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inflight with air niugini

VOL 4, 2009

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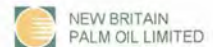
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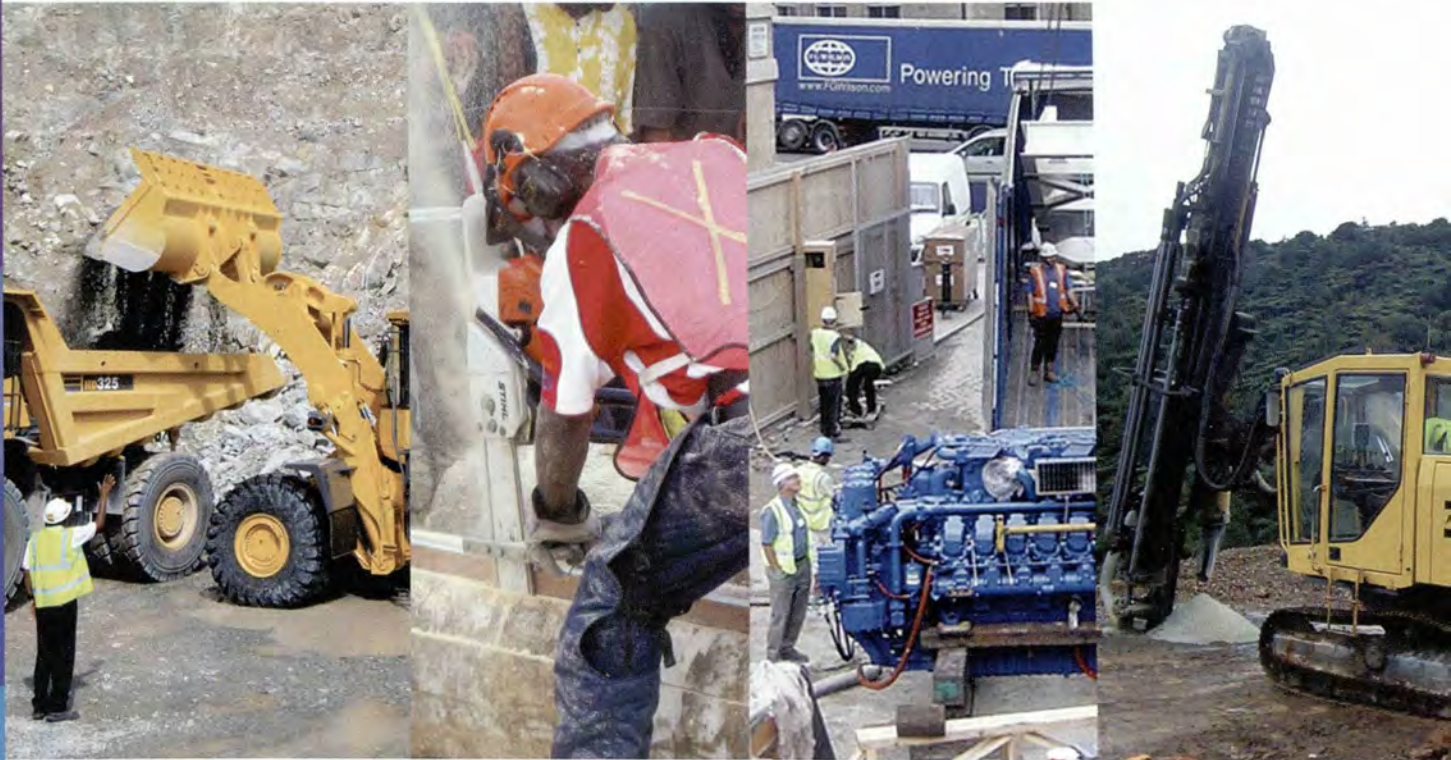
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# Chairman's Message



## WELCOME ABOARD.

We have another exciting first for the airline; the first ever locally-based loyalty programme which is an initiative of Air Niugini designed to reward our valued customers who have been loyal to us over the years. Air Niugini's Loyalty Programme will allow our passengers to earn points that can later be redeemed through airline tickets to any of Air Niugini's many destinations - both domestic and international - so long as the passengers accumulate the required points for each destination.

The Loyalty Programme is one of the many products the airline has devised as part of our efforts in keeping our customers happy and ensuring they get value for their money.

With customers our top priority, Air Niugini has introduced a new flight schedule to boost customer convenience and at the same time minimise our operating costs. The new schedule will offer better arrival times for passengers as well as allow for more connections to and from Port Moresby and the rest of our network. More details are contained in the **Airline News** section on pages 120 and 121.

With the global crisis impacting the world aviation industry, Air Niugini, like other airlines, is now under intense pressure with a not so bright picture painted for 2009 and one which is further aggravated by the A (H1N1) flu outbreak.

Unsure of how long the global recession will continue, Air Niugini is compelled to consider options to make strategic changes to its operating models to enable it to be competitive and profitable.

Despite the gloomy outcome predicted for 2009 generally for the airline industry, Air Niugini is optimistic about the future and will work together with relevant stakeholders to ensure efficient, cost-effective service delivery to its travelling public remains among its top priority.

September 16 is always a special day for Papua New Guinea as the whole country joins together to commemorate the country's independence. We welcome our overseas visitors who are in the country during the 34th independence celebrations and we invite you to take part in the colourful festivities that will be organised throughout the country.

During your flight, do take time to go through our inflight magazine **PARADISE** and read about what it is like to cruise the eastern isles of New Guinea. There is also a fascinating article about a young person's return home to Bougainville after many years. But that's not all. There are many others like bird watching on the Fly River, the magic of Chatut Caves in Manus and Madang's Kalibobo Spirit in this issue that will captivate and add to your Papua New Guinea experience.

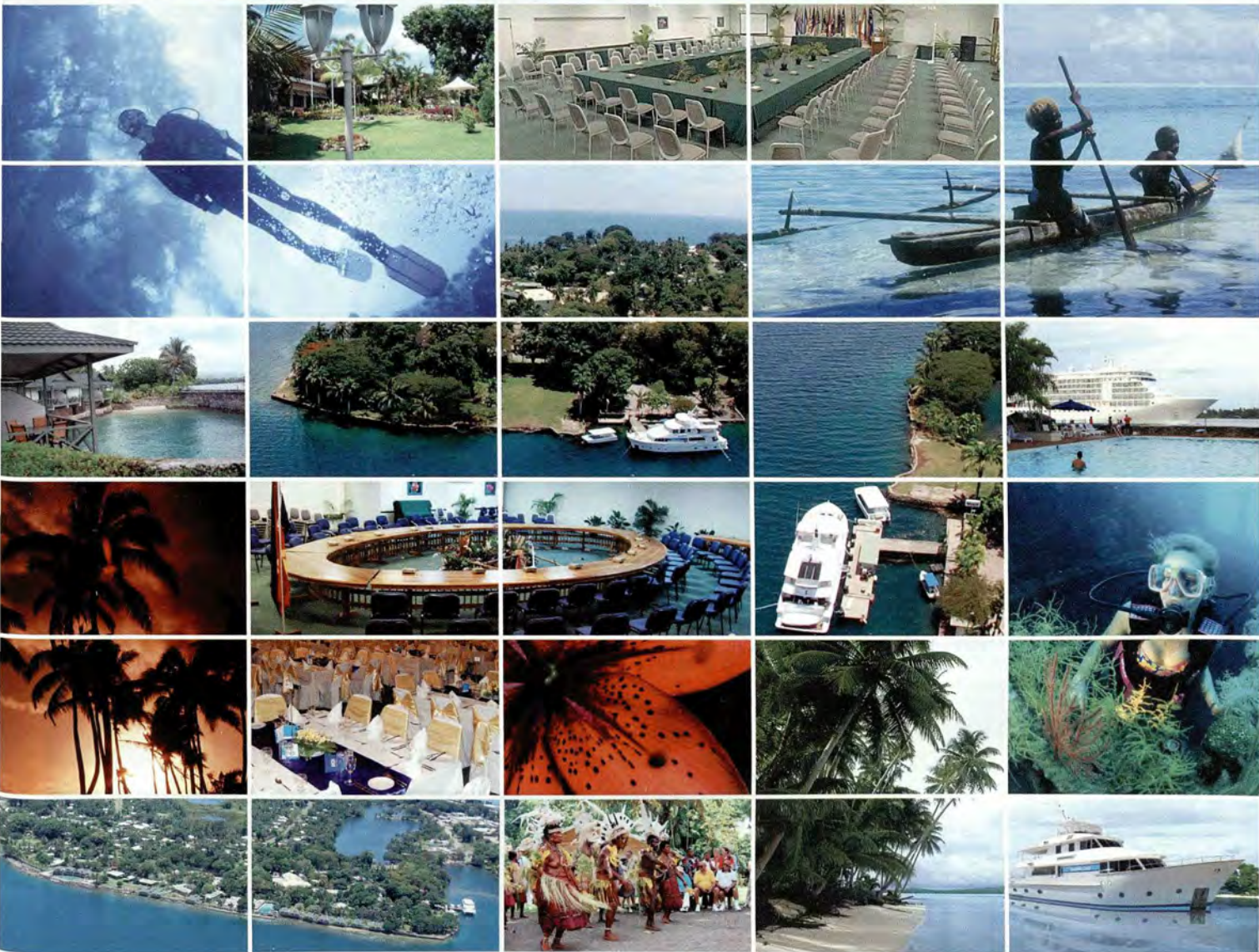
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**Chairman**



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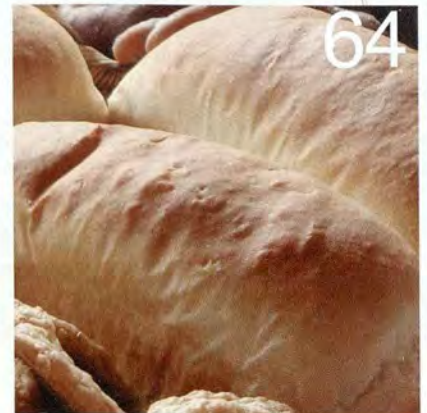
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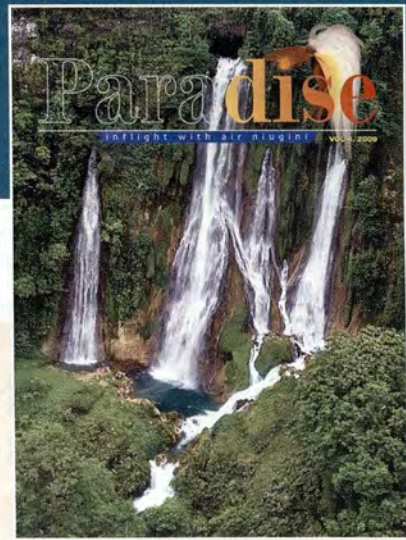
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Photo: Craig Tansley  
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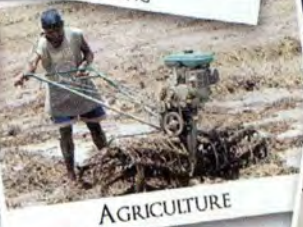
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# WELCOME ABOARD



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

### Please ask us

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

### Hand luggage

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

### Takeoff and landing

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

### Safety first

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

### Electronic equipment

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

### Children and babies

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

### Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on any Air Niugini flight.

### Entertainment

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

### Pillows and blankets

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

### Cuisine

Our 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

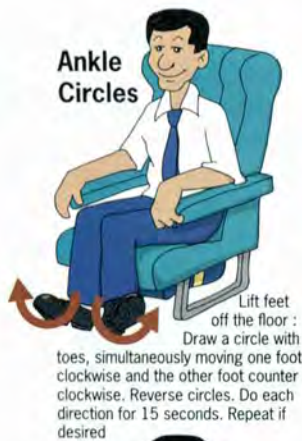




# IN-FLIGHT EXERCISES

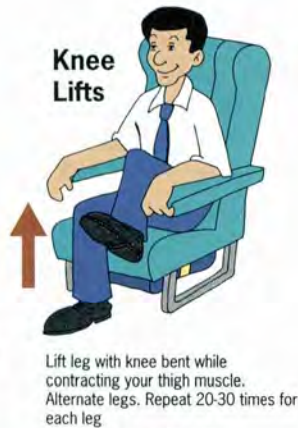
These exercises are designed to encourage a safe way to enjoy movement and stretch certain muscle groups that can become stiff as a result of long periods of sitting. They may be effective in increasing the body's circulation and massaging the muscles. We recommend you do these

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



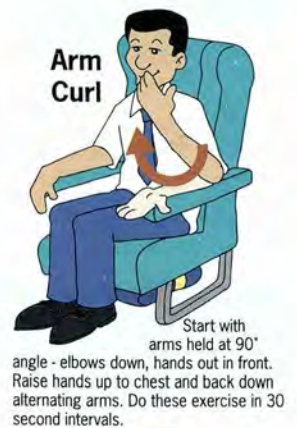
**Knee Lifts**

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

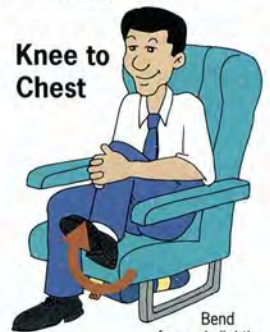
1. Start with both heels on the floor and point feet upward as high as you can.



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.

With thanks to Qantas and the Boeing Corporation for allowing us to reproduce this material.





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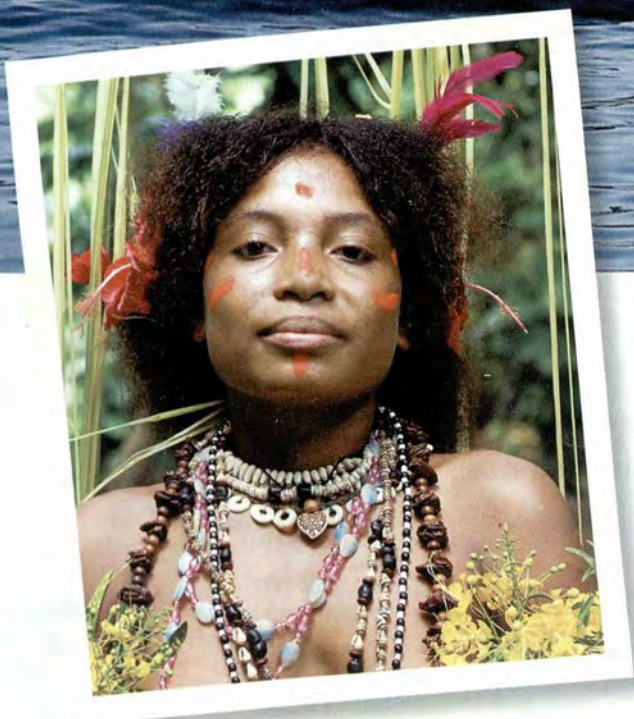
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# CRUISING

the eastern isles of New Guinea

By Craig Tansley



**One morning, early into our New Guinea cruise, I'm asked by a young girl in a canoe for my address in Australia. "Why would you like that?" I ask. "I frite you a letter," she tells me. "But do you have a post office in your village?" I ask. "What is a post office?"**



Others amongst the locals who congregate off the back of our boat have also had experience with white travellers.

"Have there been many visitors through here?" I ask a local called Lionel. "Yes, yes, many," he answers. "We have had two dim dims (white people) here." I ask him when that was. "Not long ago," he says. "Eight years, maybe."

The locals seem mesmerised by us, they float in primitive wooden canoes off the back of our cruise ship, barely staying afloat, sometimes with babies tucked to their bosom. They stay

like this for hours, under a baking sun, staring at us in wonder, and still at night, they linger, amazed by the light show on the water.

One day a guest asks the ship's marine biologist why our new friends don't ever seem to want to go home. "Think about it," he says. "Some of the people around here haven't seen white people before. You imagine if a spaceship landed in your suburb at home and all these funny looking aliens came out with their funny little gadgets, what do you reckon you'd do?"

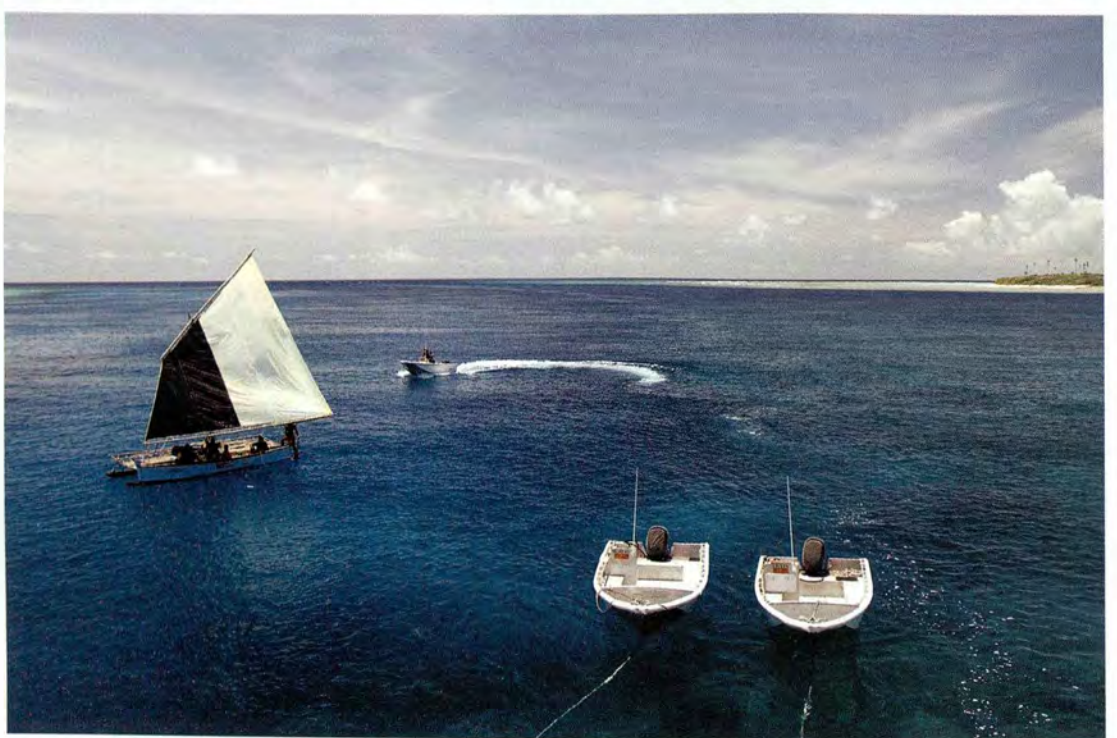
I think of the 50 metres and 20 million dollars worth of gleaming white painted metal we travel in, the tenders with their outboard motors that take us funny white people out diving, snorkelling and fishing each day, and the helicopter on the top deck the people of New Guinea call 'Mixmaster - him blong Jesus Christ' that ascends to the heavens every morning. While it may be us paying good money to observe these beautiful, traditional people, I can't help wondering who's really on display.

Our cruise aboard the MV True North will take us from the remote islands of New Ireland, off Papua New Guinea's eastern coastline, approximately 1000 kilometres south-west to the mainland at Alotau, in Papua New Guinea's far south.

For a week, we'll pass through some of the world's most untouched islands; steaming south through the Duke Of York Islands, New Britain, the tiny atolls of the Lusancays and onward through the D'Entrecasteaux Islands.

If you've never heard of them, don't feel too ignorant, very few people have ever visited, despite the incredible natural beauty of the region, so there's plenty nothing on Google. Here, the divers on our boat swear they could see the tender bobbing on the surface from 50 metres below the surface, each day passengers came back from fishing trips with obese tuna large enough to feed a ship of 36 passengers and each day is a little like being at Sea World, complete with performing dolphins, turtles, reef sharks and even on one exhilarating morning, a passing pod of orcas who allowed us to swim within a few metres of them.

**...the True North has taken a sensitive approach to showing off this picture-perfect area of New Guinea. They only offer four cruises a year through here, each time changing the villages they visit so as not to interfere with daily life and get locals reliant on tourism.**





The islands through this region have a fascinating war history, the Japanese invaded many of the islands, you can still see evidence of the occupation now; in some areas you can snorkel over tanks and spitfire planes. Not much seems to have happened since those times, an inability to access these areas has meant there's no big-scale tourism development whatsoever, and while many worry about the affects of tourism on such an untainted population, the True North has taken a sensitive approach to showing off this picture-perfect area of New Guinea. They only offer four cruises a year through here, each time changing the villages they visit so as not to interfere with daily life and get locals reliant on tourism.

That feels very important when you're here. Too much tourism today is about conquest,

it's about tourists battling each other for the best up-close photo of little golden children and the best cabana chair closest to the pool. Even eco-tourism is often just a trendy front to a much more sinister goal, opening up countries to mega-conglomerates. When you travel through these islands on the True North, you feel a bond with the locals; put away your camera, and just experience life the way it was before progress came along and made our lives supposedly simpler. Travelling here brings to mind a quote from Captain Cook: "Being wholly unacquainted not only with the superfluous, but with the necessary conveniences so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in tranquillity. The earth and sea of their own accord furnish them with all things necessary in life."

They do indeed live in tranquillity here, in a world bursting with richness. In terms of volume, variation and the biological significance of flora and fauna here, only the Amazon Basin compares. New Guinea is one ninth the size of Australia but it has just as many mammal species, with over 215 species. It has over 200 species of frogs, 300 species of reptiles, 300 species of fish, 400 000 insect species, the world's largest butterfly, over 750 species of bird, 20 000 plant species, 3000 types of orchids and 1200 tree species.

But for me, it's the people who make this place. Their innocence astounds me. On a tender ride one evening to a remote village with just one other Australian, I come face to face with people who have never seen white men before, the small children run from us as if they've seen a ghost.

## Fact File

### The Cruise:

North Star Cruises will be offering four seven nights Adventures in Paradise cruises in 2009, starting from 7 November through to 28 November.

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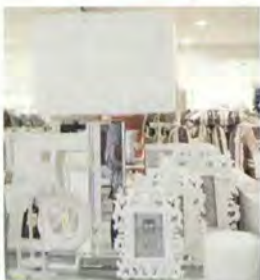
The ones who don't flee just stop and stare at us, open-mouthed, I feel like I should dance or sing, but I freeze like a cheap toy on a Christmas morning.

There's a responsibility that comes with travelling through such areas of the world. It's important we don't do what others have done before us in the Phuketis and Waikikis of this world.

Cruising through this perfect world feels a privilege and it should be treated accordingly. It's the experiences you share sitting on a beach under a waterfall that rushes directly to the ocean with a tribe full of people who get genuinely excited when you offer them a water bottle as a leaving gift, it's the small children who paddle to you in canoes to offer pawpaws in welcome.

It's understanding that paradise does exist somewhere in this world, as pure and perfect as that which Bligh encountered in Polynesia almost two and a half centuries ago. It sure makes you realise why Fletcher Christian and his men mutinied. 

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# My trip back to Mother Land Bougainville

By Alyson Joyce



**I have been travelling for eight hours now. Port Moresby to Buka by plane, Buka to Bouganville by boat, and finally to be greeted by a four-hour (very bumpy) drive to Arawa town.**



**O**ur driver, Peter, has one of those smiles you just can't help but return. He is black as coal, most of his front teeth missing, the rest stained red from chewing betelnut, yet he has a gentle, almost holy, aura that surrounds him. It's calming. He and my mother have known each other since they were teenagers.

As we drive, my eyes meet some of the most intense expressions from people we pass on the road. They either gaze at you so intently as if trying to look into your soul, or give you a simple smile and wave. Life here seems so brutal. I wonder how far some of them walk in this 30 degrees and above heat.

We've managed to cram 13 people into a space designed for 10 and I'm feeling a little guilty as I have claimed the front seat all to myself, turning around occasionally to find the pained faces of the others resembling a can of sardines staring back at me.

Every now and then I catch a glimpse of the ocean. I am reminded of just how stunning and remote this island is. They say there are 80 rivers from Buka to Arawa town. We are at the 26th river and counting. Finally, we've hit a smooth patch of road. It's been 10 years since I was last here, and I wonder how much has changed. I know I have. Physically, mentally and spiritually. I'm looking forward to what this week will bring.

I sometimes convince myself that I could give it all up and live here for the rest of my life. The truth is I would crave the creature comforts we so much take for granted. Electricity, TV, fast food, just general convenience. I often wonder what it would be like to know nothing but this life. You don't miss what you don't have right? My buttock's starting to go numb and I'm looking forward to getting out of these jeans and into a pair of shorts! We stop to buy watermelon.





**Cradled in the mountain, we find a lake. So beautiful and serene a deep emerald green, and so begins the trek to this wonderland.**

## Day 2

Arrival saw me in a zombie state and I passed out at 5.30pm. This morning's breakfast consists of black coffee (yum), pineapple, pawpaw (both from the garden) and sliced bread, no butter or milk as we don't have a fridge. I suppose it would defeat the purpose considering we have no electricity. Mother informed me that we will be going to the market and then to visit my uncle Remy, who is at the local hospital. I have also been informed that my shorts are too short (which they weren't but in mother's terms 'too short' means anything above the knee).

A few minutes later - a crisis was averted. We have settled on an appropriate outfit. This place always smells the same. Each breath summons memories of being here as a child accompanied by that smile that creeps across your face. I've met so many 'aunties' and 'uncles', 'sisters' and 'brothers', and they are all so sincerely happy to see me. The first words I hear are usually 'Yu no save' raun long hia tumas', which means 'you don't come here too much'. Which is true, and then I am reminded that Karen (my sister) is always here and I should come here more often because it's home, and you should always know where

your home is. I begin to realise how guilty people can make you feel. I almost don't know how to feel when I'm here, yet one thing I feel is welcome.

A few hours later - we are driving up to Panguna gold mine. I begin to wonder what it must have been like in its prime. The hustle and bustle of a newly discovered resource, the sudden influx of westerners with hungry eyes coming to make their fortune. Now, as we drive in, nothing but a barren wasteland, its water fluorescent blue, polluted by the copper sulphate. The skeletons of giant vehicles once used to probe and carve out the earth now lay dormant, silenced perhaps for eternity. We aren't able to go all the way into the mine this time as we have the truck. Instead, we opt to explore the mountain and chance upon a hidden oasis. Cradled in the mountain, we find a lake. So beautiful and serene a deep emerald green, and so begins the trek to this wonderland.

What a trek indeed! There goes another pair of trainers, but well worth it. Four young boys who live on the mountain in discarded miners offices and makeshift abodes guide us. The boys bound and leap down the track as I carefully wobble down the steep and muddy

track, my legs trembling all the way. Through the jungle I catch a glimpse of the lake and as we emerged filthy and sweaty, all I can do is sigh. Magical. My imagination instantly takes flight with what creatures this seemingly innocuous lake might hold in its deep and murky waters! We find a boat which we board, manned by captain Nouku. We paddle to the other side of the lake, all the while nervously eyeing the makeshift repair of a hole in the boat which consisted of a few lumps of clay and a large stone. Still it lasted with all 14 of us piled in and sitting comfortably.

When we reach the other side, the boys immediately take off their shirts and jump right in! I shudder at the very thought. Murky water scares the hell out of me! The other side houses rather decrepit, yet completely functional hydro electricity setup. Obviously done by the locals. Bouganvilleans are so very innovative. After the boys have satisfied themselves, the clouds begin to roll in and the thought of being stuck between the mountains in the pouring rain doesn't seem very appealing. We board our boat and set sail to whence we came. This time, however, our captain decides to plot the scenic course. I find it so peaceful as we drift around the



The jungle is beautiful and mysterious, calming and yet still slightly nerve-wrecking, but you never feel unsafe. I stop every now and then to look up and around and soak up my surroundings. It is certainly an experience I am truly grateful for.

lake, and I secretly hope I'll catch a glimpse of something enormous in the water. The last remaining dinosaur perhaps? But alas, no such luck. The trek up the mountain was even harder and I realised I might not have made it had I not quit smoking.

We made it to the top (with great difficulty), said goodbye to our fearless little guides and tiredly ambled back to the car. The rain began to fall as we began the drive home, me once again in the front and the rest of the troop sitting in the open truck in the back all looking like drowned rats, but smiling with satisfaction none-the-less.



### Day 3

I rise with the sun to face another adventure. This day will see us trekking to one of my family's sacred places. Bougainville, and in-fact all of PNG, still practice rituals carried down from centuries ago and hold its beliefs and customs very dear. We drive to my Auntie Christine's house. She is one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen and her laugh echoes through the jungle like a big jolly bird of paradise! It's the kind of laugh that makes you laugh in turn even if you have no idea what you're laughing at. We leave the truck and begin our journey. It is hot as hell as

we steep through the dense jungle with the unfamiliar and somewhat ridiculous sound of a chainsaw somewhere within our vicinity. I'd like to find that chainsaw and throw it in the river. The jungle is mosquito-ridden and as we stop to retrieve my mozzie repellent, they form ranks and attempt to devour us whole, I then discover I have left the bottle at home and mumble obscenities under my breath as I angrily zip up my bag and continue with my cousin giggling at my frustration.

The walk is bursting with all kinds of obstacles, mud and felled logs, some of which have been erected as bridges to cross

the many little rivers along the way. I watch as everyone else seems to dance over the logs and when my turn arrives, I awkwardly stumble over like that one idiot at the dance doing the robot. We reach a giant picus tree (I'm not sure what they are called in the western world) and a clearing, which holds a quaint little village hidden in the jungle. The boys go on ahead to talk with its occupants who are no doubt family in one way or another. We catch up and find that yes they are indeed relatives. We are told that if we are to continue, at least one of the elders must come with us to speak with the spirits and ensure everything is alright. We set off with the entire village in tow.

The jungle is beautiful and mysterious, calming and yet still slightly nerve-wrecking, but you never feel unsafe. I stop every now and then to look up and around and soak up my surroundings. It is certainly an experience I am truly grateful for. I have been taking pictures like there is no tomorrow and have given my camera to my cousin Nouku who seems to be a budding photographer. I have my mother with me. The troop comes to a halt as we have almost reached the sacred place. It is actually a spring that rises from deep within the mountain and its story I'm not too sure about. But it has been worshipped since anyone can remember. As we stop to rest, we realise that Nouku has somehow gone astray. After perhaps 15 minutes, another cousin sets off to find him. Before we are able to go to the spring, one of the landowners needs to be asked permission and we must all have our faces washed by the water of the spring.



Nouku and Kaona (the cousin sent to retrieve him) appear grinning and Nouku exclaims he had taken a detour and gone up to look at some caves. He is met with sour faces and tongue-lashings of 'stop wasting time' and 'where have you been?' These mostly from his wife, Delvin, who has been sitting on a rock huffing and puffing angrily at the disappearance of her husband. As the elder motions us to follow her, my heart begins to pound. I'm not sure why but I suddenly become aware of where I am and what this place holds for my mother's people. The spring is hidden behind a fallen log and as I slowly move towards it, my heart beats faster still. I feel a presence of some

sort around me. It feels ancient and spiritual. We find a dead rat at the spring, I suppose if you were superstitious, you might read into this, but I stopped myself from doing that. This, however, meant our faces couldn't be washed with that water so we went down stream a little further and one by one our faces were washed by the elder as she said something in our language. I gathered it to be letting the

spirits know that we were family and meant no harm, or something to that effect. The boys declare there is a cave behind the spring and we all hurriedly run up towards them like school kids on an excursion. The boys enter that cave without hesitation. It's not a very big cave but enough to hold maybe 10-15 grown men. At the base, there is water and apparently it runs deep into an underground abyss. I myself have



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**I flick through the photos and stop short of one taken of the cave which appears to contain an image of a rather large orb (there are people who insist the orb in the photo is actually spirits captured in the photo) and after considering my surroundings, I am inclined to believe that in this case, it's probably true.**

been coyly lingering at the mouth of the cave arguing with myself about whether or not I should go in. This decision is soon made by Nouku who calls me to go in so he can take a picture.

I warily take my first step in and instantly hit a slick patch of clay, which sees me nearly skiing down into the darkness ahead of me. I am thankfully caught by some of the younger boys still also at the mouth of the cave. My heart's racing. I try again but this time aided with a light from someone's mobile phone (yet another unfamiliar and ridiculous addition to this jungle). I must admit I haven't spent too much time in caves of any sort, and after being in this one, I doubt I ever will. I satisfy my curiosity and make a swift, more graceful exit. We retrieve one of the cameras and eager faces looking to see what we have captured surround me! I flick through the photos and stop short of one taken of the cave which appears to contain an image of a rather large orb (there are people who insist

that the orb in the photo is actually spirits captured in the photo) and after considering my surroundings, I am inclined to believe that in this case, it's probably true. We begin the walk home still in the capable hands of the villagers.

Puffing and panting, we reach the village and stagger to the nearest water source to quench our thirsts! We sit for a while and talk with the people who live in the tiny village. It must be such a peaceful existence. Your day would consist entirely of just living - in every sense of the word. Growing up and living in the western world would have most people saying 'but there is so much more to life'. Sitting here right now, I'm beginning to wonder if there really is. Perhaps, it's just the façade we create to keep ourselves striving towards whatever it is we are striving towards. A big house, a nice car, fancy things. It's so easy to feel 'sorry' for these people, but who am I to feel sorry for them? They live on a beautiful tropical island in the sun and spend their days looking

after each other, loving each other, talking, laughing, swimming. I'm baffled.

Papua New Guinea is one of the most untouched places in the world. Bouganville is a magical island full of strength and hope, courage, love, wisdom, and the most beautiful and friendly people on the planet.

If you have never been to Papua New Guinea, it is most definitely something you should consider. Don't believe everything you read about it being a dangerous place. Sure, Port Moresby isn't one of the nicest places in the world, but Port Moresby isn't Papua New Guinea.

It is an incredible country, with an incredible history and one of Australia's closest neighbours. The people are warm and wonderful and the landscape breathtaking. I am extremely proud to be part of this amazing country. I hope your lives might also be touched by this incredible and fascinating culture.



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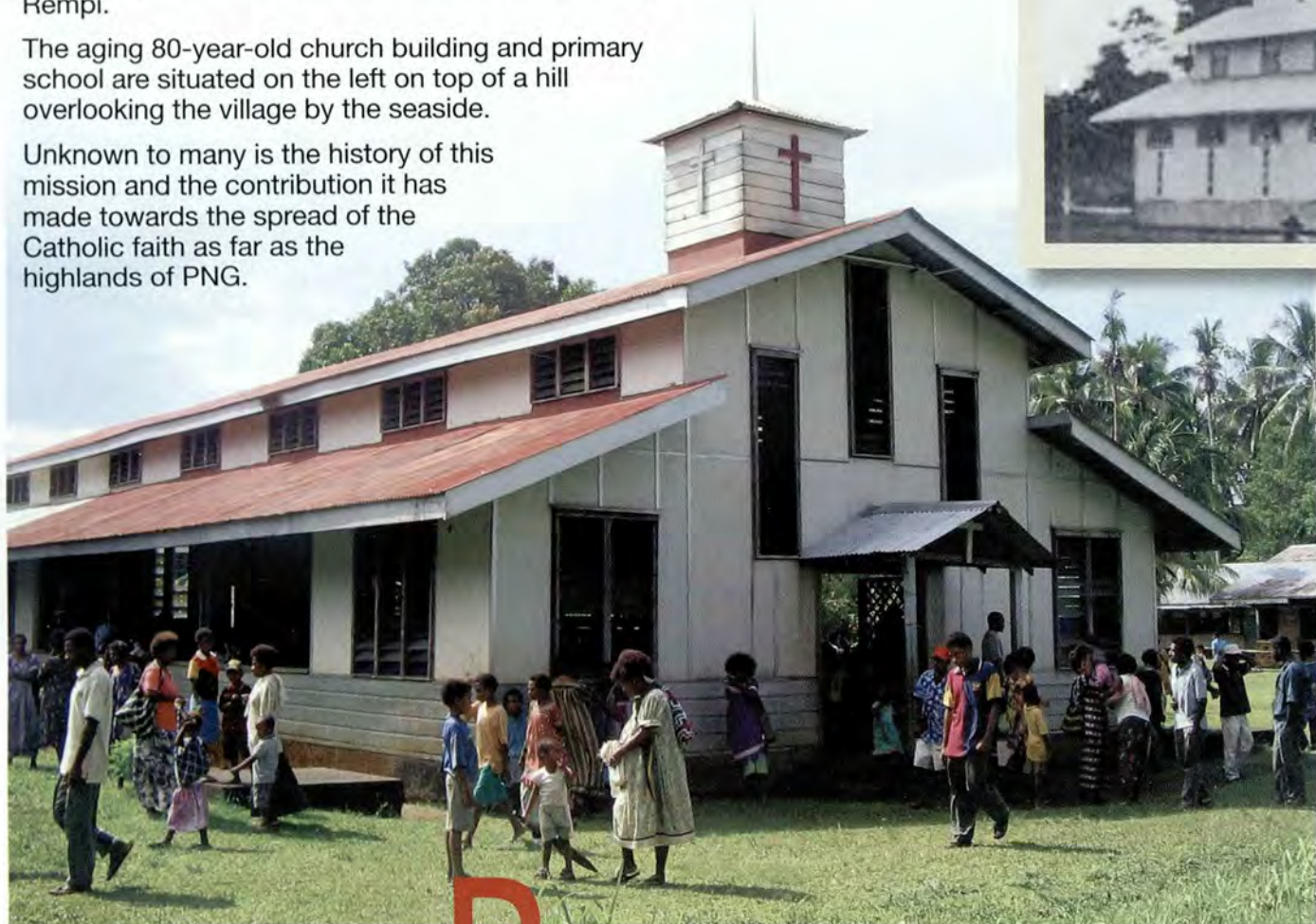
# Rempi Church

## Its place in PNG's history

If you drive 35 kilometres along the north coast road in Madang, you will pass St Boniface Catholic Church at Rempi.

The aging 80-year-old church building and primary school are situated on the left on top of a hill overlooking the village by the seaside.

Unknown to many is the history of this mission and the contribution it has made towards the spread of the Catholic faith as far as the highlands of PNG.



*Sunday morning mass at St Boniface Church, Rempi. The church was rebuilt after the 1970 earthquake.*

By Patrick Matbob

**B**ack in 1927, St Boniface was a small bush material church when a young American SVD priest was appointed there. Fr William Ross who later became famous as a pioneer missionary to the highlands of PNG had his humble beginning at St Boniface. It was his first parish posting after arriving from US to join the largely German and European Divine Word Missionaries at the nearby Alexishafen Catholic mission headquarters.

Fr Ross welcomed the move to Rempi where for the first time he lived on his own away from the community life at Alexishafen.

Discarding his white tropical suit for khaki shorts and shirt, he even took to smoking brus, the local tobacco, so he could enjoy his conversations with the village men.

The Rempi people were once fierce cannibals

who were feared by surrounding tribes but the establishment of the German colony had eliminated the practice and brought peace into the area.

One of the first things he did was to build a school and taught the children with the help of a catechist. In fact, he got on so well with the children that they taught him the Rempi language which was a difficult language for outsiders to master. Fr Ross remembered it as a tonal language with one word pronounced in different ways could have different meanings. But he tried hard and soon spoke the language fluently, in fact more fluent than he would ever speak the Hagen language.

After some months at Rempi and with the increase in the number of baptised Catholics, Fr Ross decided to build a permanent church building to replace the bush church.

The violent 1970 earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale caused massive damage to the St Boniface Church. The entire wall behind the altar collapsed, exposing the crucifix hanging on the wall.



He raised funds for the building in US and the church was built by Br Hyginus. Made of cement, arched wooden timbers and stained glass windows, the church with its mini dome and spire became the centre of faith for the local people.

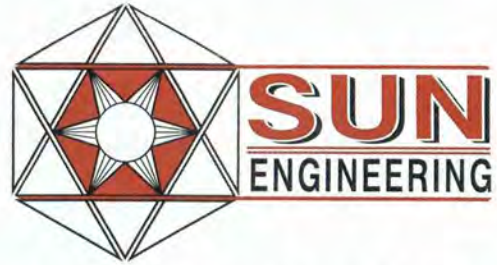
In 1927, an Australian government patrol officer Jock McKay was planning to carry out a patrol into the mountains behind Rempi and Fr Ross obtained permission to accompany him. In the mountains at Saruga, they were attacked by a tribe firing arrows at them. McKay retaliated by firing over their heads with his rifle and was able to make contact with them. Fr Ross saw that the people's health was in a pitiful state and planned to return with a doctor, Br Gerhoch, who was an expert on tropical medicines.

Soon Fr Ross was making regular patrols into the mountains behind Rempi. The going was not easy climbing the Edelbert ranges which rises as high as 2000 metres above sea level. However, with the help of carriers from Rempi and the new found mountain friends, he was able to successfully carry out his mission work there. He built a permanent church in the mountains at Sigu and after four years of climbing up and down the mountains, baptised nearly 1000 new Catholics - an increase from 120 when he first arrived.

The trips into the mountains were actually preparing him for his biggest mission yet which was to trek into the highlands and establish a mission in Mount Hagen. The special relationship that Fr Ross had developed with the local people would also help him because he was able to recruit carriers, teachers and catechists for his Mount Hagen mission.

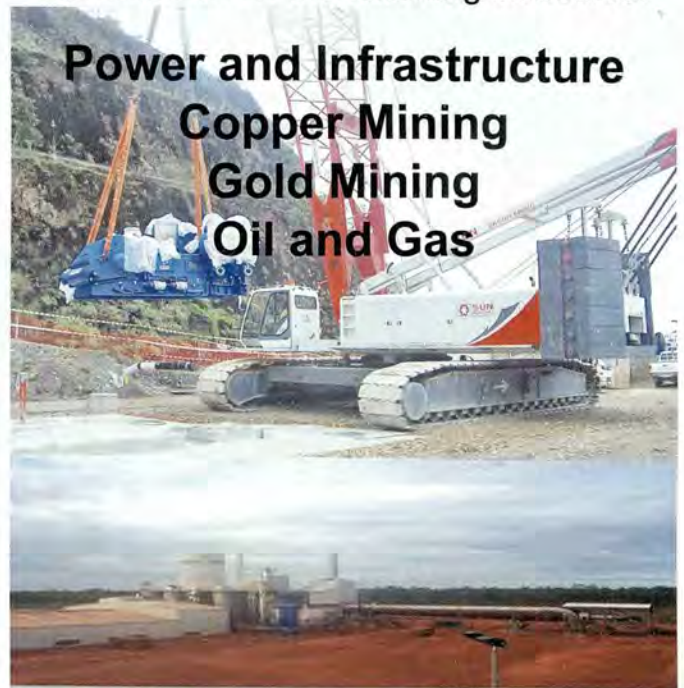
In the early 1930s, the Leahy brothers made contact for the first time with tribes of about a million people living in the fertile valleys in the present day Western Highlands province. When the exciting news of the discovery of people reached Alexishafen, Bishop Wolf appointed Fr Ross in 1933 to go into the Highlands and set up a mission there. It was not until a year later, on February 15, when the expedition was able to set out. The group left Alexishafen for Bogadjim on the Rai Coast by boat then trekked over the Finnisterre Ranges into the Ramu valley then up to Bundi and over the Bismarck ranges into the Wahgi valley and on to the present day Mount Hagen. Assisting him were his trusted followers whom he had lived amongst and baptized at the Rempi mission.

As Fr Ross and his followers moved on into the highlands and into the nation's history, the mission he had established and left behind at Rempi continued to flourish. A number of church leaders, catechists and mission teachers began their education at the Rempi mission school and later became involved in mission work of propagating the faith in other parts of Madang.



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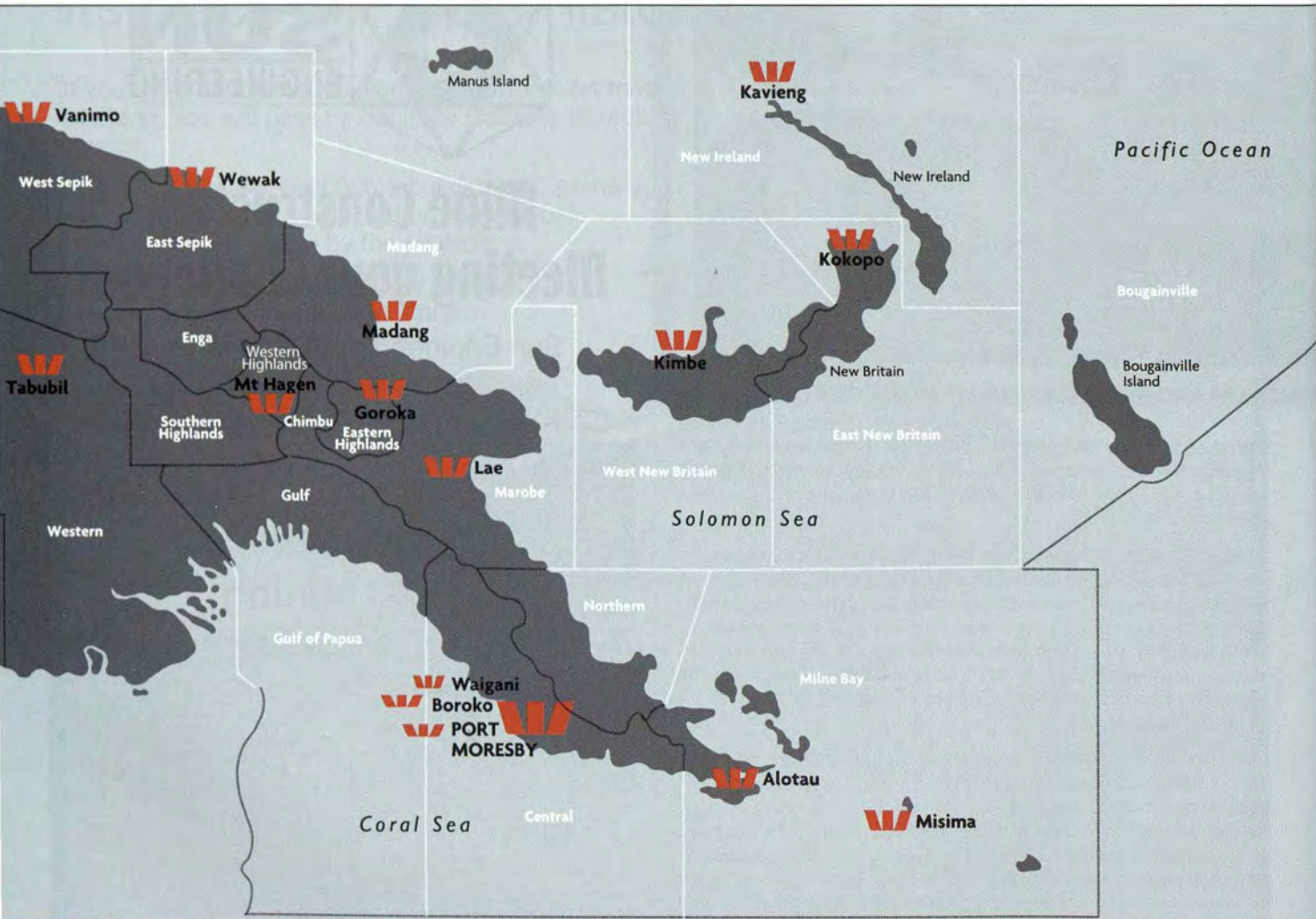
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Fr Ross (left) and a group of missionaries and explorers in Mt Hagen in the 1930s.

In his book Readings in PNG Mission History, Fr Frank Mihalic lists two of the unsung catechist heroes and teachers from Rempi. They are Anselm Suasu and Willie Anut. Suasu was a papal medalist, who was born in 1907 at Kawe, Rempi and was trained as a Catechist. He was assigned to areas beyond Rempi where Fr Ross had worked and spent 48 years in church work before retiring to Alexishafen.

Another famous Rempi catechist and church leader was Willie Anut who was born in 1925

and baptized by Fr Ross in 1928. He began his catechist work in 1941 when the war came to the country. He was drafted by the Japanese as a war carrier in the Sepik and after the war; the Australians wanted to court martial him for helping the enemy. However, he was able to win his case and return to Rempi where he continued his work. He was a teacher, a musician and a catechist for his people and was actively involved in church work up until his death in 1995.

The church that Fr Ross had established was the centre of life for the Rempi people. However, more than 40 years later tragedy struck. Madang was hit by a large earthquake measuring more than 7.1 on the Richter at about 3:55am on November 1, 1970 which damaged buildings, roads and the infrastructure throughout the province. St Boniface church which was only kilometers from the epicenter in the Bismarck Sea also suffered major damage. The whole concrete back wall of the church collapsed exposing the large crucifix hanging behind the altar. The church was restored but in the process lost its unique architecture of wooden arches, concrete dome and stained glass windows.

The population of the faithful has however, never stopped growing from the seeds that Fr Ross had sown. Today the small aging church is overflowing as ever with the faithful for Sunday mass and other religious activities. Concerned with the growing population, the local church leaders have decided to rehabilitate and expand the existing church. A committee has been formed to raise funds through various activities.

Chairman of the Church Project Development fundraising, Adolph Mugau, said the committee has set the target to raise K30, 000. He said his committee hopes to raise the K30, 000 before seeking help from possible donors.

Rehabilitation of St Boniface church would not only help the Rempi community but would also restore and preserve the legacy of Fr Ross and the church workers from the Rempi mission who had a hand in shaping a part of PNG's history.



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# Feathered Friends on the Fly

By Diana McManus

**Long have I wished to visit the fabled Fly River because of the exciting, exotic tales I read as a child and its extreme remoteness which is also very appealing. Having a colleague appointed to a school in Tabubil provided the incentive to visit. Following some enquiries, it was revealed a bird watching expedition from Kiunga was the ideal way to go.**

**K**iunga man Samuel Kepuknai, bird watcher extraordinaire, was the man of the moment. Samuel is the main conduit to the forest and its inhabitants, feathered and otherwise, and has guided many individuals such as Sir David Attenborough and Dr Jared Diamond and their international documentary teams into the region. My friend Rene and I were lucky to get a booking with this pleasant and unassuming man to spend a couple of days in his company.

We were told the Kiunga bus left Tabubil from the tin shed behind Camp Administration, between 5am and 7am. Big window of time I thought, but we showed up bright and early anyway, the first to get on the bus. We soon found that it doesn't leave until it gets its full complement of passengers, so we spent the next hour sweeping the streets for takers. Hence, the flexible departure time!

At first we drove alongside the stony Ok Tedi river then the road wound through thickly forested, misty mountains overlooking cloud filled valleys. After a bush pee stop here, a smoking stop there, and a food stop at Ningerum, the halfway point, we finally arrived two and a half hours later at the Kiunga market above the river. Our boat landing was down at the refugee village and was literally a slope of glutinous, sticky mud. But the villagers were welcoming and helpful and 'mobiled' Samuel for us.

Ten minutes later, a huge clearing marked the logging camp which was also the landing spot for refugees from Indonesia; anyone associated with the OPM freedom fighters. Only about 45 kilometres from the Irian Jaya border, it is estimated that approximately 34,000 refugees have passed through to-date.



After 30 minutes a cluster of very small huts was the first sign of human life. These were fuel or food depots for the people of the village which lay further in from the banks. Ten minutes later, a huge clearing marked the logging camp which was also the landing spot for refugees from Indonesia; anyone associated with the OPM freedom fighters. Only about 45 kilometres from the Irian Jaya border, it is estimated that approximately 34,000 refugees have passed through to-date. Samuel, a former Landowners' Representative, pointed out that resettlement has created tensions with the customary landowners who are already dealing with decreasing natural resources on account of their growing population.

We clambered aboard his fiberglass dinghy and were soon out of the creek and skimming north along the broad, brown reaches of the Fly, away from the busy port behind us. A few of the barges from Port Moresby which service Tabubil and the mine were moored on buoys; notably the Kikori Chief and other vessels belonging to Steamships' 'Chief' fleet. With Shilltiel, Samuel's ten year old daughter, perched up the front of the dinghy, we soon left town behind and settled back to watch the jungle clad banks slip by, tall trees dressed in ghostly creepers.

At 45 minutes, we slewed off to the east into the Elavara River, a big tributary of the Fly, and paid a visit to Gusiore village where we picked up Kwiwan Isebu, another birder, with his high powered telescope and little son Micromic (Mike for short). Going ashore was a bit of a challenge, climbing along a notched log balanced precariously across the sticky mud. With our full contingent aboard, we headed upstream and took another turn into the Ketu



River and eventually pulled up at the wooden stepped landing of Kwatu Lodge on Gabriel Ewakai's land. How delighted were we to find that we were the very first guests to stay here?! Previous visitors have gone to Ekame Lodge, further down the river. Ninety minutes from Kiunga and it felt like the end of the earth.

Built with local materials village-style, the picturesque little establishment sits on a cleared knoll overlooking the river, with kitchen and loo outhouses. A path runs down through the rainforest at the back leading to a clear, sandy bottomed creek, perfect for a dipper shower at the end of the day. Trees have been cleared along the riverside slope below the lodge to create a clear view of the rainforest beyond, and tall trees where countless birds flit and roost. The afternoon was spent lazing, grazing and gazing at the passing parade.

Finally, Captain Morgan provided a pleasant happy hour with his Old Spice, before a precooked lamb stew heated on an open fire, and some delightful banter with our hosts. We crashed on our home-made beds with mattresses, sheets and mosquito nets, despite the fact that we were above mosquito level and hadn't seen one all day.

Next morning, after some serious rain during the night, we took off in the dinghy in pursuit of the much admired flame bower bird. The river level had risen a metre or so during the night and clambering ashore was a whole lot easier above the gumbboot line!



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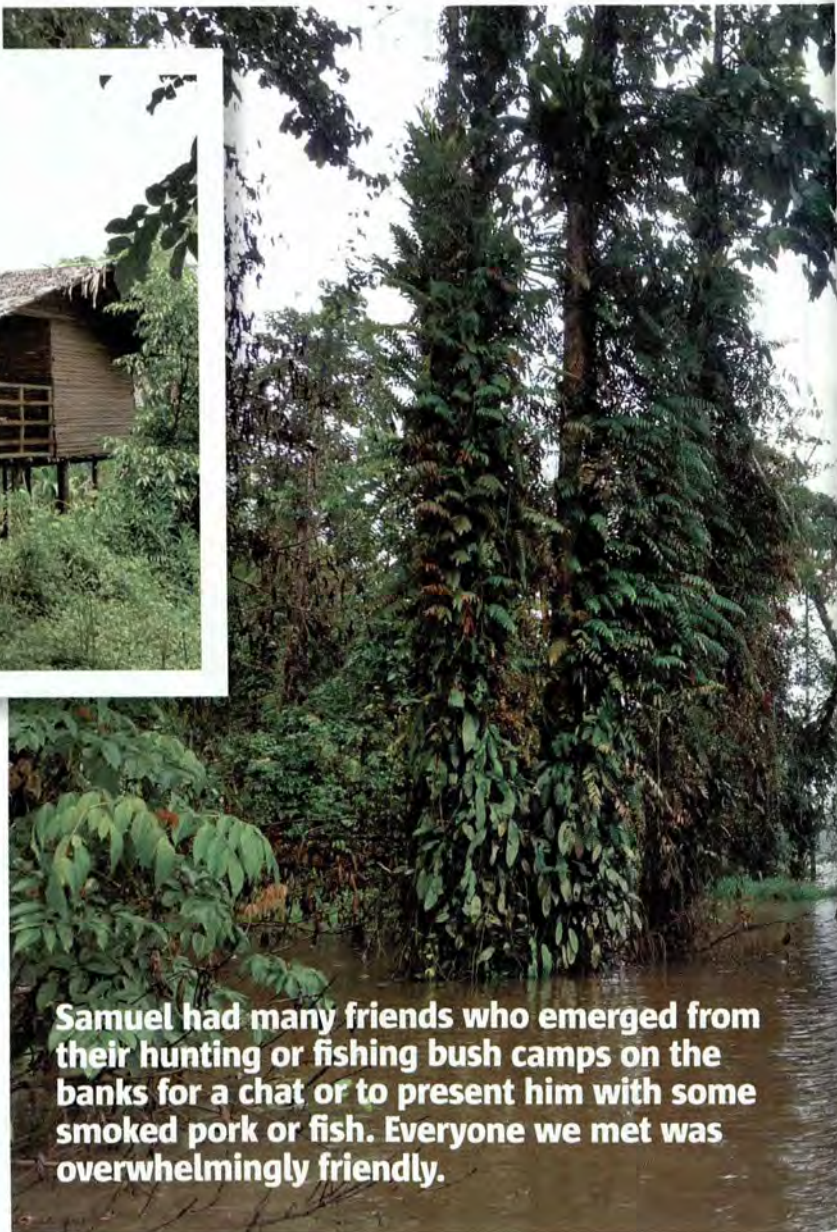
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First stop was Gusiore village again, a clean, fairly new village in the process of relocating from its previous site. Ok Tedi Mining Ltd as part of its royalty payments to the people in the region and working with the government, supplies educational and medical services if the villages place themselves on the supply routes - the roads and rivers. Kwiwan's wife Aurora, whom we met, is the community Medical Officer. We were shown houses in progress and could only admire the sturdy constructions without nails using all manner of palm products; leaves for thatch, frond stems for panelling and vines for twine.

Then it was time to do battle with the leeches and march through the soggy rainforest to the haunts of the bower birds. The first bower we visited had actually been dismantled and the bird had moved on. So did we. At the



**Samuel had many friends who emerged from their hunting or fishing bush camps on the banks for a chat or to present him with some smoked pork or fish. Everyone we met was overwhelmingly friendly.**

second site, the bower was intact and we entered into a custom-built hideout to await our feathered friend. It was a wonderful little structure of plaited palm leaves in a classic beehive shape.

Our boys decided to leave us there for awhile, giving us a realistic imitation of the bird's call should we hear it coming; our cue to be quiet. Well what can I say!? Two-and-a-half hot hours later the elusive bird remained elusive and we were exceptionally glad to hear the boys paddling back along the forest track to collect us.

Later in the evening we went on another bird watching foray in the dinghy and indeed we did see some lovely sights including a reptile lazing on the river bank; some sort of dragon. Samuel and Kwiwan really got into the bird imitations. Eventually, we silently drifted with the current along ferny banks and beneath towering trees. It was a very pleasant experience. Samuel had many friends who emerged from their hunting or fishing bush



camps on the banks for a chat or to present him with some smoked pork or fish. Everyone we met was overwhelmingly friendly.

The night again brought some serious rain and by the next morning the river level had risen by almost three metres since our arrival. Now it was time to leave. Landing access was a whole new story; much, much easier and no mud in sight. Dropping Kwiwan off at Gusiore, we slowly rode the current back down the swollen rivers. Not wishing to create a threatening wake, Samuel was careful to kill the engine as we passed many locals in their dugout canoes on their way to market, their villages or bush camps.

The bus ride back to Tabubil gave us plenty of time to reflect upon the fascinating insights we'd had into life in one of the remotest paces in PNG. Somehow with modern transport, mobile coverage and heavy mobile use it didn't seem as far removed as the imagination can make it out to be. Not once did we feel threatened or insecure and the mere contact with the friendly Fly people just reaffirmed once again the connectivity of humanity...which is, I suppose, a major driving force behind the desire to travel and explore.

For an 'off the beaten track' experience, I'd highly recommend you contact Samuel Kepuknai at [kepuknai@online.net.pg](mailto:kepuknai@online.net.pg) or give him a call on 548 1451 or 6719913. You might even see some of those elusive birds if you're lucky and stay a little bit longer! Just as well our feathered friends weren't our primary goal.



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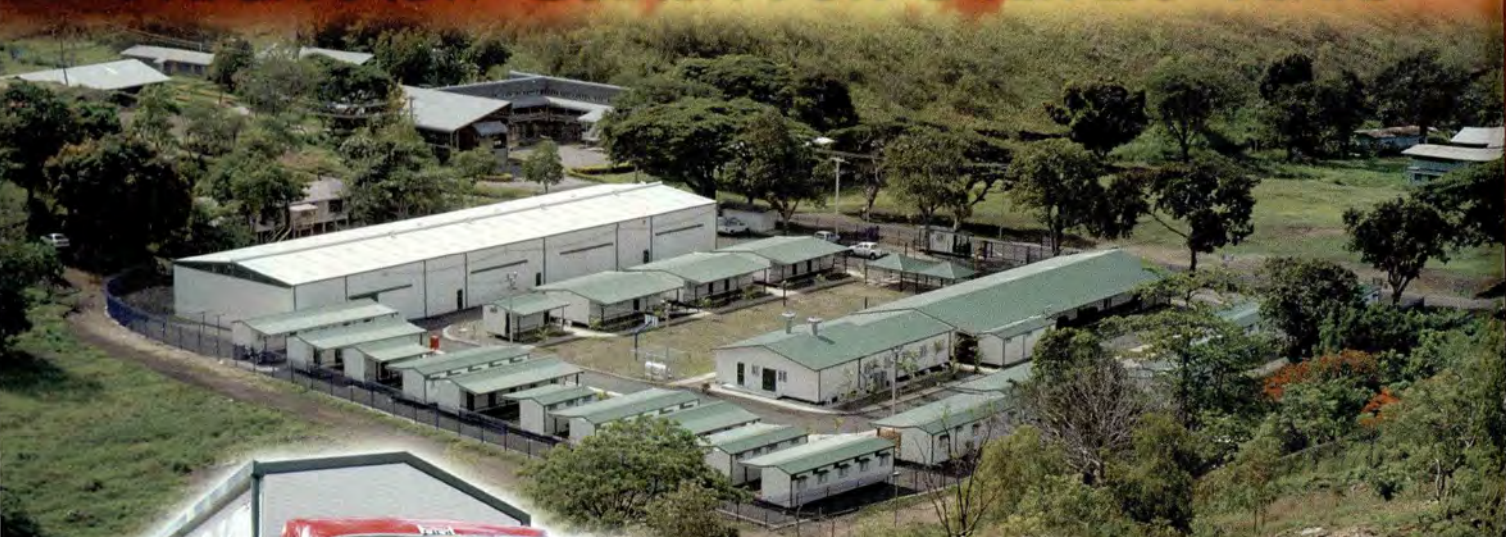
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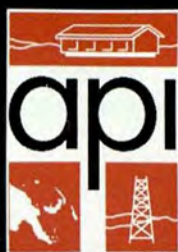
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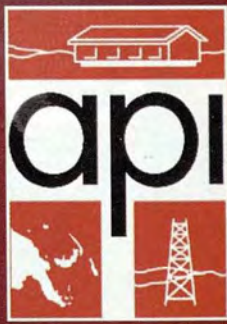
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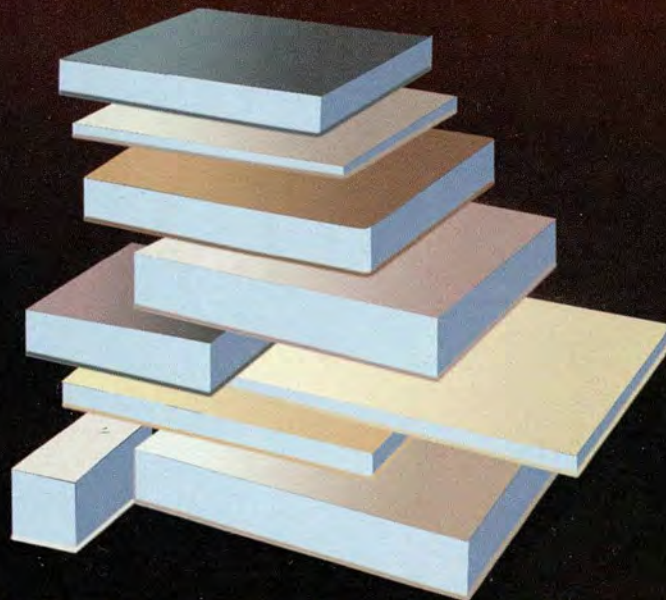
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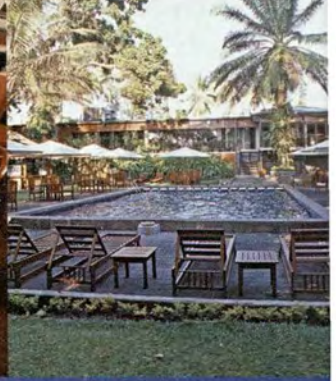
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# THE OCEAN PEOPLE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY | LANI JENSEN

**I**n the islands off Papua New Guinea, it's hard to find too many things that have changed. That is if you even know how to locate them on the map in the first place.

While we've all heard of Port Moresby on the mainland and most likely associate the New Guinean people with images we see of the highlanders, few know there are many archipelagos attached to Papua New Guinea that are home to culturally diverse and traditional island people. They live their lives on and around the ocean as they have done for centuries.

There are over 600 islands scattered around the Solomon Sea and to the west of the New Guinea mainland. Apart from the three bigger islands of New Britain, New Island and Bougainville, there is almost no road or airport infrastructure, no cars, no television, no electricity and not many tourists.

Many of these islands are so inaccessible they can only be reached by private yacht or the traditional sailing canoes of the local people.



Three Jungle dancers and Jerry welcome us to this part of the Sivoli River. At the mouth of the river we climb a steep and stare into the wonder of the Blue Hole. They had been at the previous Sing Sing down the River and had run all the way up.

Many of the more traditional costumes involve plants or parts of plants as decoration, or in this case they've been used to disguise themselves entirely as a tree spirit so they can dance wildly to the jungle.

The waters around the Island of Nimoa are a perfect crystal clear blue. It has spectacular views, golden beaches, beautiful gardens and is run by an Australian Catholic Priest who has been there for more than 30 years. The Nimoa St Alphonsus Catholic Mission features a school, medical centre, hospital and sports field.

These two girls had just shown me the way back to the beach and in a fit of giggles were trying to tell me their names.





Following a welcoming Sing Sing in the village of Noipuas, on the Island of New Hanover, we were witness to the bizarre ritual of whipping the men to prove their warrior strength. The men, and sometimes boys, whose turn it was to be whipped kneeled on the ground in bravery while their assailant cracked a hard reed around their wrists or torsos. Although this was for show, it was done with true force as the reed whipped right around their wrist and would show up in welts for hours later.

The people of the Louisiades Archipelago rely solely on the ocean as a means of transport, food, income and housing. They have sailing outrigger canoes that are found only in this part of New Guinea and are quite different to the more simple canoes found in the northern islands. A family of eight live a nomadic lifestyle on this canoe and travel between the islands in search of different hunting and farming grounds that are scattered throughout 10 larger volcanic islands and 90 smaller coral islands. Here, they chew betel nut while carving up today's catch - turtle.



These children are from a beautiful part of East New Britain called Wara Kalap in Jacquinot Bay. Before the official declaration of defeat by the invading Japanese and the end of World War II, Australian troops from the 29/46th Australian Infantry Battalion and others throughout New Guinea, were stationed here before heading home. After months in the jungle, it was a relief for them to be on the coast in clean, blue water and surrounded by such friendly and helpful locals.



The Islands of the Louisiades Archipelago have got to be one of the most beautiful places on earth. Crystal clear water, abundant fish and marine life, blue skies and the best playground in the world for these three brothers in the safe and perfect white sandy beaches.



This man was one of the oldest men in his village of Noipuas on the Island of New Hanover. He is wearing a traditional hat made from banana leaves, white face paint and carrying a woven palm leaf bag. Prior to this, he had been a very fierce greeting person and who met us down at the beach and tested our spirit before entering his village.



Vibrant and colourful costumes of feathers, shells, leaves, flowers and cloth adorn the Sing Sing dancers. Many are in elaborate head-dresses made of bird of paradise feathers that have been passed down through the generations and are held in high esteem. Sometimes an important event, such as a legendary battle or curing of an illness, would be re-enacted as part of enhancing this traditional oral culture.

"The traditional songs are about daily life, songs that people sing when they pick bananas or collect coconuts or go fishing," says William, featured in this shot.

The sound of three part harmonies could be heard throughout the islands, even at 5am in the morning when a fishing canoe would return home after weeks at sea to the sound of singing.



The canoes in the northern Islands of New Britain and New Ireland are simple in design and often don't even have the outrigger or balancing part of the canoe. Many canoes of all sizes are lost each year due to bad weather or capsizing, their occupants lost forever as distances are far and strangely most are not strong swimmers. Many of the smaller canoes are dominated by groups of children playing or pretending to fish and dreaming of the day when they can be big enough to do so. Most of the canoes have names and are often painted in bright colours with paddles to match. This little canoe, ironically called Res-Q and manned by Peter and Ignacio, was one of the many hundreds that followed us around eager to impress with their humour.



In the cool light of the dawn, Charlie, a fisherman from Jacquinot Bay, makes his way through the water and to the local fishing grounds. He is accompanied by his friends, many who have been also awake and on the water well before the dawn.





# The Beauty of Baia

A slice of paradise that just won't leave your mind!

**Baia Wilderness Lodge in West New Britain is a bastion of comfort amongst terrain fit for the gods as *Brent Delaney* found out.**



I recently travelled to the remote province of West New Britain in New Guinea and returned home infected. My infection is not malarial, it is cerebral. I am infected by memories of a slice of paradise that just won't leave my mind!

This slice of paradise is the Baia Wilderness Lodge. Baia Wilderness Lodge is a bastion of comfort and calm set amongst terrain fit for the gods. Proximate volcanoes smoulder, puff and rumble. Craggy mountains plunge into the glassy blue depths. Thick jungle grows like mould on every surface, peppered with flapping, squawking flashes of colour. Gin-clear water gently caresses sandy fringes, beyond which colourful coral and fish abound before the crust of the earth falls away into a cobalt abyss. Yes; Baia is bliss!

Baia Wilderness Lodge is located on the ultra remote North coast of New Britain, a large island located to the North East of the Papua New Guinea mainland. The lodge is situated on the outskirts of the charming village of Baia and is set on a small point amongst a proliferation of coconut palms. The lodge is run by Riccard Reimann and his family in



The black and spot-tail bass - endemic to the region - is universally acknowledged as one of the hardest fighting fish on the planet.

partnership with the village and is positioned as a comfortable retreat for adventurous anglers. However, Baia offers so much more than just fishing.

I had primarily travelled to Baia to look for piscatorial challenges. The black and spot-tail bass that are endemic to the region are universally acknowledged as one of the hardest fighting fish on the planet. I did encounter top-shelf fishing at Baia, however, it was the experience of being exposed to the local people and culture that left me with a glow that lasted long after the memorable fish had been forgotten.

## THE JOURNEY

Baia's isolation means that getting there takes some time and effort, however it's that isolation that is integral to the Baia experience. From Port Moresby, I caught an Air Niugini flight to Hoskins, a short drive from the regional town of Kimbe. Lodge owner Riccard was on hand to greet me. I relaxed for the night at the nearby Liamo Reef Resort, which is the premium accommodation option in Kimbe.





The next morning we made a long bumpy car trip, followed by a long boat voyage to Baia - there are no roads to this place! Riccard will soon have access to a high speed game boat that will whisk you straight from Liamo to Baia which will streamline access to the lodge.

### THE LODGE

The lodge at Baia is spacious and well appointed. It has an atmospheric (and well stocked) bar and dining area that opens out onto a large deck. From the deck, vistas of coral, volcanoes and palm trees assail you as you gaze out upon the Bismarck Sea.

In front of the lodge, the water is warm, clear and still and full of coral gardens and colourful fish - you don't have to travel far to access great snorkelling.

The lodge can cater for up to 12 people, with each guest accommodated in large double rooms. The food at Baia is delicious and draws heavily on locally gathered jungle vegetables and fruits which are incredibly flavoursome due to the rich volcanic soil in the area.



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The ocean outside the rivers is studded with coral bombooras and shelves of reef which provide ideal habitat for pelagic and reef fish. I had a blast catching coral trout, emperor, giant trevally, Spanish mackerel, yellowfin tuna and bluefin trevally.



### THE BAIJA EXPERIENCE

My stay at Baia was focused on fishing and for good reason. I had some brutal encounters in the many rivers in the area with large black bass and spot-tail bass were particularly thick!

The ocean outside the rivers is studded with coral bombooras and shelves of reef which provide ideal habitats for pelagic and reef fish. I had a blast catching coral trout, emperor, giant trevally, Spanish mackerel, yellowfin tuna and bluefin trevally. For a change of pace, we would simply move back into the rivers and catch more bass!

The lodge has a fleet of purpose-built sportfishing boats at its disposal and all the guides are locals from the village who have generations of knowledge of the local area. My guide for the trip was Jacob Kaukia, whose father used to be the chief of the village.

For those not interested in fishing, Baia is one of the most serene places imaginable to relax and unwind. Go snorkelling in front of the lodge, or wander further afield via boat to some amazing coral shelves and swim-throughs.

Kayak in the typically calm waters of the Bismarck Sea while the smoking apex of Mt Ulawun (one of the most active volcanoes in the world) looms above you. Take a cultural tour of Baia village or spend a day leaning about jungle foods and the local flora and fauna on a tour of the jungle. Go for a river cruise and spend the afternoon at one of the nearby spring-fed water holes with a picnic - this is not to be missed! Alternatively, you could just recline on the balcony, sip on a beverage and soak up the stillness...

Baia village itself is home to 300 people, yet it is perfectly blended into the natural environment. It is in much the same state as it would have been 200 years ago - no electricity or running water and buildings made of palm leaves. The villagers are some of the friendliest people you will ever meet and their generosity and calm nature will leave a lasting impression.

I departed Baia with a deep sense of calm and peace from interacting with a community that is largely undisturbed by modern distractions and distortions. Baia Wilderness Lodge is certainly worth the journey.



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# Fresh Bread on Kokoda Trail?

**When people come to visit us in Papua New Guinea and wish to contribute to villages and help communities, we want to encourage sustainable tourism. The story that follows is a great example of sustainable tourism as *Leonie Smith* writes.**

Hot bread - ready to be eaten.



**I**t all started two years ago when two fellow trekkers were walking the Kokoda Track with a group led by Pam Christie of PNG Trekking Adventures.

John Wallace (BNG Trading Company Ltd, Port Moresby) and Andre Arndt (Bakels, Sydney, Australia) just happened to be in the same line of business - baking. An idea began to develop as these two men pondered how they could establish a sustainable income for the villages which would benefit the whole community as well as enhance the trekking experience. All trekkers eventually tire of noodles and rice and would welcome a change in diet and what would be better than fresh bread!

In early 2008, the first expedition was organised by Pam, John and Andre. All the equipment necessary to bake bread was freighted to Efogi. This included an oven (manufactured in Lae) pre-mix flour, yeast, oil, trays, loaf tins, bowls, utensils, scales, aprons, etc - all provided by BNG Trading and Bakels. Andre, who just happens to be a master baker with international experience, demonstrated to the villagers how to bake bread, rolls, cakes and Anzac biscuits. John was able to explain to the villagers how they would be able to sell their bread to trekkers to generate income for the benefit of their whole community. This demonstration was so successful that it was repeated at Menari Village where again the response was most positive. Now, both villages are benefitting from this sustainable income

Last year, between April and October, Menari and Efogi villages purchased 60 bags of pre-mix flour and baked 5000 loaves of bread. These loaves of bread were sold for approximately K10 per loaf.





ANZAC biscuits go into the oven.

Getting tips on how to bake.



**From the vast interest in this story, a collection drive was put into action by the company employees and articles of clothing, toys and stationery were gathered together. Andre then presented these to Andy and the village and all joined in to distribute the items.**

Because this endeavour had been so successful, both John and Andre decided other villages should be able to take advantage of this opportunity as well. So, on March 25, 2009, another expedition began its journey to Kokoda to the villages of Naduri and Kagi.

It's just a short 20-minute flight to Kagi from Port Moresby. We flew over steep ridges which were occupied by the Australians and Japanese during WWII, the Brown and Goldie Rivers and the Brigade Hill where so many lives were lost.

We also spot Efogi and Menari where the bread baking business has already been set up. It's quite daunting to see the airstrip when one is about to land at Kagi. Surely, it's not long enough!

Once we have landed, all the equipment bound for Kagi is unloaded, however, we are off to Naduri first and will return to Kagi the following day.

The flight to Naduri must be one of the shortest ever - two minutes! I'm sure the walk the following morning back to Kagi will take a lot longer.

Once unloaded at Naduri we are welcomed by Andy, the village leader, who escorts us to our demonstration area and guest house. It appears the whole village is in attendance and waiting with anticipation.

Andre then proceeds to instruct his new 'apprentices' on how to use the different utensils and equipment. Once the new 'apprentices' are suitably attired in their new aprons and hats, Andre demonstrates how

to mix the dough to make the bread. Everyone is very keen and eager to learn this process, often asking questions and participating with enthusiasm.

One of the most important roles in bread-making is the fire attendant who must ensure a steady heat to cook the bread evenly. When the first loaves are put in the oven, everyone waits anxiously for the result. Once the bread is cooked, there is great celebration by everyone. As Andy stated, "it is a great opportunity for my people."

It has been a wonderful day to see so many people learn something new, baking loaves of bread, bread rolls, cakes and Anzac biscuits. There will be many trekkers who will purchase these delicious items enhancing their trekking experience and providing an income for the villagers.

Andre has another surprise for Naduri. After his Kokoda trek two years ago, he wrote an article for his company newsletter describing his experiences along the track. From the vast interest in this story a collection drive was put into action by the company employees and articles of clothing, toys and stationery were gathered together. Andre then presented these to Andy and the village and all joined in to distribute the items. The children were all smiles when they received a special toy.

By late afternoon, it was time for a walk around this picturesque village. The views are spectacular from the top of the ridge, with mist and light clouds starting to cover the distant hills. Andy then escorts us

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**To witness the joy and elation on their faces when their golden bread appears from the oven is a privilege.**



to meet his father who happens to be one of the last remaining Fuzzy Wuzzy, Ovuru Ndiki, around 103 years of age. We feel privileged to meet such a man who sits so proudly with his medals and peaked hat.

Up bright and early the following morning to walk across to Kagi village. After breakfast, we bid farewell to Andy and all our friends and wish them the best in their new venture.

As we walk slowly down the slippery path, the children come running past us in their bare feet on their way to school! They are so incredibly agile and sure-footed whilst we step so carefully.

As we approach the school, the headmaster greets us and informs us that the school, nestled in the valley, services several villages in the area catering for 114 students ranging from Prep to grade 7.

A veritable educational oasis amidst the rainforest. We then continue our climb up to Kagi where we are greeted by Isaac, the village leader and we begin to set up for another demonstration.

Once again the enthusiasm amongst the villagers is evident in their willingness to learn new cooking methods and to be part of this innovative programme. To witness the joy and elation on their faces when their golden bread appears from the oven is a privilege.

Andre continues with his demonstration to include cake baking and producing plenty of Anzac biscuits which appear to be the crowd favourites. The children are so excited when they are able to taste these treats baked by their parents.

By mid-afternoon, the work is completed so we take time out to explore the surroundings.

Gary volunteers to be our guide and leads us to his guest house which was first erected about 20 years ago. He is in the middle of renovations at the moment awaiting the arrival of the first trekkers of the season.

There is a unique artifact decorating his guest area - a Douglas Airways plane tail sitting in the fork of a tree. Apparently the plane crash-landed on the airstrip several years ago.

At about 5pm, the clouds start to roll in and by 6pm we have a total 'white-out' and the rain comes down in torrents. We decide to have an early dinner while there is sufficient light and spend a cosy evening sitting around the fire sharing stories. We all agree that the last two

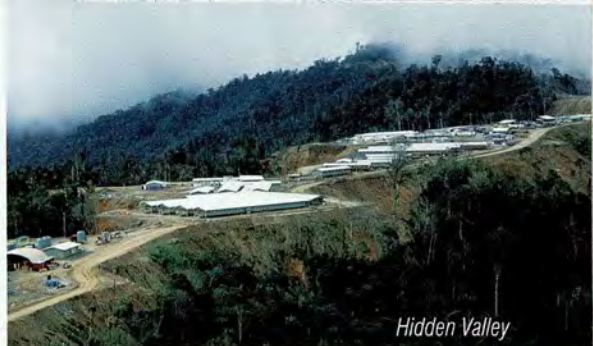
days have been an enormous success and feel encouraged by the villagers enthusiasm and positive feedback. Perhaps, there will be another expedition?

The rain continues to pour and the temperature drops. The only warm place will be the sleeping bag, so early retirement for all.

What a beautiful morning the following day. A perfect day to be flying back to Port Moresby. We soon hear the aircraft and race down to the airstrip. Our equipment is stowed away in the cargo hold and we say our last goodbyes to the Kagi villagers.

• For further information on the Kokoda Trail contact: [info@pngtrekkingadventures.com](mailto:info@pngtrekkingadventures.com)





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# PNG BIDS TO HOST 2015 PACIFIC GAMES

Almost two decades since last hosting the South Pacific Games in 1991, Papua New Guinea has once again put its hands up to host the 2015 Pacific Games, as it is now known.

With New Caledonia hosting the 2011 Pacific Games, there is a three-way race between PNG, Solomon Islands and Tonga to win the rights to host the 2015 Pacific Games.

PNG's preparation for the bidding process has been well underway with the establishment of the PNG 2015 Bid Committee early this year. It is been tasked to thoroughly plan and prepare a strategy in the bid process to ensure PNG's success in winning the bid.

To ensure no stone is left unturned in covering the bid process and making the final presentation to the Pacific Games Council in the Cook Islands in late September, PNG has assembled the PNG 2015 Bid Committee comprising sporting icons and leading sports administrators in the country, including, Sir John Dawanicura (Secretary-General, PNGSFOC), Mel Donald (Vice-President, PNGSFOC), Tamzin Wardley (Treasurer, PNGSFOC), Syd Yates, Trevor Birney, Auvita Rapilla (Deputy Secretary-General, PNGSFOC).

The government is represented on the Bid Committee by the Office of the Minister for Treasury & Finance, Minister for Sports & Development, Office of the Governor of NCD and the Office of the Leader of the Opposition.

The bid committee is currently assessing all sporting facilities and venues, reviewing potential venues for accommodation, hospitality and essential services as part of the bid preparation process.

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The bid committee at work.

Once preparations are completed, the PNG 2015 Bid presentation team will prepare all documentation for the final presentation to the Pacific Games Council in Cook Islands in late September.

Also as part of the obbying process, the committee is planning to host all affiliated members of the Pacific Games Council in Port Moresby in late August to view first-hand the

facilities and preparation work prior to the final presentation and voting in September.

The Prime Minister, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare and his cabinet have thrown their full support behind the bid process, with the government approving and allocating K1.5 million for the bidding process alone.

Should PNG win the bid to host the games in 2015, the government has pledged further

resources and financial support with plans to create a special ministerial portfolio for the games in cabinet (Minister for 2015 Pacific Games), further demonstrating the government's strong support and desire to stage the games.

With the games planned to be staged exclusively in Port Moresby, the support and inclusion on the bid committee of current Port Moresby MPs, in Dame Carol Kidu, Sir Mekere Morauta and Governor Powes Parkop, is a further indication of Port Moresby's ability, preparedness and desire to host another major international event.

The staging of the PNG National Games in Port Moresby in November, considered now to be as big as the Pacific Games, will give organisers enough time to assess the requirements of the facilities and venues well in advance.

Resources have been pooled through government agencies including the National Gaming Control Board through its Community Benefit Fund to work on existing sporting facilities and infrastructure in the country.

These works will be carried out in anticipation of a successful bid and will be completed despite the outcome of the bidding process.

However, once again should PNG win the bid, participating athletes and officials from the region are sure to be treated to facilities expected at international levels together with lasting memories of Papua New Guinea's warm and gracious hospitality.



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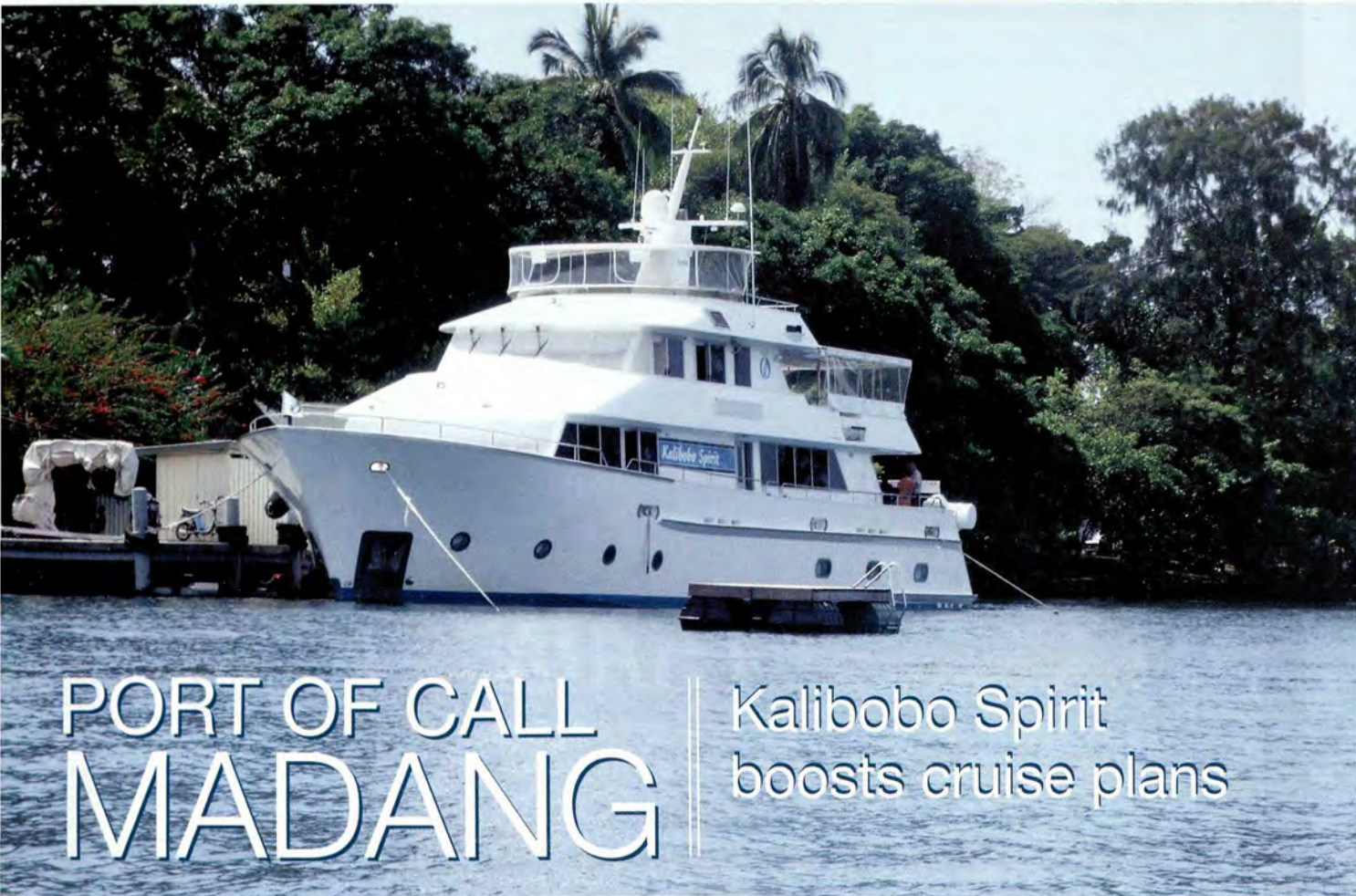
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# PORT OF CALL MADANG

## Kalibobo Spirit boosts cruise plans

By Samisoni Pareti

**S**One morning you wake up to the white, sandy beaches of Kavieng and the next you are gazing up in awe at the ash bellowing volcano of Rabaul.

Such are the wonders offered by the luxurious yacht, Kalibobo Spirit, which operates out of Madang.

With six queen-size cabins, three double bunk cabins and a stateroom with a queen-size bed on the bridge deck, the yacht can comfortably take 20 passengers in addition to the 6 to 8 crew members.

Initially christened Swanee River when it was constructed at the Carey Shipyard in New Zealand in 2004, the yacht was re-named Kalibobo Spirit when its current owner, Sir Peter Barter, acquired it in 2007.

Fully air-conditioned and fitted with state-of-the-art navigation equipment including over underwater stabilisers, Kalibobo Spirit takes the name of pleasure craft to another level.

"We go where others cannot," seems to be the motto Kalibobo Spirit cruises by these days.

While scheduled cruises up the Sepik River have been put on hold due to changes in the Australian-based outbound tour operators and airline connection issues, the Kalibobo Spirit, Barter says, is available for charter.







In 2008, for example, the cruise boat was under charter to Oil Search Limited and a couple of other mining ventures. In most cases, Barter himself is the boat captain.

He is also a licensed helicopter pilot and has added a helipad on the top-most deck of the Kalibobo Spirit. An electronic platform has also been added to the stern of the boat for divers and for carrying the boat's river-truck.

A ship brochure says: "The ship has four decks and all cabins are air-conditioned with thermostatic controls, LCD TVs, telephone and adequate storage. The mid-deck features a lounge, cocktail bar, dining room, library and theatre-style cinema plus a plasma TV.

The large galley is capable of catering for small groups overnight, or up to 120 passengers on day charters. The bridge deck has a large covered open deck with comfortable lounges, a purser's office and a well equipped bridge.

"Kalibobo Spirit is maintained in Queensland and PNG and conforms with all safety and manning requirements. Its navigation facilities include radar, sonar radar, depth sounders with 3D dimensional picture of ocean floor, GPS plotter, auto pilot, VHF, HFSSB, 3 independent satellite telephone systems, CCTV system throughout the vessel with full instrumentation on the bridge, fly deck and remote controls for docking. The ship is fitted

with Wesmar Stabilisers ensuring a stable, comfortable passage."

The luxury yacht does take to the water well. After a Sunday lunch, Barter offered to take **PARADISE** for a short cruise on Madang Harbour. It was, well, a bliss. Steaming at slow speed out of Dallman Passage with Madang and Kalibobo Village resorts to starboard before it picked up speed and followed the east coast. We passed the Coastwatchers' Memorial, could pick out the Madang Golf & Country Club before Machine Gun Point came into view. With the sun out, the point was full of bathers and picnickers. Everyone seemed to be out to enjoy a beautiful day.

On my final day in Madang, the Miami-based Silver Whisper sailed in for a day. While over 200 passengers were bussed to several of Madang's land-based attractions, the Kalibobo Spirit was on hand to transfer guests and crew members who opted to go diving in waters near several islets that dot Madang Lagoon.

For a ship 10-storey high, the Silver Whisper easily dwarfs anything it passes in Madang's harbour. Steaming past Madang Resort's waterfront swimming pool, you could for a moment believe the cruise-liner was going to berth by the pool railings.

When it docked at the nearby Madang Wharf

*Sir Peter Barter...captaining the Kalibobo Spirit.*





*Silver Whisper...going past the Madang Resort.*

minutes later, the boat was visible from several blocks away, towering over the town's stores, factories and warehouses. Because of her mammoth size, her one-day stopover in this northern seaport of Papua New Guinea was going to be the town's single biggest event of the month.

By eight in the morning, both sides of the road leading into Madang Wharf were taken up by handicraft vendors. Intricate carvings of

masks and figurines glisten in the morning sun. Cane baskets of various sizes and shapes tussle for space with bilum bags in assorted colours as they hang from makeshift displays. For the eight-hour stopover after cruising from its first stop in Honiara, Melanesian Tour Services' shipping agency handled all of Silver Whisper's requirements.

The almost 200 passengers, most of whom boarded from Sydney, had to choose from

several activities. There were the culture and nature tours, where visitors were bussed to Sulfur Creek in Bilek village, some 20 minutes from Madang Wharf.

From the small village, it was just a short walk to the cave where the movie Robinson Crusoe was filmed. From here, the bus took the group inland on a dirt road for a nature's walk at Haya village.



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Since it was almost mid-day, there was little chance of a Bird of Paradise sightings, as this, I am told by MTS tour guide Busy Bee, is best done either at dawn or dusk. But it was a nice walk through well cleared tracks under the shade of lush jungle leaf overgrowth for most of the way.

Where the track requires descending down a slope or climbing out of a creek, local Haya villagers have erected bamboo railings. Everyone struck up a good sweat. On our return to Haya village, cool coconut juice awaited us all at elder Lai Ui's resthouse,

From Haya, the buses came down to the

main Madang to Lae Highway, across to Bilbil village for lunch, traditional sing sing and a pottery demonstration. Most of the passengers shared their lunch of sandwiches and iced tea with the village children and it was straight to the boat after that.

The arrangement done by MTS was impressive for the day. Young men and women wore uniforms as tour guides. Buses were ready on time, although some of the passengers would have liked to travel in air-conditioned vehicles.

PNG Ports could also improve the friendliness of Madang Port by working out better security

arrangements. MTS staff and hired guides and drivers for instance were told in no uncertain terms by wharf security guards that they needed to wear safety boots, hard helmets and reflector vests each time they drive into the wharf. A more comfortable handicraft vendor market could also be considered.

But for a brief stop, passengers of Silver Whisper had a day to relax, unwind and learn a bit about Papua New Guinea's culture.

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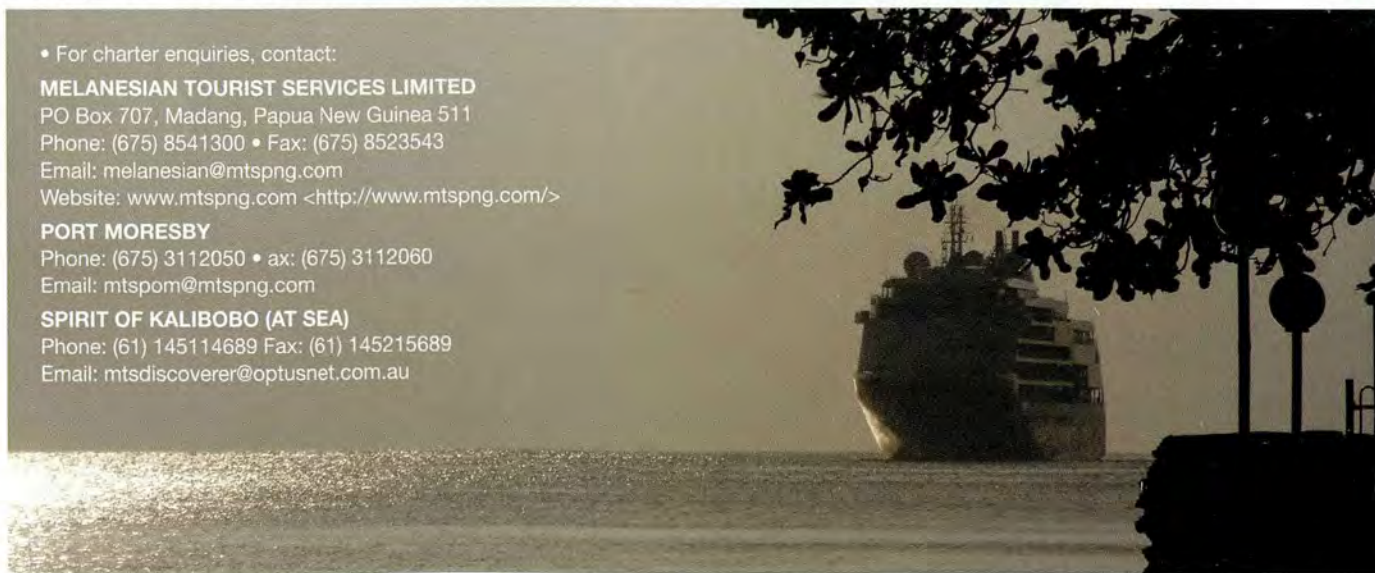
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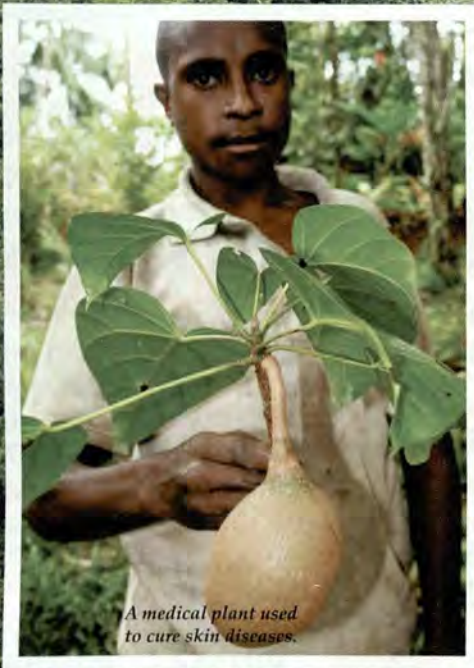


# Unlocking Ancient Knowledge

## Our world-class resource: Our forests

By Dennis Badi

**The island of New Guinea may hold solutions to some of the most dreadful diseases of our time, and the key to unlocking these treasures lies in our traditional knowledge of our world class resource – our forests.**



*A medical plant used to cure skin diseases.*

**M**ore than 50,000 years ago when Papua New Guinean ancestors crossed to the eastern part of the island of New Guinea's mainland and its islands, they used their new found environment in many ways, traditional medicine was one major discovery. Until 200 years ago when outsiders started exploring this vast country, they introduced material goods and modern medicine which had shattered many societies who rely heavily on their forests and environment for survival.

Currently in Papua New Guinea old people are dying and taking their traditional knowledge with them. Nothing like their forefathers, the new generation is often more interested in exploiting the environment than conserving their rich biodiversity.

Years after PNG got independence in 1975 the struggle for development by communities has seen many forests negligently reduced to rubble which previously provided at no cost ecosystem services. The heavy reliance on the environment due to lack of basic infrastructure like roads to bring services into remote locations is putting pressure on new generation of leaders and technocrats.

The forests together with the mangroves on the coastal fringes are source for the well being of many indigenous communities. They provide life's essentials such as food, water, medicines and free services like erosion control and protection from effects of climate change like rising sea levels and temperatures.

Isaac Jipsy, a young University of PNG scholar who is weary of the current threats that development may do to his pristine forest and the imminent loss of traditional knowledge, is documenting an array of traditional useful plants of Nipa Kutubu electorate. He is a post-graduate student in bio-chemistry whose research is to determine if traditionally used medicinal and aromatic parts of plants and trees contain pharmaceutical properties.

Isaac was engaged by WWF after he approached the global conservation organisation in his endeavour to survey and document traditional knowledge in parts of Kikori basin that lies in Nipa Kutubu. Since 2007, Issac has so far documented about 75 percent of traditional plants in his electorate, which is one of largest and unexplored area of Southern Highland Province.



**"I see that traditional knowledge is very important to our communities. This is what kept our ancestors going for decades and before they die we should record their knowledge and protect our forests."**



*Issac assesses a traditional plant at Musula village, Bosavi.*

"I see that traditional knowledge is very important to our communities. This is what kept our ancestors going for decades and before they die, we should record their knowledge and protect our forests."

As a landowner of the soon-to-be-constructed liquefied gas pipeline areas of Nipa and Moran, Issac is keen to see the traditional knowledge of his people recorded.

WWF's Kikori River Programme through its sustainable forestry component has provided Issac with a grant to compile a database of traditional useful plants in selected villages of Foe, Faso and Bosavi regions.

The entire Kikori catchment area covers 2.3 million hectares of PNG's landmass from the Southern Highlands to the Gulf Province.

The bigger portion of the rainforest lies in Nipa Kutubu electorate, unexplored and ready to bestow benefits to the victims of dreadful diseases.

The chain of forests here is the most intact in the Southern Hemisphere, which also harbours an extraordinary number of plant and animal species.

The traditional plant survey discovered 162 traditional plants used for medicinal uses alone. In Kutubu, the team visited the oil pipeline communities in Lower Foe, Keno and Mano in the Lower Faso region. The patrol to Musula in Mt Bosavi concluded the survey with adequate data to complete the database.

Issac's research was timely in these places where traditional knowledge may be lost forever amid increased development activities due to petroleum projects driven by a



*Begonia plant used as traditional medicine.*

consortium of oil and gas companies. Threat from industrial logging is also imminent which has shown to have devastating effects in other parts of PNG.

In Mt Bosavi, development activities had not affected the people's' reliance on their forests which is abounded with pinnacles of sandstone terrain of Darai Plateau.

Places here which had a rather smooth terrain are where most villagers are to be found.



*Mushrooms have traditional uses.*

The team spent a week at Musula village which is confined within the Sulamesi Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Sulamesi landowners have set up their WMA to protect and sustainably harvest animals such as cassowary, cuscus and fish under Fauna (Protection and Control) Act 1966, which took years of participatory planning in setting it up.

The interviews conducted at Musula pointed



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out that nearly all the local people living within this protected area use traditional medicinal plants to cure various sicknesses. According to Patrick Pate, Sulamesi WMA Chairman, "Our people having been practicing with traditional medicine for generations."


It was also evident that young people of Sulamesi unlike other places are well acquainted in medicinal and aromatic plant parts.

The heavy reliance by Patrick's people on their forest is due to their remoteness. Bosavi has realised the value of biodiversity conservation where there are no government services such as aid posts.

Apart from the medicinal value that is derived from the forest, the Sulamesi WMA also provides other subsistence resources such as different fish poisoning plants used for fishing, food ingredients from plant extracts, and two tree species where the sap is used as wax for lighting.

Issac is satisfied about the outcome of the survey and is hoping for positive results after lab tests are carried out at UPNG and Australia, "I will select few potential plants to test whether they possess any medical properties."

When asked of other plants, he said: "All the plants have potential for further research and its traditional values are the antidote to guide medical doctors and scientists in their quest for new medical drugs."



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A Sepik woman who relies heavily on the forests and environment.

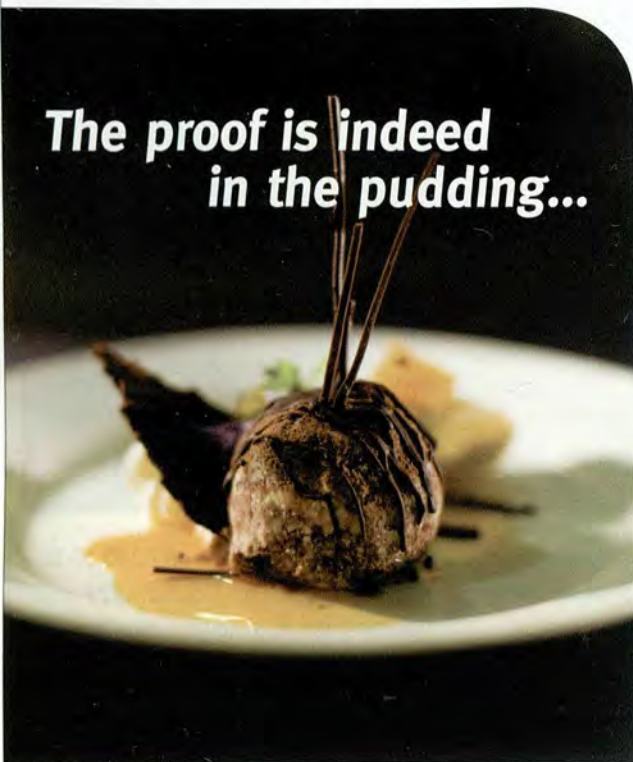


Issac holds a traditional medicine plant of the Lower Foi area in Kutubu.



An interesting yet pending is the draft bill for National Biodiversity Institute Act 2007. The proposed legislation should address the issue of access and benefit sharing so that the local people will benefit should a chemical composition of a plant in their area is used to produce a medical drug in the future.

**The proof is indeed  
in the pudding...**



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Torch plant..used to heal various sickness.



Clement Victor who assisted Issac in his field work.

Another benefit to conserve the forests is carbon sequestration to mitigate global warming as an economic value can now be placed on protected forests

. Unless we conserve our forests and document our ancient knowledge, then PNG will not achieve any real progress. Development that does not respect our ancient wisdom and natural resources will always collapse. Our forests and biodiversity are our answers for tomorrow!



"Many people outside a forest area claim there is no value in the forest unless the forest area is converted into a timber harvesting area. It's demoralising when people forget the subsistence values and ecosystem services forests freely provide," says WWF Forester,

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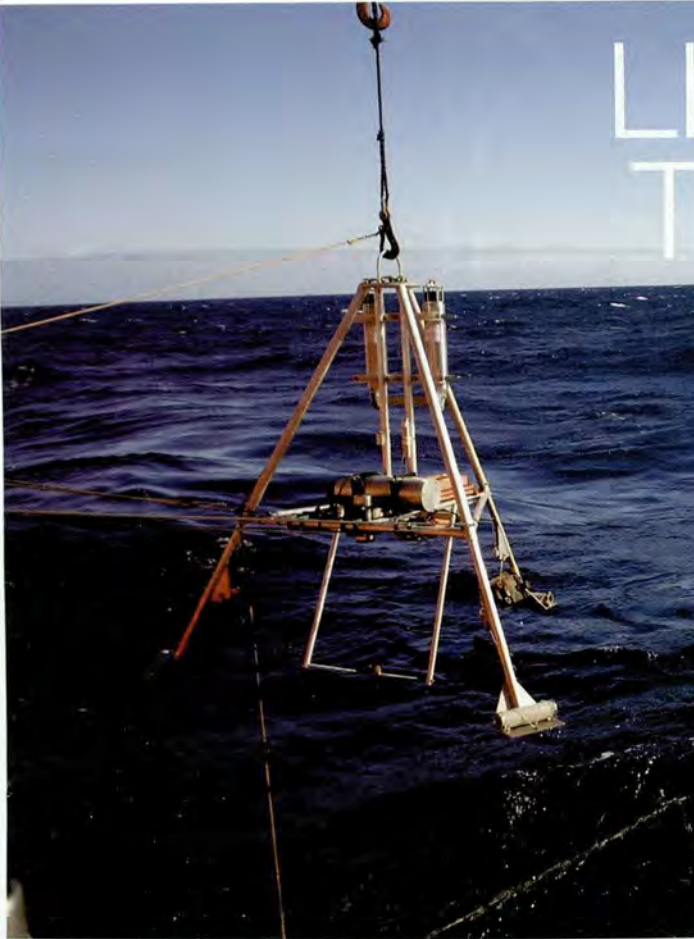


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# LIFE BELOW THE WAVES

## Surprising discoveries

By Ron Toft



Launching the lander at the Tonga trench.



Baiting up the lander.

**B**ack in the 1840s, British naturalist Edward Forbes pronounced - rather rashly in retrospect - that life could not exist more than 300 fathoms (540 metres) below the waves.

We now know that life flourishes in all manner of extreme environments on our planet. And they don't come much more extreme than the long, narrow, very deep and totally lightless oceanic trenches where the temperature is near freezing and the pressure is mind-blowingly high.

"Getting anything down to these great depths and surviving is a major technical challenge," said marine engineer Dr Alan Jamieson, of the University of Aberdeen's Oceanlab sub-sea research facility.

"These trenches - formed when tectonic plates collide and mostly found around the Pacific Rim - can plunge, at times quite dramatically, to nearly 11,000 metres, where pressures can exceed 1000 bar (one ton per square centimetre)."

Unsurprisingly, given the difficulties involved, scientists have explored the hadal zone (the name given to the region between 6,000 and 11,000 metres deep) only a handful of times.

"This leaves a vast gap in our understanding of the oceans and marine life," added Jamieson.

Despite the technological problems, engineers and scientists at Aberdeen and Tokyo universities have succeeded during the past 18 months or so in doing what has never been done before - sending a pair of bait-carrying and camera-equipped free-fall landers to the bottom of several trenches in the Pacific Ocean, taking a wealth of temperature, pressure and salinity measurements, securing hours of video and time-lapse footage, as well as thousands of 'still' photographs, and bringing the craft back to the surface with biological samples for genetic and other analysis.

The most surprising discovery was the number and size of the animals living in this utterly alien, sunless world.

At the start of the Aberdeen-Tokyo universities' HADEEP (from 'hadal' and 'deep') project, there were no instruments or vehicles anywhere in the world capable of descending to the bottom of the Pacific trenches.

"Moreover, we knew animals inhabiting the hadal zone would certainly die if brought to the surface, meaning that any behavioural or



*Amphipod taken from 7700m.*

physiological observations had to be done in situ.”

Deep-sea life survives on food sinking down from the surface. There are two kinds: dead plankton and carrion, such as fish carcasses.

“Open ocean processes mean the quantity of plankton reaching the seafloor decreases with depth. Food is extremely scarce in the trenches. But in principle, fish carcasses, or food falls, can happen anywhere and are independent of depth. We can exploit this dependency on food falls by using bait to attract the animals in front of a camera.”

The HADEEP team, which has designed and operated many free-fall landing vehicles over the years, built two landers for the exploration of the Pacific trenches: one equipped with a video camera and the other with a time-lapse stills camera.

“We worked closely with biologists on the experimental design to ensure we were giving them what they wanted.”

Although Jamieson conducted some initial development studies in 2004, as part of his PhD work, funding approval for the development of the landers wasn't granted until late 2006. The cash itself didn't come through until the beginning of February 2007.

“That meant we had just six weeks to finalise the designs of a few years earlier and actually build the landers, for we had received a generous offer we couldn't refuse by the University of Tübingen, Germany, in July 2007. It took eight weeks to sea-freight everything to Samoa, one of the packages making it with just one hour to spare!”

The battery-powered, tripod-shaped landers stand about two-and-half metres tall and



*Amphipod taken from 8100m.*

*Decapod at 5500m in the Marianas.*



weigh around 300 kg each.

“To save money, we used reliable, proven technology throughout, taking everything apart and adapting it to operate at extreme depths.”

Both landers carried bait to attract the denizens of the deep.

Once released over the side of a ship, the untethered landers sank slowly to the bottom of the ocean at a rate of about 1,000 metres every 30 minutes.

“Getting to the bottom of the trenches is a long, drawn-out process, compared with what we normally do,” said Jamieson. “It takes about five hours to descend 10,000 metres.”

The landers took a variety of scientific measurements on the way down, while on the bottom, and on the way up. When the HADEEP team wanted to recover one of the craft, it sent a unique acoustic command like a phone call. As soon as the lander detected this command, it dropped its ballast weights and slowly float to the surface where it was picked up about five hours later.

The lander's maiden voyage took place over a three-week period in the summer of 2007 at depths of 6000 to 8500 metres in the Kermadec Trench and 9000 to 10,000 metres in the Tonga Trench. Both these trenches lie between Samoa and New Zealand in the south-west Pacific.

“Allowing autonomous landers to free-fall into the deep sea is nerve-wracking at the best of times,” said Jamieson. “The anxiety on board on this occasion was unbearable. I nearly fell off my chair when the first lander resurfaced! The expedition was unbelievably successful. It was probably one of the best I have ever undertaken, not least because of the time constraints involved.”

Later that year, the landers were also used to





mackerel. They were only after the amphipods and associated the smell with a high density of these creatures. It was a massacre. I guess I was one of the first people ever to see something killed in the hadal zone! I was an eyewitness to murder!"

Also found, at 7000 metres in the Japan Trench - 1100 metres deeper than previously discovered - were deep-sea fish commonly known as grenadiers or 'rat tails'. Jamieson says "perhaps the most spectacular find" was the presence of sociable and highly active liparid or snailfish. In the Kermadec Trench, the landers found a liparid species caught only once previously, in the 1950s, and never before seen alive.

"As if that wasn't exciting enough, we found another liparid species, again never before seen alive, in the Japan Trench."

In October 2008, Jamieson and his colleagues returned to the Japan Trench and secured footage of the deepest fishes ever filmed.

Then, in March this year, they explored the Izu-Bonin Trench, south of Japan, where they found lots of amphipods at 8,000 metres and many more much bigger ones at 9,300 metres. All were apparently of the same species.

"If these creatures are moving between at least 8,000 and 9,300 metres, how do they cope with the huge pressure changes involved? Bizarrely, about one-third of the amphipods were laden with eggs. There are far more questions than answers at present."



Snailfish from 7700 metres in the Japan trench.

In just a few short years, the HADEEP researchers at the universities of Aberdeen and Tokyo have become world leaders in the unmanned exploration of the deepest parts of the world's oceans.

"As far as hadal biology is concerned, we are the only people doing it right now."

Further exploration of the Tonga Trench is on the cards for later this year. "In 2010 we are hoping to explore part of the Peru-Chile Trench. That should be really interesting. Given the huge amount of organic material which must have ended up in that trench from the

Andes, there should be a huge diversity of life down there." The team also wants to return to the Japan Trench at some point.

"It's not surprising that microbes as such go unnoticed in extreme environments," added Jamieson. "But to find entire schools of fish and 30 cm prawns in some of the deepest parts of our oceans was completely unexpected."

Who knows what strange creatures still await discovery in the Pacific and other trenches? Only time and further exploration will tell.



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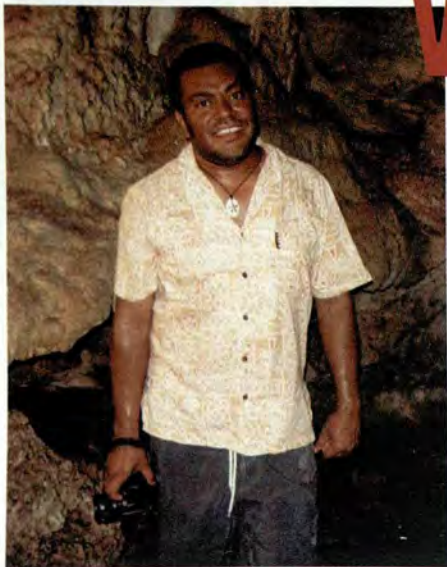


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# Deep Inside Chatut Caves

The wonders of Manus

By Samisoni Pareti



With so many places to visit at so short a time, James Koku came up with a brilliant plan.

I certainly thought it was a bright idea.

James is the tourism officer at the Manus Provincial Government.

Instead of attempting to tour the caves in broad daylight, he proposed I should make it my last place of visit, after sunset.

"But won't that be too dark for my camera?," I protested.

"Yes, it will be dark outside, but it doesn't matter whether it's day or night inside the cave because it is forever pithy black inside anyway," said James.

Wow, you are right, I mused quite ashamedly.

James' plan worked very well except when we attempted to make our way up to the entrance of Chatut Caves.

He forgot to factor in the rather slippery climb from Gary's house by the road to the caves some 30 metres up a slope.

The distance is quite short, but the climb is to my estimate a 45-degree scramble up a slope

that is covered with small undergrowth and moss-covered limestone.

However, the slippery ascent is forgotten the moment I crouched on my knees to enter what seemed like a limestone archway into Chatut Caves.

Gary Manuai as the lead guide was holding out the butterfly lamp he held, giving enough light for the rest of us to see our way forward.

We entered a bigger chamber, enough for the lot of us to stand up erect.

With Le, Gary's younger half brother holding our second butterfly lamp, and Ben and James each flashing powerful torches, there was enough light for our digital cameras to take some reasonable photos.

With the group too was Carol Polome, a senior travel consultant with Air Niugini who was working in Manus that week, and Le's 16-year old son.

Up above, I thought I saw fossil remains, embedded into the limestone walls of the caves.

We went on further, led by Gary and his butterfly lamp.

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Stalagmites and stalactites in various forms and sizes create spectacular sights.

You crouch and walk your way through, depending on the varying heights of the caves' ceiling.

At some chambers, you cannot help the feeling of walking into an ancient cathedral, the chamber suddenly leads into a huge arena and the roof with its hanging stalactites so high up.

You can't do anything but admire the view with awe.

Chatut's floor is soil, and the deeper we venture into it, the damper the soil became, turning into mud in some places.

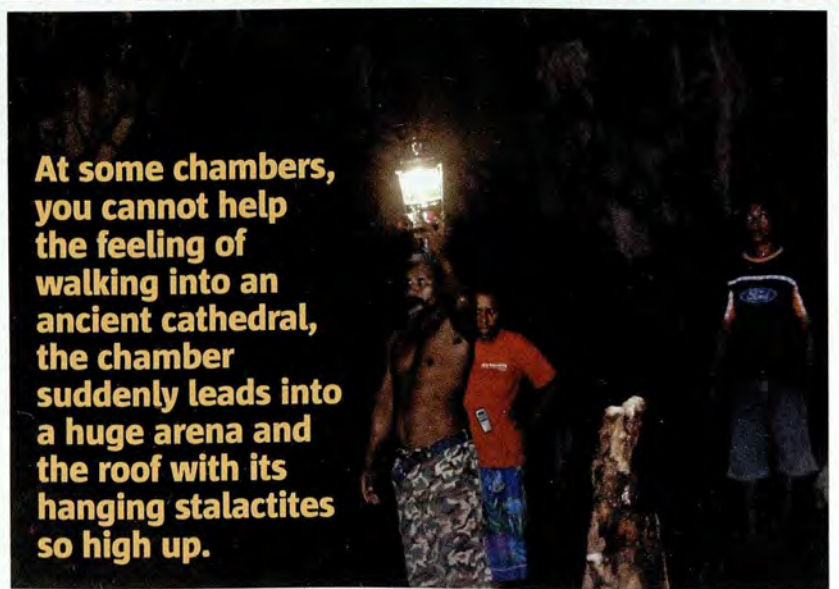
There are tunnels and chambers leading into more chambers and more tunnels.

One can easily get lost inside, which is why Chatut Caves is a taboo playing ground for Loniu children.

The caves according to Loniu chief Job Manuai - father of Gary and Le and chief custodian of Chatut - has been a key feature of the village from time immemorial.

It served as a perfect refuge during times of unrest, or as Chief Job could remember,

**At some chambers, you cannot help the feeling of walking into an ancient cathedral, the chamber suddenly leads into a huge arena and the roof with its hanging stalactites so high up.**



during World War II battles between the occupying Japanese forces and Allied troops.

"There were bombs falling everywhere and battle ships bombarding Japanese outposts on land," Chief Job told *PARADISE* through Joseph Tananga Kimat, Air Niugini's Manus manager, as interpreter.

"But we didn't feel a thing as all of us in the village were safe deep inside Chatut."

Chief Job also remembered a story recounted by village elders when the colonial rulers declared war on the village and villagers had to flee to the caves.

The year was 1877, he said.

"An Italian came to settle near Loniu and relations between him and the villagers did not improve.

"In 1881, the Italian settler was killed by Loniu villagers and the colonial government reacted by sending armed soldiers to the village.

"By the time they arrived, everyone had sought shelter in Chatut and only one villager was killed in that incident."

1972 is another year etched clearly in Chief Job's memory.



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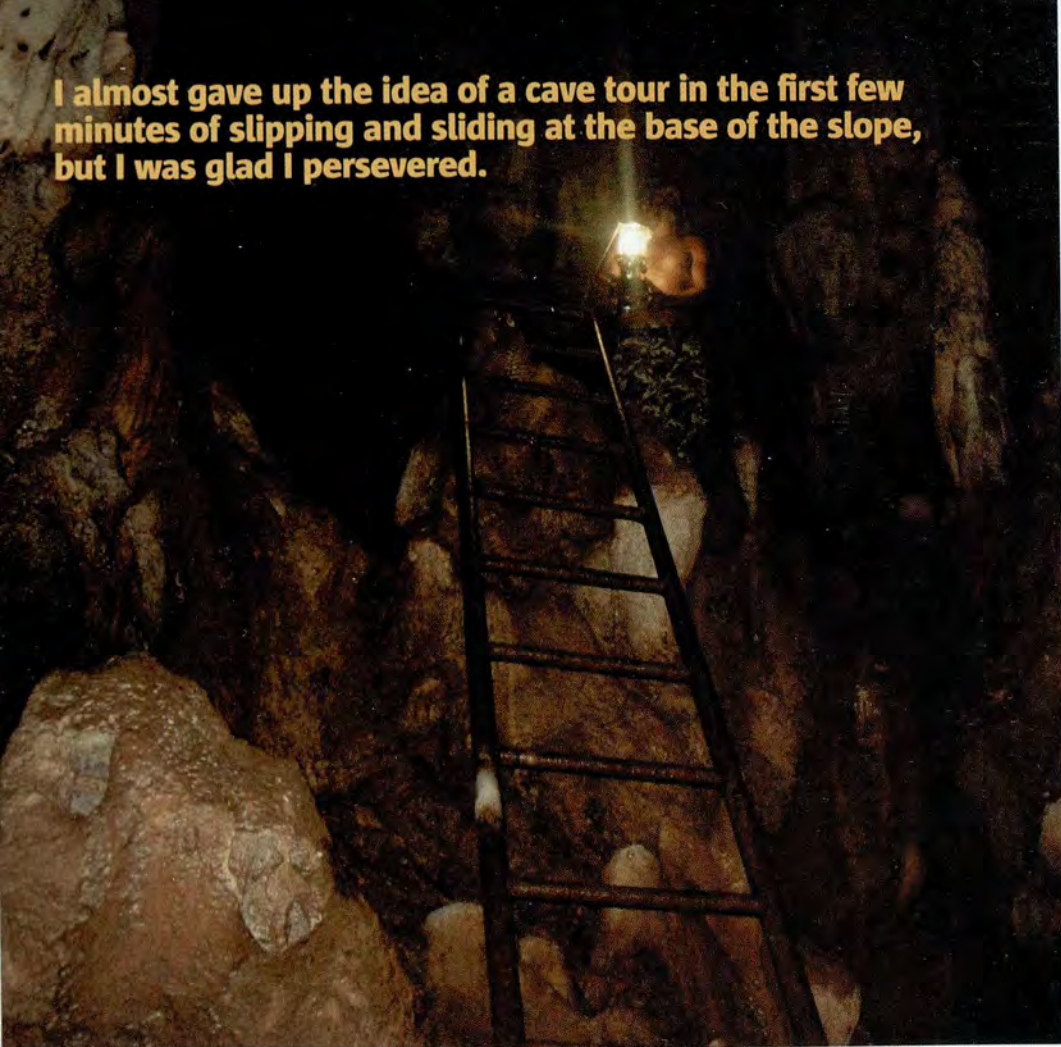
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**MEMBER**

**I almost gave up the idea of a cave tour in the first few minutes of slipping and sliding at the base of the slope, but I was glad I persevered.**



The New Zealand High Commission came to visit Loniu and asked that he be given a tour of Chatut caves.

Chief Job was his guide and after his visit, the diplomat promised to give as a gift a long steel ladder of some 15 to 16 rungs.

That ladder is still being used to this day, allowing visitors to ascent another level of Chatut's many tiers of chambers and tunnels.

The High Commissioner Chief Job recalled scaled that second tier of Chatut caves with a vine ladder.

By the time our tour ended about 40 minutes later, my cotton shirt was drenched.

Nevertheless, as we bid farewell to Gary and with Le and his son, and made our way to Le's house where Joseph was waiting with the vehicle, I sensed a feeling of déjà vu.

I almost gave up the idea of a cave tour in the first few minutes of slipping and sliding at the base of the slope, but I was glad I persevered, only to be rewarded by a marvellous display of nature at work.



• For Chatut Caves tours, contact: Mr Le Manuai, Loniu Village, Digicel mobile (675) 71237312



## **B MOBILE**

### **INTERNATIONAL ROAMING**

Telikom PNG Ltd has achieved another highly diversified milestone. With its constant and aggressive drive to offer telecommunications services, as our "Our Communications Company", nationally and internationally, it has added into its Services Portfolio, the B Mobile Global Mobile System (GSM) International Roaming (IR). The World Mobile Operators have seen and have a confident belief in Telikom PNG Ltd, and that is possible through commercial International Roaming Agreement.

The GSM Mobile International Roaming is a premium service complimenting the B Mobile Postpaid Service. The service facilitates both Outbound and Inbound Roamers. The services include voice, SMS, supplementary services and possibly data services.

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.

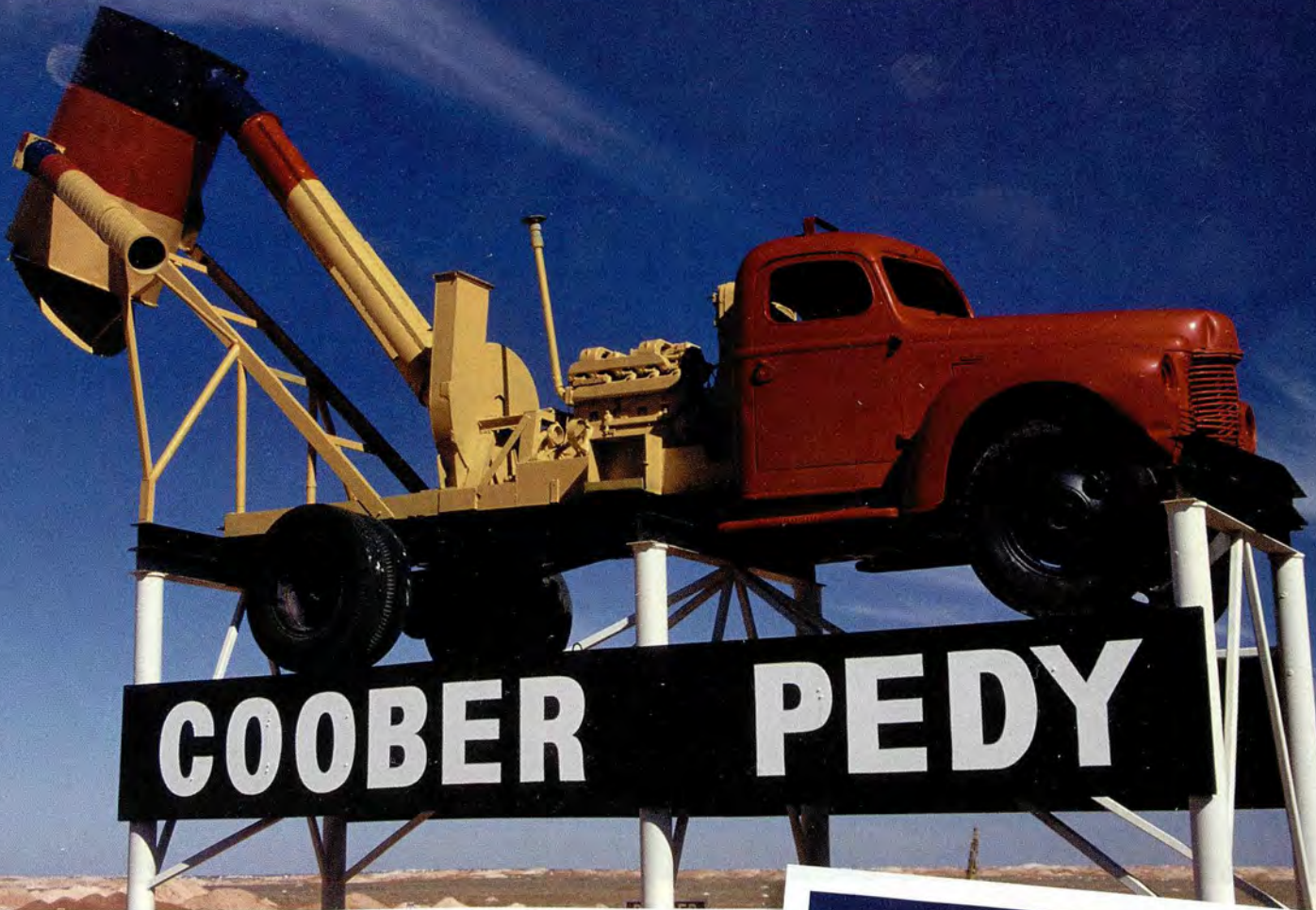
Telikom PNG Ltd, is also offering IR (inbound) service to incoming business, tourists and visiting travelers visiting PNG. These visitors can come into PNG and use their Mobiles to make calls and receive calls using B Mobile.



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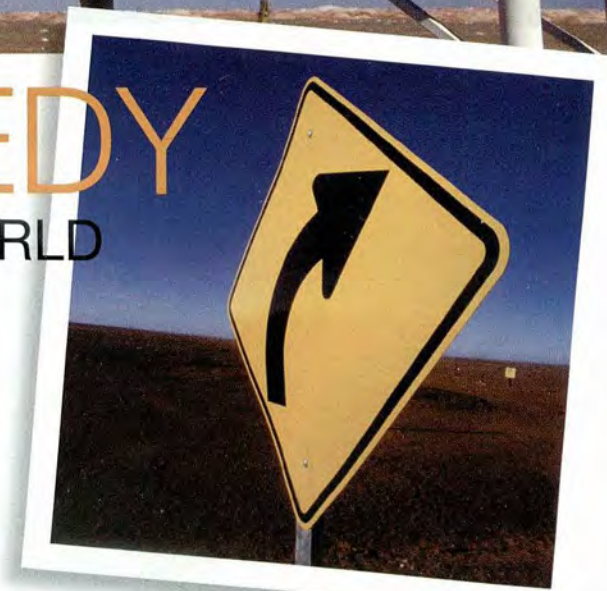


# COOBER PEDY

## WELCOME TO THE UNDERWORLD

By John Borthwick

**As we scoot through a sapphire blue sky above the South Australian Outback desert, I spot Coober Pedy below the wing. It looks like the finals of the Gopher Olympics down there. The desert is pitted with burrows and littered with mullock heaps, suggesting much furious subterranean activity. Welcome to "Coobpeddie," as the local diggers call it.**



**T**he opal mining town of Coober Pedy, 845 road kilometres north of Adelaide, used to be infamous. From 1915, when 14 year-old Bill Hutchinson first discovered opal, until 1987, when the Stuart Highway was sealed all the way from Adelaide to Alice Springs, it was known as an outpost beyond the bitumen and redemption, too.

Today, Coober Pedy is home to people from

some 45 different nationalities, living pretty much in harmony - not to mention in the underworld.

To escape the desert heat, many residents live in homes excavated from the earth. They even worship together in subterranean chapels, complete with faux vaulted ceilings and stained glass "windows." Welcome to the Outback Redeemed.

Life in Coober Pedy is, in a sense, the pits. After gophering all day in an opal mine or working in an underground tourist hotel, and perhaps occasionally repenting in an underground church, a Coober Pedy-ite can come home to a cool and roomy dwelling burrowed into the hillside. This comfortable "warren" will be equipped with the most mod-cons - it's like life in the Hobbits' Shire, with beer, kangaroos and pizza thrown in.



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**Producing over 80 percent of the world's opal, the region bills itself as the Opal Capital of the World.**



In Arabana Aboriginal language, Coober Pedy roughly means "white-fella's hole in the ground." Gone are the days when rattletrap vehicles struggled across hundreds of miles of savage corrugations to reach this isolated settlement. With effortless blacktop kilometres under their perfectly adjusted fan belts, a Panzer division of tourist vehicles rolls up to the town's motels each evening.

Bursting with huge, albeit redundant four-wheel drive power, they seem equipped for solo crossings of the Simpson Desert - while on a sealed highway that annually delivers around 100,000 arrivals to the town.

Hutchinson Street, Coober Pedy's main drag, is a gauntlet of glittering opal shops fed by the craterscape that surrounds the town. Producing over 80 percent of the world's opal, the region bills itself as the Opal Capital of the World.

"You've got to be a gambler to be a miner," calls Lloyd, one such miner, as his winch drops me 25 metres down a dark, circular shaft that's barely wider than my shoulders. Uh-oh. Goodbye, blue sky. Hullo claustrophobia.

At the bottom of the shaft, however, I step into his mine, a cavern so spacious that he calls it "the ballroom" - complete with electric lights, sofa, a toaster, kettle and tape deck.

All that's missing is the latter playing Dylan's

Driving in Coober Pedy.

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Digging for opal has cost Lloyd dearly, he admits. Dominating his shaft is a complex rig of conveyor belts and winch buckets that haul the rubble to the surface. The piece de resistance is a large tunnelling machine that he designed and built himself.

"The machine cost me \$40,000 and my marriage.

But I've still got the machine," he quips.

He picks at a wall of soft white clay and soon strikes a vein that flashes with the telltale hint of opal. "Here, have that," he says, generously handing me two pieces which, when polished, might be worth several hundred dollars.

"But don't say where it came from, especially in the pub. There's always a few 'ratters'

**He picks at a wall of soft white clay and soon strikes a vein that flashes with the tell-tale hint of opal. "Here, have that," he says, generously handing me two pieces which, when polished, might be worth several hundred dollars.**

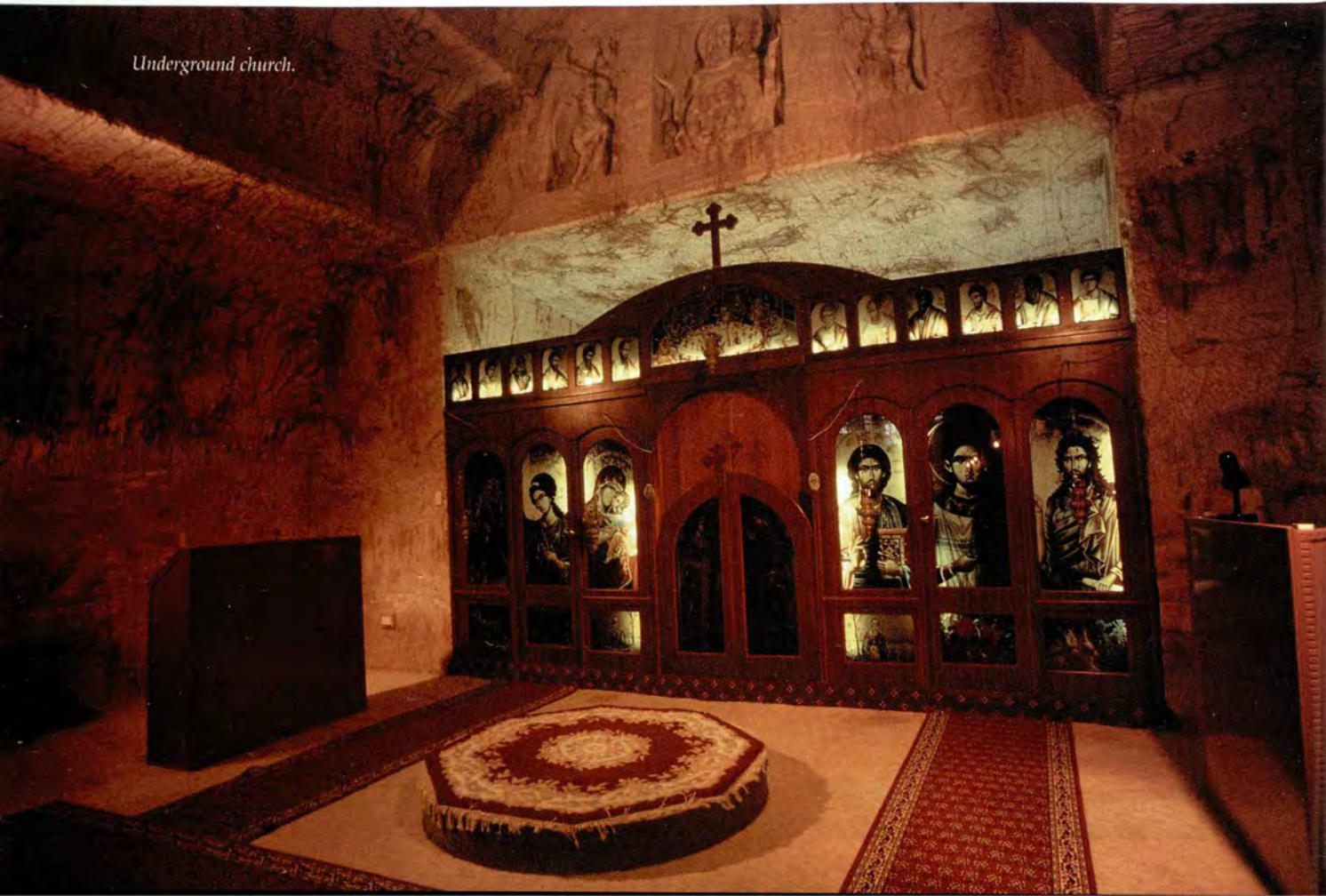
around." Ratters are rotters too lazy to find their own opal; they sniff out the scuttlebutt on where there's been a recent strike, and then pick it clean while the miner is away.

"My last mine was so big that I could burn around inside it on a front-end loader," boasts the salesman in an opal showroom on Hutchinson Street.

Like many in Coober Pedy, he discovered that the secret to survival was to move up the food chain - from opal mining to marketing. At the pub, a former cattle man underlines the point, "Bugger cattle. Farming tourists is the most profitable job around here."

The surrounding Stuart Range desert scenery still stuns, with its spinifex and ochre vastness shimmering like a dot painting gone to a Mad

*Underground church.*



Max movie. In fact, the terrain has inspired both art and cinema, notably featuring in the film Mad Max III: Beyond Thunderdome, as well as Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

Rattletrap miners' utes still clatter around town, often emblazoned with the warning "Explosive", referring to what, I wonder - the cargo or the driver's mood? At the drive-in cinema, there's a sign advising of "random boot inspections."


It's nothing to do with detecting non-payers hiding in the trunk. The drive-in just doesn't want a boot full of gellignite going off during the main feature.

For all its new-found restaurants, motels, a TAFE college and internet shops, Coober Pedy is still a tear-away town. It may be "multicultural" with 45 nationalities, but forget about any political correctness.

Locals happily tell the story of an immigrant miner whose name had so many letters that his mates dubbed him Arthur Alphabet. He changed his name to something simple and monosyllabic like Smith or Jones - but still they called him Arthur Alphabet.



Coober Pedy is a friendly place. I ask the boss of the best digs (so to speak) in town, the four-star Desert Cave Hotel, how long it takes to become a local? "Long enough to know the names of five blokes at the pub that you can shout a round of drinks for," he says.

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Aerial view of Kuala Lumpur.



# THE BOOMING KUALA LUMPUR

By Philip Game

When the Union Jack was lowered for the last time at Kuala Lumpur's Merdeka Square on August 15, 1957, a new nation began to evolve from the bits and pieces of British Malaya. Slowly, a true Malaysian identity developed, nowhere more evident than in the booming city of two million people which sprawls beyond the Federal District and into the neighbouring states of Selangor and Negri Sembilan.

From its nucleus in an 1860's prospectors' camp at the junction of the Klang and Gombak Rivers, Kuala Lumpur soon grew into a prosperous tin miners' town, becoming the seat of colonial power.

One of the city's most endearing features is the legacy of nineteenth-century British architects smitten by the Islamic domes and spires of Mughal India.

An imposing Secretariat faced the sporting club and the cricket field which became Merdeka Square; today the century-old Sultan Abdul Samad Building houses the Supreme Court.

A.B. Hubbock designed Masjid Jamek, the Friday Mosque whose onion domes and minarets mark the river fork from which the city takes its name, as well as the equally ornate Kuala Lumpur Railway Station.

Surviving colonial-era mansions include the tourist information centre at 109 Jalan Ampang and Carcosa Sri Negara, now the city's most luxurious hotel.

*The imposing Secretariat.*



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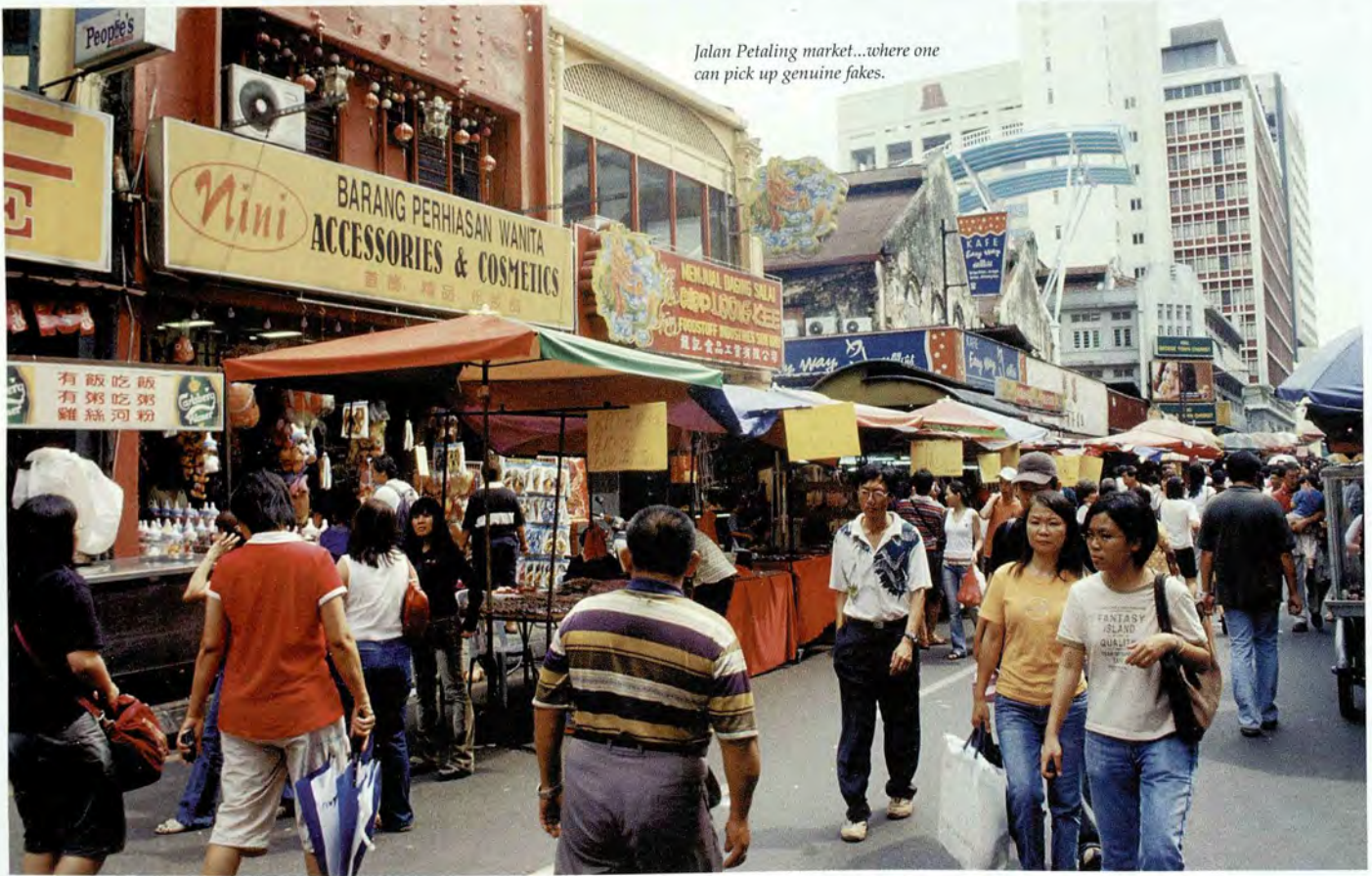
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A different architectural legacy is that of the pre-World War II Chinese storekeepers, whose shophouses cluster around the Jalan Petaling markets.

Traders spill their wares into the 'five-foot ways', covered shopfront walkways. Flyovers and overhead railways now interlace the old centre of Kuala Lumpur. Taxis and minibuses are cheap as chips, but traffic congestion often makes it quicker to walk.

Islamic tradition also inspired many contemporary landmarks: Masjid Negara, the National Mosque; the Dayabumi Complex (including the main post office) and the National Museum. These three occupy a relatively compact area close by the railway buildings, the National Art Gallery and the 90-hectare Taman Tasik Perdana or Lake Gardens.

Kuala Lumpur's showpiece - Golden Triangle district - is bounded by three main streets, Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Sultan Ismail and Jalan Imbi, convenient to international hotels and major banks. Embassies also line the busy Jalan Ampang.

**DINING**

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*Bargains galore.*

can all be sampled from hawker barrows at night markets or undercover food centres: one of my favourites is tucked away behind the General Post Office.

**SHOPPING**

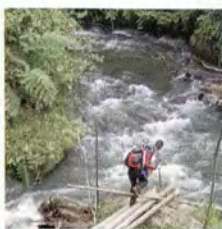
Fashion, jewellery and footwear draw

shoppers into boutiques and malls. Quality electrical and electronic consumer goods are well represented, many of them manufactured here under licence. Sungei Wang, opposite the Parkroyal Hotel, is representative of the major malls or shopping plazas.

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Photo by Jason Pini

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*Oriental Building in Kuala Lumpur.*

At the city's heart, the 1930's Central Market has been transformed from a 'wet market' - crowded with meat, fish and vegetables - to a showcase for Malaysian crafts, food and cultural performances. Craft enthusiasts should also check out the Budaya Complex and the Kuala Lumpur Textile Museum.

Head to Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Little India, for batik, leather goods, men's wear, antiques and carpets, or up the road to Chow Kit Market for fresh tropical produce. Chinatown's Jalan Petaling is the place to pick up 'genuine fakes': dirt-cheap designer-brand tee-shirts and wristwatches (which may not be legal to import back into your home country). Herbal remedies, dried and pickled foods make more novel purchases.



### OUT OF TOWN

Popular tour options include the Hindu shrine at the Batu Caves; the Royal Selangor Pewter factory; or an excursion to the centuries-old trading port of Melaka (Malacca).

### CITY OF MONUMENTS

Malaysia's government plans intends Kuala Lumpur to lead the



**Fact File****Major festivals include:**

- Chinese New Year (Jan/Feb), City Day on February 1,
- July Flora Festival and Parade,
- National Day on August 31,
- Hindu Deepavali around Oct/Nov.
- Muslims celebrate Hari Raya Aidil Fitri following the austerity of Ramadan, the holy month.

nation into the Third Millennium, envisaging a Multimedia Super Corridor stretching from the international airport 33 km south of the city, and opened in 1998, to the 452-metre Petronas Towers, sometimes dubbed the 'Twin Peaks'.

Former Prime Minister Mahathir could never be accused of lacking vision - indeed one of his programmes is titled 'Malaysia 2020'.

In 1998, the capital proudly hosted the XVI [British] Commonwealth Games. The National Sports Complex took shape in a former rubber plantation at Bukit Jalil, just west of the North-South expressway. The National Stadium forms the centrepiece, whilst the National Aquatic Centre seats more than 4000 spectators and the village houses 6000 competitors and officials.


**PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

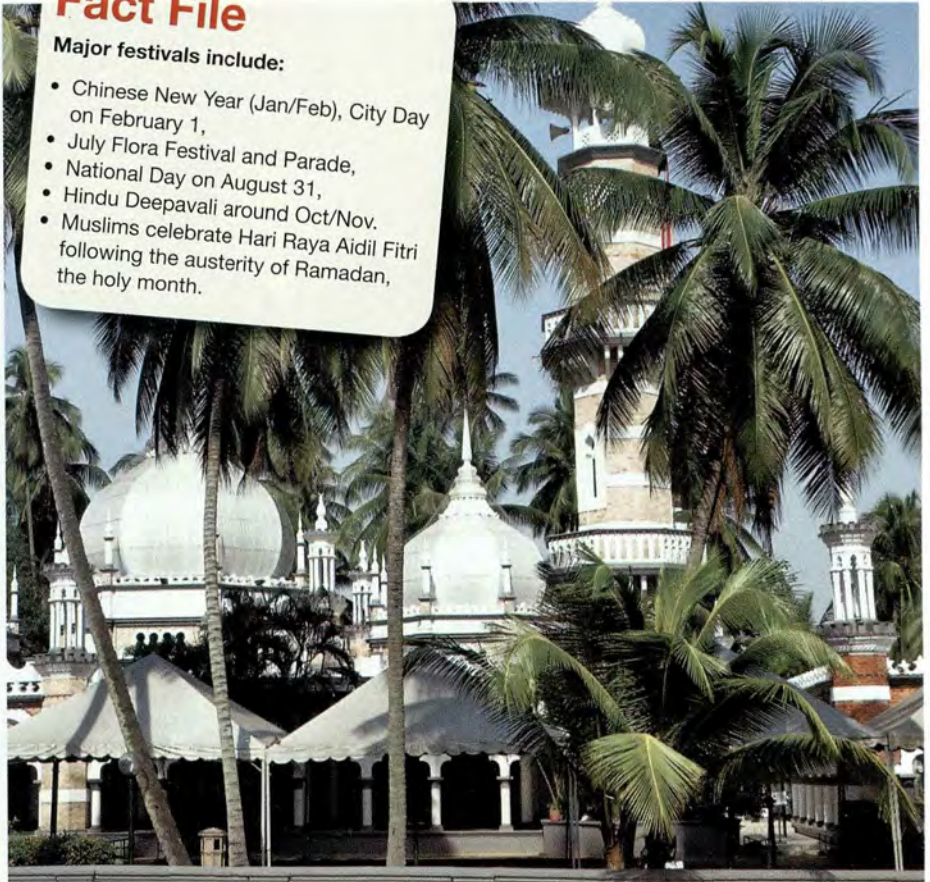
Tap water is generally safe to drink.

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Businesses operate Monday to Friday, with Saturday as a half day. Shopping centres often remain open from 10 am to 10 pm.



 **Air Niugini flies to Kuala Lumpur once a week.**



*Masjid Jamek...the Friday Mosque whose onion domes and minarets mark the river fork from which the city takes its name.*

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# PEARLS IN PARADISE

By Susan Eames

**What image do oysters conjure? Delicious molluscs with aphrodisiac qualities? Gorgeous pearls? After a visit to Justin Hunter's pearl farm, you're liable to come away believing it's the pearls themselves that possess the aphrodisiac qualities.**

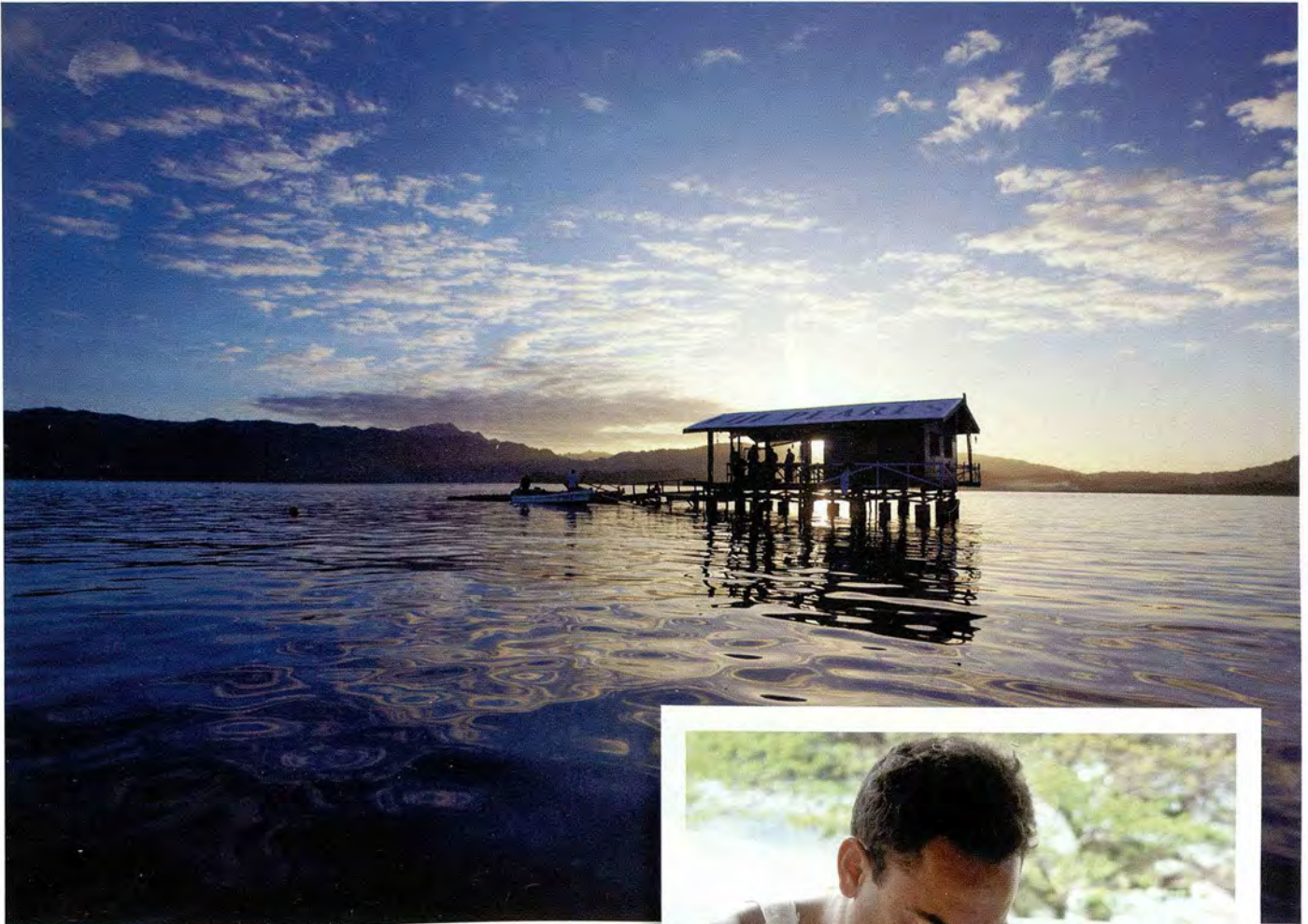
**T**he Cultured Pearl was developed in Japan by Kichimatsu Mikimoto 100 years ago. Today, J. Hunter Pearls uses Japanese technicians to implant the oysters and harvest the pearls using the same method invented by Mikimoto.

Unlike Tahiti (French Polynesia) and the Cook Islands that have had an established black pearl industry for the last 20-30 years, Justin Hunter's pearl farm only became fully operational in 2000. It is the only commercial farm in Fiji.

It was important to Hunter that the farm would benefit the local communities. As a result he pays a water lease directly into an Educational Scholarship Fund for children at a local school. Other funds are used on development projects.

Two farm sites are located on Fiji's second largest island, Vanua Levu; one in Savusavu Bay and the other in Kioa Bay. These bays provide excellent protection for the oyster beds. As a bonus, they are incredibly beautiful with rainforest-clad hills surrounding the





cobalt waters.

I met up with Mili at the J. Hunter Pearls showroom in the little town of Savusavu, aptly nicknamed 'the hidden paradise'. We motored out to the farm in a glass-bottomed boat. The water was liberally dotted with marker buoys.

"These are the Collector Lines," said Mili.

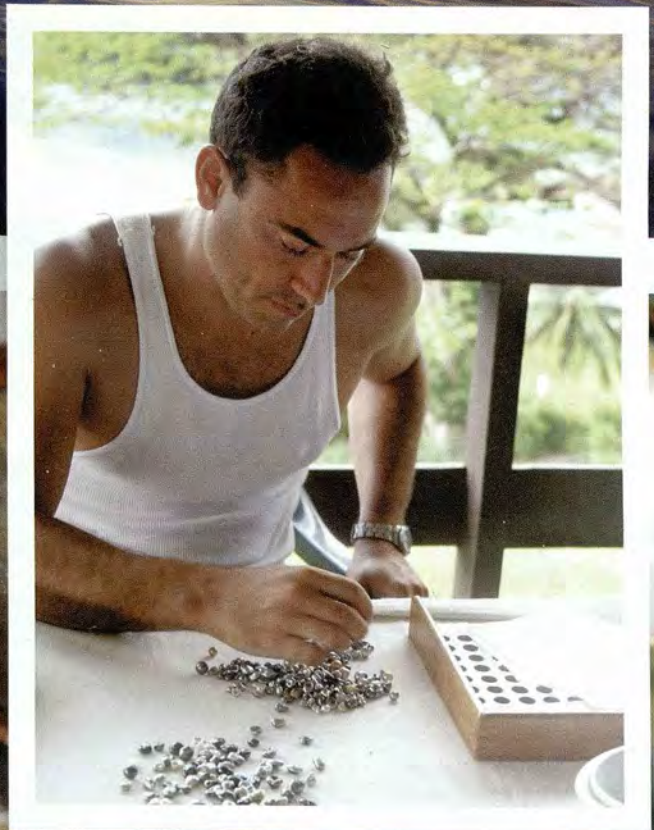
Made from rope and sailcloth material, vertical lines dangled from thick horizontal ropes connected to the buoys.

"When the eggs hatch, the spat (baby oysters) swim as larvae, looking for something to attach to." Mili pointed at the lines. "The Collectors remain submerged for nine to twelve months before being hand-harvested by local village women."

I stared down at the vast nursery, trying to pick out the little oysters nestled amongst the sailcloth and seaweed.

After the initial hand-harvesting, the young oysters are taken to the farm. The farm workers drill the shells and string the spats onto fishing line which is wound onto metre-long rope in turns called Center Turn Knots, or ctn for short. The youngsters are then returned to the water.

Six to nine months later a final transfer is

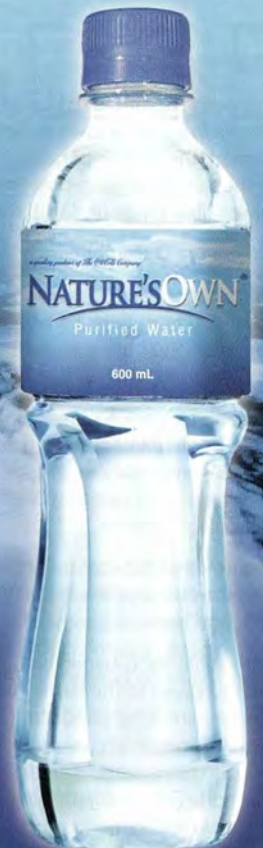




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made onto a Chaplet; the line on which the oyster will live out its life. Holding around twenty oysters, the Chaplets give them room to grow to maturity.

Each Chaplet is taken for examination and cleaning at the farm on a regular basis. Being on stationary lines, the oysters pick up molluscs, sponges, anemones and seaweed which can affect their health. The logistics involved in the cleaning operation astonished me. Thirteen farm workers, all scuba divers,

constantly check the lines and ensure accurate cleaning rotations.

I snorkelled around some Chaplet marker buoys. Four horizontal lines radiated from each buoy. Every line held dozens of Chaplets. Surrounded by countless buoys, I tried to assimilate the scale of this farm which is home to close to a million oysters.

We motored to the seeding shed where I was fortunate to see mature oysters being

implanted. Implantation is undertaken twice a year around February and August.

Absorbed in his task, the Japanese technician prised the oyster shell open just enough to reach inside with his implements. He cut a slit in the oyster's gonad and inserted a tiny piece of mantle from a donor oyster, plus the artificial bead (nucleus) to serve as the irritant. The beads are made from the shell of a mussel found in the Mississippi River.

# The first!

**Air Niugini announces the first PNG-based frequent flyer program**



**Air Niugini**

**DESTINATIONS**

**Loyalty Program**

**COMING IN AUGUST 2009**

See application form in August for more details

OLISE EWW



**Fact File**

**J HUNTER PEARLS**

Savusavu  
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 E-mail: [information@pearlsfiji.com](mailto:information@pearlsfiji.com)

**PEARL FARM TOURS:**

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The mantle tissue is the magic ingredient in the formation of nacre (pearl material). The tissue determines the colour and lustre of the pearl. Nacre builds up in layers. The thickness and quality of the nacre is what gives the pearl its durability and shimmering beauty, thus determining the pearl's value. Mili informed me that J. Hunter pearls have an average nacre thickness of 1.5mm.

The process from implantation to harvest takes eighteen months to two years. The oysters are harvested in March and August. It is at this point that the technicians evaluate the oysters' health to decide if they can be re-implanted. Re-implantation is desirable because it usually produces a larger pearl.

After harvesting, the pearls are graded. Many aspects are taken into consideration when it comes to grading the pearls. Lustre, colour, surface quality, size and shape all come under scrutiny.

Back on dry land I visited the small showroom on the edge of picturesque Savusavu town to view the results. Gail Taylor designs and sets the pearls in pendants, necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets and rings.

The colours achieved by J. Hunter Pearls are startling. Forget black; an iridescent palette of bottle green, soft turquoise, pistachio, chocolate and palest gold gleamed up at me. This was highly desirable jewellery. The pearls produced by J. Hunter Pearls in Savusavu do indeed seem to possess aphrodisiac qualities.

 **Air Niugini flies to Fiji on Friday and Sunday.**

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**DESTINATIONS**

**Loyalty Program**

**COMING IN AUGUST 2009**

\*Conditions apply. See application form in August for more details



# TAKETOMI TREASURES

**Spellbinding tropical reefs, year-round sunshine, water buffalo, tropical fruits and a walking pace of life may not be the common image of Japan, but as *Matthew Knott* discovers they are all to be found on the spectacular Taketomi Island, along with a century-old folk culture that feels a million miles from the mainland.**

**T**aketomi, part of the Yaeyama chain of islands in Japan's southernmost prefecture Okinawa and home to less than 300 people, can only be accessed by boat from nearby Ishigaki Island. The initial impression is how much the bright sunshine reflects against everything; the white sandy paths, the uneven stone walls, the draping hibiscus and the terracotta roofs. With sunglasses in place to protect against the glare, the next thing you notice is the lack of transport. Rickety bicycles can be hired at the port, but the island is only 1500 metres across at the widest point and can comfortably be traversed on foot.

The glittering gem of a village lies at the heart of the island. The houses are traditional one-storey structures topped by red clay terracotta roof tiles and were acknowledged as important and historical treasures to be maintained in good condition by the Japanese government in 1987. The houses are guarded from misfortune by shisa, lion-shaped amulets that ward off evil spirits. Some fearsome, some bug-eyed, some almost cuddly the shisa add an extra touch of character to these charming homes.

## Earn double points on flights before 2010\*



**Air Niugini**

# DESTINATIONS

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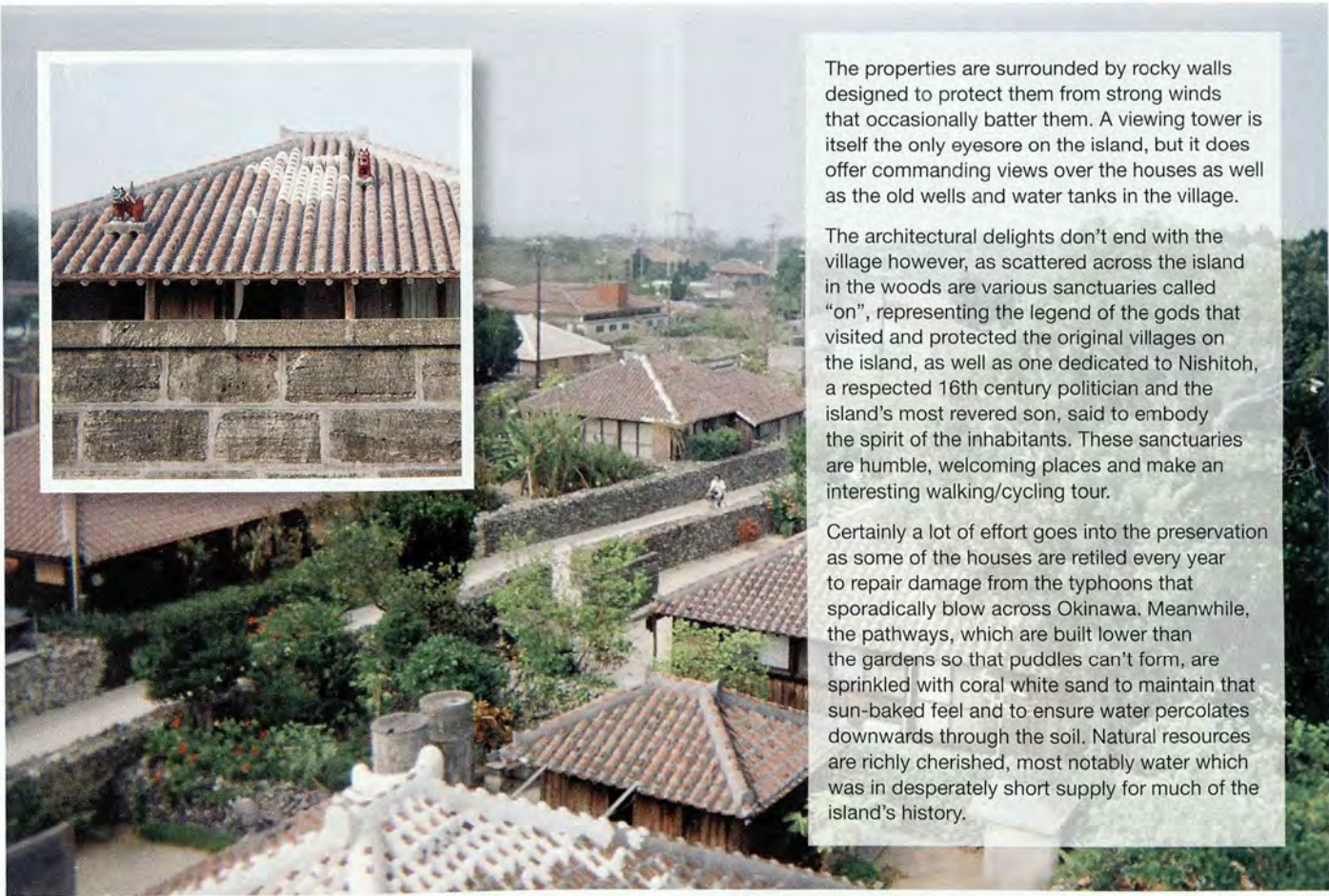
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The properties are surrounded by rocky walls designed to protect them from strong winds that occasionally batter them. A viewing tower is itself the only eyesore on the island, but it does offer commanding views over the houses as well as the old wells and water tanks in the village.

The architectural delights don't end with the village however, as scattered across the island in the woods are various sanctuaries called "on", representing the legend of the gods that visited and protected the original villages on the island, as well as one dedicated to Nishitoh, a respected 16th century politician and the island's most revered son, said to embody the spirit of the inhabitants. These sanctuaries are humble, welcoming places and make an interesting walking/cycling tour.

Certainly a lot of effort goes into the preservation as some of the houses are retiled every year to repair damage from the typhoons that sporadically blow across Okinawa. Meanwhile, the pathways, which are built lower than the gardens so that puddles can't form, are sprinkled with coral white sand to maintain that sun-baked feel and to ensure water percolates downwards through the soil. Natural resources are richly cherished, most notably water which was in desperately short supply for much of the island's history.

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**Around 1 in 50 people in PNG have HIV, and numbers are increasing**

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

**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

\*2007, Queensland Health

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*A favourite way for visitors to tour the island is by water buffalo.*

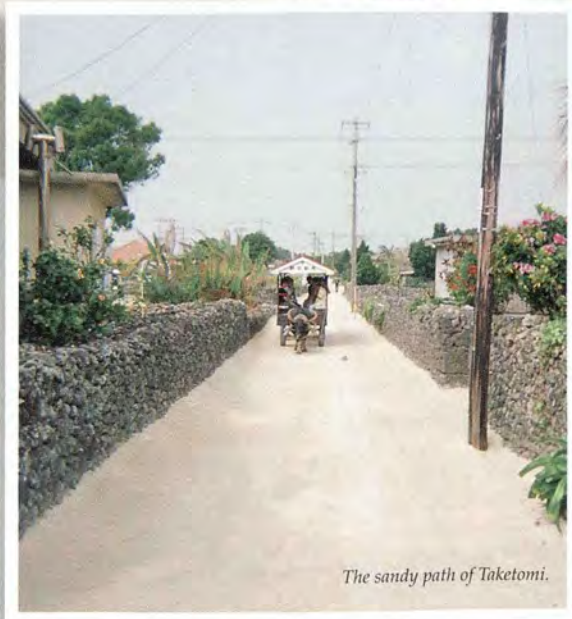
A favourite way for visitors to tour the island is by water buffalo. These placid beasts gently pull carts around the narrow streets at a pace that befits the slow life here. The driver then delights passengers with island stories and folk songs on the guitar-like sanshin.

He also points out much of the flora and fauna of the island. Autumn is a magnificent season with bougainvilleas in full bloom. Alternatively spring is blessed with scarlet flowers, trumpet lilies and amaryllises. The summer months are scorchingly hot, but you can see rare butterflies and the Yashigama crabs scuttling along the dusty paths and climbing trees to reach the Adan, a pineapple-like fruit. Taketomi also has trees bearing small, tasty bananas and plentiful papayas.

No talk of Taketomi's wildlife can be complete without mention of the multitude of stunning tropical fish and sparkling coral reefs that ring the island. Taketomi was formed on an ancient coral, and the water between Iriomote and Ishigaki islands, between which Taketomi stands, features the world-renowned 20-kilometre wide Sekisei reef. Unforgettable diving is possible all year, but locals recommend the winter when the sea is at its absolute most crystal-clear from Misashi on the northern coast.

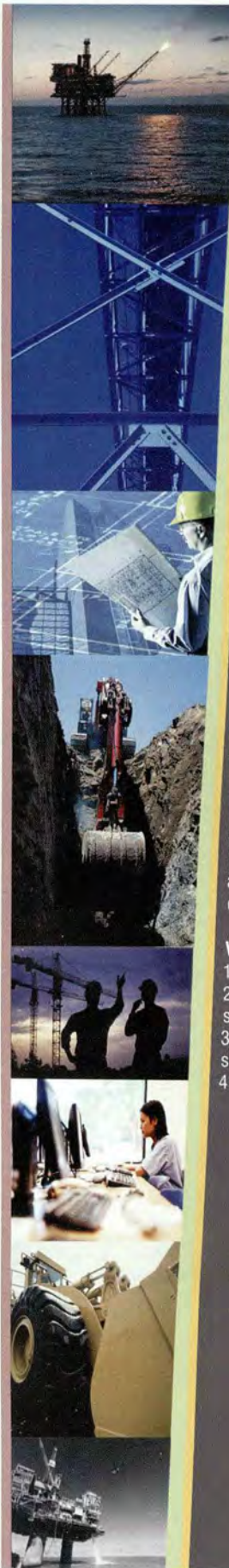
The island is fringed with white beaches that are tranquil and deserted most of the year round, and seem to stretch forever when the tide is out. On the south-eastern side of the island, miniscule star-shaped shells reveal themselves in a handful of soft sand.

Another must is a visit to the splendid Taketomi Field Museum, which informs about the folk tales and daily life of the inhabitants.



*The sandy path of Taketomi.*

It explains the experience of natural disasters, such as the 1771 giant tsunami, that informs the way the island is built and maintained. It also details how punitive taxes from 1637 that were required to be paid in rice or clothing produced perfection in the arts of dyeing and weaving. The Minsah style was said to be an expression of a woman's love and desire for peaceful days and is renowned for beautiful, decorative sashes used to tie kimono. It was revived after the cotton shortages of World War II in order to preserve the artistry. The museum also houses artefacts from the fascinating 900-year old Tanedori festival, which gives blessings for the abundance of natural life on Taketomi, and reveals the deep community spirit of the inhabitants.



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However, after most of the day-trippers have departed on the last ferry at 5pm Taketomi can create an even more lasting impression. Firstly, let the unforgettable sunsets engulf you while sitting on the deserted eastern beach. Then spend a night in one of the many hostels called Minshuku, where after dark you are more than likely to be serenaded with local folk songs on the sanshin, all washed down with a bottle of Awamori, the local lethal liquor.

The history of the Okinawan prefecture makes it distinctly different from the Japanese mainland. The long stretch of islands was united as the Ryukyu Kingdom in the 15th century and mixed cultural influences from China, Taiwan, Japan and South-East Asia. In 1609 the Shimazu clan of Japan's Kagoshima area invaded, and the islands became exploited territory until the end of the feudal-era, when they were annexed to Japan as Okinawa. However, in the islands furthest from the mainland reach, old traditions and customs survive the strongest.

Taketomi makes a stunning and relaxing place to discover those customs.



Air Niugini flies to Japan once a week.



### Fact File

**GETTING THERE** - Taketomi can be accessed by a 10 minute boat journey from Ishigaki Island. Ferries leave every 15 minutes and cost 1100 yen. Ishigaki airport is reached directly from Tokyo (about 3 hours flight) and Osaka, or from Naha on the main Okinawa Island (45 minutes).

**FURTHER INFORMATION** - Excellent resources and pictures are available at [http://www.taketomijima.jp/12kagetu/12\\_e.html](http://www.taketomijima.jp/12kagetu/12_e.html) and [http://www.2b.biglobe.ne.jp/~yharajp/taketomi\\_e\\_taketomi.htm](http://www.2b.biglobe.ne.jp/~yharajp/taketomi_e_taketomi.htm).

**WHERE TO STAY** - Daytrips from Ishigaki Island are very popular and Ishigaki has more hotel and dining options. (<http://www.city.ishigaki.okinawa.jp/International/ishigakiisland.html>). However, there are a number of reasonably priced, comfortable hostels and traditional inns on the island. Takana Ryokan, a youth hostel (0081 9 8085 2151) is perhaps the cheapest at about 2600yen. A visitor centre on the island can also assist with bookings.

**WHEN TO VISIT** - Taketomi is warm all year round, although evening temperatures can become chilly in winter. Winter is considered best for snorkelling and diving, while autumn is usually great for moderate temperatures, festivals and beautiful plant life. July and August can be extremely hot, while strong winds can hit the island from January-March. The rainy season usually comes during May.

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## Air Niugini's First Loyalty Programme



Air Niugini CEO Wasantha Kumarasiri (left) with Glenn Armstrong, head of the Loyalty Programme.

and the airline is proud to be leading the way.

The Loyalty Programme will provide an opportunity for loyal customers to travel to Air Niugini international and domestic destinations as long as customers have accumulated the required points to each destination.

A major advertising campaign, with the programme's logo and a marketing strategy kick-started the launch in mid-July to promote the loyalty programme as well as recruit foundation members.

The programme is open to anyone above the age of 18 who can join by applying either as an individual or under the family membership. Application forms are available throughout the Air Niugini network and can also be accessed via the Air Niugini website.

A unique feature of the Loyalty Programme is the offer of family membership which means that frequent flyer points can be accumulated and shared by family members, a real benefit for families.

An initial offer of complimentary membership and double points will be given to those who join the programme between 3rd August and 31st December 2009.

Heading the Loyalty Programme is Glenn Armstrong, formerly General Manager and Marketing Manager of EMTV. Mr Armstrong has over eight years of experience in the media and marketing in Papua New Guinea. He was a long-term employee of Kerry Packer's PBL group and is a Sydney University graduate.

**A**n exciting chapter in Air Niugini and Papua New Guinea's history was realised with the launch in August of the first ever locally-based loyalty programme.

The programme named "Destination" is aimed at rewarding the airline's loyal customers who can earn points that can be later redeemed through airline tickets to any of Air Niugini's destinations.

Chief Executive Officer Wasantha Kumarasiri said the programme is an initiative of Air Niugini



Air Niugini's Nori Maniana taking time off to pose with a Fijian warrior.

## Bula Fiji, here we come

Air Niugini was one of 10 industry participants who attended the recent Bula Tourism Exchange held at the luxury Sheraton & Westin Resorts Denarau and Denarau Golf and Racquet Club in Nadi, Fiji, from May 30 - June 01 2009.

Attending to showcase the diverse cultures and tourism products at this year's Bula Tourism Exchange were a cross section of the industry including the PNG Tourism Authority, Lissenung Island Resort, Papua New Guinea Tours and Diving, Trans Niugini Tours, PNG Pacific Tours Ltd and, of course, the national airline, Air Niugini.

## Codeshare deal sorted

**A**ir Niugini and Solomon Airlines have agreed to extend the codeshare agreement with revision and new terms until further notice.

Both parties are pleased with the immediate outcome, however, negotiations pertaining to commercial issues are continuing to further strengthen the future of the codeshare agreement and ensure a win, win result for both airlines.

The airlines recognise they have a mutual interest in maintaining the links between Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji.

## National airline pays tribute to Sir Brian



Sir Brian Bell (second from right) with Air Niugini staff members.

**A**ir Niugini was among corporate organisations, families and friends invited to Sir Brian Bell's tribute event, which coincided with his 81st birthday in Port Moresby recently.

Sir Brian, a long-time businessman is a loyal supporter of Air Niugini and has shared with the national airline many promotional stages, and through his generosity has helped many worthy causes in Papua New Guinea.

Air Niugini paid tribute to Sir Brian for his continued and lengthy service to the airline and Papua New Guinea over the last five decades.

Air Niugini will continue to work with Sir Brian and follow the legacy that he has set.

Sir Brian is a true friend and supporter and we salute him!





Air Niugini flight crew with CEO Wasantha Kumarasiri.



# New flight schedules to boost customer convenience

**A**ir Niugini's new flight schedule has been designed to boost customer convenience and minimise current operating costs for the airline.

Chief Executive Officer Wasantha Kumarasiri said the new schedule will offer better arrival times for passengers as well as allow for more connections to and from Port Moresby and the rest of the network.

"The airline had received requests from both government and business leaders to consider the re-timing of morning departures to Australia and arrivals from Asia to facilitate customer convenience."

Mr Kumarasiri said bad weather and fog at Jackson's Airport in the past months often resulted in diversions and disruptions of both international and domestic flights. The new schedule, he added, will allow flights to arrive into Port Moresby at a more suitable time and not to be affected by fogged conditions.

Air Niugini's CEO also said that such a schedule was not previously possible because of only one operating aircraft on its international routes. In the last six months,

the airline has been operating its international services with the B767 and B757 aircraft and tested operating models to observe customer expectations.

"With that, the airline has now come up with a new schedule to allow for better connections to and from Port Moresby and the rest of our network," Mr Kumarasiri explained.

"With the global recession impacting the world airline industry, many airlines have parked some of the aircraft to reduce capacity. Air Niugini is compelled to consider options and make strategic changes to its operating models to remain competitive and profitable. This new schedule is one way to address the issue by minimising our operating costs."

Flights to and from Brisbane, Cairns, Singapore, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Honiara and Nadi have seen more convenient departure and arrival times for passengers.

All Brisbane departures except on Saturday have been rescheduled to around 8am and 9.30am. Cairns flights remained as per the previous schedule except for Sunday where the last flight departs Port Moresby at 5pm instead of 6.30pm.

The new schedule also sees the combining of the Kuala Lumpur and Singapore services on Wednesday with the new departure time of 4.50pm and into Singapore at 9.10pm (local time). Flight then departs Singapore at 10.20pm arriving into Kuala Lumpur at 11.10pm.

The Manila service has also shifted from Tuesday to Wednesday with departure time at 4.45pm and into Manila at 9.45pm with ample time for passengers to make other international connections.

Saturday's service to Japan remains the same but is now operated by the B757 to minimise operating costs to Japan.

Port Moresby/Honiara/Nadi service has been retimed to depart at 10.15am on Fridays and 09.45am on Sundays.

The domestic schedule has aircraft overnights shared between Rabaul and Kavieng with good passenger connections on most days. Hoskins/Rabaul/Hoskins service is now available on Tuesdays, Lae/Hoskins now operates every Tuesday and a direct Hoskins service is available every Wednesday. These new flight times offer sufficient time for the airline's corporate travellers to conduct their business activities in Hoskins and Lae and return to their point of origin rather than travel unnecessarily through Port Moresby.

Air Niugini's chief executive also announced that the airline is currently investigating a new aircraft type to further improve its domestic service reliability. He said the new aircraft is expected to be introduced within the next six months after the completion of a technical evaluation. Although Air Niugini has accommodated redundancy capacity in Fokker 100 and Dash 8 fleet, in most cases, one or more aircraft are usually going through scheduled maintenance.

## THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY'S CHALLENGE FOR 2009



CEO Wasantha Kumarasiri at the IATA annual general meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Niugini is not immune to the impact. The national airline has experienced passenger decline on some of its international and domestic sectors this year.

While its Australian and some Asian routes have indicated growth, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur have shown significant reduction in traffic numbers. Certain domestic sectors have also seen reduced passenger numbers brought about at times by infrastructure development which limits capacity to some ports.

Air Niugini's Chief Executive, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri, recently attended the IATA annual general meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and advised that unlike the past five years, the current global recession has a material impact on the airline's operation. It is unknown how long the global recession will continue but the airline's CEO admitted that as part of the global airline industry, Air Niugini must initiate action to adapt to the challenges. One of the immediate

positive actions is the significant amendments to its international flight schedules which provide customer convenience, reduce capacity and increase productivity - all with the aim to save the bottom line.

The airline's chief executive is optimistic about the future and that even in turbulent times, he believes Air Niugini will look ahead and work together with relevant stakeholders to ensure service delivery to its travelling public and be profitable.

This, however, he added requires the cooperation of all service providers mainly airports and associated services, other suppliers, travel agents and staff of Air Niugini to work in partnership, and most importantly, ensuring resilience during these difficult times. He made a call to the PNG Civil Aviation Authority to assist the struggling industry by reducing airport and landing charges.

**T**he world airlines are currently under intense pressure with a gloomy outlook predicted for 2009 as a result of global recession. This is aggravated by the H1N1 flu outbreak.

As part of the global airline industry, Air

# 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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