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VOL 2, 2011

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Swire PNG Rainforest Study



John Swire & Sons and Steamships are proud to support the Swire Papua New Guinea Rainforest Study (SPRS), which was officially launched this year in the Wanang District, Madang Province.

SPRS has been coordinated by the Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS) of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, in partnership with the New Guinea Binatang Research Centre (BRC), the University of Minnesota, and the University of the Czech Republic.



The project included the construction of the Swire Research Station and establishment of a permanent 50 hectare rainforest monitoring plot which seeks to better understand biodiversity and forest dynamics by accurately mapping, measuring and monitoring all the trees with a trunk diameter of greater than 1cm.



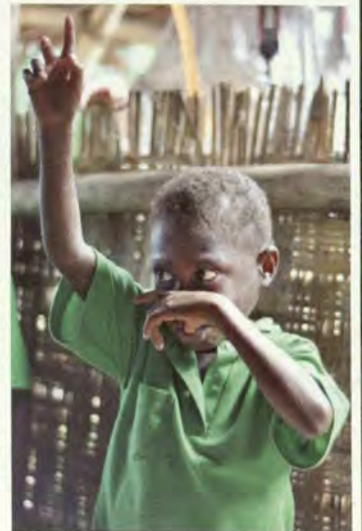
The project represents the first long term study of carbon dynamics in PNG forests and will increase scientists' understanding of forest dynamics and the ability to assess the response of Pacific forests to global climate change.

Being located in the heart of the jungle, Swire Research Station is the first of its kind in PNG,

giving researchers unique opportunities for ecological studies. The centre has accommodation and laboratory space, and is equipped to host national and international researchers. Members of the local community are employed through the Swire Research Centre as field research assistants, giving them the scientific skills required for sustainable forest management.



As part of financing the project, funds were put towards community development projects. After consultation with the community, it became very clear that there was a need for a primary school, as there was no schooling available for any of the region's forest villages in the wider area. The Wanang School has grown rapidly in only 18 months to include four teachers, three classrooms and 150 students. Many of these students come from outside villages, but have been accommodated and absorbed into the community. For all, some as old as 18, this is their first experience of primary education.



The project is replicable and scalable - CTFS is developing a model for emulating across different bioregions of PNG, and plans to establish a network of forest observatories across the country.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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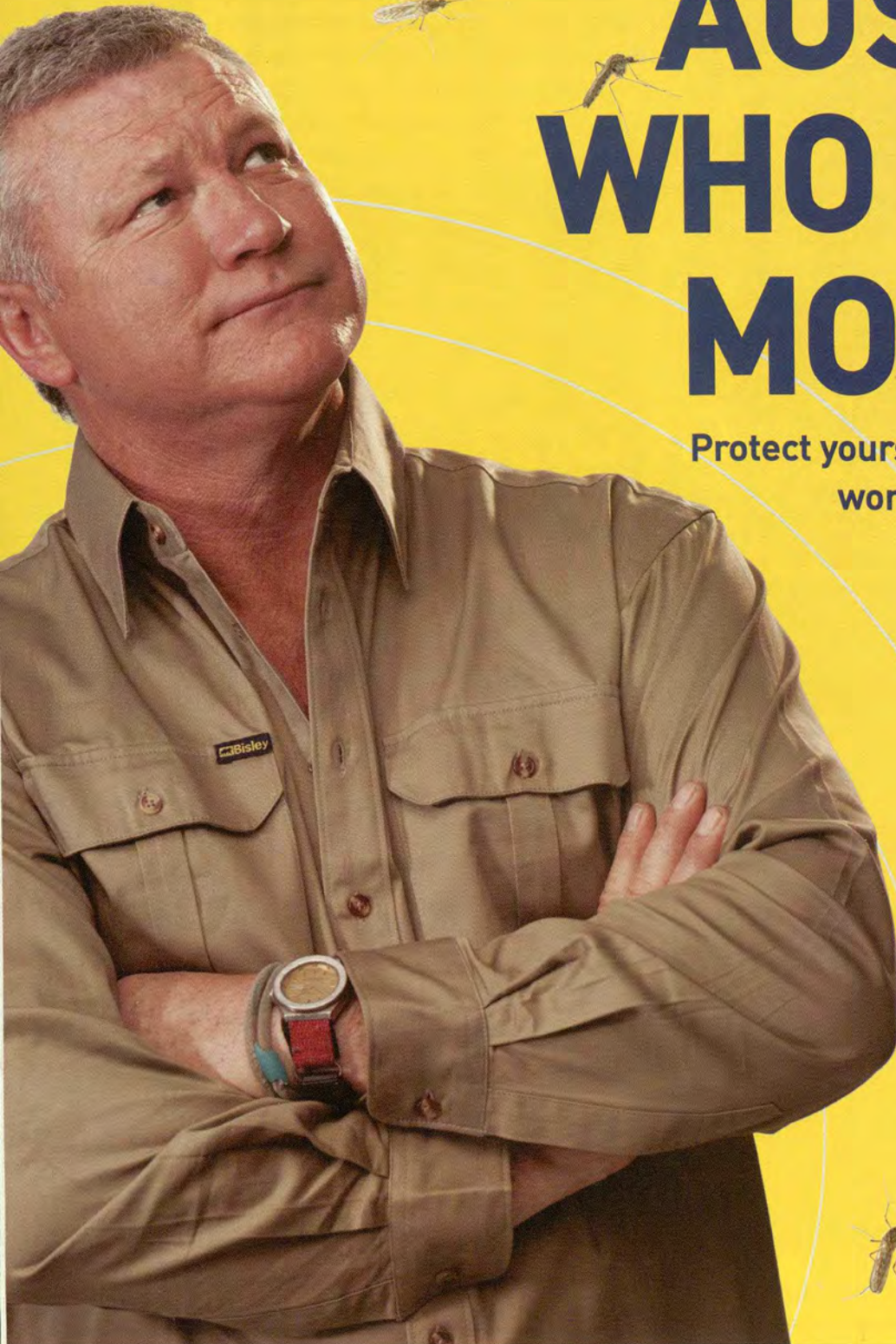
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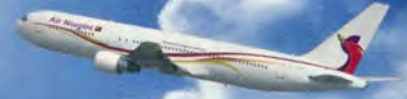
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Chairman's message



Welcome aboard

It has been quite an exciting start for year 2011. Air Niugini has taken delivery of a third brand new Dash8 - Q400 aircraft at the end of March and in early April a third B767-300 aircraft joined the fleet, bringing the total number of aircraft to 21.

The new flight schedule released on March 28th, 2011 provides significant increases in capacity on the Brisbane and Cairns routes while services to Manila and Singapore have increased to three and four weekly flights respectively. A third service has been added to the Honiara (Solomon Islands) and Nadi (Fiji) routes with a fourth awaiting formal approval. It is advisable to check the international flight schedule when you want to make travel arrangements as there have been changes to flight times to Manila and Hong Kong including the withdrawal of the Kuala Lumpur service.

The acquisition of new aircraft and increased schedule capacity enables Air Niugini to offer better travel options to the resource sector in the country particularly the PNG LNG Project and the mining industry. Overseas based businesses can use the increased frequencies offered on our Asian routes which provide better connections from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Europe and other parts of Asia. Likewise the extra services for Honiara and Nadi offer better connections for business and leisure travellers to and from Asia via Port Moresby.

On the domestic operation, we have additional services to Buka and schedule changes affecting overnight flights to Hoskins and Rabaul. The domestic schedule is also designed to offer satisfactory connections with our international flights.

Due to external factors in recent months the ongoing rise in crude oil and jet fuel prices is of great concern to Air Niugini as well as the aviation industry worldwide. In response the airline increased fuel surcharges on most of its international sectors while on the domestic routes the increase applied on tickets to Buka and Lihir. Even with the recent fuel surcharge increase, the airline will not fully recover the higher fuel cost.

On a more positive note, Air Niugini launched its new cargo system called SkyChain. This end-to-end fully integrated IT cargo management system developed by Mercator, (Dubai-based business technology provider) will comprehensively manage every aspect of the airline's cargo business. With this new cargo system, management is confident of delivering a high level of service to our customers.

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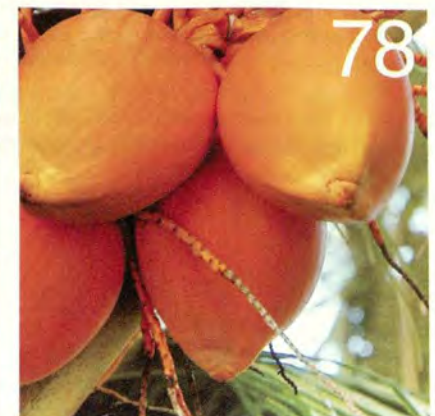
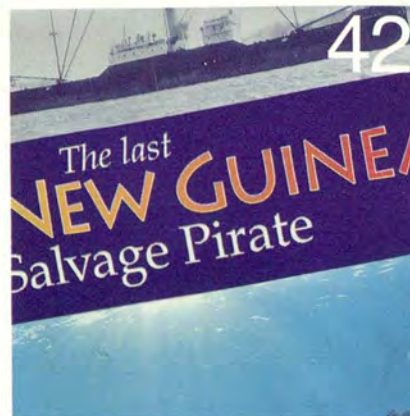
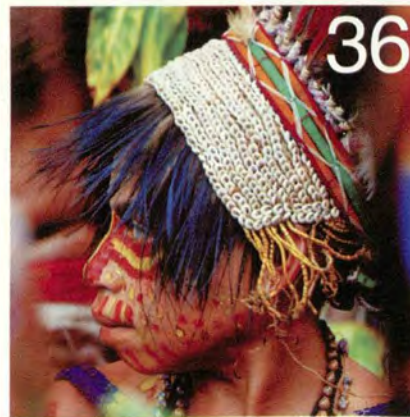
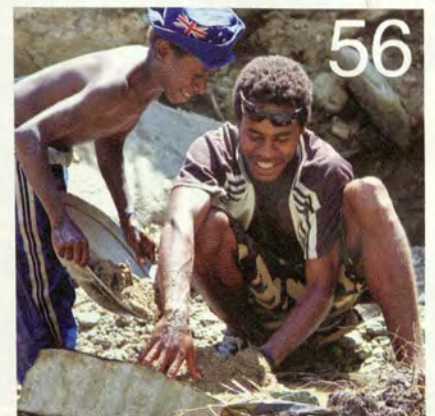
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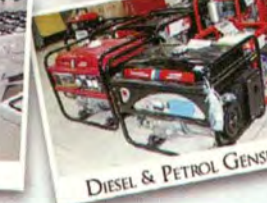
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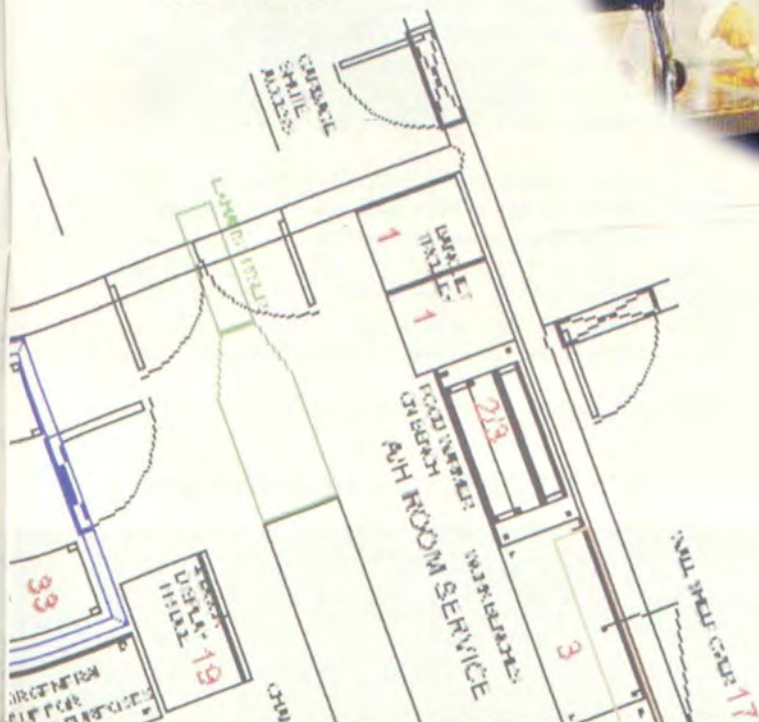
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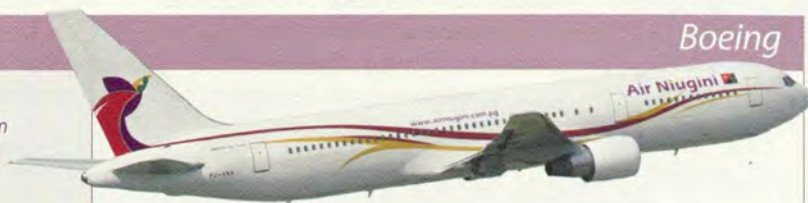
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Power plant: 2 x PW4000
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Number of aircraft in fleet: 3

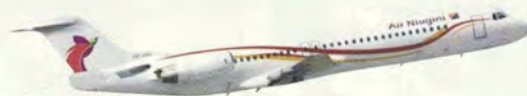


F100

Fokker

Length: 35.528m
Wing span: 28.076m
Range: 3000km
Cruising speed: 780kph

Power plant: 2 x Rolls Royce Tay 650
Normal altitude: 11,000 m
Standard seating capacity: 98
Number of aircraft in fleet: 6



DASH 8-Q400 NextGen

Bombardier

Length: 32.8m
Wing span: 28.4m
Range: 3000km
Cruising speed: 670kph

Power plant: 2 x Pratt & Whitney PW150 A
Normal altitude: 7500m
Standard seating capacity: 74
Number of aircraft in fleet: 3



DASH 8-Q315

Bombardier

Length: 25.7m
Wing span: 24.4m
Range: 1700km
Cruising speed: 510kph

Power plant: 2 x Pratt & Whitney PW123E
Normal altitude: 7500m
Standard seating capacity: 50
Number of aircraft in fleet: 3



DHC-8-202

Bombardier

Length: 22.25m
Wing span: 25.89m
Range: 1800km
Cruising speed: 550kph

Power plant: 2 x Pratt & Whitney PW123D
Normal altitude: 7600m
Standard seating capacity: 36
Number of aircraft in fleet: 3



DHC-8-100

Bombardier

Length: 22.25m
Wing span: 25.89m
Range: 1800km
Cruising speed: 500kph

Power plant: 2 x Pratt & Whitney PW121
Normal altitude: 7600m
Standard seating capacity: 36
Number of aircraft in fleet: 2



Your wellbeing



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 high at 90° angle - elbows down, hands out in front. Raise hands up to chest and back down alternating arms. Do these exercises 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 to walk your hands down the front of your legs towards your ankles. Hold stretch for 15 seconds and slowly sit back up.



OVERHEAD STRETCH

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



SHOULDER STRETCH

Reach right hand over left shoulder. Place left hand behind right elbow and gently press elbow towards 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.



FOOT PUMPS

Foot motion is in three stages.
1. Start with both heels on the floor and point feet upwards as high as you can.



2. Put both feet flat on the floor.



3. Lift heels high, keeping balls of feet on floor. Continue these three stages with continuous motion in 30 second intervals.

Innovation. From the ground up.



Air Niugini has invested in state of the art information technology to enhance customer relationships through its innovative **Destinations** Loyalty Program.

Air Niugini's **Destinations** Loyalty Program is powered by Mercator, the IT solutions arm of the highly successful Emirates Airlines. While new to Papua New Guinea, the Loyalty Program is in fact built on an engine that has 40 person years of investment and over 10 years of loyalty program experience.

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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:

- ✦ Former or current malignant disease
- ✦ Blood disorders leading to increased clotting tendency
- ✦ Personal or family history of DVT
- ✦ Immobilisation for a day or more

- ✦ Increasing age above 40 years
- ✦ Pregnancy
- ✦ Recent major surgery or injury, especially to lower limbs or abdomen
- ✦ Oestrogen hormone therapy, including oral contraceptives
- ✦ 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 travelling 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.
- ✦ Leave your watch on home time if you're staying at a 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. Fly direct to minimise flight time. This allows you to relax more upon arrival.

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.

Recommendations

- ◆ Drink water or juices frequently during the flight
- ◆ Drink coffee, tea and alcohol in moderation. These drinks acts 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.

Recommendations

- ◆ 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 hay fever 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 travelling.
- ◆ To "clear" your ears try swallowing and/or yawning. These actions help open your eustachian tubes, equalizing pressure between your 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

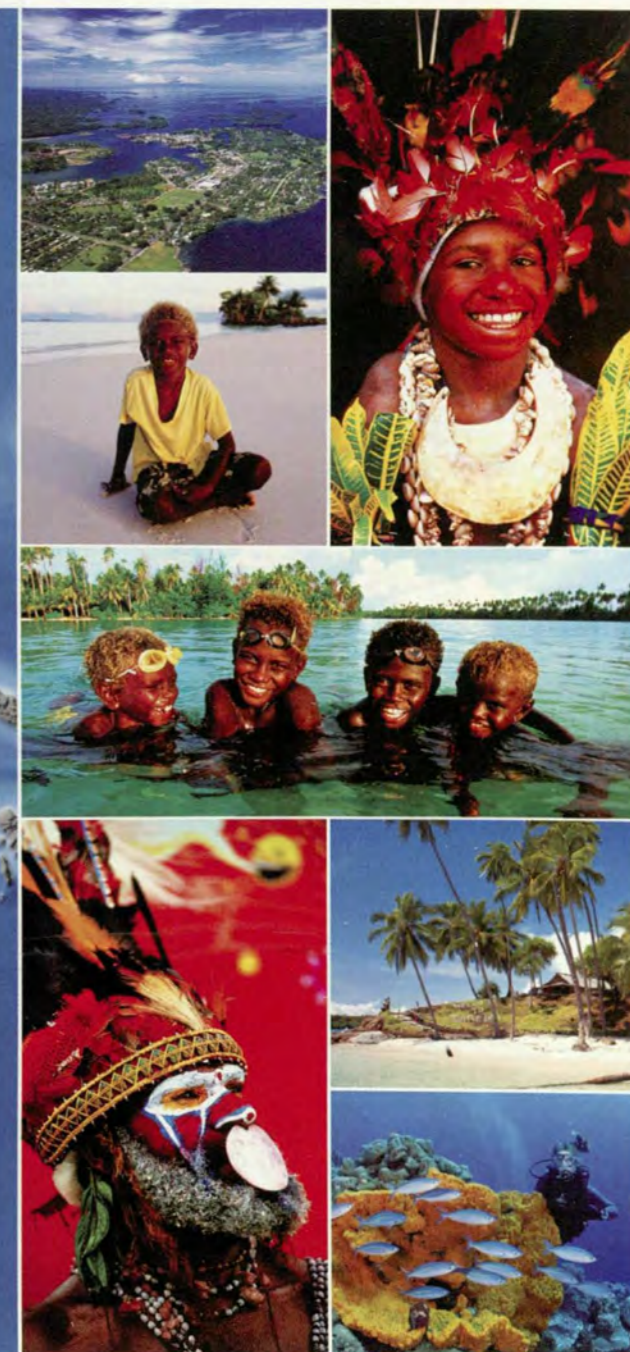
This ailment is caused by a conflict between the body's sense of vision and its sense of equilibrium. Air turbulence increases its likelihood because it can cause movement of the fluid in the vestibular apparatus of the inner ear. If you have good visual cues (keeping your eyes fixed on non-moving object),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

Recommendations

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

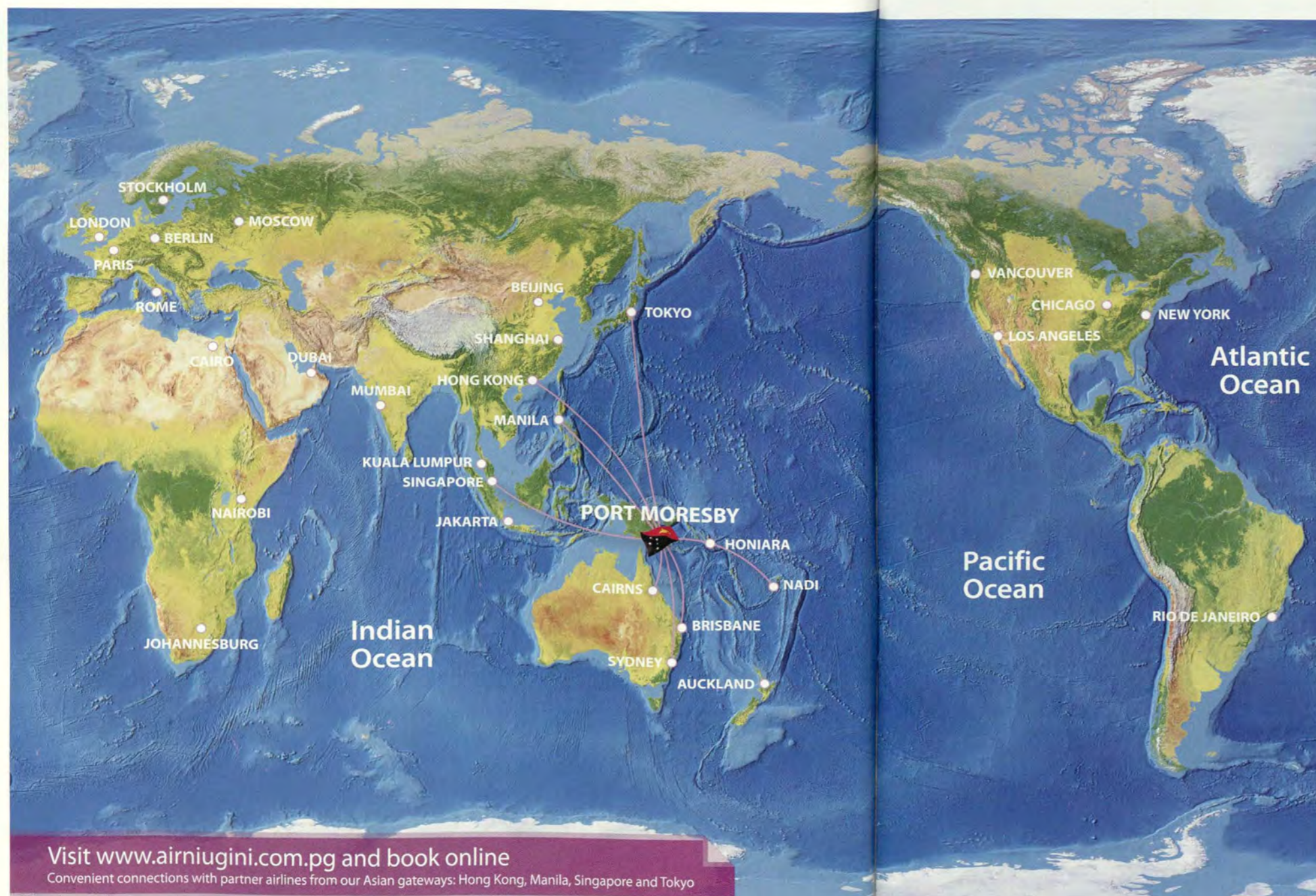
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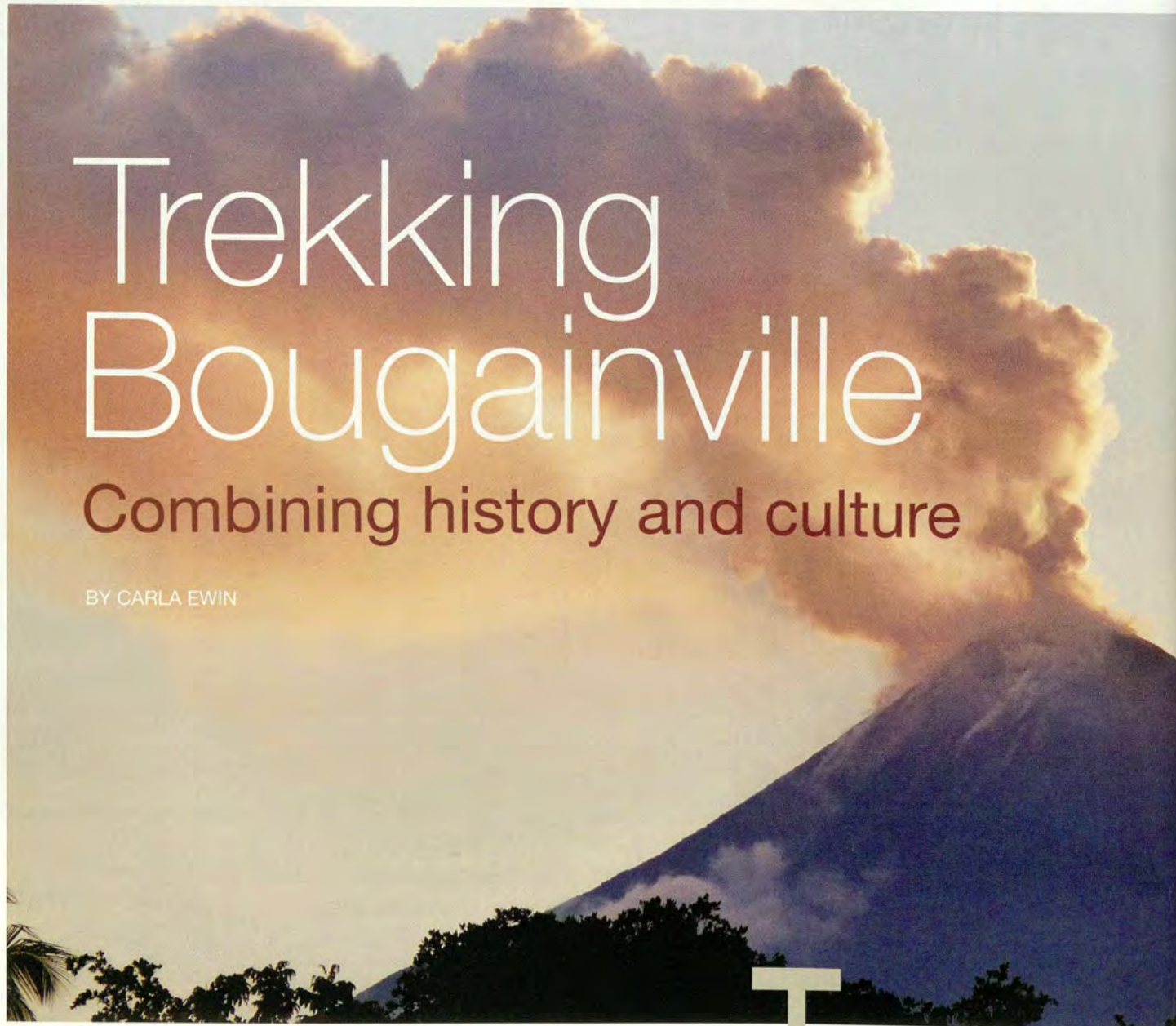


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Trekking Bougainville

Combining history and culture

BY CARLA EWIN



The simmering Mt Bagana volcano puffing away.



Graceful butterflies along the Numa Numa track.



The dense wall of green before me was punctuated by spines and troughs of rugged terrain.

I strained to locate where our guide Mark Kari was pointing. "There. On that ridge, my father was a scout for the Australian soldiers during World War II, he reported to them about the Japanese."

It was day two of walking the Numa Numa Track. It stretches approximately 65 kilometres from the east to the west coast of Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea (PNG).

After traversing numerous steep descents into ravines and clambering up equally steep ascents, the heat and humidity started to take its toll.

We finally reached the top of a ridgeline and I took the opportunity for a 'lik lik malolo' (a little rest). I greedily sucked back water and looked around at the amazing landscape around us.

Off in the distance, the simmering Mt Bagana volcano was puffing away. I contemplated the American, Japanese and Australian soldiers who would have made their way across the same track during World War II.

Mark recognises the value of the history of this track and the potential to develop it into a sustainable tourism attraction.

He hopes the development of the Bougainville tourism industry will provide benefits to the members of his clan along the track and give the youth of Bougainville something constructive to focus their energies on.

While many will come to Numa Numa because of its World War II history and the lure of the challenging terrain, the track offers trekkers a multi-faceted experience.

Beyond the history of the area, one gains an insight into the customs of the villagers and the central role the track plays in their everyday lives.

The Journey

The Numa Numa track begins in the foothills of the old Numa Numa cocoa plantation, just south of Wakunai.

It crosses over the Crown Prince Ranges and finishes at Torokina beach, overlooking the Empress Augusta Bay. The beginning of our five-day journey was hampered by heavy rain despite being the 'dry season'. In fact, the flow of water was a common theme throughout the trek.

The track traverses many river crossings. After the border of Wakunai and Torokina, it is possible to cross the river up to 22 times.

The wildlife along the track ranges from graceful butterflies, eerie floating green orbs of fireflies at night, and the peculiar noisy beating of the wings of hornbills bursting from trees high above. However, some of the wildlife should be avoided.

"Oh, and watch out for the bush pigs," Mark casually remarked, "if you see one, best to get out of their way by climbing a tree."

Sorry, what? Images of flesh eating pigs in a Hannibal Lecter film ran through my mind. The area we were walking in was apparently infamous for its inhabitants of territorial bush pigs. I thought Mark had to be kidding, but when I asked him about the large nut he was holding (which resembled a shotput in size and density), I realised he wasn't. "It's to hit the pig in the head," he replied. An encounter with a family along the track later in our journey proved that the legendary pigs were not a myth. They proudly displayed the huge bush pig they had caught only hours before.

We reached the village of Kalokoki, just before dusk on the second day. The village is also known as Cease Fire village because of the cease-fire reached between the Australian and Japanese forces at the village.

Catch of the day being carried home to be shared amongst families.



Chief Petrus Rureto with his children wearing necklets of bound vine.

Before setting off, I asked the chief about the necklets of bound vine worn by his children. The chief told me that their custom was to adorn the children in elements of the jungle from the time they were born in order for them to grow strong and feel connected to their land. This respect for the jungle and the resources it provided stemmed from the reliance the villagers had on the sustenance the land provided them.

Upon arrival, the chief of the village, Petrus Rureto, ushered us to sit around a fire with some of the villagers. I soon noticed I was under intent observation from a young boy, approximately six years old.

He fervently whispered something into his older cousin's ear and then returned to his intent gazing. All of a sudden, his face twisted into the silent mask of a child about to let out a deep cry followed by tears. Sure enough, the sobbing began and Bruce (one of our porters) tried to calm him down.

The look of shock and concern must have been apparent on my face because Bruce quickly translated that the boy had never seen white people in the flesh before and he feared we were going to eat him.

The little boy's reaction reinforced the fact that

the track was one of the few connections the villagers had to the outside world.

The next morning, I was treated to a rather interesting meal. I was led to the main hut where the women were tending to a large bamboo tube over a fire.

Mark asked me if I knew what a 'cuscus' was. I soon discovered they were small mammals, similar to possums, and were a delicacy in the area. While I like most foods, I have to admit, cuscus meat is not my first choice for breakfast. Not wanting to offend, I chomped on the little forearm (with paw still attached), trying to ignore the strong smell of burnt fur. I thought about the benefits the extra protein would provide for the remaining trek.

Before setting off, I asked the chief about the necklets of bound vine worn by his children.

Remnants of a crashed War World II plane at Torokina.



The chief told me that their custom was to adorn the children in elements of the jungle from the time they were born in order for them to grow strong and feel connected to their land.

This respect for the jungle and the resources it provides stemmed from the reliance the villagers had on the sustenance the land provided them.

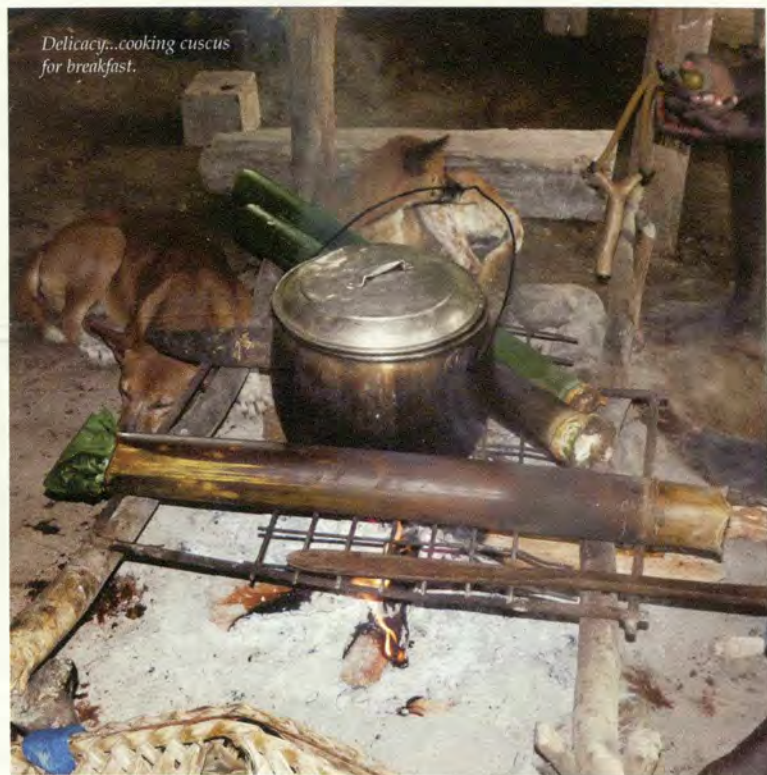
As we walked on towards the border of Wakunai and Torokina, evidence of World War II dramatically increased.

Spent bullets and mortar rounds could be found lying close to the track. Mark also pointed out landmarks such as a Japanese gravesite and an Australian constructed prisoner of war camp.

The Americans and their attempts to use vehicles along the track were responsible for some interesting engineering feats used to conquer the many river crossings and contours of the land.

We encountered a rusting bulldozer on the swamp flats outside Torokina, slowly decaying in the humidity and heat.

We finally reached Torokina around mid-afternoon on the fifth day of our trek. After cooling off in the sea, I sat with Mark on the beach and spoke to him about the development of the Numa Numa track.



Delicacy...cooking cuscus for breakfast.




Mt Bagana...standing out.

While he was keen to introduce the benefits of tourism to his people, he recognised a delicate balance existed between maintaining a traditional lifestyle and culture, and managing the benefits of employment, an increased economy and improved standard of living.

Listening to Mark's visions and ideas made me realise that the development of the track was in good hands.

Bougainvilleans are proud of their culture and connections to their land. Although

they have endured various conflicts fought on their land, they still welcome the world to experience the rugged beauty of their part of paradise they call 'ples blong san kamap', the place where the sun rises. 

• **For further details contact the Bougainville Tourism Office, +675 973 9613, bougainvilletourism@gmail.com, www.bougainvilletourism.org.pg or Zhon Bosco Miriona at Bougainville Experience Tours, +67571626393, info@bougtoours.com, www.bougtoours.com**

History of the track

During World War II, majority of Bougainville was occupied by the Japanese. In 1944, Australian forces were deployed, continuing the efforts of the Americans to drive the Japanese forces from Bougainville. The Numa Numa track was used by the Australians to spearhead the 'Bougainville campaign' against the Japanese. The campaign resulted in the isolation of Japanese forces in southern Bougainville.

A large American force was based in Torokina, where the track ends. The three large airstrips built by the Americans still remain.

Prior to the 'Bougainville campaign', some notable Australian Coast Watchers had also courageously reported on the Japanese occupation from February 1942 until June 1943. They provided invaluable forewarning of impending Japanese aerial attacks to the American forces at Guadalcanal in the neighbouring Solomon Islands.

American Admiral Halsey, Commander of the South Pacific Area praised the efforts of the Coast Watchers Jack Read and Paul Mason. He recognised that the intelligence forwarded from Bougainville Island had saved Guadalcanal and that Guadalcanal had saved the South Pacific.

In order to continue reporting, the Coast Watchers were regularly on the move, avoiding Japanese patrols and evading capture.

Some of the Coast Watchers were based in the foothills of Numa Numa plantation, where the track begins. They had negotiated the thick jungle with the help of locals and their intricate knowledge of the land.

A view from Torokina beach.

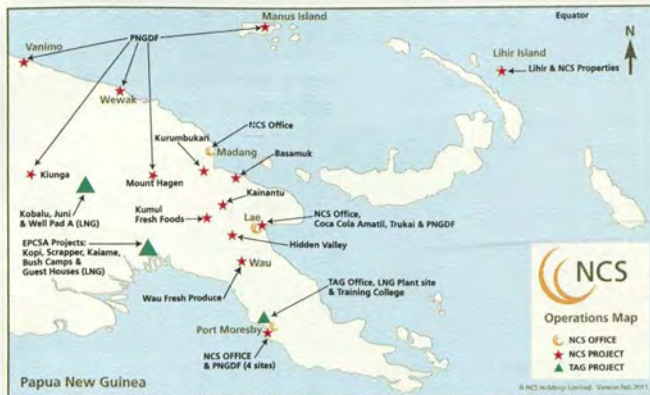




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THE GOROKA SHOW

WORDS: ROWAN MCKINNON | PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART FROST

Our excitement grew as we looked through the tiny windows at the rugged peaks of the Owen Stanley Range.

We'd boarded our Air Niugini Dash 8 at Port Moresby's Jackson's Airport and were heading northeast across the island's jagged central spine to Goroka in the PNG Highlands.

We put down at Goroka about an hour after take-off.

Goroka's airport is the single biggest thing about this attractive Highlands town, and the Highlands Highway - the country's only major interstate road - runs parallel to the airstrip.

To the east of the airport, rises a tangle of thickly forested mountain sides that culminate in a silhouette of peaks against a brilliant blue sky.

There was a minibus for the National Sports Institute (NSI) waiting to pick us up from the airport.

The memories of this town I'd visited before flooded back to me as we drove the lumpy streets towards our accommodation.

There were people everywhere - thousands of them - walking, talking and milling about in the shade of giant poinciana and acacia trees.

A dusty cluster of trade stores lined the road where old flatbed trucks rode lopsided and crabwise north and south, and weary minibuses putted along jammed with people and pigs and bales of sugarcane.

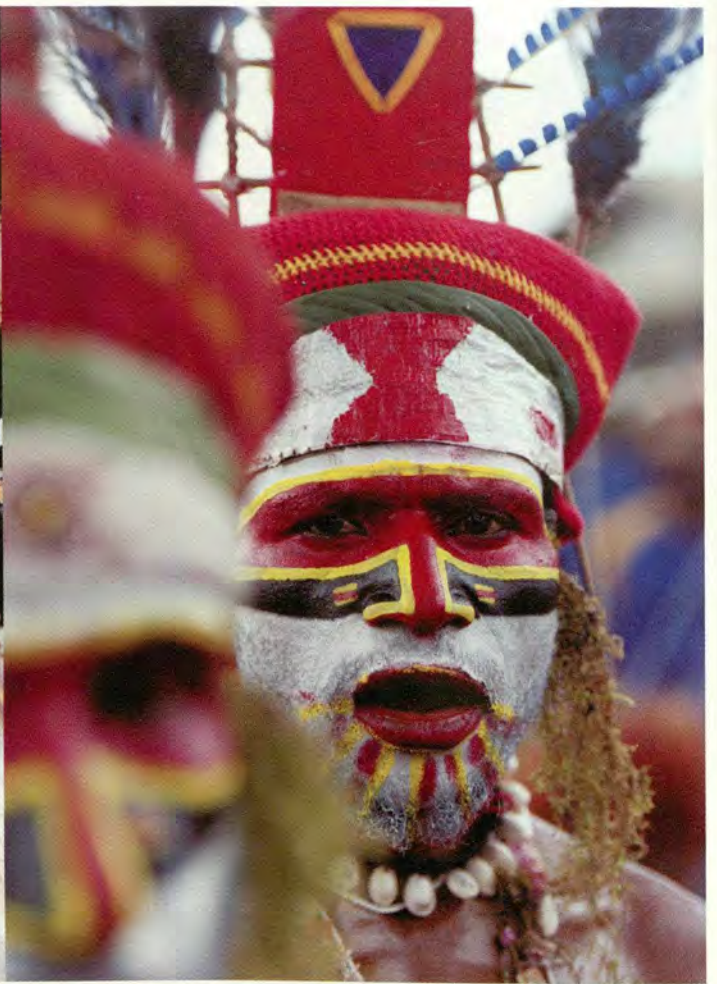
Warm golden light

The warm golden light of the late afternoon casts a glow across the scene. The morning was bright and clear and we walked north up the main road to the market and onto an exhibition of bilums at the Raun Raun Theatre.

We went to the J K McCarthy Museum and saw a necklace of human fingers as well as many other fine historical objects on display.

By afternoon, there was shouting at the gates of the large sports arena adjacent to our NSI accommodation, as the first of the Highlands singing groups demanded entry.





To walk among them was a dizzying experience, a sensory overload - everywhere was more extravagantly costumed performers, more powerful dancing, fierce chanting and drums thumping. The experience was physically intimidating, powerful and exotic.





There was singing and thumping of kundu drums - feathered headdresses were visible above the iron arena fence.

They came in groups of forty or so, and danced and swayed across the broad field to stand in formation at some chosen vacant space. The man on the PA system kept saying 'OI singing grup kam lo fron. Nau tasol.' (All singing groups come to the front, now).

Each of these groups has its own dance and its own song and its own body art. Its preparations are steeped in the oral history and ancestor stories of these linguistically disparate tribes. Some had walked for days out of the bush to be here.

We left the show grounds on Saturday morning and watched the singing groups assemble, prepare and practise in the streets.

Locals lined the roads in their thousands. The groups were led

by elders beating kundu drums and singing ancient songs.

In all, eighty-three singing groups made their way into the performance arena and the Highlanders numbered in their many thousands.

Sensory overload

To walk among them was a dizzying experience, a sensory overload - everywhere was more extravagantly costumed performers, more powerful dancing, fierce chanting and drums thumping.

The experience was physically intimidating, powerful and exotic.

The costumes were exquisite, often understated, delicate and incredibly detailed. There were treasured Bird of Paradise next to simple reeds of grass, kina shells and cloth, enormous layered bilum skirts and "targets", everlasting flowers and foliage gathered from trees.





Some women wore lengths of job's tears shells hundreds of metres long, their skin rubbed down in coconut oil, their face-paint ultra-vivid in the searing mid-day sun.

The show broke up just before a sudden deluge of rain made people scatter.

The downpour pinned everything to the ground and those who'd not escaped the performance arena huddled under canopies and sponsored marquees.

We watched the rain - for 45 minutes - from the balcony of our accommodation next door.

Later that night, we went to the black-tie Goroka Show Ball, held annually as a fundraiser at the Bird of Paradise Hotel.

Money raised helps fund the following year's Goroka Show. This year's show has been scheduled for September 16 to 18. There were tuxedoed white men and ladies in evening gowns - we felt rather under-dressed in our khakis and safari gear. There was a huge buffet of food, most of which didn't get eaten.

Couples danced to the house cover band - they played Solitary Man by Neil Diamond; Country Road by John Denver.

On Sunday, the singing groups came again and sang and danced all day in the harsh sun. There was an agricultural pavilion and pony rides.

A coalition of local coffee growers sold packets of hand-roasted coffee. Handsome Mt Hagan men sold Highlands face-painting for K10 to women in the grandstand whom they charmed and flattered. The din never stopped, the dancing went on.

It was sad to leave, but we were elated at being there, witnessing something that happens in PNG only. An incredible party.



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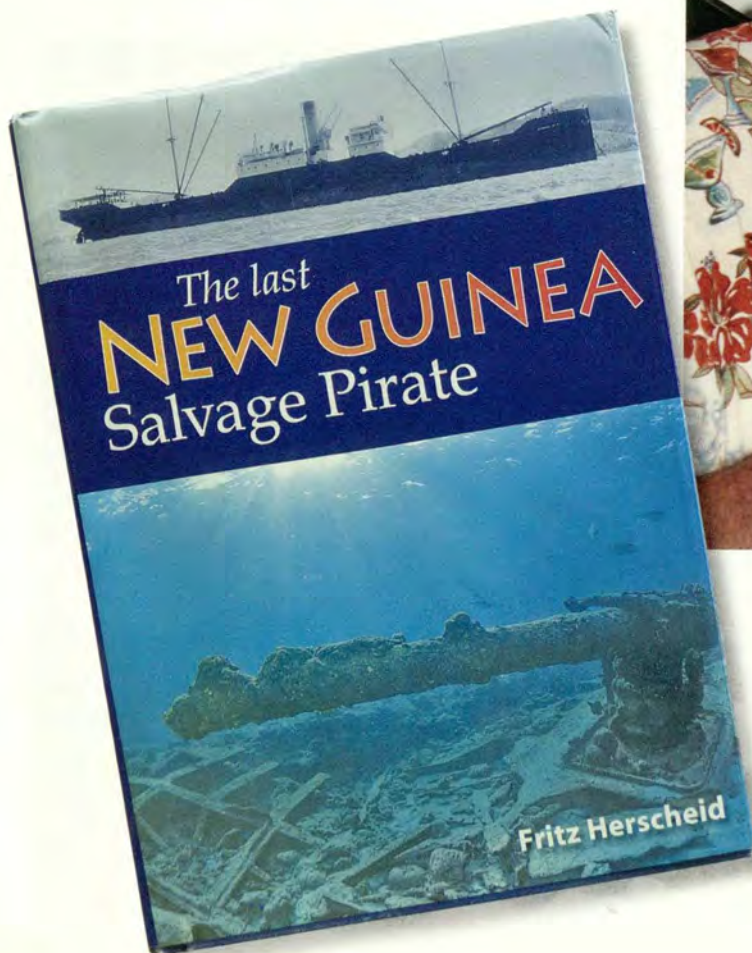
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BOOK REVIEW

THE LAST NEW GUINEA SALVAGE PIRATE

BY BOB HALSTEAD

This amazing book is a must-read for every diver. Older divers will re-live the crazy wonderful times of their youth before bureaucrats and lawyers made risk-taking a crime and adventures passive and supervised. Young divers will have trouble believing it all.

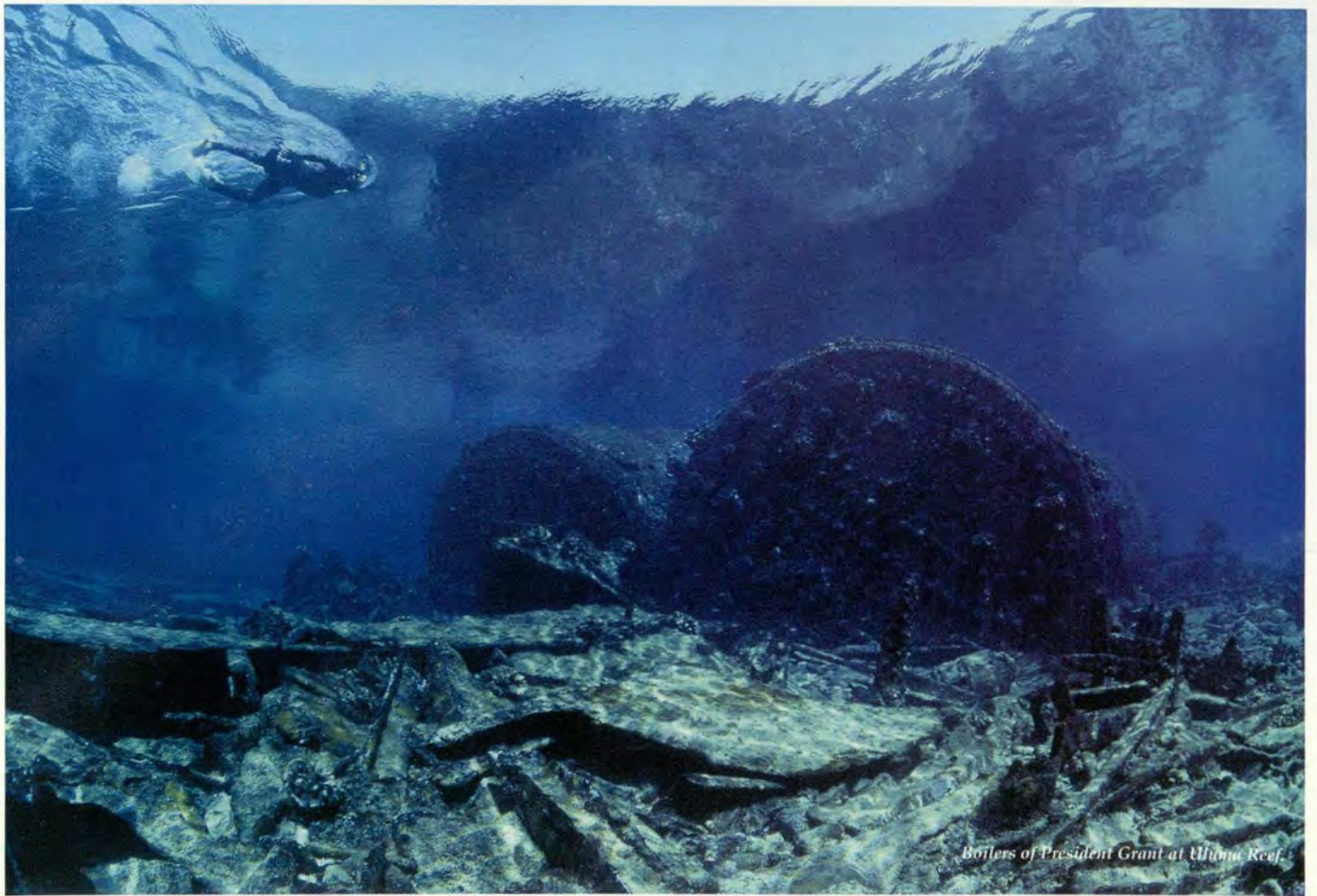


Fritz Herscheid.

But here it is! Routine 300ft (90m) dives on air using primitive scuba, 150ft (45m) free ascents in dive training, power heads to blast troublesome sharks, and fortunes in copper, bronze and brass awaiting the courage and ingenuity of mostly self-taught salvage pirates whose bible was the revered 1963 US Navy Diving Manual.

In his book, Fritz Herscheid, writing with a natural, lively, conversational style, describes his fascinating years of adventure in Papua New Guinea (with excursions to the Solomon Islands and Philippines).

He moved to Rabaul as a young automotive engineer in 1967, but quickly evolved into a diver, businessman, ship's captain, explosives expert and salvager of shipwrecks, mainly from World War Two.



Bow of President Grant at Uluma Reef.

Some will no doubt be mortified at the destruction caused by the salvagers but the truth is no one in the 1960s really saw these wrecks as the historical treasures they are regarded today.

His research enables him to identify and tell the history of many of the wrecks familiar to tourist divers today.

He then describes how and why they now exist without propellers, condensers and most of their non-ferrous fittings.

He and his various rival salvagers were a band of pirates indeed, poaching from each other and all doing their best to avoid authority.

At this time of course, PNG was still a territory of Australia. When PNG became independent in 1975, the new nation became concerned about the preservation of its war history, salvaging rapidly came to a halt and Fritz had to find a proper job!

Some will no doubt be mortified at the destruction caused by the salvagers but the truth is that no one in the 1960s really saw these wrecks as the historical treasures they are regarded as today.

Tourist diving was virtually non-

existent and the ocean was treated as an ideal rubbish tip.

The one major wreck that did escape the salvage pirates, the S Jacob, was bombed and damaged which is why it sank.

Hair raising

Today, the superstructure is collapsing, time working the demolition job of the salvagers. Fortunately, PNG has many aircraft wrecks of no interest to salvage pirates, some ditched in pristine condition and these being aluminium, have survived the corrosive effects of the sea and remain wonderful historic dives.

Fritz's hair-raising exploits, though high risk, resulted in a few injuries and no fatalities, though he does describe fatalities of a few Rabaul divers from the same era. He confesses his own near misses and tells stories with good humour and sensible caution to others. He



The bow of President Grant at Uluma Reef.



The propeller blade
Fritz missed on the
President Grant.



Bow of Russel H
Chittenden.

The photos, mostly black and white and placed along with the relevant text, are well reproduced. There is a selection of coloured photographs and the whole book is printed on quality paper and well bound.

At 500 pages, it is a significant work - but this is a book you will treasure. If you are off to PNG for a dive trip, it is one you will refer to as it has an appendix with information on all the known divable shipwrecks.

There is true romance and the trials of marital stress caused by too much diving - something many divers of both sexes are familiar with - and a romance of a different kind that may not be so familiar - the romance of operating small ships.

Fritz owned several and loved and cared for them all, even when they tried to sink under him. This is their story too.

I finish this review with some good news (though not necessarily for the authorities) - Fritz has just purchased another boat in Cairns and is fitting it out for more adventures. I can't wait to read about them.



- The book is available through Peter Stone, Oceans Enterprises, 303-305 Commercial Road, Yarram, Vic 3971, email: peter@oceans.com.au; tel 03 5182 5108 and in Papua New Guinea, it is available for sale at Theodist in Port Moresby.

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certainly made dives outside the limits - but this was not done without precautions such as careful monitoring of the depths, bottom times and decompression stops.

I have to tell you, though, that you are going to lose some sleep - but only because this book is impossible to put down.

Most of the personalities he encountered are

still alive and willingly contributed memories to the book. The book has a splendid complement of photographs and maps.

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Kokopo

The new gateway

BY JOHN BROOKSBANK

The catastrophic volcanic explosion that rocked the Gazelle Peninsula in September 1994 resulted in Rabaul town, immediately adjacent to the volcano, being literally flattened under a huge layer of ash.

The disaster also temporarily halted agriculture and commerce on this northern tip of East New Britain Province. Although no one died, many were left homeless, wharf facilities were virtually non-existent and ash drifts blocked roads and coated plants all over the whole region.

In the sixteen years since this tragedy, the resilient Tolai people have bounced back in a big way and Kokopo has emerged as the new vibrant gateway to the province.

The wartime vintage Tokua airstrip has been extended and rebuilt to replace the one that sat at the foot of Tavurvur before it blew its top and the once 'sleepy hollow' of Kokopo, on the shores of Blanche Bay across from Rabaul, has expanded as the provincial centre.

The last time Kokopo was as full of life as it is now was in the 1890s during the German colonial administration, when it was their capital of Herbertshohe and also the centre of the famous Queen Emma's coconut plantation empire.

Today, the dual carriageway main street is the central spine of which the bustling town has grown with numerous supermarkets, Post PNG office and all three commercial banks - Westpac, ANZ and Bank South Pacific - and other municipal offices housed in shiny new building complexes, a sure sign the local economy is healthy.

Buildings sit on large spacious blocks with ornamental greenery that will one day rival that of the Rabaul of yesteryear.



Enjoying the comforts of Gazelle International.



Despite being a busy town with a large new market that sits sensibly next to the bus stop, there are very few aimless loiterers and everyone seems to have something to do and somewhere to go - work, school or commerce of some sort.

Typical of the region, a proportion of the population sport 'yellow tops' of salt water (or chemically!) bleached afro-hair and carry the distinctive woven coconut leaf basket.

On a bluff above the main street is the burgeoning suburb of Kenabot, where smart modern homes populate a neat and orderly estate that catches any sea breeze blowing. Housing construction has been unable to keep up with the increasing population of Kokopo, so real estate prices and consequently rentals have boomed in recent times.

Once outside town, the hinterland of the



Banking in Kokopo...both Westpac and ANZ banks have branches there. Also housed with the ANZ Bank is the Kokopo Post Office.



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Gazelle Peninsula has little natural bush remaining and is quite densely populated with residential areas well serviced by reticulated, although not necessarily constant power, and a veritable maze of roads, some sealed, some not, and most in need of maintenance.

These roads wind amongst the smallholder blocks on which villagers displaced by the eruption were resettled. Each area has its own picturesque village place of worship, all of which seem to have come from the same religious design book and are predominantly United Church.

This road network links people throughout the area with markets, shops, schools and health facilities and hosts the routes of a flock of colourfully named buses and utilities such as Kokopo Flyer, Toboi Terror and Four Lane Fury.

Everyone in this part of the province seems to have their small family plot of cocoa or coconuts, or both, to earn a small income whilst at the same time subsisting on garden vegetables.

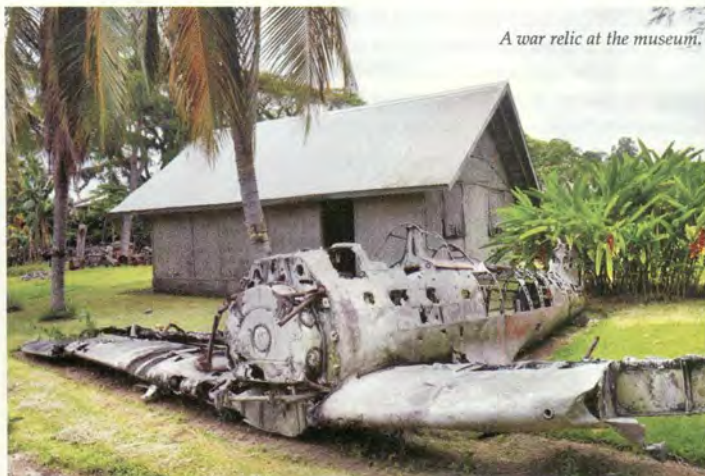
Favourite destination

As natural horticulturalists, the Tolais also find time to grow other ornamentals such as orchids that can often be spotted on roadside village gardens.

Kokopo is an increasingly favourite destination for conferences and corporate meetings, a beautiful seaside location away from the politics and other distractions of Port Moresby.

The town has a number of facilities of varying prices and standards to cater for holiday or business visitors - the Rapopo Plantation Resort, Queen Emma Lodge, Kokopo Beach Resort, Kokopo Beach Bungalow Resort, Seaview Beach Resort, Takubar Beach Resort, and the newly opened Gazelle International, complemented by a raft of smaller guest houses.

The Gazelle International, as the latest 'top end' addition to the Kokopo hospitality scene, is a joint venture between Nambawan Super, Lamana Development and the East New Britain Provincial Government.



A war relic at the museum.



Bitia Paka war cemetery.

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Mature rice head...locals have found that they can a lot of cash too from rice.

It sits atop the site of Queen Emma's residence at Ralum, and has conserved the few remains of her famous steps. The hotel sits between the Ralum Club and the local war museum and is within putting distance of the beachside golf club.

It has 52 additional rooms, a conference facility and boasts a fine bar and restaurant.

Kokopo has quite a few hired car companies, although a 4WD or utility would be best to tackle roads anywhere outside of town.

Better-heeled visitors could hire a helicopter from Heli Niugini, whose heliport is en route to the airport at Takubar, to take in an aerial view of the famous volcanoes that have caused so much grief for the Gazelle area.

War remnants

Between Tokua Airport and Kokopo town is the turn off to Bita Paka war cemetery, a place well worth a visit. Here, under the umbrella of large spreading raintrees, staff employed by the Commonwealth Graves Commission tend the immaculately neat and green garden setting.

The cemetery contains the graves of more than a thousand Allied servicemen who died in the First and Second World Wars in the East New Britain theatre, including the first Australian servicemen to die in the 1914-18 conflict and hundreds of Indian soldiers taken prisoners in Malaysia and shipped to Rabaul to be used as forced labour by the Japanese.

It also commemorates 1,113 Australian servicemen who died and whose graves are unknown. The physical remnants of the war continue to attract tourists, who either visit sites of significance on land or dive on wartime

Its laid-back atmosphere, friendly people, tropical coastal environment and excellent facilities mean the town can easily cater to the diverse needs of all sorts of business, sports or tourist visitors.

wrecks that litter the floor of Blanche Bay and Simpson's Harbour.

Along the road to Rabaul one can access some of the many tunnels totalling more than 100 kilometres that the Japanese, using their slave labour, built into the soft pumice rock of the peninsula to house a hospital, barracks, storerooms, workshops and a submarine base that allowed vessels to slip from safe underground tunnels straight into the sea.

Relaxing pursuits

A naval gun looks out at the vista of Rabaul at its attendant volcanoes from Coastwatchers Hill, Malmaluan. Other visitors come for more relaxing pursuits such as golf, chilling out at the bar, game fishing or sports diving with one of the local charter boats.

The waters of East New Britain have in the past years yielded specimens of some quite rare shells such as the 'glory of the seas' cone, *Conus gloriamaris*, and the golden cowrie, *Cypraea aurantium*. Less valuable small cowrie shells, *Cypraea annulus* and *Cypraea moneta*, are strung on cane to make Tolai shell money, or tabu. A fathom of tabu is a loop of shells whose diameter stretches from the end of a man's fingers to his chest. It is still used in the area today as a form of currency, normally for payment of bride price.

The rich soils of the region are a beneficial legacy of past volcanic eruptions and mostly anything can grow on the Gazelle Peninsula. Queen Emma's brother-in-law Richard Parkinson trialled many plant species for commercial potential, including maize, cotton, coffee, millet and tobacco.

Envy of Pacific towns

For many years, the plant collection including many orchid species at the Rabaul Botanical Gardens was the envy of many Pacific towns.

Today, crop research continues at the Keravat Agricultural Research Station, which was responsible for the introduction of balsa, now a commonly grown plantation tree crop around the Gazelle Peninsula.

Most local people continue to grow copra and cocoa. Until recently, there appeared to be no other choices than these two crops. This is despite variations in world commodity prices and the depredations of the cocoa pod borer that has spread throughout the region, drastically reducing cocoa yields and rural incomes.

Local people have found that they can also obtain as much money from planting upland rice. This recently introduced crop needs very little fertilisation in the rich soils of the Gazelle and can be rotationally planted with a legume such as cow peas which maintain soil fertility and can also produce a saleable crop. Cooked rice, wrapped in a banana leaf, is now commonly seen on roadside stalls alongside betelnut and other essential garden produce.

East New Britain is a must-see destination and Kokopo is an ideal base from which to make forays out to undertake different activities. Its laid-back atmosphere, friendly people, tropical coastal environment and excellent facilities mean the town can easily cater to the diverse needs of all sorts of business, sports or tourist visitors. So pencil in Kokopo and the islands region of the country on your next holiday plan!

Kokopo market.



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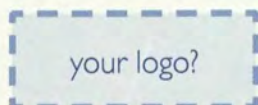
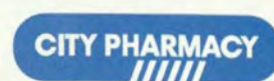
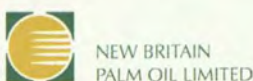
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Gold panning in Wau.

The WAU Factor

Unearthing its war history

BY RENEE CLUFF

It's a Morobe town famous for its gold nuggets.

But dig a little deeper and you'll find Wau is also a gold mine of war history, the effects of which continue to both benefit and haunt the local townspeople.

In November last year, a villager of Green Hill in Wau was killed and three others were seriously injured after inadvertently building their fire over a slumbering bomb left behind after World War II.

The tragic explosion served as a stark reminder that like Wau itself, remnants from the town's war experience have been largely unchanged by the passage of time.

The short but bloody battle for Wau was vital in the Allied campaign against the Japanese but has received hardly any recognition.

Among the few experts are former Australian Army officer Tim Vincent and his wife Dannielle. The couple and their two children reside in Wau, in a house that was used as a makeshift hospital during the war.

"It was one of the very few Bulolo district buildings not razed during the 'scorched earth' defence, when it was feared the Japanese would overrun the town," Tim explains.

He and Dannielle open up their historical home to small groups of tourists as part of their adventure touring company, Wau Adventures, which among other things, offers visitors trips to all of Wau's war-time hotspots.

Their fascinating commentary could easily be mistaken for fiction. However, the evidence presented in the form of fox-holes, the town's steep grass airstrip and the wreckage of an American B-17 bomber, certainly provide solid authenticity.

Wau sits in the Bulolo Highlands region and is accessible by four



wheel drive from Lae. The route is scenically diverse, ranging from crossings of fast-flowing rivers to mud tracks perched alongside steep, red cliffs to the moonscape of Mumeng, a village which is constantly shifting in line with its ever-changing river bed.

Bulolo, the 'big smoke' of the district is similar to any gold rush country town in Australia, dotted by 1930s' circa houses with huge yards. The Vincent's Wau acreage is up to an hour's drive past Bulolo, depending on the condition of the road.

The property is abundant with luscious gardens bordering manicured lawns and the brightest coloured bougainvillea I've ever seen, drapes down to the driveway as we pull in.

Visitors can opt to stay in the guest house, about three hundred metres from the main house. It contains bunks for 12 people, a bathroom and sitting area. All meals are prepared in the main house by Dannielle, whose many talents extend to delicious and varied cuisine.

The setting is peaceful and cosy and the silence is only interrupted by bird calls, insects buzzing, and in our case, the joyous cries of our children playing on the rope swing attached to a raintree.

Tim is in charge of the actual adventure and the first port of call for our weekend tour group is aimed at giving us some perspective

...first port of call for our weekend tour group is aimed at giving us some perspective of the town. We drive up Mount Kaindi via a picturesque but sometimes stomach-lurching dirt road adjoining a sheer plunge to the Wau Valley below. When we reach just over 5000 feet in altitude, we come to a halt and exit the vehicles. From here, Wau is laid out before us like a map.

of the town. We drive up Mount Kaindi via a picturesque but sometimes stomach-lurching dirt road adjoining a sheer plunge to the Wau Valley below.

When we reach just over 5000 feet in altitude, we come to a halt and exit the vehicles. From here, Wau is laid out before us like a map. Tim points out the range from which the Japanese entered the town after walking overland from coastal Salamaua, which they'd already captured.

Other reference points include the airstrip which was the crown jewel in the battle, the starting points for the Black Cat and Bulldog treks and Wandumi Ridge, the site of one of Australia's most significant bayonet attacks.

The latter, involving A company of the 2/6 Infantry Battalion, proved crucial to the Allied victory in Wau. Due to bad flying weather and stretched resources which hampered the input of reinforcements, this company was the only thing standing in the way of the Japanese as

they made their final approach into Wau on the 28th January, 1943.

Led by Captain Bill Sherlock, the Australians engaged the Japanese in fierce mortar and machine gun fire until the Australians ran out of ammunition, prompting the bayonet attack. While Sherlock was eventually killed, the Australian resistance delayed the Japanese by a day.

That interval was of utmost importance, for the following morning, 57 planeloads carrying 675 Allied reinforcements finally arrived in Wau. They were in action in the early afternoon to successfully push back the force of 300 Japanese troops.

By January 30, the Japanese had regrouped, managing to reach the corner of the airstrip. To capture the airstrip was to begin Plan B of the Japanese quest to reach Port Moresby, following its failure of the Kokoda Track campaign. In the end, the Allied resistance forced the Japanese to fall back and concede defeat.



Children clamber over a wrecked B17.

The B-17 flying fortress becomes clearly visible about an hour into the trek and is immediately awe-inspiring. Suspended on the hillside as though resting in mid-flight, it was obviously skilfully landed by the pilot, Lt Ray Dau.



A walk on the airstrip is the next stage of our tour. Its surface is grassy and uneven, not to mention steep. In fact, it's on a gradient of eight percent. Pilots landing here are also challenged by its length of just 940 metres and the mountains surrounding it. The airstrip is still in use today, mainly by mining companies, whose pilots must land uphill and take-off downhill.

As the sun begins to set on day one, we visit Green Hill. The site of the recent unfortunate bomb blast, it's also home to a remarkably intact fox-hole, which you can still climb into. The hill provided a natural cover for troops defending Wau and walking along its plateau, we're joined by a friendly group of village children, as eager to show us around and pose for pictures as they are mystified by our interest in their playground.

After a spectacular storm, a solid night's sleep, and a big breakfast, we clamber back into the cars for the final excursion and the highlight of the trip - a trek to see a wrecked American B-17 bomber.



It became known as the 'Ghost of Black Cat Pass' because mystery surrounded its ownership and history until quite recently. The enigma stemmed from its RAF marking and a lack of documentation, which alluded to it being a British plane, possibly on a secret mission.

"It's since been revealed that while it was originally intended for the European theatre, it had been reassigned at the US factory in Wyoming to the Pacific conflict, where the Americans quickly repainted the aircraft in the field," says Tim.

"The documentation had simply gone missing in the change, and decades of relentless tropical weather had worn away its USAAF marking."

The 'Ghost of Black Cat Pass' was one of seven planes sent to bomb a convoy off Lae on the 8 January, 1943, when it was hit by heavy fire from Japanese 'Zeros'.

Tim's narrative describes the desperation on board.

"Even after losing its two starboard engines, its nose and most of its flying controls, the bomber was caught up in a 30 minute running battle with the Japanese fighters and its gunners against all odds, managed to claim three 'Zeros'."

"It then limped towards Wau with several badly injured crew members on board and not able to either turn or climb"

Sixty eight years later, the plane still rests where it came down, on a hillside near the head of Black Cat pass. It's one of Papua

New Guinea's most impressive, intact and accessible World War II wrecks. The round-trip walk takes about three hours and is suitable for people of average fitness.

Children as young as six are in our group and are carried across the three swift-flowing creeks by a guide from the nearby Kaisenik village. The guide and a bunch of village children who tag along are impressively agile on their bare pancake-like feet, expertly shooting at birds with a slingshot as they go. In contrast we slip, slide and stumble alongside them, never for a moment taking our eyes off the goat track in front.

The B-17 flying fortress becomes clearly visible about an hour into the trek and is immediately awe-inspiring. Suspended on the hillside as though resting in mid-flight, it was obviously skilfully landed by the pilot, Lt Ray Dau.

A closer, hands-on analysis only magnifies what those on board had confronted. Visitors can inspect the plane from damaged nose to bullet-ridden tail, even climbing right into the cockpit.

A rest on the starboard wing of the aircraft lends itself to more introspective reflection. From here, it's easy to visualise the path of the B-17 skimming across the treetops, just seconds before it slid up the hill, lost its tail turret and came to an abrupt halt.

Amazingly, all nine on board survived the impact of the crash landing and were stretchered to Wau in the pitch black of night by Kaisenik villagers and a small Australian rescue party.

However, tail gunner Sergeant Henry Bowen didn't survive the rescue mission, his shrapnel wounds proving fatal, while Sergeant Robert Albright, who had been manning the radio, died six days later from wounds he'd suffered in the air attack.

Our return hike is quiet and I can only surmise that like me, the others are contemplating the significance of what they've seen and the extraordinary circumstances and surroundings the veterans of the Wau campaign lived and died in.

By the time we reach the final water crossing, the heat of the day has well and truly set in, so most of us opt for a dip in the ice-cold mountain stream. Just as refreshing is the watermelon Danielle had arranged for us to eat as an entrée to the lunchtime feast she's preparing back at the house.

While waiting for the stragglers, we take part in an impromptu gold panning expedition. The precious metal is so abundant in Wau that without even really trying we still manage to acquire quite a few flecks. We elect to return it to the rocky soil, for future generations. After all, it is the town's enduring marvels that give it that Wau factor.

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KAUKAU

bun bilong Hailans

BY JOHN BROOKSBANK

As is so nicely summarised in the Melanesian pidgin phrase above, kaukau - sweet potato - is the staple crop that underpins life in almost all Highlands communities.

Yet sweet potato, botanically *Ipomoea batatas*, is only a recent immigrant from Central and South America, where it was cultivated by some of the earliest organised societies, such as those that thrived more than 8,000 years ago in Peru.

The edible tuber was carried to some of the Pacific islands and New Zealand about 1000 years ago, however there is no evidence it made it any further west at this time. So, how did kaukau make it to Papua New Guinea and how did people survive in the Highlands until its arrival?

People have lived in Papua New Guinea for 40-50,000 years, arriving in a series of migrations from the South East Asian mainland via islands of the Indonesian Archipelago over the millennia to settle on the coast of Sahul, the super continent that also included Australia and Tasmania.

Following initial colonisation, human settlement spread to different parts of the country. Sea levels started rising 18,000 years ago, low-lying plains flooded and about 8,500 years ago the land bridge with the Australian mainland was broken when the Torres Strait flooded, forming the island of New Guinea.

With average temperatures lower than today and extensive glaciation at higher altitudes, man perhaps did not venture up into the valleys of the Highlands until perhaps 12 to 15,000 years ago. Higher altitudes and relatively low temperatures mean staple crops take a long time to mature; so population densities were low.

Archaeological diggings at Kuk in the Wahgi Valley, just outside Mount Hagen in the

Western Highlands, have unearthed evidence of swamp drainage channels and stone tools that suggest cultivation of taro some 7-10,000 years ago. It seems likely that Highland populations lived in scattered hamlets and subsisted on taro, supplemented by banana, pandanus nuts (karuka), sugar cane and other forest products. The pig has been a domesticated animal for about 3,500 years.

Legends of the Huli people in the Southern Highlands refer to earlier eras as 'ma naga', literally taro time, reflecting the role of this root vegetable as a subsistence staple prior to the arrival of the sweet potato.

Spanish and Portuguese seafarers and traders transported sweet potato from the Americas and introduced it to their colonies in Africa, India and the Moluccas in eastern Indonesia, from where it was quickly traded into New Guinea, making its first appearance around 300 years ago, about 1700.

Sweet potato is now the country's most important food crop. It dominates food production in the Highlands but is also important in many lowland locations with an average Papua New Guinea production of 685 kilos per person a year.

In the Highlands areas where the distinctive patchwork quilt of kaukau gardens is a common aerial image, annual production is estimated to be an amazing 1,200kilos per person!!

Sweet potato grows vigorously, even at higher altitudes, and importantly also has a shorter growing cycle than other vegetable staples, maturing in less than a year even when grown above 2000 metres.

The introduction of kaukau therefore meant that the land could support more people and just as, or perhaps more, importantly...many more pigs.

People were able to move onto previously marginal land at higher elevations, above the steamier lowlands where debilitating malaria was more prevalent.

The impact of the introduction of kaukau on Highlands societies was rapid and dramatic. The explosion in the populations of both man and pigs had manifest implications for the people and their neighbours. In the space of just a few generations, Highlands societies grew in numbers.

An example is the expansion of Huli speakers from the fertile Tari and Koroba valleys of Southern Highlands northwards and southwards into more marginal farming land.

Larger numbers of pigs meant there were more available for ceremonies and inter-regional trade, which in turn led to an increased demand for the prestige goods associated with such commerce, including shell and tobacco. Such rare and exotic trade goods could only come from the coastal lowlands.

In the Highlands areas where the distinctive patchwork quilt of kaukau gardens is a common aerial image, annual production is estimated to be an amazing 1,200kilos per person!



Through the hands of innumerable middlemen in various disparate but linked trade networks, goods were funneled through natural physical gateways to the Highlands such as along the Markham, Ramu, Purari and Kikori rivers and their catchments. It is possible that this sweet potato-driven increase in the Highlands' populations is linked to the expansion of the famed Hiri trade expeditions of the Motuans of Central Province to the coastal and inland people of the Gulf, that occurred about the same time.

The humble sweet potato has a lot to answer for. The once densely forested Highlands were cleared to make kaukau gardens, creating the complex of grassy valleys that characterise the region today.

When the highlands valleys were first penetrated by Europeans in the 1930s they found huge numbers of people living there who coveted kina (mother of pearl) and cowrie shell, despite having never seen or having an understanding of the sea.

Sweet potato is in fact more nutritious than the common potato to which it is only very distantly related. It is rich in vitamins A,B & C with high levels of calcium, iron, manganese and potassium, as well as lots of dietary fibre.



Sweet potato can be a very productive vegetable - average village yields in highlands areas are 2-50 tonnes per hectare although under experimental conditions an amazing 71 tonnes per hectare has been achieved.

Yields and growing time depends on soil, weather, altitude and variety; in the lowlands harvest can take place after 3-5 months, in the Highlands after 5-8 months, although normally it is progressively harvested by villagers.

There are many varieties of this root vegetable, the young leaves of which can also be eaten as greens. There are tubers with golden brown, purple, white or red skin whilst the flesh can be white, yellow, orange or even purple - everyone has their own favourite.

Sweet potato is in fact more nutritious than the common potato to which it is only very distantly related, being rich in vitamins A,B & C with high levels of calcium, iron, manganese

and potassium as well as lots of dietary fibre. Sweet potato is a popular and important food crop all over the world. The largest producer is China where 60% of its 100 million tonnes annual output is used as a stock feed, whilst in America it is strangely, and mistakenly, often called yam.

With growing urban populations and enclave resource developments representing a huge market for fresh produce, sweet potato is becoming more than a staple.

It is a cash crop grown intensively and marketed locally or shipped by the container-load by air, land and sea to markets around Papua New Guinea.

It has been estimated that the annual production of eighteen staple food crops in the country is about 4.5 million tonnes a year. By weight, two-thirds of these staples is sweet potato and if say only 2% was marketed, this still represents almost 60,000 tonnes a year hitting shops and market stalls annually.

So, in summary, kaukau is synonymous with many village societies in Papua New Guinea today.

It is an important food and cash crop, has caused deforestation of the Highlands' valleys and was indirectly a driving force behind the expansion of people, pigs and trade networks prior to the discovery by Europeans of the country. Something to think about next time you have kaukau for dinner!



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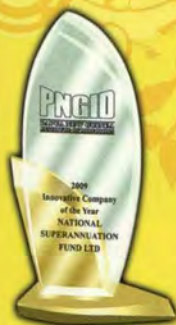


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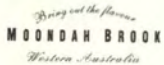
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Pere villager Tapas Niamwel exchanges fish for betel nuts with Nohang villager Nameme Nuwen.

Bartering Up

Age-old tradition continues in Manus

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: **ALEXANDER RHEENEY**

When the financial crisis triggered a global meltdown in western economies in 2008, some villagers on the south coast of Manus Island remained oblivious to its catastrophic effect.

An ancient barter system at Nohang village, on the south coast of Manus, between inland villagers and their peers from Manus' seafaring Titan tribe on Pere Island enabled families to exchange fish and vegetables.

It is not as complex as the Kula Ring exchange in the Milne Bay Province which chained hundreds of seafarers in the Trobriand Islands and neighbouring group of islands, and fascinated Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. But it ensured the Titans supplemented their diet with vegetables and the inland villagers received fish in exchange.

There were no standard criteria to determine the 'value' of their goods; the exchange is done through centuries' old silent trading in which no verbal communication takes place.

A trader can determine his or her price through the movement of their eyes. Today, the trade continues at Nohang with Pere villagers bringing baskets of fish, turtle, crabs and even prized crayfish to exchange with inland villagers for vegetables.

The two parties, like other rural-based Papua New Guinean communities, are slowly beginning to make the transition from subsistence to a modern cash-based economy.



Pere villagers Tuain and Nawaseu with their father Kusunan Kumayon hoping to exchange fish for vegetables.

However, in this part of the country, time stands still with cash taking a back seat as the fishermen swap their marine produce for sweet potato, taro, sago, pumpkin or betelnut.

"We don't encourage cash payments for our marine produce. We prefer to barter for vegetables as our people since the time of our forefathers saw the benefits of such an exchange.

"I have frequented this market for years with my family and I am confident it will grow as we get more Highway people coming in from Tingou and Bowat," said Pere villager Kusunan Kumayon, 54, as he stood behind a bamboo-bench packed with fresh and smoked fish under a sago-thatched hut.

His daughters Tuain, 16, and Nawaseu, 17, stood next to him - obviously learning the tricks of the trade which they would one day impart to their own children.

Nohang villagers, as host, have enjoyed the best of both worlds with the market giving them access to vegetables and fresh fish once a week. Peter Ndohas, 74, has seen the exchange hundreds of times but is worried it might die out.

"The younger generation should embrace the barter system and take it to the next level.

"We don't encourage cash payments for our marine produce. We prefer to barter for vegetables as our people since the time of our forefathers saw the benefits of such an exchange."

"This is one of our ancestors' last remaining cultural practices and it should be protected.

Village by-laws

"We Nohang villagers have provided the venue and protected the customers for years and we must continue to do so because it is a good thing," he said.

Like other markets, Nohang has by-laws to ensure it is trouble-free and conducive for trade. Villagers are not allowed to bring in bush knives, axes, spear guns and to keep family feuds and land disagreements away.

The exchange starts after the last Pere canoe comes ashore. Villagers intending to pay cash are urged to wait until the exchange is done.

"A lot of villagers follow the by-laws but we always use the opportunity during market days to drive home the message. Each village from the Titan and Highway communities are represented in a market committee of which

I am the chairman. Every market day, each representative often talks about pressing issues," said Mac Lucas, chairman of the Nohang market committee.

Manus academic Dr Mark Solon said a similar barter system used to exist on the central north coast of Manus. It was done out of necessity to enable villagers to access unavailable protein or vegetables.

It was done by the early communities of south, Lomoei, Derimbat, Saha, Andra, Ahus and Ponam.

He said fair trade was evident in the barter system as few arguments sprang between the villagers.

"All members respect the rights of others to fair trade and price for their produce despite the absence of regulated prices.

"One wonders if it is guided by an understanding that every member has a responsibility to sustain their family and



Nohang villager Peter Ndrohas, 73, and his grandson keeping a close eye on the barter exchange at Nohang market.



Villagers from the Highway with their garden produce at Nohang market.



Community health worker Pwapei Potin uses the opportunity provided by the gathering of vendors at Nohang market to talk about how they can purify their drinking water.

***“Be it a family or a community exchange, every member’s self esteem and confidence is enhanced by the fact that they are primary producers of their own basic needs and are able to contribute to another family’s food security.*”**

provide basic food security for them by a fair deal,” he added.

Manus folklore has stories of great battles between the Titans and Wisiai from the coast and inland Manus.

However, the faces of the elderly light up when they talk of barter markets such as Nohang, which has united communities of the two warring tribes and brought peace to the land.

In fact, interaction and exchange at the market often enabled a Pere family to adopt a Highway family, a relationship that exists even to this day.



Following a successful barter exchange at Nohang market, Kusunan Kumayon and his children prepare their canoes for the journey back to Pere.

“In the old days, the Titans and the Wisiai used to fight over the ownership of reefs that line our coastline. But the Nohang market has changed that now and united both communities so we are now living in peace and harmony,” added Mac.

Dr Solon believes a villager’s self esteem and confidence is enhanced when he or she contributes to another family’s food security via the barter system.

“Be it a family exchange or a community exchange, every member’s self esteem and confidence is enhanced by the fact that they are primary producers of their own basic needs and are able to contribute to another family’s food security.

“This is promoted by the availability of land to clan members and recognition of their right to work the marine and terrestrial resources and sustain the basic family unit,” he added.

There are reports the barter system is making a comeback in America in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

There are offers of construction help for a laptop, a Nintendo Wii for a BlackBerry or skin care for hair extensions. And there is a realisation the barter system literally gives a human element to a financial transaction and enables individuals to connect.

However, this is a fact that communities on the south coast of Manus have acknowledged since the days of their forefathers.

It is one cultural practice they want to hold on to and strengthen in the face of globalisation and a push towards a cash economy.

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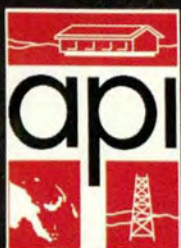
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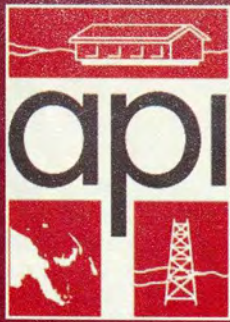
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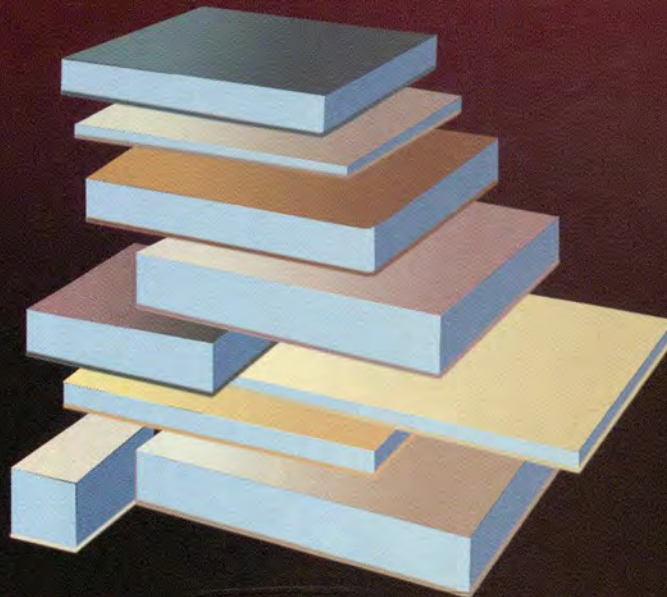
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Coconut

The multi-purpose palm

BY JOHN BROOKSBANK

Everyone recognises the coconut palm - leaning over a sandy beach it is the quintessential image of a deserted island or tropical holiday location.

This hardy plant, *Cocos nucifera*, is however much more than just ornamental - it is an essential part of life for coastal people of Papua New Guinea and other parts of the tropical world.

78 PARADISE April-May 2011

Coconuts are a useful component of subsistence diets for many villagers and the products of the palm are important agricultural commodities.

Coconuts were the main commercial reason behind the German colonial presence in the country, particularly the activities of the Neu Guinea Kompagnie, who were granted a charter to administer German New Guinea in 1885.

This trading company established plantations along the north coast of the mainland as well as in the Bismark Archipelago on New Britain, New Ireland and Manus islands. The dried flesh or 'meat' of mature coconuts, copra, was in great demand in Europe at the time for the manufacture of soap and later margarine.

The most famous character of this period was probably the renowned part American and Samoan entrepreneur Queen Emma, who built a coconut plantation empire based at Ralum in East New Britain, after initially settling at Mioko in the nearby Duke of York Islands in 1879.

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Morphologically speaking, the coconut is not a nut – it is a fruit or seed of the palm native to South East Asia and probably first domesticated in the Ganges Delta.

The coconut is light, buoyant and highly water resistant, evolved traits which allow it to disperse over long distances via marine currents. Its name apparently originates from the Portuguese and Spanish word *coco*, meaning grinning face or scarecrow, referring to the face-like appearance of the base of the shell, with its three holes.

The coconut palm thrives on sandy soils, is highly tolerant of salinity and prefers areas with abundant sunlight and regular rainfall, which makes colonising tropical shorelines pretty easy. Coconut palms grow in more than 80 countries around the world today, producing an estimated 61 million tonnes of copra a year.

Coconut plantations expanded in the New Guinea islands region of the country due to high copra prices in World War One, whilst commercial plantings had started in Papua in 1907, after Australia took over the colonial administration of this territory from Britain. In the early part of the twentieth century, copra was the most important commodity of Papua and New Guinea (in 1921/22), making up 90% of all exports.

World War Two severely disrupted the trade in the country and by the 1950s, copra production was back to pre-war levels, mostly from plantations owned by the larger trading companies such as Burns Philp, Steamships and Carpenters.

At this time, only about 20% of production came from smallholders, but extension efforts by Australian administrators increased village plantings, some associated with the promotion of rural cooperative societies as a means of introducing economic development to people in the rural areas of the country.

By the 1970s, plantation sector production of copra had declined and smallholder production increased that by 1998 it was about 80% of annual production. However, this contributed only 5% of Papua New Guinea's total exports - due in part to the development of coffee, cocoa, forestry operations and the start of some major mines.

Today, most commercial copra is produced in Madang and East New Britain provinces. Since the 1960s, the proportion of copra being processed locally to produce coconut oil, rather than exported in its dried form, has steadily increased.

Annual exports of coconut oil, worth about K60 million, are produced at two large mills, one in Madang and the other in Rabaul, mainly for markets in Europe.

There are also a number of smaller processing operations that produce high quality oil for local use to make soaps, cosmetics and shampoos.

*Its name apparently originates from the Portuguese and Spanish word **coco**, meaning grinning face or scarecrow, referring to the face-like appearance of the base of the shell with its three holes.*



A coconut palm can produce about 75 nuts a year and it takes about 6,000 coconuts to produce one tonne of copra. This in turn will yield 420 litres of oil, leaving a residue of copra meal which also has value as stock feed.



Palms can grow up to 30 metres in height and continue to produce nuts their whole life, during which their main risk is getting 'topped' due to lightning strikes.

Many palms are 70 to 80 years old and still going strong. Newer plantings are of shorter, quicker growing and high yielding hybrid coconut varieties, although these are more susceptible to attacks by certain pests.

A coconut palm can produce about 75 nuts a year and it takes about 6,000 coconuts to produce one tonne of copra. This in turn will yield 420 litres of oil, leaving a residue of copra meal which also has value as stock feed. The mature nuts are husked, usually by impaling them on a stake, before being split and dried. The dried copra shrinks and is easily removed from the shell.

Copra, even though its production is very labour intensive, represents the only available source of cash income for many coastal communities in Papua New Guinea.

The emphasis on copra oil, low world prices, deteriorating transport infrastructure, high fuel costs and the closure of many of the smaller copra buying depots and sub-depots has effectively made this uneconomic in many places. Only those growers who can easily get their copra to one of the two mills are really commercial.

Coconuts are an essential part of village diets and as such will always be grown on some scale - who can ever forget the delicious taste of fish and vegetables cooked in coconut milk?

Palm leaves are used in mats, house construction and

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the leaf midribs make excellent village brooms. The distinctive flat woven baskets of the Tolai people of East New Britain are made from coconut fronds.

In other parts of the world, the close grained dried coconut wood is used to make tough (and heavy) furniture and coconut husks are a common medium on which to grow tropical orchids.

Coconut husk fibre or coir was used extensively in furniture and is today principally made into rope, sacks and floor mats. The dense grain of coconut shells produces a superior charcoal used commercially for the absorption of gas and for the removal of colour, oxidants, impurities and odours in specialised filters.

On Bougainville Island, shortages experienced during and after the conflicts there resulted in the enterprising local people processing coconut oil to be used as an alternative to diesel, a bush bio-fuel.

Almost all coastal village families produce coconut oil on a small scale - by boiling scraped coconut meat with water, the released oil rising to the surface to be scooped off and used for cooking or cosmetically, rubbed into hair or onto the skin. Coconut oil creates that distinctive smell of the hair of coastal people.

Increasingly, since there will always be palms around, some villages have started producing coconut oil using a 'cold-press' method that results in a better product than that produced by boiling.



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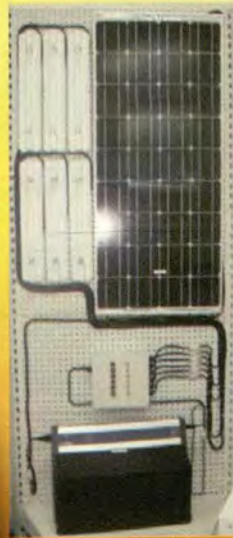


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The cavity of the coconut is sterile and the fluid contains sugar, fibre, proteins, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals...and is a nutritious food source, particularly for infants.

In Manus, a joint initiative between the Border Development Authority and the PNG Cocoa Coconut Institute has donated ram presses to five village pilot projects to investigate the viability of alternative sources of income from coconuts. Paradise Spice Limited, a nationally-owned company based in Port Moresby, is offering a price of K5 a litre for such naturally processed oil.

We all like the refreshing taste of coconut water or kulau, drunk from green nuts. The cavity of the coconut is sterile and the fluid contains sugar, fibre, proteins, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals that provides an isotonic electrolyte balance - and is a nutritious food source, particularly for infants.

Coconut water mixes easily with blood, has been used in emergency transfusions and in the village is regularly substituted for mother's breast milk if natural production ceases.

In some tropical locations, the sap from the cut stalk of coconut flower clusters is

used to ferment a palm alcohol or toddy. At the other end of the plant, the coconut is supported by a ball of fibrous roots which are a source of dye and can also be used to make a mouthwash and medicine for dysentery!

In a similar vein, the soft fibre sheet produced as the palm stalk sprouts out from the stem is a useful 'tissue', always available when the call of nature comes whilst in the bush, miles from ablution facilities!

In holiday destinations such as Cairns, the ornamental nature of the coconut is tampered by its liability as a danger to tourists promenading underneath and has spawned the profession of 'de-nutting' palms before fruits mature and drop unexpectedly.

So the not so humble coconut has a multiplicity of uses that sustain life in Papua New Guinea - even if it is just the source of kulau to mix with one's gin as you stretch out on a beach contemplating the world.



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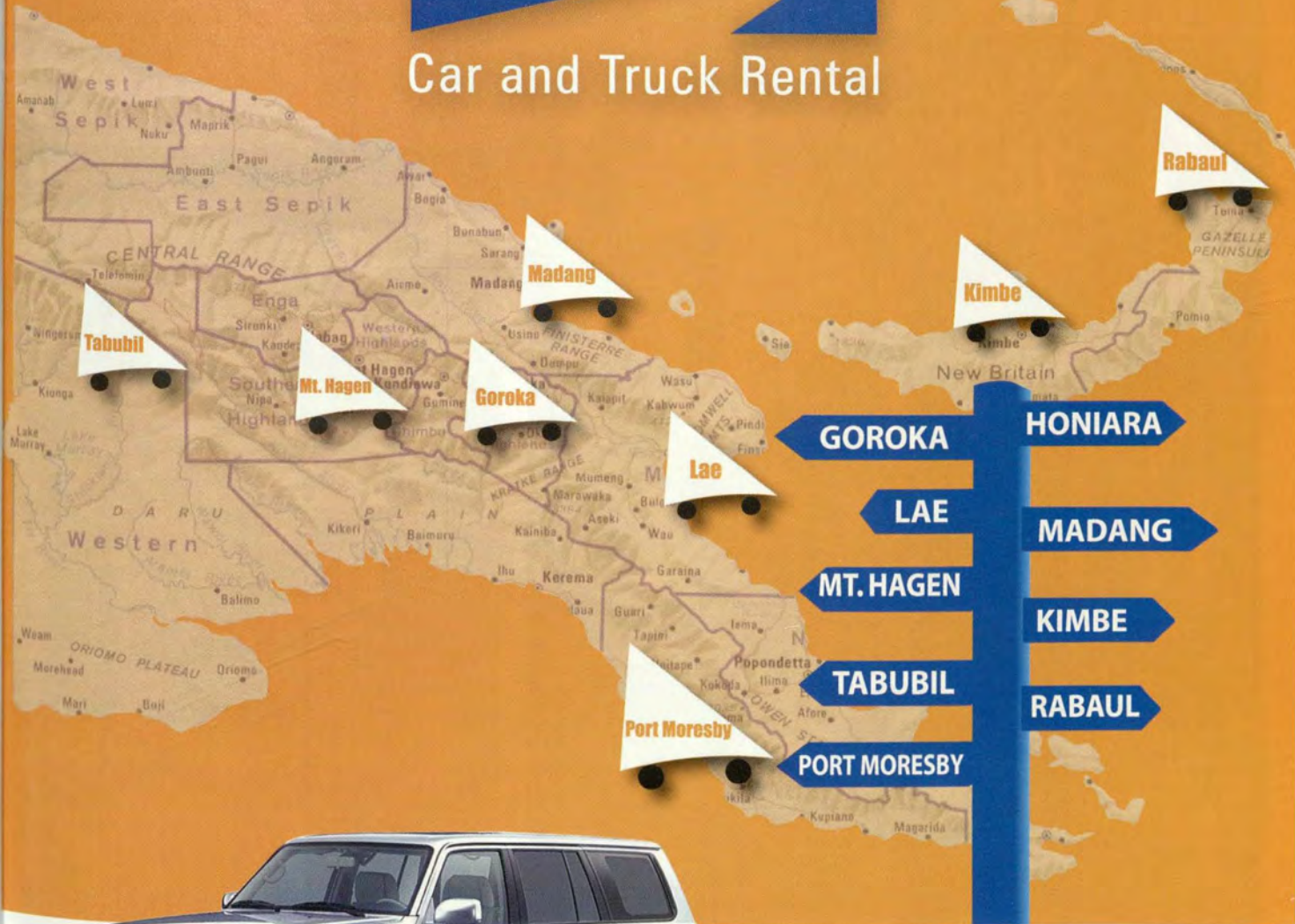
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George Street.

Hand hewn sandstone



Sydney on The Rocks!

A favourite haunt for tourists

BY JOHN BROOKSBANK

When you are next in that big Australian city on the harbour, head down George Street and you will walk straight into this historic and now iconic bit of Sydney - it is after all where European presence on the Australian continent began.

A visit to The Rocks, fairly obviously named after the outcrops of sandstone on the foreshore, just north of Circular Quay and nestled at the foot of the Harbour Bridge, is a popular part of almost every tourist itinerary to the city...but it wasn't always that way.

This bit of the Sydney Cove shoreline is where Captain Arthur Phillip of the First Fleet established his initial settlement in 1788 because of its closeness to freshwater - a stream that flowed out of the nearby wetlands. This small waterway disappeared a long time ago as the town developed into a city. It is



Russell Hotel.



Fortune of War pub.

remembered now only in the naming of a small laneway - Tank Stream Way.

There are over 100 heritage sites and buildings in The Rocks suburb, the oldest still standing being Cadman's Cottage. It originally sat right on the shore when it was built in 1816. Today, after land reclamation, the solid sandstone building is some metres from the water's edge, where it looks out across the harbour to the Sydney Opera House.

Walking up from this cottage into the maze of laneways that characterise the area, one comes across a wide variety of specialist shops, galleries, boutiques, cafes and pubs.

These establishments provide many delectable temptations to stop and linger for a little longer. They are housed in historic buildings whilst most of the bars and eateries have pleasant courtyard dining areas.



Al fresco dining at The Rocks.



The Rocks' old style housing.

Sydney was declared a city in 1842 and The Rocks, with its closeness to the wharf areas became a commercial hub but retained a reputation as a rough part of town. It was described in the late 1800s as a place known for "the practice of every debauchery and villainy".

What is nice about The Rocks is that this waterfront precinct is really not that large and easily navigable on foot.

There are at least twenty pubs and bars in The Rocks, some of the oldest in Australia, ranging from traditional dark wood furnished hostelries to more modern-styled bars, some with views out over Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and Darling Harbour.

This fine selection of drinking venues in which to enjoy cold beers and live bands includes the Hero of Waterloo, Mercantile, Observer, Orient, Fortune of War, Glenmore, Lord Nelson and the lively Jacksons on George.

However, if you fear you might miss something, there are of course more organised pub tours, details available from The Rocks' Visitors Centre.

Before European settlement, this part of the harbour belonged to the Cadigal people, one of the nineteen Aboriginal clans who had traditionally owned land in the Sydney basin for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

Archaeological excavations on Dawes Point from which the Harbour Bridge sprouts,

demonstrate that the area was an Aboriginal campsite where a variety of seafood was eaten. For the Cadigal, the presence of freshwater from the stream leaving the swampland where Hyde Park now sits made this a logical place to camp.

Local Aboriginal tribes could however not withstand the expansion of European settlement which inexorably grew outwards from this part of the foreshore.

Tents, shacks, wooden lean-tos and shanties gradually gave way to more substantial buildings constructed of blocks of locally hewn sandstone.

Commercial hub

By the 1820s, a string of pubs lined Gloucester Street with names such as 'The Black Dog', 'Turks Head', 'Whalers Arms' and 'The Punchbowl'.

Sydney was declared a city in 1842 and The Rocks, with its closeness to the wharf areas, became a commercial hub but retained a reputation as a rough part of town. It was



described in the late 1800s as a place known for "the practice of every debauchery and villainy".

More respectable families built their homes on solid sandstone foundations of higher ground such as where Cumberland Street now stands, often using the stone itself to make sturdy buildings. The area was home to sea captains, merchants, traders and even the Bishop of Australia at one time.

Whilst the city expanded north, south and west from the harbour side, older areas such as The Rocks gradually fell into squalor and disrepair and became home to the lower classes of society. When there was an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1900, the New South Wales Government announced an intention to resume privately-owned properties in the area and many houses were demolished in the name of improved sanitation.

The construction of the iconic 'coat hanger' Sydney Harbour Bridge which started in 1923 required the destruction of another 300 houses in The Rocks.

Many of the older buildings in the city did not survive the development zeal of the 20th century. The building of the Cahill Expressway to connect major roads to the Harbour Bridge in the late 1950s also saw many more houses and shops in this old part of town lost to the wrecking ball.

It was not until the 1970s that community movements arose and became increasingly vocal about saving the unique character of The Rocks neighbourhood.

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Orient Hotel...a drinking venue.

Lobbying by these groups was instrumental in the passing of the New South Wales Heritage Act in 1977.

Amazing metamorphosis

From being a virtual slum, the area underwent an amazing metamorphosis, the old district being transformed into a vibrant pocket of

cafes and restaurants, and interesting tourist shops and stalls. The Rocks has now been totally restored and is recognised as a historical, retail and entertainment precinct. This has thankfully been achieved without destroying the area's Old World charm.

The NSW Government still owns and manages the area through the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.

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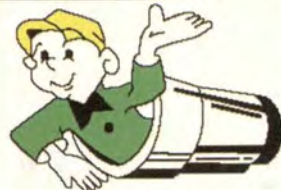


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The Rocks has now been totally restored and is recognised as a historical, retail and entertainment precinct. This has thankfully been achieved without destroying the area's Old World charm.

There is nothing more pleasant to do on a warm summer day than to wander around the street bars, cafes and markets that The Rocks is now famous for, small individually-owned stalls selling a dazzling array of goods and produce.

The Rocks is a village within a city, which echoes a long and colourful past that can be enjoyed by everyone in an equally colourful present. It is an interesting fusion of modern amenities in an old and valued setting. Go visit it yourself and see.

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Checking out the Rocks market.




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Silver service at the Raffles Hotel.

SINGAPORE ON A BUDGET

Cuisine of almost every kind on offer

BY ANDY PHILLIPS

Dressed in immaculate white, the tall Malay waiter asked to take my plate and follow him.

I had just turned away from the sumptuous buffet of North Indian cuisine, on a wide table in the restaurant at Singapore's famous Raffles Hotel - and feared the worst.

It must have been my inelegant clothing, I thought, or maybe the fact that it was my third visit to the buffet table; perhaps not suitable behaviour for a five-star establishment.

Glancing over the shoulder of the waiter, I saw another staff member replacing my knife and fork and straightening the napkins as if I had never been there.

The thought of being ushered out made me drink in the surroundings: the opulent décor, the elegant floral bouquets and the iconic paddle fans swishing on the ceiling.

But the waiter merely smiled hesitantly, lightly took my plate and walked me back to the table, presenting my plate back to me and pulling out my chair with a flourish.

Silver service, it seemed, came as standard at Raffles - even at the lunch-time curry buffet held in the hotel's elegant Tiffin Room.

'When in Singapore, feed at Raffles,' recommended Kipling during the time of British colonial rule. Thankfully, the buffet price means Kipling's maxim can still be followed



Singapore Flyer...a view from the Raffles Hotel.



now by almost all travellers to the modern city state.

In fact, even seasoned travellers used to the price of hotel rooms elsewhere in Asia often fail to realise that Singapore has plenty to offer for the budget-minded. And a five-star lunch at one of the world's top hotels is just the beginning.

The addition of the Singapore Flyer - the world's biggest ferris wheel - in 2008 added to the attraction of a visit to the Lion City. A trip on the iconic wheel is an ideal place to begin any exploration of the city state, offering panoramic views across the skyline.

Tickets for a trip in one of the capsules costs less than S\$30 per person, which makes for a spectacular but wallet-friendly beginning to any visit.

Singapore also hosted the first night race in the Formula One motor racing calendar in 2008, yet visitors lured by headline attractions will have plenty more to discover underneath the surface.

Burning off the calories from the all-you-can-

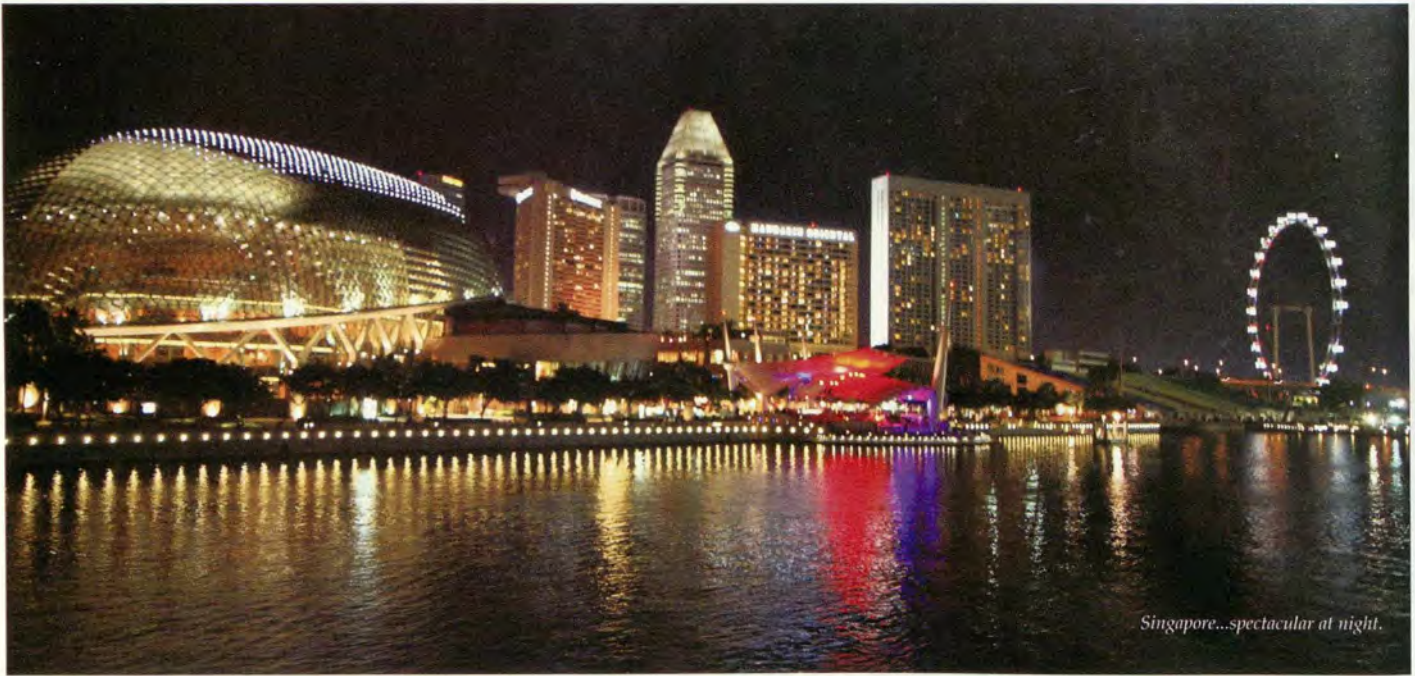


eat lunch at Raffles can be achieved by a trip to the East Coast Parkway, a 10km long palm-fringed promenade with a long white beach created with sand from nearby Indonesia.

For those looking for more than a stroll, there are bicycles, windsurfers and even inline skates for hire - all available for a few Singapore dollars per hour. The coastal route

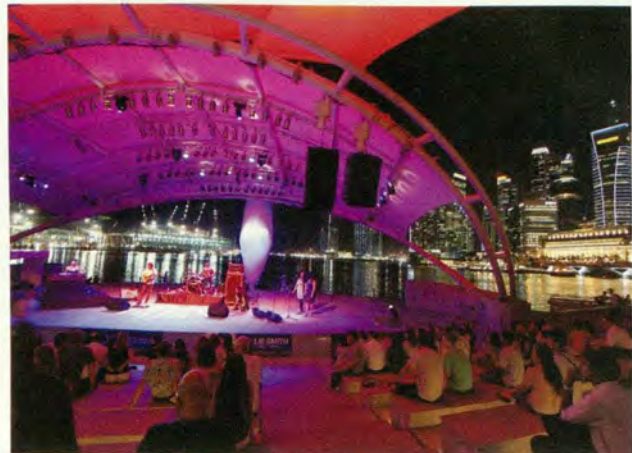
takes in winding paths and wooden bridges, all built on reclaimed land. Singapore is, after all, one of the world's 20 smallest countries.

When you've stretched your legs, there are plenty of cafes, bars and restaurants lining the promenade, the majority offering al fresco tables with views across the Straits of Singapore.



Singapore...spectacular at night.

When night falls, the bright lights and warm climate gives Singapore a spectacular atmosphere - and makes dining out a real pleasure. The city boasts some of the finest chefs and best restaurants in Asia.



Lau Pa Sat market...the largest and best hawker centre. It boasts around 120 food sellers and hundreds of different dishes. It also provides live entertainment.

For those who prefer indoor attractions - or wanting to escape the heat - there is plenty of interest at the Asian Civilisations Museum back in central Singapore.

A must for those who are making the city their first stop on a journey into Asia, the multi-level galleries of the ACM provide an insight into the history of India, China and South-east Asia through interactive displays and state-of-the-art technology. The museum is also a treasure in itself, housed in a fully-restored neo-classical building.

When night falls, the bright lights and warm climate gives Singapore a spectacular atmosphere - and makes dining out a real pleasure. The city boasts some of the finest chefs and best restaurants in Asia, but

thankfully, there is also plenty of choice for the budget-minded traveller.

Cuisine of almost every kind is on offer at the city's 'hawker' centres, which are made up of many small food stalls set around a large communal eating area.

The largest - and many would argue the best - of these hawker centres is Lau Pa Sat, a huge market boasting around 120 food sellers and hundreds of different dishes. The market is all weather, set inside the largest Victorian filigree cast-iron structure in South-East Asia. The low-rise white metal structure, complete with swishing paddle fans, is a contrast to the steel-and-glass skyscrapers which surround it. The centre also provides live entertainment each weekday from 8pm from a central stage.

STORAGE PROBLEMS SOLVED!

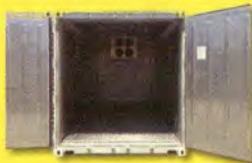


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Fact File

- The curry buffet in the Tiffin Room at Raffles Hotel costs S\$60 (Singapore dollars) and is available during weekday lunchtimes. Visit www.raffles.com
- Singapore Night Safari costs S\$32 for adults including a tram ticket. It can be reached by bus from several MRT stations including Ang Mo Kio (number 138 bus) or Choa Chu Kang (bus 927). Order tickets and find out more at www.nightsafari.com.sg
- Entry to the Asian Civilisations Museum costs \$3 (S\$4) for adults on a Friday night (7-9pm), or \$4 (S\$5) at other times, with guided tours at 11am and 2pm Tues - Fri.
- Buy an ez-link card from any newsagent or MRT station to get around without having to carry excess loose change; cards start from \$15 and can be easily topped up.
- Visit www.a1singaporehotels.com for offers on accommodation.

But the food is the main attraction. Gastronomes won't be disappointed by the choices on offer, with everything from Javanese fried noodles to Satay skewers and Chinese deep-fried bread sticks. Dishes typically cost under S\$5 each, making it a cost-friendly way of eating out.

When you have eaten your fill, the evening is the perfect time to visit another of Singapore's landmark attractions: The Night Safari.

Open every night from 7.30pm, the attraction enables nocturnal animals to be seen at their most active, with tickets costing a modest S\$32 per person.

Cost friendly...dishes typically cost under \$5 each.



A world first, the safari is set in a 40-acre forested park on the edge of the city, criss-crossed with winding walking trails and a narrow road for a silent tram.


A silent tram carries visitors on a 45-minute ride around the park, with whispered commentary at each enclosure and low-density lights used briefly to highlight each animal.

Exploring the park on foot is also a great way of enjoying the spooky night atmosphere, with paths given names like the Leopard Trail or the Forest Giant's Trail.

The attraction also has an open-air theatre where a regular Creatures of the Night show takes place.

A half-hour show involves various nocturnal creatures being brought out and their impressive skills paraded, from a leaping Puma to playful raccoons.

By the time you exit the park by the light of flaming torches, it is worth checking your wallet - as chances are you will have saved enough to enjoy one of the city's famous Singapore Sling cocktails.

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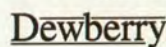
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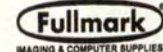

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BY SHERIDEN RHODES

Sri Lanka's past is steeped in colonial history and a colourful spice and tea trade but a spirited revival is giving the Pearl of the Orient a chic new vibe.

It's just after midnight when we land in steamy, bustling Colombo. Despite the hour, the ancient roads are choked with traffic.

Our driver Ruwan expertly ducks and weaves avoiding everything from wandering cows to impossibly laden carts before depositing us at the historic Mount Lavinia Hotel, high on a bluff - a legacy of Sri Lanka's colonial past.

As I toss and turn under the slow whirling ceiling fan, my mind groggy from jet lag and the still, humid air, I hear the distant crash of waves upon the shore, while the incessant chanting of monks from a nearby monastery infiltrates my dreams.

Imperial heritage

Come daylight, I'm transported to another era. The faded glory of the mansion is typical of Sri Lanka's imperial heritage. With its white columns, polished wooden floors, carved wood ceilings and wide windows opening to the ocean breezes, Mount Lavinia is steeped in romantic legend.

Chic Sri Lanka



Built by a Governor-General for a local mestizo dancer who captured his heart, he positioned the magnificent manor house so his love could enjoy tea on the terrace while soaking up the views of the Indian Ocean.

From the terrace, old Ceylon looks much as it has always been. But when you walk Colombo's streets, you discover changes are afoot.

While the romance of Sri Lanka's colonial past is still evident in its hill stations, estates, Portuguese, Dutch and British architecture, a twenty first century metamorphosis is slowly taking place. Magnificent colonial buildings now house chic homeware stores, art galleries and department stores styled on London's Harrods and Selfridges.

Gracious old homes are being turned into fashionable retail outlets while tucked away from the hustle and bustle of Colombo's shabby but lively streets, sophisticated dining can be had at the likes of the



Gallery Café, the former offices of Sri Lanka's most famous architect Geoffrey Bawa, the Frangipani Tree and Number 18 with its sixties décor. Beach Wadiya meanwhile is the place to tuck into sumptuous seafood with sand between your toes.

Whether it's in the cool of the hill country, deep in the cultural triangle or along the coast at Galle, smart villas and boutique hotels now welcome guests, while fabulous jewellery designers and artisans ply their trade on narrow, dusty streets.

We ponder the changes over iced tea in the intimate first floor café of the original Paradise Road store with its elegant white shuttered windows.

Paradise Road is one of the country's most successful lifestyle businesses and its flagship store is stacked from the floor boards to the high ceilings with exquisite Sri Lankan made products; white ceramic tableware rimmed with the sensuous curves of the Sinhalese script, fragrant Ayurvedic massage oils, place mats of fine kitul twigs, coconut shell spoons, bolts of beautifully woven fabric and chic leather and batik notebooks.

Afterwards, we lunch at the glamorous Gallery



Café, also owned by the flamboyant designer, Shanth Fernando, who brought the Paradise Road stores to Colombo. Diners enter down a paved driveway with shady temple trees and large urns.

A doorman dressed in a smart black and white striped batik sarong welcomes guests as they

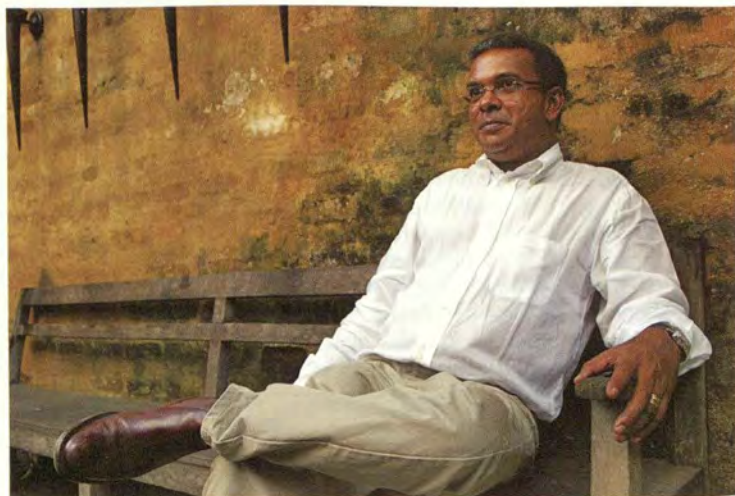
wander past showcases containing local art works.

A view across a long pond filled with striking purple nil manel, Sri Lanka's national flower, continues through latticed doors towards a giant cement urn, which sits at the boundary wall of the cafe. This dimly lit, part alfresco



Fernando has made Sri Lankan arts and crafts a highly sought after commodity. Dressed in a crisp white shirt, the talented and urbane designer unquestionably has an infallible eye for what sells. But don't expect to find Paradise Road products on sale anywhere else in the world.

Fernando...a Sri Lankan who has made Sri Lankan arts and crafts a highly sought after commodity.



Fact File

Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR)

Requirements vary. Contact the nearest Sri Lankan embassy

It is best to visit in the dry season. November to April is the driest season on the south-west coast and up in the hill country, while May to September is the best time to visit the east coast.

See www.srilankatourism.org

space set around a stylish courtyard is where locals come to sip and sup.

Chic new face

One of the key figures associated with Sri Lanka's chic new face, Fernando has made Sri Lankan arts and crafts a highly sought after commodity. Dressed in a crisp white shirt, the talented and urbane designer unquestionably has an infallible eye for what sells. But don't expect to find Paradise Road products on sale anywhere else in the world.

"To maintain the quality of what we create, we simply can't produce on a large scale to meet the tight schedules demanded for export," he explains.

It's a similar story elsewhere. The fact that products are made by artisans working at home or from small craft centres, means they are not mass produced for export and ooze quality.

At Elephant Walk, another fabulous lifestyle store, located in the elegant, leafy inner city



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district of Cinnamon Gardens, household linens, kitchen wares and clever gifts are displayed in the rooms of a spacious old house. Elephant Walk commissions skilled craftswomen and men from local villages to produce quality hand-made items.

Other retail gems that follow a similar philosophy include Barefoot, started four decades ago by Sri Lankan designer, artist and writer, Barbara Sansoni.

Spread throughout a series of rooms and

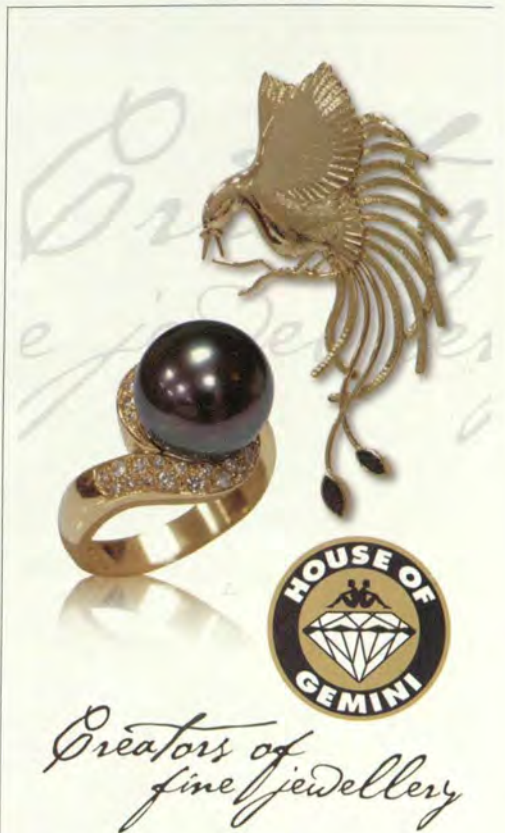
spilling out into the courtyard of a gracious colonial era house, racks of cotton and silk sarongs shimmer in saffron yellow, green, rich aubergine and Indian Ocean blue, while vibrant fabrics, clothing and imaginative soft toys entice browsers.

The style scene isn't just limited to Colombo. Over on the south west coast, many of the island's smartest villas and boutique hotels can be found. We stop for lunch at the elegant Taru Villas.

Further on at the historic fort town of Galle, we shop for exquisite saris and striking, contemporary jewellery crafted by local designers, enjoy G & Ts on the wide enclosed verandah of the newly refurbished Galle Forte Hotel, and hole up at the fabulous Dutch and Sun House overlooking the harbour and the old fort of Galle.


That night under a romantic mosquito canopy draped over an antique four-poster bed, the gentle waft of incense perfumes my room lit softly by glowing candles.

Once again, I hear the muezzin's sombre call to prayer - a reminder that while Sri Lanka is fast moving into the modern era, its traditions, cultures and beliefs remain intact, adding depth, spice and undeniable romance to the wonderful island of Serendib.



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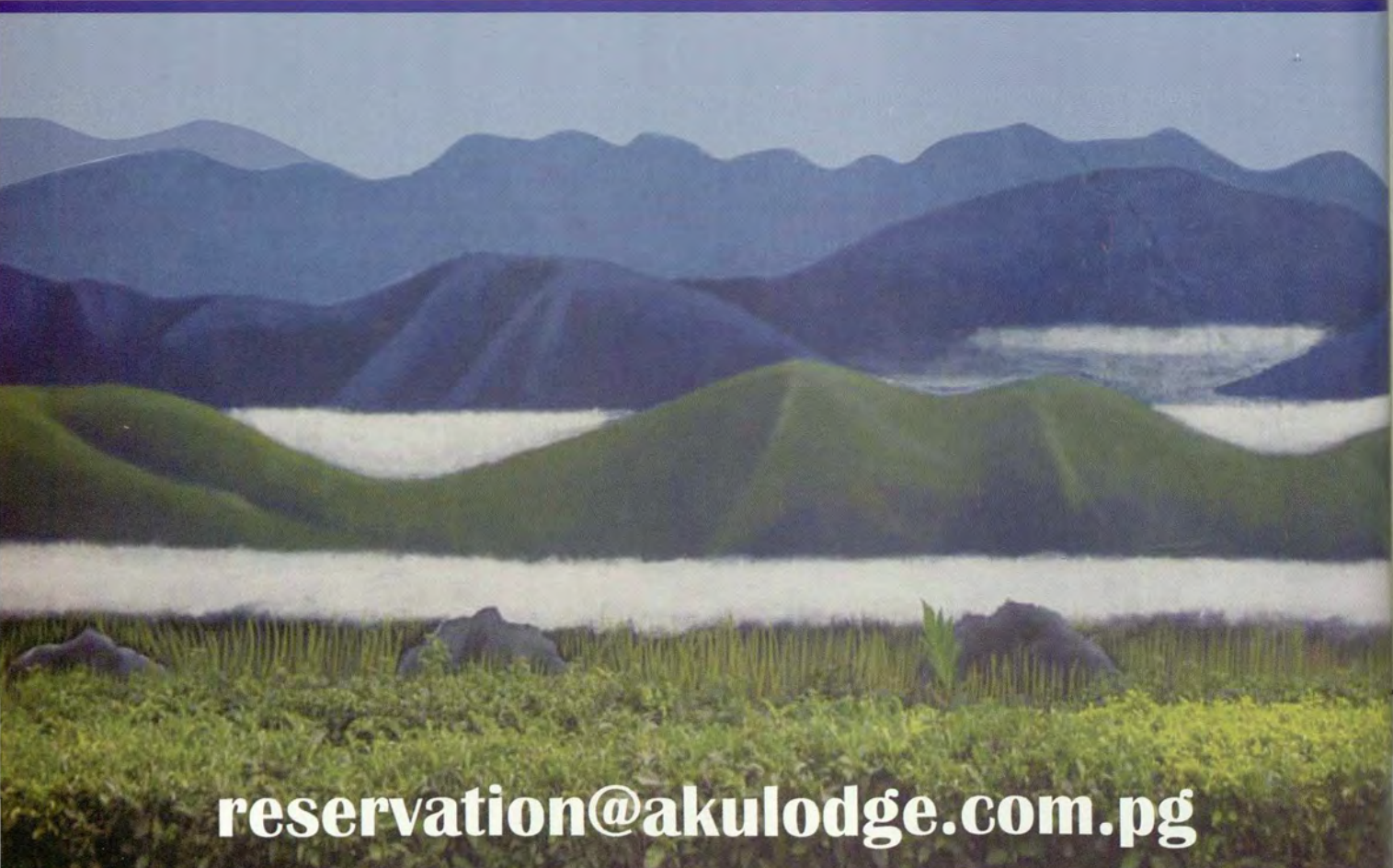
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Suva...a cosmopolitan city.



Destination SUVA

A slice of the 'real Fiji'

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **ALEXANDRA KALINOE**

As a tourist destination, Fiji's Coral Coast is well known internationally. The hotels that line the coast are the main haunts of tourists from all over the globe. The capital Suva, however, continues to remain unknown to most tourists.

I decided to take the road less travelled and experience Fiji's capital and its surrounds. Although I had travelled to Suva for a day-trip on a previous vacation, I had never actually spent any time there. Thanks to the assistance of Fijian and Papua New Guinean (PNG) friends residing in and around Suva, I was treated to the real Fiji.

Before arriving in the country, I had booked a transfer from Nadi on the Coral Sun bus to Suva. The trip takes four hours and the road meanders through scenic coastal scapes of Viti Levu.

The bus stops at the Holiday Inn in downtown Suva and passengers can then easily catch a taxi to their respective hotels. Unlike Nadi, there are many cabs in Suva, they are cheap, and they run 24 hours a day.

On my first night in Suva, a Saturday, I was met at my hotel, the Peninsula International, by Kris, a friend from Brisbane, and James, a family friend from PNG. James brought along a friend of his, Aslam, whom he had met while studying at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva.

We decided that Saturday night would be my

big night out in Suva, and it certainly was! It was a combination of the company and the venues. Unlike Port Moresby, my home town, Suva doesn't have nightclubs. Instead, there are a lot of 'pubs'. The boys referred to them as Bars.

Bar hopping around town is pretty easy, everything is close together. We kicked off at O'Reillys and then moved on to Traps, and finally ended up at Aslam's Kava Shop.

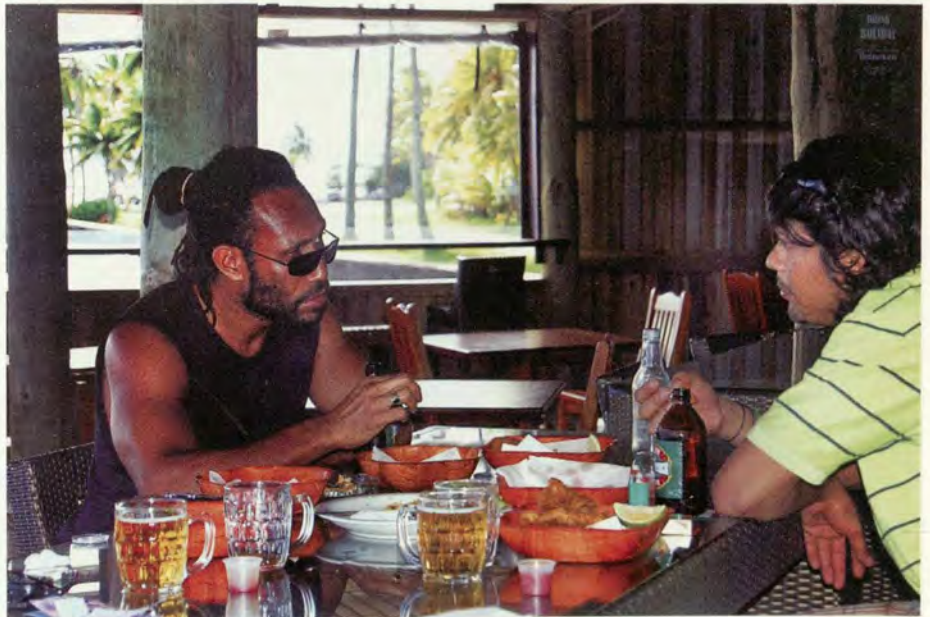
Needless to say, Sunday officially began around mid-day. Located along Laucala Bay, the boys felt *Fringing Reef*, a waterfront restaurant and bar, would offer the best hangover 'chow', combining a somewhat 'hair of the dog' approach - that's right folks, more Fiji Gold. Reasonably priced, mains will set you back F\$10-\$F12.

Cosmopolitan Suva

Monday was my first opportunity to wander around Suva city. I was warned by Kris and James that I should keep my satchel in front of me at all times as a precaution.

I liked Suva the first time I visited a few years back. I like the combination of the old and new. Brand new buildings have sprung up next to colonial era buildings. This gives it a very cosmopolitan feel. The locals didn't realise I wasn't Fijian, until I whipped out my camera.

As Pacific Islanders ourselves, Papua New Guineans are able to blend in better than other tourists.



Dining at Fringing Reef, a waterfront restaurant and bar.

Suva offers a great shopping experience with everything from high-end department stores to small souvenir shops in little alleys. Unlike Nadi, shop staff let you browse at your own pace.

Internet access in Suva is not a problem. There are a number of internet cafes and the rates are reasonable. There are international ATMs all over the city and they're open 24 hours a day.

On Wednesday, I travelled to Nausori, which

is about a 20-minute minivan (PMV) ride out of Suva. Nausori is also where the airport that services Suva is located.

Set next to the Rewa River, the longest river in Fiji, the town itself is provincial in feel. It appears to centre around a market, bus stop, and an administration area that spans one main street.

By the time we arrived from Suva, it was around 11 in the morning, so we headed to what Kris described as the Fijian version of

Shopping is great with everything from high-end department stores to small souvenir shops.





KFC, Wishbone. Although they serve pizzas, chicken and chips and other fast food, they also serve an array of curries.

Kris' home is located in the village of Wainibokasi, a further 10 minutes by taxi from Nausori. Kris lives on a farm with most of his extended family. Their home doubles as a base for the family dredging business, as well as their farming projects.

The family lives close by the river and the pace of life is slow in this rural community.

Kris describes growing up in the village as idyllic. He and his cousin were nice enough to give me a history lesson on their own family, as well as explaining to me how generations of other ethnic Indian families came to live in Fiji.

I managed to catch the local mini bus home alone. As soon as the doors opened in Suva, there was a stampede! In hindsight, I think catching public transport during peak hour is not a good idea in any country.

Thursday was perhaps the most culturally insightful day of the trip. I took in the Fiji Museum. Entry was F\$7 for adults. Set amongst beautiful gardens, the museum provides an insight into the ethnic diversity of Fiji, which is an aspect of the country that fascinated me throughout my trip. That evening I took a walk with James from my hotel to the Grantham Kava Shop aka - 'taki' central.

The back rooms of the shop serve as a boarding house for students at the University of the South Pacific, as the university is a short walk away.



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PHOTO: JOTPROG.C



The Fiji Museum...provides an insight into the ethnic diversity of Fiji.

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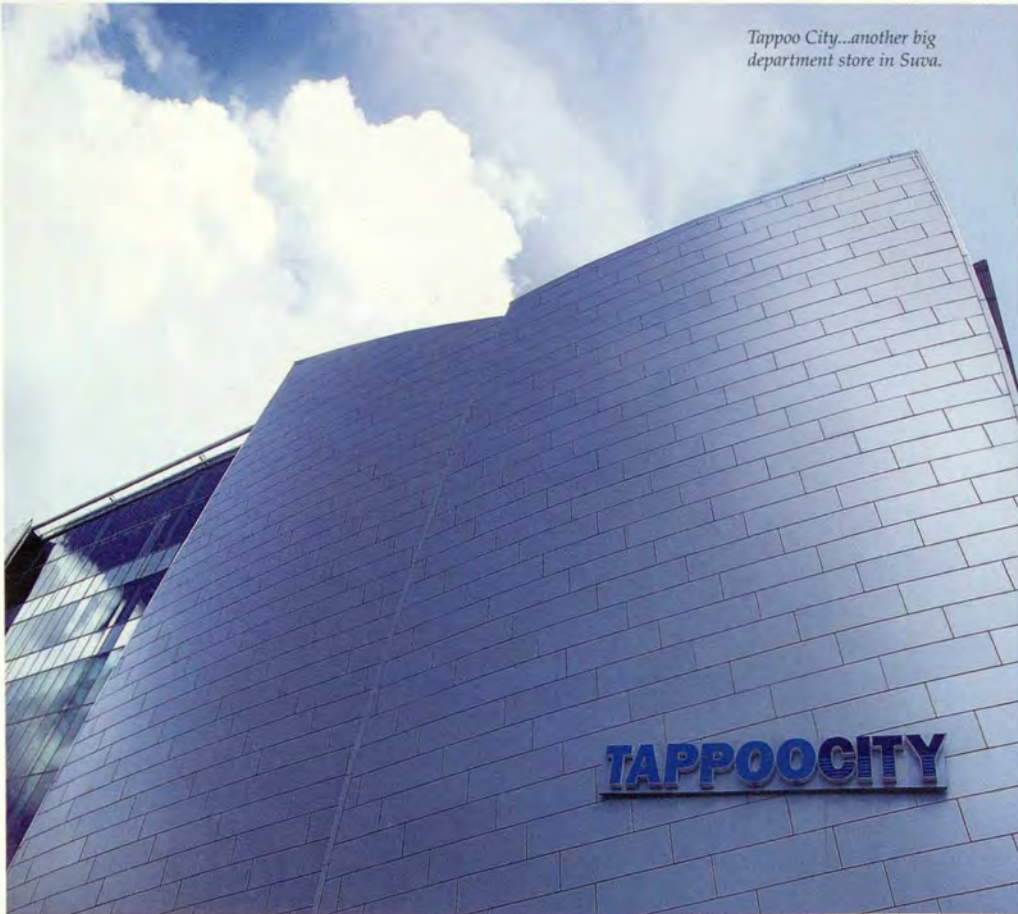
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Tappoo City...another big department store in Suva.



Suva is a far cry from the tourist traps of Nadi and everything is affordable. The food is cheap and it's good. The hotels are also affordable, but you do get what you pay for.

The boarders mainly come from the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

Suva's cheap

Aslam, the proprietor, speaks a version of *tok pisin* which has me confused most of the time. He and James seem to have adapted all the different Melanesian dialects of *tok pisin* into their own.

Aslam opened his kava shop in 2007. Originally from the island of Taveuni, his family has been involved in all aspects of the kava business, including cultivation and processing, for generations.



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Smiling for the camera.



He explained to me that he hand-pounds his kava, which is what makes it more prized than kava that is machine ground. He gave me some to take home to PNG, as well as all the equipment to attempt to do it myself - a 'kava kit'.

Suva is a far cry from the tourist traps of Nadi and everything is affordable. The food is cheap and it's good. The hotels are also affordable, but you do get what you pay for, so you won't necessarily get the same standards that you would expect in Nadi.

Suva is definitely a slice of the 'real Fiji', so if you get the chance to experience it, take it. Independent travellers certainly don't have a problem getting around here, so choosing not to take an arduous organised one-day tour from Nadi is fine. Taking a couple of days to soak it up, is definitely advised!

 Air Niugini has three weekly flights to Nadi.

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Out of Africa, into the Philippines

BY JOHN BORTHWICK



Caluit waterbucks...resting.

In 1976, the late President Ferdinand Marcos decided that he'd like to be able to go big-game hunting without ever leaving home. So he selected the 3,700-hectare Calauit Island in the Calamian Island group and stocked it with animals from eight non-predatory African species. The animals multiplied and prospered.



On slim resources, the Calauit Island Wildlife Sanctuary now operates as a reserve for endangered Philippine species, as well as its African exiles.

Club Paradise, a small, four-star resort on neighbouring Dimakya Island, is the most convenient jumping-off spot for Calauit. With no roads, jeepneys or disco, the 19-hectare island has instead white sand that slope down to waters as pale green as an old Coke bottle. Sea eagles and orioles cruise overhead while tiny Calamian deer roam the island. Any place called "Paradise" must be earned, of course.

We start with a one-hour flight from Manila to Busuanga Island's Coron airport (little more than a runway and windsock) in northern Palawan, followed by a jeepney ride, then a boat trip down the jungle-fringed Panggauran River and out to the islands. An hour later, we're stepping across the beach at Club Paradise.

The resort's waters are a scuba diver's dream with coral reefs, a World War II wreck and good dive facilities. But, it's not what we are here for. Our banca boat next slips through the islands of the Busuanga channel on its way to Calauit, Africa.

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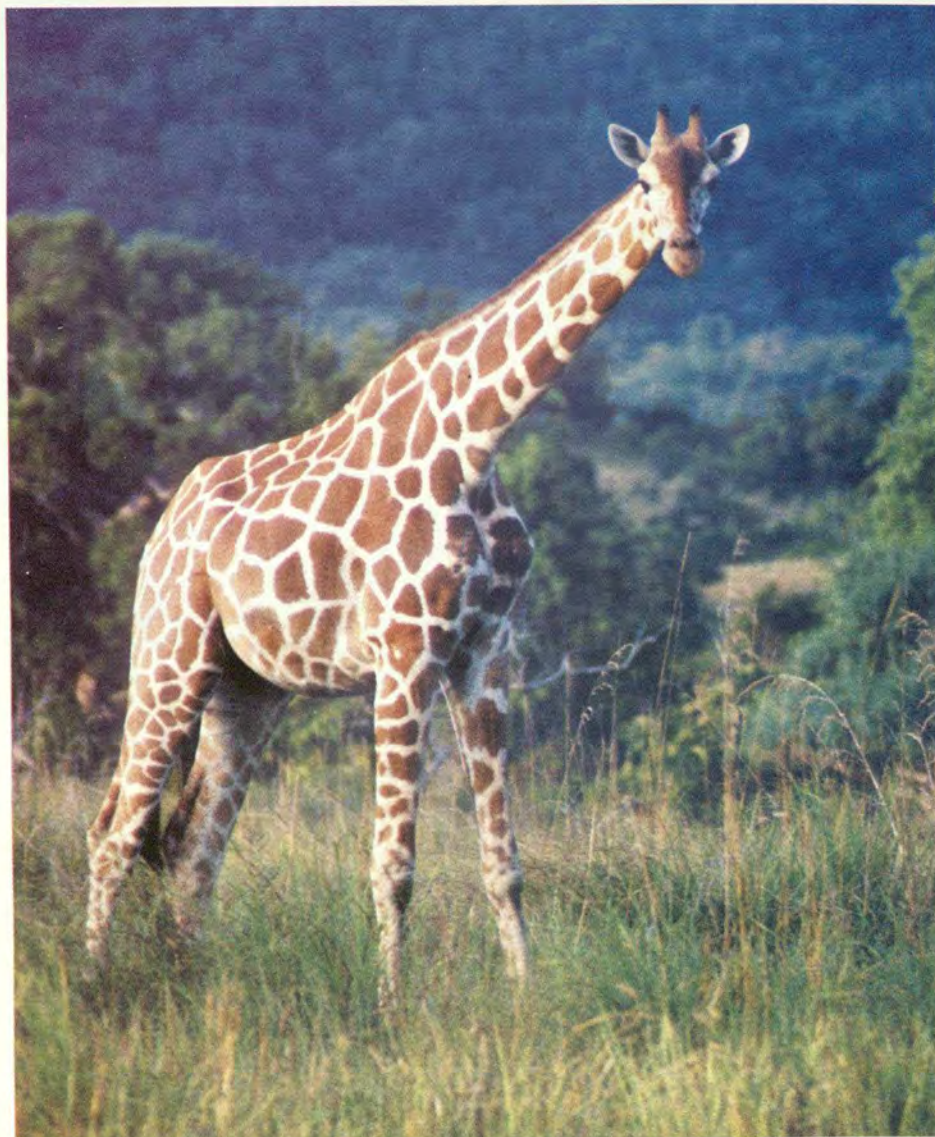
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"All the animals are grazers and browsers. Being non-predatory species, they don't attack each other - or the locals."

The project manager welcomes us ashore and we pile into his ancient jeep. Bouncing across Calauit's cogon grasslands, already I can spot the heads of giraffes drifting above the treetops like languid "cherry pickers".

Nearby, a gallery of op-art zebras seems to have adapted very well to its Asian diaspora. We learn that the original 104 African animals, of eight species, have bred so well (there are now around 600 of them) that either selling or culling some will be necessary in order to avoid overcrowding.

"All the animals are grazers and browsers. Being non-predatory, they don't attack each other - or the 'locals'," says our guide, pointing out a group of native Calamian deer sheltering among the ipil-ipil trees.

Across the open grasslands are scattered various members of the antelope family - horned bush bucks, water bucks, eland, topi, gazelle and impala. Our vehicle spooks none of them, although when I approach on foot a group of water buck, they scamper away.

The African animals attract the most attention from visitors because of their anomaly, but Calauit's Conservation and Resource Management Foundation now concentrates its efforts on its own endangered Philippine species.

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Outside the centre, sits an old Isuzu truck that is ample testimony to the limited budget the devoted staff work under. The truck, abandoned by the Japanese Army in 1945, was until recently the centre's main workhorse.

The guide takes us to a roughly netted enclosure holding a beautiful royal blue Palawan peacock pheasant. Staff shortages - there were 400 in the Marcos heyday - mean that resources are stretched to protect this native species, as well as the Philippine crocodile, the Calamian deer and the Palawan mouse deer.

One local creature that seems to be doing very nicely is the Palawan bear cat. This bushy, indolent fellow built like a well-fed possum, hangs from a rail by his tail and hooks into his favourite snack, a salami sandwich.

Visiting the sanctuary's Operations Centre, we learn about programmes to protect other indigenous species such as sea turtles and

scaly anteaters. Outside the centre, sits an old Isuzu truck that is ample testimony to the limited budget the devoted staff work under. The truck, abandoned by the Japanese Army in 1945, was until recently the centre's main workhorse.

We drive back out to the grassy plains again, then park to watch the giraffes mosey by with their necks both above and below the trees. Gazelles amble past; bush bucks and water bucks graze peacefully; but, as the joke goes, since President Marcos fled in 1986, Calauit hasn't had a fast-buck.



Air Niugini flies every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

A Palawan bear cat.





The Colourful Cairns Botanical Gardens

Like a much anticipated pregnancy, the flower was for a few days the centre of public attention. It drew sightseers eager to see the inflorescence of one of the largest flowering plants in the world, the Titan Arum - an event which occurs only infrequently in the wild and even more rarely when cultivated.

The Titan Arum...one of the largest flowering plants in the world.



Amorphophallus titanium, literally meaning large misshapen phallus is a plant native to the island of Sumatra in Indonesia.

Its huge flower stalk or spadix, wrapped in a leaf-like spathe is commonly about three metres tall and emits an odour similar to that of decomposing carrion, which leads to its Indonesian name *bunga bangkai* or corpse flower.

This characteristic, along with its deep red colour and texture, serves to attract insects to assist in pollination during the few short days when the female, and then male flowers, are open.

During its brief public life, its days in the spotlight so to speak, this tropical beauty was the magnet that drew more people than usual to the Flecker Botanical Gardens in the Cairns suburb of Edge Hill.

Finally, the green spathe opened to reveal its interior purple colour and ribbed texture, showcasing the central hollow spathe, its top portion covered in pollen.

The first cultivated Titan Arum flowered in Kew Gardens in London in 1889 and even today only 5-10 cultivated plants a year flower in gardens around the world. This year, two of these, named Spud and Hannibal by the curators for some unfathomable reason, were in Cairns!

The flowering of the two Titan Arums coincided with the school holidays in January 2011 and for a few days there were more children than normal thronging the garden grounds, learning about some of the wonders of the natural world.

With its cleverly designed meandering pathways, clearly labelled trees and other plants of interest, manicured lawns, a fernery and an orchid house, the Flecker Gardens, are well worth a visit for anyone who loves nature.

Some parts really are the lush wet tropics, framed by trees both native and exotic which provide a framework on which hangs orchids and bromeliads over an understorey of more exotic gingers and aroids.

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The Cairns botanical gardens site was first established as a recreational reserve in 1886, only 10 years after Cairns was itself surveyed in 1876 as a coastal port to service the inland Hodgkinson goldfield. Originally an area of 71 acres below Mount Islay, the Flecker Botanical Gardens were only formally established as such in 1971, occupying 38 hectares and managed by the Cairns City Council.



The lawns and open areas of the Botanical Gardens are often used to host cultural and other arts performances....

Together with Mt Whitfield Conservation Park and Centenary Lakes, the formal gardens along Collins Avenue are an island of rainforest surrounded by the suburbia that is the growing city of Cairns.



Named after naturalist Dr Hugo Flecker who housed his extensive herbarium collection there for many years, the gardens are about five kilometres from the Cairns CBD off the main road going to the airport.

Centenary Lakes, complete with educational signage and boardwalks through the palm and paper bark forest, are a preserved remnant of the low-lying swamp land that once covered the whole of the area where the CBD

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The flowering of the two Titan Arums coincided with the school holidays in January 2011 and for a few days there were more children than normal thronging the garden grounds...



and suburbs of Cairns now spread their urban tentacles.

The unhealthiness of this swampland meant that no one actually lived in the Cairns area until the arrival of Europeans; the local Aborigines traditionally lived on the coast or in the nearby tropical rainforest. The Lakes are themselves interesting to walk around - but remember to take your mosquito repellent!

The gardens also act as a base for those more energetic souls who run or walk the Red Arrow and longer Blue Arrow tracks that loop through the Mt Whitfield Conservation Park.

At the top of the Red Arrow walk are spectacular views of Trinity Inlet, the Coral Sea

and Cairns city, and where the fresh breeze is a welcome relief from the rainforest heat.

Cairns residents come from miles around to get fit, shed a few kilos, drip sweat and look good. Between 4:30pm and 6:30pm every weekday and anytime on the weekend, it is the bastion of after-work fitness freaks who prefer to exercise among the trees and fresh air rather than pay to lift heavy iron objects in a small room smelling of sweat.

The 1.3 km Red Arrow circuit takes approximately 40 minutes to one hour to complete, has fantastic views of the natural environment, is frequented by beautiful looking people, and can be walked or run no matter

what your fitness level is.

The number of steps along the path are superb for exercising your legs, but can be a pain after the first hundred or so.

About halfway up the Red Arrow walk, the track splits into two and forms The Blue Arrow walk.

This steep climb, which ascends the mountain to a height of 365 metres above sea level, is reserved for those who are masochistically fit. It is 5.4 km long, and drinking water should be taken.

The vegetation on the mountain is predominantly rainforest with patches of eucalyptus, grassland and tall bamboo. Brush turkeys are everywhere and are very friendly in a turkey sort of a way. Agile Wallabies can be seen in the early morning or late afternoon in the grasslands, however, they are much shier than the turkeys.

The lawns and open areas of the Botanical Gardens are often used to host cultural and other arts performances and the small unobtrusive restaurant in the grounds provides a pleasant

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OUR BEER





How colourful the gardens are depends to a certain extent on the season. But you will be sure there is something fruiting or flowering at most times of the year, although none can predict the next time a Titan Arum will be flowering...



oasis for lunch or occasional refreshments. A major event in the local calendar is 'Carnival on Collins' which is part of the annual Cairns Festival, during which Collins Avenue is made into a pedestrian precinct and used as a temporary mall for botanical stallholders of various kinds, as well as providing access to the nearby Tanks Arts Centre exhibitions.

Having been established for such a long time, there are a number of large tropical trees in the gardens that originate from various parts of the world, although over the years some have suffered during the periodic tropical cyclones that occasionally make landfall in the Cairns area.

Although birds and animals are no longer formally kept in the gardens, the varied and abundant plant life attracts much avian life and you are likely to see colourfully red and yellow

wattled brush turkeys strutting around the place, and perhaps a neat little orange footed scrub fowl, another rainforest mound builder.

There are many species of palm trees - yes, including some betel nut for those buai addicts in the city - such as the clumping lipstick palm from South-east Asia, *Cyrtotachys renda*, with its distinctive bright red trunks and crown shafts that can grow up to six metres in height. If one looks carefully, there are also plots of traditional Aboriginal bush tucker plants to be found.

The gardens pride themselves on having many examples of the main tropical families and genera such as aroids, heliconias, cycads, gingers, orchids and the mostly epiphytic bromeliads that live on other rainforest plants.

The stunning yellows, pinks, reds and oranges of the heliconias are not actually the flowers

but the bracts which cluster together.

An interesting stop for the kids is just inside the bromeliad shade house where there are festoons of carnivorous pitcher plants of the *Nepenthes* genus - these digest anything that falls into and drowns in their liquid filled pitchers suspended at the end of tendrils. This is apparently an adaptation by plants that grow in locations poor in minerals.

How colourful the gardens are depends to a certain extent on the season but you will be sure there is something fruiting or flowering at most times of the year, although none can predict the next time a Titan Arum will be flowering - why not drop in for a visit, the next time you fly to Cairns with Air Niugini!

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PX increases fleet & flights



Air Niugini took delivery of its third Q400 aircraft in late March and a third B767 in early April - bringing its fleet to 21.

The fleet now comprises 3 x B767, 6 x F100, 3 x Q400, 3 x Q300, 2 x DH8 - 200 and 2 x DH8-100.

With the entry of the new aircraft, additional services to Singapore, Manila and Honiara/Fiji are in the new flight schedule that came into effect on 27 March 2011. Capacity on the Brisbane route is also being boosted with the introduction of daily double B767 services on Friday and Sunday. However, Kuala Lumpur service has been discontinued in the new schedule.

Capacity to Cairns has also increased with a B767 service on Wednesday plus the extra double daily on Thursday, utilising a Q400 aircraft. This additional Cairns service should provide good connections for our passengers arriving from Narita (Japan) on Thursday morning and continuing on to Cairns.

Additional international services include a fourth weekly service to Singapore and a third weekly service to both Manila (Philippines) and Honiara (Solomon Islands) and Nadi routes (Fiji). The flight times from Honiara and Nadi will offer greater connectivity for passengers travelling to Asia and Australia.

With the 2:15pm departure to Singapore, the airline is confident of providing excellent connections to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Europe and other parts of Asia, including better connectivity for the domestic network through Port Moresby.

Singapore service is at 2:15pm every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, while the Manila services at 5:30pm every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

Another change in the international sector includes the change for aircraft overnight

in Hong Kong on Monday with the return on Tuesday, arriving Port Moresby early Wednesday morning.

The second Hong Kong service has been moved to Thursday, returning early Friday morning in Port Moresby.

Air Niugini will also commence a twice weekly service to Bulolo in the Morobe Province sometime in early April.

Flights will be operated by a Dash 8-100 aircraft. The new service to Bulolo (Lae) brings the total domestic routes to 22.

B757...no longer in the Air Niugini fleet.





Q400 at Jacksons Airport in Port Moresby.

The services provided by the Q400 will be supplementary to the daily F100 (jet) services as well as a weekly B767 service to Cairns on Wednesday.

Other domestic schedule changes:

- Increased services to Mendi and Tari.
- Daily direct Madang services on Q400 and Q300 aircraft.
- Additional service on Sunday to Popondetta.
- Q400 Rabaul overnight on Monday and Tuesday via Hoskins.

- Kavieng overnights increased from 4 to 5 weekly.

Air Niugini's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri said the extra services marked an exciting chapter for the airline's growth and it was necessary to re-organise its

operations to provide better connections for its valued customers.

Requests for additional flights on the same routes are subject to relevant governments' approvals. Once approvals have been granted, the airline will operate the added services.



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Airline News

AIRLINE IMPLEMENTS NEW CARGO SYSTEM



Air Niugini's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Wasantha Kumarasiri with the Cargo project team.

Air Niugini has implemented a new cargo system called SkyChain which is an end-to-end fully integrated IT cargo management system, developed by Dubai-based business technology provider, Mercator.

The solution comprehensively manages every aspect of an air cargo business, from sales and reservations, pricing, capacity management and cargo operations, through to shipment handling, tracking and tracing, and supply chain management.

The national carrier joins other airlines in the client list for Mercator's SkyChain solution, including Emirates Airline, Swiss WorldCargo, Midex Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Oman Air, TACA Airways and SriLankan, proving SkyChain to be one of the industry's key future cargo solutions.

The project was launched in June 2010 with a dedicated project team comprising of Mercator, Cargo and Information Technology staff.

Air Niugini management is confident about the positive impact SkyChain will provide to its valued customers with the levels of connectivity they require, along with streamlined business processes and the ability to stay ahead in what is an increasingly competitive and dynamic industry.

SkyChain's cutting-edge capabilities will transform the way Air Niugini does cargo business!



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GOLDEN KINA AWARD TO AIR NIUGINI, LIHIR ISLAND



Honoured...Terry Bywater and his team receiving their award.

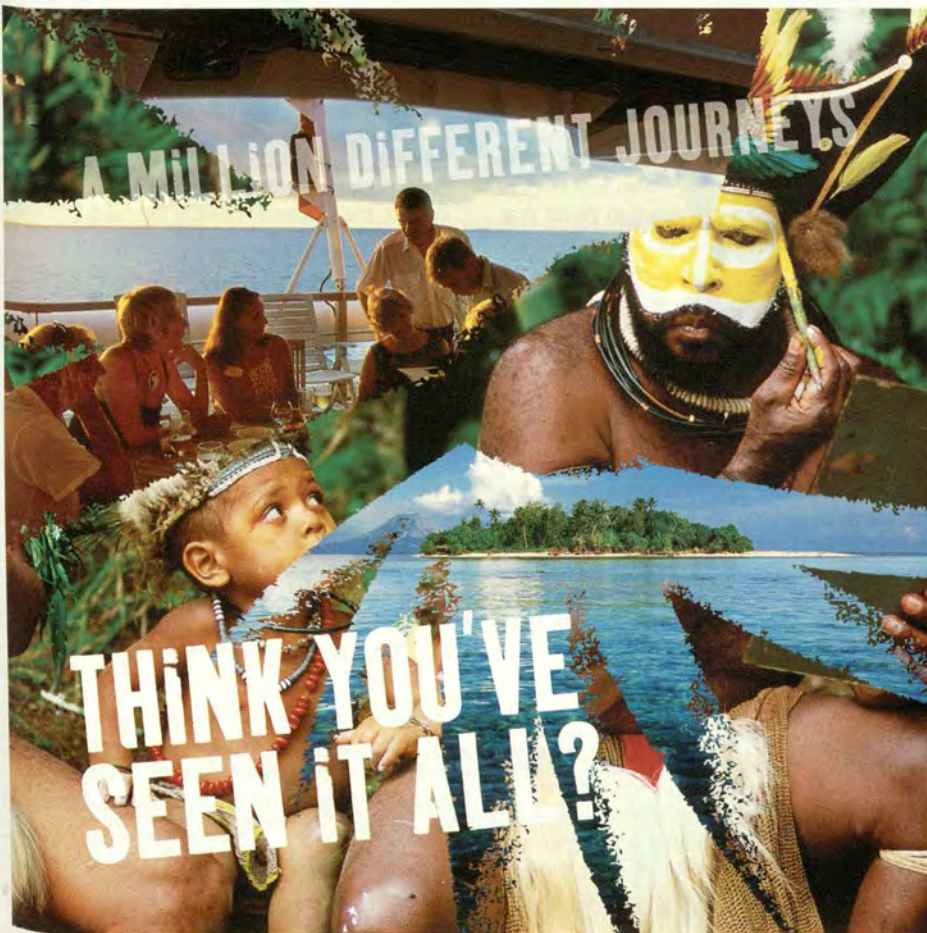
Air Niugini Port Manager Terry Bywater and his team on Lihir Island were recently awarded the NCS Gold Kina Award. This is a recognition given to an organisation by NCS employees for its support to NCS as a catering and camp service business working in remote locations across PNG.

During a special dinner for the Air Niugini team hosted by NCS, General Manager for NCS Lihir, John Honan said his nomination was based on the exceptional customer service received from the PX team and the attitude of willingness to work with NCS to find solutions.

“Air Niugini is a true business partner and Terry is a great representative.

According to NCS Managing Director, Marcus Gosling, Terry and his dedicated team are always there to meet and greet from 4.30am right through to the last flight at 6pm.

In response to the award, Terry said he was pleased with the interactions with NCS and he found the company to be very professional in all aspects. He looked forward to building a stronger relationship with the company.



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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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Recommendation to incoming expats

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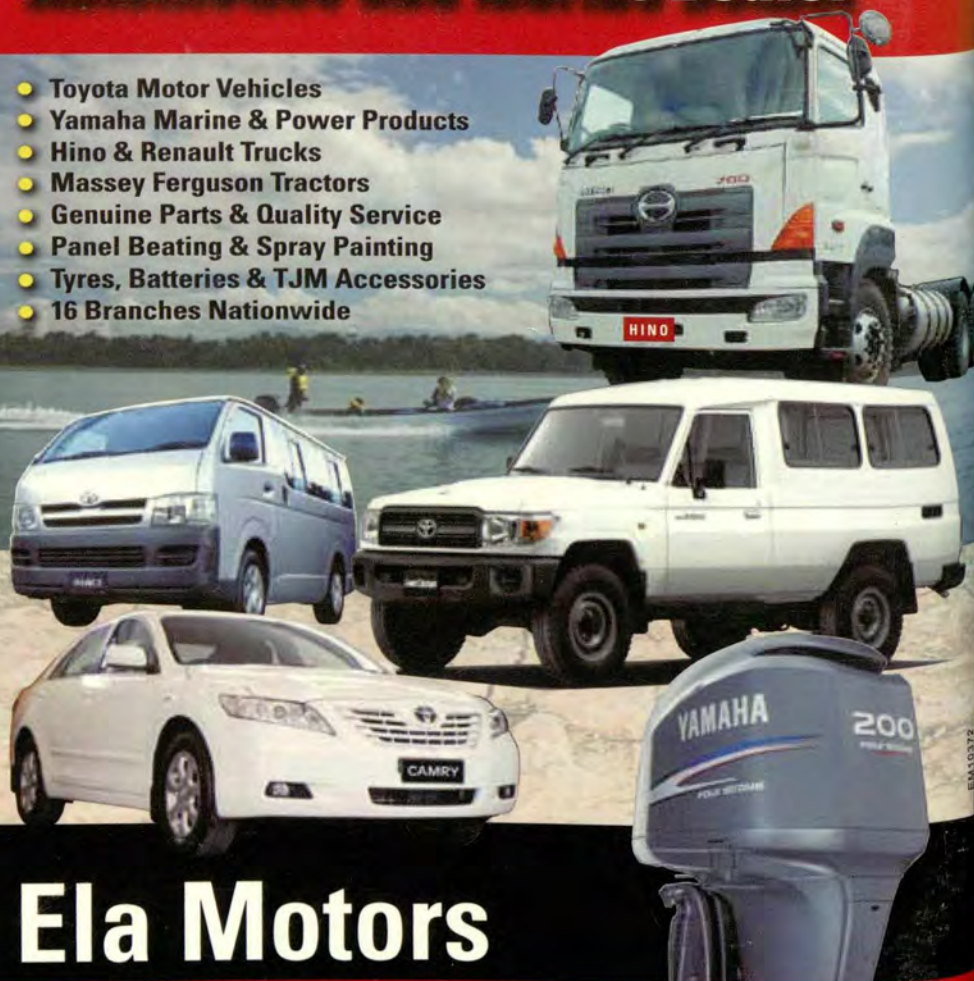
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