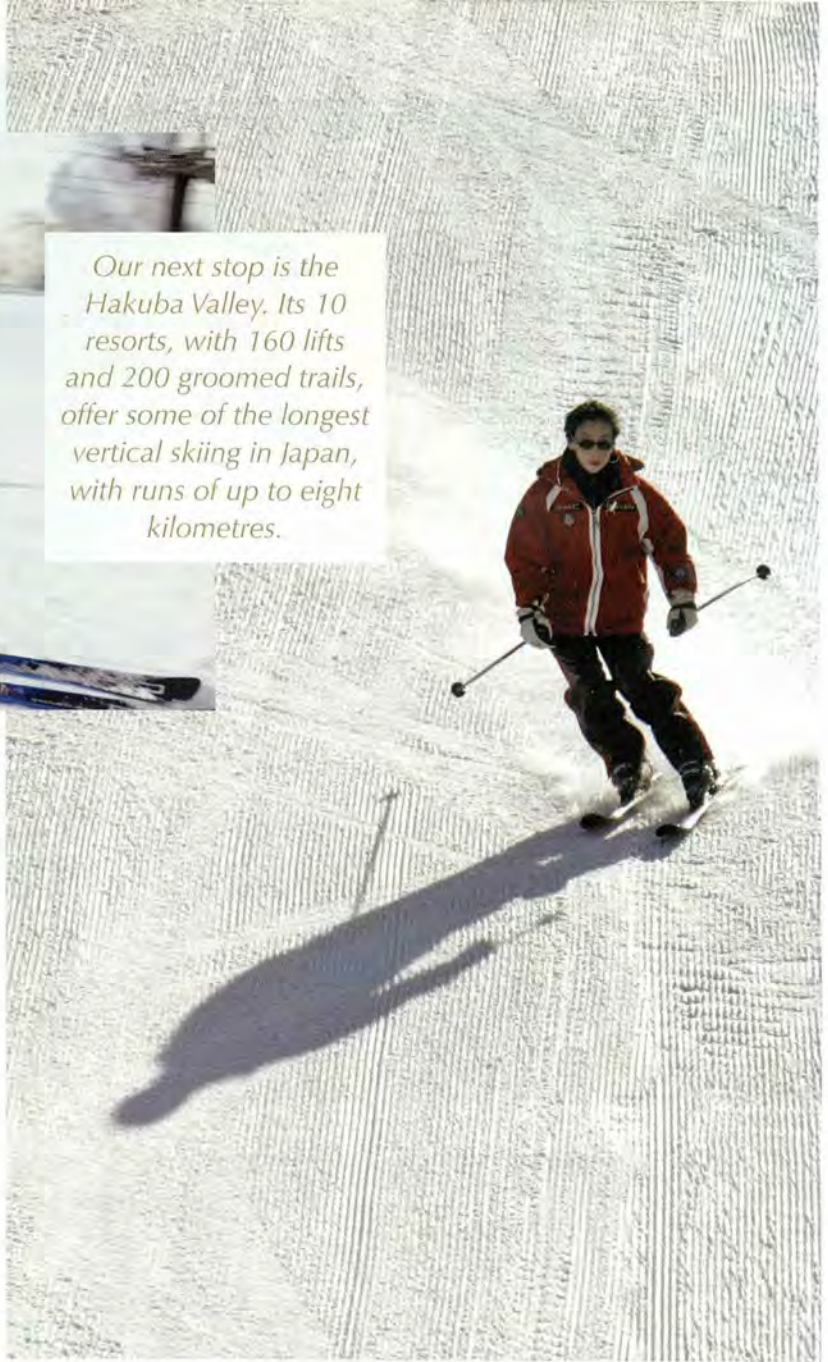
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Our next stop is the Hakuba Valley. Its 10 resorts, with 160 lifts and 200 groomed trails, offer some of the longest vertical skiing in Japan, with runs of up to eight kilometres.



He might have been talking about skiing. (He answered his own question with, "The summer of a dormouse.")

Kitted out this time less like Ronald McAllsort, I try Hakuba's Happo-One run. OK, I mingle with the Japanese kids who juggle cigarettes and cell phones between runs and their trips to the inevitable McDonald's at the top of the gondola.

I look down the plunging slope and know that it is beyond my competence. I chose to lose face, rather than plant face, and do the unthinkable, go back down in the gondola.

Japanese ski culture has a definite banzai quality to it - take the beginner to the top of the hill and throw them off. I choose inaction over traction.

Back at the hotel I ditch my snowboard in a public rack and retire to the onsen. Here, at least, everyone is meant to be equal. Well-soaked and steamed two hours later, I remember I left my snowboard outside in the rack. In any other country, it would be long gone and hocked. Here, it sits awaiting my admiration for the honesty of the Japanese.



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The young tour guide is holding a heavy, thickset spider in the palm of her hand. It is an Australian tarantula with the somewhat quaint name of Savah.

We are told Savah is venomous and can deliver a very nasty bite, symptoms last up to eight hours and include severe pain and vomiting.

There is, however, an early warning sign. Prior to biting, Savah will rear up, expose her considerable fangs, hiss audibly and then strike down, into flesh.

Love at first Bite

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | MICHEL CHATENAY



ne could be forgiven for harbouring thoughts of flinging the spider aside at the first sign of movement. But the young guide quite earnestly tells us that Savah could easily be hurt. It is quite possible that she might even break a leg, and to our guide that would be unacceptable.

She would rather accept attack and envenomation before calmly, so as not to stress the animal any further, return the spider back to the safety of her home. Then I guess the only option is to sit down with a nice cup of tea to await the inevitable painful outcome. And I truly believe she would do that, such is the passion and dedication of staff at the Australian Venom Zoo.

This attitude is contrary to that held by the vast majority of people in regard to spiders, snakes, indeed all “creepy crawlies”, but it is a view based on ignorance and unfounded fear. We simply do not have the information to judge or understand these creatures for what they really are. At the Australian Venom Zoo, in the rainforests of Kuranda, in North Queensland, Director Stuart Douglas and his committed team are striving to change that perception.

Australian Venom Zoo is a zoo like no other. Forget lions jumping through hoops or foolish clowns, this zoo only features native Australian wildlife that either crawls, slithers or burrows. It also has one other point of difference, most of the creatures on display are highly venomous.



The zoo has five of Australia's most deadly snakes, the world's most venomous spider, giant centipedes that grow up to 15cms long, scorpions and freshwater stone-fish. In addition to the zoo, there is a captive breeding programme specifically targeting the pet trade.

Visitors can expect to be educated on a fascinating level. For example, most of the heavy set, ground dwelling arachnids are primitive spiders with forward pointing jaws that strike forward and down into prey. Scorpions are living fossils and have barely changed in over 400 millions years. They are luminescent under ultra-violet light and make wonderful mothers. And the world's deadliest snake, the inaptly named Fierce snake (or Inland Taipan) which is four times more toxic than the feared Coastal Taipan is blessed with a placid nature. So obviously the common weapon of most of the zoo's inhabitants is venom, a complex substance.

Venom usually combines a blend of toxins that impact on the victim in different ways, for example neurotoxins affect the nervous system; myotoxins affect the muscles; necrotoxins affect tissue and cause necrosis. Whatever the effect envenomation is something most humans try to avoid. Until now.

As it turns out, it is the venom that makes this zoo truly unique because of its bio-prospecting or bio-farming potential. The zoo extracts venom from living exhibits and sends the product to bio-pharmaceutical companies around the world for the purpose of medical research.

We are slowly learning that nature may indeed have answers in quarters we have never before suspected. Overseas medical researchers are currently testing venom, supplied by Australian Venom Zoo, with the goal of creating treatments for heart arrhythmia, brain cancer and arthritis.





caught animals are far more likely to stress and possibly die after the trauma of capture. Douglas' captive bred animals are quite placid, fed well and are far more accepting of their confined world.

Whilst many would argue that the confining of any animal may seem cruel Douglas, like scientist and Australian of the Year, Tim Flannery, argues that Australians have been set apart from their own native wildlife. Once children collected and kept the likes of kangaroos, blue-tongue lizards and jars of insects but well meaning and perhaps misguided authorities have created rules that make it difficult or illegal to keep native wildlife as pets. And this may well be to the detriment of our unique fauna. To have the will to save our native wildlife, the nation needs to learn to love our wild creatures, and to love them we need to know and understand them and that, regrettably, no longer happens.

Of all the nations on earth Douglas has been lucky enough to be born in a country with the greatest representation of venomous creatures on earth. In fact we are decidedly over-represented in venomous department, which in turn creates a strange phenomena. Whilst many Australians quickly grab for a can of insect spray at the first sighting of a spider, or will readily run over a snake we actually harbour a perverse attitude to our more deadly inhabitants. Australians delight in bragging to visitors about the fierce spiders, aggressive snakes and the man-eating sharks lurking off every beach. There is a morbid, hidden pride in our dangerous wildlife. Hopefully, with the help of institutions like the Australian Venom Zoo, that dark admiration will turn into healthy and open respect along with a desire to preserve our very unique fauna.



And this is just the beginning, bio-prospecting is cutting edge technology with application and benefit well beyond potential cures for the medical scourges of mankind.

The harvesting of wild native venomous creatures for medical research and a captive breeding programme offers remote Indigenous communities an exciting opportunity. Douglas has begun to set up pilot projects across Australia.

His concept is to offer training and education in field collection, sustainable bio-farming and venom extraction. He hopes to combine this training with the natural bush skills and habitat knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Douglas, owner and director of the Australian Venom Zoo, the "passion" has always been there. At age five years he had his first pet, a deadly Sydney Funnel-web spider. By age seven years a Red-bellied black snake was in his loving care. He admits to not being academic by nature but the animals just felt "right", it was home. And from that first spider came a parade and collection of scorpions, snakes, lizards, centipedes until the day when a zoo became virtually inevitable.

One of his fondest projects is the zoo's captive breeding programme. By rearing and selling zoo bred animals, the demand on wild stock, at least in some locations, is diminished. And yet a flourishing, illegal black

market continues to exist. Douglas argues the position that the tarantula is a "keystone" species because it produces up to 300 babies per year, many of which become a major food source for Australian reptiles and birds. However, the depredation in recent years by collectors for the pet trade has depleted wild populations alarmingly. And unfortunately wild

Stuart Douglas...with one of his many snakes.





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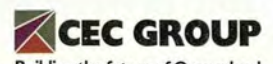


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Samoa's Sipi Tua bowls against Vanuatu.

PACIFIC A CRICKET POWER?

By Peter Rees

A cricket revival is taking the Pacific by storm that it has prompted the International Cricket Council (ICC) officials to say the region could become the next West Indies.

ICC officials are excited about what is happening in the Pacific and they are not just blowing hot air. Some are already whispering that the Pacific islands can one day emulate the West Indies and become a cricket power. The West Indies, a composite team made up of several Caribbean islands, have been among the elite for decades and dominated the game in the 1970s and 1980s.

With legendary names such as Viv Richards, Sir Garfield Sobers, Joel Garner and more recently Brian Lara and Courtney Walsh to boast of, the West Indies epitomised the power game and with their natural athleticism, they were able to hold their own against their richer and more resourced peers.

The Pacific still has a long way to go to get even close to that standard. But even with little funding and few chances to play international matches, English cricket has flourished beyond the expectations of ICC officials.

The ICC East-Asia Pacific (EAP) Cricket Trophy held in Auckland last December was further proof of how far the small islands nations have advanced in the game.

Less than a decade ago, English cricket was only played by expats and organised competitions in the Pacific were few.

Samoa and Tuvalu played their version called *kirikiti* or *kilikiti*, but this was more on a social level and with far different rules.

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The EAP elite cricket squad in camp in Australia.



The ICC first made advances into the Pacific at the end of the 1990s with several pilot nations chosen to receive a steady stream of funding used mainly for infrastructure and development programmes.

The game now has established national associations running their own competitions and programmes in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Tonga.

In terms of ranking, Papua New Guinea and Fiji are the top guns and courtesy of their higher ICC ranking, do not play in the Pacific Cup.

But the game's growth in the Pacific has grown even more since the ICC introduced the Pacific Cup at the start of the decade. Now called the ICC East-Asia Pacific Cricket Trophy, the tournaments are held biennially (every two years) and Auckland, Samoa and Vanuatu have had turns hosting the tournament. Last December's tourney saw the event return to Auckland.

English cricket is also played at the South Pacific Games when Suva hosted it in 2003. The 2007 Games in Samoa saw Papua New Guinea win gold with Fiji settling for silver, while Samoa did well to finish with bronze, their best international result to date.

In terms of ranking, Papua New Guinea and Fiji are the top guns and courtesy of their higher ICC ranking, do not play in the Pacific Cup, but in higher level competitions with other ICC developing nations in the next tier up.

The ICC runs a ranking qualification system with the pinnacle being to earn promotion to the top tier and the opportunity to play in

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The Vanuatu team cheer after taking a wicket during one of their matches in Auckland.

the Cricket World Cup. Australia and New Zealand, two of the best cricketing nations in the world with proud histories in the game, are playing their part to promote the game in the Pacific in conjunction with the ICC. The Pacific's best players regularly attend EAP training camps in Australia under the training of Australian coaches.

ICC Asia-Pacific Cricket Trophy 2007, Auckland

Before last December's event, the pre-tournament favourites were Samoa and Tonga, courtesy of their international record and performance at the South Pacific Games just a few months prior. But a young Vanuatu side, led by their champion all-rounder spin bowler Andrew Mansale, quietly arrived in Auckland confident they could shake the hierarchy. And they did just that. Vanuatu finished second, their solitary loss coming against eventual winners Japan, who also looked vastly improved from the last tournament it hosted two years ago. Japan and Vanuatu therefore qualified for the World Cricket League Division 5 Tournament to be held in Jersey in May 2008. Cook Islands finished third, followed by Samoa, Tonga and Indonesia in that order.

Vanuatu's Mansale was named the player of the tournament. He was the highest run scorer of the tournament and also chipped in with nine wickets. Vanuatu's strength lay in their top order batting and spin bowling expertise, able to take advantage of the slower wickets in Auckland. Japan were the best all round team however by a long shot. They had several foreign players in their team qualifying by residency who strengthened their team. Their main weapon was strike bowler Naoki Miyaji who was the leading wicket taker with 12 for the tournament.

EAP officials chose the following team at the end of the tournament: Dunu Eliaba (Cook Islands), Tino Etita (Cook Islands), Jon Kairua (Cook Islands), Pratyush Chaturvedi (Indonesia), Gavin Beath (Japan), Tatsuro Chino (Japan), Naoki Miyaji (Japan), Ben Mailata (Samoa), Liviaetau Pese (Tonga), Patrick Haines (Vanuatu), Simpson Obed (Vanuatu), Andrew Mansale (Vanuatu).

The tournament was well followed by the local Pacific community which turned out in force at Waikaraka Park in the central Auckland suburb of Onehunga. The New Zealand Pacific community have their own hero in 23-year-old Ross Taylor, a part Samoan currently playing for the New Zealand Black Caps. Taylor is only the second New Zealand rep of Pacific descent since Murphy Sua in the early 1990s. Sua is the current coach of the Samoa cricket team.



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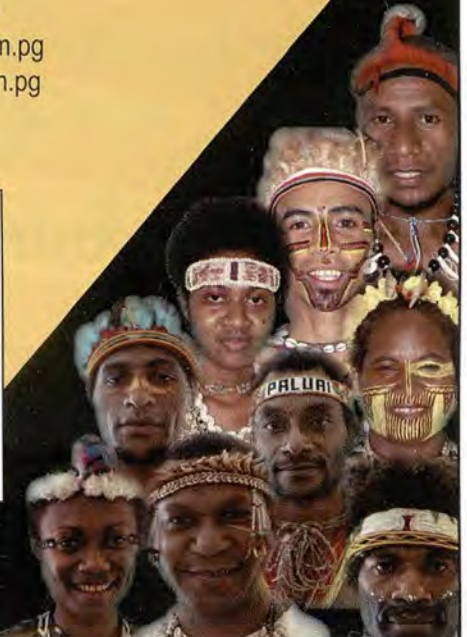
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Air Niugini hosts party for travel agents

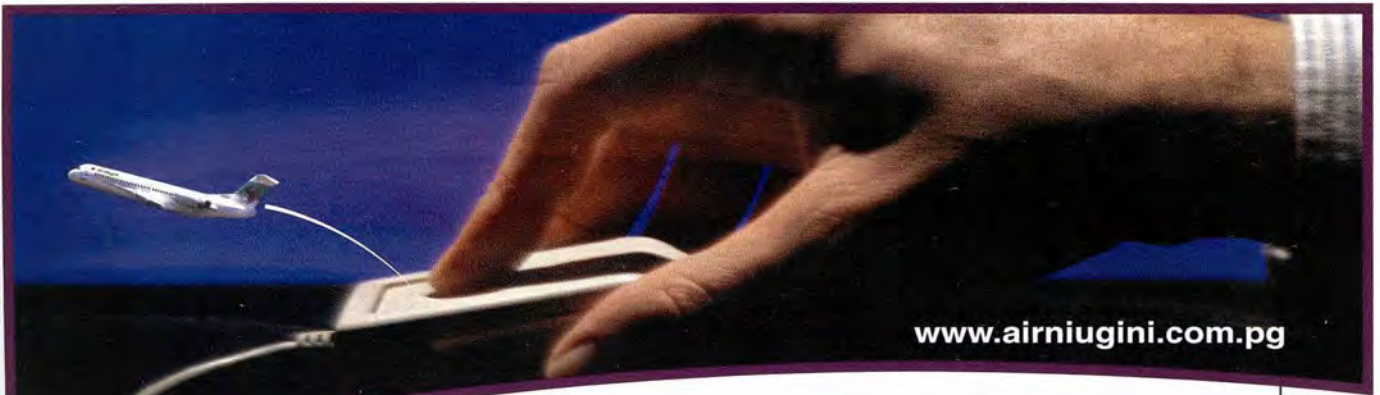
Air Niugini's Cairns office launched the first Travel Industry function on January 25 at the Hilton Hotel with over 150 guests including 32 travel agents in attendance.

Aimed at promoting Air Niugini's services and products and PNG to travel agents and

clients in North Queensland, the industry get-together will be a monthly event.

Major prize for two return tickets on any of Air Niugini's destinations ex-Cairns will be drawn on June 27.

Anmemarie Rhodes (second from right) with guests.



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Air Niugini supporters enjoying themselves.



Stephen Tanner.

Walshes World in Auckland GSA for Air Niugini



Air Niugini's interest in Auckland will be looked after by its GSA Walshes World's new man Stephen Tanner. He re-joined the Walshe Group in January 2008 as Key Account and Strategy Manager. He is based in New Zealand. Tanner previously spent two-and-a-half years as Sales and Marketing Manager for the Walshe Group between 2004 and 2006.

Tanner's industry experience spans 27 years and includes positions with Scandinavian Airlines as a Sales Promoter and as Country Manager for both American Airlines and Air France/KLM, based in New Zealand.

Tanner has been involved with a variety of industry boards and committees including the See America Committee, where he was chairman.

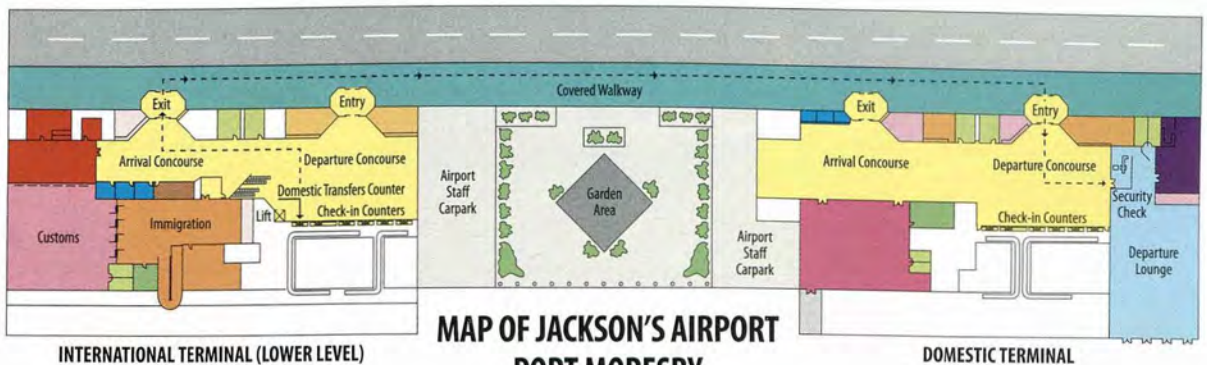


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Welcome to Papua New Guinea

General Information

Lying entirely within the tropics, barely south of the Equator and just north of the Australian continent is Papua New Guinea, the second largest island in the world. With a total land mass of 473,189sq.km it is the last of a string of Islands spilling down from South East Asia into the Pacific.

Apart from the mainland, Papua New Guinea comprises a remarkable collection of islands, atolls and coral reefs scattered around its coastline. The mainland is divided by the Owen Stanley Range—a rugged central spine with peaks over 4,000 metres high. Great rivers begin their journey to the sea from these mountains—among them, Fly and Sepik waterways. Below the mountain chain, fertile coastal plains, flooded delta regions and mangrove swamps exist alongside broad sandy beaches, sheltered bays and dense rain forests.

The coastal regions are tropical however in generally the climate is warm to hot and humid all year round. Temperatures on the coast vary between 25-30 degrees throughout the year. The Highlands regions enjoy a temperate climate, ranging from 20 degrees during day to as low as 10 degrees during the evenings. Rainy season varies from province to province, however generally the country is driest from May to December.

Fully independent since September 16, 1975, the country has a freely elected democratic government. PNG became the 142nd member of the United Nations on October 10, 1975 and is also a member of the British Commonwealth.

The population is just over 5 million with over a third in the Highlands region of the country. The people are Melanesian though in

appearance they are quite varied.

There are more than 800 distinct “live” languages with Melanesian pidgin and Hiri Motu being the two most widely used. English is the official language in education, business and government circles.

Papua New Guinea has a vibrant and multifaceted economy with two distinct systems operating side by side.

The vast majority of the people live a traditional, non-monetary barter economy that existed long before European colonization began. Co-existing with this is the modern economic system based on mining, petroleum, fishing, forestry and agriculture.

The main exports are gold, copper, oil, coffee, tea, copra, oil palm and forest products.

What to See and Do



Ideal Cruising Experience

The wonders of Papua New Guinea never cease to impress even the most intrepid traveller. Offering a multitude of ideal experiences, the visitors will find a country rich in culture, ethnic diversity and where little has changed over centuries. Cruising Papua New Guinea is relaxing since island life is slow-paced and informal. Rich in cultural and ethnic diversity PNG promises to reward cruise enthusiasts with unforgettable sights and sounds.

Diving

This is home to some of the world's most spectacular diving, dubbed as 'underwater photographer's paradise.' It is said to have twice as many species as the waters of the Red Sea, and up to five times as many as the Caribbean. The waters are a wonderland of elegant reefs, sunken wrecks, brilliantly coloured coral and marine life. The immense diversity of dive sites includes barrier reefs, coral walls (drop-offs), coral gardens, patch reef, fringing reefs, sea grass beds and coral atolls.

Trekking the rugged terrains

Trekking in Papua New Guinea is a challenge which portrays the real meaning of adventure in paradise. An extensive network of walking

tracks covers most mountain areas, and experience bush walkers are well catered for. The most popular is the Kokoda Track which continues to provide challenges and experiences beyond men's imagination. Others include Mt. Wilhelm, Bulolo, Wau and Madang. The Kokoda Trail, so significant to World War II continues to grow in popularity amongst serious trekkers.

Excellent Fishing

The country's reputation for excellent fishing localities and choices of catch is fully boosted by the wonderful climate.

Surfing the waves

Experience an unforgettable wave-riding adventure in the country's wave-breaking shores. From the breath-taking coastline of Vanimo that stretches down Madang, to the sandy beaches of New Ireland Province, where premiere breakpoints and scenic surfing sites are located.

Bird Watching

Bird watching does not only require dead silence, it provides the opportunity for watchers to take in nature's most eerie surroundings and eternal spring whether up in the Highlands or in a typical tropical weather in the coastal areas. Over 700 species of feathered fliers flutter across our island

including 38 of the 43 known species of the exotic Bird of Paradise. Not all the colours of the rainbow have been reserved for our feathered friends as there is an unlimited range of hues and shades to be seen in our 2000 orchids and countless magnificent butterflies including the world's largest, the Queen Alexandra Birdwing.

World War II Relics

Relics of World War II battles are found in most parts of Papua New Guinea's land, underwater, caves and tunnels.

Astounding Volcanoes

Located along the "Pacific Ring of Fire, Papua New Guinea offers distinct views of active volcanoes that captivates a land of tranquility. There exists a number of volcanoes in certain provinces, including the latest 'basaltic statovolcano on Manam Island, Madang Province. Other recent volcanic location include Rabaul's two volcanic cones-Vulcan and Tavurvur-and West New Britain's Mt Pago.

Visitors to our country are guests and hospitality is an honour in our Melanesian culture. Tipping is neither expected nor encouraged.

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