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VOL 3, 2009



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Chairman's Message



WELCOME ABOARD.

In May Air Niugini recently carried over 1000 passengers from various provinces to Kokopo for the recent signing of the draft umbrella Benefit Sharing Agreement (BSA) in Kokopo, East New Britain Province. The successful signing of the agreement by stakeholders paves the way for the commencement of the LNG project.

Although there is a significant impact from the global financial crisis across the world, PNG has not suffered a similar severity at this stage. The mining sector continues to meet productivity levels, setting record prices. The associated activities spinning off the anticipated LNG project commencement is resulting in boom conditions in construction in Port Moresby and Lae, the country's second largest city and industrial centre.

With the multi-million kina project getting the green light, there are a number of massive infrastructure developments scheduled to commence in the various areas over the coming years. This will mean a tremendous demand for travel and freight to cater for these projects and associated developments. As the largest domestic carrier and a growing international airline, Air Niugini is vigilant in its commercial preparedness to fully participate by ensuring its fleet capability and capacity is able to meet the increased market demand.

Also in May we successfully uplifted delegates from Australia and various centres in the country to and from the 25th Australia Papua New Guinea Business Forum in Madang. Additional domestic flights were scheduled to ensure all the delegates arrived on time for the annual forum.

As the global crisis continues to reduce demand for international air travel, carriers within the Asia Pacific region have experienced an overall decline in passenger numbers particularly on the long-haul sectors. Whilst the immediate impact of the Swine Influenza on the region and on our own services may be early to determine, we can assume that anything affecting the passenger's well-being to travel will have some effect on the business.

Considered against a backdrop of the greater impact of the global financial crisis on the rest of the world and the repercussion of the swine flu scare, Air Niugini has performed well in the first part of 2009. There is some decline in demand over a few domestic sectors but these have been complicated by external factors.

Current marketing products on offer throughout the year include the Australian and Asian packages which you can find in the Airline News section of *Paradise*. Other products are the Asia Circle Trips which allows for two destinations for just one price! Our international fares have been restructured from round trips to one ways; beginning with PNG-Australia and now includes Asia, with the exception of Philippines which is pending approval.

Manus Province and its far-flung island atolls are featured in this issue of *Paradise* along with some of our international destinations. If the travel urge gets to you, select one of our affordable packages in the Airline News section and treat yourself to a holiday with Air Niugini.

Enjoy your flight with us.

Sir James N. Tjoeng, KBE
Chairman

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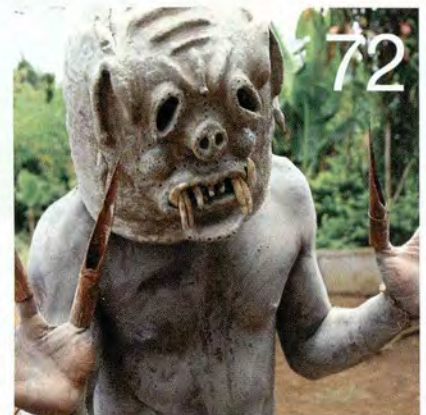
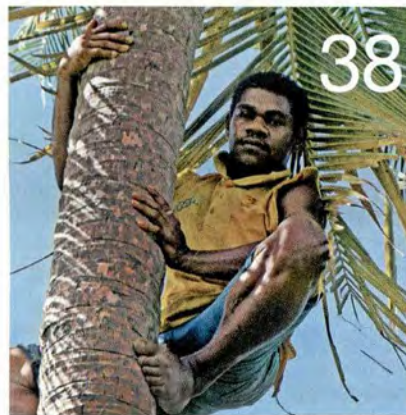
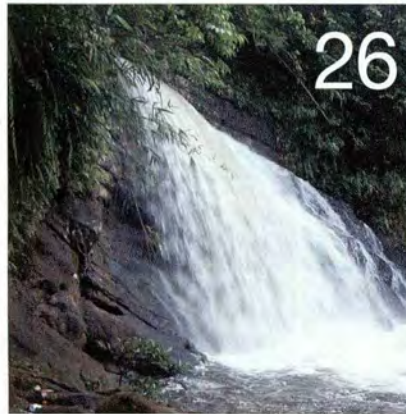
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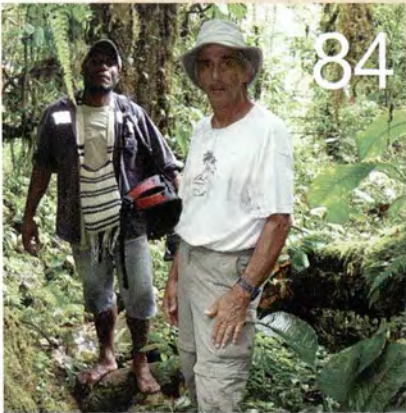


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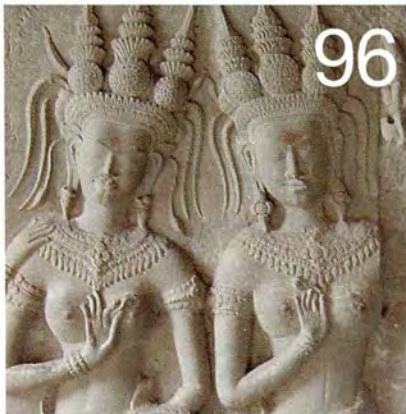
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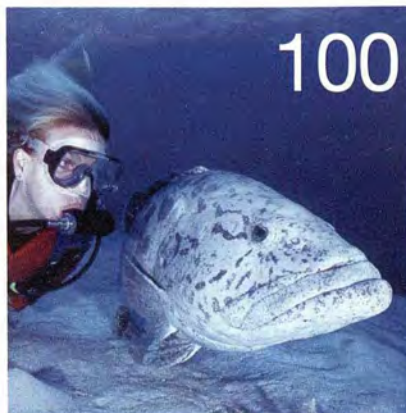
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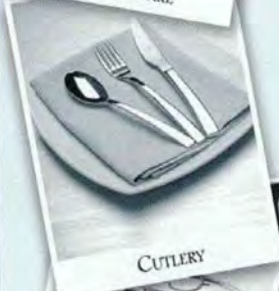


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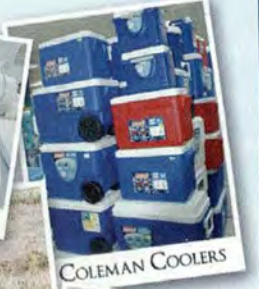
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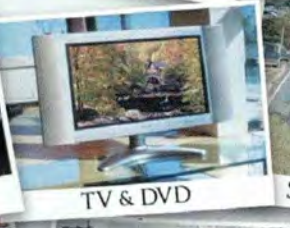
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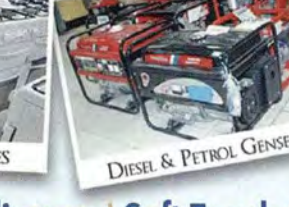
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Takeoff and landing

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 in-flight 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.

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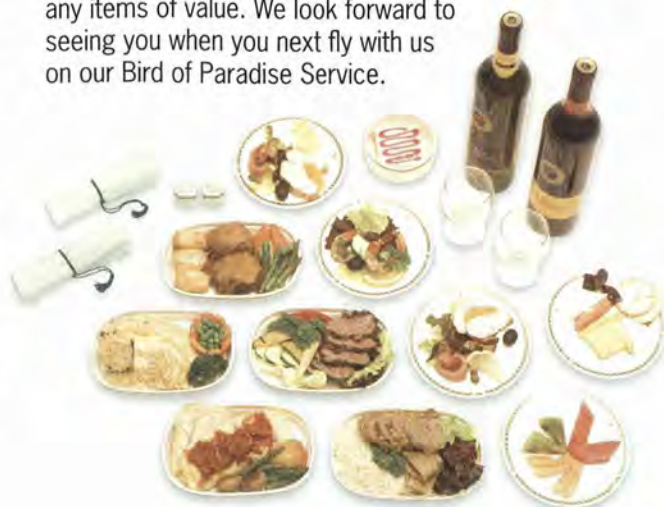
During the flight take some time to look through our In-flight Duty Free brochure located in your seat pocket. Duty free purchases can be made after Meal Service. All major credit cards are accepted.

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

B767-300ER



Aircraft type	Length	Wing Span	Power Plant	Cruising Speed	Normal Altitude	Std Seating Capacity	Range
B767-300ER	59.94m	47.57m	2 PW4000	857kph	11,000-12,000m	214 + 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





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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:

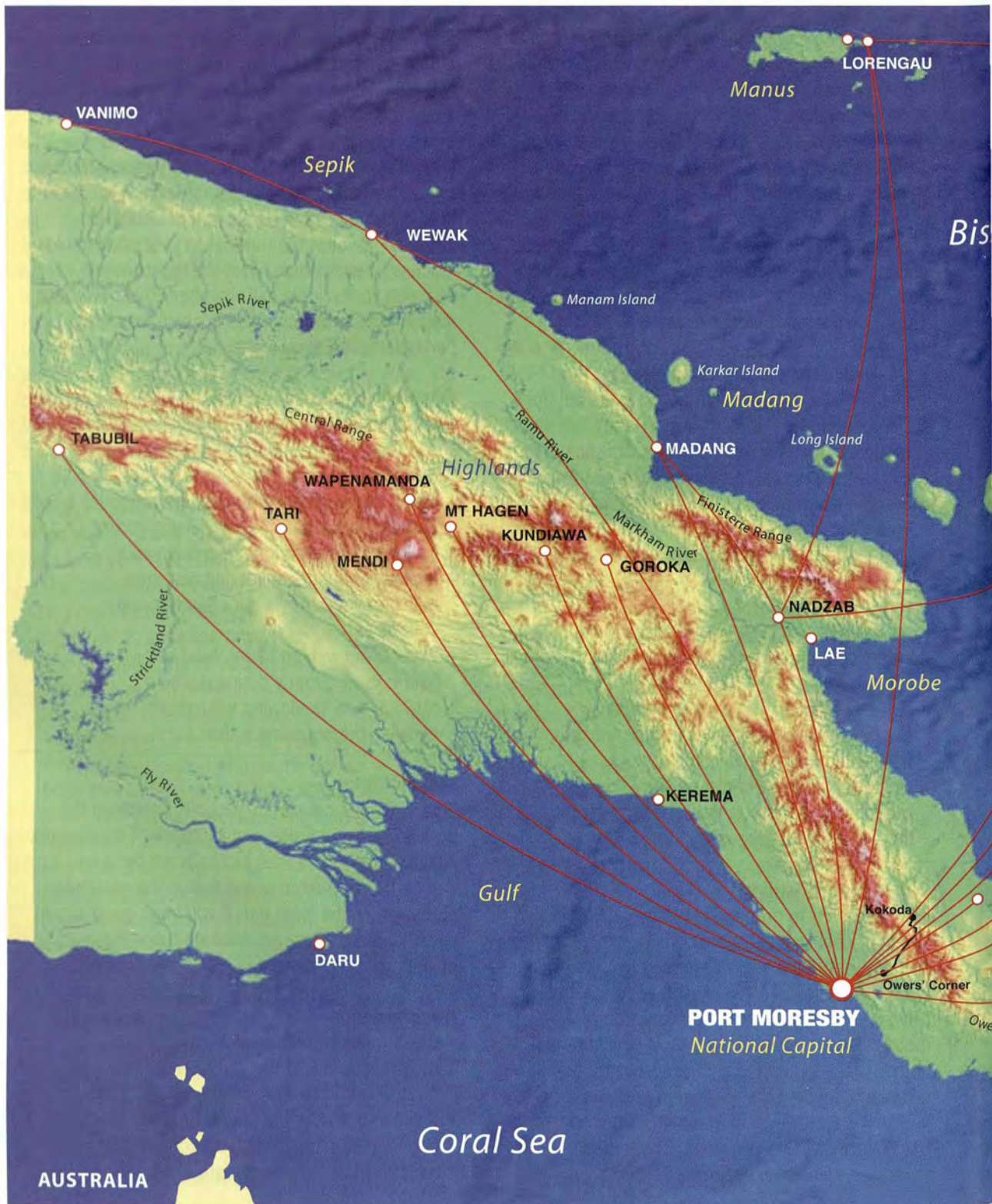
- When weather is clear and you can see the ground, sea or horizon, you are less susceptible to motion sickness.
- You can buy over the counter medications but we recommend that you consult your doctor about the appropriate medications.

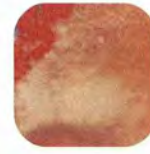
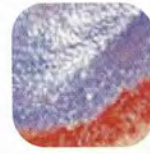
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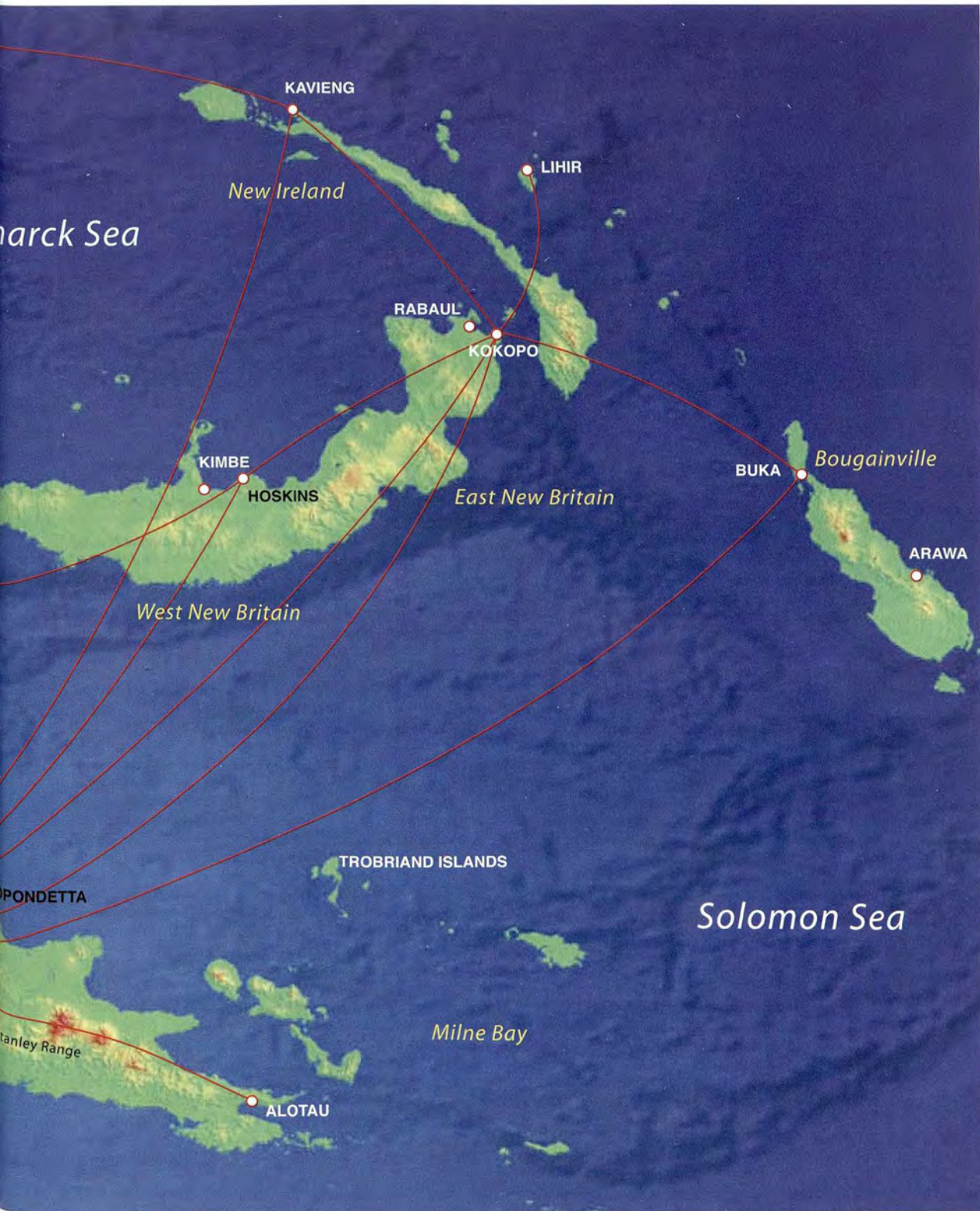


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An island getaway MANUS... yet to be discovered



A word of caution; don't be misled by the map of Manus Islands.

BY SAMISONI PARETI

After 80 minutes of flying on one of Air Niugini's Fokker 100 jets from Jackson's International Airport in Port Moresby, tiny dots of green begin to appear as you look out the windows on both sides of the aircraft; circles of lush green amidst a sea of deep blue.

There are many of them and perhaps because of their sizes, they do not register on many maps of PNG, or the world for that matter.

Since it is approaching eight in the morning, the sea is glassy calm.

Momote Airport (used to be known as Hyane Airfield was built by the Japanese during WWII) sits on Los Negros Island which is linked to the main island of Manus by a single lane bridge, about 15 metres long.

Manus Island is quite large at 2100 square kilometres and said to be Papua New Guinea's fifth largest island.

Though shown in many atlases as comprising one island, the province itself consists of at least two main groups of islands.

The main island of Manus and all the nearby islands make up the Admiralty group of islands, and there's Wuvulu Island and its surrounding atolls to the west.

Its geography largely dictates the life, economy and even the politics of the province.





Joseph had to remind me that we had entered the town after I remarked about a signboard we had just passed, declaring the 'Home of Manus soap!'

The ocean influences a large part of their life; many islanders are fishermen and fisherwomen, relying on the sea for their source of livelihood.

About half of those who live on the main island do not have motored roads, relying therefore on the sea for transportation to the main town of Lorengau.

At the bridge linking Los Negros and Manus, boats and motored canoes of varying sizes can be seen moored at the pontoon.

These bring in traders and visitors from the outer islands.

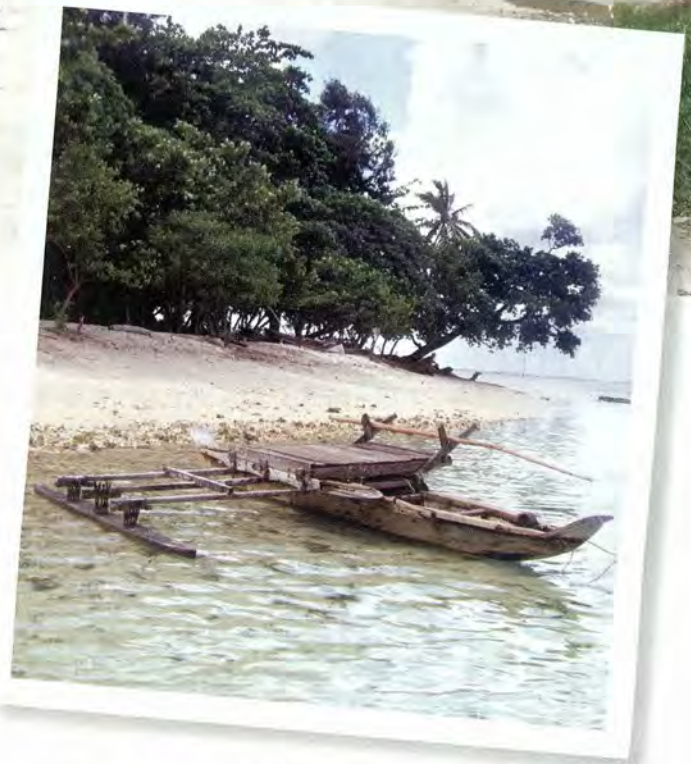
You will see many of them at the main market at Lorengau town.

Well, I could notice many of them through Joseph Tananga Kimat, who offered to be my guide through the market.

He is the Air Niugini manager at Manus.

His father is from Lou Island, lying offshore south of Los Negros, while his mother comes from Kari village near Lorengau in the main island of Manus.

So he enjoys the two worlds of Manus: island living and life on the mainland.



For its size, the province has only two elected representatives in the national parliament in Port Moresby.

There is the Governor of Manus, and that position gives him an automatic seat in Waigani. The other representative holds the Manus Open constituency, and the incumbent currently serves as a cabinet minister.

For a provincial capital, Lorengau is small.

Joseph had to remind me that we had entered the town after I remarked about a signboard we had just passed, declaring the 'Home of Manus soap!'

Lorengau town actually sits by a harbour, although as is true of many capitals in the Pacific, there is little recognition of the spectacular sea frontage in the town's planning and development.

Unlike Apia, Nuku'alofa and Suva to some

extent, Lorengau's waterfront - lined by towering breeze-kissed banyan and rain trees - looks sad and neglected.

The provincial administration of the province sits in a building built some distance from downtown Lorengau.

Past the provincial headquarters and closer to town, the courthouse comes up to your left.

It looked like it was recently built because of its fresh paint and the entire compound well fenced.

A huge store then comes up to your left, painted in the bold red colours of Digicel, a mobile telephone provider.

The main road veers off to the right, to the main centre of Lorengau. To the left, looms the main town market, looking out of place somewhat as it is built in the architecture of a Samoan fale; wall-less with oval shaped roofs.



“Other industries destroy the environment before we get our money, but tourism pays us money for keeping our environment clean and intact.”

The province’s largest wholesaler and retailer Papindo store is to your right.

Papindo is also the biggest exporter of bech-de-mer to Asian markets.

Next to his store is the office of Air Niugini. Constructed some 30 years ago, Joseph said plans have been approved to renovate the building and give it a fresh-look.

Past the airline building, the road veers somewhat to the left as the town’s main hotel, Lorengau Harbourside, takes up the waterfront to the right.

The hotel has seen better days and it will do with some renovations and a fresh coat of paint.

Its location is on prime real estate with its restaurant and swimming pool looking over Seadler Harbour.

During my stay, the pool was closed, undergoing repairs.

Provincial administrators will be the first to admit that tourism has not been a priority for past administrations in Manus. But that is changing, thanks largely to the push by Joseph and his team at Air Niugini.

The national carrier in collaboration with the owners of Lorengau Harbourside Hotel are finalising a package deal, aimed at enticing Moresbians for weekend trips to the island



province.

James Koka is the tourism officer. He is a trained trade officer but temporarily manning the one-person tourism desk in the province.

Again if Joseph has his way, James will be confirmed in the position. Although new to the industry, the young man is very keen to sell Manus as a tourist destination.

“Unlike other industries that we try to promote here, tourism I think fits in well with the environment and the kind of development we would like to have on Manus,” James told **PARADISE** magazine.

“Other industries destroy the environment before we get our money, but tourism pays us money for keeping our environment clean and intact.”

During my overnight visit, James with the kind help of Joseph took me to a few of the province’s attractions.

Rarah Islet – a great picnic spot

Rarah Islet is only a two-minute boat-ride across from Lorengau town, a favourite picnic spot for locals and visitors alike.

It was so named by American soldiers who fought fierce battles with Japanese troops on Manus during World War II.

“After the Americans took control of Manus from the Japanese, they set up camp at Palous Hill near Lorengau,” explains James.

“They used to come to this little island for rest and recreation and they named it R and R.

“Locals came to refer to the island as Rarah and the name has stuck to this day.”

The use of Rarah is free to locals for now. But tourists will need to seek permission before visiting Rarah, something that can be easily arranged by Harbourside Hotel, or your local hosts.

Pityluh by the looks of it is a great relaxing getaway; it is quiet, clean, sandy and looks very inviting; great for snorkelling and kayaking.



It took James and I no more than five minutes to walk across the island.

Though short, you will need a local guide as itchy plants grow in abundance.

I would have easily walked past the itchy leaves had it not for James' sharp eyes and good local knowledge.

James also salvaged two small bottles he believed were left by the Americans.

One - a green bottle - had 1943, the date of manufacture, etched on it.

"The island is littered with these bottles," said James.

The water is clear and the sand white and soft - a great picnic spot.

James talked of plans to make the islet available for locals and tourists alike, and the need to provide utilities like picnic tables, fresh water and toilets, with the permission, of course, of the landowners.

At a reasonable fee for those who want to visit the island, a caretaker can even be appointed to maintain these facilities and keep Rarah clean and tidy.

Pityluh Guesthouse - a relaxing escape

This double storey accommodation adopts as its name the island it is located - Pityluh Island. It's about 10 minutes from Lorengau by boat.

It's owned by Joe Hilari, a retired senior government official, and operated by his daughter, Joan.

Its six bedrooms, some with double or single beds, are located on the first floor while the kitchen and dining area are on the ground floor.

Water for cooking and shower is from rainwater collected in a big tank.

For a fee, Joan cooks for guests.

The bathrooms and toilets are in a separate block, built beside the main accommodation.

Pityluh Guesthouse, although quite humid, is located on a spectacular beachfront.

Tall leafy trees grow in abundance on the guesthouse's beachfront, a great spot to relax, read a book and enjoy the sea breeze.

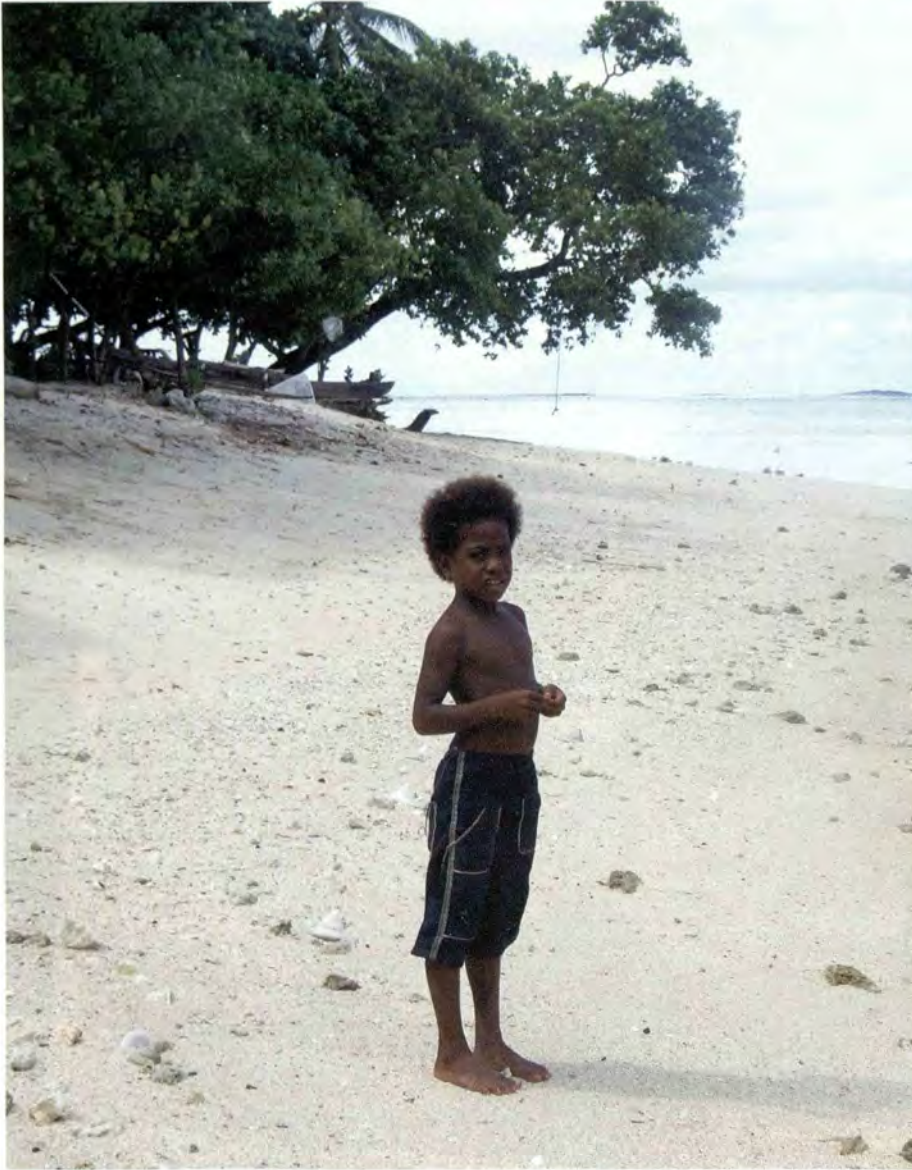
Joe is aware of this and over time, he would like to build a couple of small beach bungalows.

He is also not averse to the idea of inviting guests to bring their tents along.

Pityluh by the looks of it is a great relaxing getaway; it is quiet, clean, sandy and looks very inviting; great for snorkelling and kayaking.

• *Contact: Through Harbourside Hotel, Lorengau town. Or Joe Hilari on telephone: B-mobile - 6394137; Digicel - 71055066; Room rates: K\$50 to K\$70 a night; and meals from K\$4 to K\$8 a meal.*

A group of marine scientists from James Cook University in Townsville was at Palagowou when we visited. They gave the guesthouse a hearty thumbs-up.



Palagowou Guesthouse – peace by the beach

Built on stilts, this accommodation has spectacular views as it sits right on the beach on Ahus Island, another 10 minutes by boat from Pityluh Island.

At Palagowou, its six bedrooms, lounge, kitchen and dining areas are located on the first floor.

Rainwater is the source of water for guests.

Facing the ocean is a verandah which also houses the stairway.

John Pondrein runs Palagowou Guesthouse for its owners - his sister Angela and his brother-in-law who live on the main island.

A group of marine scientists from James Cook University in Townsville was at Palagowou when we visited and they gave the guesthouse a hearty thumbs-up.

"The rooms are clean, the meals are nice and we hardly come across any mosquitoes," said Dr Joshua Cinner.

"It can be humid yes, but still liveable."

Dr Cinner and his team were there studying marine parks around Ahus and measuring the impact of using traditional controls like taboo on fish population.

At the neighbouring island of Andra, the group looked at the adverse impacts of coral harvesting, which the islanders do to supply lime for Lorengau market.

Lime is used as paste for betel nut users.

• Contact details: John Pondrein, B-mobile: (675) 6744710; Digicel: (675) 71752529.

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Rossun Waterfall – cool seclusion

With the landowners' support, a visit to this twin waterfall is a must for any visitor to Lorengau.

This is important, as with their approval, the road to the waterfall could be upgraded and picnic tables and shades erected at the water

attraction between the villages of Tamat and Rossun.

As the road to the second waterfall was bad, Joseph stopped his vehicle at the first fall, which also acts as the main intake for Lorengau's water supply.

Just on the edge of the fall, before the water

Photo by Jason Pini

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that comes down from Rossun River cascades with brutal force some 20 metres down, a long concrete barrier is erected. Water therefore tends to build up before crashing down below.

James managed to make the trek down river to the second fall.

It was dusk by the time we were there, but he attempted nevertheless to take a few pictures for *PARADISE*.

The waterfall down river, which can be reached by vehicles once the road is repaired, offers a better swimming spot as the force of the water eases into a wider and bigger pool.

From Lorengau town, it is a mere five minutes by road to the Rossun Waterfall and a dip in its refreshingly cool waters is highly recommended.

• To visit: Enquire at your hotel reception desk.

Chatut Caves, Loniu Village

Make this as a 'must do' as it can easily be the highlight of your Manus holiday.

It definitely was the case for me.

A truly natural wonder, Chatut Caves comprises a web of caves, where you sometimes have to bend low over tunnel-like entrances or wade through a floor of mud.

The intricate designs of stalactites, stalagmites, columns, speleothems and icicles are a marvel to observe.

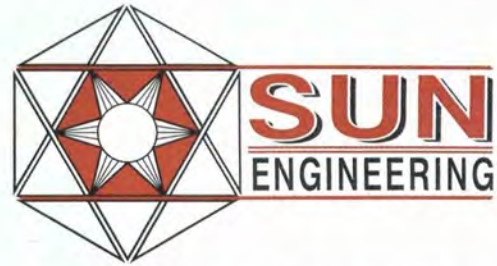
At one stage, I saw what seemed like fossil remains on the ceiling of a chamber.

I came across two flowstones, glittering in the glow of our two butterfly lamps and torches.

I tried photographing land crabs that make burrows in the cave's damp floor and fruit bats flying around us in some places.

Through the skilful guidance of the Manuai brothers - Kerry and Le - we went through almost the entire length of the caves and returned safely.

Kerry did say they don't encourage the use of butterfly lamps inside the cave, as their powerful lights - experts say - could affect the calcite lining on the cave walls.

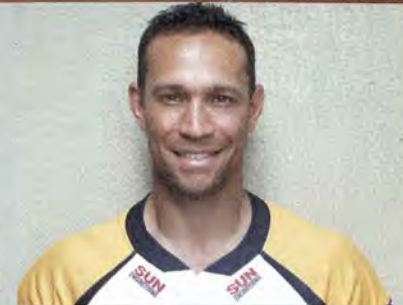


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Your local hosts will be more than willing to share their secret fishing spots, and because of its clear and clean water, Manus is a diver's paradise.

Our use of the lamps was a one off, and only because we needed to photograph the wonders of Chatut Caves.

At one turn, we had to negotiate climbing a steep iron ladder, some 15 or 16 rungs, to another tier in the cave.

This was a gift from the New Zealand High Commission in Port Moresby, whose high commissioner, according to Job Manuai, the guardian of Chatut and also chief of Loniu, traversed that part of the cave with a vine ladder.

As you will need to scale a short but steep limestone clad hill to reach Chatut's entrance, it is best that you come equipped with walking boots that have deep rubber soles.

I had my walking canvas on, but I quickly learnt that canvas and moss-covered limestone are hardly a combination.

Loniu village charges a minimal fee for a tour, which can last between 30 to 50 minutes.

• For a tour of the Chatut Caves, contact Le Manuai, Loniu Village; Digicel: (675) 71237312



Manus...hosted an international kayaking tournament some years ago.


These are not the only holiday activities Manus has on offer.

Your local hosts will be more than willing to share their secret fishing spots, and because of its clear and clean water, Manus is a diver's paradise.

Perfect surfs are yet to be discovered.

Its sheltered coves and bays make Manus' many islands and islets a boon for kayaking.

The province did host an international kayak tournament some years ago.

For nature lovers, the province has its own distinct collection of flora and fauna. 

• For a Manus holiday package, contact Air Niugini Travel Office or Air Niugini - Manus Telephone (675) 470 9092, 470 9053; Fax (675) 470 9268; Email sales.manus@airniugini.com.pg

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A GIANT SUPERMARKET

Bush Tucker PNG Style

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY **JAN MESSERSMITH**

Twenty-eight years ago I arrived in Papua New Guinea with only the knowledge imparted to me by my father, an American soldier, who fought in Milne Bay Province during World War II.



When bush walking, it is advisable to have a reliable guide.

Though he spoke little of the fighting, he told me many beautiful stories about the friendships he enjoyed with the local people. Throughout half of my life, visiting Papua New Guinea was a distant and unattainable dream. As often happens, circumstances gave life to dreams.

Shortly after I arrived in PNG with my wife and son, we were immersed in an intense, months-long training course to learn about PNG culture and the lingua franca, Tok Pisin.

As part of that training, I spent three days in the bush with a few others and a local guide. We were not allowed to take any food with us. The concept was to begin to learn to live off the land. This was my introduction to bush tucker - food that can keep you alive if you are lost in the bush. This is, of course, a foreign concept to Papua New Guineans.

For them, the bush is simply a giant supermarket where the only payment required is muscle power and a keen knowledge of what is edible and what is not.

Being 65 years old now and going a little crazier with each passing year, it occurred to me that it might be fun to repeat the experience. I called on my old friend Tagtap from Nob Nob near Madang to help me plan the venture and act as my guide.



Bad fruit...inedible or even poisonous.



Marita...is a lucky find.



Giant spider.



Many items look as if they might be edible.

Tagtap and his wife Hagag were our village hosts during our training. It was under his tutelage that we learnt Tok Pisin and basic bush survival skills. He also taught us much about Melanesian culture.

Bush walking is one of the great underappreciated pleasures of tourism in PNG. One could spend months trekking this vast land experiencing day after day the unexpected new treasures of its astonishingly rich ecosystem.

The motto "Land of the Unexpected" was not coined by a public relations guy in a pinstriped suit. It is part and parcel of the PNG experience.

The first thing that I had to learn about bush tucker is that nearly all of the things that appear to be edible are most definitely not.

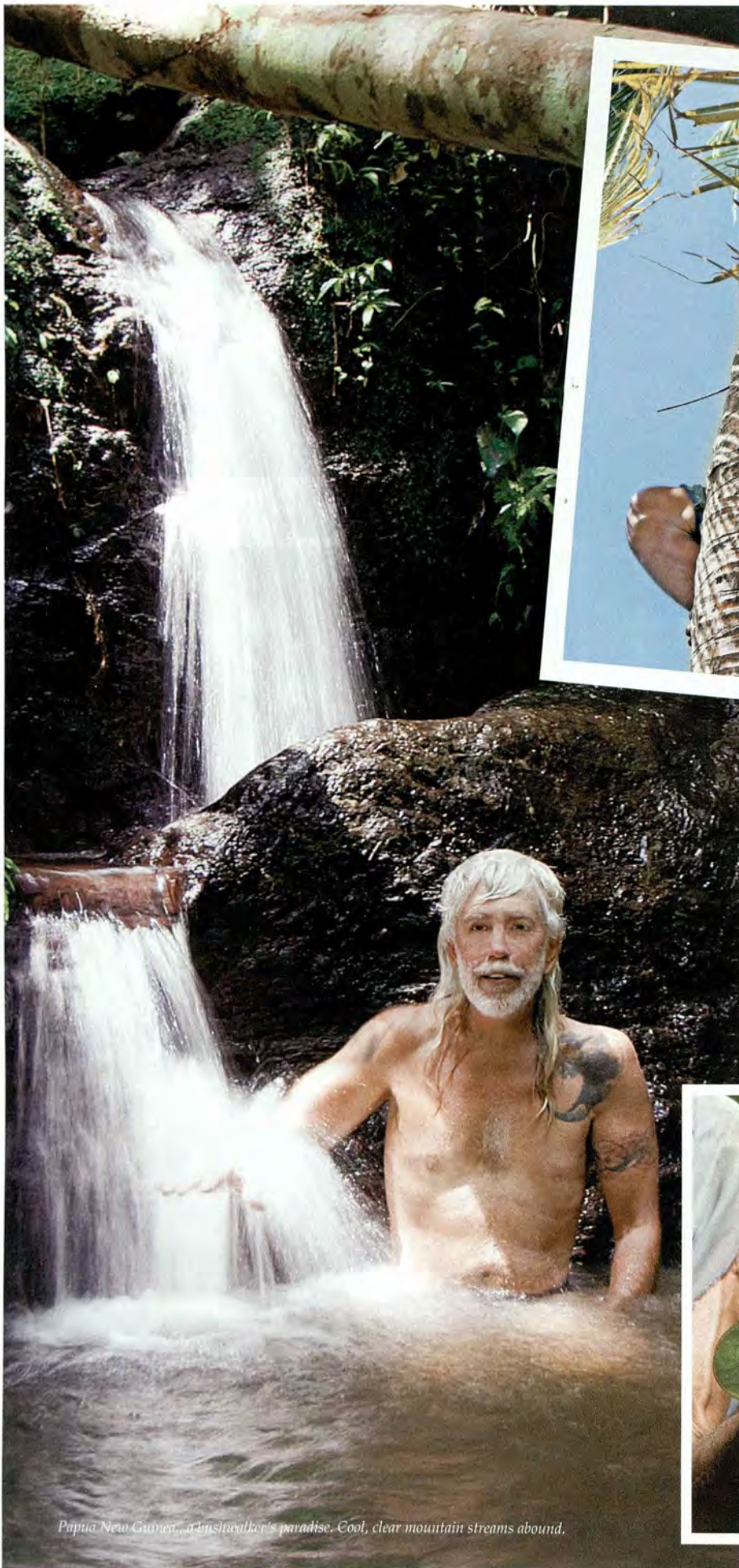
A prime example of this is the ficus or fig tree abundant in the bush. The fruit is plentiful and often appears tasty. Sadly, hardly any figs are edible by humans. I got tired of asking Tagtap, "Can I eat those?" His answer was always the same, "Nogat, em i long abus tasol." (No, those are only for animals.)

The second crucial lesson is that many things that are edible either do not appear so or are often hidden from sight. We identified leaves, dug in the ground, chopped with bush knives, and poked around under rocks and roots in streams to find what we could. Tagtap could survive indefinitely here. I'd be dead in two weeks, or sooner if I ate something poisonous.

I learnt from bitter experience that a tried and trusted pair of shoes is essential. Bad shoes can cause big problems. After only six hours of trudging up and down steep slopes



Caterpillar...this would probably make you sick.



Coconut tree...a life saver.



and splashing along stream beds, I gave my shoes to one of our porters and opted for bare feet instead. It was a blessed relief because my feet are fairly tough after nearly three decades of going barefoot most of the time. I have learnt to take care of my feet. They are all that stand between me and an extremely undignified exit from the bush.

If I get hungry while I am trekking in lowland bush, I'd climb to higher grounds and look for coconut trees.

They are easy to spot from a distance and where there are coconut trees, there is food.



A giant green cricket...edible.

Papua New Guinea...a hushwalker's paradise. Cool, clear mountain streams abound.

Green coconuts called kulau in Tok Pisin, are a delight. The liquid inside is ambrosia. It is very sweet and contains salt - very handy to counter dehydration. The gelatinous meat of the young coconut is tasty, full of energy and nicely fills the aching void of an empty stomach.



Most kinds of ferns would not poison you, but might not taste nice.

Green coconuts, called kulau in Tok Pisin, are a delight. The liquid inside is ambrosia. It is very sweet and contains salt - handy to counter dehydration. The gelatinous meat of the young coconut is tasty, full of energy and nicely fills the aching void of an empty stomach.

Dry coconuts that have fallen to the ground are also nutritious, but one must take care that the shell has not been cracked, allowing bacteria to spoil the contents. The only problem with coconuts is that it is nearly impossible - and very dangerous - to climb the tree, unless you are a Papua New Guinean. I learned the hard way never to stand, sit or sleep under a coconut tree. A falling coconut, though weighing only a few kilos, will ruin your day if it hits you. That is if you are lucky. Falling coconuts kill many people every year.

We often find abandoned gardens near coconut trees. These can be raided judiciously in an emergency. I must remember, however, that even if the garden appears untended, it still belongs to someone. The food is available to me only if I am in severe need.

Breadfruit, tulip (not the flowers, but a tree with two leaves at the end of each twig), sugarcane, wild yams, cacao and marita, all are common and can be eaten safely.

My grandfather taught me the old woodsman's wisdom, "Red rhymes with dead". With very few exceptions, nothing that is red is palatable. Worse yet, it might be poisonous.

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Streams abound with small fish and crayfish for those patient enough to catch them.

Though I am an experienced bushwalker, I never venture into the bush without a guide. The foremost reason for this is that I am always walking on someone's ground. Trespassing, without a guide who knows the landowners, is not likely to be a pleasant experience. The other, more obvious reason for hiring a guide is that there is a very real possibility that I might become lost. When surrounded by gigantic trees that all look more or less the same and searching for paths not visible to the untrained eye, it is amazing how quickly one can become hopelessly disoriented.

I never drink from streams or springs no matter how clear the water appears. One has no idea what might be happening upstream. I always bring enough water for the day or carry water purification tablets.

It is always my practice to come to an agreement beforehand with my guide and

porters concerning their fees for services during a bush walk. I ask my porters to carry everything except my camera. Unless you are very fit and experienced, you will find it difficult enough simply to propel your body along the trails.

At the end of a long day, bushwalking there is no finer respite than to build a small bush shelter, ignite a fire to keep the bugs away and sit with new-found friends to reminisce the adventures of the trek.



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Close-up view of active volcano, Mt Tavurvur.



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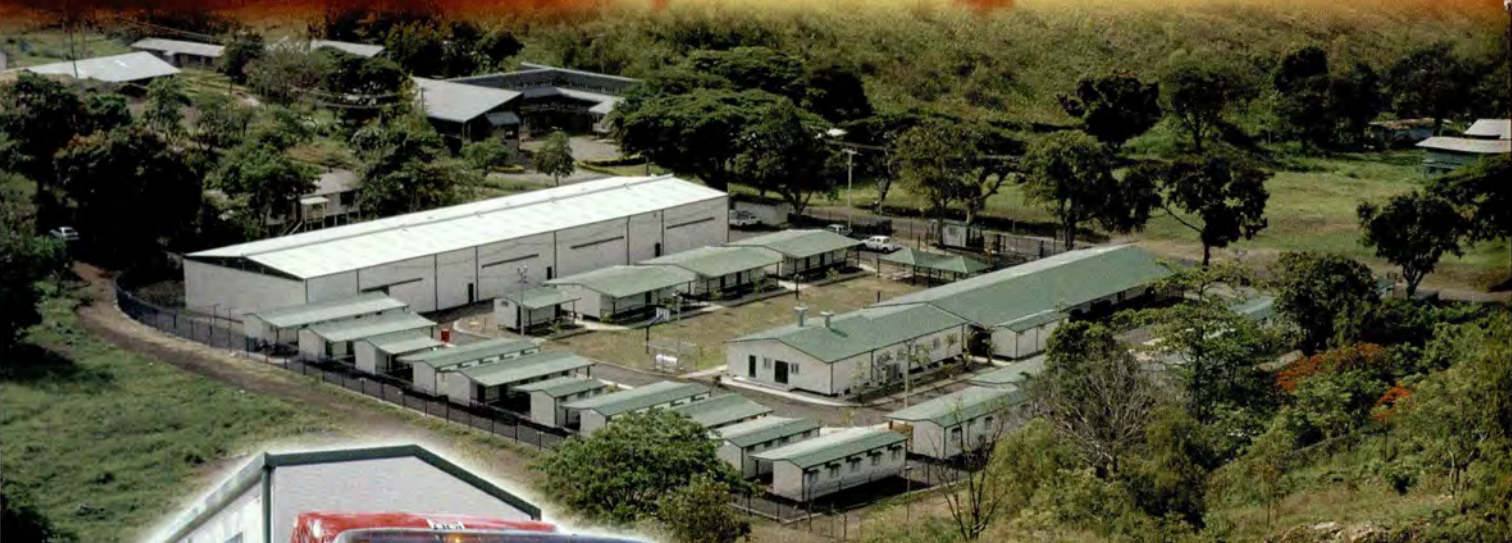
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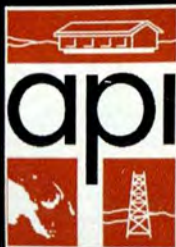
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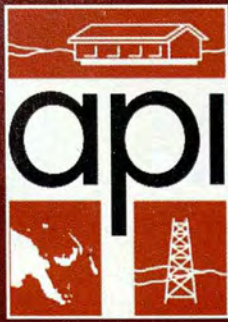
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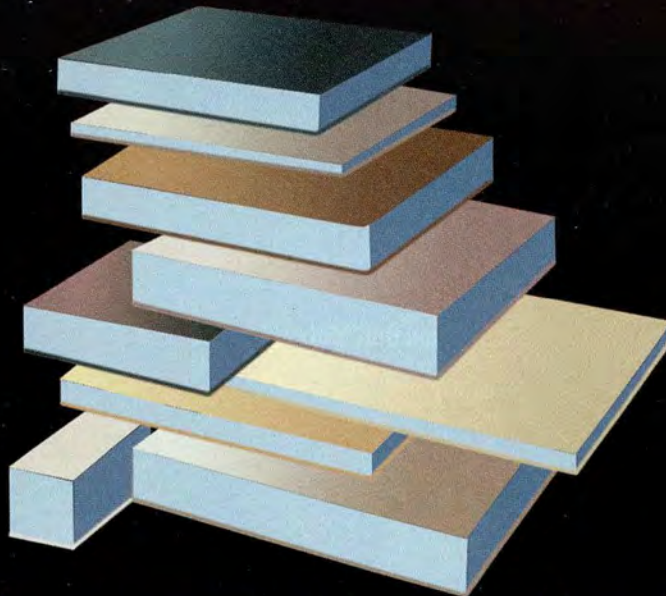
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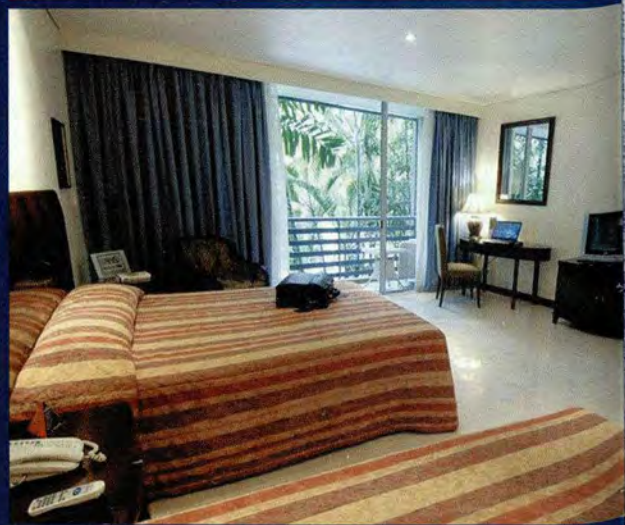
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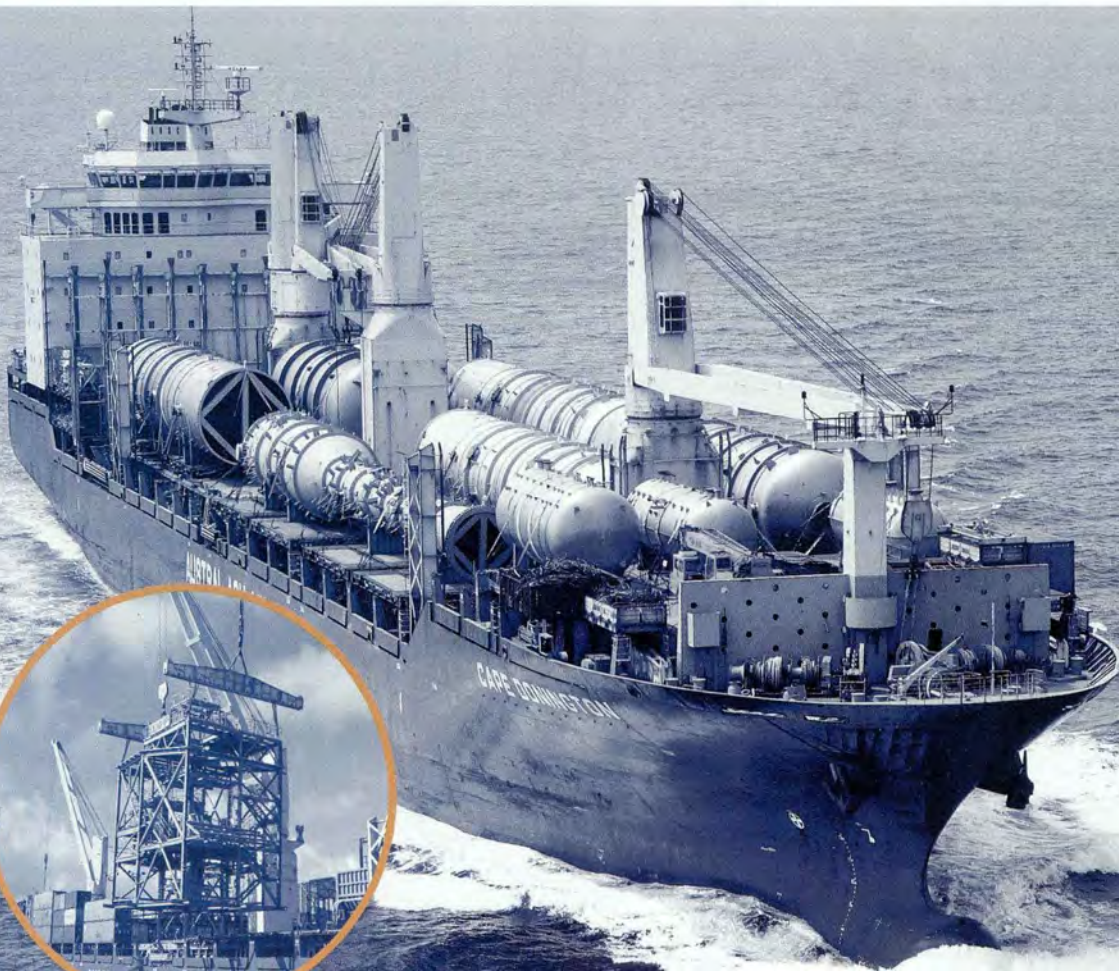
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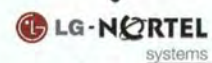
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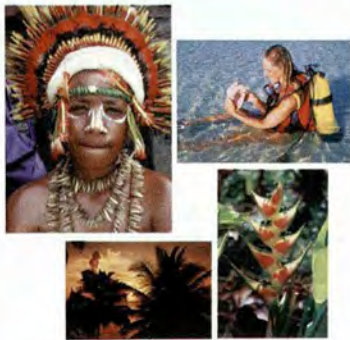
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Meet Piggy - a small cartoon turtle - who researchers hope will help turn around a decline in the numbers of the last survivors of a 40-million-year old family.

SAVING THE 5 TOEA ICON

The last survivors of a 40m-year old family

BY LYDIA KAIA & DENNIS BADI

Piggy is a pig-nosed turtle, or more formally, *carettochelys insculpta*. Pig-nosed turtles are the last surviving members of the *carettochelydidae* scientific family of creatures.

Today, they are found only in the southern-flowing rivers of the island of New Guinea, and in some of the major rivers of the Northern Territory in Australia. It's a far cry from the *carettochelydidae* family's range 40 million years ago, which fossil evidence suggests included Asia, Europe and North America.

Listed as vulnerable in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, the pig-nosed turtle in Papua New Guinea is now the focus of a collaborative research project supported by the University of Canberra, Oil Search (PNG)

Limited and the conservation organisation WWF.

The project is working with communities along the reaches of the Kikori River in Papua New Guinea's Gulf province to gather strategic data on the nesting biology of the turtle and the harvest. It also aims to raise awareness of the turtle's significance and to encourage discussion on the need for sustainable harvesting and protection.

Piggy, the cartoon turtle, stars in a new book the project has produced and distributed to around 1000 school children in the region. Researcher Carla Eisemberg says Piggy introduces children to the pig-nosed turtle and its life cycle in an entertaining way.

"The book uses games and number puzzles to

underline the importance of sustainable fishing and hunting practices to preserve turtles for future generations because over-harvesting is a very real danger," Eisemberg says.

"We know that traditionally the pig-nosed turtles have been an important part of local people's diet, and that hunting and fishing for turtles is part of the culture. But the pressure on the turtle population seems to be increasing - people aren't just harvesting them for their own use, but for sale in the markets. If that pressure becomes too intense, there's a real risk the turtles could be wiped out in this region."



Carla Eiseberg...distributing Piggy, the cartoon turtle book to children.



The star of the PNG five-toea coin, the turtle's pig-like snout makes it instantly recognisable. Above water, Piggy and her real-life counterparts use their noses for breathing, but underwater, the nose becomes a detection device.

The turtle uses special growths in its throat to absorb extra oxygen from the water, while its soft nose with its large openings is used to investigate its environment, searching out food even in muddy water.

The turtle's nose is not its only unusual feature. Its front limbs take the form of flippers, like marine turtles. These flippers have two claws on the outer side, which the turtle uses to hold food such as fruits, crabs and crustaceans while eating. The claws also enable the turtle to hold on to vegetation while resting.

Weighing as much as 25 kilogrammes, the Kikori pig-nosed turtles are significantly larger than their Australian cousins. Female turtles lay eggs once or twice every two years, at night on a dry sandy bank on the river's edge. Digging a small hole, each breeding female will deposit between 13 and 36 eggs. About the size and shape of a ping-pong ball, the pig-nosed turtle eggs have the thickest shell of any turtle species. The eggs incubate in the nest for three to four months before hatching.

The sex of the hatchlings depends on the temperature - if the sandbanks are warm or hot, there will be more females; if cooler, there will be more males.

The three-month nesting season, during the September to February dry season, is a hazardous time for turtles. The salvadores

monitor is the longest lizard in the world; it's also devastatingly efficient when it comes to finding newly-laid turtle eggs. Similarly, the salt and freshwater crocodiles that inhabit the Kikori River and delta prey on turtles and their eggs. Flooding is another problem - if the river floods early and inundates the nest, the eggs won't hatch.

To make matters worse, the nesting season is when turtles are mostly likely to be hunted by people.

The international pet industry has always been a problem for the pig-nosed turtle - its unique appearance makes it popular with collectors, and in the past unsustainable egg collection has occurred. A recent CITES listing (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) under Appendix II may provide more protection.

In the Kikori region, the turtle is hunted primarily for food, for its meat and eggs. Local communities watch for groups of females laying their eggs on riverbanks. Eiseberg says in recent times, some hunters have been taking larger numbers of breeding females than in the past, and taking entire clutches of eggs, leaving none to hatch.

"In the Kikori area, people seem to have forgotten their traditional resource management practices and so they're now major threats to the survival of pig-nosed turtles. The wisdom that used to be passed from one generation to the next is being lost," she says.

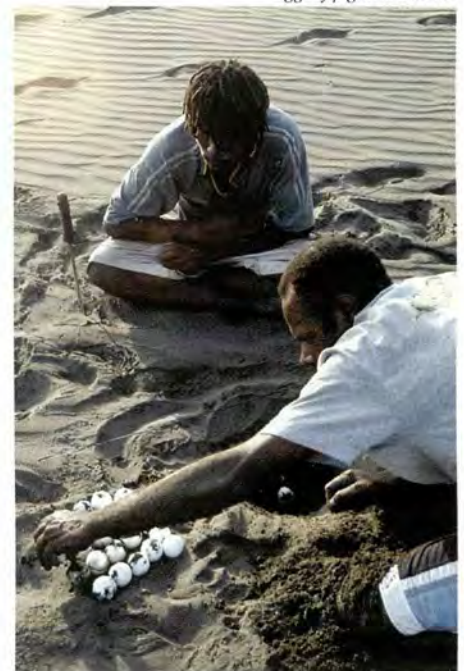
Gathering more information about turtle

populations in the wild will help conservation. Eiseberg says the data will help scientists understand how many turtles there are, and how often and how successfully they are breeding.

"That in turn gives us a better basis for sitting down with local villagers to work out what's a sustainable harvest and what's a concern."

Veraibari ward councillor Alex Miuari praised the project's efforts to reach out to the younger generation and its sustainable harvest

Eggs of pig-nosed turtle.



message. "We know it's important to preserve the pig-nosed turtle for the future generations, by not taking every egg for consumption, but leave some to hatch to multiply the turtle population."

As well as producing the book introducing local children to Piggy the turtle, the project has worked with a group of senior school students, training them to help with scientific survey and monitoring work, to use computers, and involving them in radio programmes made with the help of the Community Development Initiative NGO.

"Their Nature Talk programme is broadcast in Tok Pisin, Motu and English and has generated a lot of public interest in Kikori," Eisemberg said.

WWF's PNG representative Iain Carr said the project was an important one and acknowledged the financial and logistical support it had been given by Oil Search Ltd.

"The company and its joint venture partners recognise that the social and economic impact of their operations can extend well beyond a project area," Carr said.

"For example, when development attracts more people to an area, this can have unintended effects on wildlife, such as the pig-nosed turtle. Oil Search's partnerships with WWF and with universities to mitigate these potential impacts are really breaking new ground."

WWF species officer Felix Kinginapi has



worked on the turtle research with Eisemberg - he says it's difficult to predict or measure the eventual impact. "But most certainly, there has been a shift in the community response," he says.

Eisemberg says although her field work with the project will finish soon, she hopes the students and communities she has worked with will now take over, continuing the efforts

to preserve pig-nosed turtles for future generations.

"The pig-nosed turtle is so important to the people of the Kikori region. They are the ones who can really help to work out how we can strike a balance between people's needs, and making sure turtles survive for the future. Our research and awareness work is intended to help with that," she said.



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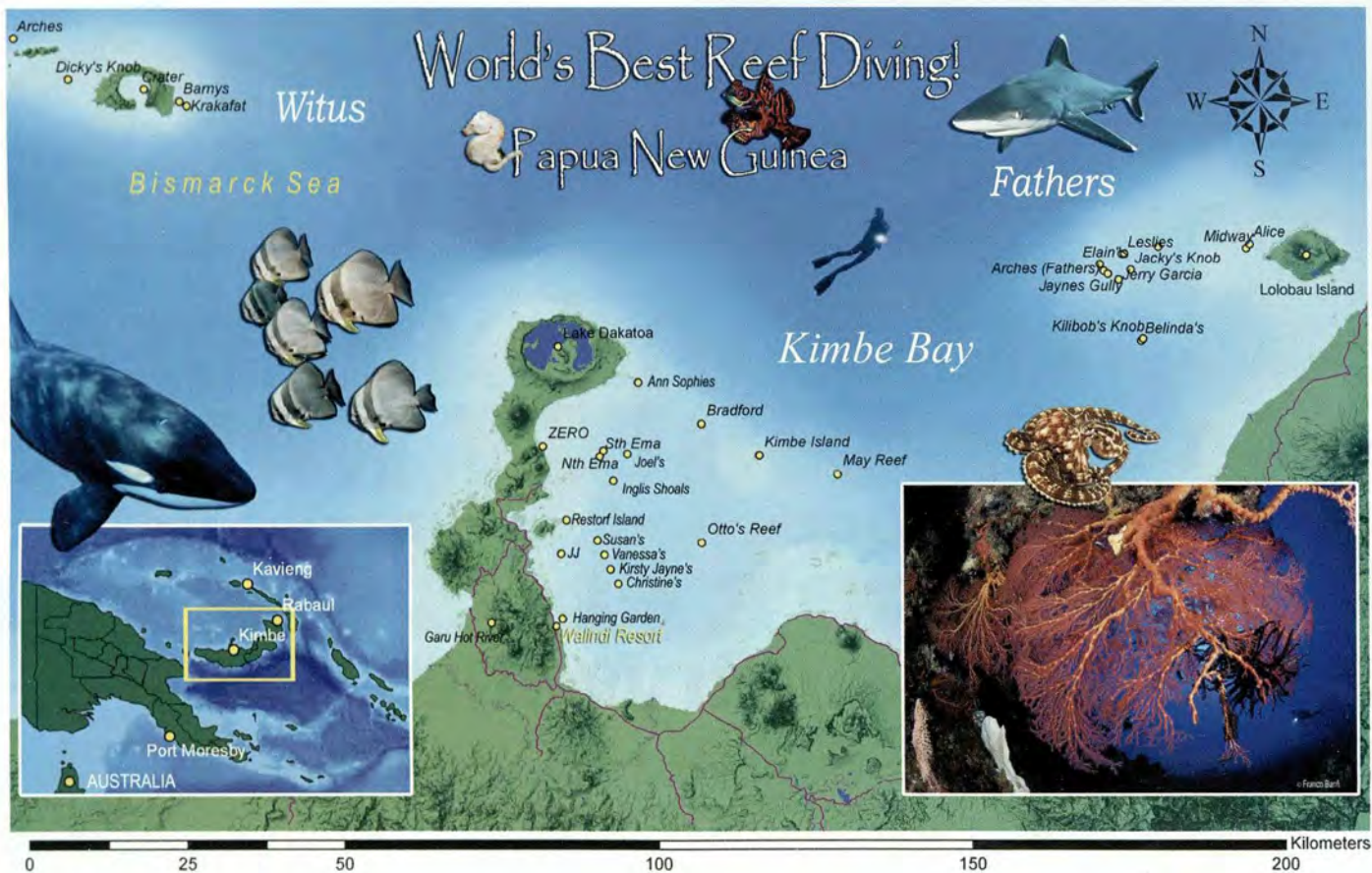
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SO YOU WANT TO BUILD A RESORT IN PARADISE?

The long and winding road...

BY CECILIE BENJAMIN

Walindi Plantation Resort, renowned worldwide for scuba diving, snorkelling, bird watching and interaction with nature, celebrated 25 years of operation or a silver anniversary in 2008. Twenty five years is a long time in a human life span. Much can be achieved with vision and determination. I am often asked by guests and visitors about what it was like in the beginning and what changes have occurred over the years.



With husband Max, I had learnt to scuba dive in Kimbe Bay, on the north coast of New Britain Island, Papua New Guinea, during 1976. The intervening years up to the early 1980s were spent in underwater exploration of the reefs of Kimbe Bay. 'The Bay' was our undiscovered universe.

A scuba diving holiday to the Red Sea's Sinai Peninsular in 1978 sowed the seed of the idea with Max to develop Walindi Plantation Resort on the shores of Kimbe Bay where we lived at Walindi Plantation, a plantation growing oil palm even to this day.

The Red Sea at that time was internationally hailed as the 'world's best diving'. We found the spectacular desert scenery and interesting reefs there, simply no match for our home in Kimbe Bay with its dramatic rainforests, volcanic peaks as a backdrop and - the underwater difference - of so many more coral and fish species.



This was an era where the term 'Coral Triangle' had not yet been coined. Through international marine research in the years following that fateful journey, it is now recognised that the greatest marine diversification of coral on earth occurs in the region boarded by the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, East Indonesia and the southern Philippines.

This is the so-called Coral Triangle, home to 75% of the world's coral species in an area covered by less than 2% of the world's oceans. The Bismark Sea, where Kimbe Bay is situated, is almost central to this triangle.

Some of the greatest changes we have experienced over the last 25 years have occurred with telecommunication. In an era of broadband wireless internet, mobile phone connection now extending into some of the remotest villages in Papua New Guinea,

global positioning systems for navigation, the younger generation would find it hard to comprehend a time when communication was very different. Two-way radios and a manually operated telephone exchange in Lae were how it was in the early days.

Walindi Resort's construction commenced with two bungalows in 1983. Today, 12 beachfront bungalows and four Plantation House rooms cater for up to 32 guests.

Initially, our first visitors were from Australia. They were present when Australia achieved one of its greatest sporting triumphs by winning The America's Cup, sailing's greatest prize. The champagne flowed! Since that memorable event, Walindi has welcomed guests from all corners of the world and all walks of life.

Looking back through old photo albums, images from the past bring back a flood of memories...friends made, guests we have met and good times. There were also hard times. Once, a bungalow was lost to a fire one afternoon, February's wet season floods in the



“The coral reefs of Kimbe Bay take me back 40 years to a time when corals grew in lush profusion, untroubled by all the problems that beset them today.”



early 1990s severely damaged staff housing and infrastructure. Volcanic activity in 2002 near Hoskins closed the nearby airstrip which services West New Britain Province, severely disrupting aircraft schedules and leading to four months cancellations of resort bookings.

The Main House, where meals, bar, recreation, boutique facilities, library and offices are centred, has been completely rebuilt. The decking has been extended to the edge of the sea over the years making it a hub for guests and local visitors from Kimbe and surrounding areas.

The resort started with one diving boat called 'Ema'. Today, there are two extra day boats called Cheyne and Charmaine - both named after our children. They take guests to outlying reefs and islands in the bay on a daily basis.

Recently, Professor Charlie Veron, a former chief scientist at the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences and the world's most published reef scientist, stated after a reef study of the bay that "the coral reefs of Kimbe Bay take me back 40 years to a time when corals grew in lush profusion, untroubled by all the problems that beset them today. A short boat ride from Walindi Resort and I am diving on reefs that have half of the coral species of



the entire Indo-Pacific, all awaiting those rare opportunities that come only with the clearest water. I am hard-pressed to think of anywhere on earth that has this combination of vibrant health, diversity and beauty”.

Such statements have helped keep us focused on further nurturing the resort over the years and most importantly, encouraged. It has been gratifying to see the awareness raised of the marine environment with underwater images taken here. Kimbe Bay photographs have had prize winning success on many occasions at international underwater film festivals such as the Festival Mondial de L'Image Sous-Marine held annually at Antibes, France, and elsewhere. This fact has contributed to Papua New Guinea's reputation as a world class international environmental destination for tourism.

In 1991, the MV Febrina, under the command and partnership of Capt Alan Raabe, was an important addition to extending the resort's field of operation. The live aboard dive boat is over 20 metres and takes 12 passengers to outlying areas like the Father's Reef complex and the Witu Islands, off the north coast of New Britain.

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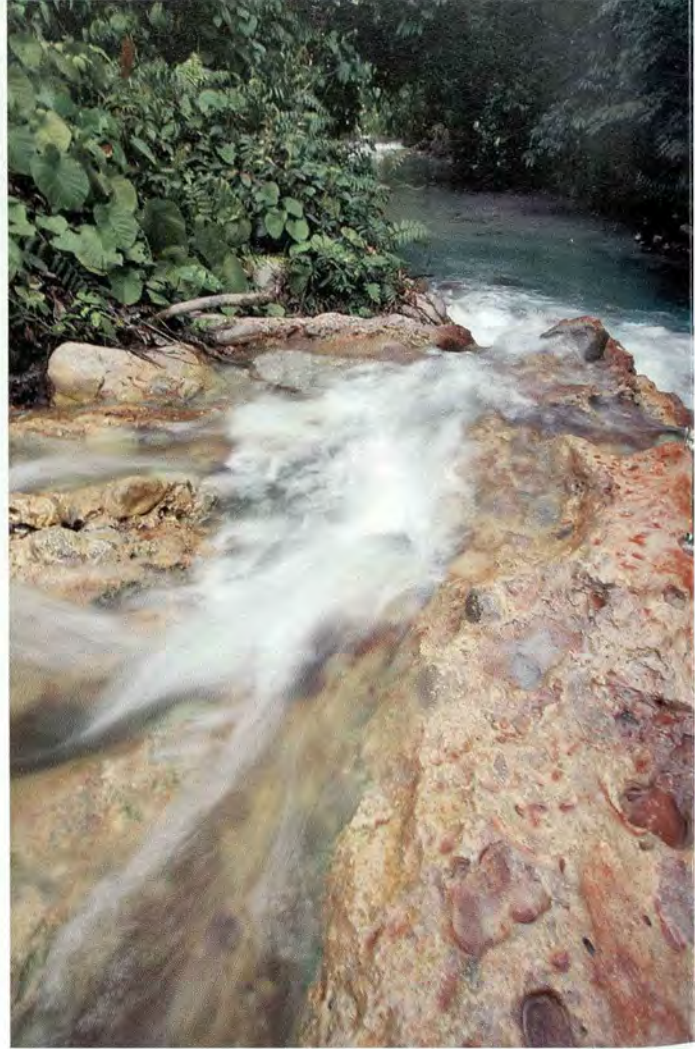
Bird watching in the area has begun to flourish with an appreciation of some of the rarest birds on the planet being identified.

It has been a long road to reach the Walindi Plantation Resort we see today. It is our life's work and an investment of time, finances, passion and hard mental and physical input.

Walindi Plantation Resort has developed a momentum of its own. Along with scuba diving, the snorkelling is spectacular. Bird watching in the area has begun to flourish with an appreciation of some of the rarest birds on the planet being identified.

Nearby village visits can be arranged and excursions to swim in thermal pools are popular. There is an increased interest in trekking throughout the area to observe and be surrounded by primary rainforest and all that it offers. World War Two aircraft wrecks in the vicinity serve as a reminder of the devastating conflict which enveloped this whole island from 1942 to 1945.

So to future resort builders everywhere...be prepared to be taken into realms and directions you never deemed possible or expected if you commenced a similar road.



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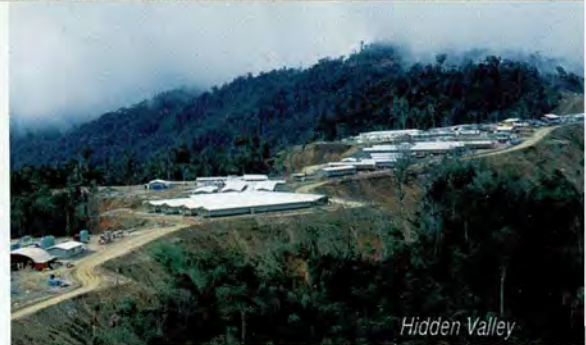
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PNG FLAG FLIES HIGH IN MARITIME EDUCATION

BY SAMISONI PARETI



If you forget just for a moment how you entered, you could very well think you are inside the engine room of one of the world's most modern ships.

The main 900kW engine sits in front of you, backed up by two diesel generators by its side. Also installed within easy reach are the steam-generating engine and a fuel purification machine.



As you walk around, you feel the aluminium claddings on your shoes. Lift one of these claddings up, a network of well painted pipes will be revealed. Past the heavy engines, a flight of stairs take you up to the control centre of the engine room. Its 24-hour air conditioning keeps out the fumes and noise down below. From it, the chief engineer has a bird's eye view of the engine room floor. The cubicle may be small but it serves as the vital link between the bridge and the engine room of the ship.

But this is no ordinary ship. It is one of the many buildings that make up the Papua New Guinea Maritime College (PNGMC) in Madang.

In it, the college trains the country and the Pacific's ship engineering students. As a matter of fact, PNGMC is the only maritime educational institution in the Pacific islands, outside of Australia and New Zealand, that offers engineers and ship master class one certificates. Such training means its graduates can captain (or become chief engineer) of



any ship anywhere in the world. Certificates of PNGMC are world recognised because the college is in the IMO's white list. This is the International Maritime Organisation's standards of excellence for maritime training institutions around the world. To remain in the white list, maritime colleges are subjected to vigorous scrutiny by external auditors every five years. PNGMC passed its recent audit in 2006.

"I joined the college in 1996 as an engineering lecturer and the person who recruited me who was then the principal Noel Snelleksz actually had put in place a development programme that was accepted by AusAid and the PNG Government. This is to install equipment that would allow us to train to those levels - master class one and engineering class one," explains PNGMC principal, Richard Coleman.

"So in 1997, we began a programme of development of the college which lasted two years and resulted in the equipment that allowed us to train up to this level. After that, we had to obviously go through the approval cycle and it was in May 2001 that we actually achieved the white listing. So it was my predecessor, if you like, that really was the vision behind the initial concept of bringing this college to the forefront of international maritime education."

Originally from Britain, Coleman worked for a number of years for Shell based in Australia. He was an engineer in one of the oil multinational's tankers. Coleman readily acknowledged that PNGMC would not have attained world accreditation if it wasn't for the confidence and the high level of investments

of the government of Papua New Guinea and donors like AusAid.

The first phase of the college's development cost 12 million Kina with AusAid contributing K10 million and the balance by the PNG Government.

Beaming with pride...PNGMC principal, Richard Coleman with his state of the art facilities.





“Like a real ship, the student will have in front of him radar panels, steering wheel and electronic charts. Each cubicle is mounted with speakers that simulate real ship sounds...”

The next round of investment was secured in 2002, this time from the PNG Incentive Fund, which resulted in the upgrade of the college’s facilities, including the state-of-the art ship simulators and real size engine room.

The Incentive Fund is another programme of AusAid and it gave PNGMC K6.8 million. Because of this growing confidence by overseas donors and its own government, PNG Maritime College has been able to double its student capacity from 120 in 1997 to 240 in 2003.

The building, housing the engine room, is near the water. From there, past the residential blocks and near the college’s main office, you will come across two sets of buildings. These are classrooms for PNGMC and one of them houses the college’s highly sophisticated ship simulators.

A large, well-lit room greets you as you enter. Across on a wall are mounted three big computer monitors. A long conference-like table takes up the rest of the space. If you stand near the door, three cubicles take up

the right wall. Computerised simulators of a ship’s bridge are housed in each of the cubicles.

“When in operation, the student will have a 120-degree display of the ship from the large flat screen in front of him,” explains Coleman.

“The screen gives a visual representation of the seaway, which could be Sydney Harbour, for instance. The student will have to navigate through hazards and obstacles like other ships, submerged reefs or wrecks.

“Like a real ship, a student will have in front of him radar panels, the steering wheel and electronic charts. Each cubicle is mounted with speakers that simulate real ship sounds. The lecturer doesn’t need to be with each of the student in their cubicle as he monitors everything from the screens in the main room and just like a real ship, communicates with his students over the intercom.”

From the middle of the year, Coleman hopes



the simulators will be able to use Port Moresby Harbour for training. Through a project funded by PNG Ports, a 3D graphic image of Port Moresby Harbour is being produced by a Singaporean company. Once completed, a copy of the programme will be loaded into the college’s three bridge simulators. Coleman said PNG Ports has committed itself to this expensive investment as it will help the training of good local pilots in the country’s sea ports.

Herein lies another reason why PNGMC is a leader in maritime education. Coleman said the commitment shown to the school by the

PNG Government has been matched by those offered by private shipping companies and friendly donors.

They sponsor most of the students, so hardly a graduate is left without a job by graduation day. In fact, because of such a support, PNG Maritime College is about to embark on its third round of capital development.

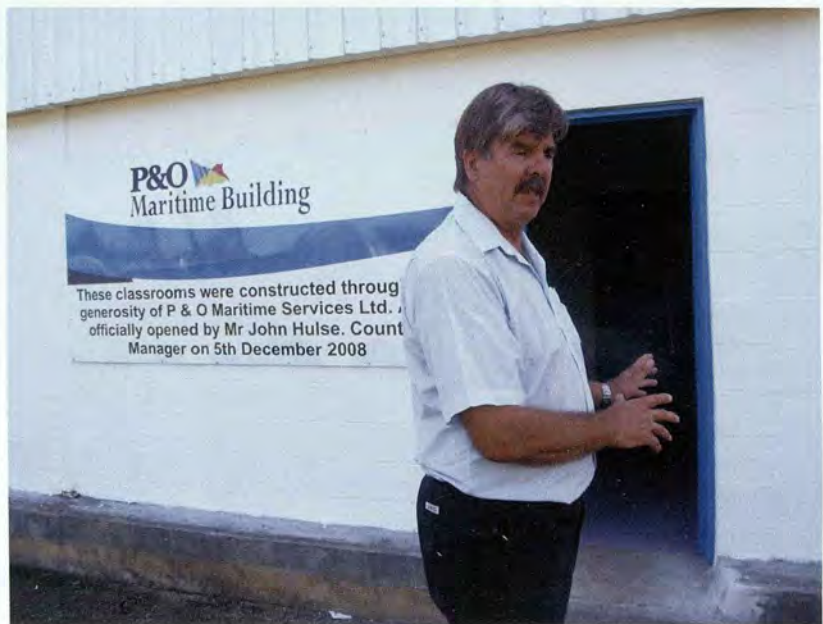
The national government has already approved the transfer of its adjacent property of two acres to the college, doubling its land size as a consequence.

Using the already existing large warehouse, two large air conditioned classrooms and a laboratory (housing a hydrostatus machine donated by Swire Shipping) have been completed and an indoor 25-metre swimming pool for fire fighting and rescue training is under construction.

The new property will also house more residential blocks for teachers and students, which will include rooms for women students as well.

Said Coleman: "There is a term that is banded about which is called corporate social responsibility and the PNG shipping industry is very much at the forefront of that in looking after the people they employ.

"Because training fees are not cheap especially with the degree of sophistication of the equipment that we have here and in order to maintain the facility we have, we have to spend money in equipment renewal,



upgrades and obviously, the staff we employ are also highly qualified. Although we don't pay the same rate as what a seafarer would get, we still have to attract good people to the positions.

"The PNG Government pays our salary bill. We are a statutory authority under the PNG Maritime College Act. We have a board of directors who are both government and private sector reps which I report to and I put a budget to government purely for our salaries and all

the other revenue we get is for operational requirement.

We feed all our students on site, we maintain our buildings, we've got some houses in town that staff live in that we maintain. So it's important that training fees and the salary government pays meet our costs. We run a balanced budget, not for profit but we ensure that we have sufficient income in order to keep standards up to the level that is required by shipping companies."



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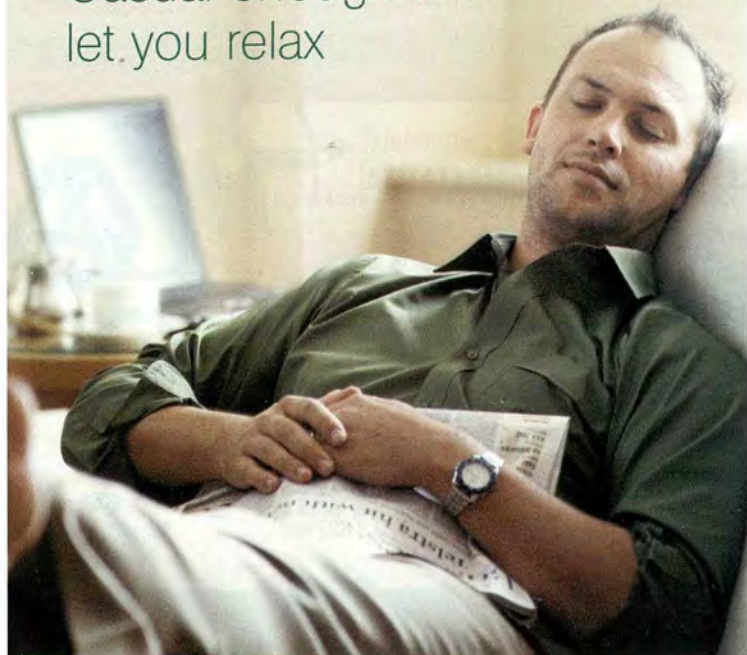
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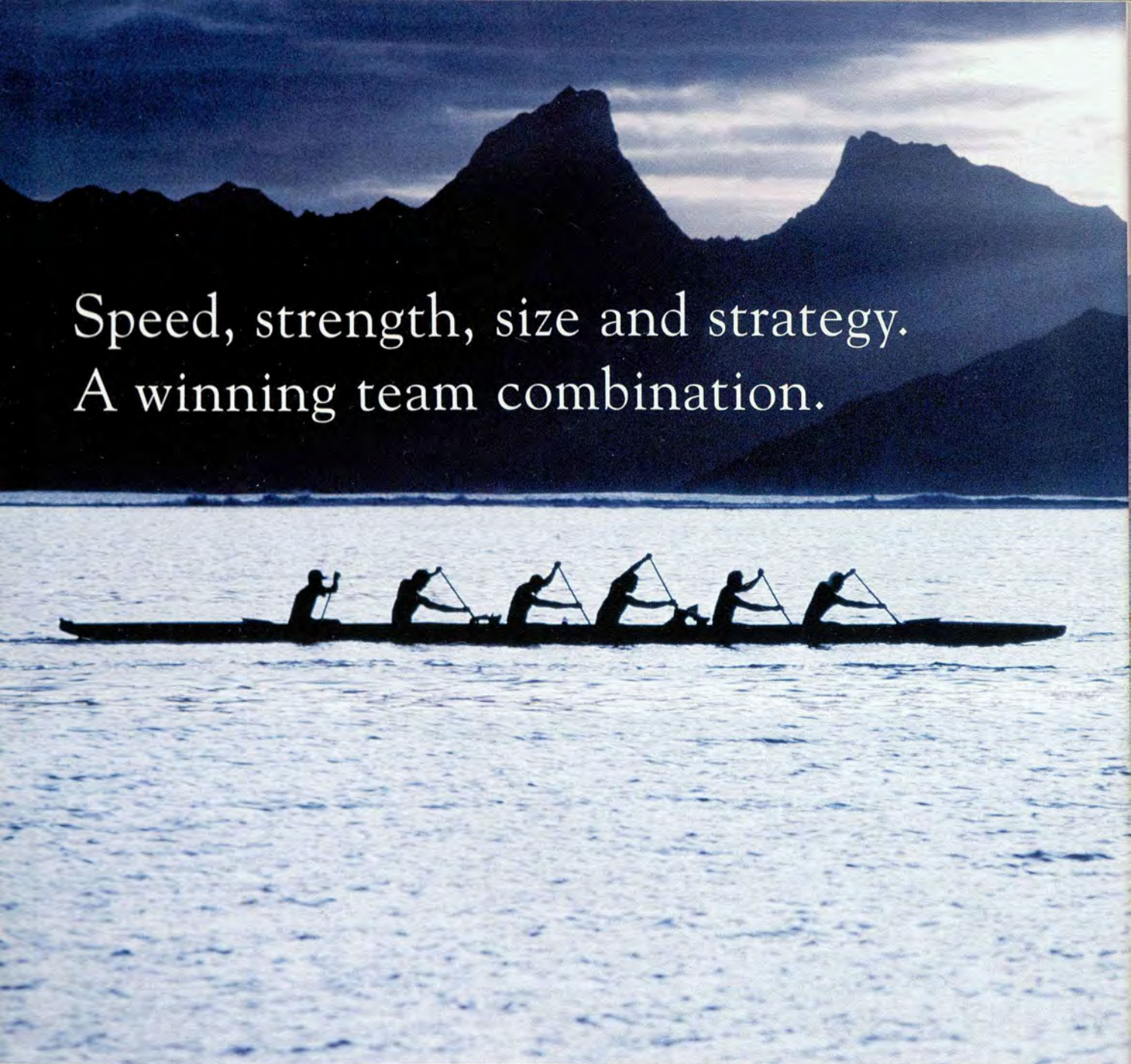
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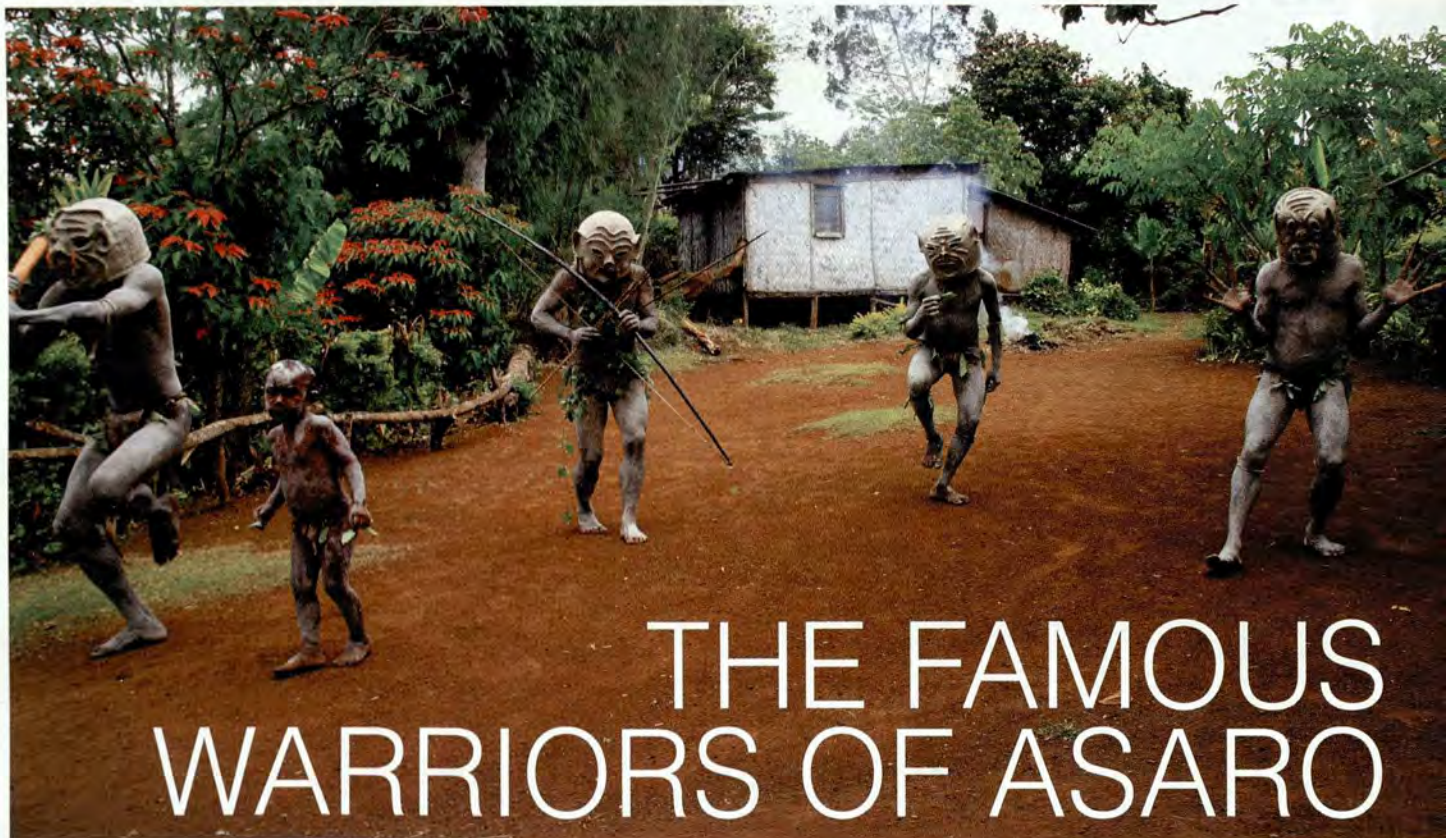
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The legend of the Mudmen of Asaro has been kept alive in the eastern Highlands of PNG. In Geremiyaka village, they bring back to life the famous warriors in an area of natural beauty.



THE FAMOUS WARRIORS OF ASARO

How the Mudmen came to be feared

Through the smokey haze, the first warrior emerges with a bow slung over one shoulder and arrows on the other.

With slow and deliberate cat-like movements, he moves towards us. Behind him, other warriors step cautiously and quietly and follow a short distance behind.

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BEN HALL

Like ghosts emerging from the shadows, the warriors are covered from head to foot in a light grey mud and they wear clay helmets with ferocious and grotesque masks which add to the eerie atmosphere.

As they approach, the warriors close ranks and form a tighter unit and from a range of just two metres, the lead warrior carefully raises his bow, primed with an arrow, and aims straight for my chest.

He holds the position for seems like eternity and then lowers the bow and arrow and moves to his left. Our eyes haven't left him, and we jump as a "clack clack clack" sound breaks the silence. One of the warriors is snapping his long sharpened bamboo fingernails right next to my cheek as a threat, and then they all freeze. It's the end of the performance and "Edward Scissorhands"

removes his helmet to reveal a teenager with the smile of someone who's just played a great practical joke.

The Mudmen of Asaro provide an enduring image of Highlands tradition and culture and the men of Geremiyaka village, just outside Goroka, perform the ritual with a genuine attention to detail, with a little showmanship thrown in for dramatic effect.

This is not a dance, as is the case with most sing-sings in this part of the world. It's a performance which tells the story of one of the most enduring legends of PNG.

The legend of the Mudmen goes something like this: many, many years ago the men of the village returned from a hunting trip to find a neighbouring clan had raided their home and taken their women.



They were greatly outnumbered by their rivals whose reputation as fierce warriors created fear in the region, but all the same to save face, they launched a dawn raid of their own to save their women.

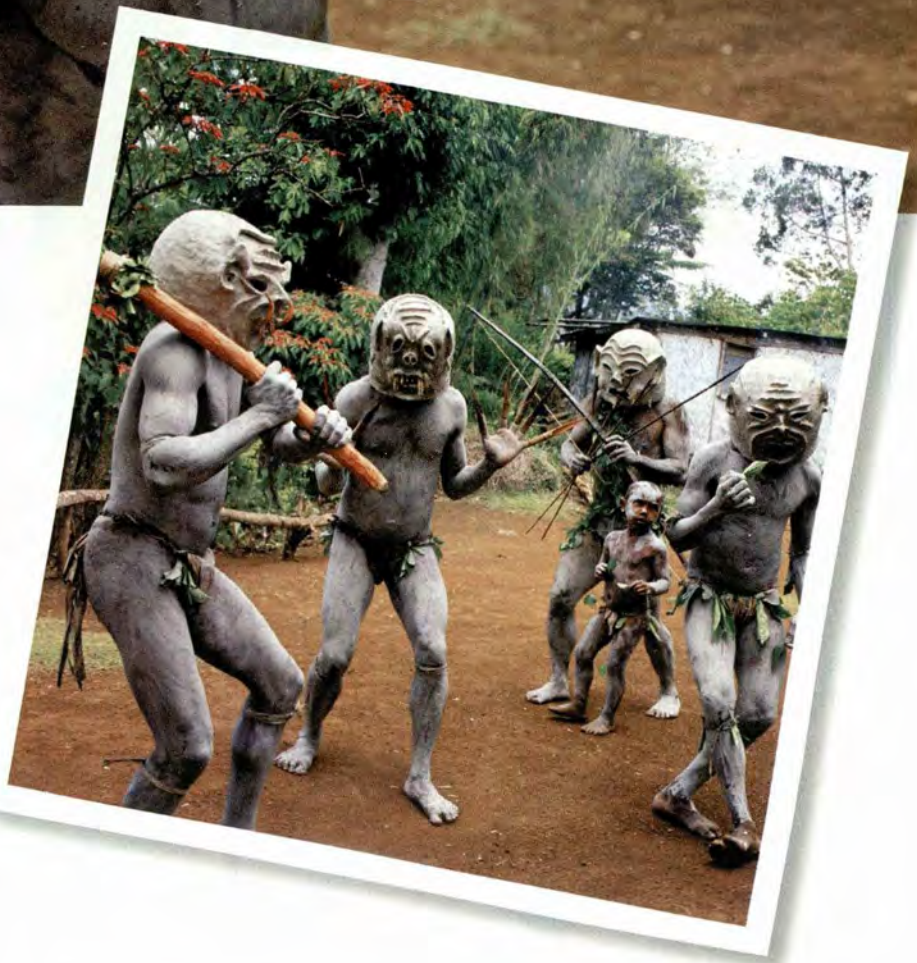
In the darkness, they became lost and stumbled into a muddy creek, losing their weapons, and when they finally emerged, they were covered in thick grey-white mud. When the rival tribe saw them stalking towards them, it created mass panic as their enemies thought they were evil spirits coming to take them.

In their own language, the Mudmen called out to their women and convinced them to escape back to their homes.

"After that, the first Mudmen took advantage of the fear they created and made helmets with masks to make themselves even scarier," explains Tiger, the leader of Geremiyaka's performance group.

"The mud and the masks became a weapon and they used it to recapture land and to attack other warriors. Their enemies were very scared of evil spirits and they made the most of this."

The Asaro Mudmen performance was first displayed publicly at the inaugural Goroka Show staged in 1957, and before a crowd of 100,000. It was reported that even then spectators fled, terrified at the sight of the mudmen with their masks.



"The mud and the masks became a weapon and they used it to recapture land and to attack other warriors. Their enemies were very scared of evil spirits and they made the most of this."



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“He’s been doing this ever since he started to walk and has respect for the legend...”



It's widely believed that the original Mudmen hailed from Komunive but other villages also claim a link to the ancestry.

In Geremiyaka, in the Daulo District, the locals adhere to the traditions of the Mudmen of Asaro with their detailed dress and knowledge which is passed onto the children. Tiger's three year old son, Tenige, has been performing since he was 12 months old and is well versed in the important tradition he is keeping alive.

“He’s been doing this ever since he started to walk and has respect for the legend,” Tiger says.

Geremiyaka is a friendly place of great beauty and an impromptu village visit is often a part of the Mudmen experience.

One of the local ladies, Rachel, shows us around and introduces us to her grandfather Tenige, who she thinks might be 85, but nobody really knows for sure.

Tenige invites us into his traditional home and shows us his bed and the fire on his floor where he cooks and makes his coffee.

Then we're taken around the gardens of Geremiyaka which are dotted with other traditional homes and Rachel shows us the area's famous coffee berry plant, which is a cash crop for local people in this part of the world. There are also banana trees, papaya, avocado trees,

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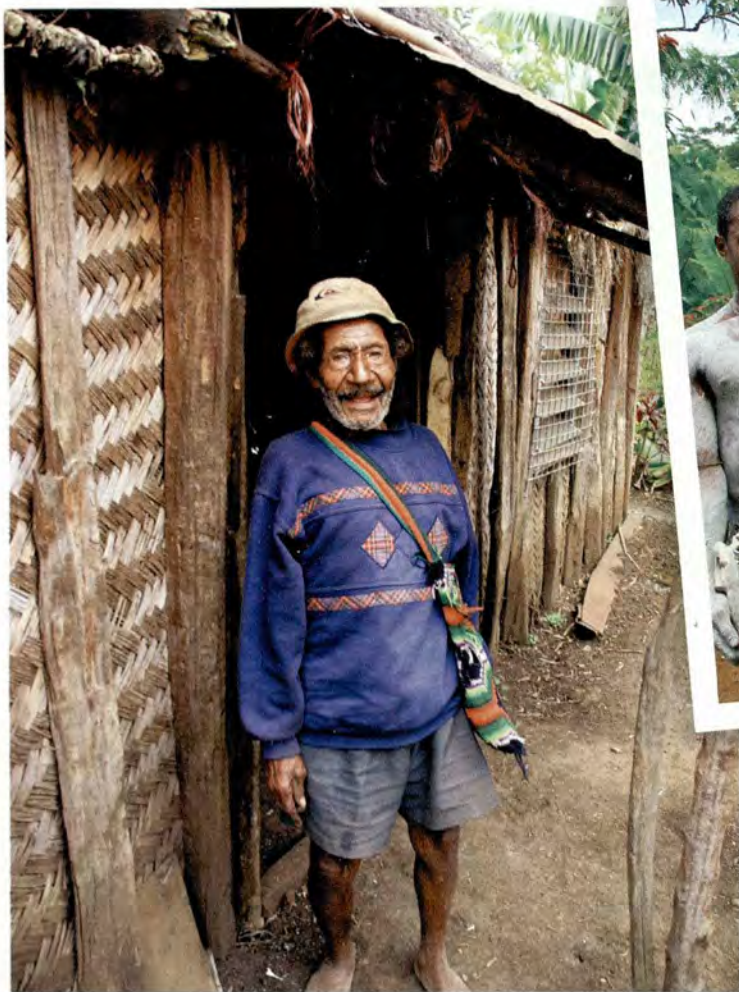
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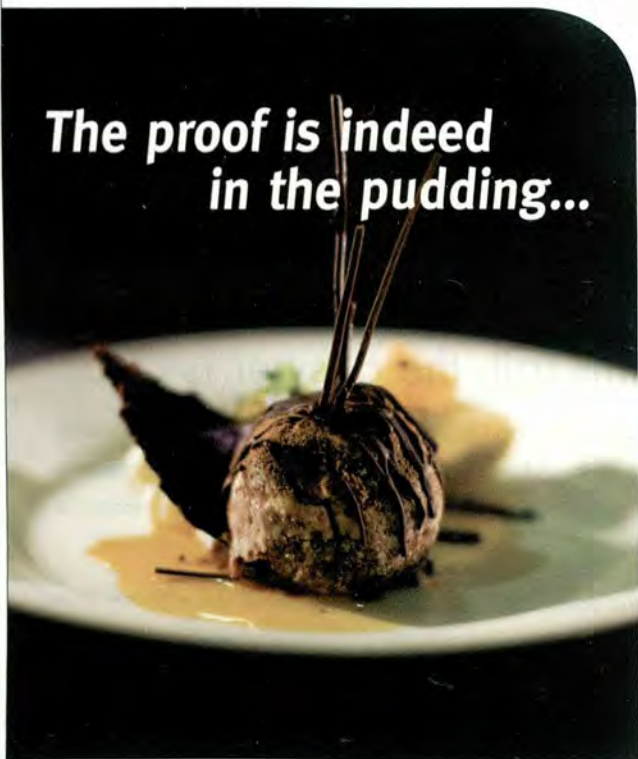
To ensure total accuracy, we still use hands to tell the time.





“We can grow nearly anything up here,” Rachel says. “The only thing we really buy from the market is frozen chicken which we cook up in a mumu.”

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cabbage patches, breadfruit trees and tree tomatoes which come in two types - one for eating as it's nice and sweet and the other for making the area's famous wine. It's obvious the people can quite easily live off the land.

"We can grow nearly anything up here," Rachel says. "The only thing we really buy from the market is frozen chicken which we cook up in a mumu."

The mumu is one of the highlights of the visit to Geremiyaka, along with the Mudmen, and the food is cooked on rocks heated by a fire underground and then covered with banana leaves. Chicken and pork are usually the main course, with yam, potato, and cabbage all cooked with their flavours sealed in with an enticing smokey flavour.

Eating traditional fresh food in such a peaceful setting usually marks the end of this village experience, but the wider area is worth exploration and a drive through the Asaro Valley and up the Highlands Highway to Daulo Pass reveals the landscapes that earn this area the reputation as one of the most beautiful parts of PNG.

Through the fast-moving clouds and swirling mist at an altitude of 2,478 metres, the full grandeur of the valley is revealed with lush forests lining steep mountain ranges and rivers running beside small villages where small wisps of smoke rise from the floor.



Fact File

Getting There

Geremiyaka is accessed by four wheel drive and Goroka Treks & Tours (Tel: +675 732 1281, email: goroka@pngexplorers.com) take visitors to the village. For more information visit www.pngtourism.org.pg

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BILUMS

Functional, traditional and fashionable

WORDS: NATALIJA BRUNOVŠ | PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON THOMAS

Papua New Guinea and bilums. You can't really separate the two. The handwoven bag is the decoration of the nation.



As a reasonably well travelled Australian, I must add that I have never seen a country that has embraced one art form so entirely. It's functional, traditional and fashionable. And it is carried by every one.

I imagine that most of the female population came out of the womb being able to weave. It seems to be as essential as knowing how to cook kao kao (sweet potato) or grow kumu (greens). And what impresses me most is how all manner of complex designs can come from the hands and minds of these women without patterns or plans.

They just pass on their knowledge from one woman to the next through showing. I've seen women who will weave all day and night, they will walk and weave or cook and weave. It must be a truly enjoyable way to spend time, to focus on the creation of a bilum.

In areas of Papua New Guinea, there is up to 80% unemployment. That is an astronomical figure and affects the lives of these people greatly.

People wander the streets with nothing to do, nowhere to go. It naturally leads some to crime, but the majority of the people have an innate joy. Laughter comes easily to the people, kindness is exchanged through warm handshakes and a great strength is derived from their spirituality.

This is so inspiring when you observe how most people survive on basic vegetables, working hard in their gardens and selling what they can at the markets.

Most wear second hand clothes from developed countries and just dream of being able to afford their children's school fees. Yet they are rich in the sense of their land - it is fertile and grows the best vegetables I've

ever tasted. And, the beauty of their weaving, its colourful designs dotted all over their landscape, is a reminder of this incredible skill that each woman possesses. Can this skill be a means to alleviate poverty?

I went to Goroka, in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, in January on an assignment with the Australian Business Volunteers (ABV). ABV sends Australians to many areas of the Pacific each year for anywhere between one month and one year.

I had previously worked with a university in Madang, Papua New Guinea. With such fond memories of the country, I was keen to accept a new creative assignment. This particular project was to assist a collective of weavers to develop their product for an international market. The goals were to generate a feasible income for these women and build their capacity to continue with the project independently.

The weavers have been working for the past seven years with a very inspired and active community elder, Florence Jaukae.

Florence has developed the bilum into wearable fashion and had quite some success with their bilum dresses. However, the appeal was limited to the Pacific and so Florence approached ABV to help her find a volunteer to work with the women to create products that would get them noticed.

Australian Business Volunteers puts great emphasis on the building of capacity. If I were to turn up, do a job and leave, then the women would be left without the ability to manage the project. What would they have learnt? How would they be empowered?

My role was to share my skills in design and marketing, to teach them ways of thinking like the Australian buyer and to develop their skills and product. The women were skilled at their craft but was it possible to develop bilum products



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I didn't want the women to feel like a factory line. Fortunately, they explained that they didn't mind making the same bag multiple times.



in line with Western notion of quality control, consistency and timelines? When women weave a bag, they weave one individual bag which can look simply fantastic. When women are to sell a bag overseas, then a person will have an expectation of what they will receive. This will relate to size, colour and quality. These women had to shift their thinking entirely and work out how they could create consistent products. It was a struggle for me to push these points as it can clash with my beliefs in the beauty of individuality and self-expression. I didn't want the women to feel like a factory line. Fortunately, they explained that they didn't mind making the same bag multiple times, if that meant that the bags could be sold. It was decided that the best way to sell the bags would be to deliver a consistent product.

Simple things became real challenges for the group. For example, how do you make a bag the same size as another?

Without rulers, we tried pieces of string and cut out sheets of paper until we settled on counting the number of stitches across the base of the bag. Then we explored colour, not just theories of combinations and fashionable themes, but simply, how do we ensure everyone uses the same colour each time? Even the concept that one pink isn't a substitute for another pink was new to them. Their belief was 'close enough is good enough'. So it had to be taught that to a buyer, it does matter. You do need to buy the same colour each time and stick with

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The relationship that developed between myself and the women was delightful. Through sign language and poor Pidgin English on my part, we learnt to communicate.



it throughout the design. Then the pattern itself was another bridge to cross. Take 'box' design. One person might make the box sizes twice as large as someone else. It truly was a challenge for all of us to change our thinking and develop systems to work from.

As the women were unable to read, we came up with other methods like drawings, cut-out shapes and swatch samples. Each woman was left with their own kit which included all their references and the pattern that they could confidently do.

The relationship that developed between myself and women was delightful. Through sign language and poor Pidgin English on my part, we learnt to communicate. Soon, we were laughing and joking like old friends. And through the enjoyment of each other's company, it motivated the women further to work hard for this limited opportunity and to trust me.

I really felt for these women and their individual stories, hardships and simple dreams. I felt determined to make the project work and plant the seed of a new future for them. Through the project, we developed a limited edition collection of bilum bags and cushions. Each of the eighteen women weaved one item.

The samples were then sold online to raise money to pay for their labour, for the website and to develop future products. The response was very positive. The next stage is to test the process by enacting the role of a customer in Australia.

I will order the products via the internet and the women will have the opportunity to prove that they can produce a consistent quality bag, and on time!

Once we are confident that it can work, the website will be launched with products for the world to order.

• Visit www.bilumweave.com to find out more about the project and meet the women involved.



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The outbound service is available to customers who subscribe to B Mobile Postpaid service. Under the IR services, Papua New Guineans are given the opportunity to roam to other countries using their B Mobile postpaid Mobile. Telikom PNG Ltd will endeavour to cover destinations that many nationals visit and conduct business.

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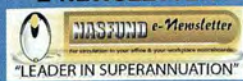
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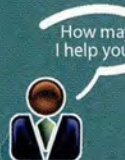
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MEMBER



In Search of the Sacred Lake at Tabubil

By Diana McManus

When I mentioned to my PNG friends that I was planning a trip to Tabubil, they told me about a sacred lake up in the mountains above the town. Little can whet my appetite more than the prospect of a trek in the bush, particularly one with a mission. Even more so for my French-Canadian friend Rene, an experienced mountain guide. Some further enquiries revealed that indeed there was a lake though it seemed to be known by two names. Expats call it Lake Wangbin but some local people refer to it as Saholmic Lake.



Lts legend goes something like this: There was once a family living on the mountain and it was the daughter's job to collect the cooking and washing water from the spring each day. The father told her to get only enough each day for their daily needs. But the daughter was lazy and cunning and contrived to lessen her duties for the next day by collecting more water than the daily quota. She rolled away the stone controlling the spring's flow. Suddenly, the spring burst forth in a mighty gush. She collected lots of water and ran away, forgetting to replace the stone.

Soon the spring flooded the whole area. The water level kept rising and rising until it covered the whole mountain top, and still it came. The people became very afraid and begged the guardian spirit of the spring to have mercy. Finally, the water stopped and formed the lake we see there today. There was a price to be paid for mercy. The offending daughter was turned to stone.

The story goes that today when people visit the lake and tend their nearby gardens, they don't make noise in case the guardian spirit of the lake and its spring gets angry again and makes the water level rise and consume them.

Tabubil is not really a tourist destination. It's known more as the mining town which

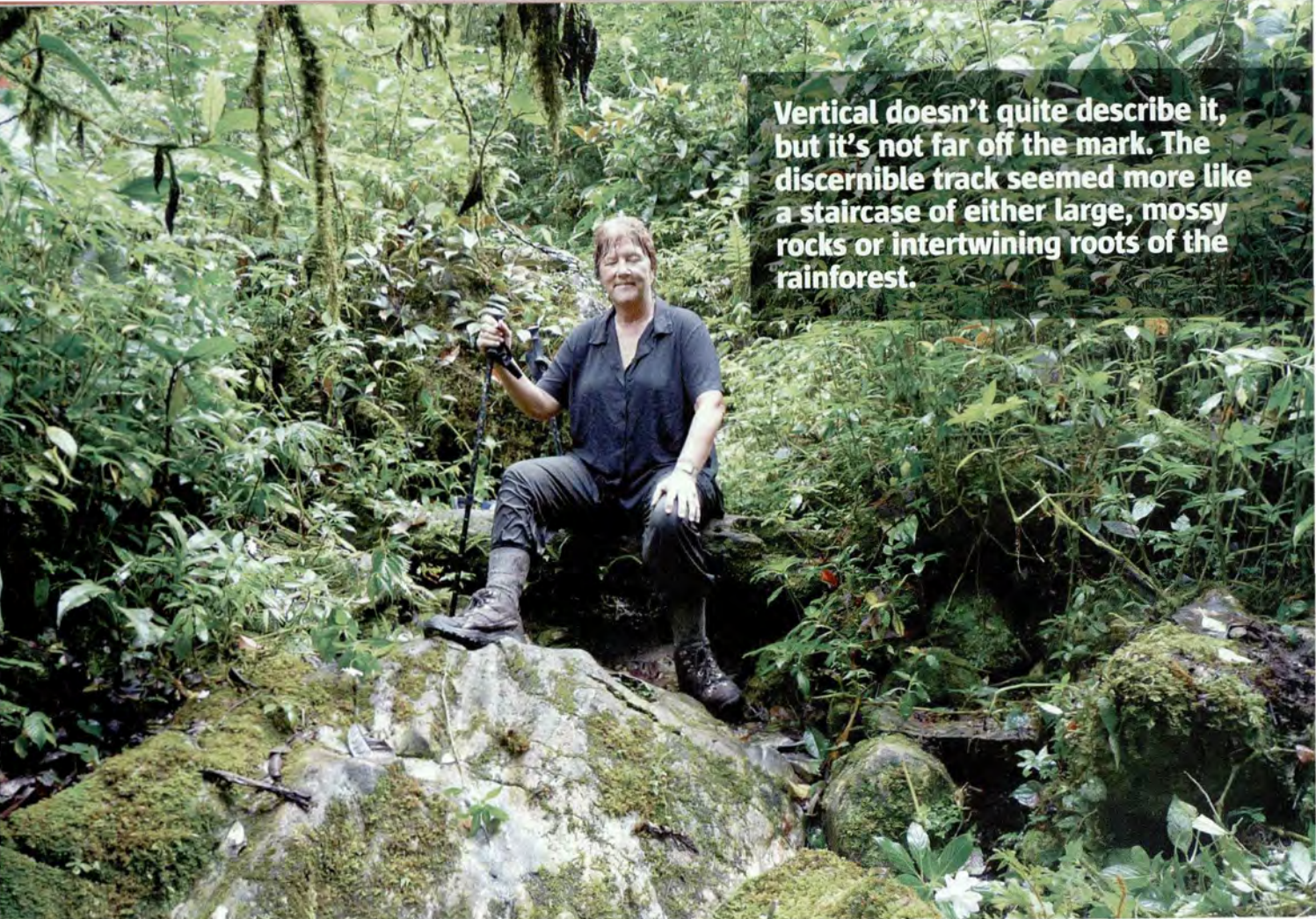
services the Ok Tedi mine. It is tightly controlled by Ok Tedi Mining Ltd (OTML). We had to seek permission from the mine to stay with our friend as all buildings there are company owned. In fact, it's a very clean town nestled in a valley and surrounded by the formidable Star Mountains. Houses are good quality, streets are broad and paved, the central shopping area and market are well laid out, rubbish is frequently collected and buai not allowed. There's a very nice Golf Club, Hash Harriers' Club, tennis courts, swimming pool and gym for the aspiring fit, and the more working class and very friendly Gazebo Club to keep your eye in at pool or darts.

As Tabubil is not geared towards tourism, our first objective was to find someone to guide us to the lake. A serendipitous encounter at the Cloudlands Hotel with Maria Miller, Supervisor of Room Services, provided an answer. She agreed to meet us after our Fly River side trip to make arrangements. As it happened, our bus from Kiunga returned later than the appointed time, so we set off in search of Maria at her home in New Wangbin, a landowner's community on the edge of town.

There's also an Old Wangbin adjacent, but it's a settlement and the building style and materials reflects this. The Wangbin communities below have their gardens up by the lake and make a couple of trips there each year to plant and harvest their crops...in bare feet and carrying heavy string bags as well.

Maria produced her nephew John, who





Vertical doesn't quite describe it, but it's not far off the mark. The discernible track seemed more like a staircase of either large, mossy rocks or intertwining roots of the rainforest.



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agreed to take us up to the lake for K60, which seemed very reasonable. "How far is it John?" I asked. "Two and a half hours, three...maybe four," he replied.

Okay, double it for the return journey and that seemed achievable in a day. At 6:20 the next morning John appeared and off we went, through town, across the mini "Harbour Bridge" and onto the track leading up to the Lagum Water Intake and pumping houses, Tabubil's main water supply. Concrete steps set a deceptively easy tone for the walk. These fizzled out at the pumping station where the track turned into a totally different ball game.

Vertical doesn't quite describe it, but it's not far off the mark. The discernible track seemed more like a staircase of either large, mossy rocks or intertwining roots of the rainforest. After about an hour and a half, the track disappeared altogether and so did the canopy of trees. Felled trees littered the steep slope and the walk became a tough scramble through the thick undergrowth and across fallen logs to a very small flat area offering superb views of the valley and town below.

To our astonishment, a couple of families emerged from behind the ridge and greeted us with enthusiasm. They had relocated from the village of Bolima, three days and two nights away. The young father had a job as a Security Guard with OTML and spent the week sleeping in one of the dongas which made up the single men's quarters in town. He joins his family up here on the hill slope for the weekend. Apparently lots of tiny settlements



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“How much further John?” Boring question. “Oh, last time I did this we left at 7am and reached the lake at 1:30. I looked at Rene, who looked as dry and cool as a cucumber (How could he?) and he made the call to turn around.”

like this dot the hillsides around Tabubil, and it's common for villagers to travel for days along forest tracks, sleeping at bush camps along the way.

Miriam, the guard's wife, showed me a pile of home-grown sweet potatoes and yams they had gathered for cooking, then excused herself to go and plant more sweet potatoes in their expanding garden. A couple of other young men and children accompanied us a bit further up the hill. Bounding up the roots and leaping from rock to rock, the locals made my arduous toiling look pathetic. At about 6+ degrees south of the equator, the humidity was getting to me and I was saturated, but determined to reach our destination. The track was relentlessly steep. My companion looked decidedly cool and comfortable. Shame! I felt a bit better when he said he would grade the 'walk' as difficult. We'd been going for about three hours. “How much further John?” “Not

too far...another hour.” Okay then. Onwards and upwards.

Suddenly we came to a little glade which could have been straight out of a fairy story. The track petered out at the creek which came tumbling and splashing down the hillside like one continuous graded waterfall, forming clear pools of swirling crystal water. This meant walking uphill though the creek! Fortunately, the scored and pitted rock gave good purchase. This was a truly beautiful part of the day. Bright green moss hung thickly from the trees and vines bathed in the dappled light which filtered through the canopy. Impatience, ferns and peace lilies lined the banks in soft cool shades of green, with an odd splash of red from the wild ginger flowers.

When the creek bed became impassable, the track magically reappeared and the vegetation above and beyond seemed to be thinner.

Perhaps we really were near the top and the lake. This was an encouraging thought, especially since the track very quickly turned into squelchy, ankle deep mud. Step, suck and pull, step, suck and pull. Despite the gorgeous surroundings, this was not fun. Four hours into the walk without a break and I was feeling distressed. Stopping along the way had not been an option on account of the droves of mosquitoes and horse flies which appeared as soon as we became stationary. Maybe, just maybe I was good for another hour.

“How much further John?” Boring question. “Oh, last time I did this we left at 7am and reached the lake at 1:30.” I looked at Rene, who looked as dry and cool as a cucumber (How could he?) and he made the call to turn around. “You have to get down and that can be harder than climbing.” What an understatement!

Another four hours later of tough, scary descent, I wobbled home on rubbery legs, sorely disappointed at not having reached the sacred lake. It's probably a good thing we didn't make it to the top.

All my bumbling through the bush might have awakened the spirit of the lake and goodness knows what I might have brought down upon



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us! But despite its challenges, it had been a wonderful day, experiencing first hand the gorgeous, tropical rainforest of remote PNG and appreciating the stamina of the locals for whom negotiating the terrain is just second nature. Though we weren't rewarded with a sighting of the lake, the search itself was enlightening...a glimpse into the warmth and self sufficiency of PNG villagers and the total beauty of pristine equatorial rainforest. And I guess you could say that about life itself. It's not the destination that counts, but what you make of the journey along the way.




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John F Jackson...the man
Jackson's Airport
is named after.

HOW JACKSON'S AIRPORT GOT ITS NAME

BY JAMES SINCLAIR

On 28 April 1942, a Curtiss Kittyhawk fighter piloted by Squadron Leader John F Jackson, DFC, was shot down while battling an overwhelming force of Japanese bombers and fighters over Port Moresby.

Jackson was killed. He was buried at Bomana War Cemetery, where he still lies today; Port Moresby's international airport is named Jackson's in his honour.

Jackson was 34 years old at the time of his death - venerable in fighter pilot terms - and was familiarly known as "Old John" to the pilots of 75 Squadron RAAF, most of whom were in their early 20s.

Jackson's exploits are little known to the general public today.

The heroic battles between the Hurricane and Spitfire pilots and the pilots of the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain have tended to overshadow the record of those who fought in other theatres.

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“It was only when we started to read the letters and diaries that we felt we really came to know my father,” Arthur said.

Jackson married his wife, Betty early in 1938. Their daughter, Patricia, was born the following year, and son Arthur, the year after that. Naturally, neither has any personal memories of their father. But Jackson wrote many letters to his cherished wife during the short years of their marriage and kept a detailed diary of his RAAF service in the Middle East and New Guinea. All have been preserved in remarkably good condition.

In 2001, Patricia and Arthur published a book in memory of their father. *A Lot to Fight For* reproduces many of those letters, interspersed with extracts from the diaries, and a large number of excellent photographs.

It is dedicated to their late mother, Elizabeth Helen Jackson. “It was only when we started to read the letters and diaries that we felt we really came to know my father,” Arthur said.

Patricia lives in Brisbane after a career in business. Arthur lives with his second wife, Christine, on a property near Beaudesert, Queensland. He spent his life on the land, a calling followed by his father in his early days.

Jackson was born in Brisbane in 1908, the first of six children of William and Edith.

In 1927, William purchased a sheep property, Macwood, between St George and Mitchell, in Queensland. Jackson and his brother Bill, lived on the property for some time.

In 1933 Jackson acquired the managership of the New Zealand Stock and Station Agency in St George, leaving his brother on Macwood. Eventually all the boys - the others were Ed, Les and Arthur - obtained properties, except for Les, who bought a garage in Surat.

Jackson’s involvement with aviation began soon after, when he flew to Sydney, learnt to fly and bought a Klemm Swallow open-cockpit



Jackson’s Airport...in Port Moresby.

low-wing monoplane, for use in his agency business, which involved travelling throughout Queensland.

The product of a well-known German aircraft manufacturer, the pretty little Klemm was fitted with a Popjoy Niagra radial engine of just 90 horse-power.

Jackson flew the Klemm home to St George, and over time taught Ed, Les and Arthur to fly. He later replaced the Klemm with a Beech Staggerwing, an advanced biplane that was faster than most of the aircraft then in service with the Royal Australian Air Force.

Jackson met Betty while on a cruise on the liner Oronsay. After a brief courtship, the two were married in Adelaide. The couple then flew

back to St George in the Staggerwing to what was to be a tragically brief but very happy married life.

Jackson joined the RAAF within a month of the outbreak of the war in September 1939. By this time he had some 800 flying hours in his logbook, and as he noted in his diary, he had to unlearn many bad habits formed as a rather slapdash civilian pilot.

Les and Ed also joined the RAAF; Arthur was killed in a flying accident while trying to gain the hours required for acceptance. Bill was left with the task of trying to manage four properties and two garages whilst his brothers went off to war.

After a year of training - mostly on the

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Australia was in mortal danger and Jackson successfully argued that at this grim time in the nation's affairs, his operational experience should not be wasted in the training role.



John Jackson's children and grandchildren - Diana, Greg, daughter Patricia, Michael, son Arthur, and Aryela.

Wirraway advanced trainer, Jackson was posted to 3 Squadron RAAF in Egypt.

The squadron was initially equipped with obsolete Gloster Gladiator biplane fighters, not a great deal more advanced than the famous SE5-A, Camel, Albatros and Fokker biplane fighters of the Great War.

He took part in aerial battles with Italian Fiat CR42 biplane fighters, also survivors from an earlier era of aviation, among the last aerial combats between biplanes in history.

A number of pilots who later gained fame in New Guinea aviation served with 3 Squadron, including Bobby Gibbes, Nicky Barr and "Prim" Primrose. Luckily for the pilots, the Gladiators were soon replaced by modern Hawker Hurricane fighters.

In April 1941, 3 Squadron took part in a general retreat in the face of the advance of Rommel's formidable Afrika Korps.

Ed joined the Squadron at this time. 3 Squadron was again re-equipped, with Curtiss Tomahawk fighters and took part in the Syrian campaign against the Vichy French, before returning to Egypt to face the far more dangerous Luftwaffe. Jackson by this time held the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

But the authorities now decided that "Old John" had done his bit and was ordered to return to Australia to Point Cook as a Wirraway instructor.

He arrived in Sydney in late November, 1941 - just before Pearl Harbour. But after the Pacific

War began, Jackson was determined to return to combat flying.

The forces of Imperial Japan had burst out of the home islands in a mighty rush, overwhelming all opposition with almost contemptuous ease.

Australia was in mortal danger and Jackson successfully argued that at this grim time in the nation's affairs, his operational experience should not be wasted in the training role.

In March 1942, Jackson was given to command a newly formed Squadron No 75, hastily formed in Townsville for the defence of Port Moresby.

Most of the pilots were very young and had no combat experience (although among them was Les). Few were expert in handling Curtiss Kittyhawk fighters; they knew they would be vastly outnumbered and that their aircraft would probably be no match for the deadly Mitsubishi Zero fighters of the Japanese, which had by this time won an almost mythical reputation.

Jackson wrote to his wife, Betty, on 20 March 1942: "My own dearest Betty, Have been given 75 Squadron and acting rank of squadron leader, so am big stuff now, but crikey, have some worries. It's no joke starting a squadron up from scratch...we are en route now, and expect to be in action in a few days...I have asked for Prim to join 75...it would be great if he were posted to me..."

Another letter on 29 March recorded, "Never

seem to have time to write these days, am flat out. Have seen a good lot of action since we arrived, practically every day. The boys already have five scalps and about twelve aircraft destroyed on the ground...Les has had a couple of scraps. He had three Jap fighters after him the other day and fought them off from about 20,000 feet to ground level..."

Jackson had decided that because of the superior numbers and technical superiority of the Japanese fighters, squadron policy would be to destroy as many Japanese aircraft as possible on the ground, rather than dogfight in the air.

The uneven battle raged on. The Japanese launched one bombing raid after another on Port Moresby, their bombers heavily escorted by Zero fighters. The Kittyhawks took their toll on the enemy, but suffered grave losses which could not be immediately replaced.

On 10 April Jackson took off from Seven Mile Strip to make a reconnaissance flight over the Japanese positions on Salamaua.

"Just as I was leaving Lae, three Jap fighters surprised me, and shot my plane to bits," he later wrote to Betty. "When I first saw them, I didn't attempt to fight them as it was essential to get the information back...at last I decided to turn and fight them, but my guns had been hit and wouldn't work. The aircraft was a mass of holes, windscreens, etc, all shot away and on fire. I crashed into the sea about three-quarters of a mile off land, near a native village."

...but I could hear Jackson's voice when he finally broke radio silence, shouting epithets as only he could, indicating he was making one hell of a fight of it.

The village was Busama. Jackson managed to struggle out of his harness before his Kittyhawk sank, the Japanese fighters circling overhead all the while.

There followed an amazing trek through the mountainous interior. Jackson was bare-foot, with nothing but the clothes he stood up in, but aided by villagers he managed to walk to Mapos village, from where he was taken to Wau. He was flown back to Port Moresby, arriving on 23 April. Back in Port Moresby, Jackson found that he had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his Middle East service.

He wrote to Betty on 25 April: "My own dearest Betty, Providence has guided and protected me all through. Was so glad to get all your letters, darling, and thanks for your congrats re DFC. There are many others who haven't got it that have earned it far more than me...I am sending back all the congratulatory letters and telegrams and would be so glad if you would answer them for me, darling, and explain how impossible it is for me to write..."

"Well, darling, must close. Am so thankful you are well. I am much more optimistic about everything in general - MacArthur is tackling

the job along the right lines. Tons and tons of love, sweetheart, to Patricia, Arthur and yourself from your own ever-loving husband, John..."

Three days later, Squadron leader Jackson was dead. At 6am on 28 April, Jackson took off from Seven Mile Strip leading four other Kittyhawks, to intercept a flight of Japanese aircraft on their way from Lae to attack Port Moresby, reported by Coastwatcher Leigh Vial from his listening post in the mountains behind Salamaua.

Peter A. Masters was flying one of the Kittyhawks. He recalled many years later: "Eight bombers and a fourteen-Zero escort were heading our way at 20,000 feet plus. We grabbed our throat microphones. These fitted round our throats like garters and were fastened at the back of the neck...John...was the first to reach his aircraft, which was located immediately outside the tent. He shouted, 'Stick close, we'll go in single V. Follow me - Masters, you're my number two'...at full throttle we first climbed out to sea, circled, then headed north through heavy cloud over Owen Stanley Ranges, that wonderful but frightening range of mountains

which runs east-west over the whole length of New Guinea..."

In the wild confusion that followed, each Kittyhawk pilot was fully engaged attacking enemy bombers and trying to defend himself against the nimble Zeros. Masters attacked a Mitsubishi "Betty" bomber, stalled, and went into a spin. By the time he had recovered, the aerial battle was raging on, high above, "making streamers in the sky," as he remembers.

"Exactly what happened to Jackson and Barry (Barry Cox, another of the pilots who fell that day) will never be known, but I could hear Jackson's voice when he finally broke radio silence, shouting epithets as only he could, indicating he was making one hell of a fight of it. I heard this as I came out of my spin, but then all was silent again. Jackson's voice was not heard again, but his spirit, dedication, determination and will to survive lived on as a banner of true leadership for us all to carry forward forever...it was the darkest day in the history of 75 Squadron, but also our proudest..."

Jackson crashed into Mt Lawes. His body was recovered and brought to Port Moresby for burial. Les (Jackson) took over the command of 75 Squadron. Within a few days it had been reduced to just one serviceable Kittyhawk.

Betty Jackson died of cancer in 1972. Les survived the war, passing on in 1980.



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Cyclos, bikes and mopeds dominate the roads in Phnom Penh.



CLASSIC CAMBODIA

The land of wonders

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY SUSAN EAMES

Phnom Penh is one of the most fascinating capital cities in south-east Asia.

Outnumbering cars, the tuk-tuks (auto rickshaws), mopeds and cyclos (bicycle rickshaws) raise dust on the crumbling streets. As you pick your way along the ripped pavements, sunlight reflects off the dust motes to create a city in soft focus.

Traffic lights are uncommon. At junctions everyone slows down, weaving and criss-crossing in a graceful ballet while maintaining a Buddha calm.

Scattered through the streets, mobile food stalls emit enticing aromas that mask the pungent drains. Beggars with missing limbs - victims of Cambodia's recent violent history - cannot be ignored.

This is a country of gritty realism. Behind the faded glamour of her classical French colonial buildings, Phnom Penh is edgy and intriguing. I felt like I was in the middle of a Graham Greene novel or an American espionage flick.

Central Market bustles with booths selling a wide variety of goods. Jewellery, watches, sunglasses and clothes dominate inside, while more prosaic household items are on offer

outside including a lady doing a brisk trade in ready-cooked bugs and bird embryos.

It is possible to visit the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek where thousands of people were slaughtered. A memorial stupa was erected in 1988. Over 8,000 skulls are displayed behind glass. These victims were first detained in Security Prison 21 (S-21), now the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

The museum is variously described as gruesome, compelling, and a testament to the madness of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime.

Cambodia is now a constitutional monarchy. King Norodon Sihanouk's official residence, the Royal Palace, has buildings open to the public.

We strolled through spacious grounds to the Silver Pagoda where we removed our shoes. Solid silver tiles carpet the interior of the Silver Pagoda. Rugs have been laid to protect them, but a roped off section allows visitors to see the softly gleaming unpolished floor. A solid gold Buddha image adorned with thousands of diamonds stands in a glass case in front of a dais. High above him sits another Buddha made of baccarat crystal, while more stone

Bugs and beetles for sale.



More prosaic household items are on offer outside the Central Market including a lady doing a brisk trade in ready-cooked bugs and bird embryos.

Central Market...in Phnom Penh.



Carvings on Angkor Wat.

Buddhas flank them. Glass cases containing yet more Buddha images and other artefacts line the walls.

Across from the Royal Palace is the National Museum. This attractive building houses a superb collection of Khmer art from the Angkor period and breathtaking statuary dating back to the 6th and 7th centuries.

Sadly, photography inside the Silver Pagoda and National Museum was forbidden.

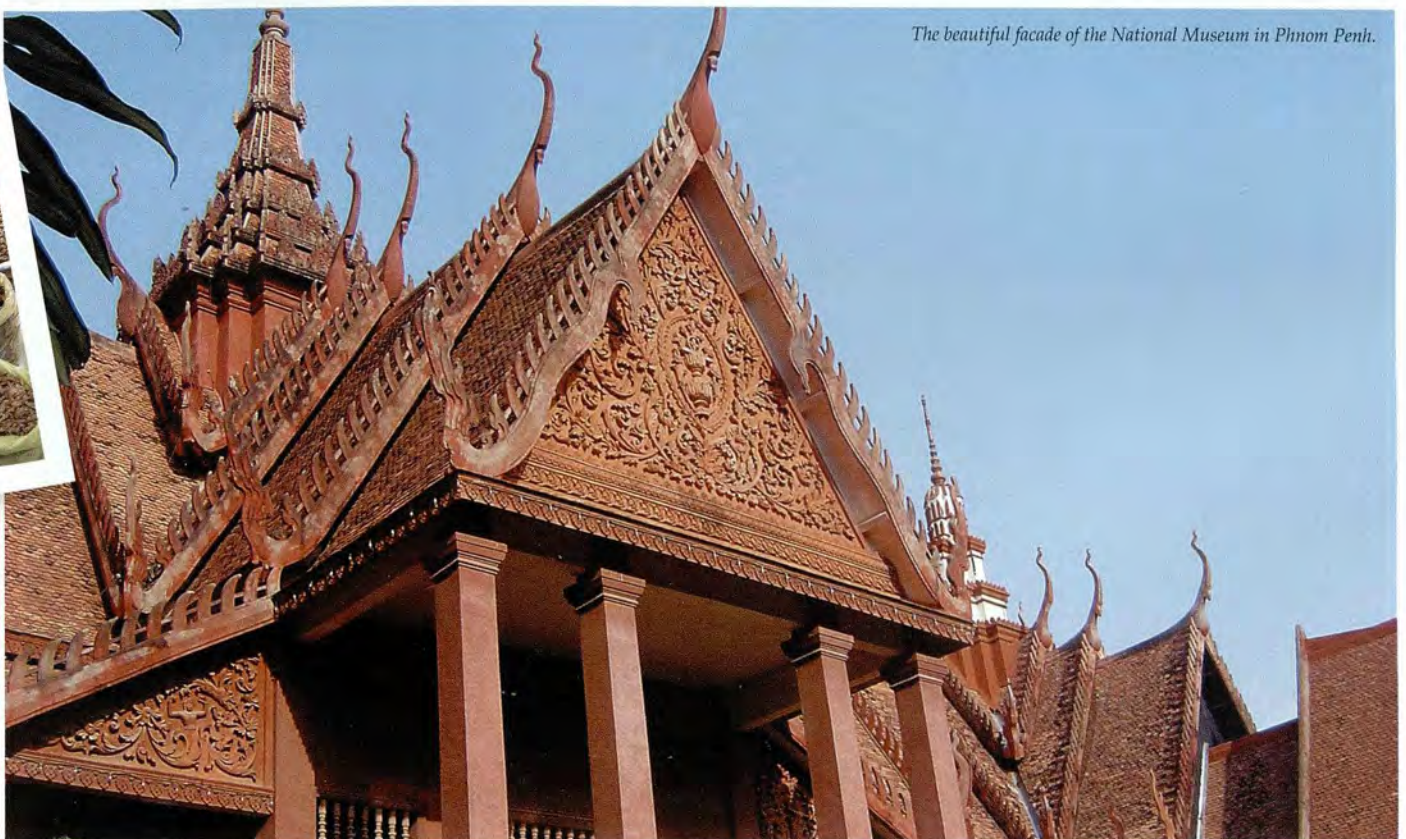
However, a visit to the National Museum was an excellent way to prepare us for our trip to the temples of Angkor.

Flights operate between Phnom Penh and Angkor's gateway town, Siem Reap. We chose

to take a dusty, six hour bus ride in order to see something of the country instead.

The public bus was crowded and the journey sometimes gruelling. We had deliberately taken ourselves out of the comfortable tourist loop and it was worth every minute of discomfort to catch a glimpse of ordinary Cambodian life.

The beautiful facade of the National Museum in Phnom Penh.





Sample of Bauteay Sren's exquisite carvings.

Angkor refers to the empire itself and the capital city of the Khmer Empire that reigned between the 9th and 15th centuries. The monuments represent remnants of the ancient Khmer architecture, art and civilisation.

There are hundreds of ruins and a good way to make sense of the Angkor region is to break it down into comprehensible sections. A guidebook or knowledgeable tour guide is essential. In a shocking

As an example of ancient human achievement, Angkor Wat is undeniably right up there with the Pyramids, Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China.

reality check, the guidebook warned about the dangers of straying off well worn paths because of land mines.

There are various means of transport available in Siem Reap. We hired "Mr Bo the man in the no" (sic) and his motorcycle tuk-tuk. Equipped with a three-day pass, guidebook and a sizeable dollop of stamina, we devised a schedule.

Angkor Wat defines Angkor. Its classic image even appears on the Cambodian flag. Originally constructed as a Hindu temple in the 12th century, Angkor Wat has served as a Buddhist temple since the 14th century. As the largest religious monument in the world, Angkor Wat is hugely impressive.

Surrounded by a 200-metre wide moat, the temple consists of three levels. The top level is reached by dauntingly steep stairways more suited to mountain goats. One stairway is fitted with a handrail as a useful safety feature to aid ascent and descent.

From the uppermost level, the five central beehive shaped towers soared above our heads and we could examine the magnificent carvings on them.

As an example of ancient human achievement, Angkor Wat is undeniably right up there with the Pyramids, Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China. It wasn't my favourite though.

There are monuments largely left untouched by the archaeologists; places where the jungle and ruins entwine. The monastic complex of Ta Prohm is one such place. Giant tree roots curl serpent-like around

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moss covered stonework to create an impossibly romantic atmosphere. The jungle has invaded parts of the complex so successfully, only jumbled, impassable ruins remain.

The huge size and disarray of Ta Prohm made it feasible to find quiet areas to explore away from intrusive tour groups with their cameras and chatter.


Another favourite of mine was Banteay Srei. This enchanting little pink sandstone Hindu temple is smothered in exquisite carvings.

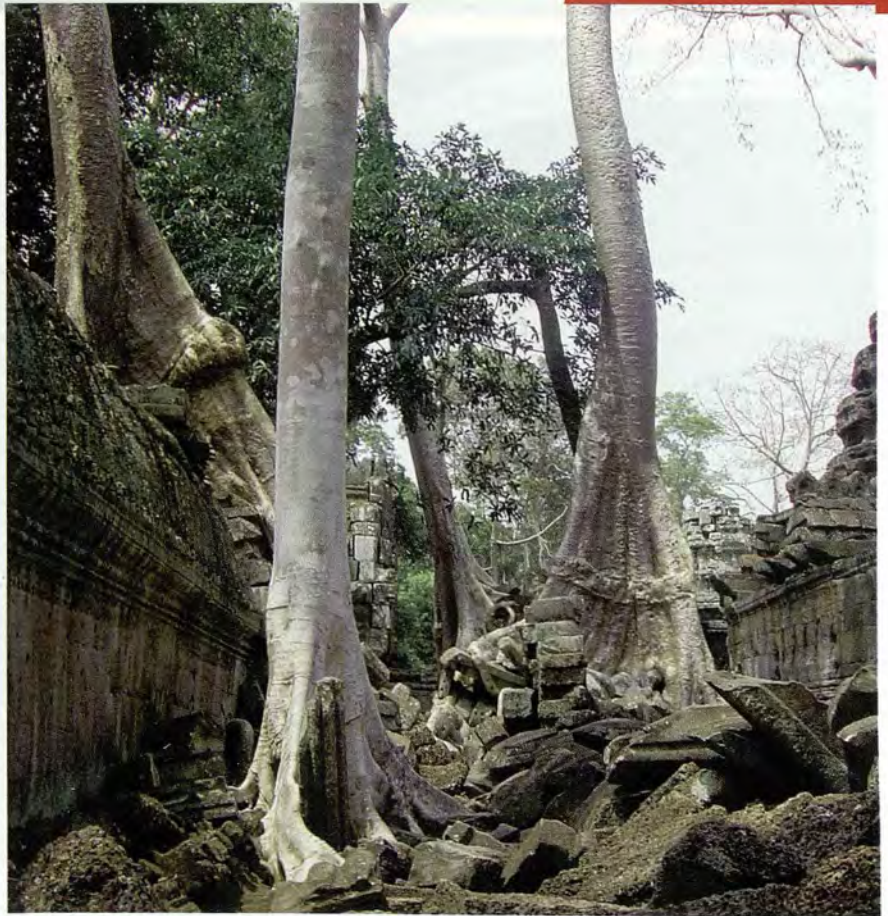
There are notices asking visitors not to touch the carvings and I was irritated to find the stunningly beautiful central section roped off. However, when I saw a tourist stroke an unprotected carving and another rest his foot on one to tie his shoelace, I understood.

Built about 100 years after Angkor Wat, the Bayon is second only in iconic status. This Buddhist temple has 54 towers carved with enormous faces. There has been much speculation regarding the enigmatic, smiling faces. They are now believed to be likenesses of King Jayavarman VII. The magnificent Bayon was yet another wonder in this land of wonders.

It was easy to fall in love with Cambodia for its resilient people, delicious food, edgy cities and breathtaking temples. I was sorry to leave.



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Trees overtake in Ta Prohm.

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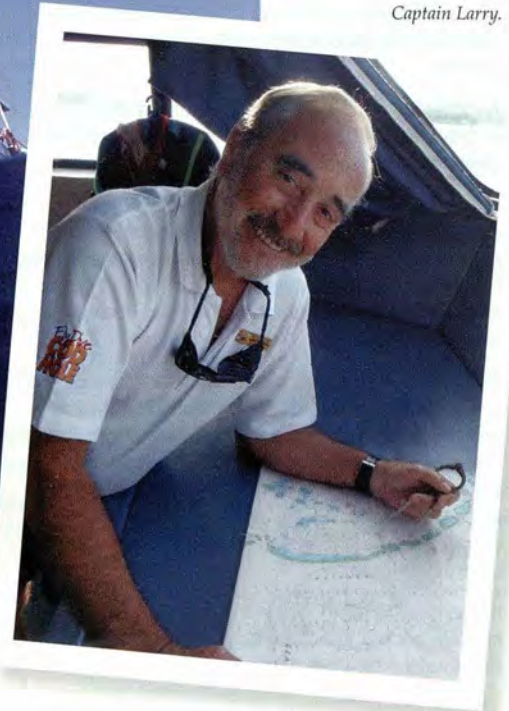
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Captain Larry.



The wonders of GREAT BARRIER REEF

BY BOB HALSTEAD

The weather had turned calm and our one-week cruise north from Cairns would include a couple of days out at the fabled Osprey Reef in the Coral Sea. We had only just boarded Mike Ball's Spoilsport but with a glass of complimentary bubbly in hand, and Captain Larry's announcement, it was time to celebrate.

Extraordinary divers.



With the regulatory, but slickly performed, safety briefings and ship's protocols out of the way, we set off on the smooth overnight cruise. Trip Director Kieran asked if there were any special events for guests during the cruise. "We're on honeymoon!" a couple cheered. More celebrations required!

Spoilsport was filled with extraordinary divers, including some very experienced Americans.

One was an attractive young lady with ambitions of helicopter scuba drop-rescue training with police divers, another a ski-diving expert with his snorkelling wife, keen to night-snorkel on the cruise. The Aussie divers were a spirited lot and handy with classic Aussie insults.

Mike gives far more freedom to divers than was allowed under the old Queensland Workplace regulations (thankfully repealed) and was the first to introduce "Solo Diver" status for those who come with a pony bottle and wish to dive alone. Newly qualified, or rusty, divers are still offered a guided tour - but experienced divers can solo or buddy dive without guides, using the informative dive briefings and "Mud Maps", to plan their dives.

Dive freedom deserves a toast, but the real cause for celebration is that the GBR has made a magnificent comeback during the past six years. It may not be quite what it was when I first dived it in 1973, but it is much better than it was a decade ago. The outer reef coral gardens have regenerated and are full of fish. Cooperation between the various dive operators means that there is only one boat on a site at a time. Fishes are accustomed to friendly divers and, even without being fed, come far closer than they do in, say, the wilds of PNG. Some of my best fish photos have been taken on the GBR.

Early in the morning we were gearing up for dives at Challenger Bay. This sheltered reef has a glorious shallow coral garden. Spoilsport had only just moored, but a school of trevally was waiting to greet us right under the boat. I was forced to abandon my philosophy of "Get to the bottom fast and ask questions later" and shoot some pictures of them. On the bottom, I was also able to shoot model Leigh Paine with a bold Flowery Cod and a cuttlefish among the perfect corals.

After two dives we moved to the famous Cod Hole and were soon playing with the gallant Potato Cod. We got as close as possible, but never touching, and the cod responded, inviting Leigh to a blue water dance!

While the partners celebrated at their underwater ball, I was able to get some

GBR has made a magnificent comeback...The outer reef coral gardens have regenerated and are full of fish.



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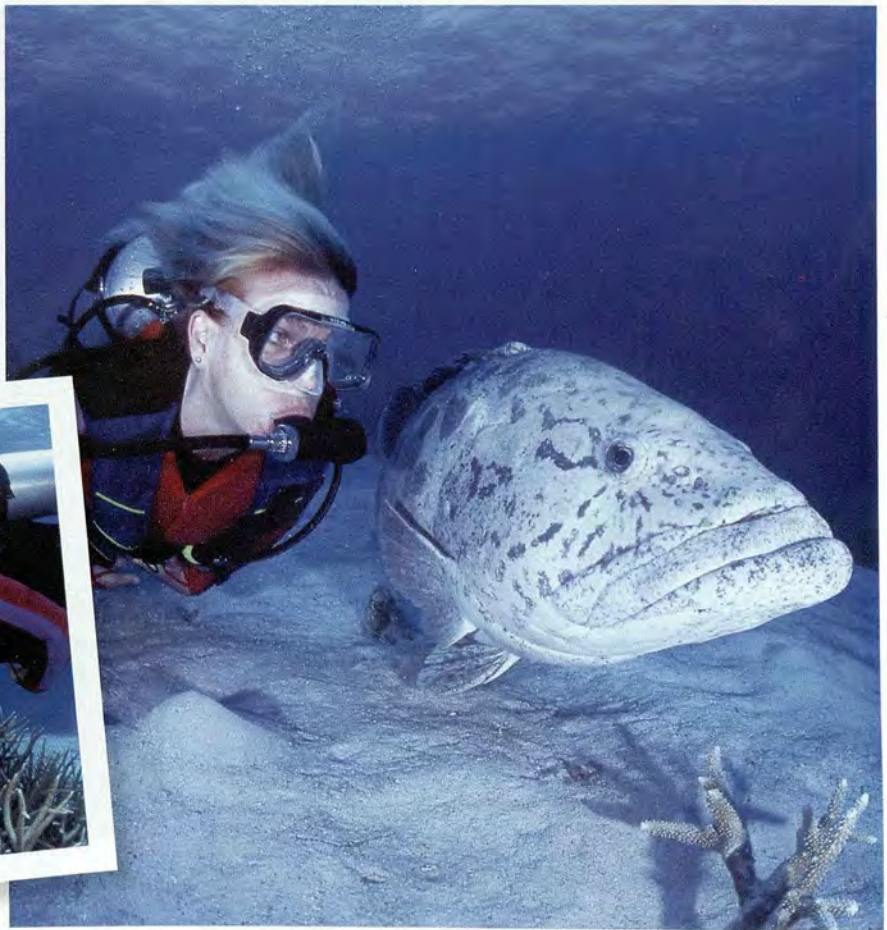
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silhouette shots. The Cod Hole "ballroom" was resplendent - these coral gardens are among those rejuvenated over recent years.

We then steamed overnight to Osprey Reef. A broken mooring prevented our first choice of dive so we dived Admiralty Anchor.

This site has a reef tunnel with an old anchor wedged in it. Pleasant enough, but better on the night dive we did there, finding a spectacular cave full of Flashlight Fish and a huge male Green Turtle. I had to explain to one innocent that the large organ between the male turtle's rear flippers was not its tail. She walked away wide-eyed and grinning.



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20% of new HIV cases in Cairns were men with sexual partners in PNG.
(2007, Queensland Health)

HIV and other STIs are most often spread through unprotected sex.

In PNG, equal numbers of men and women have HIV, and HIV is **NOT** confined to sex workers, men who have sex with men or drug users. **Whoever you have sex with, the risk is real.**

The best way to protect yourself is to always practice safe sex, whether you're travelling, or at home.

Taking risks? Use condoms and take a test

*National Department of Health and National AIDS Council Secretariat, PNG, The 2007 Estimation Report on the HIV Epidemic in Papua New Guinea

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Most of the day was an open dive deck at the Fairy Grotto with plenty of reef fishes, some gorgeous red sea whips and...Ahem...quite deep, some big Coral Sea soft corals. It looked enticing even deeper down the wall so it was probably a good thing I was on nitrox and depth limited.

The next morning we dived Round the Bend with lots of sharks and soft corals. No mantas this time but one diver surfaced, to my frustration, with a shot of a Thresher Shark. The day climaxed with a fabulous shark feed at North Horn. There were lots of Whitetip, Grey Reef and Silvertip Sharks. The feed was brilliantly set up in a natural coral amphitheatre so divers could be as close, or distant, from the action as they choose. The risk was low, as these sharks knew the difference between divers and the bait. Personally I prefer it when they are still learning.

For the second dive at North Horn, Leigh and I set off early and alone to dive the Western Wall. A large Silvertip Shark immediately greeted us. When it departed we drifted in a blaze of colour along one of the best soft coral walls anywhere, a school of small barracuda following us all the way back to the mooring. I toasted Neptune for that one!

Next morning after switching some guests at Lizard Island, who then made a spectacular low-level flight over the reef, we were back at the Cod Hole for a couple of dives and then to Challenger Bay for the night dive.

Lighthouse Bommie does not boast spectacular corals but is a creature hot spot. In June and July Minke Whales hang out here, but all year there is a resident Green Turtle, Olive Sea Snakes and super-schools of yellow snapper.

I was after the sea snakes. Leigh had met them before and was aware of their extremely venomous bite, but also knew that they were often very cooperative. Unlike Potato Cod, Olive Sea Snakes, if handled correctly, love to be made a fuss of, and photographed. That is my opinion (and what I told my model), but I am not recommending you try this.

We dropped to the bottom and immediately found a snake. I gave it a gentle caress, and, though it could have swam away, it just stayed

It is important that divers never grip a snake, especially if the snake is about to head for the surface to breathe. We just guide them and never restrict their movement.



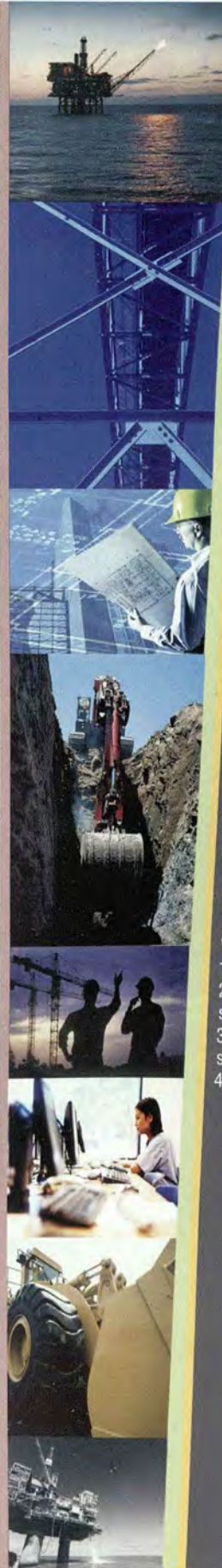
for more cuddles. Leigh took over and I got the shot I wanted. It is important that divers never grip a snake, especially if the snake is about to head for the surface to breathe. We just guide them and never restrict their movement.

We then cruised to Acropolis Reef and the celebration turned into a festival. Live corals and fishes everywhere! I made three dives here.

At Pixie Reef, we made a private dive on the Pinnacle. The next dive was to be Leigh's 100th and she was determined to make it that night and not wait until morning.

I had not made 6 dives in a day for a few years, but I am very pleased I made that night dive. A school of tiny baitfish had gathered under Spoilport's deck lights. This was magic! The fishes were flashing and surging while Giant Trevally crashed through them. I loved the confusion and action.

We were only a few metres from the back of the boat and I looped and rolled with the fishes pretending I was one of them - you are never too old to have a happy childhood.



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OUR BEER



Back on board, we celebrated Leigh's 100th. The exuberant Americans presented her with her favourite sweet - Reese's Peanut Butter Cups.

Suddenly it was the last diving day of the trip. Steve's Bommie with its schooling trevally and snappers (and stonefish and leaf scorpionfish) was as wonderful as ever, and afterwards we moved to Flare Point to dive with vibrant corals and Striped Sweetlips.

The sun's rays beamed through the crystal water. The only negative of the trip occurred when a raft of floating rubbish appeared. I collected some - plastic wrappers were marked "Made in Solomon Islands", reminding us that we still have a lot to do to protect our seas from pollution.

Captain Larry and crew put on a celebration that night with prawns and more bubbly.

Kieran introduced a party trick tying couples together with string loops around the wrists.


There is an easy way of getting untangled, but most went into erotic contortions in the process. Only the now baggy-eyed honeymooning wife was disappointed when they quickly succeeded.

"You did not even touch me!" she complained to her husband.

The fine dining, great diving, beautiful live bountiful reefs and witty companions were all hard to farewell. Sensibly I bought Photo-Pro Julia's brilliant trip DVD for a memento.

Also, unlike the digital divers, I still had my film to develop. There was no rush - I am sure you know that instant gratification is associated with low intelligence. Later I would relive the whole trip, and celebrate again.



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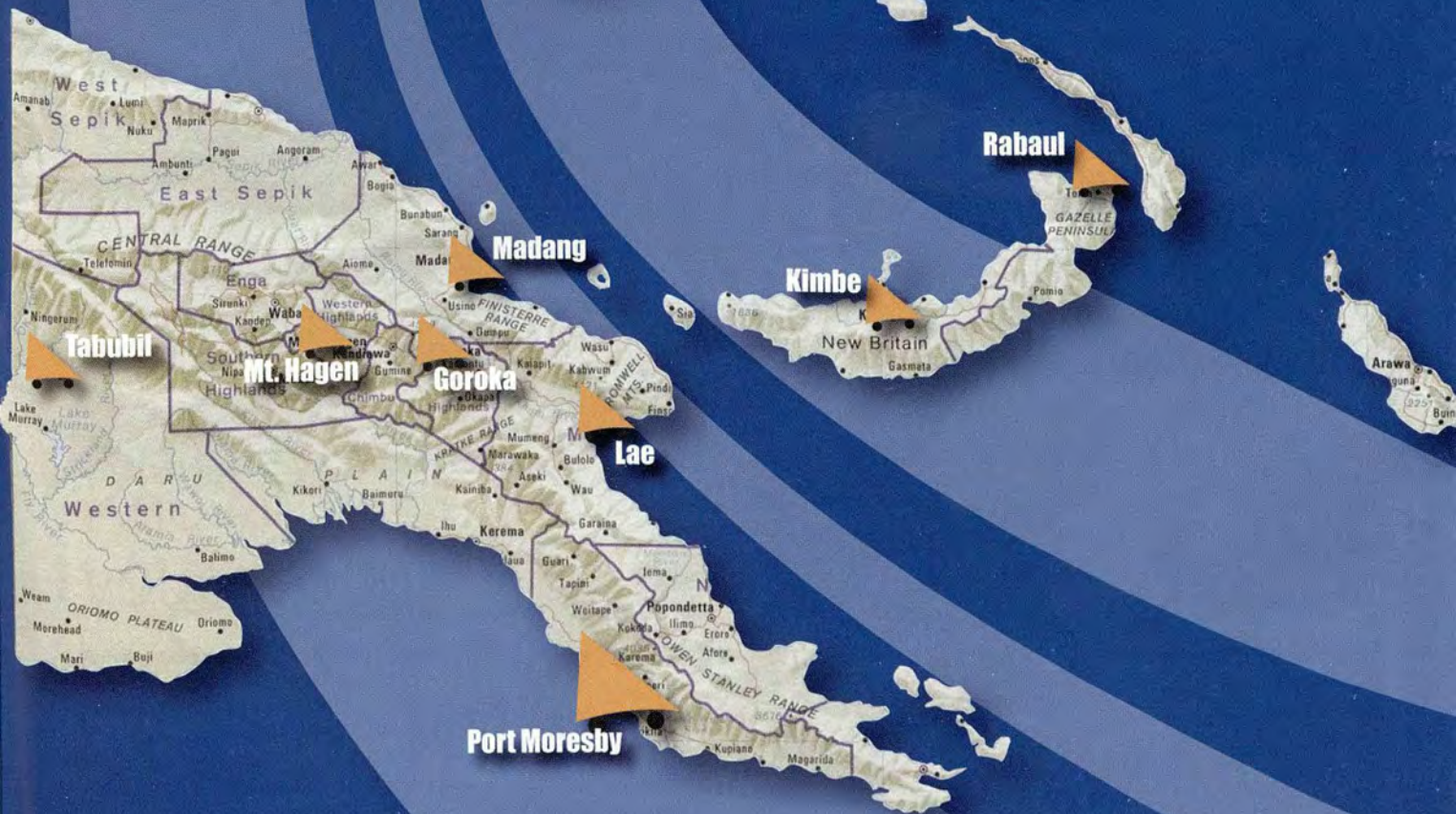
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Air Niugini assisted with the uplift of relief supplies for flood victims in Waghi, Western Highlands Province recently. The items weighing around 108 kilogrammes were donated by the Port Moresby-based ANZ Bank staff. As part of its community services obligations, Air Niugini offered to uplift the supplies free of charge.

Air Niugini's golf team

Air Niugini fielded a team in the PM's Open Golf Tournament. The team was captained by Umake Tavinke (left) and includes Veronica Ruimb, Nou Kariko and Illan Kaprangi posing with their caddies (in red t-shirts).



Knowing your product

Air Niugini Hong Kong and China GSAs made a brief visit to the airline's head office in Port Moresby recently to meet and discuss a number of marketing issues. They also used the opportunity to familiarise themselves with PNG; most of whom were visiting the country for the first time.





Farewell Captain Aria Bouraga, farewell

Air Niugini farewelled its pioneer pilot after completing almost 40 years of flying in Papua New Guinea - 35 years with Air Niugini and 23,000 hours spent in the air.

His final flight back from Lae on May 1, 2009 was received with the traditional hosing down of the aircraft as it was taxiing to park at its allotted bay.

He was met by his colleagues and other well wishers as he disembarked from the aircraft for the last time and left the tarmac in a wheel chair; signifying the clipping of a bird's wing.

The first Papua New Guinean to achieve a commercial pilot's licence, Captain Aria Bouraga hails from Gabagaba village, about 40 miles from Port Moresby.

He started his early education at the Gabagaba Primary School, attended Rigo Intermediate School and went on to complete high school at the well known Sogeri Secondary School.

Forty years ago, he left his home village bound for University of Papua New Guinea to do a degree in economics. His career changed when he saw an advertisement in which Australia's Department of Civil Aviation invited applications for flying scholarships.

After winning one of the scholarships, he started his flying at the Aero Club of Papua New Guinea and then was sent for further training in Melbourne.

On July 25, 1967, Bouraga took to the sky for his first solo flight and made history in the pages of flying as a first young Papua New Guinean pilot.

"Two of us returned from Melbourne after completing our training and we got our commercial licences. But we couldn't get a job because no one had heard of Papua New Guineans flying planes.

"Ansett didn't have any vacancies so we waited around until Papuan Airlines hired us as first officers on DC3s. The company was later taken over by Ansett and I worked for them for almost five years before Air Niugini was formed in 1973. I moved across and flew with the national carrier until now."

PNG nationals had obtained private licence, but "I was the first one to get a commercial licence," Captain Bouraga said proudly.

"The two most harrowing experiences during my flying career was when I flew my first solo (July 25, 1967) and the other one was when I flew my first cross country on my own; a to b to c and come back to Port Moresby. That was scarier."

Captain Bouraga said on the DC3s, many of the old expatriate pilots taught him a lot. "It was a very exciting time, no auto pilot, no nothing, just manual and flying for hours and hours.

"From Rabaul to Port Moresby in a DC3 took about two-and-half hours, almost three hours."

He moved to the Fokker 27 as a first officer and attained his command in that aircraft type in 1981.

"Stone Age to Jet Age" as I was described; the first Papua New Guinean to fly a jet aircraft. Breaking into flying where most of the pilots were expatriates - I was the first living proof that a Papua New Guinean could fly too."

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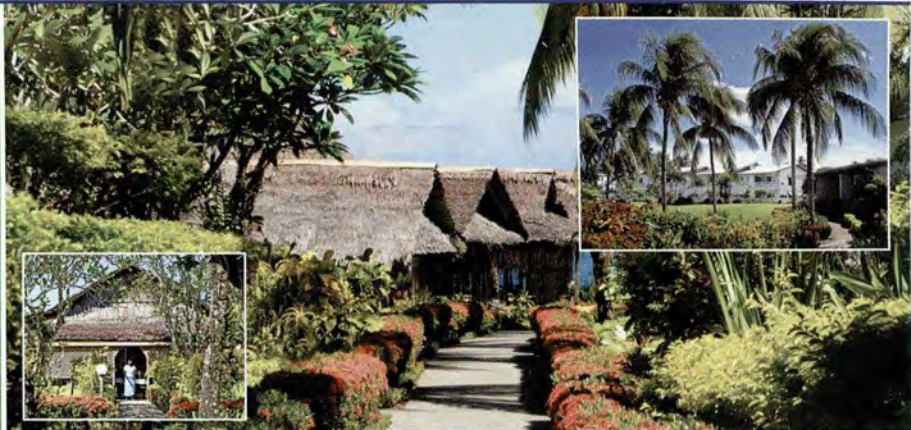


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“I would like to thank my professional pilots both nationals and expatriates for the time we spent flying; they were the most happiest days that will stay with me for the rest of my life.”



He recalled that when the country was approaching its independence, TAA and Ansett Airlines were asked to merge and form Air Niugini. Pilots from both airlines who wanted to remain to work for the new airline were approached.

“About 90 percent of them left to join TAA and Ansett Airlines in Australia and only a few remained including me to form the foundation of the country's national airline's first pilots.”

Since the inception of Air Niugini on November 1, 1973 until his retirement on May 1, 2009, Captain Bouraga has clocked up 35 years with the airline.

Captain Bouraga said he enjoyed flying the Fokker 28 jets. “With the F-28s, it was mostly 30-minute sectors and it was good fun flying, actually manipulating the aircraft, not just sitting there in the cockpit.”

He was awarded an MBE (Membership of the Civil Division of the Excellent Order of British Empire) by her Majesty the Queen for Service to the Airline Industry.

Not surprising for the country's first commercial pilot, Bouraga's ambition and passion during his flying career was to recruit young Papua New Guineans to become pilots. During his time, he has trained pilots who have gone on to become Captains (including attaining their commands on the Boeing 767) and First Officers within the Air Niugini fleet.

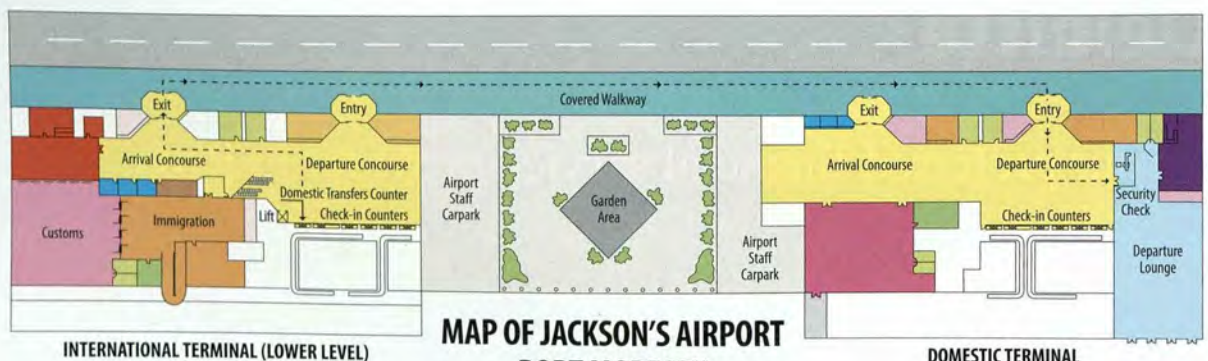


Air Niugini Domestic Transfers

For those passengers who require to transfer to an Air Niugini domestic flight, firstly clear customs and then call at our transfer counter in the Concourse area, alongside the international check-in counters. Our courteous staff will check in

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When you exit the International Terminal, turn right and follow the covered walkway to the Domestic Terminal entry gate and proceed directly to the Departure Lounge.



INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL (LOWER LEVEL)

MAP OF JACKSON'S AIRPORT
PORT MORESBY

DOMESTIC TERMINAL



Reminiscing his early days of flying, he said one occasion will always remain in his memory. "I flew a single engine aircraft to Amazon Bay airstrip and an expatriate patrol officer motor biked over the airstrip to meet the pilot of the aircraft. As I got out of the aircraft, he walked over and asked for the pilot. The expatriate patrol officer was visibly shocked, he said "How can a kanaka fly an aircraft," so he looked around and inside the aircraft for an expatriate pilot."

For the up and coming national pilots, Aria is leaving a few tips:

- Take pride in your job with professionalism and positive attitude.
- No complacency.

- Keep Air Niugini's safety record intact.
- Continue to uphold the high standards of both personal and professional behaviour.

"I have stayed with Air Niugini for a long time and yes I am very proud to have given my best to serve Papua New Guinea as a pilot with the national airline since its inception. I have watched the fleet of aircraft grow from DC3s, F27s and F28s and now we have a new generation of aircraft such as F100s, B767 and B757.

"I would like to thank my professional pilots both nationals and expatriates for the time we spent flying; they were the most happiest days that will stay with me for the rest of my life."

Fact File

Capt Bouraga's Flying History

- First Flight – 3rd July 1967
- Solo Flight – 25th July 1967
- Private Licence – 22nd November 1967
- Commercial Licence – 18th June 1968
- Started Flying with Papua Airlines PATAIR- 24th July 1969
- Ansett Airlines – 21st December 1971
- Air Niugini – 1st November 1973
- Retired from flying – 01 May 2009

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■ Hong Kong from K4,040

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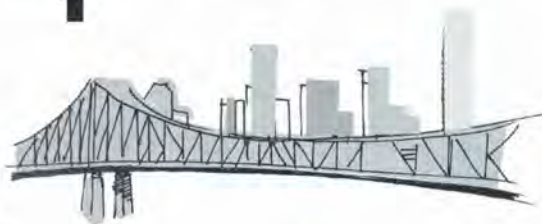
■ Kuala Lumpur from K3,395

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■ Cairns from K1,150

• Per person twin share. Includes return airfares, 2 nights accommodation at Cairns Queenslander. All taxes and surcharges.



■ Manila from K2,909

• Per person twin share. Includes return airfares, 3 nights accommodation at the Garden Heights Hotel (3*). Daily American breakfast, return airport transfers with Blue Horizon, all taxes and surcharges.



■ Brisbane from K1,630

• Per person twin share. Includes 2 nights accommodation at Hillcrest Apartments. Return airport transfers per coachtrans. All taxes and surcharges.

■ Fiji from K2,489

• Per Person twin share. Includes return airfares, 3 nights accommodation in a Studio room at the Grand West Villas (3*). Airport meet and greet, airport transfers with Rosie Holidays, all taxes and surcharges.

■ Sydney from K1,879

• Per person twin share. Includes return airfares, 3 nights accommodation at Aaron Hotel. All taxes and surcharges.



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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