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VOL 6, 2009

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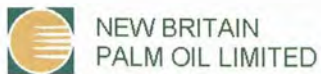
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Chairman's Message



WELCOME ABOARD.

This is our last issue of Paradise for the year 2009 - a year that has been full of challenges with the impact of the global economic crisis. However, the challenges have provided an opportunity for the airline to review and adjust its operations to weather the global storm.

Air Niugini quickly and diligently put in place measures that enabled the airline to remain buoyant within a region that saw other airlines greatly reducing their capacity and services.

Decisions to combine services on routes and the change of equipment on some of our international routes were part of the rationalisation to manage our costs.

In the latest schedule change the combined Kuala Lumpur and Singapore services have ceased and direct services have resumed to these destinations on Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

An additional 5 flights have been introduced between Lihir and Rabaul, bringing a total of 12 weekly flights to Lihir. A healthy growth on the Lihir/Rabaul sector has already been noted since its commencement in October this year. Due to market demand, services between Mt Hagen and Tabubil have also recommenced.

Three overnight flights in Vanimo have been scheduled while Wewak will have five and an additional overnight for Cairns. All these changes are to cater for our traditional peak travel period.

Our performance during the year has seen a growth in passenger numbers on both the domestic and international routes compared to last year's figures despite a tough operating environment.

During the year Air Niugini carried out its community services obligations with countless educational, sports and medical sponsorships including our continuing major sponsorship for the Operation Open Heart which we consider to be a very worthy humanitarian project. During times of disaster both local and abroad, the airline has uplifted medical supplies for victims. Air Niugini has assisted many charity organisations and individuals; often as a silent partner.

Looking ahead, 2010 will be an interesting year for Air Niugini with many exciting developments unfolding for Papua New Guinea. The acquisition of a further two Dash 8 - Q400 aircraft will be timely with the development of the multi-million dollar LNG project - one such opportunity that Air Niugini is keenly observing.

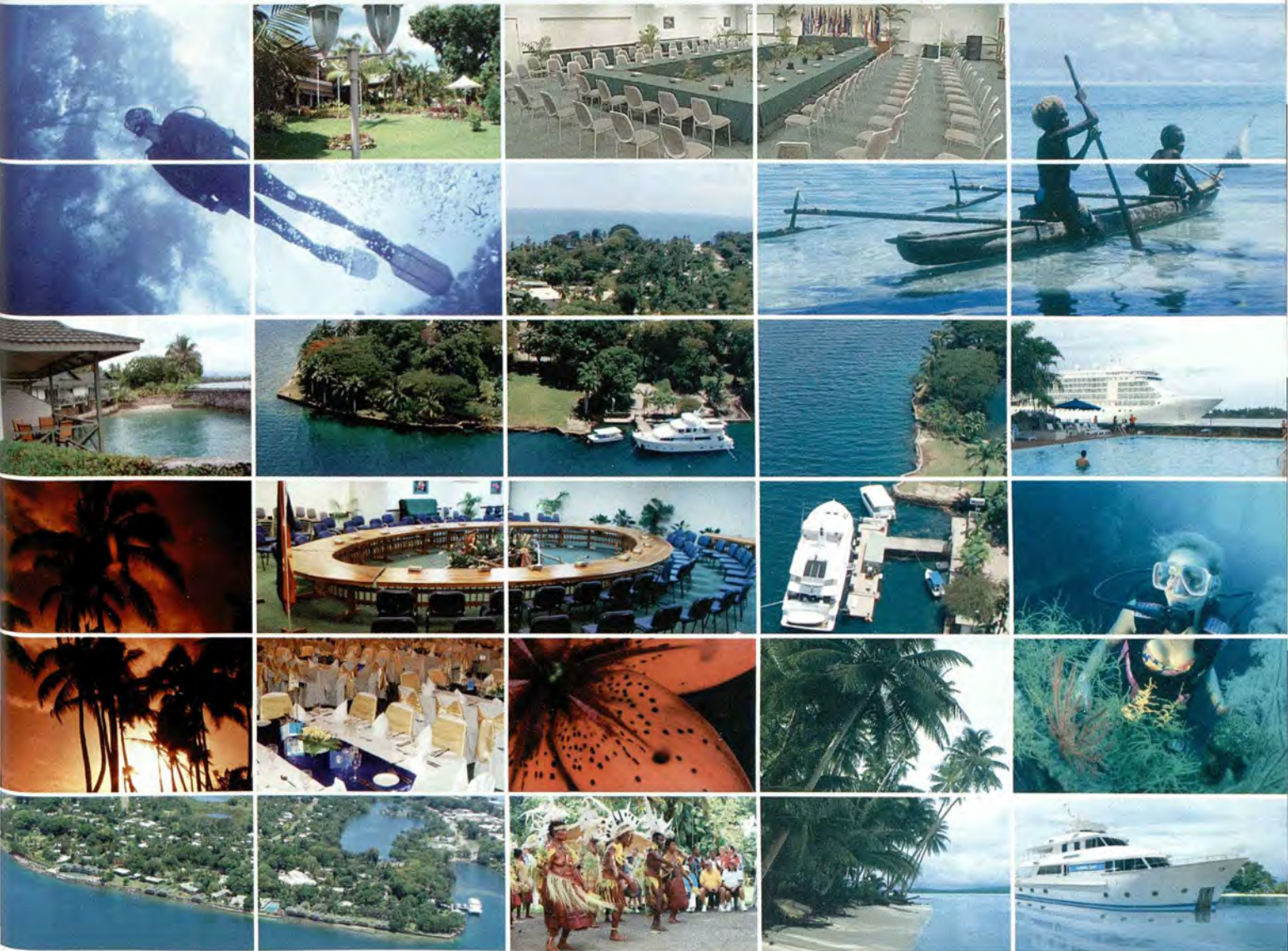
Air Niugini's pleasing performance this year is attributed to a number of factors; our loyal customers who have remained with the airline, the Board, Management team and staff who have worked tirelessly and diligently throughout the year to keep Air Niugini flying high.

Our airline will endeavour to continue delivering the best customer service to our passengers and we look forward to your ongoing patronage next year. Whilst you are enjoying your flight with us, take time to read our excellent inflight magazine Paradise and find out why our magnificent country continues to captivate the hearts of many of our visitors.

As this issue will be out during the festive season I would like to extend my personal best wishes for a wonderful Christmas celebration and a Happy and Prosperous New Year to you and your families.

Sir James N. Tjoeng KBE
Chairman

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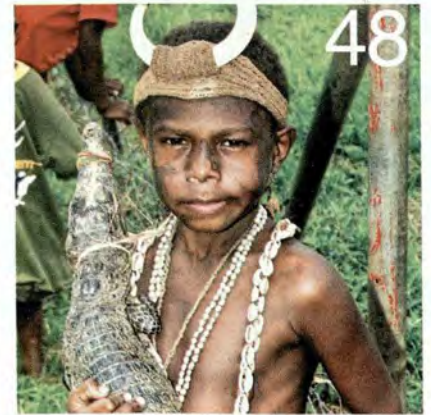
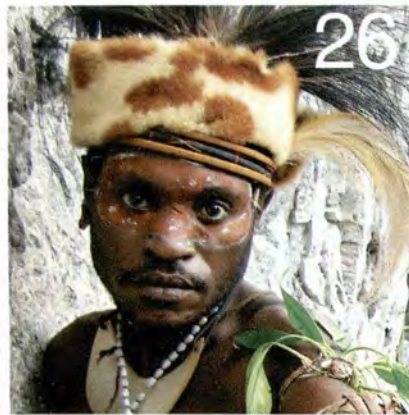
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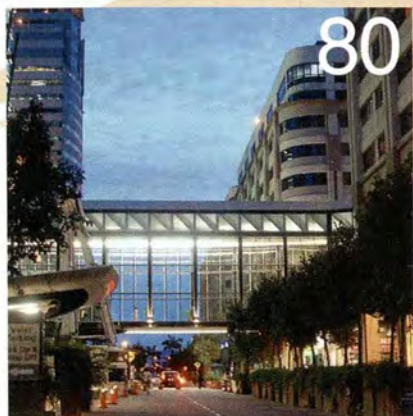
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Photo: Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority



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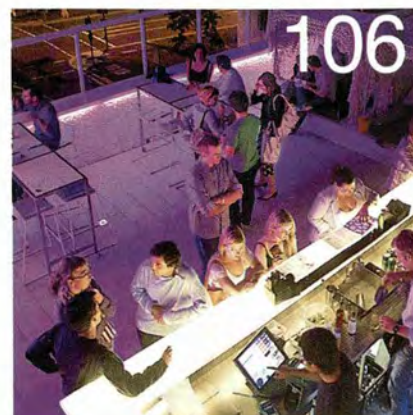
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We hope you enjoy our Bird of Paradise In-flight Service

Please ask us

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

Hand luggage

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

Takeoff and landing

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

Safety first

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

Electronic equipment

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

Children and babies

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

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on any Air Niugini flight.

Entertainment

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

Pillows and blankets

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

Cuisine

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

In-flight Duty Free

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

Immigration and Customs Forms

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

Before you leave

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





AIR NIUGINI FLEET

B767-300ER



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.

Foot Pumps

Foot motion is in three stages

2. Put both feet flat on the floor.

Foot Pumps

Foot motion is in three stages

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 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

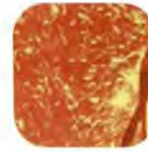
The main cause of jetlag is traveling to different time zones without giving the body a chance to adjust to new night-day cycles. In general, the more time zones you cross during your flight, the more your biological clock is disturbed. The common symptoms are sleeplessness, tiredness, loss of appetite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

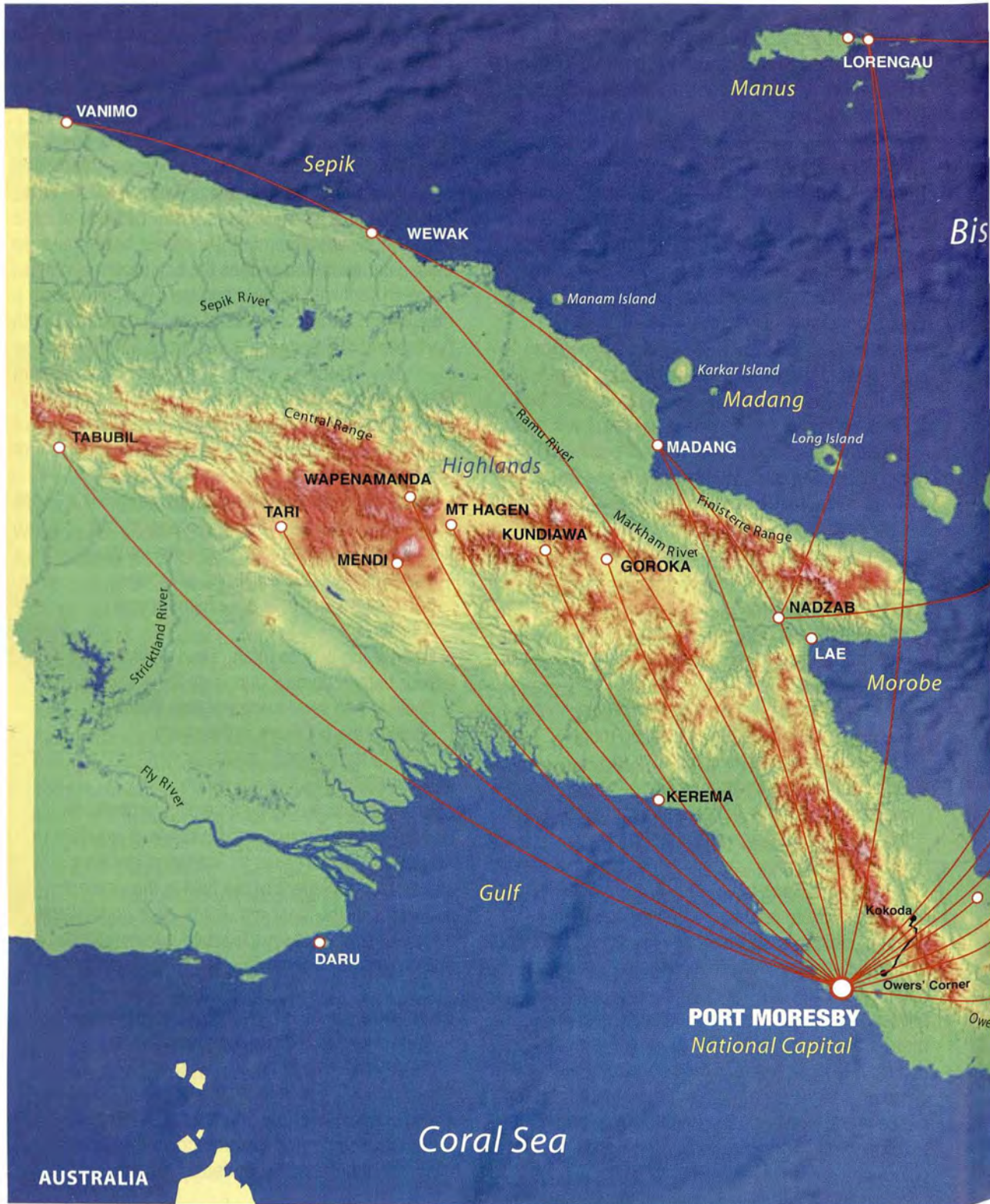
- When weather is clear and you can see the ground, sea or horizon, you are less susceptible to motion sickness.
- You can buy over the counter medications but we recommend that you consult your doctor about the appropriate medications.

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



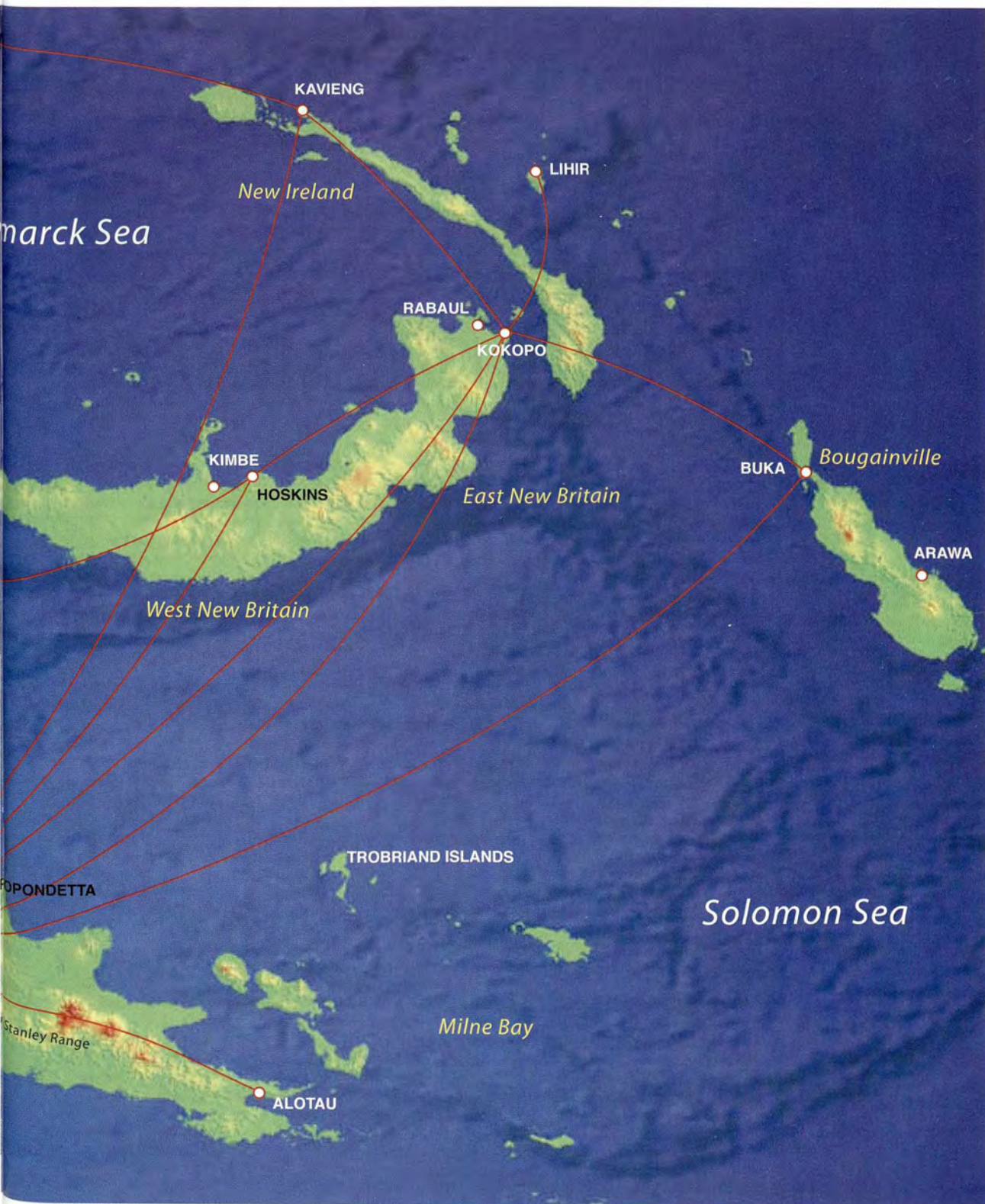


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Cave Arts of Karawari

BY NANCY SULLIVAN

In the hills behind the Arafundi and Karawari Rivers lies one of the largest cave art systems in the southern hemisphere. It may even be the largest, but we don't yet know.

However, for the past two years, a team of ethnographers from Nancy Sullivan and Associates in Madang has been working since 2007 to measure and record the caves where the Inyai, Ewa and Penali peoples have lived for hundreds of years.



Camillus Asukai and Mathew Konggo in their Imboin cave.



Hand and cassowary stencils in the Pundumbung cave.



The entire complex of intersecting tributaries, loosely referred to as the 'Upper Karawari', ranges some 85 kilometres across the southern end of the Sepik River floodplains. The past is a visible backdrop to all these people.

The limestone escarpments on the horizon are riddled with caves where they once buried their dead, initiated their young men and sheltered from their enemies.

In the past, mobile communities formed loose villages that, until recently, occupied the rainforest tablelands around the Upper Arafundi and Karawari, and their tributaries. These peoples occupied rock shelters and caves in seasonal rotation with hunting shelters and would spend longer periods of time in the caves for ceremonial and mortuary purposes.

They started to move down to the tributaries that run south of the Sepik River barely 60 years ago, after promises of government services and economic benefits, only a few of which have ever materialised.

The Ewa and Inyai people were easily persuaded at the time to sell their mortuary carvings from the caves to early Oceanic art collectors. As a result, some of the best pieces can now be seen at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Jolika collection at the de Young Museum in San Francisco.

Majority of the pieces called yipwon, komanggabi and aripa in the local languages are now in the Museum de Kulteren in Basel, Switzerland. Only the Jolika pieces have been carbon-dated - in an expensive effort to establish historical provenance for the collection.

But it is one of PNG's great ironies that the Ewa and Inyai people have remained underdeveloped and ignored, while thousands of people in Europe and the USA admire their grandparents' carvings every single day.



Women of Awini village waiting for the opening of their new hausbol.



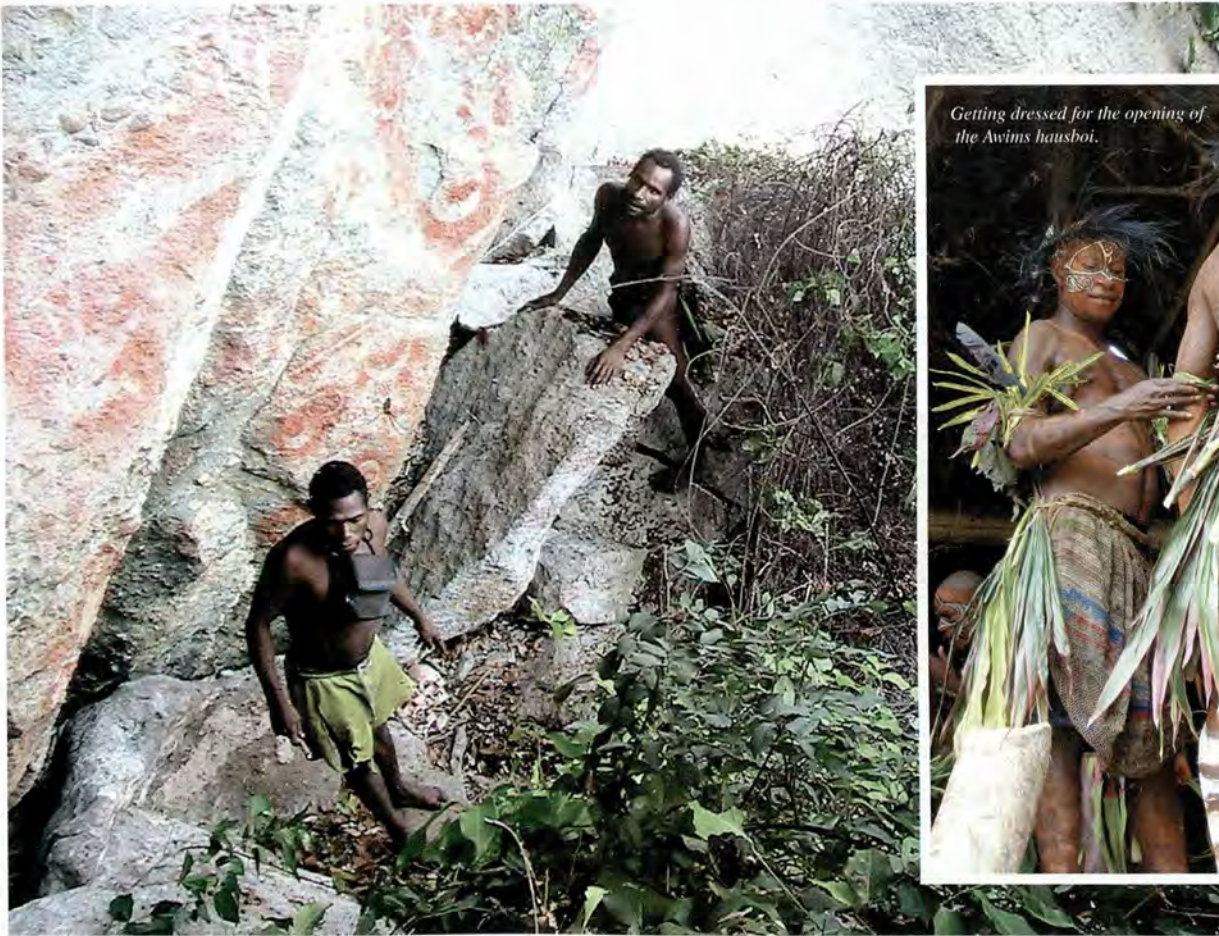
Robert Tapain and fieldworkers and animal bones.

But as a result, we now know that the Upper Karawari people have been in the area since at least the 16th century. Anything they may have made before that time would probably not have survived the weather anyway.

But it is one of PNG's great ironies that the Ewa and Inyai people have remained underdeveloped and ignored, while thousands of people in Europe and the USA admire their grandparents' carvings every single day.

Some of these semi-nomadic communities were first contacted by the PNG Government as recently as 1966, and as recently as 1987, archaeologists Paul Gorecki and Rhys Jones conducted a survey of abandoned rock shelters in the area that had never before been documented.

They describe the caves as being covered with panels of stencilled and painted images - in some cases "more than 60 metres of cave wall or roof are decorated with continuous panels of art," (Gorecki and Jones 1987:3), constituting "the greatest example of rock art in the whole of Melanesia".



There are roughly 300 caves in these foothills of Mt McGregor and the Auagum Range that are covered with hand and other stencils of unknown age. Unlike hand stencils in Northern and Western Australia, and in Borneo, where we can date the clay to 20,000 years ago, this is a huge complex that's only recently been 'finished.' People have been stencilling over older images that may be thousands of years old.

In 2008, a team of archeologists from Easter Island, including Edmundo Edwards, as well as a Canadian carbon-dating expert, Bassam Ghaleb, came to PNG to train NSA workers in measurement and recording techniques. But they could not establish a reliable date for the images as yet.

In addition, archeologist Sebastine Haraha of the National Museum and Art Gallery joined our team earlier this year when a writer/photographer team from the National Geographic Magazine arrived to report on one section of the caves owned by the Penali people.

Traditionally, the Penali initiated their young men in these caves and marked the process with the young men's hand prints. After being housed in the caves away from women and children and instructed in esoterica by their uncles, the youths would 'bleed' their penes by having cane reeds shoved into the urethra and they would spray the blood on their palms to press handprints on cave walls.

The bark paintings that decorate the Penali men's houses are also associated with male initiation. They are made from the sago trunk leaves, roughly 130 by 40 centimetres, which are flattened and cleaned before being bound by rattan loops to vertical sticks, and sent directly to the house walls.

Using charcoal, lime and brown and white clay, they are elaborate spiral and animal motifs, some more anthropomorphic than others, and each connected with the maker's clan.





...these remote communities wish to take stand against rainforest destruction and conserve their caves for the future of our children and the world.

It is assumed the designs function as mnemonic devices for clan stories, as is the case for so many Sepik carvings and paintings. Much like the rock stencils and prints, these are non-transportable works and remain important features of the area's cultural heritage.

Our objective is to produce a publishable document of the Upper Karawari peoples and their history as a collaboration amongst the villagers and ourselves.

Hopefully, this publication will be the cornerstone of a campaign to establish National Cultural Property for these caves. As the jungles and river basins around them are being logged, mined and explored for future resource extraction, these remote communities wish to take a stand against rainforest destruction and conserve their caves for the future of our children and the world.

This project still has far to go. We have enjoyed major funding from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Firebird Foundation, and Sr Antonio Cruz Mayor. Only half of these caves have been properly recorded. But we will be spending much of 2010 trying to finish the rest.

Our team has already lost one beloved worker, Fred Casi. Communities that work with us are growing anxious to receive schools, aid posts and other vital infrastructure that would make their conservation efforts sustainable. So we wish to thank everyone in the Penali, Ewa and Inyai communities, and their relatives among the Yimas villagers, for their dedication so far. And we cannot forget our world class crew: Josh Meraveka, Levi Ronald, Aiyo Gubag, Frank James, Albert Kamas, Christian Dominic, Jeffery Otto, Robert Tapain, Sebastian Katuk, Justin Waipo, George Tikas, Tony Wangoon, Timothy Kamuk, Camillus Asukai, Lucas Yami, Solomon Yakari, Manuel Tungi, Martin Meliyap and Sebastine Haraha of the National Museum and Art Gallery.



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Lissenung: A perfect name for a perfect place to unwind

BY DIANA MCMANUS



Welcome to Lissenung...a place of rest.

Lissenung means 'place of rest' in local Tigak language. It's a perfect name for a perfect place to unwind. A little gem amongst the myriad of islands, Lissenung lies between the New Ireland mainland and the looming, mountainous island of New Hanover to the north. Lying on a shelf between the Pacific Ocean and Bismark Sea, Lissenung's surrounding waters are also a diver's paradise.

A

20-minute boat ride from Kavieng, the island is a tiny, low-lying, green tropical gem with a white sandy beach and gorgeous coral gardens teeming with fish a mere few metres offshore.

It's a place where the clear aqua waters reflect huge, bright blue skies and you can watch the clouds building into streaky or woolly shapes in the distance.

Or you can enjoy the stark contrast of the threatening black skies, gusty squalls and grey sheets of rain marching across the horizon. It's all good!

This is where Austrian born Dietmar Amon and his wife Ange call home, and where they have invested considerable time and energy to build up a charming resort whose main purpose is to showcase PNG's brilliant diving prospects to the world.

Twelve years ago, Dietmar took over the lease of the island which was being managed by the Kavieng Hotel. Then, it was a sort of a Robinson Crusoe getaway with a couple of bungalows and kerosene lanterns.

He has since erected more environmentally-friendly bungalows with traditional style woven walls and thatched roofs, combined with modern bathroom facilities, all nicely spaced to create a village feel to the island with its lovely landscaping. This is where I went for a few days in the company of my POMSAC (Port Moresby Sub Aqua Club) playmates as a club getaway.





Water babies...Children having fun at the Kavieng wharf.

Flying in to Kavieng you know you're in for a treat. The number of islands and channels 'crowning' New Ireland is staggering; all jewels in their own right.

And when you get to the wharf with all the laughing little boys leaping into the water, their joy becomes infectious and you can't wait to get in either!

The watery highways and byways buzz with the sound of outboards with boats zipping between islands. Further out, near Lissenung, you're more likely to see the ubiquitous outriggers with someone dropping a line over the edge.

Plenty to choose from

Once ashore, pretty landscaped pathways lead you in different directions to the bungalows, but not before a welcome meal in the thatched, open-sided dining/sitting room. And if you haven't let go of your busy world yet, the sandy floor hints loudly that here bare feet is the go.

While this is going on, Ange, an ex-travel agent and dive organiser, pleasantly lays out the options and gathers peoples' diving preferences; and there is plenty to choose from.

There are drift dives along the deep walls which plunge down into the Bismark Sea; Albatross Channel, Planet Channel and the Matrix, to name a few, offer big fish sightings and especially sharks.





Divers tuck in a hearty meal after a day's diving.

There are other big drops like the Bermuda Drop with its pygmy seahorses which can also be spotted at Kavin II, an overhanging wall with a couple of swim throughs. Other incredible dives include the Nusa Blowholes with their caves and big white tipped reef sharks.

If you prefer reefs, there are great reefs like Helmut's, Kaplaman, Nautilus, Judy's Reef and Peter's Patch. There are countless bommies such as Danny's and Lighthouse, and numerous wrecks, mostly from World War II.

The wrecks are a mix of ships and planes. For example, there's the Tenryu Maru, a 70-metre Japanese merchant ship sunk by the US Navy aircraft carrier on Christmas Day in 1943. And at the Echuca Patch, there lies a Korean boat, Der Yang, on its side close to a large ridge in the open ocean, just outside Kavieng.

The Nakajima Kate is a three-seater Japanese Torpedo Fighter shot down in 1944 probably during take-off. There's an American Mitchell Bomber (B25) with two engines in the shallow waters between Baudisson and Manne Islands.

The bomber was in full attack when it was shot down by the Japanese. Only one person on board died. The other five survived because, according to our Dive Master Peni, they were picked up by the locals in their canoes and paddled safely to the islands



where there were no Japanese.

Our first dive was on the wall at the front of Albatross Channel which divides the mainland from the big Baudisson Island. Because of an ear perforation, I'm restricted to snorkelling. I dive vicariously through the tales and observations of my diving companions.

I get a taste of it by hanging off the ladder or rope when the current is crazy and drifting along that way, watching the divers disappear down into the deep blue gloom and enjoying the passing parade of fish and coral,

occasional turtle, rays or sea snakes.

Also enjoying the passing parade above, as locals invariably drop by in their boats; a team off to another island for a football match, children paddling out in their canoes with fruit to trade, old men asking the time, whatever. It's amazing what you can learn. The divers really enjoyed the big sharks and schools of barracuda down below.

The afternoon dive was at Matrix, another drift dive, touted by Steve Hulbert as being super relaxing, and who also enjoyed the barramundi



Spectacular...Lissenung's underwater world.

cod. Jeff, on the other hand, loved the wall with its 'waterfalls' of sparkling white sand cascading down the deep cliff fissures and over the coral outcrops.

The unexpected often presents some of the most memorable experiences. I was sitting in the open banana boat late that moonless night, rocking gently and gazing at the night sky over a cup of tea, when the kitchen girls and their driver appeared on the beach.

"We have to go home now", said Delsie. "Do you want to come with us?" "Maria-Christina," I shouted to my roommate who was also star gazing, "Come for a ride!"

Soon, we were skimming across the inky glass reflecting the vast, black universe above with its myriad of stars and random flashes of orange lightning, back lighting the distant thunderheads. Wow! What a stage for life's little intrigues. And they did seem insignificant in that majestic face of infinity. Flickering firelight or lanterns in island homes were the main navigational aids as far as I could see.

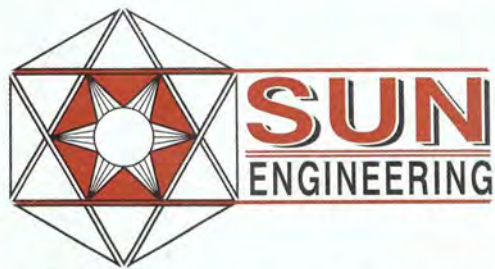
Optimism, anticipation

Ten minutes later, a dull light appeared in the water and we turned to avoid a lone, floating outrigger with a night diver fishing beneath. And then we were in the shallows of Eruk islands divided by a small channel. This is where all the resort workers live. The girls leapt into the ankle deep water and splashed off into the darkness waving and calling their goodbyes. Then, we turned towards Lissenung and were off again into the spectacular night.

It's hard to imagine a greater contrast than the day which presented itself. The skies were cloudy and dark grey sheets of rain advanced across the water. However, the pervading mood was one of optimism and anticipation as we set off across Silver Sound wherein lies Lissenung, for the far reaches of the 'local universe' to Eagle Ray Passage and Planet Channel.

We skimmed across the shallow, unsurveyed waters around Nusai, studded with shoal patches and through Byron Strait, past the three little islets of Kulenus, Upuos and Utukul which get completely covered during king tides. Locals continue to stay in their hi-set houses with the sea lapping around the floorboards!

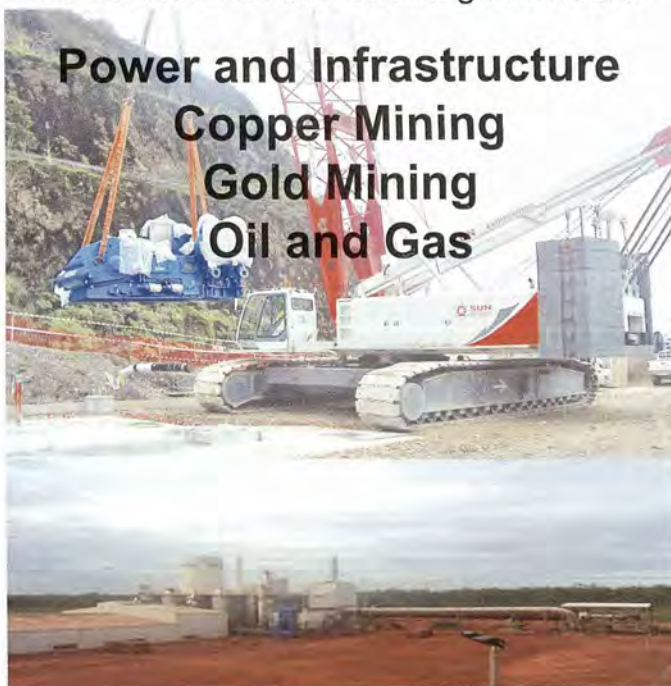
Eagle Ray Passage lies between the islands of Enang and Nusulaua, with the huge land mass of New Hanover rising above them. Enang is the demarcation line between two language groups, Togak and Lavongai, who barely understand each other, according to Benson, our driver. Huge swells were coming in from the Bismark Sea with deep



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Marine life, underwater war wrecks...attractions at Lissenung Island and its dive team definitely knows how to select sites for optimum enjoyment.

walls and big currents below us. The fish life was superb for me, who drifted on the surface with the a dive boat in tow...or was it the other way around?

Privileged to see

Schools of big black, white and yellow oriental sweetlip, 40 odd batfish gliding around together in a wall of their own, dozens of different types of beautiful butterfly fish, particularly a shoal of the relatively unseen pyramid butterfly fish, big maori wrasse, hump headed banner fish, bump headed parrot fish, and even the yellow and white bi-coloured parrot fish. The others were privileged to see the Eagle rays winging their way below.

The divers said later that the drift dives along

the walls of Albatross and Planet Channels are as good as you would get anywhere in the world, with turtles, black and white tipped reef sharks, shoals of barracuda, dog toothed tuna and moray eels.

At Planet Channel, they encountered big sharks feeding and coming in close to within a metre, and a large Queensland grouper, apparently on holidays! Here, it's mostly all about tides, currents, times of the day and the time of the dive needs to be carefully picked. The Lissenung dive people definitely knows how to pick it for optimum enjoyment.

It's a place which attracts a lot of journalists and professional photographers for well known international diving magazines or for personal publications of underwater

photography. Indeed, we were lucky to enjoy the company of German resident, Milan Czapy, who has won awards in France and elsewhere for his superb underwater images and promotional diving videos.

Dietmar's aim from the beginning was to start a dive operation and to employ local staff with on-the-job training as kitchen-hands, cooks, room girls, drivers, dive masters; anything tourism related.

The resort, on average, employs about 20 local staff. His vision is to attract a lot of people to see the beauty and wonders of PNG and to help promote the tourism industry.

He and his wife attend a lot of trade shows together with the PNG Divers Association (PNGDA) and the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA), in the US, France, Germany, UK, Australia, Japan and Fiji.

They spend a couple of months of each year on the promotion trail. Environmentally conscious, they support the PNGDA in its mooring program, sponsored by aid agencies, to lay down permanent moorings in popular dive sites to avoid coral destruction through anchorage.

Air Niugini, working through TPA, sponsors tickets for international travel agents to visit PNG, and Lissenung is one of the dive resorts which work hand in hand with them by offering free of charge accommodation and diving.

For Dietmar this has had its own special reward. It's how he met his wife! There's just nothing quite like a few days at Lissenung Island Resort in New Ireland's far north for a feel of the famed Pacific paradise.

It may cost a bit to get there but, like all exquisitely precious gems, the experience is ultimately priceless.

• For more details, check out www.lissenung.com or contact Dietmar and Ange direct at info@lissenung.com.



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Hula...houses on stilts with children enjoying themselves.

Having lived in Port Moresby all our lives, we have never travelled by road outside Port Moresby.

So when we were asked by an aunt to help out with a bride price ceremony for her son in Hula, we knew this was to be our biggest trip ever by road and also a fantastic opportunity to get away from city life and enjoy a truly local experience.



Escaping the city life Hula: A Perfect Getaway

BY SKERAH.COM

Hula is located along the Papuan coast in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. It is about three hours east of Port Moresby by road.

Because we weren't staying overnight in Hula, our trip started off at 5 in the morning. Magi Highway is the main road to Hula and while certain sections of the highway are sealed, there are other parts with potholes making the ride a little bumpy.

But nevertheless, the scenery along Magi Highway is a pleasant one for the first time traveller to this area as it gives one a glimpse of what life is like in rural PNG.

The surrounding is hilly and although it is the dry season, the place was greener than expected.

The people who reside along the highway are subsistence farmers and this is evident with the many vegetable gardens on the roadside or on the hills. Banana and pawpaw trees appear in an orderly manner while coconut trees grow everywhere.

As we drove along, we noticed a number of people standing on the roadside carrying bags filled with their garden produce hoping to catch a ride on the next bus to the capital to sell their goods at the Port Moresby markets.



Hula market...busy.

People started entering the market...most were waiting for the local fishermen to arrive so that they could buy fresh fish from them. The prices of fish in Hula are ridiculously low compared to those sold at the Port Moresby markets.

A more interesting site along the way was the number of stalls set up selling petrol and diesel fuel. Obviously, a thriving business opportunity due to the many vehicles running out of fuel along the way.

To get to Hula, we went through several villages namely Kemabolo, Kamali and Taruba. We enjoyed going through these villages because people smiled and waved at us as we went past. Pigs roamed around freely in these villages which is something you won't normally see in villages much closer to Port Moresby.

We arrived in Hula at about 8am and as you enter the village, the Hula market is the first sight you will see. People started entering the market and on enquiry we were told they were waiting for the local fishermen to arrive so that they could buy fresh fish from them.

The prices of fish in Hula are ridiculously low compared to those sold at the Port Moresby markets. We even bought some for our host in Hula and some for ourselves to take back to Port Moresby.

The people easily noticed we were strangers and while some would stare, others would smile and wave.

It is evident that the people of Hula rely very much on the sea. A lot of



Time to go home.



These are all for the bride...the six-metre stand filled with bananas, sago and other traditional food, pigs and cash.

the houses are either built over the sea or scattered around near the beach.

Most of the houses we saw had very large window frames to allow the cool sea breeze to enter as it can get pretty hot and humid during the dry season.

The houses built over the sea is a picturesque site and we did not hesitate to take a couple of photographs. There are a number of reasons

why houses are built on stilts.

The first and foremost is that coastal people in PNG have a very close affinity with the sea and building their houses on stilts maintains that association. It also easy to access their canoes and go fishing.

The other reason is to do with the hot and humid conditions in this area. By building their houses on stilts, the cool breeze from the sea

can make their houses more cooler.

The Hula people don't need air conditioning to cool the house. The cool breeze is enough to cool their house and make it comfortable at night.

The kids love the sea and if they're not swimming, they're playing on the beach. Hula kids like many kids in Papua New Guinea love having their photographs taken.

Most of the kids were so excited to have their photographs taken that one kid climbed up a tree and requested that we take a picture of him.

While we were exploring this unique village, relatives were preparing for the bride price ceremony.

Briefly, the process of bride price involves the groom and his immediate and extended family paying the bride's family with cash, traditional food like bananas, taro, yams, sago, pigs and more recently goods like kitchen utensils have been included.

The bride is dressed in traditional regalia and accompanied by the groom's family as she walks from the groom's house to her parents house to deliver the bride price payment.

Around mid-day the bride price ceremony started and the bride walked about 300 metres from the groom's house.

The village grinded to a halt as people witnessed the bride in full colour leading





The bride in traditional attire with cash.

the way. Trucks loaded with pigs and other foodstuff also followed the procession. On arrival at the bride's parents' house, we saw an imposing stand about six metres high filled with bananas, sago and other traditional food.

Traditionally, building this towering stand shows one's gardening prowess and by erecting the stand outside the bride's parents' house, this illustrates that the groom's family not only showed their gardening prowess but

also paying the bride price wholeheartedly.

Singing and dancing form part of the procession and villagers standing by with no connection to the ceremony sing along as well just to be involved in the fun.

Once all the goods were handed over, it was time to return to our host's house to pack and ready to roll back to Port Moresby.

We had a great time in Hula and the people

Fact File

A getaway

Hula provides a fantastic opportunity to get away from city life and enjoy a truly local experience. Whether you're there for the day or overnight, there's a number of activities you can enjoy to make your stay in Hula a fun and enjoyable one.

Given that the people of Hula rely a lot on the sea, a day out fishing with the locals either in a dinghy or traditional canoe is sure to be an exciting experience. If you're not into fishing, there's always the opportunity to just get on a dinghy and go sightseeing, exploring the coastal surroundings and even looking at the village from out at sea.

One of the exciting events held in Hula is canoe racing. The Hula people are champions in this sport and you can expect to see the beach packed with people watching the races.

The houses built on stilts over the sea is another unique experience and this is a great opportunity to stay or see what it is like in a stilt house. You can even sit on the verandah and enjoy the cool breeze and in the evening watch the sun go down.

are very friendly. The beach is a picturesque site to see and it is interesting to wonder through the gardens and see the different types of crops grown by the people of Hula. It is definitely a trip worth your while if you want to escape the city for at least a day.

If anyone is thinking of making a trip to Hula, we recommend it and if you want some help to get there, you can contact us on www.skerah.com



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Villagers from Puruknawi carry a giant saltwater crocodile at the Sepik River Crocodile Festival.

Crocodile Tattoo

Resembling “crocodile bites”

BY GRAHAM SIMMONS

I didn't want to go to the grave untattooed. So, when I heard it might be possible to get a crocodile tattoo at the Sepik River Crocodile Festival in Papua New Guinea, I jumped (OK, crab-stepped) at the opportunity.

Until it was explained to me what is involved in this type of tattooing. The skin is scarified with a razor blade, they said, with cuts resembling “crocodile bites”. When the wound heals, the “tattoo” stands up above the skin, resembling the bumpy hide of a crocodile.

“Should be a nice talking point when you recover!” said a spokesperson for the festival. In the end, sanity and/or craven cowardice prevailed, and I went unscarified. But the bonds between humans and crocodiles go far beyond tattoos or dining on one another.

This year's Crocodile Festival, sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and with the theme of conserving the Sepik's delicate ecology, drew more than a thousand guests.

The theme of the festival was Kirapim wok bilong turis wantaim bus, wara na pasin tumbuna bilong Sepik, meaning “let's work to promote ecotourism by conserving natural habitats and encouraging sustainable use of the river.” A noble sentiment indeed.

The skin is scarified with a razor blade with cuts resembling 'crocodile bites'. When the wound heals, the tattoo resembles the bumpy hide of a crocodile.



A young croc for a young boy.

Our trip starts out at the northern coastal town of Wewak, from where a road leads to the river hamlet of Pagwi. It's a couple of hours by dugout canoe from Pagwi to Wagu village, nestled on Wasui or Wagu Lagoon at the foot of the Humstein Ranges on the Upper Sepik, from where we will proceed downriver.

Wonders of Wagu

In Wagu, our guide Mathew Yamsu is keen to show us the wonders of his home village. We're shown around the village, including the crocodile compound, where 20 or so crocs are splayed out behind a sturdy fence. "They're nearly ready to be harvested," says one villager.

The next day, after a hilltop hike in search of the rare Bird of Paradise (the only person to actually see one is Mathew), we set out for the Crocodile Festival held in the river village of Ambunti. A young lad, with a baby croc non-chalantly draped over his shoulder, greets visitors at the main gate, while members of the Karowari village Community Police Band entertain guests. Nearby, villagers from Puruknawi village manhandle a giant saltwater crocodile. Fortunately, all crocodiles at the festival have their jaws tied - some of them not so



Haus Tambaran...Spirit House at Palimbe.



For what seems like hours, we drift, trying to find bearings. Then towards midnight, a blinding apparition appears on the horizon in the form of a tall lady clad totally in white, standing up in a dugout canoe.

tightly, as one tiny croc that I have the temerity to pat later gives me a salutary nip on the finger. After a series of fun dugout canoe races in the afternoon, the festivities build up to a crescendo the next day. Sing-Sing groups from different villages both along the Sepik and on the coast vie to outdo one another in decorative display, in the power of the dance and in sheer good-natured exuberance. The overall effect is riveting.

Tattooing

As the festival draws to a close, we travel further downriver. In Palimbé village, one of the villages where "tattooing" is a part of initiation ceremonies, the Haus Tambaran or "spirit house" is - as the name implies - the home of the spirits, of ancestors, progenitors, crocodiles and other animals. We pay a visit to the Haus Tambaran, but Matthew and his colleague Philip of Sepik River Tours have heard that a real live initiation is about to take place in Kaningara village, way down south of the Sepik on Blackwater Lake; so we set off at a late hour in search of the village.

Our boat cruises downriver along the Sepik, branching right onto the Korosameri River

and then veering left onto a narrow channel. Eventually, we find ourselves in a vast lake - one of the Blackwater Lakes, where rotting leaves stain the waters deep charcoal. But the night is even darker than black. For what seems like hours, we drift, trying to find bearings. Then towards midnight, a blinding apparition appears on the horizon, in the form of a tall lady clad totally in white, standing up in a dugout canoe. Then I'm able to make out other group members, standing next to her.





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As it turns out, they live on a floating island in the lake. They are on their way home from a church fellowship meeting on the mainland. One of them knows the way to Kaningara, on the opposite side of the lake, and guides us there.

But bad news awaits us in Kaningara. "Your late arrival has disrupted the preliminary rituals," says Chief Bonny Yambi in the finest possible English.

"We have to ensure the safety of those who are going to be initiated. So, you can witness the start of the initiation ceremonies tomorrow, but the main procedures will have to be postponed to a more auspicious date."

The next day dawns clear and bright. Along a ridge, with dramatic views over the ocean, the lower level of the haus tambaran houses the candidates for initiation. Outside the spirit house, the waus - initiated men who will guide the candidates through the initiation processes - perform a ritual dance. Inside the haus tambaran, the candidates then join in the dance, solemnly led by the waus around the ceremonial ring. In the end, I don't get to witness the "tattooing".

Having chickened out of being scarified, I can't quite summon up the will to watch others undergo pain. But I like to think that some of the crocodile's spirit - preferably with its jaws tied - has rubbed off.



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Fact File

Getting there: Air Niugini flies from Port Moresby to Wewak. From Wewak, Sepik Adventure Tours (www.ambuntilodge-sepiktour.com.pg, tel +675 856 2525, E-mail: adventurepng@datec.net.pg) are specialists in the Sepik, and able to tailor a wide range of custom itineraries.

Accommodation: In Wewak Boutique Hotel (www.inwewak.com, tel +675 856 2100, E-mail: inwewak@global.net.pg), atop a hill, is a comfortable hangout with new Filipino management and excellent catering.

Sepik River Crocodile Festival: The next Sepik River Crocodile Festival will be in mid-August 2010. Exact dates have yet to be confirmed.

Further Information: Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (www.pngtourism.org.pg; tel +675 320 0211; E-mail: info@pngtourism.org.pg)

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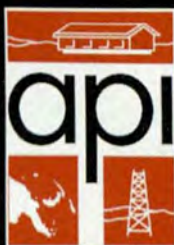
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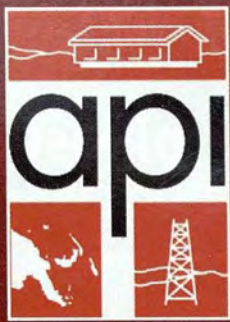
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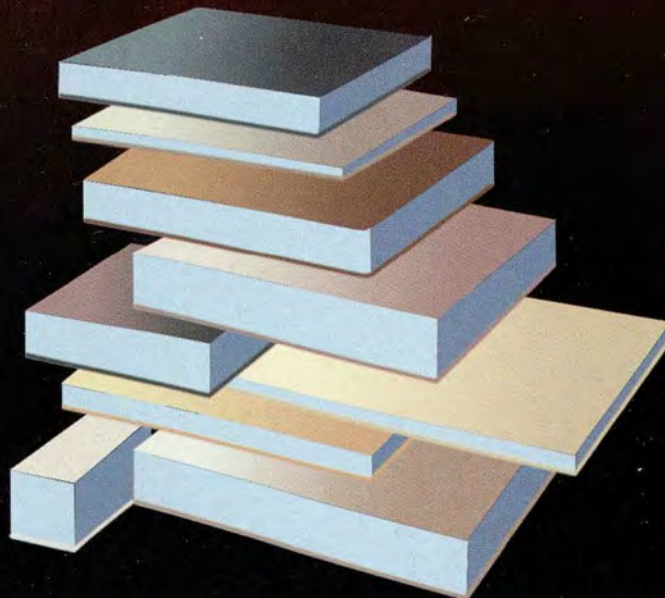
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Talking Tapa

PNG bark cloth on show

BY ISABELLE DINA

Papua New Guinea tapa is taking centre stage at a touring exhibition *Talking Tapa: Pasifika Bark Cloth* in Queensland.



Baining people a recurring motif 1940 - beaten bark cloth and black pigment.



It is currently showing at the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in Townsville. The display, an initiative of the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre and funded by the Brisbane City Council and Queensland government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund, offers no less than 10 beautiful works from the provinces of Oro, Manus, New Britain, New Ireland and Chimbu.

Tapa is the common name for beaten bark cloth from Pacific islands countries. Also well represented in this exhibition are countries such as West Papua, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Wallis and Futuna.

Known in Fiji as "the cloth of the gods and the cloth of the land", the bark cloth for generations was the only source of clothing before the introduction of weaving by the first

Europeans and missionaries in the early 18th century. Tapa is one of the most distinctive products from the cultures of the Pacific and an ancient craft that has been practiced for thousands of years. Usually made from the pounded bark of the Paper Mulberry tree, tapa can also be produced from the bark of breadfruit and khombo trees (Papua New Guinea) or fig and banyan trees (Solomons and Vanuatu).

The making of tapa is a very laborious and intricate process. The bark is rolled up and soaked until soft then scraped with a shell to remove the remaining pieces of the outer bark. The strips of the inner bark are then beaten against a wooden anvil with a flat faced beater. This expands the material to 6 to 8 times its

former width and reduces it to a tissue-paper thickness. During this entire process, the cloth is always kept wet. These thin sheets are then placed one over the other in double or triple thickness and is beaten again to "felt" it together and make a single sheet.

Manioc root juice, breadfruit or arrowroot starch may be used to glue sheets together. Tapa can be made as thin and fine as muslin-like or layered into lengths with the consistency of thick felt. It is then ready to receive its own unique design to be painted stencilled, rubbed or dyed using natural pigments such as candlenut soot, mangrove root, koka tree dye, bark blood tree dye, ochres and ashes. Designs are traditional to each tapa maker's culture with the greatest variety and uses found in Papua New Guinea.

In 2004, a tapa mask from New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago of Papua New Guinea was sold in a Sothebys auction for 22,500 Euros (\$A\$36,000).

Oro province women's ceremonial skirts 1980 paper mulberry bast, ochres, mangrove root bark and ash.



While Papua New Guinea has the largest remaining tropical forest in the Asia/Pacific region and the most extensive forests of Mulberry trees, the country is now under threat from industrial logging.

In 1993, Maisin tribe groups took a strong stand amongst other regions of Papua New Guinea and rejected proposals from big timber companies to sell their one million acre of ancestral rainforest. Instead, they resolved to build their livelihood with more sustainable practices such as making and selling of their traditional bark art made from mulberry trees grown in their gardens to a global audience.

Oro Province, North of Papua New Guinea from which the Maisin tribes hail from, has the most prolific makers and users of decorated bark cloth.

Joan Winter, curator of the exhibition, who first visited Papua New Guinea in 1971 as a student and later returning as a teacher and researcher until the mid eighties wrote: "They remain the only province in Papua New Guinea whose traditional dress - male and female - is tapa. Their tapa has been used for generations for trade, as clothing and for performances, ceremonies and rituals, and since the 1960's has been readily available in artefact shops in Papua New Guinea."

Presented at this exhibition are two ceremonial skirts that are worn by Maisin women and were collected by Winter in 1980. The female wraparound skirt is about 200 centimetres long and 90 centimetres wide. Its design



Manus Province ceremonial women's skirts - breadfruit tree bark, seeds, bush string and red cloth strips.

is usually repeated in four equal horizontal or vertical panels. They are adorned with distinctive bright red geometric swirls and curls with open linear diagonal designs accentuated with dots (suffi). Maisin young women use similar patterns for their traditional facial tattoos, with bark cloth and tattoo being "an additional layer of skin wrapped around the individual," wrote anthropologist John Baker.

A rare ceremonial women's skirt, is also on display in a glass case from the smallest province of Papua New Guinea, Manus. The bark cloth apron is not painted but adorned with seeds, bush strings, shells and red cloth giving a finish exquisitely organic as if the petals of a flamboyant tree had been embroidered on white tapa.

"The plain bark cloth from Manus is of coarser texture than Polynesian tapa and some Melanesian varieties. It is made from the pounded bast of the breadfruit tree and the beaters were made of heavy shell rather than wood", wrote Winter. This type of skirt was worn by women on festive occasions such as marriage ceremonies and the tassels of shell money and beads indicate family wealth and status.

Although the exhibition does not include the magnificent masks and towering structures made of tapa and known to be used in Papua New Guinea for rituals and performances, a piece from East New Britain Province and the Baining people gives us a glimpse of yet another function of tapa as a funeral shroud. Black is the colour most used for decoration. Coming from the sap of the Ovupka tree, it is chewed to be mixed with saliva into a thick consistency.

As I walked through the rest of the exhibition, admiring the striking and creative pieces of tapa from other countries of the Pacific, I was left wondering about the traditional bond these bark cloth pieces once had with their ancestral societies and the new meaning they take on in the world of contemporary art.

Undoubtedly tapa is very attractive to the Western eye. In 2004, a tapa mask from New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago of Papua New Guinea was sold in a Sothebys auction for 22,500 Euros (approximately A\$36,000).

With its very tactile and non woven qualities, tapa makes a great medium for paint and has become a canvas of



New Ireland 1920 panels of beaten bark and natural pigments.

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Fiji- I Sulu Ni Vakamau - women's wedding attire.

choice for Pacific contemporary artists.

The Maisin people of Papua New Guinea do not have a word for "art" in their vocabulary; instead they have the term "saraman" which simply means thinking and doing.

Making Tapa thus becomes a cooperation between the hand and the free flowing mind of the artist. This is the process of any artist and beyond the cultural and traditional uses, it is easy to see those bark of cloths as works of art.

• *The exhibition will tour Queensland till the end of January 2010 and will move to Victoria to complete its journey at the Bathurst Regional Gallery in New South Wales in November 2010.*

Tonga, paper mulberry, koka tree dye and candle nut kernel soot, 1970.



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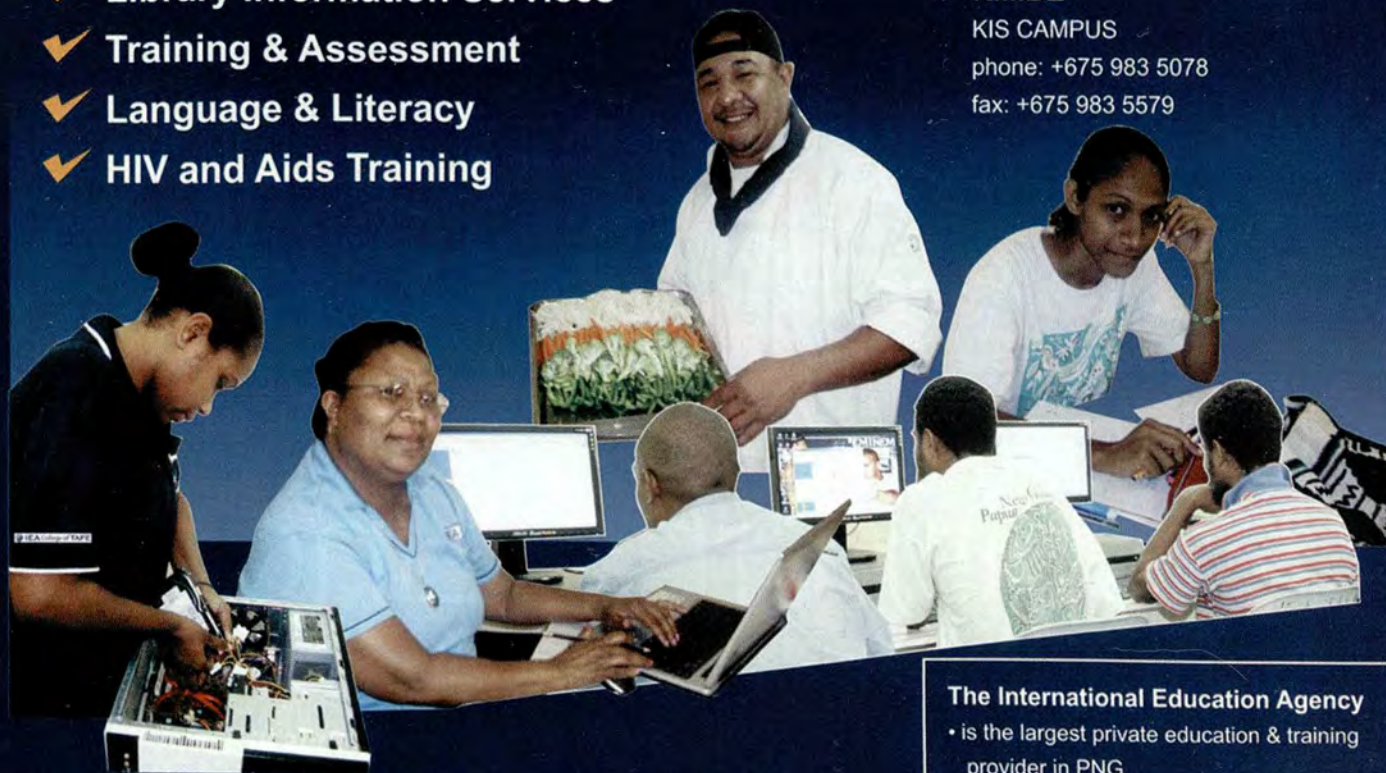
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A group of male dancers from the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea. They are shirtless, wearing traditional headbands with feathers and flowers, and necklaces of red and white flowers. They are holding long, narrow strips of fabric or paper, likely used in their dance. The background shows a large crowd of people, including children, watching the performance.

Male dancers of the Trobriands.

Learning the Lingo

WORDS: FIONA HARPER PHOTOGRAPHY: TOURISM PROMOTION AUTHORITY PNG

Kilivila, the language spoken by the people of the far-flung Trobriand Islands in eastern Papua New Guinea, is broken up into 12 language families.

Some estimates note that as few as 200 people speak the Budibud dialect in the Lachland Islands, making it fairly certain that before visiting the remote islands of the archipelago - often described as the 'Islands of Love' — you'd be well advised to brush up on your sign language skills.



Island market in PNG.

Watching the outrigger canoe launch from the beach towards our anchored yacht, we prepare for visitors. With his canoe loaded with yams and three good size fish, the lean, muscular young man grins widely as he approaches.

Holding up one of the fish, a questioning look on his face, I nod my head, laughing, beckoning him to come closer. Our trading had begun. Now all I had to do was find a suitable item to exchange with this affable entrepreneur.

Gaining in confidence with his first 'sale', my new friend laughs encouragingly towards the small crowd of villagers forming on the beach, as I realise that more canoes are being launched.

Knowing nothing of the Kilivila language, I try some basic pidgin English. "Laik wan pis," I repeat, in the hope of not offending by only wanting to buy one fish. Holding up one finger and pointing to his fish and then to my chest, we seem to reach an understanding. The Trobriand Islanders have a long tradition as seafaring traders.

An outlying archipelago of the Milne Bay Province in the Solomon Sea, the region straddles a major shipping route.

Traders travel long distances across open water by sea going canoes, bartering for essential produce and supplies as well as partaking in the traditional custom of Kula, or Kula Ring.



Trobriand Islands dancers with their yams.



A traditional form of today's networking, this is a ceremonial exchange system of valuables, which are traded for the purpose of enhancing one's social status or prestige.

It's an important custom that forms lifelong partnerships, stemming from a respect-based culture where saving face and dignity are highly regarded. Valuable Bagi (red shell necklaces traditionally made from the Chama Pacific shell) and mwali (white arm shells) are traded to form prestigious, long term associations.

These treasures are not held onto for long; rather they are gifted to other associates in an effort to achieve higher status or to exchange more valuable Kula in a complex system of wooing potential partners.

Traders and their precious trinkets travel amongst the islands 'networking' in a circular direction, hence the name Kula Ring.

Polish born English anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski seems to be responsible for the 'islands of love' tag often attached to the Trobrianders.

Exiled in the islands as World War I broke out, he penned *The Sexual Life of Savages in North West Melanesia*, the second in his trilogy on the Trobrianders.

A study of courtship, marriage and family life based on his first hand immersion into village life, he observed that sexuality dominates almost every aspect of their culture.

Amazed that islanders freely indulged in premarital

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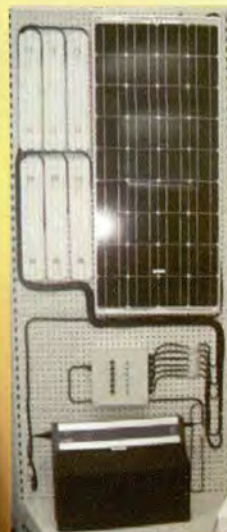


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"when everyday is a sun day"

sex without stigma, often at a young age, he noted that marriage was still highly desirable, with females from a young age seemingly pro-active in courtship rituals.

In a mainly matrilineal society, women enjoy a status unknown in other parts of mainland PNG. Land ownership passes through the female line with women considered to be peacekeepers, conservationists as well as guardians of traditional customs.

Yams, somewhat like sweet potatoes, are another important aspect of life in the Trobriands. Not only a staple food of their diet, the yam harvest is the trigger for the annual Milaa Mala, an ancient and colourful festival with numerous rituals and ceremonies conducted. The festival culminates in a ritual that sees off the spirits sweeping through the island villages. While harvest festival time varies each year due to environmental factors affecting the crop growth, and ostensibly at the whim of the Chief, as a concession to tourism, each July a Yam Festival on Kiriwina Island enables visitors to experience the traditional culture and colour of the celebration.

Back onboard the yacht and rummaging in a locker for something suitable to trade, I come up with an (almost new) rather large white t-shirt.

Passing it over the side of the yacht and



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into the young man's hands, his enthusiastic grin indicates that I've come up with an appropriate item in exchange for his fish.

Giggling delightedly like a child, my new friend paddles back to shore, his powerfully built upper body proudly emblazoned with our yacht's logo across his back.

Waving enthusiastically from amidst the crowd of villagers that surround him, he points proudly to his t-shirt covered chest, which I understand to mean that our trade has been a success.

Onboard, we decide to anchor here another night, a steady supply of fresh fish now

assured, but more importantly, we look forward to more guests arriving, and perhaps learning a little more of their lingo.

• *To get there, you can fly to the district capital Losuia on Kiriwina Island, the largest island in the Trobriand Islands, via Air Niugini.*



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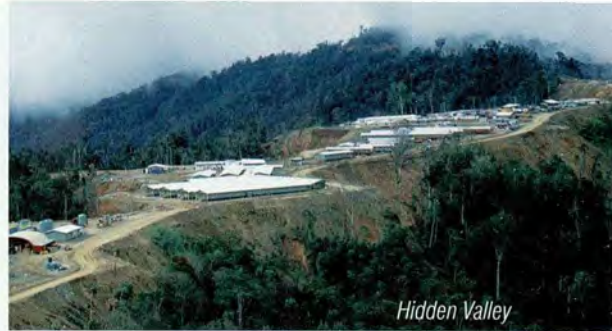
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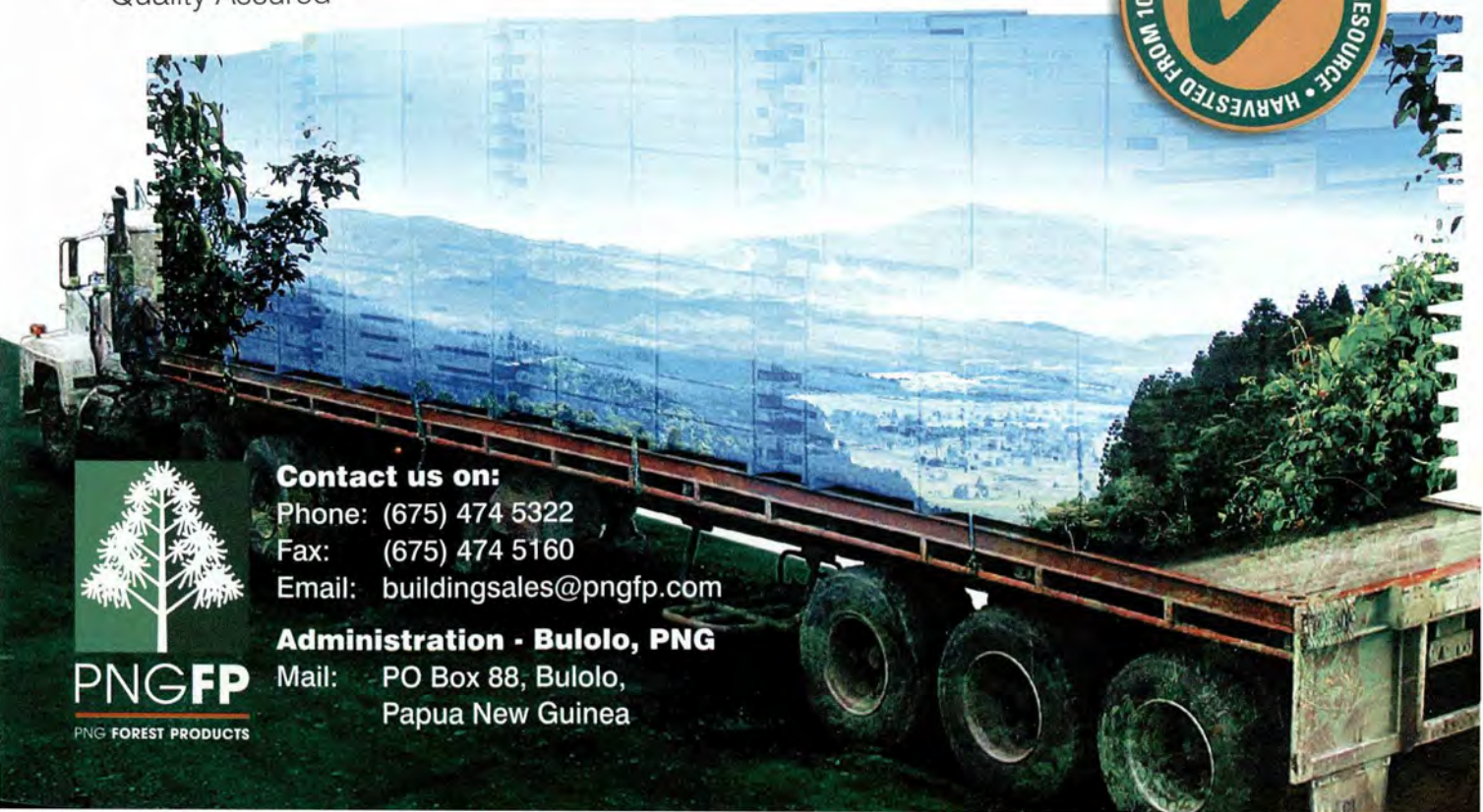
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Verena Thomas...gives a few tips to the young cameraperson.

Yumi Piksa

Home-grown filmmaking on the rise

A new workshop at the University of Goroka trains young, upcoming filmmakers to record the stories of Papua New Guinea's Highland communities. Filmmaker and workshop facilitator VERENA THOMAS writes about the vision of Yumi Piksa and the first pilot workshop aimed at contributing to a newly emerging film landscape in Papua New Guinea.

It is around 4am when Arthur knocks on my door to wake me. We packed our gear the night before. I open the door and check that we have enough lights. As the other team members join us, we start our short but early journey.

We walk down a small path near the university campus. It is muddy and steep and although we have torches we can barely see the steps ahead of us. We climb through a hole in the iron fence and cross a small stream.

We are going "Down Under" to a settlement just below the University of Goroka. The team, under the direction of Arthur Hane-Nou, has planned to film Mama Lucindo. She's been living in the Down Under community for almost 50 years.

Arthur tells us about Mama Lucindo. "She is an elderly mother. Her husband has passed away. She has 9 children and each of those nine children have their own houses so they have a sort of hamlet. What we want to capture was her trying to earn a living. And to see how she lives daily."

Every day Mama Lucindo gets up early to bake scones which she sells at the local market. When we get there, Mama Lucindo is already up, happily baking her scones. She rises at about 3am every day to start mixing her flour.

Mama Lucindo is the main character in one of the latest productions made by the Yumi Piksa team. The group is the result of a pilot workshop at the University of Goroka, which 12 Expressive Arts students participated in.

The team is a mix of artists, teachers, musicians and performers, each of them taking up a degree in Creative Industries. They are Yumi Piksa working to build up a home-grown Papua New Guinea film industry that brings together peoples' creative talents to tell the stories of Papua New Guinea communities.

Papua New Guinea has attracted many outside filmmakers over the years. Films on Papua New Guinea have enjoyed great success overseas, ranging from high-rating television programs to Oscar nominations.

Many of these present Papua New Guinea as an exotic paradise of tribal traditions, revelling in the diverse visual culture that has fascinated audiences around the world. I too came to Papua New Guinea as a filmmaker, following in the footsteps of my great-uncle Father John Nilles who spent 54 years as a missionary in the Chimbu province. I recorded both his and my own story to produce Papa Bilong Chimbu, which screened in Papua New Guinea and overseas.

As a filmmaker, the most amazing reactions



Mama Lucindo in her kitchen. She is the main character in one of the latest productions made by the Yumi Piksa team.

I've ever received were from the Chimbu people. I started to realise the potential of video to tell Papua New Guinean stories to local audiences.

"Papua New Guinea today is so full of television programmes, films and media products that are created from many parts of the world, and our people, particularly our youth, are watching these programmes, accepting them as significant things for information and knowledge. Unfortunately there are very few or no opportunities for them to tell their own stories and share them with others."

The Yumi Piksa concept emerged out of the conversation with people from the University of Goroka. It was a plan to offer opportunities of media training to students and at the same time promote community participation.

After learning the ropes of the latest video equipment, participants were eager to work with communities and share their newly accrued media savvy. They discussed the topic of the films with community members and explained the filmmaking process to them.

For Eastern Highlands communities, filmmaking is not a new concept. Goroka has been a filmic location for a long time. The National Film Institute is based in Goroka and the Skul Bilong Wokim Piksa, the first Papua New Guinean film school, was established there in the 1980s.

Limited funding and lack of copyright laws have made building a film industry in the region challenging.

Martin Madden, one of the filmmakers trained at the Skul Bilong Wokim Piksa, has been able to maintain a filmmaking career overseas.

"If you want a film industry, don't even try to build the structure, make the films and it will



create the structure." The Yumi Piksa team hopes that their latest productions will lead to new opportunities to be able to continue the project.

Historically, technology has been expensive and difficult to get in Papua New Guinea. This is changing as mobile phones, digital cameras and video technology improve and markets emerge.

Yumi Piksa is fortunate to have been provided

with cameras from Sony and tripods from Miller Australia, which equipped the team with world-class technology they needed to produce the pilot films.

"Yumi Piksa project and the members that are in it are really pioneers," says Bao Waiko, Yumi Piksa camera trainer.

"This is the first of its kind that is being done in Papua New Guinea and I think we can really be the benchmark and spearhead this

The Yumi Piksa team.



movement of communicating messages about what the communities are going through and getting our message heard outside the province and outside the country."

Mama Lucindo was not the only film subject for the Yumi Piksa team. Levekuka Clay and Nokondi's Morning Call are both stories about local art makers and the meanings behind their art works. They are both about preservation of cultural ideas, an increasingly relevant subject in PNG.

Levekuka Clay portrays Papa Ataizo Motahe, a wise man from Massy village in the Eastern Highlands who makes traditional clay artefacts. Papa Ataizo worries that he is the only one with these skills and that the younger generation is not learning traditional art processes.

"When I die, this art will die with me. They won't continue making it." Levekuka Clay is about the use of traditional knowledge and skills and how they are developed and preserved.

Nokondi's Morning Call features George Sari, who paints the myth of Nokondi, custodian of the environment and well known throughout the Eastern Highlands Province.

Through his paintings Sari preserves the knowledge of his grandfathers, which gains new significance given the current debate about climate change.

"The history of my ancestors is fading away. I feel we should preserve it in some way. And we

should look closer at the environment, re-plant the seeds and bring the spirit of Nokondi back."

The films were launched at the University of Goroka, with members of all participating communities attending.

They were met with overwhelming enthusiasm. It is Yumi Piksa's vision to continue this involvement with communities and encourage the filming of more local stories.

The University of Goroka is committed to providing a platform for training upcoming media producers to capture these stories.

This is a small step into the right direction and the early success of Yumi Piksa both nationally and internationally shows its potential. Susan Cochrane, known for her contributions on Papua New Guinean art comments

"These honest, intimate films had immediate appeal to local audiences. In the future they will reach, and touch, many more of us in PNG and far beyond."

The Yumi Piksa team is exploring further filmmaking options for education and awareness. The University of Goroka is now embarking on a long-term project with the University of Technology Sydney on a project funded by the PNG AIDS Council.

This project will use the filmmaking model of Yumi Piksa to produce education materials on HIV/AIDS that are based on community narratives.

The continued involvement of young Papua New Guinean filmmakers, as well as the communities is key to the project.

Arthur says of his experience thus far, "I've learnt from this workshop that to be a filmmaker is not easy and that you need to pay attention to the community to see that even though in that community they might not tell you what they would like to say, the way they are, the way they live tells a different story and that story needs to be told."

The Yumi Piksa team have shown exceptional commitment in taking on the challenge of promoting new technologies and ways of telling stories in Papua New Guinea.

We return to Mama Lucindo's kitchen to join her and her family for dinner while watching the film.

Mama Bilong Down Under is the story of a strong woman, caring for her family, showing a proud identity in the place she lives. We share the story, we share food and her story brings us together. "I like the others, I look after them and they look after me...They all speak different languages. I like them and they like me. There are no arguments, no fights. We are family. This is my home..," Mama Lucindo said.



• To purchase the DVD with the three productions or to receive more information, send an email to: yumipiksa@gmail.com; or visit our website at www.visual-voices.org/yumipiksa.html

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KL: Re-define the Stopover

WORDS: PAUL TANSLEY | PHOTOGRAPHY: LANI JENSEN

Picking up my bags from the carousel felt strange. They weren't heavy but they just weren't used to being collected here. Normally, they stayed out of sight, ferried out behind the terminal on a small buggy from one plane to the next, waiting for me to join them as I boarded the next plane to my final destination.

Kuala Lumpur (KL), the Malaysian capital and hub of many flight paths, is normally my gateway to Asia, or the rest of the world for that matter. I originally planned what many do with flights to KL - visit only the airport while you wait for your connecting flight to another destination.

But after weeks of working hard to get the spare time to holiday, I decided instead to enjoy every moment of this trip, KL included, so I decided against sitting at the airport terminal for hours.

With bags now in hand, I reflected on the words of the great American statesman, scientist and philosopher Benjamin Franklin, whose work I'd recently been reading: "He that can take rest is greater than he that can take cities."

My mission was to see if I could go one step better and take both in a couple of short days in KL. Strangely, here I was in the capital of an ethnically, racially and culturally diverse nation, where the majority of inhabitants are either Malays or Chinese with the rest consisting

of Indians and Arabs, on a Benjamin Franklin inspired mission.

If that seemed odd, arriving at the Sunway Lagoon Resort and Spa was surreal. Only hours earlier I was in the office, now the almost painfully friendly Irma was welcoming me and checking me straight into my massage where four pairs of hands rubbed away any work or airport tension.

But that's not the surreal part. The Sunway, only 20 minutes out of the centre of KL, might as well be on another planet from the airport. It is acres upon acres of hotel, with private villas and presidential suites, all overlooking a man-made beach and aquatic theme and amusement park. Among the families and the holiday makers, the Ministry of Sound has set up a building and music festivals are regularly held on the site.

After my massage treatment I floated through the gardens resembling the deepest virgin jungle to lounge around the pool with waterfalls cascading down on me. Had I kids, they would have been happily playing on the waterslides or

theme park while I sipped my beer in this virtual reality human-made paradise.

By nightfall I wanted to see something more of KL to get a feel for the real world outside of the Sunway. It was strangely similar - friendly, warm and a world away from my recent flight.

A quick walk down the street, turn right and I was in the Asia I had come to know over the years from other countries - noisy local food stalls with hawkers on the street, cooking me up fresh fish and noodles.

Yet somehow Malaysia makes everything feel that bit safer, sanitised and less likely to upset the stomach than other countries.

For the next two days I took my mission to the second level. I'd managed the rest part (although I did manage to sneak in a few bars in Bangsar before going to bed), but I still had to take in the city. And in KL, there's plenty to take in. It's safe, it's easy and there's no shortage of things to do.

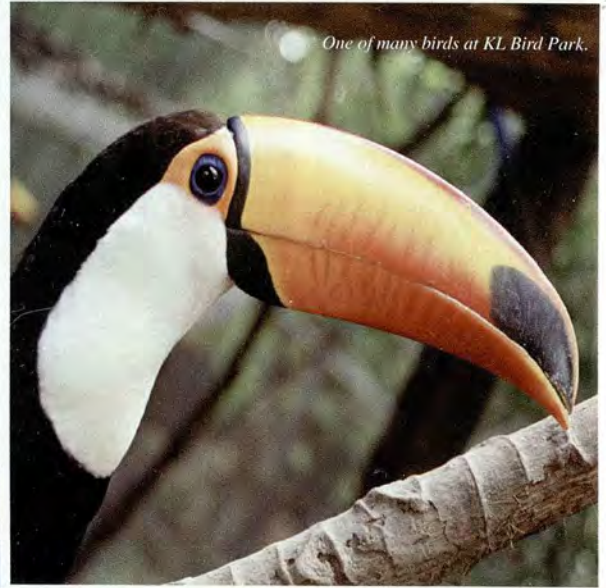
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One of many birds at KL Bird Park.




Petronas Twin Towers...once the tallest building in the world.

Sri Mahamariamman Temple

This looming pyramid is a sight to behold. A classic South Indian Hindu temple that was originally founded in 1873 as a private shrine. It's a beautiful and peaceful stop, a brief time out from a busy itinerary.

Eat Laksa

Laksa is THE dish of KL, and a trip here wouldn't be complete without trying at least a few varieties. Good old time favourites include: Nam Chuan Coffeeshop at Bangsar, Old China Café in Chinatown and a special mention must go to the myriad of street-side stalls found on every corner which often offer the best.

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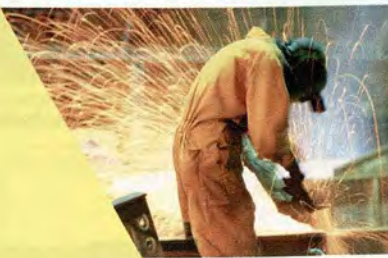
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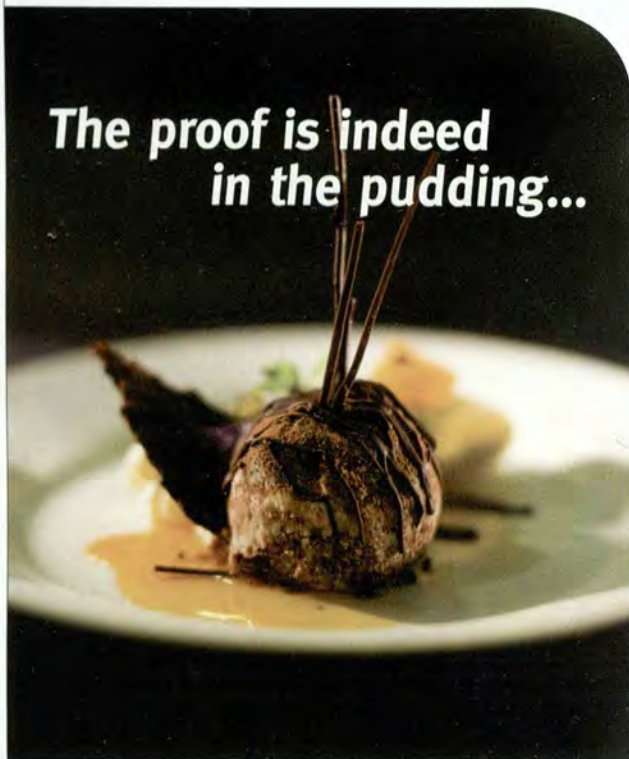
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Mid Valley Mega Mall.

Shopping

The shopping choices in KL are as varied and as frequent as the food stalls so finding a place to shop is never a problem. You can choose from the many street markets with the most famous being Petaling Street in Chinatown, or visit one of the many centres like the Sunway Pyramid, or one of the biggest in South East Asia is the Mid Valley Mega Mall.



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After all the activity, it was time to focus again on the resting part of my mission. I stayed at Trader's Hotel in the city for my last night, sipping cocktails in the pool at the Sky Bar, nibbling on tapas, overlooking the brightly lit and slightly eerie Petronas Twin Towers.

It was hard to believe in this ultra trendy and modern, urban environment that earlier that same day I'd been strolling through a rainforested bird park, or eating with my hands by the side of a road.

But KL's like that. You can experience a rich diversity of culture, environment and food for little cost or fuss and all crammed into a small timeframe.

With my mission now complete I was back at the airport, rested and ready for the next leg of my journey. The stopover had been re-defined - it doesn't have to be a chore or a long wait at the airport, it can be part of the experience itself.



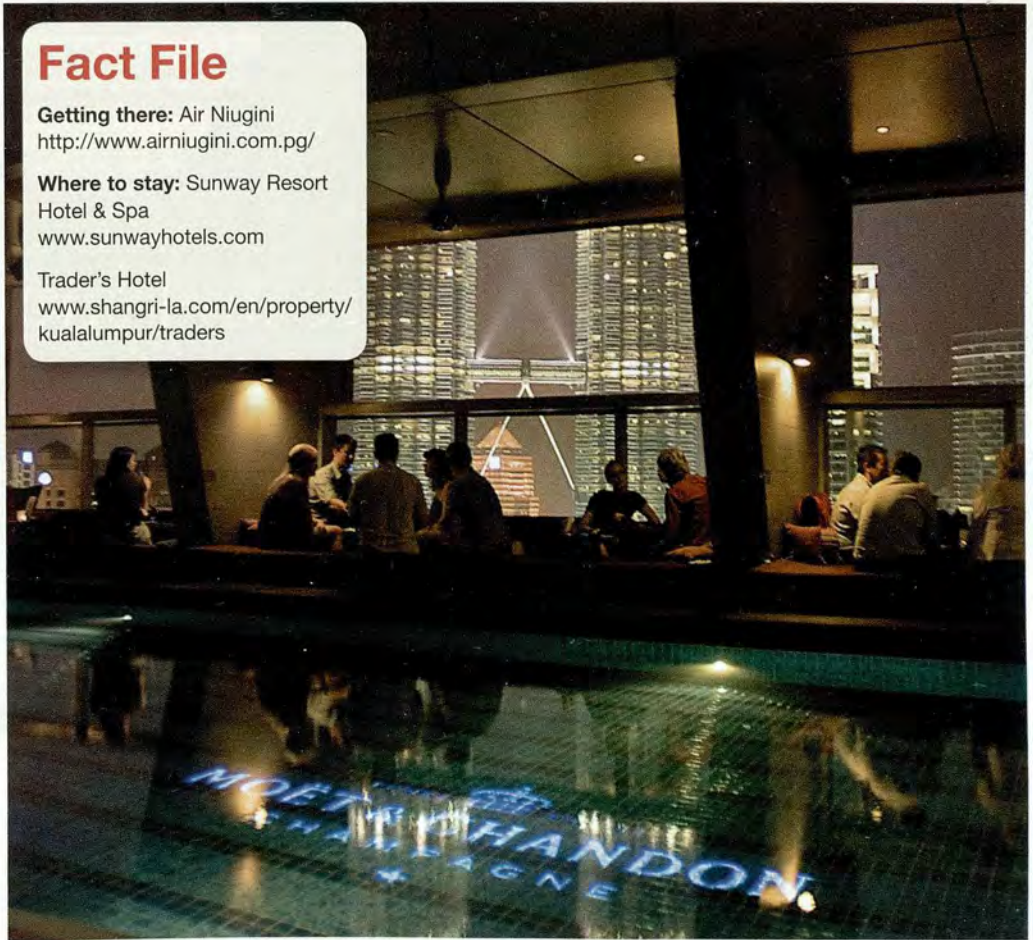
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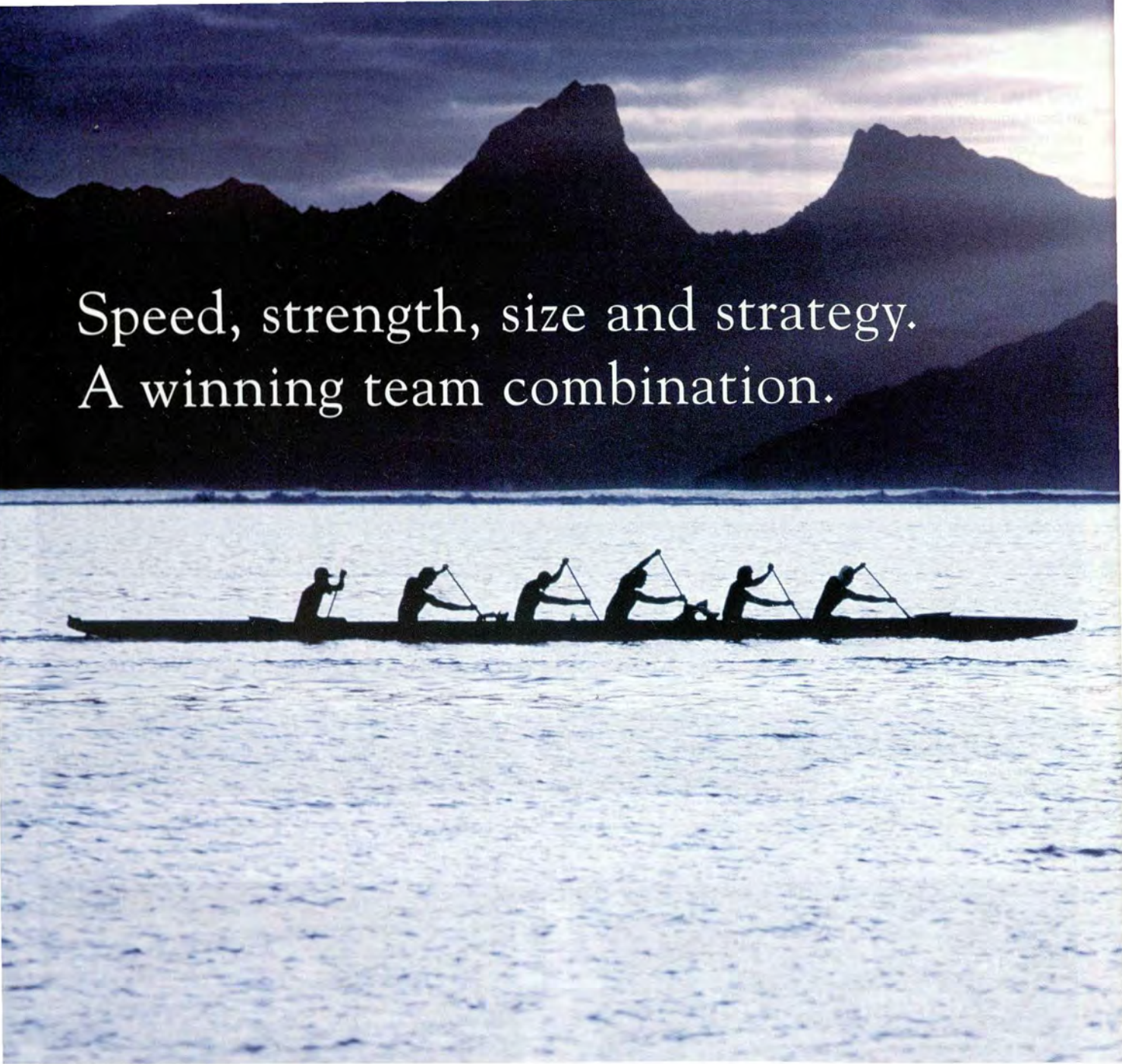
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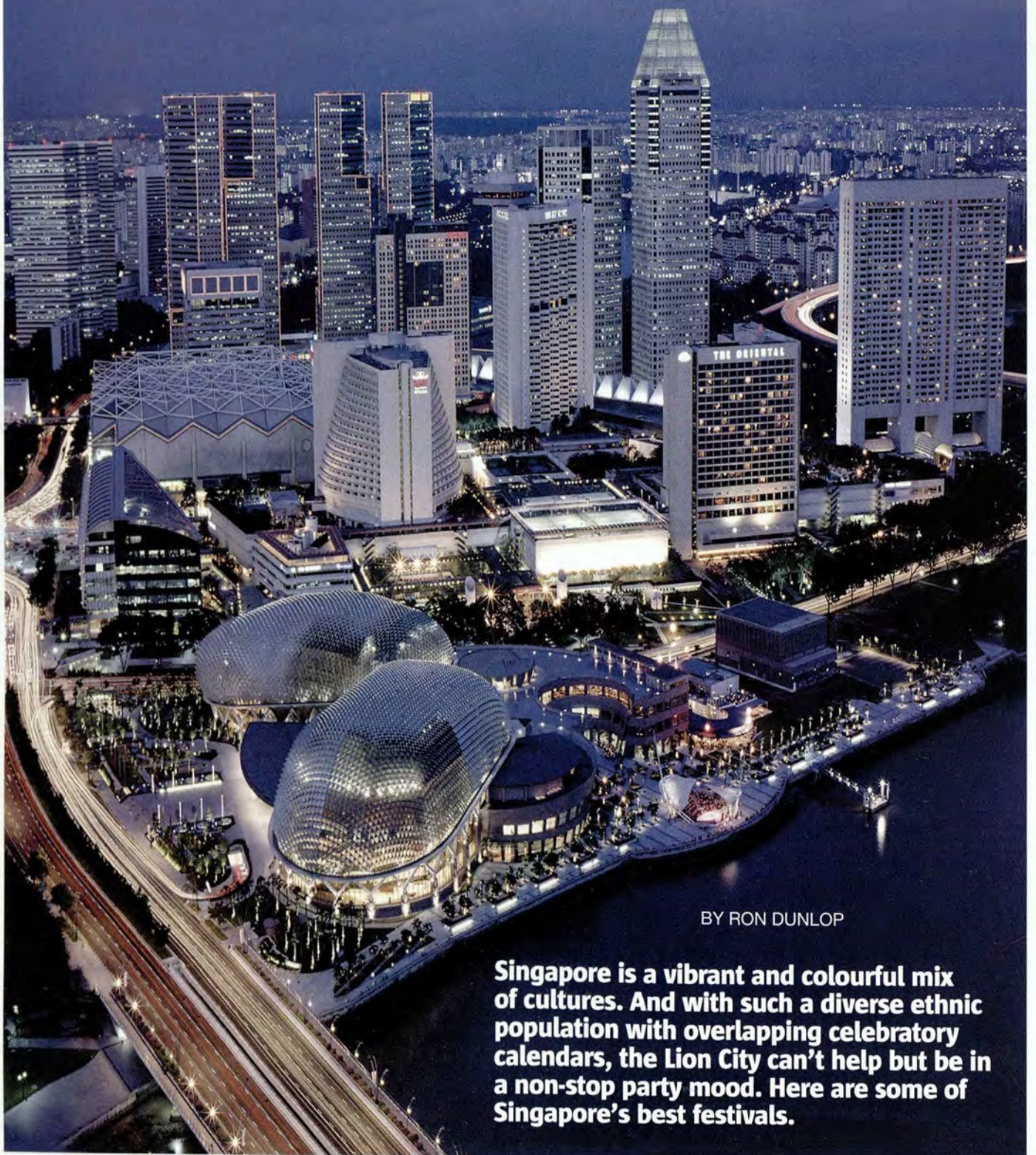
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Singapore's non-stop **PARTY MOOD**



BY RON DUNLOP

Singapore is a vibrant and colourful mix of cultures. And with such a diverse ethnic population with overlapping celebratory calendars, the Lion City can't help but be in a non-stop party mood. Here are some of Singapore's best festivals.



Fancy costume at the Chingay Parade.



Singapore lights up...Chinese New Year.

Chinese New Year Light Up

All Chinese communities in Singapore literally 'light up' during the Chinese New Year celebrations. But it is not just reserved for the New Year's Eve party. For about six weeks the districts are draped in bright lights and lanterns.

Spectacular fireworks light up the skies. And with fireworks available at the markets stalls everyone can take part in illuminating the city. 2010 will mark the Year of the Tiger which represents courage and bravery, ushering in big events. The highlight of the festival is the night-time Chingay Parade down Orchard Road, reminiscent of Rio's Carnival, but billed as Asia's grandest street and float parade. Out in force are colourful costumes, music and a plethora of dancers, including traditional dragon and lion dancers. And, of course, a Samba Parade, but Asian style.

The 2010 Light Up takes place January 23-March 7 and includes the New Year celebrations on February 14. The Chingay Parade will take place on February 19 and 20. **Visit www.chingay.org.sg**

Singapore Arts Festival

This is Singapore's premier annual art event, where dance, music, theatre and visual arts come together in a world class spectacle. The internationally renowned festival showcases thousands of artists from dozens of countries. It is fast becoming one of the desired locations for world premier events, both Western and Asian.

Styles of performance range from classical to experimental, including unusual fusions of music such as Indian with Jazz.

While each year guarantees combinations that will break new ground, it's not all about pushing boundaries. More traditional Western and Eastern forms still take place, such as ballets, orchestras, belly dancing and of course Singapore's Lion dance. Exciting outdoor events and concerts also help to give the festival broad appeal. The city's cultural landscape is indeed healthy. The Singapore Arts Festival, a four-week celebration, will take place May 14 to June 13. **Visit www.singaporeartsfest.com**

Singapore Food Festival

The Singapore Food Festival is a showcase of the city's culinary delights. Every style and tastebud is catered for, including traditional

hawker fare, seafood banquets and elegant high-end dining.

Beautiful tropical fruit arrangements are on display, along with live seafood in large purpose-built tanks. Cooking workshops spring up all over the city. And look out for free food tastings. Yum!

The festival is a chance to indulge in the multiculturalism of Singapore via its mouth-watering flavours. Mix up the famous Singapore Chili Crab with ethnic cuisine from Chinatown, Little India and the Muslim

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Singapore...a constant food festival.

quarter, Kampong Glam, for Malay dishes. Aromas and taste sensations don't come much better than this. At night, colourful street celebrations rule. And along Singapore River Market, the restaurants, cafes and bars are abuzz with gastronomical partying. The festival takes place every July for two weeks; 2010 dates are yet to be announced. Visit www.singaporefoodfestival.com

Hari Raya Aidilfitri

Hari Raya Aidilfitri is a Muslim celebration for Singapore's Malay community, marking the end of the fasting month, Ramadan. So expect food aplenty. The historic Kampong Glam and Geylang Serai districts, also known as the Muslim quarter, burst with the colour and aroma. Street lights illuminate market stalls selling traditional handicrafts, while foods stalls overflow with tasty Malay delicacies. Nasi Padang is a concoction of steamed white rice with spicy meat and vegetables, and goes a treat with Teh tarik, a milky tea drink. Traditional dancing and handicraft demonstrations are also on display during the festival. For the Malay community, Hari Raya Aidilfitri is about renewal and that can also mean stepping out in new clothes. The special event of the festival is the 'breaking of

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fast', which takes place at the Sultan Mosque in Kampong Glam. Everyone dresses up for this one.

The annual festival usually takes place between August and September; 2010 dates are yet to be announced. Visit www.visitsingapore.com/1city3fest

Mid-Autumn Festival

The Chinese love a party. And they certainly know how to host one. The Mid-Autumn Festival has been in full swing for some 3000 years in Chinese culture, and is the second most important celebration on the calendar after Chinese New Year. The festival rejoices the end of the summer harvesting season on the 15th day of the Lunar month. During this time, when the moon is at its brightest, Chinatown also becomes ablaze with the colour of street lights and lanterns. Hundreds of festive stalls line the streets offering up goodies and food such as the traditional pomelos and mooncakes, which is the symbol of the festival and exchanged between friends and family. Myth has it that mooncakes were once used to transmit secret messages, but today they transmit delights such as lotus seed paste and tropical fruit. Nightly stage shows take place during the festival,



Mid-Autumn Festival.

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as well as the Mass Lantern Walk procession - a night treat, which also closes the event. The annual festival usually takes place between September and October; 2010 dates are yet to be announced. Visit www.visitsingapore.com/1city3fest

Deepavali

During Deepavali, Singapore's Little India throws its arms in the air. Also known as the Festival of Light, it is the most important event on the Hindu calendar, celebrating good over evil. Fairy lights adorn Serangoon Road while oil lamps burn brightly, creating a dazzling night-time display. The three temples Sri Veeramakaliamman, Sri Vadapathira Kaliamman and Sri Srinivasa Perumal are also decorated in lights. All temples openly welcome visitors. While spicy aromas hang in the air, market stalls offer up sweets, saris, jewellery and authentic handicrafts. Beautiful flower offerings, including Singapore orchids, are in abundance and draped everywhere. Young girls parade in elaborate jewel encrusted head gear. Traditional dancers hit the streets and on stages in splendid saris. The rhythm and beat of the dancing is infectious. In a gob-smacking display of devotion, the faithful walk bare-footed across coals. The annual festival usually takes place between September and October; 2010 dates are yet to be announced. Visit www.visitsingapore.com/1city3fest

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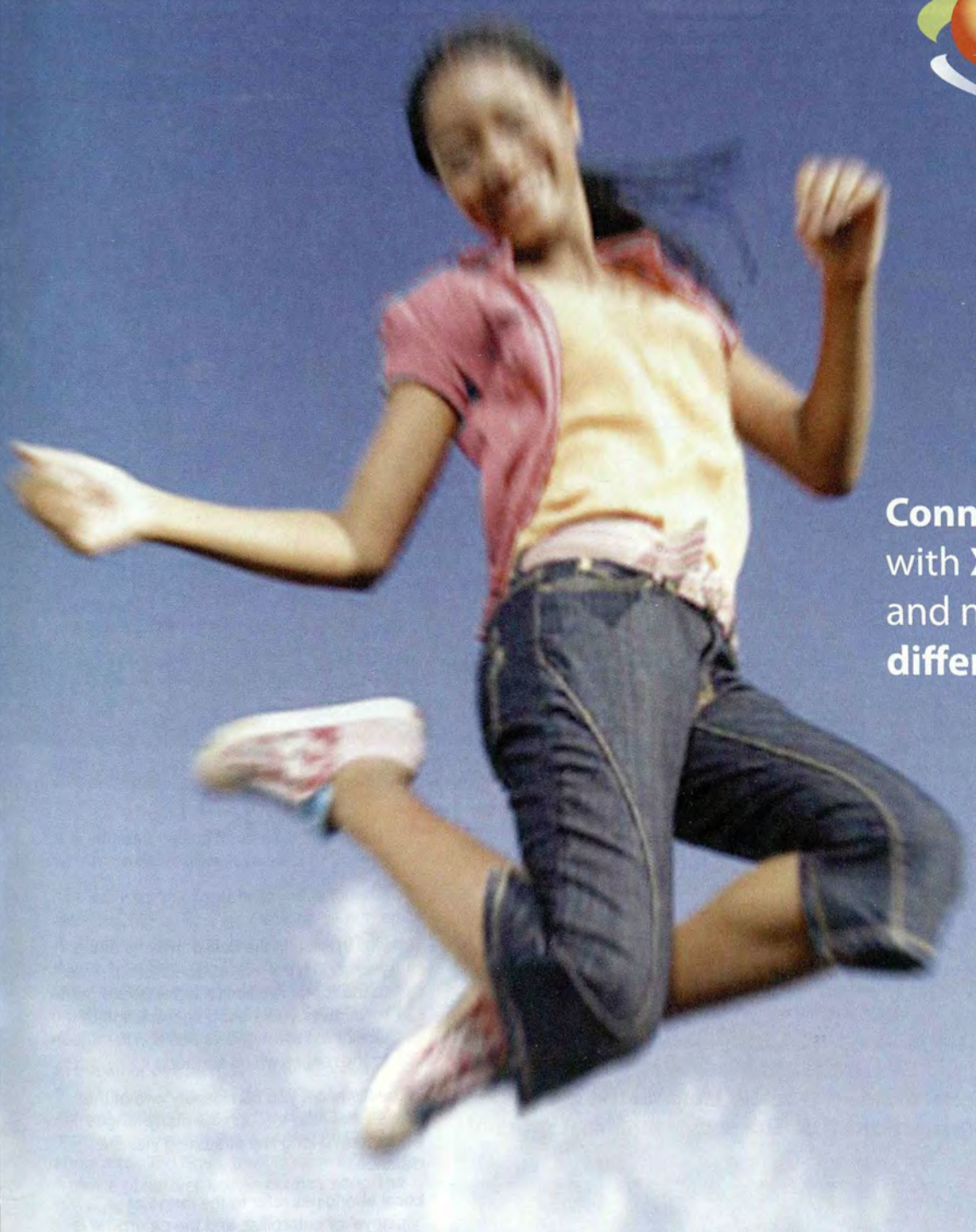
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Racing, Alice Springs Style!

BY DIANA MCMANUS

Most Australians, when they hear the word racing, immediately think of horses, or perhaps greyhounds. Even if they aren't seasoned punters, everyone has heard of the Melbourne Cup and some may even know of the Victorian Spring Racing Season which encompasses the Caulfield Cup and McKinnon Stakes as well. It's part of Australia's national identity. But few know of the exciting races which make the Territorians tick. The camel and boat races of Alice Springs!

I was in Alice in the cooler months of the year for a work related conference. A walk to the top of Anzac Hill in the centre of the town gives you a good appreciation of the size of the town and its position in relation to the ranges which surround it.

In the distance, you can identify one of the passes that lead through the many ranges which form a long line stretching into the distance.

Local aborigines refer to the range as 'yipirinye' or caterpillar, and the caterpillar is their totem. From the air, the ranges do indeed look like a train of caterpillars crawling across the desert.

Aboriginal culture is undergoing a renaissance as new businesses owned and operated by aboriginal people are opening up.

Tourism ventures to nearby canyons, chasms, and, of course, Uluru (300 kilometres away), naturopathic creams and cosmetics made from local shrubs and flowers, aboriginal art; all have given rise to new shops and galleries and income earning capacity for locals.

A short way out of town is the old Telegraph Station which heralded vital communications to the nation's red centre.





The old Telegraph station.

It is situated beside another dry river bed which, on occasions, has water in it.

The early settler, Todd, must have found a wet spot fed by springs because he named it after his wife, Alice, hence the town's later name Alice Springs. The Telegraph Station is surrounded by rocky hills full of wallabies. Nearby, is a historically sacred bora ground where ceremonial corroborees were held.

In the other direction, about 30 kilometres out of town, lies Ooramina Homestead, one of the earliest cattle stations in the district, which is now a movie set! Years earlier, Australian songwriter, Ted Egan, tried to raise funds for a movie of his well known country song The Drover's Boy.

He raised enough money to build the set and film a couple of 'takes' but couldn't find backers. The owners of the station have opened this outback town set to the public for functions. With a huge illuminated bluff nearby, the site is fantastic.

On the way to Ooramina lies the race track. Undoubtedly, the highlight of the visit was the camel race meeting on the Saturday afternoon. People had come from miles around for the event.

There's no doubt at all that the 'Alicians' can dream up some pretty fun events to keep themselves and others amused. The Imparja Camel Cup is one of them and held every year in July.



Rock Wallabies.



From the air, the ranges do indeed look like a train of caterpillars crawling across the desert.



Total chaos as the riders try to make the camels to sit down.

I sat on a little stand with a hundred other people about half way around the race track which seemed to be the best place to see the camels in full lope! Loudspeakers blared out the names and endearing qualities of the camels, inspiring the punters to lay bets on their favourites.

Camels in a zoo are one thing. Camels in a desert are another. But camels on a racetrack are something else again! Grunting, snorting, bellowing and pounding their way around the Alice Springs Racetrack, the camels and their riders excited and delighted the enthralled crowd.

I thought my stand would fall apart as we all jumped up cheering to watch the beasts round the bend with necks outstretched and riders bouncing behind their humps.

What a sight. Race after race churned the track up and sent the dirt flying.

Between events other silly nonsense took place on centre oval. A couple of 'fashion' events produced Vikings and sheiks and all manner of strange beings, both male and female, along with some pretty funny human drawn chariot races. Around the oval food stalls and other operators sold the usual trinkets and goodies found at these events.

By far the most popular race of the day was the Honeymoon Cup. A contingent of young men escorting helmeted girls gathered on the track right in front of our stand.

The object of the race was for the riders to race their camels half way around the arena, pick up their girl and 'ride off into the sunset'.

When you're talking camels, this is easier said than done. Nothing like the swift horseback pickups we've all seen in the movies where our hero swoops out of nowhere, scoops up his girl and off they ride. Camels need to sit down to be mounted!

Around the bend stampede the camels in a cloud of dust. Suddenly they're pulled up short right in front of us amidst a lot of grunting, protesting and deep throaty moans.



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Come on...let me get on... the most popular race of the day - the Honeymoon Cup.

Our hardy helpers, the men on the ground, run forward and try to assist the riders in making their camels sit down. This doesn't happen in a neat little row or all at once. Camels are turning every which way and facing every direction...as long as they get down! It's noisy, chaotic and thrilling. The blokes are yelling.

The girls are shouting. They plough through the dirt and are helped on board. Up get the camels, point for home and away they go with their 'prize'.

Racing camels! It seems outrageous. Yet somehow, in the lee of the bright red ranges, with a big blue sky and blazing sun



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Todd River walkway. Right. Todd River bridge.

annual Todd River Regatta; a fun event involving bottomless boats and their bare legged running crews beating up and down the river bed.

Well, what else can you do when the water flows underground? There's no doubt that originality is the key word when summing up racing Alice Springs style.



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overhead, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to be watching on that Saturday afternoon. It was a great family fun day and if I had the opportunity to go again, I would jump at it. As long as I'm not on the camel's back.

Meanwhile, back in town concrete bike paths and footways line the dry bed of the Todd River, which a few weeks later would host the

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Escape to Brisbane

Things to do that won't cost you the world

BY ISABELLE DINA

There is no better time than spring to visit Brisbane, the most progressive, innovating and green city of Australia.

Brisbane is officially listed as Australia's fastest growing city with 19,000 new residents moving to there every year.

Being the third-largest city in Australia, Brisbane is a little different from its big sisters Sydney and Melbourne with its casual Queensland style.

Ask any Queenslanders and they will tell you they have it all, and as a visitor you can enjoy most of what this vibrant city has to offer.

Brisbanites love their water and their outdoor life and they have gone as far as building a beach in the middle of their city. But most of all, they love their diverse communities and its relaxed lifestyle. And, of course, the weather. With only eight weeks of cold nights, they can bask in the sun for the rest of the year.

Affectionately known as Brizzie to Australians, Brisbane is certainly full of life.

Here's what you can do if you have a few days to spare while in Brisbane:



Lone Pine Sanctuary

Start your day experiencing some of the best wildlife in Australia at the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary. The cheapest way to get to the sanctuary is to catch bus number 430 in George Street (near the casino).

Nestled in the bush land on the banks of the Brisbane river, Lone Pine is home to 130 koalas and at least 100 species of Australian native animals.

The entry fee of A\$28 is worth every cent as it is the only zoo where you can have a natural encounter with animals, hold a koala and hand feed and pet roaming kangaroos, wallabies and lorikeets. Don't miss out on the twice-a-day bird of prey flight show with several kinds of raptors showing off their speed, agility and keen eye sight.

Kangaroos at Lone Pine.



Java Coast cafe on George Street.

Time to return to the city and grab a well deserved lunch. Try Java Coast Café on George Street, a lovely little alley cafe neatly tucked between the city walls. Their courtyard of brick, gravels, and leafy greenery offers an unusual sanctuary where you can enjoy a savvy lunch at a reasonable price of \$7 to \$11 for the main course. I am always tempted by the 3-dip combination with Babaganoush, ricotta pesto, and humus served with freshly toasted bread.

Breads at Chouquette.



Queen Street Mall

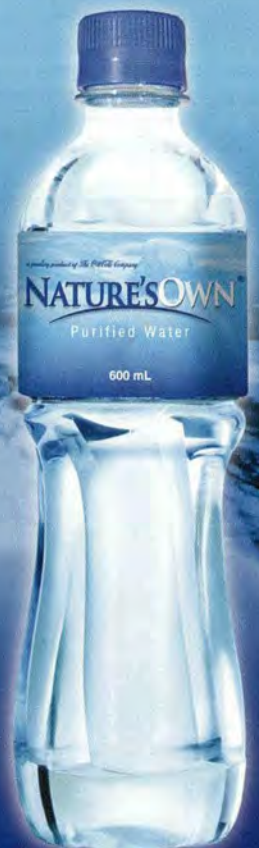
In the mood for some shopping? The Queen Street Mall has the answer to all your shopping needs with sales reaching 40% in October. Located in the heart of the city, it boasts five major shopping centres, department stores such as Myers and four shopping arcades where you can shop to your heart's content.



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Topless Bars

Your stay would not be complete without experiencing the latest craze of topless bars (not that you will find any topless girls there), so head to Fortitude Valley, the hub of Brisbane's nightlife and experience a social night at the Limes Hotel. A modern yet warm urban retreat, it offers a rooftop bar, rooftop cinema and a view of the city. Enjoy a glass of wine or a cocktail and watch the glow of fluorescent fuchsia, yellow and blue lights attracting the trendiest crowd. In case you may over indulge, you can stay the night for a special rate of A\$99 in one of the 21 black and white guestrooms.

Brisbane River

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major bridges including the latest one (the impressive multiple mast Kurilpa Bridge which opened in October), the river connects you to all that Brisbane has to offer.

You can jump on a CityCat ferry for a couple of dollars and continue the adventure to South Bank for an afternoon of arts or the beach.

South Bank, a modern urban village, features South Bank Parklands, 17 hectares of lush gardens and lawns, interactive playgrounds for children to swing, climb and have a slide. The Arbour is made up of 443 curling, tendril-like columns of steel, each covered with a train of vibrant magenta bougainvillea plants weaving through the centre for about a kilometre. Street Beach has a unique man-made swimming beach and lagoon and is the most popular spot to cool off.

The Arbour...made up of 443 curling, tendril-like columns of steel.



Brisbane City from Goma



Queensland Cultural Precinct

Queensland Cultural Precinct is the home of Goma, a gallery of modern art, which is fairly new and has already gained international reputation. Be prepared for monumental works with exhibitions of various media, art forms and practices. Goma is linked to the Queensland Museum and is next to the State Library. All museums and galleries are free except during special exhibitions.




Queensland Museum.

Plough Inn Tavern

Let your hair down for the evening and head to the Plough Inn Tavern on Stanley Street Plaza (in the heart of South Bank Parklands), a historical and iconic Queensland pub with a modern twist, with its terrace revealing a sprawling view of the city skyline. Feast on their smoked ribs (you are in the barbecue country) and sit back and enjoy the live music.



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The middle of an intense bout.

Wrestle Mania

BY MATTHEW KNOTT

Two wrestlers crouch forward with huge clenched fists supporting their mammoth frames and stares fixed on each other. Time seems to momentarily stand still before they surge forward. The opening thud of two pumped, top-heavy sumo wrestlers colliding at the beginning of a match must be one of the most awesome sounds and sights in sports.

When you are close enough to see the intensity in their eyes and potentially be flattened by them, it is both a terrifying and an exhilarating experience. The three 15-day tournaments per year in Tokyo are a wonderful opportunity to witness the history, atmosphere and rituals of this 1500-year old martial art. But watching a training session also offers the chance of feeling the bruising power and dedication of the wrestlers.

I arrived at the Tomozuna training stable (beya) at 7:30am to find a modest building similar to many private residences in Tokyo. There was little hint of the activities inside until a tall wrestler with legs like tree trunks, naked except for his trademark sumo mawashi (heavy-silk loincloth), appeared. Immediately, I felt incredibly small and fragile.

Even more so when I was invited to take a seat on the small wooden-floored viewing area and saw about 30 wrestlers warming up and lifting weights. It was a simple room with a dohyo ring, a small shrine and an old portrait of a sumo on the wall.

Many training sessions are open to the public, but on this occasion I was lucky enough to be the only visitor. My own private sumo show!

The warm-ups continued with pushing practice, where one sumo stood firm while another tried to summon the strength and grip to force them across the ring, and also nimble foot-sliding movements that are an integral part of the sport. Many training sessions are open to the public, but on this occasion I was lucky enough to be the only visitor. My own private sumo show!

At 8am, the practice wrestling matches began and gradually increased in competitiveness. Punching is banned in sumo, but the lusty slaps left visible marks, while occasionally losing sumo were hurtled from the dohyo and smacked into a wall. Still they came back for more each time. One plucky young trainee bounced up each time with a huge grin on his face! After two hours of wrestling the sumo warmed down with a series of stretches and movements, many of which have actually become very popular as exercise routines across Japan.

Throughout the session the strict seniority and respect of sumo was evident. The most senior and experienced wrestlers didn't partake in



The opening impact of a sumo bout.



Junior sumo stretching after training.



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A sumo wrestler takes a break after a hard training session.

the bouts until late in the session. If they lost to a junior fighter, they were given chances to save face, and if they won, the other fighters clamoured like over-eager schoolchildren to test their skills against the respected warrior.

Ultimate respect is reserved for the stable master, who occasionally looked up from his newspaper and coffee to bark instructions at his charges.

At the end it was the younger trainees who were happy to chat and pose for photographs. One wrestler explained to me that their day was far from over with cleaning, chores and the preparation of the famous chanko nabe hotpot lunch ahead of them. Another told me he arrived from China seven years ago to become a sumo. It is increasingly common for wrestlers to come from overseas, particularly Eastern Europe, Mongolia, and Hawaii.

Sumo has an intriguing history and at various stages has been used as peace ceremony, prayer for harvest, royal entertainment and military training. Legend holds that the origin of the Japanese race depended on the god Takemikazuchi winning a sumo bout against the leader of another tribe. It was during the Edo Period (1603-1868) that professional sumo was organised to entertain the masses and truly became the national sport of Japan. The governing Japan Sumo Association has roots in groups formed then.

This colourful background is represented in a museum at Ryogoku Kokugikan, Tokyo's magnificent sumo stadium. Standing in contrast to the modernity surrounding it, the giant slanted, green-tiled roof makes an enchanting welcome and few sporting venues can be as ornate on the inside. The dohyo is 4.55 metres in diameter, constructed from straw rice bales and sits atop a platform made from clay. Shadowing the ring is an imposing roof resembling a Shinto shrine with huge tassels in each corner representing the four seasons and a chrysanthemum flag.

Tournaments (bashi) in Tokyo are held in January, May and September and the buzz outside the Kokugikan is captivating. The sight of sumo wandering

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Sumo wrestlers show how big they are.

in and out of stores in the surrounding area only adds to the spectacle. There are a limited number of special tickets for foreigners that allow visitors to sit anywhere in the stadium until that seat-holder arrives.

If you are early enough, you can sit in the front row box seats for a while. The bouts actually begin at 8:40am with young trainees and progress through the ranks. At about 3:50pm the makuuchi (top-division) sumo appear for a ceremonial entrance called dohyo-iri and face

the crowd dressed in vivid, gold-fringed silk aprons.

It is then left to the mighty yokozuna wrestlers to then engage the fans. Wearing a massive braided hemp rope they clap to attract the attention of the gods, show palms to indicate they are not concealing weapons and then perform a resounding stamp to symbolically drive evil from the dohyo. The yokozuna is the highest rank within the makuuchi and only 68 have been honoured in the 300 years

since the creation of the position, all of them honoured with portraits around the arena. Uniquely they cannot be demoted, but have to win several tournaments, perform consistently and be considered of worthy character to hold the exalted rank. The makuuchi bouts then commence to great excitement, with the yokozuna matches closing the schedule just before 6pm.

At this point the atmosphere in the auditorium will become electrifying. Sumo bouts usually last only a few seconds, but matches that become deadlocked draw extra excitement. The crowd loves an upset and if a yokozuna is defeated the front rows will throw their cushions into the ring. The yokozuna positions are currently held by Mongolians Asashoryu and Hakuho and it is about seven years since a Japanese wrestler occupied the rank, so there is extra spice if a home favourite defeats the top dogs.

Although the rules of a sumo bout appear relatively straightforward – to force your opponent from the ring or onto the floor of the dohyo – there are actually 82 officially recognised winning techniques. Striking with fists, hair pulling, eye gouging, choking and kicking are all prohibited. There are no weight divisions in sumo, meaning it is quite common during the day to see an intriguing clash of a gargantuan sumo against a relatively slender opponent. Yokozuna Asashoryu is famed for

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a lifting body slam technique of immense strength that has seen him lift and dump bigger rivals.

As well as the fights it is the pomp and ceremony of this ancient sport that truly leaves a lasting impression. Each top division bout is preceded by a teasing round of rituals that gradually build the tension. To cleanse mind and body they symbolically rinse their mouths with water and then several moves from the yokozuna's dohyo-iri are repeated with successive stamps drawing louder cheers. Each sumo then tosses a handful of salt to purify the ring before crouching in the 'get-set' position with fists on the ground and glares at his rival. This 'cold warfare' process is repeated for as much as four minutes (significantly longer than the bout itself), but the sumo signify they are ready with a series of hearty slaps of their own belt or body. The gyoji (referee), colourfully dressed in traditional kimono and black hat, announces the wrestlers in theatrical voice and then signals the time to begin with a wave of his fan.

The effectiveness of a sumo's training and technique is then tested in a few manic seconds. Short they may be, but sumo bouts are infused with drama, skill, power and thrills.




Fact File

TOURNAMENTS – There are six basho per year in Japan: Three in Tokyo (January, May, September) as well as events in Osaka (March), Nagoya (July) and Fukuoka (November). Special foreign visitor tickets allowing you to move around are limited in number and issued on a first-come-first-serve basis on the day for 2100 yen, while regular arena seats start from 3600 yen. Weekends tend to be busy, especially the final day. Tournament schedules and ticket information are available at <http://www.sumo.or.jp/eng/index.html>.

TRAINING – There are a few training stables that are happy for foreign visitors to view their morning training sessions

including Tomozuna beya (<http://www.tomozuna-beya-fansite.biz/News.htm>) and Musashigawa beya (<http://www.musashigawa.jp/?lang=1>). Contact should be made the day before visiting. The Japan National Tourism Organisation (<http://www.jnto.go.jp/>) as well as the sumo website above can also provide information about stables. Many others are happy for foreign visitors to attend along with a Japanese speaker.

ETIQUETTE – Observers of morning training will be expected to arrive early, sit quietly and to not eat or drink during the training. Permission should be asked before taking photographs. A bottle of sake for the stable master is considered polite.

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program experience. There is an additional 150 person years of investment over an 8 year period of development.

The system has been implemented by airlines all over the world and is available at more than 90 global offices with over 2,000 on-line users, with a support team of 50 highly skilled loyalty systems business and technical professionals.

Add to that a team of dedicated customer service and IT personnel at Air Niugini and it's easy to see why 2010 will be a significant landmark in the development of Papua New Guinea's national flag-carrier. We call it innovation... from the ground up!



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Air Niugini targets frontliners



Cabin crew...back to school.

Air Niugini cabin crew members are further enhancing their skills and knowledge following a refresher course on customer service held at the airline's Training Centre in Port Moresby recently.

During the week-long course, cabin crew members went through intense sessions covering various aspects of customer services.

The training provided by a consultant from Malaysia Airlines covered topics ranging from

communication to voice enrichment, impact and impression on customers.

As the frontliners, cabin crew members were encouraged to ensure they have a positive and lasting impression on customers by ensuring they are pleasant, courteous and diligent in their approach.

Air Niugini Chief Executive Officer, Wasantha Kumarasiri, in closing the workshop, said such refresher courses are important for staff members.

"As CEO, it is my commitment to ensure all staff members in this entire organisation have some kind of refresher course to enhance their skills and knowledge in the work they do.

"Once everyone is on the same line of thinking, only then can we move Air Niugini forward."

Similar trainings are being planned for the coming weeks for other members of the cabin crew as well as staff from other departments within Air Niugini.

Loyalty program customer services team

Air Niugini has announced its loyalty program customer services team, as the airline moves towards the launch of its new Destinations Loyalty Program in January 2010.

The four-person team is headed by Loa Morea, Customer Loyalty Program Coordinator, with Henry Gelu, Gibson Tom and Evangelyn Paul appointed as Customer Loyalty Program Officers.

The team will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the program and will handle customer enquiries via the program's

180 3444 hot-line number, as well as customer services such as fulfillment and mail-outs.

Located in the Air Niugini telephone sales department, the team is currently being trained in all aspects of the Mercator CRIS (Customer Relationship Information System), which is hosted in Dubai as part of the highly-successful Emirates Airlines group of companies.

Loa and her team are managed by Ms Kilomona Oka, Air Niugini Telephone Sales Manager, and they're working in conjunction with Loyalty Program Coordinator, Abigail Popoitai.



New flight schedule



Air Niugini has since October introduced a new flight schedule aimed at allowing more connections for its valued customers during the peak festive period.

The new schedule which came into effect on October 25 will mean more connections

within Papua New Guinea and abroad. There are five additional flights between Port Moresby and Lihir in New Ireland, bringing the total to 12 flights per week.

Of the five flights, three operate direct from Lihir to Rabaul and back to Lihir while the rest are from Port Moresby to Lihir and back

to Port Moresby.

The Lihir/Rabaul/Lihir flights operate every Monday, Wednesday and Friday while the POM/Lihir/POM flights are scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Air Niugini has also resumed the Tabubil/Mt Hagen service. This flight operates every Wednesday commencing from Port Moresby to Tabubil, then Mt Hagen to Tabubil and returns to Port Moresby.

The new sectors have been created due to demand in passenger movement.

The airline's Fokker 100 aircraft is for the first time, staying overnight in Vanimo, Sandaun Province, for up to two nights a week and five nights in Wewak, East Sepik.

This will allow more connections for holidaymakers during the Christmas period. There is also an additional F100 overnight in Cairns, Australia, increasing its stay to two overnights.

Air Niugini has also resumed its non-stop services from Port Moresby to Kuala Lumpur and Port Moresby (POM) to Singapore, replacing the combined services. The POM/Kuala Lumpur direct service is scheduled for Wednesday, while the POM/Singapore service is on every Monday and Thursday.

The remaining days and timelines on the previous schedule remain unchanged. Air Niugini calls on its valued customers to take note of the new changes and amend their travel accordingly.



New appointments

Air Niugini has appointed two new General Managers to head the airline's Finance and Flight Operations Departments.

Philip Williams (right) is now in charge of the Finance Department, while John Cappelletti (left) now heads Flight Operations.

Mr Williams is an Australian chartered accountant with over 20 years experience.

He started at KPMG as an undergraduate cadet in the Audit and Advisory Division in Sydney, then went back to school to complete his Economics degree from Macquarie University and other further

professional studies, where he qualified as a chartered accountant.

Since KPMG, he has held other senior financial roles for large companies in both Sydney and London including Westfield Holdings, Thakral Holdings and Laing O' Rourke.

Mr Cappelletti, on the other hand, is not new to Air Niugini and Flights Operations. He was with Air Niugini as the GM Flight Operations from 2003 to 2006.

He joins Air Niugini from PNG Air Services where he performed as the Chief Executive Officer. The experience gained there together with his previous airline experience and qualifications will bring valuable management experience to the airline.

The two gentlemen said it's an exciting time for Air Niugini and they are looking forward to working with the airline's management team to realise the opportunities unfolding for Air Niugini and the country.

Air Niugini Chief Executive Officer, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri welcomed the two general managers saying their wealth of experience would be an added advantage to Air Niugini.

Air Niugini supports women's empowerment

Air Niugini has again supported this year's Westpac Women in Business Award.

The airline has been supportive of this award since it was launched three years ago by providing airline tickets for the finalists living outside Port Moresby to attend the event.

Westpac Women's award recognises and rewards PNG women who have forged new grounds and made valuable contributions to our young nation.

Thirteen women were chosen as finalists for the six categories this year including Private and Corporate Sector award, Public sector, Entrepreneur, Community Responsibility and Young Achievers Award.

The overall winner of the 2009 Westpac Award went to Betty Higgins. She is the owner and manager of Mt Wilhelm Trout Farm in Simbu Province.



Winners of the 2009 Westpac Women in Business Awards. The overall winner is Betty Higgins (in red) in front.

Hawke draws winners



Former Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke sharing some tips with Air Niugini's General Manager-Marketing, Colin Lyttle and wife Debbie (left) during the promotion.

Air Niugini had the opportunity to invite former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke to draw tickets during the airline's annual key draw promotions in Port Moresby last month.

Mr Hawke was in the country as one of the recipients of the 2009 PNG New Year's Honour's List and coincidentally was at the Port Moresby Yacht Club that evening, an opportunity Air Niugini's marketing team couldn't bypass.

The former Australian Prime Minister was made Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu, the highest award for a non citizen. He was recognised for his services to PNG prior to and since independence through his involvement in the establishment of the PNG Trade Union movement and early national wage development.

The key draw promotions are held every October involving Air Niugini's friends and supporters, representatives from other corporate organisations and members of the yacht club in which airline tickets are given to lucky winners for trip to both domestic and international destinations of their choice.



Air Niugini supports the blind

Air Niugini has been supportive of the work done by doctors in restoring eyesight of corneally blind Papua New Guineans. The airline since 1996 has assisted by uplifting box containing cornea or human eyes, free of charge from abroad, the arrangement so far has ensured 20 Papua New Guineans having their eyesight restored. Another box was uplifted from Singapore recently.

This donation from the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society Limited, an eye bank in Sri Lanka, will go a long way in helping restore the sight of six Papua New Guineans. The arrangement involved in the transportation and storage of such donation is very important as the cornea can be stored up to only six days before being transplanted to the blind and this is where Air Niugini comes in.



Air Niugini Chief Executive Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri (right) handing over a box containing cornea which arrived from Sri Lanka to Dr Perera Lalith of University of Papua New Guinea who will deliver it to the Port Moresby General Hospital for the transplant.



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Welcome to Papua New Guinea

General Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What to See and Do



Ideal Cruising Experience

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

Diving

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

Trekking the rugged terrains

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

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

Excellent Fishing

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

Surfing the waves

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

Bird Watching

Bird watching does not only require dead silence, it provides the opportunity for watchers to take in nature's most eerie surroundings and eternal spring whether up in the Highlands or in a typical tropical weather in the coastal areas. Over 700 species of feathered fliers flutter across our island including 38 of the 43

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

World War II Relics

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

Astounding Volcanoes

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

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

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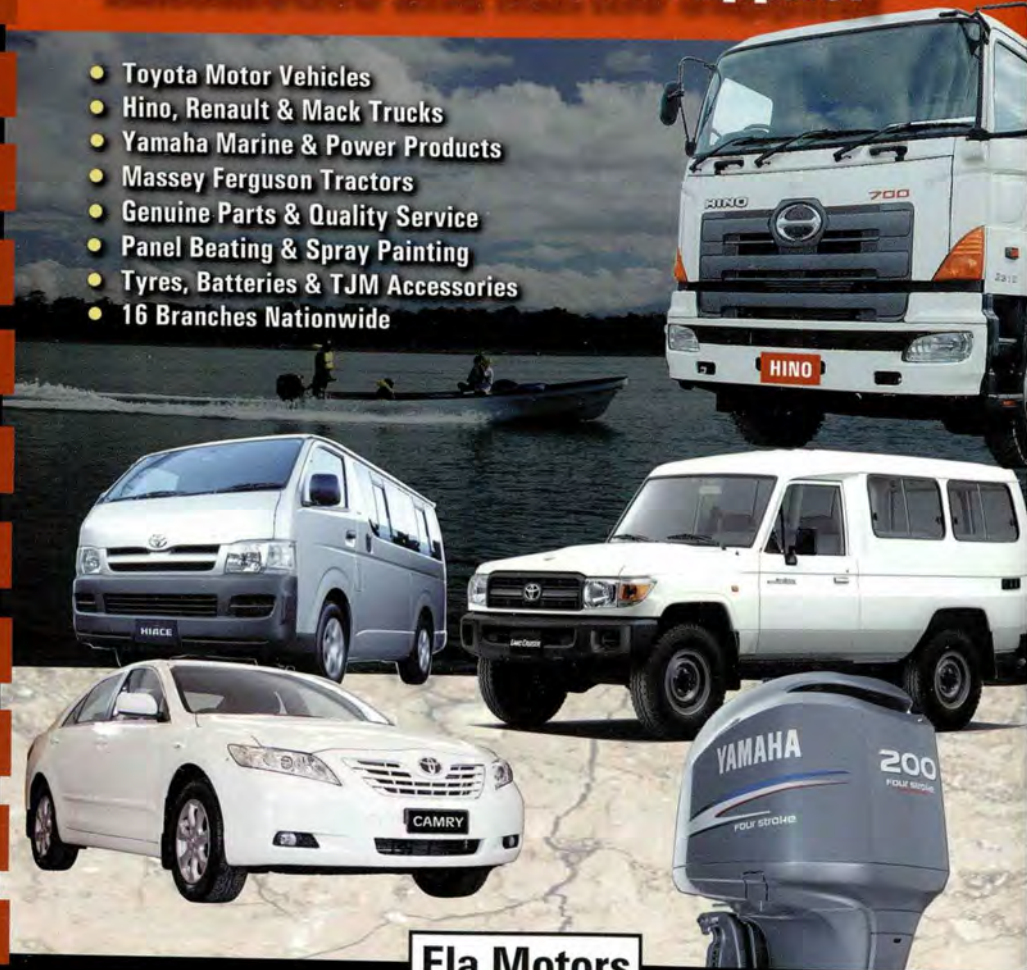
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