

For Six Month Period Ending Feb. 28, 1994
(Insert date)

Name of Registrant
AVISO, INC.

Registration No.
04220

Business Address of Registrant
1150 Marina Village Parkway, Ste. 104
Alameda, CA 94501

I-REGISTRANT

1. Has there been a change in the information previously furnished in connection with the following:

(a) If an individual:

- (1) Residence address Yes No
- (2) Citizenship Yes No
- (3) Occupation Yes No

(b) If an organization:

- (1) Name Yes No
- (2) Ownership or control Yes No
- (3) Branch offices Yes No

2. Explain fully all changes, if any, indicated in item 1.

N/A

IF THE REGISTRANT IS AN INDIVIDUAL, OMIT RESPONSE TO ITEMS 3, 4, and 5.

3. Have any persons ceased acting as partners, officers, directors or similar officials of the registrant during this 6 month reporting period? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name

Position

Date Connection
Ended

N/A

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TOURIST ATTRACTION: An Australian aborigine pursues his art in the Outback near Alice Springs. Australians, like aboriginal peoples in many other parts of the world, are finding that being themselves can be good business — tourist business.

MEET THE PEOPLE

If you look hard, you may see the natives as they really are

Australian Tourist
By WILLIAM A. DAVIS

I was walking along a beach in Fiji one time, absorbed in the Technicolor spectacle of a South Pacific sunset. Suddenly, from behind a palm tree, a muscular young man carrying a long spear and dressed only in a sulu, the abbreviated Fijian sarong, came charging toward me.

Startled — terrified, to tell the truth — I froze in place, expecting to be skewered like some sort of Melanesian shish kebab. Instead, the spear carrier stopped in front of me and lowered his lance, which I could now see was a two-pronged fish spear. "Hope I didn't alarm you, sir," he said, with an engaging grin. "I'm going fishing with my mates tonight; I'm late and they're waiting for me."

He took me down the beach and introduced me to his friends, as amiable and hospitable bunch of guys as you could ask for. They taught me a lot about Fiji and a bit about spearfishing, a practical recreational activity that is one of the ways modern Fijians preserve the

traditions — and cuisine — of their ancestors. As with those of most indigenous peoples, the traditions and cuisine largely revolve around the rhythms and bounty of the natural world.

I left Fiji having learned an important lesson of the road: The peoples who have lived long and deeply in a place are

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The United Nations has declared this to be International Year of the World's

Indigenous Peoples. But compared to the political hoopla surrounding other such events — such as last year's the Year of the Woman, for example — not much has happened at the government level to make the world more aware of the problems and potential of its indigenous citizens.

Main reason for the lack of interest in indigenous peoples is that they are scattered very thinly around the planet and are a cloutless minority almost everywhere. While roughly half the world's 5.5 billion inhabitants are women, there are an estimated 300 million indigenous, tribal or aboriginal peoples left and they inhabit some 70 countries. Many live deep in jungles in remote corners of Indonesia, Ecuador, Brazil and New Guinea, but they also are found in not-so-remote parts of the United States, Canada and Australia.

Because of their scarcity value, indigenous peoples are becoming tourist attractions, just like endangered fauna such as the mountain gorilla or black rhino — ecotourist attractions, that is.

please see **PEOPLE**/M

Given the harm mass tourism development has done to the ecology in places such as the Costa del Sol, Waikiki Beach and the Everglades, there is understandable concern that unbridled ecotourism — that is, pleasure travel — to rain forests and other exotic but endangered environments may only compound the damage already done to most indigenous peoples by the white man's liquor, diseases and diet.

Exposure to tourism can quickly make a sham out of old customs and turn once self-sufficient tribal people into performers living off tips and hand-outs.

Visitors to the Yagua Indians in Peru's Amazonian basin, for instance, are told by tour guides to blow on a conch shell before entering a village so the Indians will know they are friends and won't throw spears or shoot arrows at them. Actually, it's to warn the Yaguas that the tourists are coming and give them time to take off their T-shirts and running shoes and hop into grass skirts and headdresses.

However, indigenous people themselves frequently see ecotourism as a way to both alleviate their often abysmal poverty and enlist new allies in the struggle to protect ancestral homelands from exploitation and expropriation.

Recently, for instance, a band of Australian aborigines passed through Boston on an updated version of a "walkabout," the traditional nomadic journey of their people. They came from Australia's vast but barren and thinly populated Northern Territories, where ancient tribal traditions — derived from the "Dream Time" when the world was made — are preserved and still vital. This, however, was very much a dream quest of the 1990s, and these aborigines were trying to drum up some business. Literally.

All tour operators, professional guides or representatives of sports lodges and other tourist-related tribal businesses, they were touring the United States to invite Americans to come see Down Under from the point of view of the people who have lived in it for some 60,000 years. To dramatize their sales pitch, they traveled with a native dance troupe: the Gikul Wilderness Dancers of Arnhem Land, home of the mythical Rainbow Serpent whose bite made water gush from the desert. On the

A success story from the American West

Some American Indian tribes have developed tourism projects that are both ecologically friendly and economically beneficial. One of the most successful is Ski Apache, a ski resort in New Mexico run by the Mescalero Apaches. Under war chiefs such as Cochise and Victorio, the Mescaleros terrorized the Southwest in the last century. However, yesterday's warrior is today's hotshot entrepreneur.

The resort includes a gondola that runs to the top of 12,000-foot-high Sierra Blanca and a deluxe 250-room four-season hotel — one of the largest and poshest in New Mexico — called "The Inn of the Mountain Gods." Among the amenities are a restaurant with a spectacular view and a menu that includes "Apacheburgers" (fried bread topped with hamburger and hot peppers), an 18-hole golf course, an artificial lake stocked with trout, riding stables (even the U.S. Cavalry had trouble keeping up with the Apaches) and the largest private elk herd in the country.

The tribe also operates a museum with artifacts, photos and displays of the Cochise era. The Mescalero view

of the Indian wars, needless to say, in no way resembles that of a John Wayne movie. There is also a stadium where powwows and other traditional ceremonies open to the public are held.

The ski resort is only one of a number of successful Mescalero-run businesses that in the last 30 years have lifted the tribe from poverty to prosperity. Some 2,500 Apaches live on the 400,000-acre reservation, and virtually all the adults are employed — and in the kind of work traditional for Apaches.

Like Cochise and Geronimo, their grandsons and great-grandsons prefer dangerous outdoor work to the relatively easy indoor kind. They like heavy lifting and hard riding. Virtually all the workers in the tribe's ranching and timbering operations, the cowboys and lumberjacks, are Mescaleros. For the really fun jobs — such as driving large grooming machines down steep ski trails at night during snowstorms — there is usually a long waiting list.

Ecotourism certainly represents a real threat to some fragile tribal peoples. But I wouldn't worry much about the Mescalero Apaches.

WILLIAM A DAVIS

steps of Faneuil Hall — which has never seen a sight quite like it — the Gikul Dancers stomped, sang, drummed and played the didjeridu, the eeriest-sounding of all aboriginal instruments.

Didjeridu lessons are among the good things provided tourists who go on tour with Manyallaluk Tours, based in the town of Katherine in the Northern Territories. "We take the people out and show them how we really live," said Manuel Pamkal, senior guide for the tribal-owned tour company and president of the Manyallaluk Community Council. Other aboriginal arts that visitors get to try include bark painting and boomerang throwing. Pamkal said.

"Aborigines are taking an increasingly active role in presenting their culture to tourists,"

said Bill Baker, regional director for the Americas for the Australian Tourist Commission. "In 1983, there were just 23 aboriginal tours available. Today, there are more than 50 tours, with 20 owned and operated by aborigines." Aboriginal tourism, including the sale to tourists of bark paintings and other art objects, generates an estimated \$50 million annually, according to Baker, about 45 percent of which goes to the local communities.

In Australia's Northern Territories, much of which is either national park or protected tribal land, fears of the effects of ecotourism are unfounded, said Brian Rooke, who operates Umorrduk Safaris. "The country I work in covers about 250,000 acres," said Rooke, "but I'm only allowed to bring in 16 people at a time."

NOV 14 1993

Tread Softly On Global Visit

At a recent international conference on the promises and pitfalls of indigenous tourism, Australian Chris Burchett told the story of an Alice Springs tour group that had signed up for an Aboriginal performance after reading a brochure that touted the "haunting strains of the didgeridoo."

The trouble was, the long, hollow instrument is carved from trees that don't grow near Alice Springs. It



Laura Bly



— Photo By Laura Bly

TOUR LEADER BY ABORIGINAL PAINTING Bill Harney Shows Feature In Australian Territory

isn't considered part of the local Aboriginal culture, and therefore wasn't included in the program.

"So, right in the middle of the dance, two busloads of tourists got up and walked out," recalled Burchett, director of cultural affairs for the Northern Territory Tourist Commission in Darwin.

"They came to hear a didgeridoo. And when they didn't, they said (the performance) was a sham."

When the United Nations tagged 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, it focused new attention on the eco-

nomie and cultural plight of more than 300 million indigenous and tribal people living in 70 countries.

At the same time, the U.N. declaration has spotlighted the often-troubled encounters between First World tourists and Third World native cultures.

"By and large, tourism has been devastating to indigenous people," says Robert Leavitt, education director for Cultural Survival, a Cambridge, Mass.-based human rights organization that focuses on native culture.

"More and more people are looking for what they think is an 'authentic'

cultural experience, but what we're seeing are facades put up to manufacture that authenticity," Leavitt adds. "It's been going on for decades in Hawaii and the Caribbean, and now it's global as well."

Getting past those facades is a difficult, sometimes treacherous passage both for native cultures and the tourists who come to admire and learn from them. Here are some suggestions for smoothing the journey:

DON'T LET YOUR OWN CURIOSITY BECOME INVASIVE. Each November thousands of tourists flock to the Australian Territory. **GLOBAL** Page 2, Section 6

GLOBAL — Continued From Page 1, Section 6

ists head for the small volcanic island of Janitzio, near the colonial Mexican town of Patzcuaro. There Purepecha Indians celebrate the Days of the Dead with a poignant, all-night vigil that combines Catholicism with the pre-Hispanic beliefs of their ancestors. And there, those same tourists have turned vigil into carnival — trampling on graves, swigging beer and sticking camcorders into worshippers' faces.

Not every breach of cultural privacy is as blatant as that at Janitzio. Sometimes, it's as seemingly innocent as asking questions about long-held, carefully guarded beliefs — and expecting answers that might better come from pre-trip research.

"Good tourism must create and protect pride and privacy," says Robertson Collins, a Singapore-based consultant with the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

RESPECT RESTRICTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND OTHER VISITOR ACCESS. Many native cultures request visitors not to take photographs or make sketches of sacred sites or celebrations — a request that, in some cases, may be backed up with confiscation of the offending camera.

Even if you're not taking photos, be considerate of a site's spiritual or historical significance by tailoring your own behavior to that of your hosts.

FIND OUT WHO BENEFITS FROM, AND DECIDES THE NATURE OF, YOUR VISIT. Among the questions of the San Anselmo, Calif.-based Center for Responsible

Tourism recommends asking potential tour operators: What percentage of the trip cost stays in the community you visit? Does the tour's pacing allow time to create or accept opportunities to interact with local people? Is there a pre-trip orientation program? Most important, how much input and control does the local culture have?

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TOURISM VICTORIA, the Australian state's promotional arm, has followed the example of other regional tourist boards by restructuring its operation. The group will cut costs by taking part in the Partnership Australia umbrella campaign run by the Australian Tourist Commission. Margaret Sparrow will oversee Tourism Victoria's marketing with the ATC as product development manager, based in Los Angeles. Tourism Victoria said it soon will give details on the reorganization of its operations, which in the U.S. had been headed by Regional Director Cait Falck.

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Destination Australia
A free info-packed magazine
about Australia is available by call-
ing 800-333-0262. The guide tells
you what to do and see and in-
cludes practical information on
visa requirements, weather and
tours.

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'Tis the silly season down under

NORTHWESTERN WIRE SERVICES

SYDNEY — The Yuletide holidays in Australia are known as the silly season, a time for crowning the Cockroach Queen, competitive skydiving and the tossing of the equivalent of a telephone pole.

In the land Down Under, Christmas is a balmy summer of surf championships, yacht racing and cricket matches. To be sure, Australians celebrate the holidays with the age-old traditions of caroling,

Christmas trees and Santa Claus. Leave it to the saucy Aussies, however, to accentuate their climatic difference and turn some seasonal celebrations on their collective ear.

The plucky residents of tiny Derby in Western Australia have enlivened Boxing Day, Dec. 26, with a bit of cheery competitive madness: Witness the Cockroach Crawl, the Tinnie (can of beer) Toss, the Frog Flying, the Cackle-berry Chuckle and the Lemon Drop Seed Spit. The industrious levity culminates, for

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about Christmas in Australia, and a copy of the Destination Australia travel planner, contact the Australian Tourist Commission toll-free at (800) 888-5116.

some reason or another, in the annual crowning of the Cockroach Queen.

In Corowa, on the New South Wales/Victorian border, they leave any pretense of sanity behind and merely eject themselves from speeding airplanes. Actually, the sky is filled with parachutes

as the National Skydiving Championships get under way. More than 1,000 jumps are made by an international coterie of divers — in formation, freestyle falls and an accuracy event.

Leading up to Christmas, in the historic Victorian town of Daylesford, the Scottish clans gather to compete in the Highland Heavy Games. The kilt-wearing athletes toss the caber, heave the 26-pound shot put and hurl the Scottish hammer. The celebrations are highlighted by competing bands, pipers, drummers and

highland dancers.

In Melbourne, the city's oldest tram, and the world's only tramcar restaurant, rattles down Melbourne's leafy boulevards serving holiday passengers a full Christmas feast.

Come Christmas day in the remote desert mining town of Coober Pedy, South Australians' retreat underground, but to dig in their opal mines, but to escape the heat and worship in one of the five underground churches.

NOV 21 1993

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Meeting the people: The indigenous people, that is

By William A. Davis

Boston Globe *WAS*
I was walking along a beach in Fiji one time, absorbed in the glorious Technicolor spectacle of a South Pacific sunset. Suddenly, from behind a palm tree, a muscular young man carrying a long spear and dressed only in aulu, the abbreviated Fijian sarong, came charging toward me.

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view of the people who have inhabited it for some 60,000 years. To dramatize their sales pitch, they traveled with a native dance troupe: the Gikil Wilderness Dancers of Arnhem Land, home of the mythical Rainbow Serpent whose bite made water gush from the desert. On the steps of Fan-eul Hall — which has never seen a sight quite like it — the Gikil Dancers stomped, sang, drummed and played the didjeridu, the earliest-sounding of all aboriginal instruments.

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said, "Aborigines are taking an increasingly active role in presenting their culture to tourists," said Bill Baker, regional director for the Americas for the Australian Tourist Commission. "In 1983 there were just 23 aboriginal tours available. Today, there are more than 50 tours, with 20

owned and operated by aborigines." Aboriginal tourism, including the sale to tourists of bark paintings and other art objects, generates an estimated \$50 million annually.

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Aborigines claim bigger piece of Australia travel pie

By STEVEN MORRIS

Chicago Tribune
In Australia's 600,000 square-mile Northern Territory, where only 175,000 people live, tourism has boomed in the last 20 years. The territory, much of which has been returned to Aboriginal ownership, is the site of some of the country's most dramatic scenery.

"But Aborigines were often the objects of the tourism rather than active participants," said Bill Baker, regional director for the Australian Tourist Commission.

Over the last decade, Aboriginal operators have slowly entered the tourism market. But they were excluded or confined to lower-level jobs.

Now, however, Australian Aborigines are starting to take a bigger piece of the \$50 million Aboriginal tourism industry. A

group of them was in Chicago recently to make that point to the U.S. travel industry.

Aborigines, said Baker, "face many problems, not the least of which is a history of negative Aboriginal stereotyping by the broader Australian and international communities."

Ownership of Northern Territory land has helped encourage Aborigines to move into the tour market. Of the 50 so-called Aboriginal tours operated in the Northern Territory, 10 are run by Aborigines, according to the commission. An estimated 20 tourist-related companies are now operated by Aborigines.

"In the past, a lot of safaris have been owned by non-Aborigines but were calling themselves Aboriginal tours," said Brian Rooke, who, with his wife,

Phyllis Wilson, owns and operates Umorruk Safaris, based in Darwin. For \$220 a day plus air fare, Rooke takes tourists to the bush country of western Arnhem Land, a one-hour flight by light aircraft from Darwin, home of the Gummukbun Aboriginal clan.

Rooke is among 17 representatives of Aboriginal tour companies who are traveling in the U.S. hoping to lure business.

Rooke, 42, is descended from Aborigines in Tasmania, and Wilson is a Gummukbun. Until four years ago Rooke operated a gardening business in Darwin.

"I loved going into the bush," he said, "and I was looking for a way to earn a living there."

His business is "the only Aboriginal-owned safari in Arnhem Land," he said. "We employ

members of the community as guides, and the community gets a fee for the rights to operate tours there."

Harold Wilson, 25, town clerk of Peppimenarti, a community of 220 people, became the operator of his clan's tour business a year ago.

Peppimenarti was established in 1973 as a "cattle station," an Australian term for a ranch. "Now it's a community," said Wilson. "We set up the (tour) business three years ago as a means of self-determination. Aboriginal people want to be independent."

The tours have been "pretty busy" the last year, Wilson said, but "it's going to have to take a while for it to really get going. It's like any new small business."

One impetus for the sprouting of Aboriginal tour businesses came from the cattle industry. Beef importers in the U.S. and other countries charged that some buffalo in Australia were infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, which could

spread to cattle. "In our area, a source of income for the clan was from working in the program for testing cattle in the 1980s. When that finished, they needed to look around for an alternative," Rooke said.

Flint Journal
Nov. 21, 1993

TREAD SOFTLY

As global villages open up to tourism, encounters with outsiders pose dangers

By Laura Bly
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

At a recent international conference on the promises and pitfalls of indigenous tourism, Australian Chris Burchett told the story of an Alice Springs tour group that had signed up for an Aboriginal performance after reading a brochure that touted the "haunting strains of the didgeridoo."

The trouble was, the long, hollow musical instrument is carved from trees that do not grow near Alice Springs. It is not considered part of the local Aboriginal culture and, therefore, was not included in the program.

"So, right in the middle of the guidance, two busloads of tourists got up and walked out," said Burchett, director of cultural affairs for the Northern Territory Tourist Commission in Darwin.

"They came to hear a didgeridoo. And when they didn't, they said (the performance) was a sham."

When the United Nations tagged 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, it focused new attention on the economic and cultural plight of more than 300 million indigenous and tribal people

living in 70 countries.

At the same time, the U.N. declaration has spotlighted the often-troubled encounters between tourists and native cultures.

"By and large, tourism has been devastating to indigenous people," said Robert Leavitt, education director for Cultural Survival, a Cambridge, Mass.-based human rights organization that focuses on native culture.

"More and more people are looking for what they think is an 'authentic' cultural experience, but what we're seeing are facades put up to manufacture that authenticity," Leavitt said. "It's been going on for decades in Hawaii and the Caribbean, and now it's global as well."

Getting past those facades is a difficult, sometimes treacherous passage both for native cultures and the tourists who come to admire and learn from them. Here are some suggestions for smoothing the journey:

● **Do not let your curiosity become invasive.** Each November thousands of tourists head for the small volcanic island of Janitzio, near the colonial Mexican town of Patzcuaro. There Purepecha Indians celebrate the Days of the

In Australia's Northern Territory, for example,

participants on some Aboriginal tours are separated into men and women's groups because the knowledge presented is sex-specific. On other Aboriginal programs, visitors are taken to areas of special significance but are requested not to photograph or even talk about what they have seen.

● **Find out who benefits from, and decides the nature of, your visit.**

Among the questions the San Anselmo, Calif.-based Center for Responsible Tourism recommends asking potential tour operators: What percentage of the trip cost stays in the community you visit? Does the tour's pacing allow time to create or accept opportunities to interact with local people? Is there a pre-trip orientation program? Most important, how much input and control does the local culture have over the conditions of your visit?

● **Do not impose your own standards of "authenticity."**

"Escaping to a civilization that has never seen raisins dance on TV or a Liz Claiborne label fascinates me," humorist Erma Bombeck once wrote. "If I wanted to drink the water, speak English and eat Italian, I'd stay home."

Honorable sentiments, to be sure. But in the global village of MTV, CNN and "Terminator" videos, it is hard to imagine many

places whose residents have not seen dancing raisins — or, thanks to visiting tourists, a pair of designer jeans.

As a result, you should not expect your hosts to look as though they stepped out of the pages of a tattered National Geographic. And, if they do, recognize what the exchange is meant to achieve.

Collins cites the Trans-Niugini Tour in Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea, as an example of a tour that works both ways.

"There is an awareness on both sides that they are putting on a show," Collins said. "But, as it should be, there is a limit on our welcome; they show what they want to show."

"There may be blue jeans in the back of the house, but when (the villagers) are elaborately dressed, they are wearing the clothes they still wear for ceremonial events," he said. "Further, the money they all earn goes to buy a new outboard engine for their market- canoe."

● **Travel in a low-key manner.**

By their very nature — small groups, off-the-beaten-track locations — many tours that concentrate on indigenous cultures tend to be expensive. All the more reason for those often wealthy tourists, said director Virginia Hadsell of the Center for Responsible Tourism, to journey as unobtrusively and undemandingly as possible.

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Tour leader Bill Harney talks about an aboriginal rock painting in Australia's northern territory.

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Cultures find ways to capitalize on curiosity

By Laura Bly
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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Getting to Capirona is not easy.

Accessible only by foot, it requires a two- to four-hour slog through dense jungle — while wearing a backpack and knee-high rubber boots. (If the water is high enough, the return trip is via canoe.)

But the handful of hardy travelers who make the journey to this remote Ecuadorian village come away with more than sore feet and local knowledge about the flora and fauna of the Amazon rain forest.

They are part of a new experiment in cultural exchange and survival.

Capirona, a village of 24 Quichua Indian families in Ecuador's Napo province, has created one of the world's few indigenously owned and operated tourism programs. Conceived three years ago as an alternative to oil, lumber and mining interests that have exploited the region, the low-key project has attracted the attention of other Amazonian tribes — and prompted cautious optimism among its Quichua hosts.

Although not every traveler has the ability or inclination to visit Capirona, interest in native cultures is booming, and a growing number of mainstream travel companies and tourist offices are capitalizing on the trend.

In Alaska, representatives of the state's four largest native cultures — Eskimo, Aleut, Athabaskan Indian and Tlingit — formed an Alaska Native Tourism Council late last year to promote everything from three- or four-hour tours designed for cruise passengers to overnight stays in remote villages.

Australia's Northern Territory provides a "Come Share Our Culture" brochure emphasizing Aboriginal programs and tours. Several focus on the region's prolific rock paintings, which range from recent depictions of contact with outside societies to designs that experts estimate could be anywhere from 20,000 to 65,000 years old.

If you go:

● The Berkeley-based University Research Expeditions Program has led trips to Capirona in the past and might repeat

them next year. For more information, call (510) 642-6586.

● Alaska Airlines Vacations offers a one-day, \$315-per-person trip from Anchorage to the Eskimo village of Kotzebue, about 30 miles north of the Arctic Circle. In Kotzebue, visits include a camp where village elders teach youths traditional crafts and survival skills. For information, call (800) 468-2248.

● For information on the "Come Share Our Culture" brochure, call (800) 4-OUT-BAC.

● Overseas Adventure Travel, a Cambridge, Mass.-based adventure-tour operator, this summer offers 11 new Canadian itineraries that focus on Inuit culture in a region that by the turn of the century will become part of a new Inuit-controlled territory called Nunavut. For information, call (800) 221-0814.

● In the American Southwest, major tour companies such as Globus-Gateway, (800) 851-0728; Maupintour, (800) 255-4266; and Special Expeditions, (800) 762-0003, have launched new programs focusing on American Indians.

Planning your trip

Here is a sampling of other sources that focus on indigenous cultures and tourism:

■ **Center for Responsible Tourism** is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving awareness about Third World tourism and the importance of responsible interaction with other cultures. The group publishes a "Code of Ethics for Responsible Travelers" and a quarterly newsletter. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Box 927, San Anselmo, CA 94979, (415) 258-6594.

■ **Cultural Survival** is a human rights organization, which specializes in native cultures. It produces a quarterly magazine. For information, contact Cultural Survival, 215 First St., Cambridge, MA 02142; (617) 621-3818.

■ **Yields With Care: A Guide to Responsible Travel in Developing Countries** by Scott Graham (Noble Press; \$9.95) addresses sticky issues such as begging, haggling at markets and the ethics of traveling to countries with repressive governments.

SALT LAKE TRIUNE

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SUNDAY 340,977

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THE COURIER CONNECTION

**You must be willing
to hop an airplane
at moment's notice**

By Laura Ely

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

It was a phone call out of a foot-loose traveler's dream.

Ten minutes after calling IBC-Pacific, a Los Angeles courier service, I booked a Continental Airlines flight leaving a few days

later for Sydney, Australia. Price: \$425 round-trip, less than half the cheapest advance-purchase fare.

All I had to do was bring a carry-on bag and show up at the airport two hours before my scheduled departure, when an IBC-Pacific representative would meet me at the Continental check-in counter and hand me my ticket.

I'd been thinking about a trip to Australia, and was curious about the cultlike popularity of courier travel — which aficionados claim

is the next-best thing to Aladdin's carpet.

Since it's more expensive and time-consuming to ship something overseas as freight than as checked baggage (which must be accompanied by a passenger), an estimated 50-60 U.S. companies use "free-lance couriers" on 25,000-35,000 international flights a year. Most courier shipments leave from New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Miami, but such cities as Chicago,

Houston, Boston and Atlanta either have some courier flights or are scheduled to start within the next few months.

In return for giving up their baggage allowance, couriers at significant savings — often 50 percent or higher. Landing a free flight is rare but not unheard-of, particularly for past customers willing to travel at a few hours' notice.

The requirements for my own cheap trip to Sydney were simple:

I had to be at least 21 years old and have a valid passport. I'd need a visa for Australia but could arrange that at short notice. I had to be traveling alone and must return two weeks later, by the date IBC-Pacific specified. I was told I could pay for the flight with a credit card but would have to post an additional security deposit of \$500 that would be forfeited if I broke the terms of my contract.

777 ■ See H-8, Column 1

Traveling via courier service has drawbacks

Continued from H-1

No long, anxious wait at the airport for a shifty-eyed messenger in a trench coat. My contact, dressed in snazzy shorts and a striped shirt, was standing where he was supposed to be, right on time. No drug-sniffing dogs or suspicious customs agents when I arrived. "My" checked bags, which I'd been told contained books and small machine parts, went direct and unseen to a courier facility at the Sydney airport.

There was just the gleeful knowledge that I was saving a bundle — and the conviction that courier travel couldn't be this easy. Could it?

Not always.

It's all legal, and U.S. Customs Service spokesman Greg Does says he's heard of few cases in which a courier was trapped in the middle by a delivery company — or its clients — accompanying drugs or other contraband.

But the drawbacks to courier travel can be considerable.

Since most companies use just one courier per flight, couples and families are at a disadvantage. However, with enough notice, you might be able to fly as couriers on consecutive days.

Generally, you'll need to make hotel reservations and other travel arrangements yourself or through a travel agent.

A few companies allow you to check one bag, and in some cases you might be able to check luggage by paying the airline an "excess baggage" fee of around \$100 per bag. But traveling light is a courier's modus operandi, and one piece of carry-on luggage is the rule.

As Tom Carpenter, overseas director of IBC-Pacific, put it, couriers are "buying a trip, not a ticket." Though passenger names are listed in the airline's reservation computer and on the ticket itself, couriers are typically locked into the delivery companies' schedules. IBC-Pacific, for example, allows exactly 14 days in Manila and either nine, 12, 14 or 15 days in Seoul, depending on the day of departure from Los Angeles. If you don't fly back on the assigned day, you forfeit your return ticket and \$500 security deposit.

In most cases, couriers carry a pouch that contains shipment-related paperwork. As for the goods themselves, "most of the time, you never see them," said Kelly Moaghann, author of *The Insider's Guide to Air Courier Barneys*. When you arrive at your destination and clear customs

with your carry-on luggage, you hand over the pouch to a delivery-service representative. Then, depending on whether the airport has its own courier facility, you either are free to go or must wait while the representative takes the checked bags through customs — generally, no more than 15 minutes.

But in a few airports, such as Seoul's, the procedure is more complicated. There, says Carpenter of IBC-Pacific, couriers might have to show up at the baggage-claim area, load anywhere from

10-15 bags on carts, and wait to clear customs — a process that could take an hour or more.

If you're partial to nose rings, pierced eyebrows and tattered cutoffs, forget about being a courier. Most contracts specify that couriers maintain a "professional" appearance; backpacks and unconventional hairstyles are discouraged.

Many companies that use couriers require payment, well in advance, by cash, money order or cashier's check. And they might hold the return portion of the

ticket at your destination, to ensure that you show up for the flight.

Most travelers are put off by the uncertainty of paying cash for a ticket they won't even see until they reach the airport, says Byron Lutz of the International Association of Air Travel Couriers, which supplies listings of courier flights.

"Most of the time it's hassle-free, but there's always that element of doubt," Lutz said. "You're always wondering if [the courier company] will really show up. People who worry a lot should never be couriers."

He recalls waiting for one courier representative to meet him at the Mexico City airport with a re-

turn ticket. The contact was stuck in one of Mexico City's legendary traffic jams, and showed up just as Lutz's plane was taxiing to the runway. The upshot: Lutz spent an extra night in Mexico, at his own expense.

My own trip, meanwhile, was nearly glitch-free. At one point during the Thursday-night leg from Los Angeles, before popping a sleeping pill and adjusting my earplugs and eye mask, I chirpily confided to the woman next to me that I was flying as a courier for only \$425 round-trip.

Her eyes widened; her jaw dropped.

I didn't have the heart to ask how much she'd paid.

NOV 21 1993

BURRELLE'S

Aborigines active in bush tour visits

By STEVEN MORRIS
Chicago Tribune

In Australia's 600,000-square-mile Northern Territory, where only 175,000 people live, tourism has boomed in the last 20 years. The territory, much of which has been returned to Aboriginal ownership, is the site of some of the country's most dramatic scenery.

"But Aborigines were often the objects of the tourism rather than active participants," said Bill Baker, regional director, the Americas, for the Australian Tourist Commission.

Over the last decade, Aboriginal operators have slowly entered the tourism market. But they were excluded or confined to lower-level jobs.

Now, however, Australian Aborigines are starting to take a bigger piece of the \$50 million Aboriginal tourism industry. A group of them was in Chicago recently to make that point to the U.S. travel industry.

Aborigines, said Baker, "face many problems, not the least of which is a history of negative Aboriginal stereotyping by the broader Australian and international communities."

Ownership of Northern Territory land has helped encourage Aborigines to move into the tour market. Of the 50 so-called Aboriginal tours operated in the Northern Territory, 10 are run by Aborigines, according to the commission. An estimated 20 tourist-related companies are now operated by Aborigines.

"In the past, a lot of safaris have been owned by non-Aborigines but were calling themselves Aboriginal tours," said Brian Rooke, who, with his wife, Phyllis Wilson, owns and operates Umorrduk Safaris, based in Darwin. For \$220 a day plus airfare, Rooke takes tourists to the bush country of western Arnhem Land, a one-hour flight by light aircraft from Darwin, home of the Gummukbun Aboriginal clan.

Rooke, 42, is descended from Aborigines in Tasmania, and Wilson is a Gummukbun. Until four years ago, Rooke operated a gardening business in Darwin.

"I loved going into the bush," he said, "and I was looking for a way to earn a living there."

His business is "the only Aboriginal-owned safari in Arnhem

"We set up the [tour] business three years ago as a means of self-determination. Aboriginal people want to be independent."

— Harold Wilson, 25, town clerk

Land," he said. "We employ members of the community as guides, and the community gets a fee for the rights to operate tours there."

Harold Wilson, 25, town clerk of Peppimenarti, a community of 220, became the operator of his clan's tour business a year ago.

Peppimenarti was established in 1973 as a "cattle station," an Australian term for a ranch. "Now it's a community," said Wilson. "We set up the [tour] business three years ago as a means of self-determination. Aboriginal people want to be independent."

The tours have been "pretty busy" the last year, Wilson said, but "it's going to have to take a while for it to really get going. It's like any new small business."

One impetus for the sprouting of Aboriginal tour businesses came from the cattle industry. Beef importers in the U.S. and other countries charged that some buffalo in Australia were infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, which could spread to cattle.

Some clans considered mining and tourism.

"Fortunately for everybody, they chose tourism," said Rooke. "That wouldn't have as much impact on the culture, the environment, particularly if the tourism was on a small scale."

Bill Harney, 62, who operates a business building fences for government installations and cattle ranches, started Jankangyina Tours in 1988, taking visitors on camping trips in what's called the Land of the Lightning Brothers, whose clashes, according to legend, established the seasonal cycles of storms and droughts.

Harney, who was raised in a rock shelter and never attended a school, says the business lets him "share my culture with white people" when he guides them.

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IN THE CENTER OF DOWN UNDER

Agents are the key to Australia's plans to attract more visitors from the U.S.

Jon Hutchison, managing director of the Australian Tourism Commission (ATC), puts the travel agent at the center of his marketing plans for the U.S. "The recession in the U.S. has had its impact on our projections for the U.S. Despite that, we however, feel we're on the right track there, dealing ever more closely with retailers and the trade

in general," Hutchison points out. Last year, Australia launched its Aussie Specialist program in conjunction with a \$12.5 million consumer ad campaign in the U.S., hoping to integrate consumer advertising and agent education. Callers to the toll-free hotline receive Destination Australia Booklets along with an ATC cover letter listing the names and addresses of three Certified Aussie Specialist agents in the caller's vicinity.

To date, the Aussie Specialist program has enlisted about 500 agents. "The U.S. market is so vast that you have to get the maximum out of your marketing invest-



ment. The U.S. was our laboratory for the Aussie Specialist and we're very pleased," says Hutchison.

The ATC's interest in the travel agent

is a result of research they've done in past years. "We found that the average American consumer walks into an agency with three different destination options in mind, which puts the agent in a powerful situation in influencing the choice," says Hutchison. "In the final analysis, agents will sell the country they feel most knowledgeable about and in which they have the most confidence."

Teaching Others

Hutchison adds, "We also found that unless the client is a regular customer, agents are likely to sell products they can close quickly, such as cruises. That's why we have to teach the Australian product that's out there."

To increase agents' confidence in selling Australia, an agent Helpline (800-433-AUSSIE) offers up-to-the-minute information on the destination.

In a key personnel move, Bill Baker has replaced Carole Hancock as regional director for the Americas. Baker, who served most recently as the ATC's area manager for Central and Southern Europe, previously served as Los Angeles area manager and played a leading role in the development of the successful "Shrimp on the Barbie" campaign.

This year, Australia is stressing sports and activities as the main marketing promotion abroad. The effort appears to be

working, judging by the ATC's disclosure that it has received tens of thousands of consumer inquiries about sports activities in Australia.

Although Australia receives most of its visitors from Asia, the best markets for dollar yield remain the long-staying

tourists of North America and Europe. The average international tourist in Australia spends \$1,254, not counting international air fare.

For more information, call the ATC at 310-552-1988 in Los Angeles or 212-687-6300 in New York.

HOT PRODUCTS

■ SOUTH PACIFIC SAMPLER

Orient Flexi-Pax is offering a 21-day Down Under Super Saver that visits Fiji, New Zealand and Australia. Prices, including air fare from the West Coast, range from \$2,699 to \$3,099. The tours depart twice a month through April 1994 and include first-class accommodations, daily American breakfasts and extensive sightseeing.

PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

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THURSDAY

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Destination Australia

A free info-packed magazine about Australia is available by calling (800) 333-0262. The guide tells you what to do and see and includes practical information on visa requirements, weather and tours.

David Dolsen is the owner of a local travel agency.

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Aborigines enter tourism

By Steven Morris
Knight-Ridder News Service *0675*

In Australia's 600,000-square-mile Northern Territory, where only 175,000 people live, tourism has boomed in the past 20 years. The territory, much of which has been returned to Aboriginal ownership, is the site of some of the country's most dramatic scenery.

"But Aborigines were often the objects of the tourism rather than active participants," said Bill Baker, regional director, the Americas, for the Australian Tourist Commission.

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"In the past, a lot of safaris have been owned by non-Aborigines but were calling themselves Aboriginal tours," said Brian Rooke, who, with his wife, Phyllis Wilson, owns and operates Umorrduk Safaris, based in Darwin. For \$220 a day plus air fare, Rooke takes tourists to the bush country of western Arnhem Land, a one-hour flight by light aircraft from Darwin, home of the Gummulkbun Aboriginal clan.

Rooke is among 17 representatives of Aboriginal tour companies who are traveling in the U.S. hoping to lure business.

Rooke, 42, is descended from Aborigines in Tasmania, and Wilson is a Gummulkbun. Until four years ago, Rooke operated a gardening business in Darwin.

"I loved going into the bush,"

he said, "and I was looking for a way to earn a living there."

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One impetus for the sprouting of Aboriginal tour businesses came from the cattle industry. Beef importers in the U.S. and other countries charged that some buffalo in Australia were infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, which could spread to cattle.

"In our area, a source of income for the clan was from working in the program for testing cattle in the 1980s. When that finished, they needed to look around for an alternative," Rooke said.

Some clans considered tourism.

Mass tourism has both pros and cons for native peoples

Buffalo News
Nov. 28

By WILLIAM A. DAVIS
Boston Globe

I was walking along a beach in Fiji one time, absorbed in the glorious Technicolor spectacle of a South Pacific sunset. Suddenly, from behind a palm tree, a muscular young man carrying a long spear and dressed only in a sulu, the abbreviated Fijian sarong, came charging toward me.

Startled — well, terrified to tell the truth — I froze in place, expecting to be skewered like some sort of Melanesian shish kebab. Instead, the spear carrier stopped in front of me and lowered his lance, which I could now see was a two-pronged fish spear.

"Hope I didn't alarm you, sir," he said, with an engaging grin. "I'm going fishing with my mates tonight; I'm late and they're waiting for me."

And he took me down the beach and introduced me to his friends, as amiable and hospitable a bunch of guys as you could ask for. They taught me a lot about Fiji and a bit about spearfishing, a practical recreational activity that is one of the ways modern Fijians preserve the traditions — and cuisine — of their ancestors. As with those of most indigenous peoples, the traditions and cuisine largely revolve around the rhythms and bounty of the natural world.

I left Fiji having learned an important lesson of the road: The peoples who have lived long and deeply in a place are every bit as memorable and rewarding as the scenery they inhabit. But you often have to look hard to get a glimpse of them being themselves — and it usually helps to have a knowledgeable local guide.

The United Nations has declared this to be International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. But compared to the political hoopla surrounding other such events — such as 1992's Year of the Woman — not much has happened at the government level to make the world more aware of the problems and potential of its indigenous citizens.

Probably the main reason for the lack of interest in indigenous peoples is that they are scattered very thinly around the planet and are a cloutless minority almost everywhere.

While roughly half the world's 5.5 billion inhabitants are women, there are only an estimated 300 million indigenous, tribal or aboriginal peoples left, and they inhabit some 70 countries. Many live deep in jungles in remote corners of Indonesia, Ecuador, Brazil and New Guinea but they also are found in not-so-remote parts of the United States, Canada and Australia.

Because of their scarcity value, indigenous peoples are becoming tourist attractions, just like endangered fauna such as the mountain gorilla or black rhino — ecotourist attractions, that is.

Given the harm mass tourism development has done to the ecology in places such as the Costa del Sol, Waikiki Beach and the Everglades, there is understandable concern that unbridled ecotourism — that is, pleasure travel — to rain forests and other exotic but endangered environments may only compound the damage already done to most indigenous peoples by the white man's liquor, diseases and diet.

Exposure to tourism can quickly make a sham out of old customs and turn once self-sufficient tribal people into show business performers living off tips and hand-outs.

Visitors to the Yagua Indians in

Peru's Amazonian basin, for instance, are told by tour guides to blow on a conch shell before entering a village, so the Indians will know they are friends and won't throw spears or shoot arrows at them.

Actually, it's to warn the Yaguas that the tourists are coming and give them time to take off their T-shirts and running shoes and hop into grass skirts and feathered headdresses.

However, indigenous people themselves frequently see ecotourism as a way to alleviate their often abysmal poverty and to enlist new allies in the struggle to protect ancestral homelands from exploitation and expropriation.

Recently, for instance, a band of Australian aborigines passed through Boston on an updated version of a "walkabout," the traditional nomadic journey of their people.

They came from Australia's vast but barren and thinly populated Northern Territories, where ancient aboriginal tribal traditions are still preserved and vital. This, however, was very much a quest of the 1990s — these aborigines were trying to drum up some business. Literally.

All tour operators, professional guides or representatives of sports lodges and other tourist-related tribal businesses, they were touring the United States to invite Americans to come see Down Under from the point of view of the people who have inhabited it for some 60,000 years.

"Aborigines are taking an increasingly active role in presenting their culture to tourists," said Bill Baker, regional director for the Americas for the Australian Tourist Commission. "In 1983 there were just 23 aboriginal tours available. Today, there are more than 50 tours, with 20 owned and operated by aborigines."

Aboriginal tourism, including the sale to tourists of bark paintings and other art objects, generates an estimated \$50 million annually, according to Baker, about 45 percent of which goes to the local communities.

Some American Indian tribes have developed tourism projects that are both ecologically friendly and economically beneficial. One of the most successful is Ski Apache, a ski resort in New Mexico run by the Mescalero Apaches.

The resort includes a gondola that runs to the top of 12,000-foot-high Sierra Blanca and a deluxe 250-room four-season hotel — one of the largest and poshest in New Mexico — called "The Inn of the Mountain Gods."

The tribe also operates a museum with artifacts, photos and displays of the Cochise era. And there is a stadium where powwows and other traditional ceremonies open to the public are held.

The ski resort is only one of a number of successful Mescalero-run businesses that in the last 30 years have lifted the tribe from poverty to prosperity. Some 2,500 Apaches live on the 400,000-acre reservation, and virtually all the adults are employed — and in work traditional for Apaches.

Virtually all the workers in the tribe's ranching and timbering operations, the cowboys and lumberjacks, are Mescaleros. For the really fun jobs — such as driving large grooming machines down steep ski trails at night during snowstorms — there is usually a long waiting list.

Ecotourism certainly represents a threat to some fragile tribal peoples. But I wouldn't worry much about the Mescalero Apaches.

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Down under

Because Christmas falls during their summer season, the Australians have their own way of celebrating. It's not unusual to find caroling side by side with surfing championships; it's also the season of Santa and cricket matches.

FYI: Australian Tourist Commission, 2121 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1200, Los Angeles, CA 90067; (310) 552-1988.

FYI is prepared by Copley News Service. Your local travel agent can help you arrange these vacations and advise you of changes in prices, dates or itineraries.

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Just-N-Trails Nordic Ski Center in Sparta, Wis., offers cross-country skiers some unexpected luxury. Guests stay in a 1920s Midwest-style farmhouse, a Scandinavian log cabin or a converted granary with fireplace and heart-shape whirlpool. Bed-and-breakfast guests ski free; otherwise, trail fees are \$5 per person. (808) 269-4522.

FLY-FISHING GUIDE

Anglers heading to New Zealand should request the free "Best of New Zealand Fly Fishing" brochure. The 28-page full-color guide includes details on top lodges, professional guides, float trips, helicopter fishing and more. It also features a 12-month fishing calendar. (800) 528-6129.

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS

Because Christmas falls during their summer season, the Australians have their own way of celebrating. It's not unusual to find caroling side by side with surfing championships; it's also the season of Santa and cricket matches. In Derby, Boxing Day (Dec. 26) celebrations include the Cockroach Crawl, and in Daylesford, there are the Scottish Highland Heavy Games just before Christmas. If your Australian vacation isn't scheduled until June or July — their winter — you can always catch Yulefest. (310) 552-1988.

FRISCO SAVINGS

Stay at the St. Francis in San Francisco during the holidays and enjoy some nice savings with the

special "Holiday Shopper's Package." With rates starting at \$119, the package includes accommodations, a holiday beverage coupon and special offers from local retailers (discounts, free gifts, etc.) Participating retailers including Eddie Bauer, I. Magnin, Jaeger, Macy's, Ghiradelli Square and more. The holiday package is available through Jan. 4, 1994, so you can take advantage of post-holiday sales. (415) 397-7000.

Can you recommend an off-the-beaten-path destination? Or a way to save time or money on a trip? If we choose your tip for this column, we'll send you a Desert Sun luggage tag. Submit your tips to: The Desert Sun, P.O. Box 2734, Palm Springs, CA 92263.

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Australian Christmas

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COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

Rocky IV - News
Nov. 28

Worriers need not apply,
but for others traveling as a courier
can be a very cheap vacation

Wing it



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by Laura Bly

It was a phone call out of a footloose traveler's dream.

Ten minutes after calling IBC-Pacific, a Los Angeles courier service, I booked a Continental Airlines flight leaving a few days later for Sydney, Australia. Price: \$425 round trip, less than half the cheapest advance-purchase fare.

All I had to do was bring a carry-on bag and show up at the airport two hours before my scheduled departure, when an IBC-Pacific representative would meet me at the Continental check-in counter and hand me my ticket. I'd been thinking about a trip to Australia, and was curious about the cultlike popularity of courier travel, which aficionados claim is the next-best thing to Aladdin's carpet.

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BURRELLE'S

Following the rules

COURIERS FROM IT

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Laura Bly is travel editor of the Orange County Register. Distributed by The Financial Press Syndicate.



CAPITAL CELEBRATIONS

Sydney

It's officially Silly Month down under, where December marks the beginning of the long, hot summer and the start of school holidays. Even Santa gets into the spirit of things, arriving at Sydney's Bronte Beach by boat (above).

The sun shines almost every day in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales and unofficial capital of all of Australia, so outdoor activities are part and parcel of December celebrations. Sydneysiders stroll past an alfresco Nativity scene drawn with pastel chalk on a sidewalk near Hyde Park (opposite, second from top), while the police, riding near Bondi Beach, don jaunty elves' caps (opposite, bottom).

"Carols in The Domain" is one of Sydney's most popular Christmas celebrations. Thousands of festively attired people gather in a downtown park to sing traditional Christmas carols (opposite: top and third from top), an event that is televised nationally. There are also a few distinctively Australian songs to be heard, such as "Once Upon a Hillside," the story of the angel and the shepherds on the hills above Bethlehem, set to the music of "Waltzing Matilda."

Christmas Day often begins with the opening of presents, followed by a large breakfast. Some enjoy their holiday turkey served cold, as part of a picnic at the beach, while other families sit down to a lavish meal at home, such as stuffed leg of lamb with all the trimmings. In recent years, however, more and more Australians save their "Yulefest" feast for a cooler Sunday in June or July. Who says Christmas has to come only once a year?

{CONTINUED ON PAGE 134}



DEC 5 1993

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BURRELL'S



Associated Press

With all the trimmings: Hats off (or should it be a drum roll?) to Jack Pelton of Manhattan Beach, Calif., who stood out among the throngs of travelers at Los Angeles International Airport eager to get away for the Thanksgiving holiday. Pelton, who was en route to Portland, Ore., on Nov. 24, seemed nonchalant about his turkey tiara prior to his flight.

A taste of Christmas: If you can stand the heat, you might want to consider going on the Mendocino Celebrity Cooks & Kitchens Tour noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 12. For \$12 per person, participants will rove around six different Mendocino Coast homes — with kitchen furnishings that range from Victorian to a "llama farmhouse" — sampling holiday appetizers by local chefs. Phone: (800) 726-2780.

There oughta be a law: What's worse than a party full of lawyers? How about a hotel full of them? The Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in New Delhi, India, is catering to legal eagles with an "Attorneys' Club" floor. Amenities include a lounge with a legal library (including Supreme Court digests, a volume or two of Halsbury Law of England and American Jurisprudence, and tomes on tax, trademark and patent law), a conference room, and a business center. The hotel is just a few miles from the Indian Supreme Court and High Court.

Messiah at the Mission: The Mission San

Luis Obispo de Tolosa in San Luis Obispo invites visitors to a "sing-along" concert of Handel's "Messiah" with the San Luis Obispo Vocal Arts Ensemble on Dec. 19. The ensemble is also staging two concerts Saturday.

Other yuletide events include a Victorian-style celebration 6-8 p.m. Thursday at the Dallidet Adobe and a performance of "The Nutcracker" by San Luis Obispo's Civic Ballet Thursday-Dec. 12. For more information, call the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce at (805) 781-2777.

Old leaders never die!

Answers: a. Next to his mother; b. Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills; c. Anywhere but Moscow.

Question: Where should Lenin be buried? The leader regarded as the father of the Soviet Union has been on public view for decades in Moscow's Red Square. But as the 70th anniversary of his death approaches on Jan. 21, the Russian government, eager to part with symbols of its communist past, is struggling to find an appropriate spot for him. The mayor of St. Petersburg, Mayor Anatoly Sobchak, suggested that Lenin's body be buried in St. Petersburg near his mother, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Way Down Under:

Christmas in Australia can be a balmy summer holiday — and weather definitely modifies the holiday happening-of-choice. In the remote desert mining town of Coober Pedy in South Australia, worshipers retreat underground to escape the heat at one of five underground churches in town. On Cable Beach, the capital of Western Australia, visitors celebrate the season with a camel ride along wide stretches of sand. And some just put the whole thing off by postponing Yulefest until the cooler months of June or July.

— Mary Forgione

PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD

A Home-Grown Tourism Initiative in North Australia

The Pajinka Wilderness Lodge is located on the northernmost point of the Australian mainland in an area rich with natural gifts. The lodge, which is owned and operated by the Injinoo Aboriginal Community, is part of a collection of

13 specialized, small-scale tourism enterprises that recently began to market itself to the international tourist trade under the broad banner of North Australian Aboriginal and Environmental Tourism. This collection of entrepreneurs includes lodges, safari and nature tour operators, and traditional dance companies: all were created, and are sustained by, various Aboriginal communities in North Australia.

A number of local representatives and other participants involved in the initiative made a promotional swing through the United States earlier this year, including an appearance at the annual congress of the American Society of Travel Agents in St. Louis. Their intention was to court business from U.S. tour operators and travel agents.

According to Harold Wilson, operator of Aussie Safaris, an operator who was a member of the visiting delegation, the North Australian Aboriginal and Environmental Tourism initiative is firmly grounded in "the pride of self-determination."

Neil Hermes, a natural historian who operates Uluru Experience, said the type of tourism represented by the collection that visited here has significantly broadened the economic base available to many Aboriginal communities in North Australia, who "tend to be in remote areas that have not been used for pastoral locations." Tourism offers "good employment for Aboriginal people," said Manual Pamkal, president of the Manyallaluk Community Council, which operates Manyallaluk Tours, and another member of the visiting group. "We can employ our own people, in our own country."

The Aboriginal tourism movement in North Australia now generates roughly \$35 million each year, said sociologist Chris Burchett, manager of Aboriginal Tourism for the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. About \$8 million of that is from ground tours, and the remainder is derived from the sale of locally made art items, according to Burchett, who has worked as an economic

adviser to Aboriginal communities in the north for more than 25 years. While the Aboriginal tourism figures represent just 1 percent of tourism revenues for Australia's Northern Territory, and a minute fraction of the country's billion-dollar tourist trade overall, the market is growing. In 1980, Burchett said, only eight Aboriginal groups in North Australia were willing to share their land and culture with outsiders through tourism; today, 50 Aboriginal groups in the region are involved in tourism to some extent.

In hard business terms, environmental and cultural tourism in North Australia represents a good opportunity for U.S. travel agents; in surveys conducted by the Australian Tourist Commission, visitors consistently express a high degree of interest in learning more about the country's indigenous cultures, and adventure and nature travel are the fastest-growing segments of the worldwide leisure travel market.

And there are other, equally significant rewards. The North Australian collective offers travel agents an opportunity sell a tourism product that is non-invasive environmentally and directly supports an Aboriginal host community, in economic and human terms. "I think tourism is very important," said Pamkal, "so our culture and our role can continue on and on into the future, for our country and for our children."

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Information and materials on North Australian Aboriginal and Environmental Tourism are available from the Australian Tourist Commission. (310) 552-1988.

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Bob Sullivan

GROUP MANAGER

Drew Cole

GROUP PROMOTION

DIRECTOR

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PRODUCTION MANAGER

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CUSTOMER SERVICE

Maureen Corrigan

CMP Publications, (600)

Community Drive, Manhasset,

N.Y. 11030, 516-562-5000

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9-1024 PEOPLE...**Regent Holidays** has named **Joanne Cothran** director, group sales and development. She is a specialist in FIT, group and incentive travel and will concentrate on customized groups, congresses, conferences, symposiums to Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Israel and Italy among other destinations. For information on customized groups contact Cothran at (905) 673-9777.

The Australian Tourist Commission has named three new managers in North America. **Nigel Bramich** has been named marketing manager, meetings, conventions and incentives and **Andrea Williams** manager, incentive travel, both based in the ATC's regional office in New York. **Amy Shearer** has been named manager, public relations and promotions based in Los Angeles.

The Great Canadian Railtour Company, owners and operators of **Rocky Mountaineer Railtours**, has named **Terry Gainer**, vice-president, international sales. The son of a Banff Train Station manager, Gainer was most recently vice president, sales for Banff-based **Brewster Transportation and Tours**.

U.S.
PHOTO / INFORMATION
ASSISTANCE

ing facilities include the 1,120-room Sheraton Hua Ting and the 628-room Portman Shangri-la.

Even though capitalist Hong Kong is moving toward Chinese rule, the communist mainland's embrace of tourism and the convention market has the colony looking boldly to the next century. Regional and international meetings are on the rise and there are discussions of expanding the 4.4-million-square-foot Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center to accommodate several major conventions at once. Hong Kong's Kai-Tek Airport is currently operating near capacity, so work has begun north of the city on a major new airport that will be able to handle 87 million passengers a year. The first of two runways is expected to open in 1997.

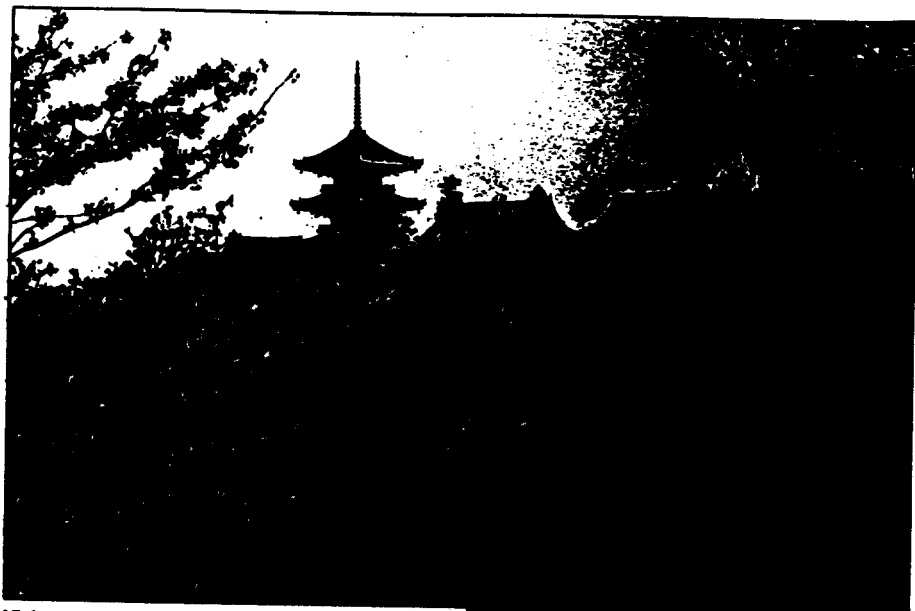
Among Hong Kong's newer meeting facilities are the Pacific Place Conference Center, which boasts three hotels—J.W. Marriott, Hotel Conrad and Island Shangri-La—with a combined total of 1,700 luxury guest rooms.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

The nations of Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia, are also jumping into the American meetings market with both feet. Political turmoil and natural disasters have dampened the popularity of some areas, but only temporarily. Heavy hotel construction and airport expansion is underway throughout the region and billions of dollars are being spent for massive new convention and exhibition complexes.

Singapore is one of the smallest nations in the world but ranks consistently as Asia's top convention city and among the top in the world. In one year alone, the 242-square-mile country (which is composed of 50 islands) hosted more than 2,000 events. Many visitors are attracted to Singapore's big-city sophistication because it hasn't been allowed to overwhelm the feeling of genuine Asian culture.

The painstakingly restored Raffles Hotel and other reminders of the city's colonial past share the streets with modern skyscrapers and international businessmen. Top meeting facilities abound in Singapore. Next year, the \$350-million International Convention and Exhibition Center in the new Suntec City complex will add 300,000



Visitors to the Pacific Rim find peace and quiet at the Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto, Japan, and in the waters near Australia's Lizard Island (right).

square feet to the city's inventory of convention space. In addition to 26 meeting rooms and a 600-seat auditorium, the center's main hall will seat groups of up to 13,000 people. To mark the opening, the government is launching a marketing campaign that offers meeting planners special incentives for meeting in Singapore in 1995.

Of course, Singapore already boasts one of Asia's largest collections of exhibition halls, including the Changi International Exhibition Center, the Singapore Cruise Center and the World Trade Center (which recently added another 22,500 square feet of space).

Major hotels, including such chains as Sheraton, Hyatt, Pan Pacific, Holiday Inn and Regent, offer more than 25,000 guest rooms—and more are being built. The Rasa Sentosa Beach Hotel and King's Clarion Hotel have just opened, and the Elizabeth Hotel and Four Seasons Hotel are scheduled to open later this year.

The Philippines, an archipelago of 7,100 islands stretching 1,100 miles, is looking for an explosion of convention business with its return to political stability. Tourism officials are anxious to refute reports of anti-American sentiments and insist that Americans will be made to feel welcome in this country of white sand beaches and coral reefs.

Next year, the state-of-the-art World Trade Center is scheduled to open in the spectacular \$1-billion Asiaworld City project on Manila Bay. The Asiaworld Place Hotel will offer more than

2,500 rooms and 134,000 square feet of meeting space.

The capital city of Manila already offers more than 10,000 guest rooms, many from operators such as Hyatt, Westin, Mandarin Oriental, Peninsula and Holiday Inn. Nine new luxury properties, including the 697-room Shangri-La Makati, will open this year and add another 6,000 guest rooms to the city's inventory.

Malaysia, on the southeast tip of Asia, is emerging as a top meeting destination boasting everything from the skyscrapers of Kuala Lumpur to the old British fort and Hindu temples of Penang. The 3,500-seat Putra World Trade Center in Kuala Lumpur can handle major conventions and offers sophisticated services ranging from simultaneous language translation to international satellite transmission.

The capital already has more than 7,000 guest rooms and is anticipating

rapid growth in convention business at five properties now under construction, including the 500-room Hotel Nikko, the 561-room Grand Hyatt and the 627-room Pavilion Hotel.

JAPAN AND KOREA

Despite an economic slowdown, the nation of Japan has more than 30 hotels, each with at least 200 guest rooms, scheduled for opening in the coming year. New convention facilities are also under construction.

Japan has more than 30 cities with convention facilities. These cities attract more than 1,200 international meetings each year.

The capital city of Tokyo is home to 12 million people and offers a seamless blend of the ancient and the new. The city boasts of more than 60,000 hotel rooms and convention properties ranging from the stunning 280-room Four Seasons Resort Hotel in the Chinzan-so Gardens to the 1,059-room New Otani Tokyo Hotel, which offers 36 banquet and conference rooms accommodating up to 4,000.

The first major convention center in Tokyo—the 5,000-seat Tokyo Forum—is expected to open in 1996. The Tokyo International Exhibition Center, which is expected to be the Pacific Rim's largest convention facility, is scheduled to open the following year.

Japan's other convention cities, including Chiba, Yokohama, Osaka and Kyoto offer tens of thousands of guest rooms. The fabled city of Kyoto, Japan's cultural and spiritual capital, has won countless awards for its International Conference Hall, which includes 64,000 square feet of exhibit space and banquet seating for up to 4,000 people. A fast rail link between the hall and downtown is expected to be completed by 1997.

Other meeting facilities range from the 32,300-square-foot Event Hall and the Trade Fair Center and Inamori Hall downtown. Nearby hotel properties include the 322-room Westin Kyoto Takara-ga-ike Prince and the 554-room Kyoto Grand Hotel.

Aided by a massive wave of hotel construction spurred by the 1988 Olympics, Korea in the past decade has become a major player on the international meetings scene.

To mark Seoul's 600th anniversary as the nation's capital, the government has designated 1994 as "Visit Korea Year." Nationwide, some 17,000 guest

rooms are expected to be added, which will raise Korea's total inventory to 60,000 guest rooms and will help accommodate the more than 4.5 million people expected to visit.

Seoul has been the destination of choice for most Korea-bound groups and offers the nation's largest convention facilities including the 5,300-seat Korea World Trade Center, the 100,000-seat Seoul Sports Complex and the recently opened 338,445-square-foot Korean Exhibition Center.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Australia and New Zealand are luring more and more meetings and conventions from the states and, despite a deep recession, both countries are rushing to build additional facilities.

One of the newest jewels in Australia's meetings crown is the billion-dollar Exhibition and Convention Center in Brisbane, which is expected to open in April 1995. On the nearby Barrier Reef, three new resorts (which will include conference and meeting facilities) are also being built.

Hotel construction in Australia includes a Sheraton in Melbourne and three properties near Sydney's convention center, which offers 250,000 square feet of covered hall space. Two additional hotels are being built at a new airport west of Sydney and are expected to open next year.

Australia's capital city, Canberra, has also begun packaging itself as a destination for groups. A casino, expected to open in October, is the latest addition to Canberra's National Convention Center.

New Zealand, an island nation the size of Colorado which boasts of scenic wonders from fiords to Alpine mountains, is also making a concerted effort to increase the number of meetings and conventions inside its borders.

The three year-old Aotea Center in Auckland can accommodate 2,140 people and the New Zealand Exposition Center offers 100,000 square feet of exhibit space. Many Auckland hotels, including six within walking distance of the Aotea Center, offer complete conference facilities.

New Zealand's capital, Wellington, offers the Michael Fowler Center, which includes 13 meeting rooms and a 2,500-seat theater. Picturesque Christchurch offers a 1,000-seat theater, five conference rooms and an auditorium seating more than 2,600.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

For meeting planners in the Western states, considering the nations of the Pacific Rim opens an array of options not available domestically. Planners in the Western states have the added benefit of being approximately six hours closer by air to the Pacific Rim nations than their counterparts on the East Coast. And with Pacific Rim options in their destination tool kit, creative meeting planners are sure to construct gatherings in this faraway place that are far and away the most memorable their groups will ever hold.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Australia Tourist Commission
2121 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1200
Los Angeles, CA 90067
(310) 552-1988

China National Tourist Office
333 West Broadway, Suite 201
Glendale, CA 91204
(818) 545-7505

Hong Kong Tourist Association
333 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60601-3966
(312) 782-1960

Japan National Tourist Organization
401 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 770
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 222-9693

Korea Tourist Office
3435 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 382-3435

Malaysia Tourism Development Corporation
24-27th Floor, Menara Dato'onn
Putra World Trade Centre
Jalan Tun Ismail
Kuala Lumpur 50480 Malaysia
011 60 3 293-5188

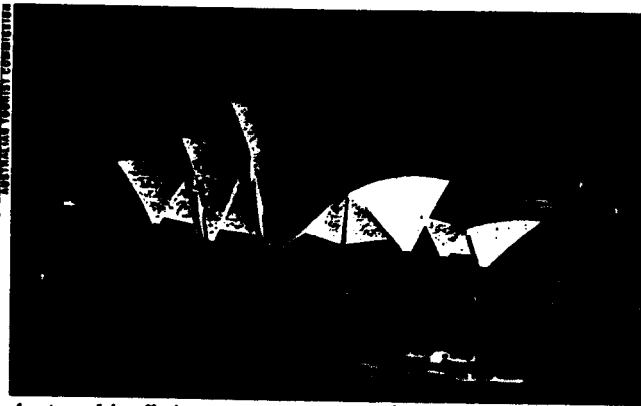
Phillipine Convention & Visitors Corporation
556 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10036
(212) 575-7915

Singapore Convention Bureau
8484 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 510
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(213) 852-1901

Thailand Incentive & Convention Association
5th Floor Mezzaine
Bangkok Convention Centre Central Plaza
1695 Phaholyothin Road Bangkokhen
Bangkok 10900 Thailand
011 66 2 541-1401

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 6: Hong Kong Tourist Association
Page 6 (inset) and Page 8: Japan National Tourist Organization
Page 8 (bottom): Australian Tourist Commission



Austravel is offering a special roundtrip air fare to Australia. Above, the Sydney Opera House.

fers, daily breakfast and complimentary scheduled shuttle bus service downtown. Call (800) HOLIDAY.

TOURS

Austravel Opens Fort Lauderdale Office

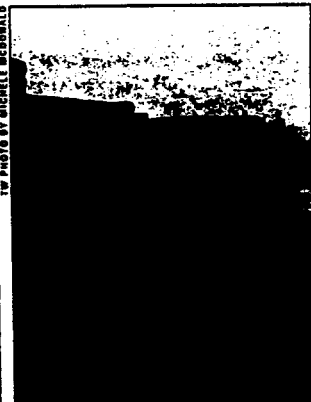
FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Austravel will launch its newest U.S. office here with a special roundtrip air fare from Florida to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane or Cairns, Australia.

Clients who book three nights at one of the destinations for \$99 are eligible to receive air fare for \$899 per person.

Travel must take place in September and passengers can stay in Australia for up to 30 days.

The new Fort Lauderdale office will serve the southeastern market; the company has offices in New York, Chicago, Houston and San Francisco.

To book, call (800) 633-3404.



The Cliffs of Moher, above, will be featured on Perillo Tours' Nine Deluxe Days of Irish Revelry tours.

cludes Dublin, the Rock of Cashel, Blarney Castle, Bantry, Kenmare, the Ring of Kerry, Killarney, Adare, Limerick City, Bunratty Folk Park, Liscannor, the Cliffs of Moher, Burren Country and Galway Bay.

Hotel accommodations include the Berkeley Court Hotel in Dublin, the Park in Kenmare and Dromoland Castle in County Clare.

All meals except lunch are provided, including three a la carte hotel dinners and four dinner-entertainment evenings at Doyle's Irish Cabaret and the Abbey Tavern in Dublin, a medieval banquet at Knapogue Castle, and a farewell gala with the McCormack singers at Dromoland Castle.

Departures will be on Saturdays from New York and Boston on Aer Lingus.

Rates, including air, are \$2,299 to \$2,399 per person, double.

For more information, call (800) 431-1515.

United Vacations Offers Seoul Package

NEW YORK — United Vacations is offering a Seoul package through November.

The Seoul Holiday package, which starts at \$1,520 per person, double, includes air from New York or Newark, N.J., three nights' accommodations at the Grand Hyatt Seoul, American breakfasts, half-day sightseeing tour and roundtrip airport transfers.

United began nonstop Chicago-Seoul service July 2.

In addition, the firm is offering a Taejon Expo '93 land package for \$547 per person, double.

Included in the package are transfers from Seoul to Taejon, two nights' accommodations in

NORTHWEST HERALD

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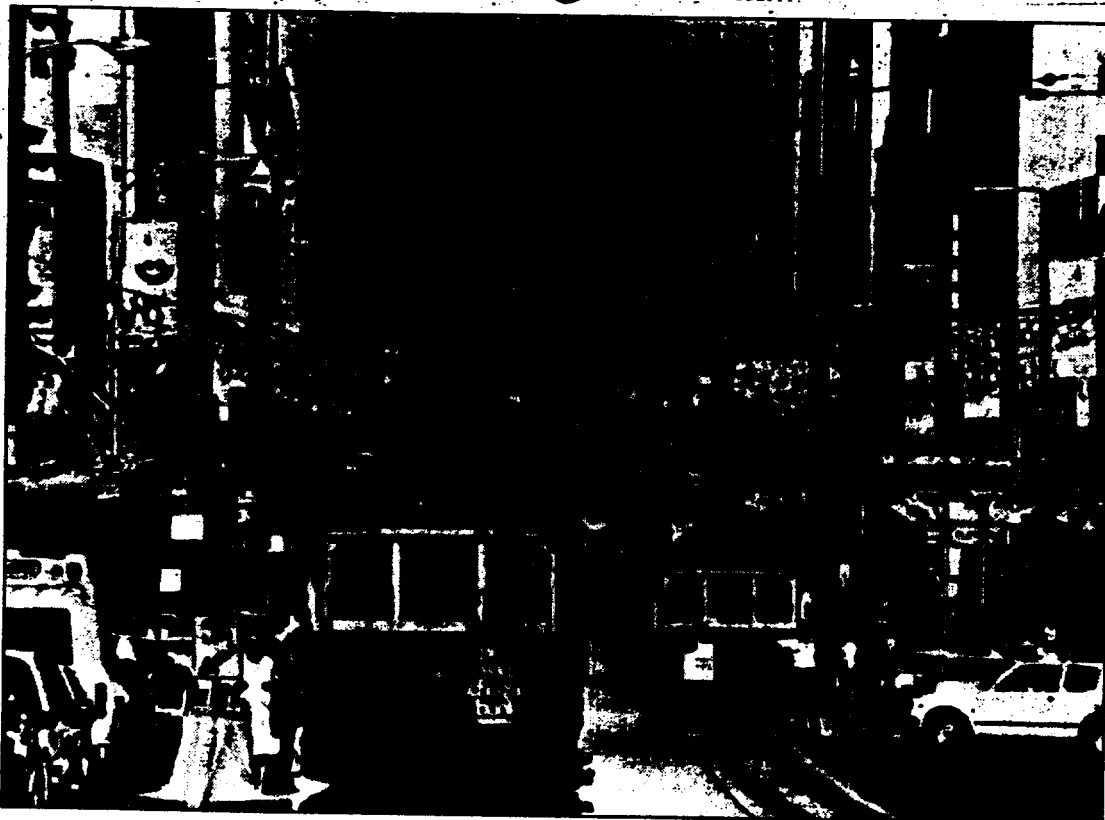


Photo provided

The third film in the Kiwanis Film Series is "Australia — Coast to Coast," which will be shown 7 p.m. Sunday in the McHenry County College Conference Center.

Film series goes down under

4675
CRYSTAL LAKE — The third film of the Kiwanis' Travel Film Series, "Australia — Coast to Coast," will be shown 7 p.m. Sunday in the MCC Conference Center.

Visit with Jim McDonald

CRYSTAL LAKE

the golden beaches and broiling deserts, wine-growing valleys and rugged mountain ranges.

McDonald studied cinematography at the University of Southern California and has been making films since his days as director of sightseeing tours for Yosemite National Park.

Tickets are \$6. Save \$10 by purchasing a discount pass for \$20, which includes five admissions.

The film series is sponsored by the Crystal Lake Kiwanis Club and the Office of Community Services at McHenry County College.

For more information, call (815) 455-8697.

Strange birds, unusual wildlife rife in Australia

By JANET CELESTA LOWE
Copy News Service

Sel Nichol pulled his six-wheeled drive Land Cruiser off to the side of the road in the forest, tipped his Akubra hat back on his head and gazed into the rooftop of eucalyptus.

"Listen," he whispered.

First he heard a clear, musical "ding," then another and another. Soon the forest rang like a carillon with the song of Australia's bell-birds. The bellbirds live in flocks of up to 300 members and make unbelievable music in the territory they've claimed for themselves.

The bellbirds are only one of thousands of animals, birds and water creatures that are found only on the isolated, ancient Australian continent. Long before I decided to visit Australia, I'd heard of the deserts, big rocks and sunny beaches. Even though I knew about kangaroos and koalas, I was not prepared for the amazing diversity and strangeness of plant and animal life in Australia.

Since Australia is approximately the size of the United States and its wildlife oddities come from many distant regions, it's not easy for the typical two-week visitor to see it all.

Fortunately, Aussies are justifiably proud of their natural riches and take pains to make the country as accessible as possible. Australia has more than 2,000 national parks, nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. They include tropical rain forests, deserts, snow-capped mountains, islands, coral reefs, estuaries and glacial lakes.

Australia's birds, from the awkward emu to the frightful flying fox, are among its most unusual

If you go ...

● **Passport and visit:** A U.S. passport is required for re-entry into the United States, and a visitor's visa is necessary for admission to Australia. Visas are filed and can be obtained from the Australian Embassy in Washington or at consulates in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston and Toronto.

● **Weather:** The seasons are reversed from the United States, and Australia's climate can be temperate to that of California. Since California has everything from hot to heavy, many Aussies are quick to change according to the time they go and the places they intend to visit.

● **Driving:** Remember that Australian drives on the left. There is no need for a special driver's license; U.S. drivers will also. Companies that rent cars will be in the United States for you to take.

● **Money:** Australia has its own currency, the dollar. The exchange rate has recently favored Aussies, which makes Australia a reasonable of a travel bargain here.

natural treasures. Happily, most of the birds are quite charming.

While driving through the village of Warrimoo in the Blue Mountains, I noticed a flock of what appeared to be pigeons flitting around a statue and onto the lawn. At second glance the birds turned out to be wild, pristine white cockatoos. Australia is full of such surprises!

There are more parrots, and a

greater variety of parrots, in Australia than anywhere else. There are 17 known species of cockatoos, and all but one are native to Australia. The most familiar native parrot is the budgerigar, once found only on Australia's plains, but now probably the world's most popular caged bird.

The best-loved Australian bird, however, is a kingfisher, the laughing kookaburra. The kookaburra is common throughout the country, even in the cities, and its cackling song is practically the Australian national anthem.

But even the kookaburra takes a back seat to the kangaroos and koalas, as far as tourists are concerned. Nichol, founder of O'Day Tours in Brisbane and the Gold Coast, tells about an American executive who called late at night, pleading for a custom tour for his wife and children. The family had been in Australia for two weeks but hadn't seen a kangaroo in its natural habitat. The man's family were in tears and refused to leave until they'd seen a 'roo running wild.

They were fully justified, of course. Australia's most unique animal population is the marsupials — creatures that carry their young in a pouch. Because of millions of years of isolation, the Australian continent has been a sanctuary for archaic species such as the marsupial, which could not survive competition with higher life forms elsewhere in the world. Kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, wombats, platypuses, bandicoots, possums, bats and Tasmanian devils are among the thriving species.

Nichol drove the family to an area near Lake Maroon, several hours from Surfer's Paradise, where he nearly always spots fam-



The Blue Mountaineers behind Sydney, Australia, get their name from a bluish haze that hangs in the air, the rising oil from the eucalypt groves. —Copy News Service photo

ilities of kangaroos — the male monarch, secondary males, females and their baby joeys. It helps to have an expert guide, since kangaroos easily fade into the tall, tan grass.

As for eucalypts, as the Aussies call these tall gray-green gum trees, there are more than 800 species.

Crocodiles in some rivers, dolphins and marine near the beaches and hundreds of bright fish along the Great Barrier Reef complete the story of Australia's natural environment. Deciding what to see first can be perplexing.

Often visitors want to see plants, birds, animals and sea life in their natural setting, which means a trek to the outback.

To Australians, the outback is any place that isn't a city, which includes most of Australia. Even from Australia's largest city, Sydney, where most visitors either arrive or spend most of their time, the outback is easy to reach. Brisbane and the nearby Gold Coast also are good bases for exploring the country's natural wonders. For those who don't have the time to get too far into the countryside, the fringes of the urban areas are great for exploring.

The Blue Mountains
The mountain range behind Sydney gets its name from a bluish haze that hangs in the air, the rising oil from the eucalypt groves. There are many attractions in the mountains, but for garden lovers, there are two special spots, Leura and Mount Tomah.

The village of Leura is known for its passionate gardeners, plant nurseries and garden shops. In the spring, summer and fall (remember the seasons are reversed south of the equator) the town is aflame with flowers and colored vegetation.

The New York Times Sophisticated Travel
Nov. 14, 1993
Sunday - 1,735,706

Australia's Und

BY BLANCHE D'ALPUGET

IN 1770, LIEUT. JAMES Cook, sailing the Endeavour on a voyage of discovery along the northeast coast of Australia, realized from the ocean swell that a reef must exist somewhere to starboard. He proceeded on tiptoe, his lead line in use 24 hours a day. When water depth reached 14 fathoms, he lowered canvas and

crept forward. If it shallowed further, he ordered the long boats to be launched and rowed in front of the ship to sound the bottom.

Despite these precautions, the Endeavour ran onto a reef and was holed. Cook covered her broken timbers with canvas and nursed her to the mainland for repairs. But when the ship was seaworthy again, he discovered he was trapped in a labyrinth of stone. He was a prisoner inside a gigantic, mostly invisible structure, now known as the Great Barrier Reef.

This reef off the coast of Australia is often called the eighth wonder of the world. Billions of coral polyps — tiny blind animals, each with a plant growing inside it — have built it over approximately eight millenniums, making a submarine garden riotous in color and one-third the size of Texas. Although it is not a single ribbon, but rather 3,000 individual reefs,

Blanche D'Alpuget's new novel, "White Eye," will be published by Simon & Schuster.



MAP BY DUGALD STERNER



Underwater Garden



the Great Barrier Reef is, nevertheless, One Big Thing.

Each year for two or three days after full moons in late spring and early summer, it holds a mating fiesta: along its whole length, the distance from New York to Miami, its polyps throw out colored eggs. The trillions of pink, red, blue and green spawn create, divers say, the illusion of an underwater Technicolor snowstorm.

What Lieutenant Cook did not know at first was that, traveling north, the reef moves closer to the coast of what is now the state of Queensland, and that it is a maze of ribbon, patch and fringing coral

around continental islands.

When he saw he was trapped, he found an island with a good-sized mountain — Lizard Island, now a holiday spot — bushwhacked his way to the peak, and looked for a channel through to deeper water.

"I rejoiced," he wrote in his log, at being free of the reef.

Several nights later, the crew heard the thunder of breaking waves: another mountain had
(Continued on Page 44)

ABOVE RIGHT: Parrotfish.

RIGHT: Fish schooling among hard coral.

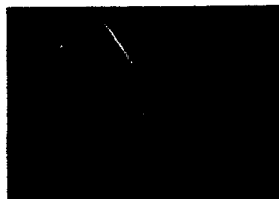


THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, AND TWO OF ITS VARIED ISLANDS.



ABOVE: Lady Elliot Island, from the air; humpback whales breach the water at sundown; a diver with a manta ray, a benign creature that can grow to be 18 feet across, from wing tip to wing tip.

PARROT FISH AND LARGE CLOWN FISH BY ISY SCHWARTZ/IMAGE BANK. CORALS BY HOWARD HALL. ISLAND AND MANTA RAY BY CLINT HEMPSALL. SMALL CLOWN FISH BY FRED BAVENDAM. PETER ARNOLD. WHALES BY MIKE OSBOND/AUSCAPE



A clown fish snuggles up to a sea anemone.



ABOVE: Fairy basket and red gorgonian coral.

LEFT: Clown fish exist in symbiosis with sea anemones, which are poisonous to other species.

Great Barrier Reef

reared out of the sea, the wind had dropped, the ship was drifting toward it in water too deep to anchor. Cook wrote that they were only 90 yards from destruction when a breeze sprang up and saved them.

From the time of Cook's voyage until 1900, more than a thousand ships and an unknown number of lives were lost on the Great Barrier Reef. Despite accurate charts and advanced navigational aids, the toll continues. On just one island, Lady Elliot, a coral cay at the southern extremity of the reef, 126 ships have been wrecked in as many years, although a lighthouse flashes warnings day and night. A recent casualty was a lone round-the-world sailor whose small yacht has been high and dry on the cay for the past 18 months. In the 19th century, shipwreck was such a common danger that the Government of Queensland released goats and planted coconut palms on some of the more than 600 islands dotted on and around the Great Barrier Reef to provide food for castaways. The goats are still there. So are ghosts. Three are frequently seen or heard on Lady Elliot, while several other islands, it is claimed, are also haunted.

In the 1920's, people began visiting the islands for rough-and-ready tropical holidays. The reef archipelago includes flat coral cays and wooded, craggy islands, once part of the mainland but cut off by the sea that rose at the end of the last ice age. Until the 1920's, the islands were used for grazing cattle, cutting timber, gathering *bêche-de-mer* — sea cucumbers — and mining the guano deposited by nesting birds. Today, almost all are included in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, protected from commercial mining, logging and oil exploration. Eighteen have holiday accommodations; a few more are scientific research stations; a couple are privately leased; the rest are uninhabited and wild.

There are three main groups: the Far North Islands; the Whitsundays in the middle, and the Capricorn Islands at

the southern end of the reef. The Whitsunday Islands, named by Cook for the day on which he first saw them, the feast of Pentecost, 1770, are known locally as "Virgins of Creation." All are named, but many of their bays, promontories and other features are not yet well enough known to have titles. Underwater, miles of the reef are virgin and have never been seen.

So far, the reef is known to support 400 kinds of coral and 1,500 species of fish — from giant black marlin to half-inch finned jewels. There are 4,000 varieties of mollusks, thousands of different sponges, worms, crustaceans and echinoderms, turtles, dugongs and manta rays. The mantas gather sometimes in groups of 20. Mostly they are 5 to 6 feet wide, but some grow to 18 feet across — and one ray at the south of the reef, seen around Lady Elliot, is estimated to be 29 feet from wingtip to wingtip. Mantas, which are harmless creatures, swim as if flying slowly underwater; their faces have a peculiarly benevolent expression. Occasionally, they allow divers to stroke their skins, which are said to feel like velvet. In the submarine paradise of the reef, they play the part of angels. To swim with one, as I did once, is to experience a sense of elevation, as if in the presence of a mighty work of art.

On its islands, the reef provides rookeries for sea birds — a quarter of a million on one cay alone — and is a mating ground and nursery for Antarctic humpback whales.

ON THE MORNING I flew into Hamilton Island, in the Whitsunday group, from the window of the plane I thought I could see, poking out of the water below, the heads of two whales. (A week later, on the return flight, I realized they were rocks.) It was July, midwinter, and the weather was overcast, with squalls of rain. The unseasonable damp had confounded the local residents, who were going around trying to laugh it off by

CRASH

ONE MORNING, IN the Whitsundays, I caught a de Havilland Beaver floatplane for a day's snorkeling on the reef. There was the maximum seven people on board: a young French couple and an Australian family of parents and a 2-year-old son, all of whom had boarded on the mainland, the pilot and me. We were unknown to each other and chattered brightly about our holiday.

Minutes after takeoff, however, it became obvious that something was wrong: the pilot began pumping a lever beside his seat and looking back along the fuselage. Our conversation faltered and died. I realized we were flying in the wrong direction, not northeast, to the reef, but south, back to Hamilton Island. The pilot continued pumping, saying nothing. (He was trying to work the hydraulic system manually. I learned later, to retract the wheels, because all the electricals, including the radio, had failed on takeoff.) We circled Hamilton airfield once, then again, our odd behavior causing the ground crew to stare up at us.

Inside the Beaver, there was silence. On our third run above the airstrip, a man on the ground made swimming movements with his arms, meaning "land on the water." (Beavers can land on water or land.) We banked and began to make a fourth circle. For the first time, the pilot spoke. He turned, his face stiff with tension, and said, "You all got your seat belts fastened?"

Then we descended.

We were traveling at about 70 miles an hour, just wheel-height above the sea, when there was a tremendous whack, the aircraft pitched forward and green water covered the windows. We were diving like a submarine. The child gave a scream of terror. Otherwise, there was no sound except for the thunder of the water against the plane. "We're all going to die!" I thought. This struck me as horrifyingly wrong — and horror, rather than fear, was my main emotion. After a few seconds, the aircraft rose toward the surface, fell onto its port side and stopped.

We could see nothing but water, and still none of us said a word. The doors opened outward. On the port side, where the pilot

sat, they were held shut by the water. But his door had a window in it and he ripped it open, letting the sea rush in. The pressure on the door had been released. "There's a chance," I realized. My next thought was, "Can I open the seat belt and climb out of my seat?" The cabin was as small as the interior of a compact car, and we were lying on one side. The pilot had undone his belt, dived and swam out. The Australian man beside him dived; I was third in line. It was obvious now that we could escape, and with this thought came another one: I mustn't lose my sunglasses or my handbag. Clutching the handbag, I dived through the door. The French couple came next. That left the mother and child inside. "It can't sink!" the pilot shouted at us, now clinging to the fuselage. He swam round to starboard, where he opened another door. The mother, who had occupied herself finding the life jackets under the seats, passed out her child, threw out the life jackets, then jumped in the water herself.

We had been clinging to the plane for only a few minutes when a yachtsman arrived in an aluminum dinghy into which we scrambled, giving ourselves more bruises and cuts climbing over the metal gunwales than we had got in the crash. "I don't know your names or who you are, but, by God, I'm glad you're alive!" he said. He was shaking; we were relatively calm, except for the young pilot, who had saved our lives and who, before our eyes, had aged 15 years. I heard him sobbing later. What he had not known when he tried to land was that one of the plane's four wheels was still down, and it was this wheel that, hitting the water, had thrown us into the sea.

Not long after we came ashore on Hamilton, the plane capsized, leaving only its floats above the water. Had we still been inside, we would have drowned upside down. I wondered in the days that followed if this experience had meaning, or were merely curious. I recognized that it was meaningful, but that its meaning — for me, and perhaps for the others, too — is something tender and intimate, which may not be revealed.

BLANCHE D'ALPUGET

declaring, "Welcome to the Whitsundays!" There is a large, rather tacky resort on Hamilton, but I was going to Hayman Island, an hour away by motor launch.

I asked the skipper of the launch (on which complimentary flutes of Champagne were an overture to the pleasures to come) if what I'd seen from the air could have been whales. Certainly, he said: humpbacks spend the winter around the reef before returning to the Antarctic for the summer. Since the international ban on whaling was instituted in 1986,

their numbers have increased rapidly. In 1985, a single whale was sighted; the following year, 10 were seen, perhaps because of keener observation. This year, 60 had been recorded by July, which was only the beginning of the season. Almost daily, people were seeing individuals or gangs of half a dozen: blowing, breaching, rearing out of the water to ogle boats, slapping their tails about or rolling on their sides like enormous puppies.

Two women lawyers holidaying on Hayman the week before were on a sunset sail when

a smallish, 40-footer took a fancy to them, I was told, and swam and dived under the yacht for half an hour, lifting its head above water to roll its licorice black eye at them.

One could imagine, fathoms deep, their huge, warm bodies as they listened to the engine throb, able to swim up beneath us and manifest suddenly with a blast of water. I remembered Jill Hellyer's poem about humpbacks: "The curious soft indigo explosion of their cries / that trail like comets in the night are heard as / trumpet calls, submerged, sharp shud-

dering, / ... a salt-white sorcery." They can communicate with each other across a hundred miles of ocean. I began to long for a close encounter with a whale; the skipper said he was sure it could be arranged.

Over the next few days, the staff on Hayman did everything possible to conjure a humpback, phoning my room to say that a pod had been sighted, and if I would be at the marina in 10 minutes, a speedboat would take me to the spot. These hour-long journeys, bouncing across the Coral Sea at wild speed, circumnavigating islands and puttering into bays to look at tame fish, were exhilarating. The whales had always vanished by the time we arrived.

Consolation was at hand, however, for Hayman holds fast to the idea that beauty and pleasure are good for you.

The island is mountainous, three miles in length and a mile wide, with a long crescent of beach lapped by turquoise water. For the first half of this century, it was a goat paddock, its lease passing between the hands of fishermen and eccentrics until 1947, when a fisherman sold it to a developer for the price of his goats. He reckoned he had a thousand and asked \$40 a head. Now there are few goats — I saw a black nanny and a kid one day while bush walking — and instead it boasts one of the best resorts in Australia.

The 214-room hotel on Hayman is the only building, apart from staff quarters; it steps back, like a ziggurat, into the palms of an elaborate garden. Farther west, dug into the hillside, is a water desalination plant; the rest of the island is native grassland and forest, threaded with walking trails.

The original resort, dating from 1950 and in style resembling the Royal Hawaiian, was demolished and remade in 1987 to the specifications of a Hungarian-Australian, Sir Peter Abeles, who had previously built a transport empire. Sir Peter filled Hayman with antiques, works of art, gold-plated faucets, wittily decorated suites and fine restaurants, his taste for the baroque and his love of food translated into a playland that is strangely and relaxingly disorienting. In a tropical rain forest pool floated a pair of white European swans so astonishing in their sur-



CRAG LAMOTTE

The 214-room hotel on Hayman, stepped back like a ziggurat, is, aside from staff quarters, the only building on the island.

roundings that, although I knew about them in advance, I gasped, "Are they real swans?" (What did I think they would be? Cement?) Palm trees sway outside the glass walls of a cozy London club bar. One of the resort's 11 penthouses is Art Deco; another is rough plastered, like a house on the coast of Greece, with a spa and body shower in its marble bathroom.

In the evenings, an invisible hand placed a fine white linen mat on the floor beside my bed so that my dear feet, on retiring and arising, would have something smoother than carpet to stand on. Such attention to detail, in seemingly endless variety, is a point of pride with the resort. In the kitchen one day, I saw a cook carving in chocolate a rhinoceros with a monkey on its back. "For a guest," he explained gnomically. In the Oriental Seafood restaurant, where Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Malay food is served, desserts arrive decorated with chopsticks made of chocolate. In the coffeehouse overlooking the turquoise lagoon, there are cakes with thin chocolate frills like the fins of lionfish. The seafood platter served in the Trattoria is a yard long and so spectacularly laden with fish that everyone turns to look when a waiter carries it in.

One night, I dined at the Chef's Table in one of the big stainless-steel kitchens behind the restaurants. It is an event held twice a week, usually limited to 20 people, at a cost of about \$90 a head, including

wine. (One should book in advance.) The table was set with silver and crystal, and the chief of the island's 54 chefs, Jean-Marie Pougnet, led a discussion of cuisine. We ate: purse of duck confit; seafood consommé; fillet of John Dory on sautéed spinach; a sorbet, granité of lavender and blush wine; cutlet of lamb wrapped in pastry with a mushroom and black olive stuffing, garnished with an aspergine hollandaise, and, finally, a light pear soup with a sauterne soufflé. Good Australian wines accompanied each course.

THERE IS ALSO AN occasional Sommelier's Table, set up in the cellar and limited to 10 people, with the sommelier, Jean-Michel Feray, discussing vineyards and vintages, of which his knowledge is encyclopedic. The cost can run up to \$200, depending on the wines. Perhaps recalling Nubar Gulbenkian's aphorism that the perfect number of people to have for dinner is two, oneself and the head waiter, Mr. Feray happily entertains just one wine lover at his table if more do not present themselves. Hayman stocks 18,000 bottles, including a 1945 d'Yquem the color of caramel, an 1842 Champy Père et Fils pinot noir, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, and one of the world's great reds, the Australian Penfold's Grange Hermitage 1959.

By day, you can learn to scuba dive, play tennis or prac-

tice golf. The coral around the island is exquisite and can be viewed either by snorkeling or from a glass-bottomed boat. The fish, all protected in this part of the reef, waft or dart through flower beds of stone, their shapes so bizarre one wonders if the Almighty was contemplating Picasso at the moment He created them. They peer into your goggles with dotty, Dickensian looks on their faces and sometimes nibble your legs. Their colors induced in me a sort of trance while I was snorkeling: orange with purple spots, green with deep pink squiggles, electric blue with a black stripe, gold dashes on orange and brown — yet many people at the resort never bother to look at them. Elsewhere on the reef this would be lunacy, but on Hayman it is not, for the island, with its 17th-century crystal chandeliers, stone lions, silk wallpapers, Chinese vases and formal gardens, is a wonder in its own right.

Four hundred miles south, in the Capricorn group, is Lady Elliot, a coral cay just long enough for an airstrip. It is nicknamed "Lazy Elliot" for its mysterious, unwinding effect. Day and night, waves crash with muffled roars on the reef around the lagoon, and the casuarina forests sigh. Along the edge of the beach, pandanus palms cast a deep shade, their fronds whispering in the southeast trade wind that blows for most of the year. There is no television or radio and, except in an emergency,

the telephone may be used only at night, or for an hour at lunchtime. The staff, all young and freckled and so water-mad you think they might grow scales, converse in pure Australian, referring to "ockies," "the glassie" and "bombies," when speaking of octopuses, the glass-bottomed boat and bomboras, an Aboriginal term for a submerged reef. They all seem to believe in — and some of them have seen or heard — the island's ghosts. One is the shade of Susannah McKee, an Irishwoman who could not stand the isolation of her life as a lighthouse keeper's wife and is believed to have drowned herself. The staff refuses accommodation in the house she haunts. Another ghost is an unnamed, fair-haired child; the third, a cheerful fellow called Kerosene Willy, who is glimpsed around the lighthouse. An endearing experience on Lady Elliot is the weekly Ghost Walk, conducted at night, with only a flashlight and lots of spooky stories about the tragic, dramatic and sometimes violent history of the island from its days as a sea cucumber and guano farm.

The coral gardens of Lady Elliot are famous; superclear water — average visibility of 30 yards — makes it one of the great dive sites in the world. Fish mass like crowds at a pedestrian crossing in a big city at lunchtime, and on virtually every dive people see loggerhead or green turtles. Hundreds of turtles nest on the island from October to April, when they

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hatch. These months, too, are the breeding season for sea birds, which arrive in tens of thousands. Humans, however, do not have unlimited access: only 160 are allowed there at any one time, including the staff and day trippers; most of the year, the population does not rise above 50.

The accommodations, all single story, range from two-bedroom suites to tent cabins. The suites, secluded and very private, are simple apartments built on the beach, with views over the coral lagoon. Pairs of a rare avian species, the red-tailed tropic bird, nest within a yard of their balconies, and, during nesting time, December to February, guests are required to speak quietly so as not to disturb the birds. Most of the reef units are also on the beach, with a double bed, two bunks and a varnished wooden floor from which the sand that you always seem to bring in on your feet is swept away each morning. The tents and lodges, for budget travelers, have four single bunk beds, power and lighting; showers and lavatories are in a separate toilet block.

Nature's comfort, rather than man's, is paramount on this island. Next door to the dining room there is a Reef Eco Center, set up like a school-room, with walls covered in information about the reef; it is equipped with a library, educational videos and lessons in environmental etiquette: "Always pick up a sea cucumber with two hands..." for example. There are special lights that do not disorient hatchling turtles, ecofriendly rubbish disposal, warnings to divers to lighten their belts in case they descend too quickly and damage the coral.

Meals are self-serve in a canteen, where one is often joined by staff members and sometimes by small birds flying in the open windows. I watched a sparrow helping itself to muesli in the mornings, while a few feet away a finch pecked at some melon. Photographs taken around the island of fish, nesting turtles, the giant manta ray and tropic birds decorate the walls. Next door, timbers from wrecked yachts have been made into a bar.

At breakfast, the hot topics were always tide times — and, of course, whales, whales, whales. At every meal, I listened enviously to tales of

RESORTS ON THE REEF

THE MOST PLEASANT months to visit the Great Barrier Reef are September to December and April to June; January, February and March can be hot and humid. The following prices are computed at a rate of 1.54 Australian dollars to the United States dollar. Rates for Lady Elliot Island are those given by the resort's United States representative; prices may vary somewhat if the resort is booked in Australia.

Luxurious Hayman

Flights from Sydney and Brisbane to Hamilton Island link visitors to a Hayman Island launch transfer.

At the 214-room **HAYMAN ISLAND** resort, North Queensland, Australia 4801 (telephone: 79-46-9100; fax: 79-46-9410), double rooms range from \$227 for a garden-view room to \$754 for an East Wing suite overlooking Hook Island, the lagoon and the Whitsunday Passage. A lavish buffet breakfast is included. Among the resort's 11 penthouses, the one-bedroom Art Deco suite, which has a balcony, costs \$975; the three-bedroom French Provincial suite costs \$1,820.

The resort has several restaurants offering seafood, Oriental and French cuisine and Australian specialties. **PLANTERS RESTAURANT** specializes in such local delicacies as emu salad, kangaroo soup, crocodile fillets, Northern Territory buffalo and, for dessert, wattle seed Pavlova. A three-course meal for two costs \$125, with a moderately priced bottle of wine. (The 1842 pinot noir is \$4,225.) At the **TRATTORIA** or at the **COFFEEHOUSE**, which overlooks the Whitsunday Islands, a three-course meal for two costs about \$100, with wine.

In the United States, Hayman Island can be booked through Ansett Australia Airlines (800-366-1300) or through Leading Hotels of the World (800-223-6800, or, in New York, 212-838-3110).

Laid-Back Lady Elliot

There are flights from Brisbane to the town of Bundaberg, from which a second short flight takes visitors to **LADY ELLIOT ISLAND**. The cost of the Bundaberg-Lady Elliot flight is included in the price of the first night's accommodation at the resort. Lodgings, which can be booked through the resort's United States representative, **Inta-Aussie Tours**, 9841 Airport Boulevard, Suite 1402, Los Angeles, Calif. 90045 (800-635-5641), include 3 island suites, 24 reef units and 14 tent cabins. The rates, which are for one person, double occupancy, are as follows: tent cabins, \$160 for the first night and \$79 a night thereafter; suites, \$200 on night one, then \$120; reef units, \$180 for the first night and \$99 for each additional night. Meals, consisting of salads, cold meats and cheeses at lunch, and, for dinner, soup, roasts, cheeses and desserts, are included; wine is about \$1 a glass.

humpies appearing to some lucky soul and leaping about in the air.

The last day of my stay arrived, and I had still not seen one. It was windy and tall waves crashed against the reef. I went snorkeling, so scared that the diving instructor had to cajole me to swim, holding hands with him, out to a bomboora. The sea was wild, and it was a long time before I could relax and breathe smoothly as I gazed at the silent

ballet of fish. Despite a full-body wet suit I was cold and shivering. Suddenly, the diving instructor grabbed me, making urgent signals for me to put my head down. I did, and stopped breathing. Singing through the ocean was the sound of a violin. Another, in a slightly different rhythm, answered it. And so, back and forth it went across 40 leagues of sea, the music of whales talking to each other. ■

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Surfers can find paradise on Australia's Gold Coast

By Brian Alexander
Copley News Service

Anyone who doesn't know better might fly halfway around the world to a spot that sounds idyllic but turns out to be tourist hell.

That's what I thought I had done.

I'm a Californian keenly aware of how the state has lost most of the beach culture that made it famous. I went to find it in the place I was told was most like California — Queensland, Australia's Gold Coast.

But when I hit Surfers Paradise, I figured I had made a huge mistake.

The place sounds like it ought to come straight out of a 1960s surf soap opera, all low-slung houses and beach fires and rattan.

That's what I had come to see — a true beach town, not just any town on a beach. Los Angeles, for example, is not a beach town.

And neither is Surfers Paradise. This is paradise lost. Imagine Miami Beach built by the Japanese. Skyscraper hotels are jammed on zero lot lines in a concrete curtain so tall and thick that the afternoon sun disappears behind their facades.

Discos are crowded into the bottom floors of these towers. Topless bars dot the side streets. I woke up one morning to the sounds of a late-night party throwing up below my high-rise balcony.

In short, Surfers Paradise has very little to do with surfing, the beach or paradise.

So I got out of town.

That's when I found the real surfers paradise, in small towns such as Burleigh Heads, Kirra, Currumbin and Tugun, replete with small beach motels and surfers standing on rocks overlooking the breakers, scoping the waves pouring in from the South Pacific.

There, one finds beaches filled with people vacationing because they like beaches and the sun, not discos or concrete. It is, in fact, just like

California circa 1963.

The occasional tower apartment complex or hotel gets in the way, like it bled down the coast from Surfers Paradise, but things are pretty much the way they were when Moonoggie and Shelley Fabares and surf legends Mickey Dora, Phil Edwards and Hobie Alter were making surfing popular in the early '60s.

The Gold Coast, about 50 miles south of Brisbane, stretches some 40 miles from Sanctuary Cove in the north to Tweed Heads in the south, on the New South Wales border.

For as long as there have been people in Australia, they've been coming to the coast. Ancient Aborigines sometimes trekked 100 miles from the interior rain forests of Queensland to reach the coast, where they feasted and no doubt played in the waves.

Later, white settlers came to the beaches, where afternoon breezes offer a little relief from the blistering tropical sun and humid air.

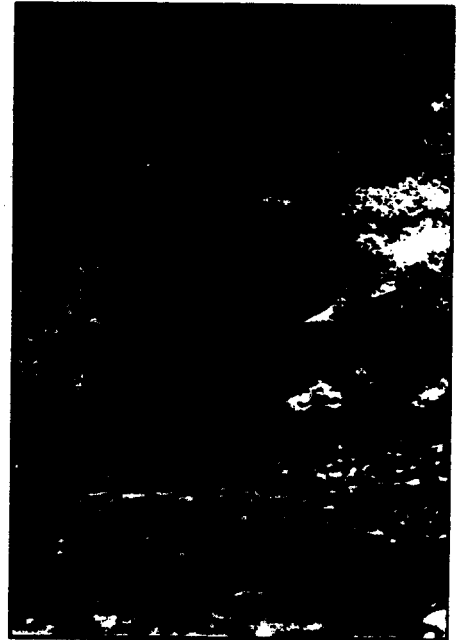
Now Australians and visitors from overseas arrive in large numbers to hit the beaches, craps tables and discos, and generally to party as only Australians can party.

The northern portions of Queensland, around Cairns and Townsville, attract those searching for that mecca of scuba, the Great Barrier Reef, or for the interior rain forests. But the folks coming to the Gold Coast want beach, sun and beer.

But at what pace? Surfers Paradise offers frenetic action, a permanent spring break. Just a couple of miles south, things begin to slow down considerably.

Starting at Mermaid Beach, accommodations become a little less luxurious but all the more comfortable for that.

Small motels run by families sit across the street from the beach. Six- and eight-unit apartment buildings that appear to be shared by as many surfers as can crowd into them are decked



Copley News Service

A surfer rides a wave off the Queensland coast.

out with beach towels draped over wooden balconies.

At Burleigh Heads, one finds the real surfers paradise. It is still a beach town in the old sense. Blond-haired kids run barefoot in and out of surf shops and ice-cream stands. They pile into old cars kept running on hope and look at the surf breaks to choose a spot to park.

The best is right in the center of town. It's a point break, the site of the annual Stubbies Surf Classic, one of the world's premier surf events. But even when the surf tour has left, top Aussie pros still hone their local knowledge there, along with young "grommets" and old amateurs.

I sat in a park about 50 yards south of the break and looked over the waves and the people surfing and was sorry I had not brought my board.

After Burleigh Heads, the towns become more like villages. There's Tallebudgera Beach, Palm Beach and Currumbin. And in between them are just sand, rocky points, surf and a few houses.

Life slows down even more there. It's possible to feel the rhythm of the sea and the waves. It actually begins to feel the way California used to feel.

Kirra sure does.

I stopped in Kirra because I had heard about its surf breaks. They are there. But perhaps even more importantly, the town is still a place where the surf shop is the center of life — where small boys learn to surf about the time they learn to walk, where the stores carry items in small sizes because they know that's what the average surfer can afford.

This town, at the very end of the Gold Coast, was what I had come to see. It was a true beach town. It was nice to know it still existed, someplace.

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Tourist Offices of the Pacific

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Australia: Australian Tourist Commission, 489 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017; (212) 687-6300.

Fiji: Fiji Visitors Bureau, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 220, Los Angeles, Calif. 90045; (213) 568-1616.

Guam: Trip-N-Tour of Guam and Micronesia, 846 Williamston St., Suite 202, Vista, Calif. 92084; (800) 348-0842.

Hawaii Visitors Bureau: 350 Fifth Ave., Suite 808, New York, N.Y. 10118; (212) 947-0717.

New Zealand: New Zealand Embassy, 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington, D.C. 20008; (202) 328-4880. Also, in Los Angeles: New Zealand Tourism Board, 501 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 300, Santa Monica, Ca. 90401; (800) 388-5494.

Papua New Guinea: Embassy of Papua New Guinea, 1615 New Hampshire Ave. 3rd floor, Washington, D.C. 20009; (202) 745-3680.

Philippines: Philippines Department

of Tourism, 556 Fifth Ave., Suite 1M, New York, N.Y. 10036; (212) 575-7915.

Tahiti: Tahiti Tourism Board, 300 N. Continental Blvd., Suite 180, El Segundo, Calif. 90245; (310) 414-8484.

Other destinations: The Pacific Area Travel Association, 1 Montgomery St., Teleis Tower, Suite 1750, San Francisco, Calif., 94104; (415) 986-4646, provides travel information for the following Pacific Area destinations: American Samoa, Australia, Bangladesh, Republic of China, Cook Islands, Fiji, Gilbert Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Macao, Malaysia, Micronesia, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, New Zealand, Northern Marianas, Pakistan, Papua, New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tahiti, Thailand, Tonga, Russia, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

Slow trip on paddle wheeler recalls continent's discovery days

By John Masters
Special to The Denver Post

ECHUCA, Australia — We are sitting around the fire in the red-gum forest on the shore above the winding Murray River. The sun is setting in a sky of steel and pale yellow, with streaks of pink. The paddle wheeler that brought us here has been run up on the sand for the night. The evening feels timeless, but not quiet. As the darkness thickens, in the woods behind us a flock of lookalikes begins cawing — a sound like orange means on amphetamines.

— Nonetheless, we are relaxed. We have just finished a filling dinner, and the flies, mercifully, have settled for the night. There is a discussion on the true meaning of "Waltzing Matilda," which some of the paddle wheeler's crew maintain is a song about a sleeping bag ("Matilda") and a swagman (bobo) who in the end hangs himself.

— No conclusive evidence is presented, and the conversation moves lazily on. A bit later, when the air thickens, we help carry everything back up the gangway onto the ship and sit out on the top deck, watching shooting stars and looking at Orion, upside down in the southern sky.

— Timber from outback

— We are on board the P.S. Emmylou, a modern but faithful reconstruction of a 19th-century paddle wheeler. A hundred years ago, hundreds of ships such as this plied the waters of the Murray. Australia's narrower answer to the Mississippi, bringing wool and timber from the outback to the railroad at Echuca. In the paddle wheeler's heyday, from 1865 to about 1910, Echuca was the second-largest port in Australia, with a wharf over a half mile long.

— Then the railroad pushed farther inland and made water travel too slow, and the paddle wheelers died. The few that are left, and the purpose-built Emmylou, now cater to the historical tourist trade that sees Echuca's 6,000 population grow to 25,000 in the holiday season.



John Masters

ON THE RIVER: Emmylou ties up, left, along the Murray River in southeastern Australia. Above, Sharp's Movie House Penny Arcade in Echuca has antique games you can play.

ally changed much since the steamer ship days; river redgums still line its banks. This isn't virgin forest: The redgum is a much-prized tree, hard and durable even in water, and resistant to termites, and this area was logged last century. What shades the river now is mostly second growth — slender trees on a dry dirt floor littered with deadfall.

Avoid poisonous snakes

"You want to be careful of the deadfall. Step around, not over it," warns Darren Brown, the Emmylou's captain. Brown snakes, one of Australia's many poisonous varieties of slithering reptiles, like to hide in the wood, and don't enjoy being disturbed. "They'll chase you," Darren says.

Of course, we don't see any brown snakes, and we soon learn that Darren likes to have a bit of drama in his stories. One afternoon, we go on a short walk through the bush. Darren points

out a big dirt mound, maybe 6 inches tall.

"That's lion ants," he says. "You don't want to knock into that. They can jump this high (and be motionless to his mid-shin) and they bite. The Aborigines used them as antiseptic close wounds. You'd get a lion ant, hold the gashed skin together, have the ant bite you, then pinch off its body so just its pinchers stayed in your skin."

Darren and the crew are one of the most enjoyable parts of the cruise. No one stands on ceremony in rural Oz, and Emmylou hands, while polite and efficient, are by no means deferential. When the chores are done, they mix with the guests, and happily try to take our money at cards. When we put in to take on more wood (the Emmylou uses left-behind railway sleepers), they more or less expect us to help heave the fuel aboard.

We get to know them all: Joy Needs, the purser, who's working here instead of on her 548-acre

sheep and wheat farm because, as there's no market for her produce; Eddie Carter, the Walter Mathias look-alike engineer; Greg Jenkins, the deckhand, who has worked all over Australia; and Kerri-ann, Joy's 21-year-old daughter and the ship's cook, who wants to water-ski in the Southern 80, a race held in February.

Skiers hit speeds of 110 mph in the Southern 80 as they zigzag

down 50 miles of twisting, snag-riddled Murray. The record for covering the distance is 34 minutes, 16 seconds.

"They're trying to get it stopped," says Joy. "There're always a couple of people killed and several injured."

But Kerri-ann is determined to compete in it.

The Emmylou docks back in Echuca shortly after noon, leaving time to explore the town before taking the 2 1/2-hour drive south to Melbourne.

Popular grog shop

In its glory, Echuca was a wild west town, and some of that feeling remains.

There's the Star Hotel, once a popular grog shop with a tunnel for clients' speedy exits; and the Bridge Hotel, now a restaurant, built in 1858 by the town's founder, ex-felon Henry Hopwood.

There's also a good chunk of the original massive redgum wharf, three levels high to cope with the Murray's annual 23-foot rise in the rainy season. One of its sheds has an exhibit on the history of the port.

Worth missing are the wax mummies, Gunnsmund and Australia's only listed brothel (you can't go in, but definitely stop in at Sharp's Movie House Penny Arcade.

It's full of antique games you still can play and it has a movie house that screens old, old films. If you're curious, it also sells the video of "All the Rivers Run."

John Masters is a freelance writer living in Vancouver, British Columbia.

IF YOU GO

Where to go: Echuca is 125 miles north of Melbourne. The Murray River cuts across the southeastern Australian states of New South Wales and South Australia.

On the river: The P.S. Emmylou has two-day, two-night cruises midweek out of Echuca leaving at noon Wednesday and returning at noon Friday. Cost per person is about \$270, which includes accommodations and all meals. The weekend cruise leaves at 6 p.m. Saturday and returns at 10 a.m. Sunday. Cost per person is about \$100. The Emmylou sleeps 20 in two-berth cabins.

Toilet facilities are shared. There is a sun deck (beware soot from the ship's smokestack), a small library, a dining room and a bar. With its shallow draught (2½ feet), the Emmylou can put ashore just about anywhere for hikes, swimming or fishing.

What to take: Take sturdy walking shoes and something for the flies. (Joy Needs, the ship's purser, wisely wears a hat with mesh netting that covers her face.)

When to go: The Murray River is a popular destination around Christmas, when many Australians get a month off work. That's summer Down Under, and days generally are warm to hot. The Emmylou is heavily booked at this season.

More details: The Emmylou is the only overnight cruise ship on the Murray River. For further details, contact Emmylou Enterprises, Box 123, Moama, New South Wales 2731, Australia; phone (from U.S.)

011-61-54-82-3801 (1 p.m. in Denver is 9 a.m. in Australia).

For facts about day cruises or rental houseboats on the Murray, contact Tourism Victoria, 2121 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1200, Los Angeles, Calif. 90067; 1-310-552-1888.

Travel documents: A visa is required for travel to Australia. Cost is \$25, and the visa is valid for four years or the life of your passport if it's less than four years. Contact the Australian Consulate-General, 1 Bush St., San Francisco, Calif. 94104; 1-415-362-6160.

— John Masters

NOV 14 1993

BURRELLE'S

Narrow-gauge train half the fun on bargain run

6675

By Kim McHugh
Special to The Denver Post

CAIRNS, North Queensland, Australia — The train whistle screeches, signaling passengers to get on board for the journey to Kuranda, an artisans' village 16 miles west of Cairns. The town of 800 is a favorite of visitors who go in search of bargains on gems directly from Australia's mines, as well as unique crafts created by local artists. The market, which operates Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings, is a bustling outlet, and getting there by train is half the fun.

The Kuranda Commentary Train, so called because of the description of the ride that is given along the 21-mile switchback journey to the fringe of the Atherton Tablelands, catapults riders into 1891, when the train first began operating. It weaves its way slowly from the seaside town of Cairns through Barron Gorge to Kuranda, 1,081 feet above sea level.

Trip through history

You could rent a car or take a bus to trim the 90-minute travel time considerably, but you would miss a trip through history with wonderful narration that is piped in through the speaker in your train car. After hearing about how the narrow-gauge railroad served the sugar cane industry and shuttled passengers between the two towns, the enthusiastic voice adds that the train passes through 15 tunnels and over numerous bridges, the longest being the steel bridge at Stoney Creek Falls.

At the towering falls, the train stops briefly for an opportunity to photograph Barron Falls, Glacier Rock and Red Bluff before lumbering to its final destination, the magnificently restored Kuranda Station.

Wherever you sit on the train, you'll see jungle-clad mountains and have a stunning view of the coastline far below on the valley floor, so pack your camera.

Known as the "Village in the Rain Forest," Kuranda is surrounded by lush mountains. There is some controversy concerning the town's name. One theory suggests it comes from the aboriginal word for falls or possibly a plant native to the region.

Surveyed in 1888

The area, once covered with dense tropical rain forests and inhabited by the Tjapukai aboriginal tribe, was settled by Europeans in the 19th century. In 1888, the town was surveyed by Thomas Behan and G.D. Edwards. The latter, who had lived for many years with aboriginal tribes, proposed the name Kuranda. Edwards claimed the name came from Capt. James Cook's book of travel in the South Sea Islands.

Today, Kuranda is known for the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary and the Tjapukai (pronounced JAPU-guy) Dance Theater, home of the Tjapukai Dance Troupe, a collection of aboriginal performing artists who combine humor, song and dance in a one-hour show to tell the story of a culture that dates back 50,000 years.

In the quiet, darkened theater, the silence is broken by peculiar and unfamiliar sounds — the pulsating, droning noise of a didgeridoo, the traditional musical instrument of the aborigines. A speaker begins, "In the time of the Dreamtime, the time before the time the oldest man can remember, the rain forest people walked this land, Tjapukai land."

Created in 1986 as a vehicle for presenting the mystical and enchanting traditions of the aborigines, the theater was the brainchild of David Hudson, a Tjapukai aboriginal, American theater producer Don Freeman and Freeman's wife, Judy. In developing this unique venue, the three consulted aboriginal elders.

Moving to the sound of the didgeridoo and the beat of clap-sticks, 18 actors depict the conflict between a warrior and a devil spirit, blending ancient verse with melodramatic levity. Told in mime, singing and chanting, the story pits Woonan, a brave warrior, against Gadja, a Quinkan devil spirit, whom the aborigines fear. Through an act of sorcery, Woon-

IF YOU GO

Getting there: Fly to Cairns International Airport from the California West Coast on Air New Zealand and Qantas. If you fly into Sydney, take Australian or Ansett airlines to Cairns.

Cairns-Kuranda Railway: Departs daily from Cairns at 9 a.m., returning at 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. daily; Saturdays, 12:30 and 3:15. On market days (Wednesday, Friday, Sunday), the train departs at 8:30 a.m. For a full-day tour, train fare is about \$18 for adults and \$9 for children. The tour includes the train ride to Kuranda, discounted admission to the Tjapukai Dance Theater and butterfly sanctuary and a return ride by deluxe bus. If you don't ride the train, you can take a bus tour or rent a car. Kuranda is a 20-minute drive from Cairns.

A free souvenir booklet shares the history of the line and includes photos covering the construction years 1882-1891.

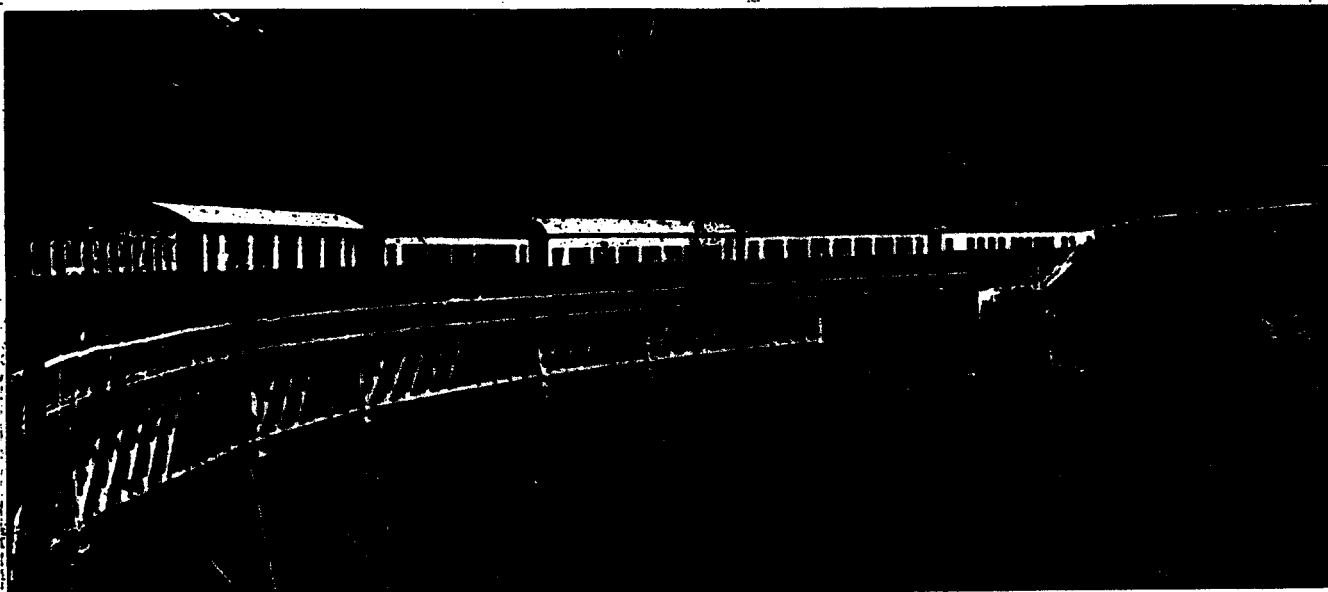
Theater: Tjapukai Dance Theater admission is about \$9.50 for adults and \$5.50 for children. Shows are at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. daily.

Butterflies: Contact the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary at 8 Rob Viewers Drive, P.O. Box 345, Kuranda, FNQ, 4872, Australia. Family groups are welcome, though the sanctuary recommends that very young children be strictly supervised by parents.

Admission is about \$6 for adults; \$3.50 for children. Souvenirs are available in the gift shop. Guided, multilingual tours are available from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

More information: Contact the Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau, P.O. Box 865, Cairns, Queensland, Australia 4870.

— Kim McHugh



Andy Couffield

ROUND THE BEND: Kuranda Train curves through rain forest during its 90-minute trip between Cairns and Kuranda in Queensland.



KURANDA SIGHTS: Aboriginal artist, left, performs at Tjapukai Dance Theater. Above, winged resident alights in Australian Butterfly Sanctuary.

an, who is destined to become leader of the tribe, is tricked by the spirit, kills someone dear and becomes an outcast.

Occasionally, cast members step forward and out of the play to explain what is going on and how it relates to the world today.

With their bodies painted in the signature dotted patterns of the aborigines, the Tjapukai, or "people of the rain forest," take viewers on a roller-coaster ride of con-

flict, misunderstanding, loyalty, courage, the triumph of good over evil and ultimately the restoration of unity in the tribe.

It is a creative, fun, raucous revival of a culture that was once dying. The show was honored in 1989 with a Pacific Asia Travel Association Gold Award, the equivalent of a Tony Award on

tation-draped pathways on your guided tour, don't be surprised if a butterfly lights on you, a common occurrence in this friendly-flyer place. Inside this cavernous room live 14 species of butterflies, including the Cairns Birdwing, the Orchard, the Blue-banded Eggfly, the electric-blue-and-black Ulysses and the Leafwing.

Wright's intent was to provide a large enough flight area (nearly 130,000 cubic feet) to ensure the well-being of Australia's most alluring butterflies, the Ulysses and the Cairns Birdwing. The 1987 Guinness Book of World Records recognized the facility as the largest butterfly farm in the world in terms of an enclosed flying area. It is more than twice the size of the butterfly aviary at the Melbourne Zoo.

Banker's career switch

Far north Queensland is no stranger to butterfly fans. Frederick Parkhurst Dodd, whose nickname was the "butterfly man of Kuranda," gave up his career as a banker to collect and sell butterfly specimens native to this area from 1904 until his death in 1937. Likened to the fictional adventurer-scientist character Indiana Jones, Dodd did a great deal of collecting for museums and individual collectors around the globe, all the while tromping through dense jungles with net in hand.

While touring the aviary, you'll discover the life cycles of butterflies (some live as little as three weeks), as well as flying habits, protective mechanisms against predators, physiology, and mating rituals, including females' mating only once in a lifetime.

Kim McHugh is a freelance writer living in Denver.

New York's Broadway, and the 1990 Queensland Tourism Award.

The Australian Butterfly Sanctuary was developed by butterfly fancier Paul Wright, a former advertising executive. He selected Kuranda because of its proximity to a United Nations-designated World Heritage Site rain forest in far north Queensland — habitat to more than 380 varieties of butterflies.

Once inside the atmospherically controlled greenhouse environment, count on seeing more than 2,500 butterflies performing aerobic displays throughout a miniature replica of a tropical rain forest that includes waterfalls, ponds, creeks, sandy beaches and hundreds of broad-leaf plants.

As you meander along the vege-

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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Say ahoy, mates, to traveling the countryside by train

New York Times 6/6/75

Australia is home to some of the most interesting train trips in the world, taking travelers through a continent of vast contrasts along thousands of miles of track.

Many long-distance trains offer first-class, deluxe and economy-class compartments, sleeping berths and reclining seats. Some have entertainment cars, in which a piano, video games and even slot machines are provided. And the Queensland-er, which goes from Brisbane to Cairns, even has a disco car called Club Loco offering dance music.

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States. Tickets for single trips can be bought before leaving, too.

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lines (one class only). Passes run from \$511 in economy for 14 days (\$811 in first class) to \$897 in economy for 28 days (\$1,193 in first class).

Tickets can be ordered through Australia-New Zealand Travel Headquarters (Don-Em Travel), 120 Montgomery St., Suite 1280, San Francisco, 94101; 1-800-453-6636. These are some of the train trips you might want to consider.

■ The Indian Pacific from Sydney to Adelaide to Perth, a 65-hour journey that runs every Monday and Thursday (Tuesday and Friday in Adelaide) through most of the year.

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ary. Named after Afghan traders whose camel trains were at one time the only link between Australia's interior and Adelaide, the 908-mile journey takes you straight to the heart of the outback.

NOV 28 1993

BURRELL'S

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Courier travel: It's cheap, but it's not for everyone

It was a phone call out of a traveler's dream.

Ten minutes after calling IBC-Pacific, a Los Angeles courier service, I booked a Continental Airlines flight leaving a few days later for Sydney, Australia. Price: \$425 round-trip, less than half the cheapest advance-purchase fare.

All I had to do was bring a carry-on bag and show up at the airport two hours before my scheduled departure, when an IBC-Pacific representative would meet me at the Continental check-in counter and hand me my ticket.

I'd been thinking about a trip to Australia, and was curious about the cult-like popularity of courier travel — which airplane claim is the next best thing to a limousine carry-on.

Since it's more expensive and time-consuming to ship something overseas as freight than as checked baggage (which must be accompanied by a passenger), an estimated 60 to 60 U.S. companies use "freelance couriers" on 25,000 to 35,000 international flights a year. Most courier shipments leave from New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Miami, but such cities as Chicago, Houston, Boston and Atlanta either have some courier flights or are scheduled to start within the next few months.

sniffing dogs or suspicious customs agents when I arrived. "My" checked bags, which I'd been told contained books and small machine parts, went direct and unseen to a courier facility at the Sydney airport.

There was just the gleeful knowledge that I was saving a bundle — and the conviction that courier travel couldn't be this easy. Could it?

Not always. It's all legal, and U.S. Customs Service spokesman Greg Doss says he's heard of very few cases in which a courier was trapped in the middle by a delivery company — or its clients — accompanying drugs or other contraband.

But the drawbacks to courier travel can be considerable.

Since most companies use just one courier per flight, couples and families are at a disadvantage. However, with enough notice, you might be able to fly as couriers on consecutive days. Generally, you'll need to make hotel reservations and other travel arrangements yourself or through a travel agent.

A few companies allow you to check one bag, and in some cases you might be able to check luggage by paying the airline an "excess baggage" fee of around \$100 per bag. But traveling light is a courier's modus operandi, and one piece of carry-on luggage is

the rule. As Toni Carpenter, overseas director of IBC-Pacific, put it, couriers are "buying a trip, not a ticket."

In most cases, couriers carry a pouch that contains shipment-related paperwork. As for the goods themselves, "most of the time, you never see them," said Kelly Mosaghan, author of "The Insider's Guide to Air Courier Bargains." When you arrive at your destination and clear customs with your carry-on luggage, you hand over the pouch to a delivery service representative. Then, depending on whether the airport has its own courier facility, you either are free to go or must wait while the representative takes the checked bags through customs — generally, no more than 15 minutes.

But in a few airports, such as Seoul's, the procedure is more complicated. There, said Carpenter of IBC-Pacific, couriers might have to show up at the baggage-claim area, load anywhere from 10 to 15 bags on carts, and wait to clear customs — a process that could take an hour or more.

If you're partial to nose rings, pierced eyebrows and tattered cutoffs, forget about being a courier. Most contracts specify that couriers maintain a "professional" appearance; backpacks and unconventional hairstyles are discouraged.

Many companies that use couriers require payment for the ticket well in advance, by cash, money order or cashier's check. And they might hold the return portion of the ticket at your destination, to ensure that you show up for the flight.

Most travelers are put off by the uncertainty of paying cash for a ticket they won't even see until they reach the airport, said Byron Lutz of the International Association of Air Travel Couriers, which supplies listings of courier flights.

"Most of the time it's hassle-free, but there's always that element of doubt," Lutz said. "You're always wondering if (the courier company) will really show up. People who worry a lot should never be couriers."

My own trip, meanwhile, was nearly glitch-free. At one point during the Thursday-night leg from Los Angeles, before popping a sleeping pill and adjusting my earplugs and eye mask, I chirpily confided to the woman next to me that I was flying as a courier for only \$425 round-trip.

Her eyes widened; her jaw dropped. I didn't have the heart to ask how much she'd paid.

Laura Bly writes for the Orange County Register in California.

Travel Tips

6675
Editor's Note: For additional information on travel tips and packages, contact a local travel agency.

By Copley News Service

California Dreaming

Stay at the 330-acre Stonepine Estate in Carmel Valley, Calif., and you'll have a taste of paradise created by old California money. Built by the Crocker banking family as a country home in 1928, the estate was renovated by Gordon and Noel Hentschel in the 80s and opened to the public as a resort.

Boasting 14 suites, the centerpiece of the estate is a Mediterranean-style mansion. Each suite is individually decorated, and they are divided between Chateau Noel, the Briar Rose cottage and the Paddock House.

Because Stonepine is a Relais & Chateaux property, no luxury is

spared; guests slumber under goose-down comforters and bathe in Jacuzzi/whirlpool baths.

You could, of course, simply lounge by the Renaissance-style swimming pool, soaking up the atmosphere, but the resort offers plenty to do.

Its Equestrian Center is the oldest working thoroughbred farm west of the Mississippi. Both English- and Western-style riders will feel at home for trail rides, riding lessons and picnics.

If you don't like to ride, the resort also has chauffeured carriage rides, as well as carriage-driving lessons. There's also tennis and a health center.

In the surrounding area, there's Carmel-by-the-Sea and Monterey less than 25 minutes away.

Rates at Stonepine range from \$225 to \$750 per night, depending on the suite.

FYI: Stonepine Estate Resort, 150 E. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley, Calif. 93924; (608) 659-2245.

Happy Trails

Just-N-Trails Nordic Ski Center in Sparta, Wis., offers cross-country skiers some unexpected luxury. This year, it has opened a 1,000-square-foot warming house, complete with indoor bathrooms, a snack shop and picnic tables — welcome amenities to skiers who are used to more primitive facilities.

Just-N-Trails is Wisconsin's only bed and breakfast with groomed and track-set trails. Located on a working dairy farm, it offers three bedrooms, each with private bath. Guests stay in a 1920s Midwest-style farmhouse, a Scandinavian log cabin or a converted granary with fireplace and heart-shape whirlpool.

Bed-and-breakfast guests ski free; otherwise, trail fees are \$5 per person.

FYI: Just-N-Trails Bed and Breakfast/Farm Vacation, Route 1, Box 274, Sparta, Wis. 54656; (608) 269-4522.

Fly-Fishing Guide

Anglers heading to New Zealand should request the free "Best of New Zealand Fly Fishing" brochure.

The 28-page full-color guide includes details on top lodges, professional guides, float trips, helicopter fishing and more. It also features a 12-month fishing calendar.

FYI: Mike McClelland, The Best of New Zealand Fly Fishing, 2817 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, Calif. 90403; (310) 998-5880.

Australian Christmas

Because Christmas falls during their summer season, the Australians have their own way of celebrating. It's not unusual to find caroling side by side with surfing championships; it's also the season of Santa and cricket matches.

In Derby, Boxing Day (Dec. 26) celebrations include the Cockroach Crawl, and in Daylesford, there are the Scottish Highland Heavy Games just before Christmas.

If, however, your Australian vacation isn't scheduled until June or July — their winter — you can always catch their second celebration: Yulefest. That's when Aussies take advantage of the brisk weather to serve up their hot roast meals and heavy Christmas puddings.

FYI: Australian Tourist Com-

mission, 2121 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1200, Los Angeles, Calif. 90067; (310) 552-1988.

Frisco Savings

Stay at the St. Francis in San Francisco during the holidays and enjoy some nice savings with the special "Holiday Shopper's Package."

With rates starting at \$119, the package includes accommodations, a holiday beverage coupon and special offers from local retailers (discounts, free gifts, etc.).

Participating retailers including Eddie Bauer, I. Magnin, Jaeger, Macy's, Ghirardelli Square and more. The holiday package is available through Jan. 4, 1994, so you can take advantage of post-holiday sales.

FYI: The Westin St. Francis, Union Square, 335 Powell St., San Francisco, Calif. 94102; (415) 397-7000.

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Say ahoy, mates, to traveling the countryside by train

New York Times

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ARTHUR FROMMER'S 20 TOP WINTER TRAVEL VALUES

When winter comes, most tour operators grow frantic. Why? Because the overwhelming percentage of Americans can take their vacations only in the warmer months. Even to tropical destinations like Hawaii and the Caribbean, the number of people having the time to travel in winter is relatively small.

So what do these companies do? They slash their prices. They create "packages" whose low, lead prices make your mouth drop open. From a much larger number of products, I've chosen 20 tours that to me seem outstanding—remarkable values for what you receive.

Except for the skiing tour that leads our discussion, each of the prices I've cited includes round-trip airfare from major U.S. cities to the operator's holiday location. Most of these packages are based on a full six-night, seven-night or longer stay. Four tours include only five nights at the destination (but are easily extended). Some even include all three meals a day. Now look at their prices, and see whether you agree that some are almost cheaper than staying home! All prices are per person, based on two people traveling together and are subject to change.

Steamboat For \$387 (plus air). For winter skiing, I vastly prefer Colorado's laid-back, unpretentious, inexpensive Steamboat Springs to the terribly trendy Aspen and Vail; its slopes also seem fully as challenging to me. And the best bargain package known to me, for skiing in those glorious Rockies, is offered in Steamboat from January 4 to February 4, 1994: six nights at an economy motel and a five-day lift ticket for only \$387, double occupancy, plus airfare to Steamboat, which has many direct flights. Call the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation at 800/922-2722.

For less than \$500, you can spend a week under a tropical sun or sightsee in London — airfare included. Those are just two of this winter's outstanding deals uncovered by America's premier travel writer.

BY ARTHUR FROMMER



COSTA DEL SOL, SPAIN. Cesares is one of many quaint hillside villages near beach resorts favored by thrifty winter vacationers.

Concun For \$439. The Caribbean's cheapest destination remains this carefully planned resort community on the Yucatan coast, despite the fact that its accommodations are arguably higher in quality than those of most other competing locations. For \$439 this winter (January 4 to 31, and April 1 to 15, with prices higher by \$50 in February and March), you'll receive round-trip air from New York or Newark on Aeromexico charters departing every Saturday, six nights at the Hotel America (roughly halfway between the town and the start of the beach), transfers, service and taxes. Same package (except it includes only three nights) using

scheduled Aeromexico flights and daily departures: \$355 from Miami, \$449 from Atlanta, \$589 from Los Angeles. The operator is Gogo Tours (probably the nation's largest tour company), which won't accept direct calls from the public; it only sells through travel agents, who are all familiar with Gogo.

Hawaii For \$449. As sure as the sun will rise, the winter will witness short-term airfare price wars that will periodically cut the price I've quoted by a bit, but for only 10 days or

so at a time. Until that happens, the unbeatable winter package (it starts on January 7) to Honolulu will sell for \$449, including round-trip airfare from Los Angeles or San Francisco on American Airlines, six nights at the chain-owned Outrigger Maile Sky Court Hotel located just three short blocks from Waikiki beach, lei greeting and transfers, half-day sightseeing, and a breakfast orientation—all told, a superb value, to which you add

\$320 for East Coast departures, or \$300 from Chicago. Again the operator is Gogo Tours, whose packages are sold through travel agents only.

London For \$479. Unquestionably the leading travel value of them all, to a city rich with wintertime cultural treasures. You receive round-trip airfare on daily Virgin Atlantic Airways flights from New York or Boston, a tourist-class hotel for six nights, breakfast daily, afternoon tea, transfers and a walking tour. November 1 to March 31 are the valid dates; flights are also available from Miami (add only \$80), Los Angeles (add \$140), and Milwaukee (add \$200). British Airways will offer almost as good a deal from several U.S. cities, but hasn't tried to match Virgin Atlantic's lowest tour price

in previous winters; American Airlines and Delta Airlines haven't even come close (but phone them to see if there's been a last-minute change of heart). See your travel agent or contact the tour operator: Travel Bound, 599 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; 800/456-8656 or 212/334-1350.

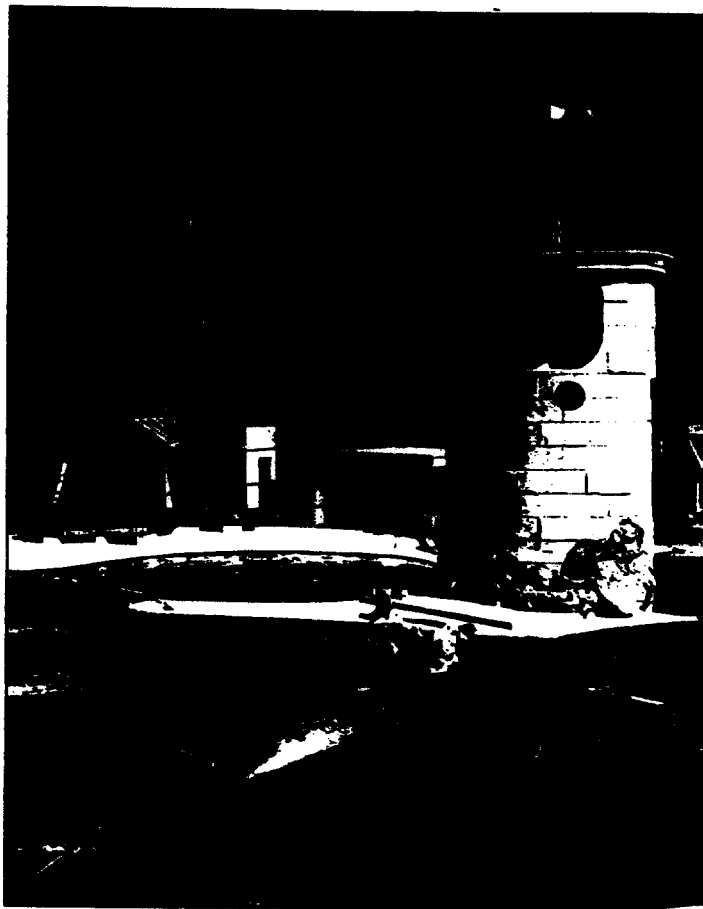
Orlando For \$479. Business at the Mickey Mouse City is still below capacity, despite the current economic recovery, and nearly every tour operator going there is offering winter rates for 1993-94 of \$479 (and sometimes less) for a seven-night stay at a modest motel, a car with unlimited mileage, and round-trip air from cities east of the Rockies. You don't stay at the famous hotels on Disney property, but in the various districts or "strips" of economy hotels. I like the unusually comprehensive program at that price of "Delta Dream Vacations," operated for the carrier by Certified Vacations, P.O. Box 1525, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33302; 800/233-7260. Every retail travel agent handles the program and is well-acquainted with its features.

Russia For \$777. Sounds unbelievable? In December, 1993, and January and February of 1994, a major tour operator to the former Soviet Union (Russian Travel Bureau) will have at least some seats at that price for a six-night package that consists of two nights in St. Petersburg, one night in a railroad sleeper from St. Petersburg to Moscow, two nights in Moscow, and one night in Helsinki, including two meals a day in Russia, some escorted sightseeing or evening entertainment, and round-trip air from New York. While the destination is freezing cold at that time of year, proper clothing (heavy galoshes, fur hats, and the like) can make the trip tolerable—I've done it. Contact Russian Travel Bureau (225 E. 44th Street, New York, NY 10017, 800/847-1800 or 212/986-1500) for experienced handling of the arrangements.

London Plus Athens For \$798. To the one-week London package described above, add \$299 (for a total of \$798) for an extra three nights in a tourist-class Athenian hotel with continental breakfast daily, including round-trip airfare between London and Athens on Virgin Atlantic Airways. Here's a windfall

for passengers seeking that combination, which results from Virgin's new start-up service between London and Athens, priced sacrificially low in its first winter season. Travel Bound (see its London package to the left) is again the tour operator, but call your travel agent first.

Beijing For \$899. An oddity, but at a sensational price, is an eight-day, six-night tour to the Chinese capital for only \$899 per person in December 1993, January and February 1994, and only \$999 per person in



ORLANDO, FLORIDA. Sea World (above) is among numerous area attractions that compete with Walt Disney World, the main tourist draw.

November 1993 and March 1994, including round-trip airfare from either Los Angeles or San Francisco. ("Add-on" airfares of only \$200, round-trip, are available from most East Coast and Midwestern cities.) For that small sum, you fly to and from Beijing on United Airlines, stay for six nights at the new Novotel Beijing within walking distance of the Imperial Palace and Wangfujing Road (Beijing's "Fifth Avenue"), and receive round-trip transfers from the Beijing Airport and full American buffet breakfast daily. Tour operator: Orient Flexi-Pax Tours, a division of Isram World of Travel (phone 800/545-5540 or 212/692-9550).

All-Inclusive Mexico For \$899. Using weekly charter flights from Dallas, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, Club Med will be flying winter guests to its largest resort in the Western Hemisphere, Club Med Huatulco on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, well south of Acapulco, for an all-inclusive seven-night price (air, transfers, lodgings, meals, recreation) of only \$899 a week from Dallas, \$999 from Chicago, \$1,069 from New York, and \$1,099 from Los Angeles; those prices are among the lowest recently offered to any new and high-quality Club

Med, as the Huatulco resort definitely is. And since literally everything—including unlimited wine and beer with your meals—other than cocktails, greens fees, and certain excursions, is included in a Club Med vacation, many people won't need to spend anything beyond the rates listed above, which will be available starting January 8, 1994, from Chicago and New York, slightly earlier from Dallas and Los Angeles. Call 800/CLUB MED to book.

Spain For A Month, \$899. Starting January 15 and continuing to March 23, 1994, Iberia Airlines and Sun Holidays (800/243-2057 or 203/323-1166) will be charging only \$899 per person for a full month in a kitchenette-equipped studio apartment at the Timor Sol Hotel on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, including round-trip airfare from New York, three full-day tours of the area by escorted motorcoach, and

round-trip transfers to the hotel. Earlier, in November and December of 1993, the price goes up by only \$116 (a total of \$1,015) for the same features, using the Pyr Fuengirola Hotel in the same area of the famed "Costa del Sol." These are obviously for mature and retired people who can devote that much time to the stay; they are a substitute for similar vacations in Miami Beach or Phoenix, for not a penny more in most cases. This is a stunning value.

All-Inclusive Venezuela For \$920. On the island of Margarita off that nation's Caribbean coast, the 160-room beachfront Flamingo Beach Hotel supplies a room for seven nights, all three meals each day, all domestic drinks, free shuttle service into town for shopping, all water sports, and

most important, round-trip air transportation from New York and other Eastern cities, for only \$920 per person—a price hard to beat in the Caribbean for a week-long stay with air and meals. Weather? Virtually guaranteed for sun at this location far to the south of other popular islands. Call TourScan Inc. (1051 Boston Post Road, Darien, CT 06820, 800/962-2080, 203/655-8091) to book.

Cruising The Panama Canal For \$924. Out of a slew of week-long, under-\$1,000-per-person cruises (including airfare), I like the November 21 and 28, December 5 and 12, 1993, and January 2, 1994, departures from Montego Bay, Jamaica, of the 950-passenger *Regent Star*, on a seven-night itinerary it made famous. The ship goes "halfway through the Panama Canal," by turning around in Gatun Lake and returning to the Caribbean. En route, to and from the Canal, it also stops in Costa Rica, Cartagena and Aruba, in addition to spending two full days simply at sea. You pay only \$924 to \$983 per person double occupancy (depending on date), for inside cabins, including round-trip airfare from Miami and (in an unusual touch) all port taxes. And you pay a round-trip add-on of only \$100 for flights from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Nashville or Detroit; \$150 from Midwestern cities; \$230 from the West Coast. All in all, a colorful choice of locations, and a top-value price. Book the ship at this price by contacting Saga Holidays (800/343-0273).

Tahiti For \$979. The U.S. branch of France's largest travel company, New Frontiers ("Nouvelles Frontières") offers this miracle package from now until the end of March, 1994. You depart from Los Angeles on Sundays, on the company's own charter airline ("Corsair"). spend one night at the Hotel Prince Hanoi in Papeete, five nights at the Moorea Village on the island of Moorea, one remaining night back at the Hotel Prince Hanoi, receiving continental breakfast throughout on seven successive mornings. Twenty dollars more per person gets you the Tahiti Country Club near Papeete and the Moorea Beach Club in Moorea. Add-on fare from New York: \$370. Contact New Frontiers at 12 East 33rd Street, New York,

NY 10016 (800/366-6387 or 212/779-0600). A somewhat similar package is offered for \$899 by the long-established Islands in the Sun (760 West 16th Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, 800/828-6877), but for one less night; still, you'll want to compare brochures of the two companies.

Bangkok For \$999. That's in January and February 1994, using midweek departures from the West Coast on United Airlines, whose airfare is included in the cost. You spend five nights at the deluxe Royal

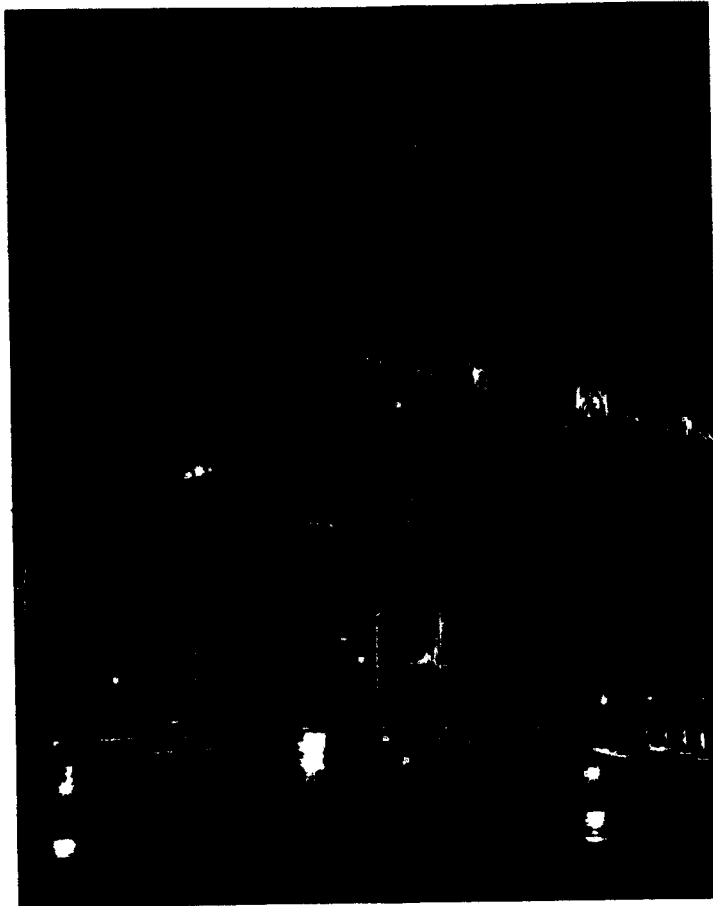
stay in Bali is only for five nights, at that price, you can extend the package for only \$10 per additional night. And you get round-trip air transportation from Los Angeles on Garuda Indonesia Airlines, lodgings at the Bali Indra Hotel in the popular Kuta Beach area, transfers and half-day sightseeing. The package is available until the end of 1994 (add \$150 in June, July, August and December), from Garuda Orient Holidays, 800/247-8380.

All-inclusive China For \$1,299. That's the December 1993 and January 1994 price for a nine-day tour that goes to five Chinese cities (Shanghai, Hangzhou, Wuxi, Nanjing and Suzhou) but not to Beijing, spending eight nights in China itself. It includes three meals a day, decent hotels, all sightseeing and transportation, and round-trip air between Seattle and China on the new China Eastern Airlines. You pay \$100 more for February 1994 departures, and still another \$100 more if you leave in March, but even at those increased rates, this is a believe-it-or-not value from the well-respected Intertour of America, Inc., 600 East Ninth St., Michigan City, IN 46360, 800/628-0110.

Three Japanese Cities For \$1,399. To the place that most everyone claims is too expensive to visit, the important TBI Tours is offering a remarkably priced (\$1,399) winter package that includes round-trip air on Japan Air

Lines or United Airlines from the U.S. West Coast, three nights at a first-class hotel in Tokyo, one night ditto in Hakone, and three nights in the same sort of high-quality lodgings in exquisite Kyoto, plus half-day tours in both Tokyo and Kyoto, and an escorted, full-day drive via Mt. Fuji to Hakone and lunch in Hakone. Your only other costs are meals in Tokyo and Kyoto, and two meals in Hakone. Departures are guaranteed for November 24 and December 8, 1993, and January 19, February 16, March 2 and March 16 in 1994. Phone 800/223-0266 or 212/489-1919 for information, but book through your travel agent.

Around The World For \$1,349. Air only, hotels not included. From the West Coast, you fly to either Hong Kong or Tokyo, and



LONDON, ENGLAND. The "leading travel value of all," according to the author, is London, site of Tower Bridge (above, shown at dusk).

Garden Riverside Hotel (but can extend for extra days at a moderate extra charge), receive an American breakfast daily, and a half-day "Bangkok by Boat" tour. The weather is at its best; most other purchases in Thailand are dirt-cheap; and considering the distance, this is a remarkable offer from TBI Tours (a division of Japan Travel Bureau), 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019, 800/223-0266; order through any travel agent.

Bali For \$1,099. A remarkable price breakthrough, to the place for which they coined the term "tropical paradise." Though the

from there to Taipei to Bangkok to Cairo to Paris to New York and back to the West Coast. From New York for the same price, you can fly directly to Hong Kong and from there to Singapore, then by surface means to Bangkok, and from there to Bombay to Delhi to a European city of your choice, then by rail to London and back to New York. These, and other remarkable around-the-world bargains, are available from the highly skilled Air Brokers International, of San Francisco, phone 415/397-1383; or write for their listings to 323 Geary Street, Suite 411, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Highlights Of Australia For \$1,499. From now until March 30, which is "high season" there, you can fly round-trip from Los Angeles to all three of the most-visited sites in Australia—Sydney (where you spend three nights), Ayers Rock (two nights), and the Great Barrier Reef (four nights in Cairns, including a day trip to the Reef on the *Quicksilver*)—for only \$1,499, using Qantas trans-Pacific and Australian Airlines internally; that's for considerably less than the airfare to Sydney alone. Tourist-class hotels throughout, and the offer comes courtesy of Australia's leading tour operator, Austravel, at 51 E. 42nd St., New York, NY 10017, 800/633-3404 or 212/972-6880. The timing may be perfect for that long-awaited trip down under.

The Antarctic For \$2,995. What must surely be the least-expensive-ever cruise to the Antarctic will be offered this winter ("summer" in the polar region) by Overseas Adventure Travel of Cambridge, Mass. (800/221-0814 or 616/876-0533). For as little as \$2,995 per person double occupancy (using shared bathroom facilities) and \$3,995 (private facilities) for a two-week trip (including South American stopovers), passengers will receive airfare from New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Toronto or Montreal, and eight days aboard ship, landing on Antarctic shores in rubberized Zodiacs on five separate days. How so inexpensive? Cruises will be aboard the *Akademik Ioffe*, an ice-rated research vessel built in 1987 for the Russian Academy of Sciences. It carries only 75 passengers, serves meals family-style, and yet it offers a heated swimming pool, sauna and guest naturalists to lecture before each boarding. ●

Renowned travel writer and frequent CONSUMERS DIGEST contributor, Arthur Frommer is the founder of the Frommer Travel Guides, author of an annual, The New World of Travel, and host of a new nationally syndicated call-in radio travel show on Saturday afternoons. Ask Arthur Frommer.

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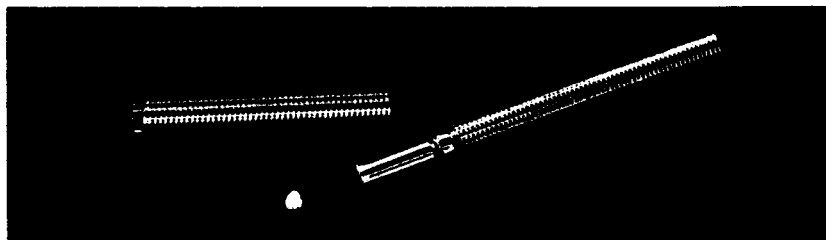
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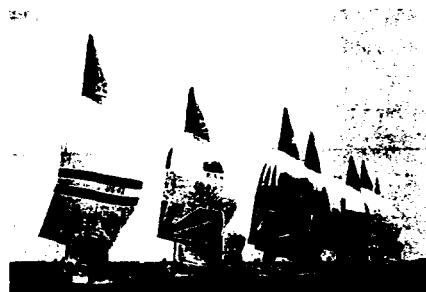
TRAVEL NEWS

KABUKI PLAYS

Various theaters in Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan, December through January. Kabuki connotes unusual, shocking, and out of the ordinary. It started out as a light theatrical performance with dancing and comic sketches. Now, it is no longer a variety show, but a dramatic theater with three categories of plays: the *shosagoto*, which are dancing or pantomimic scenes; the *jidai-mono* or staged contemporary events relating to members of the samurai class; and *sewa-mono*, a re-enactment of the latest sensational event. Kabuki tends to be actor-centered theater where the playwright is secondary to the actors and the plays enhance the popularity of the leading stars. Some theaters offer kabuki plays year-round. Tickets: \$14-\$197 Tel: 212-757-5640.

SPORTS

HEMISEN FREMANTLE STOPOVER FOR THE WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD YACHT RACE



*Fremantle, Australia, December 9
through January 9.*

Fifteen yachts from 11 countries are sailing around the world, and when they stop for a month in Fremantle, the festivities begin. There's the Race Village, with \$200 million worth of yachts on display, a replica of the *Endeavour*, Captain James Cook's barque, a regatta, and a street parade complete with ticker tape. Tel: 61-9-430-4478.

UNITED AIRLINES HAWAIIAN OPEN

*Waialae Country Club, Honolulu,
Hawaii, January 10-16.*

Watch the professionals tee off in paradise. This is the first full-field PGA Tour event of the year, and it draws 143 professionals and one lucky amateur for a solid week of golf. Tickets: \$8-\$10. Tel: 808-526-1232.



First class meals are served in the dining room on the upper deck.



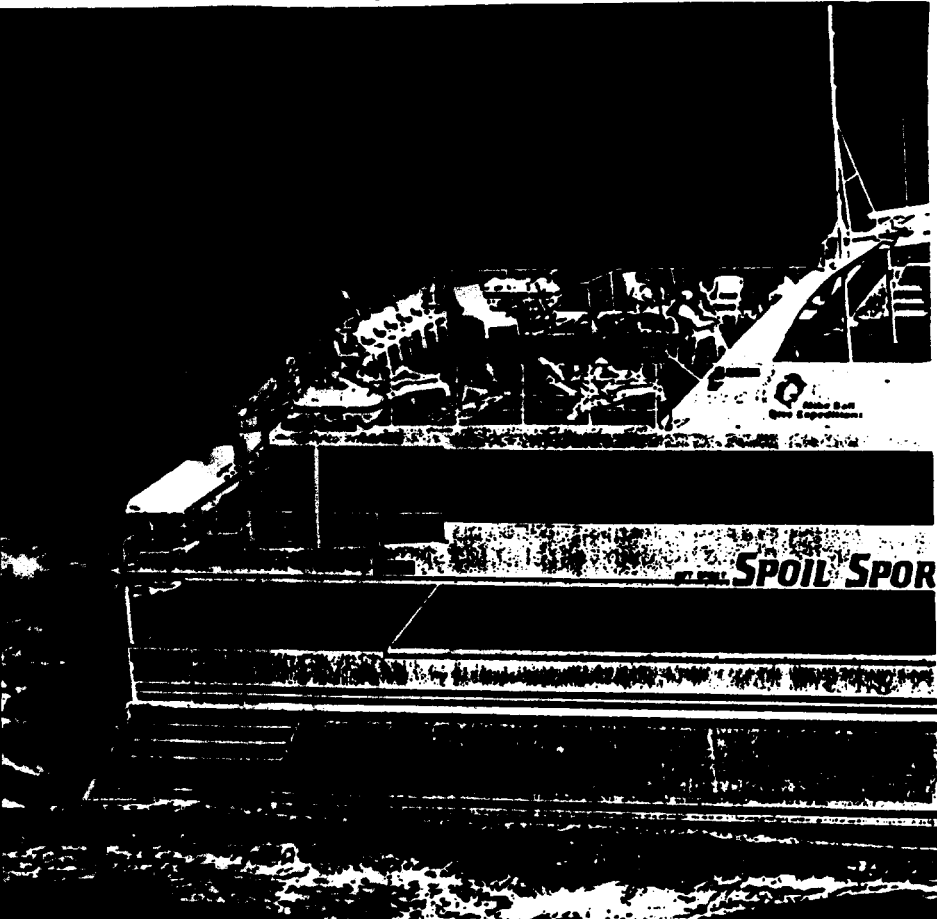
Guests socialize in the comfortable surroundings of the lounge.



Fourteen double cabins are offered in various sizes and configurations.



The dive deck has stairways (above) and room for donning tanks (below).



Australians SPOIL SPOIL

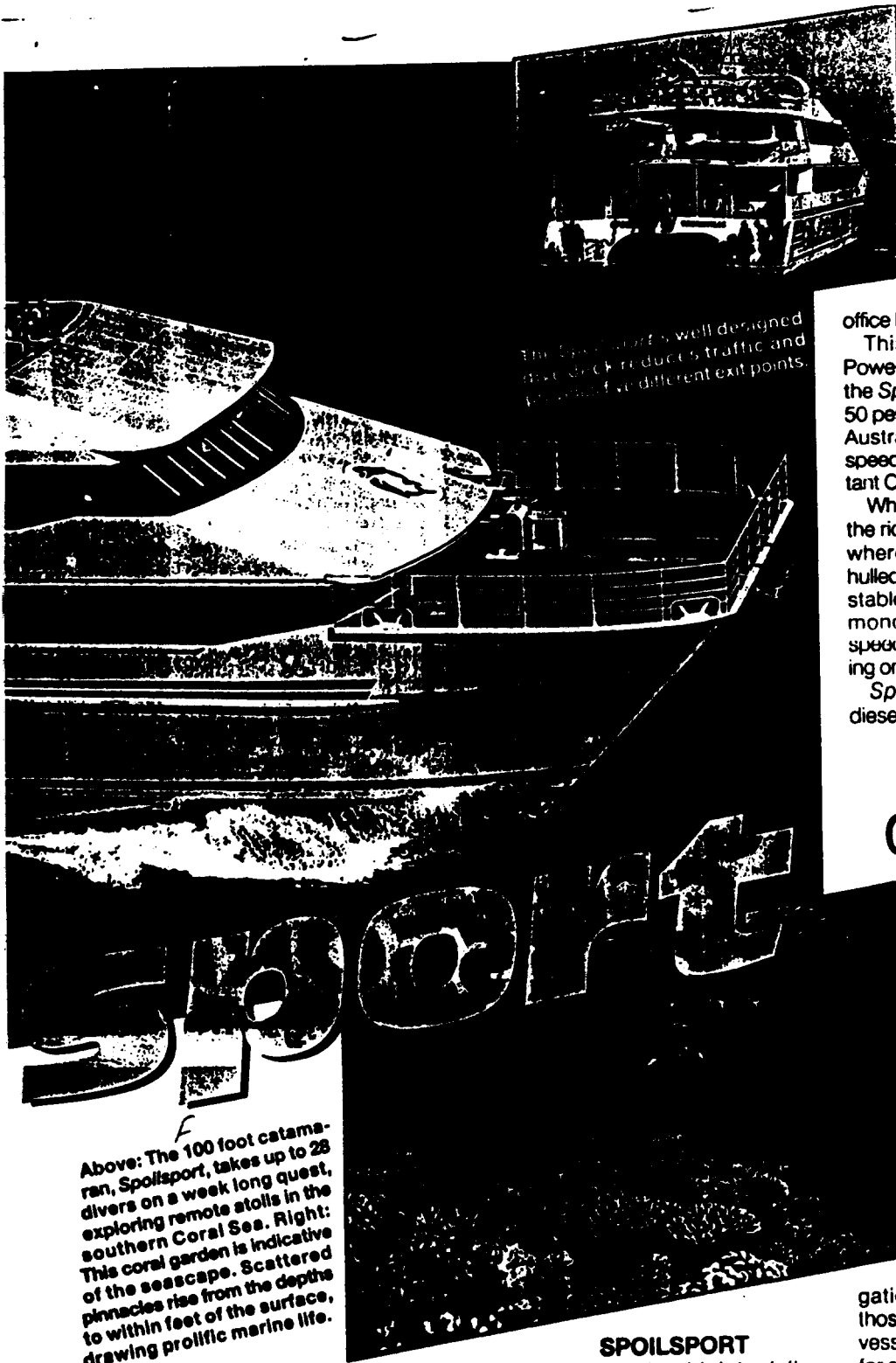
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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY GERI MURPHY

Australia has earned a reputation as a world class diving destination but it is the less frequently visited Coral Sea, not the Great Barrier Reef, that has Australia's best diving. The Great Barrier Reef has a spectacular intensity of fish and coral species, however, the best visibility and wall diving, plus better fish and shark action, are found in the Coral Sea.

The Coral Sea is a vast body of isolated ocean that lies hundreds of miles off Australia's northeast coastline. Here you will find a pristine ocean, untouched by commercial

development, tourism or any other form of industry. Covering an area the size of the entire Caribbean, the Coral Sea does not have a single inhabited island.

Sprinkled sparsely across this great sea are a few isolated coral atolls—ringlets of coral reefs and sand cays that rise thousands of feet from the deep seafloor. It is these remote atolls that serve as beacons for a remarkably diverse and abundant collection of fish and marine life. The Coral Sea is one of earth's last wildlife frontiers, still untouched by man.



The Spoilsport's well designed three deck reduces traffic and provides five different exit points.

Above: The 100 foot catamaran, Spoilsport, takes up to 28 divers on a week long quest, exploring remote atolls in the southern Coral Sea. Right: This coral garden is indicative of the seascape. Scattered pinnacles rise from the depths to within feet of the surface, drawing prolific marine life.

The Coral Sea is live-aboard country. In fact, it is the ultimate challenge for live-aboards, as the sailing distance is sizable. To really enjoy the Coral Sea at its best, you need a big live-aboard, one designed to run long distances, navigate with precision and be spacious enough to provide comfortable living conditions. Among all of Australia's fine live-aboards, the Spoilsport is regarded as the unchallenged queen of the Coral Sea.

SPOILSPORT

The Spoilsport is a high tech live-aboard, the first of a new breed. Ahead of its time, this craft represents the live-aboard design of the future.

Built at a cost of \$2.3 million, the Spoilsport was designed specifically as a live-aboard. It was the culmination of ideas and experience gained from the seven years of operation of its two fore-runners—Water Sport and Super Sport.

The Spoilsport is regarded as the largest full time live-aboard dive boat in the world today. It is an all aluminum,

power catamaran, 100 feet long, 3 decks high and with a beam of 36 feet.

The catamaran design is the key to its spacious facilities. It is like having two, 100 foot monohulls strapped side by side with three gigantic decks on top of the hulls. When you walk up to this boat at the pier, it feels as if you are boarding a three story

office building!

This live-aboard is fast for its size. Powered by twin 540 hp Detroit diesels, the Spoilsport can cruise at 16 knots—50 percent faster than most ocean going Australian live-aboards. This additional speed allows the Spoilsport to reach distant Coral Sea atolls in record time.

While speed is a significant advantage, the ride is equally important—and this is where the Spoilsport excels. The twin hulled catamaran design is exceptionally stable, eliminating the rolling effect of a monohull. When traveling at cruising speed, it makes you feel as if you are riding on a cushion of air.

Spoilsport carries 3,700 gallons of diesel fuel, providing an extended cruis-

Queen of the Coral Sea

ing range. It can reach the outermost atoll in the Coral Sea, return to Townsville and still have enough fuel to make the trip again.

A Furuno Nav Star Global Positioning System (GPS) allows the Spoilsport to navigate by satellite. It can sail hundreds of miles out into the Coral Sea and arrive within 50 feet of a specific coral pinnacle or dive site. This kind of pinpoint navigation saves running time and avoids those frustrating hunts for dive sites. The vessel is also equipped with color radar for spotting islands and storm systems, two depth sounders for pinpointing drop-offs and coral pinnacles, a weather fax for the latest weather reports, a high tech compass and assorted radios for high seas transmission. If, during the cruise, you need to phone home, you can do so on the Spoilsport.

The Spoilsport is approximately the size of a small, 20 room dive resort hotel. It has a total of 14 double guest cabins that can accommodate up to 28 divers. There are

(Continued on Page 70)

AUSTRALIA'S SPOILSPORT ^F

(Continued from Page 21)

also quarters for a total of 10 to 11 crew members. Despite these numbers, you hardly ever see anyone—except at meal times. The immense size of this vessel allows guests to spread out on three separate decks. Dive times are staggered, however, the huge dive deck can comfortably handle a full complement of passengers gearing up at the same time.

All of the guest cabins are on the main deck, above the waterline. They are fully air-conditioned. There are a variety of different cabin configurations, locations and pricing.

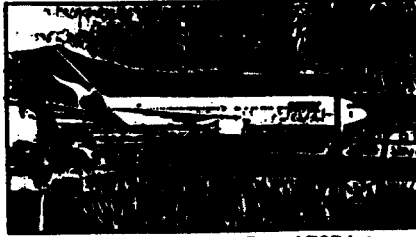
The outboard cabins have giant picture windows with a magnificent view of the surrounding ocean. The windows are coated with a filter that greatly reduces the warming effect of the sun's rays and also ensures privacy. You can see out but no one can see in.

Some of the deluxe cabins have private (ensuite) bathroom and shower facilities. The less expensive cabins have shared, semi-private bathrooms and showers. There is no water problem aboard the *Spoilsport*—the vessel carries 3,000 gallons of fresh water plus a giant water purifier that is continually filling the reservoir.

The upper deck is the size of a small ballroom. It is fully air-conditioned and well lit by a series of giant picture windows. The port (left) side of this room is the dining area, furnished with three large tables. The starboard (right) side has two parts—one-third is the galley and two-thirds is the recreational lounge.

The *Spoilsport* has a first class chef and galley crew. They serve a hot breakfast, a giant buffet lunch and a magnificent dinner. They bake their own bread, make their own pizza and prepare scrumptious desserts. In addition to the three full meals daily, there are snacks in between—you never go hungry on this ship!

Opposite the dining area is a comfortable recreational saloon comprised of a number of couches, coffee tables and potted plants. It is a homey atmosphere—ideal for taking a nap or doing a little quiet reading. There are two large color TVs, plus a VCR capable of playing

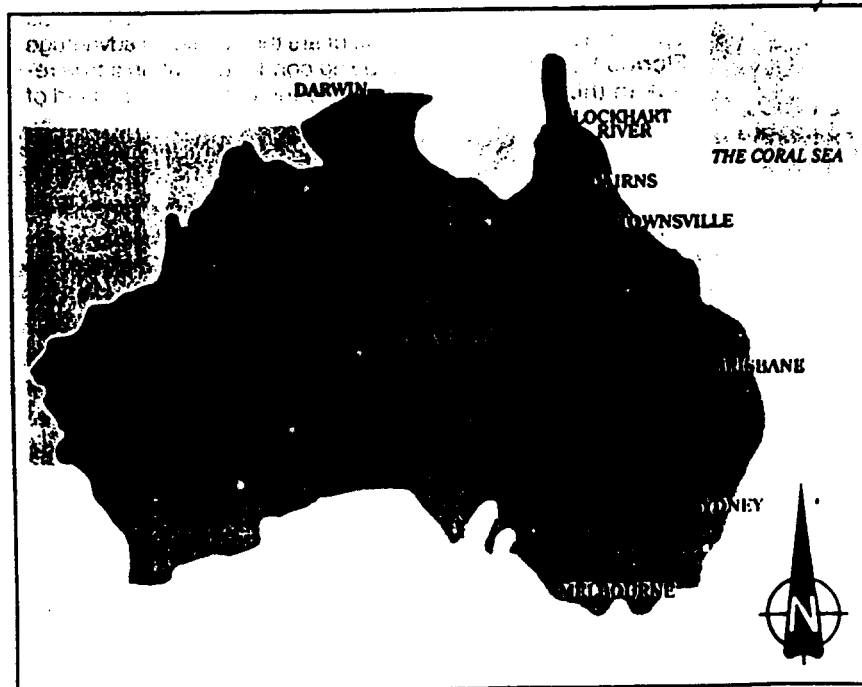


Qantas offers direct 747 and 767 jet service from L.A. and San Francisco to Cairns, with a brief stop in Honolulu.

American or Australian videotapes.

The top deck is equally immense—about the size of a volleyball court. It is fully carpeted and furnished with lounge chairs for sunbathing. It is a great place to get a tan or just enjoy the view.

The dive deck is a work of genius. It is large, spacious and designed to reduce traffic and confusion. The furnishings are constructed of sturdy aluminum for long wear and easy maintenance but the bench seats have wooden slats for both comfort and safety. You are not sliding all over the place, trying to get into your gear. There are a total of six long bench-



AUSTRALIA'S SPOILSPORT

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es, each equipped with nine scuba tanks cradled in an upright position. Each guest is given a jumbo sized plastic milk crate in which to store personal dive gear. These containers slide right under the benches.

Just above the scuba tanks is a carpeted, aluminum shelf that has a retainer lip around the edge. The shelf is used for storing camera equipment, dive computers, masks or other fragile items. This system keeps the decks clear of dive and camera gear.

The *Spoilsport* carries 36 aluminum scuba cylinders. Guests have their choice of using either 63 or 88 cubic foot tanks. The 63s are more comfortable for repeated dives. The 88s provide a jumbo quantity of air for heavy breathers.

There are five different exit points from the *Spoilsport's* dive deck. You can make a high jump scuba entry from either the port or starboard side of the vessel or directly off the mid-point of the dive deck stern. If you don't like high jumps (most people don't), there are two stairways (port and starboard) that lead from the dive deck down to twin stern platforms. Since the platform is only six inches from the water, you simply step off in a giant stride.

As for returning to the boat, there are two dive ladders attached to the twin stern platforms. Constructed of stainless steel, these ladders are wide, rugged and feature comfortable handrails that rise three feet above the platform deck. Coming up the ladder is easy, even when you feel exhausted from the dive.

The *Spoilsport* sails with a crew of 11. That is practically one crew member for every two guests. Most of the crew is trained to handle several jobs. For example, on our trip, the skipper was also a qualified emergency medical technician. The ship's engineer was also a certified scuba instructor. Everyone on board is capable of performing two or more jobs.

You will find the crew members of the *Spoilsport* some of the friendliest and most considerate in the live-aboard business. Their knowledge and enthusiasm is remarkable. How do they do it? The key to *Spoilsport's* success is the rotation of crews. *Spoilsport* is part of a larger organization comprised of a major dive center and two other live-aboards. Crews are rotated on a regular basis to avoid fatigue, burnout or boredom.

One unique aspect of the *Spoilsport* is the cruise director. This person has the primary responsibility of seeing to the guest's needs. The cruise director is generally the senior divemaster, who

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gives the pre-dive orientations and keeps the guests advised as to where the boat is heading and what they will be doing. The director also works with the captain in plotting the ship's course and selecting the best dive sites for a particular trip. *Spoilsport* has a private log of more than 100 dive sites that have been located, charted and described. Decisions on specific sites are based on wind, current and weather conditions.

HOME PORT

Townsville, a city on the Queensland Coast, is home port for the *Spoilsport* eight months of the year. The other four months, the ship is based some 530 miles north, at Lockhart River, a very remote Aboriginal reserve. Townsville is a convenient headquarters for Mike Ball Dive Expeditions, Travel and Training Divisions.

**MIKE BALL DIVE EXPEDITIONS
INFORMATION/RESERVATIONS**

U.S. RESERVATIONS

Adventure Express
950 17th Street, Suite 505
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(415) 442-0799: 33 000
(415) 442-0289 (fax)

Tropical Adventures

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(206) 441-3483
(206) 441-5431 (fax)

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Townsville is a convenient departure point, as this city has a large international airport with direct jet flights coming in from Cairns, Brisbane and Sydney. There are numerous hotels and many fine restaurants. Upon arrival in Townsville, guests check in at the dive center and leave their scuba gear to be transported to the ship later on in the day.

When departing Townsville, you board the *Spoilsport* at 8:00 in the evening, after having a leisurely dinner at one of Townsville's many restaurants. By this time, the crew has transported the guests' dive gear and luggage to their assigned cabins. Guests are spared the hassle of lugging heavy bags on board the ship. There is a welcome aboard party with wine and cheese, as guests become acquainted with the crew and each other.

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The ship generally departs the pier around midnight for the first leg of the cruise. Most of the long running time occurs at night, when the guests are asleep in their cabins. By dawn the next morning, *Spoilsport* is in the process of anchoring at the first dive site.

SPOILSPORT CRUISES

A dive trip aboard the *Spoilsport* is approximately one week long, with exploratory trips to the far Northern Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea in the first half of the year and the Central Coral Sea expeditions, including the *Yongala* wreck and *Scuba Zoo*, in the second half.

NEW ITINERARIES

Spoilsport's newest itinerary offers an exciting opportunity to join the next phase of Mike Ball Dive Expeditions' exploration of the far north. Last year's trips found some spectacular diving and magnificent marine life, including pods of Pilot Whales, Manta Rays, Whale Sharks and large numbers of pelagics and sharks. In 1994 *Spoilsport* will travel 125 miles farther north to dive more than 200 miles of remote and unexplored regions in the far Northern Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea.

The expedition begins with a spectacular 330 mile flight from Cairns over the Great Barrier Reef and the dense rainforests of the far north Queensland Coast to Lockhart River airfield. This is the only year-round access to this isolated part of the Cape York Peninsula. Just a stone's throw from the very tip of the continent, it offers tiny isolated sand cays and islands, which have become havens for turtles and seabirds. Discover new dive sites in the crystal clear waters at **Wreck Bay** and **Black Rocks**. Mingle with masses of schooling Trevally, Barracuda and patrolling sharks on spectacular drift dives at the **Small Detached Reefs**. Explore **Great Detached Reef** and the impenetrably dense coral ribbons between Olinda Entrance and Triangle Reef. Go beyond the northernmost point of Australia to **Ashmore Reef**, standing alone in the Northern Coral Sea. A vast, untouched coral lagoon. Its underwater treasures are yet to be discovered.

Spoilsport's itinerary will be very flexible, to take advantage of weather and dive site discoveries.

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ter visibility reaching unheard of distances of 150 to 200 feet.

Sprinkled across the vast reaches of this oceanic paradise are more than a dozen isolated coral atolls. In the southern region of the Coral Sea, these atolls include Flinders, Abington and Lihou Reefs, Diamond Islets, Marion and Holmes Reef and the Willis Group. These spectacular formations rise straight from several thousand feet, often coming within inches of the surface. They serve as homes and mating areas for an incredible array of marine life.

FLINDERS REEF

Flinders Reef is one of those magical oceanic atolls where the diving is so spectacular it defies description. Flinders lies 130 miles northeast of Townsville, well beyond the reach of most Australian divers. Only a handful of live-aboard dive boats can reach this spot.

Flinders is not a single reef but rather a cluster of several reefs covering a large area. Flinders measures 36 nautical miles long and 24 wide. More than 99 percent of this area lies underwater, with only two tiny sand cays jutting above the surface. Yet, Flinders is home to an enormous population of fish and marine creatures. It is here one will find most of the exotic creatures that have brought Australia worldwide diving fame.

China Wall, at the tip of **North Boomerang**, is an outer edge vertical wall dive. The top of the reef begins at depths ranging from 20 feet and the wall drops straight down to 3,000. The vertical face of the wall contains many caves and caverns with tunnels leading back up into the lagoon shallows. Large soft corals and giant yellow gorgonians can be found at depths from 60 to 100 feet. Small reef tropicals can be seen along the upper edge of the wall and numerous pelagics cruise the blue water.

Fan Patches is a spot comprised of a series of four large, finger-shaped coral heads that lead from the shallow sandy lagoon into depths of 100 to 120 feet. The average depth between the coral formations is 70 feet, with the walls rising vertically to within 30 feet of the surface. In these narrow canyons are forests of giant yellow gorgonians.

Rock Arch is a unique formation on the outside edge of Flinders Lagoon, right off the southwest tip. The spot is marked by a solitary small piece of coral rock that rises above the surface. The site is a series of high coral heads that curve inward from the lip of a vertical wall. Less than 100 feet from the rock is a large coral head with a magnificent archway at its base. Growing in the center of this arch is an enormous yellow gorgonian fan that measures 15 feet high. The arch is also the home of a

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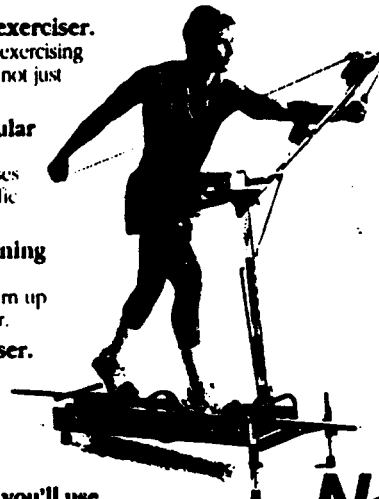
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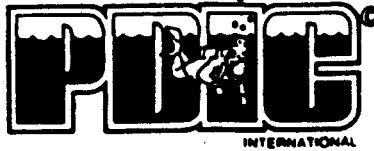
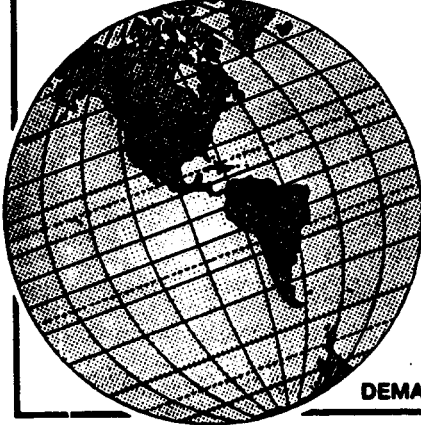
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Watanabe Point is a flat topped pinnacle roughly 140 feet in diameter. The sides are vertical, dropping straight down to 150 feet on the inside edge and 180 on the outside. The top of the pinnacle rises to within 40 feet of the surface. Because of its proximity to the drop-off, underwater visibility ranges from 150 to 180 feet.

This solitary pinnacle serves as a magical undersea beacon for all pelagic fish that may be cruising in this part of the Coral Sea. The pinnacle is occupied by roughly 200 Bigeye Trevally (jacks) that are separated into four different schools. These graceful fish circle the pinnacle in precise formation, zooming up and down the vertical sides and across the top. At times, they ball up into a tight circle like a vortex. Their motion is so fluid it tends to mesmerize the observer. A large school of Pacific Barracuda also encircles the pinnacle. These wide-eyed predators maintain a close watch on the baitfish that inhabit the area.

Scuba Zoo, on South Boomerang, is probably the most unusual shark feeding dive in all of Australia. Mike Ball Dive Expeditions has placed a giant shark cage on the edge of the wall at a depth of 50 feet. It is believed to be the largest shark cage in the world today, measuring 9 feet wide, 9 feet tall and 50 feet long! The shark cage is of such great dimensions that divers can actually swim inside it. At feeding time, the divers climb into the cage while two large trash barrels filled with shark food are positioned outside. Each of the barrels contains a flotation buoy and a coiled line laced with fish parts. The lids are held in place by a trigger. When all the divers are inside the cage the lids are released and the coiled lines of fish parts spiral toward the surface. This act initiates an awesome shark feeding frenzy just a few feet outside the safety of the cage. It is a spellbinding experience few divers will ever forget.

The finale of most every *Spoilsport* cruise is a return to the Great Barrier Reef, where the live-aboard makes a visit to the **Yongala**—the world's most exciting wreck dive. This extraordinary wreck lies in the shipping channel between the outer barrier reef and the Australia shoreline (10 miles off the coast). Sunk in 1911, this 350 foot, steel hulled passenger steamer was lost to the world until its accidental discovery in 1945.

What makes the *Yongala* so special is:

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the extraordinary amount of fish that live in and around the wreck. There are literally thousands of fish stacked in layers. A school of Pacific Barracuda hovers above the ship. Below it is a school of Trevally (jacks). On the wreck itself, there are huge Bull Rays, Giant Trevally (150 pound fish), snappers, cod, Coral Trout and 100 other species. Four large Queensland Gropers live under the bow—each weighing 400 to 600 pounds. Other resident creatures include sea turtles, sea snakes, Cobia and an occasional Sawfish. The wreck is an aquarium without walls!

Upon the completion of the diving at the *Yongala*, there is an afternoon cruise north to Townsville. This provides guests an opportunity to have a leisurely lunch, after which they can wash and dry their dive gear while they pack their personal clothing. The *Spoilsport* is back in port by 5:00 pm, as guests nostalgically prepare to disembark. ■

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Coming to grips with the rock in rugged Australia

AYERS ROCK, Uhuru: 1,143 feet high (348 m) and 5½ miles (8.9 km) around the base, pocked with caves that were sacred sites long before Jesus Christ was a twinkle in the Holy Ghost's omniscient eye.

By John Moore
Contributing Writer

The largest known free-standing monolith on the planet. The biggest boulder in the world, and people come from all over the globe to the vast red desert plain of central Australia to climb it, watch it change color from dusty red to scarlet and purple at sunset, take innumerable photographs of it, or simply to gawk at it in wonder and vaguely superstitious dread.

Visitors arriving by plane start peering out windows, trying to catch a glimpse of the country's most famous landmark, the monument the pilot announces we'll be landing in Alice Springs in 20 minutes.

Australian pilots know this. After a 10-second beat, ours reminds us the Rock is 465 km (290 miles) southwest, invisible at this altitude even on a clear day. Everyone immediately adopts nonchalant I-know-that expressions.

Two eventful days later, having bounced over bull-dust backroads, explored spectacular King's Canyon, slept in a swag (the outback bedroll) under millions of unfamiliar stars with my boots on a campstool to discourage scorpions

and snakes, I've abandoned any pretence of nonchalance along with any hope of looking like I belong under my new Akubra stockman's hat.

In the grip of a distinctly non-superstitious dread, I'm clinging to a stanchioned chain more than halfway up the Rock, buffeted by a wind that tears words and breath out of my mouth and snatches them away in its furious rush from emptiness to emptiness.

Deafened by the wind, my head echoes with the words of our Holidays Northern Territory Coach captain and guide, Dean Lambert: "You don't have to climb it," he told our mixed gang of 15 from Canada, Japan, Germany, England and exotic Sydney.

"Aboriginal people don't. The route you take is the path of Dreamtime ancestor, and they won't walk in the steps of spirit beings."

"They don't regard themselves as owners of the Rock, but as caretakers. When someone gets hurt or dies climbing it — and it happens — they feel responsible. So, if you don't climb, you're not chicken. You're just respecting aboriginal feelings. Right?"

I'm developing an intense, if belated, reverence for aboriginal sensibilities with every inching step.

Without the chain, this wind-rounded red rock would be the ultimate "friction climb" — a test of balance, adhesion and blind faith.

I tell myself people have done this in bare feet, thongs and leather street shoes, and I try not

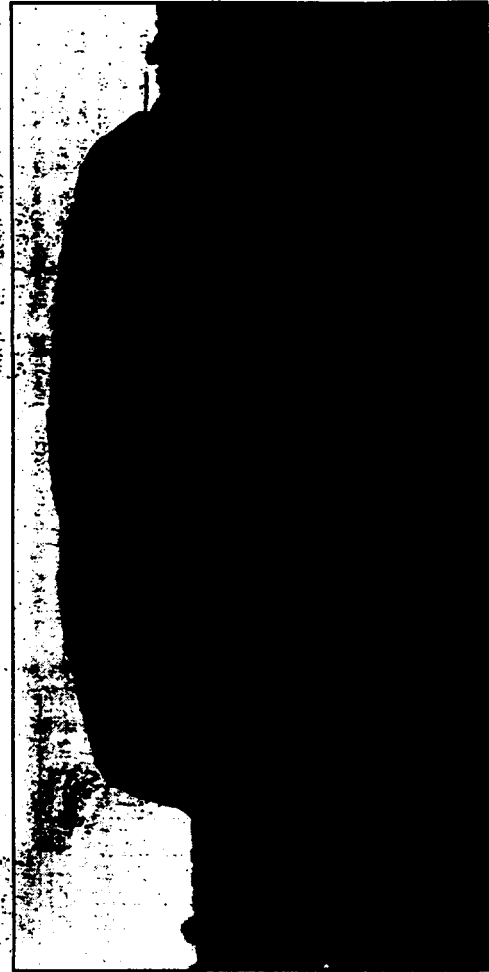


Photo submitted

THE LARGEST known free-standing monolith on the planet is Australia's Ayers Rock. People come from all over the globe to the vast red desert plain of central Australia to climb it, watch it change color from dusty red to scarlet and purple at sunset, take innumerable photographs of it, or simply to gawk at it.

to think about the dozen or so deaths since the '60s.

The 360-degree view from the summit is mind-numbing: more than beautiful, a horizon hinted at only by the purple mesa of Mt. Connor and the surreal jumble of the Olgas to the east and west.

What you are experiencing is The Limit, one of the points at

which the contract between perception and imagination breaks down in exaltation and terror.

There are higher mountains on the "island continent," but this is the true "high point" of Australia.

Lambert can't resist messing with our already boggled minds.

"They figure at least three-fif-

ths of it is underground," he says, pointing at a towering red sandstone wall.

"And you've noticed the vertical striations in the rock. Since sandstone only occurs in horizontal layers, that means there's a power on this earth great enough to roll this rock over on its side."

See Complimentary page 34

LIFESTYLES

Complimentary affection makes Down Under memorable

From page 33

I don't think he's pulling our legs, but you can never tell.

Winding up the tourists is universal Territorial entertainment: he's told us the one about the coach captain who convinced his passengers the cairn at the summit was actually the Ayers Rock post-box and had them stuff it with postcards; the American woman who wrote a formal complaint because there was no Coke machine at the top as the guide promised with a straight face; the one about the dozen tourists lying face-down in hot red sand trying to catch a glimpse of the elusive "miniature buffalo" of the outback scrub (actually a pair of hawk talons mounted on a cork like horns and left on the dashboard, waiting for some fool to ask).

Whatever humorous mileage he got out of us, we got a lot more of the real thing out of him.

In three days, he drove us more than 1,200 kilometres (746 miles), to King's Canyon, Uluru and The Olgas, barbecued everything from croissants to the best steak I've ever had (with onions and home fries), regaled us with local history, gossip, more information about outback flora and fauna than any of us could take in (even leaping out of the bus to catch Horny Devil lizards for us to fondle), and probably too many take-offs of Skippy the bush kangaroo.

Understandably, as we roll back to Alice along the Stuart Highway, he looks a bit whacked out.

There are times when he does three of these two-day safaris a week with one day off, if there are no company chores to do.

"Sometimes I wish I was back driving for the big companies," he says, not quite ruefully. "When you own a piece of a small one, you work harder, whether you make money or not. If only one person signs up for a tour, we still go."

Lambert and his three partners pooled their extensive individual experience to form Holidays Northern Territory, but you sense the extra effort they make is more than just the nervousness of corporate new boys on the block.

When we dropped into their office next to the Melanka Lodge Complex on Todd Street to say an inadequate thanks for an unforgettable experience, the superficially laid-back sales manager, Mike Fraser, turned into a whirlwind one-man tourist bureau.

We needed coach tickets to Adelaide with a stop at Coober Pedy and got confusing info by phone, so we were walking down to the terminal.

Drop those heavy bags, put

your feet up and have a coffee; he would issue tickets as soon as he called the terminal, solved the cheap fare mystery, discovered a forgotten Quantas Card in my wallet and wangled a further discount.

He also put us on to a tour of the opal mining town of Coober Pedy that proved to be fantastic. (Another time.)

He didn't carry our bags to the station, but I figured suggesting it would be seriously pushing my luck.

After all, the night before, Lambert had recommended what turned out to be one of the nicest places we stayed in Australia (the Midland Motel, 4 Traeger Ave., Ph. 52-1588), and mentioning his name knocked another 10% off what was already a bargain (About AU\$340).

An excellent restaurant, very reasonable breakfast room service and complimentary affection from the owner's Blue Heeler if you're homesick for your dog.

Holidays Northern Territory runs daily "Ayers Rock in a Day" tours departing from your accommodation at 6 a.m. for AU\$112 and two-day tours of Kings Canyon, Ayers Rock and the Olgas for \$165, departing Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. If you can get a couple of friends together, they will also create customized outback adventures to places you've never seen in a brochure or on *National Geographic* TV specials, at rates to be negotiated. That's what we're doing, next time.

Holidays Northern Territory can be contacted by you or your travel agent at (089) 53 2897; fax (089) 53 2178.

There are many ways to get to the Rock, from Harley-Davidson choppers hired at curbside on Todd Mall, to double-decker tour buses with tinted windows staffed by bored guides in natty uniforms.

You can even fly directly into the Yulara Airstrip and, according to Lambert, book a suite in the lowrise Sheraton there that will allow you to view the Rock from a picture window at the foot of your bed, for a mere \$2,000.

Forty-eight hours and a night in a swag won't turn you into a "territorial," but you'll know you've been there; it wasn't just a public broadcasting documentary.

A week later, I was almost reluctantly still picking splinters of mulga out of my hands from gathering firewood to boil the billy-cans for tea.

My new hightop sneakers are pink with iron-hydroxide dust, and I can't bring myself to wash them. But my head has swelled just enough that the Akubra will hold a rakish angle.

When I pressed Lambert about

why he does what he does, he stared through the bug-smearred windscreen at the desert, blooming

after a half-inch of rain a week before, and looked at me like I needed some serious life-skills

therapy. I flatter myself that I have just an inkling of what he meant.

BY GERALD FITZPATRICK
 • Special to The Globe and Mail • Kangaroo Island, Australia •

WHITECAPS were blowing off the wave crests as we shivered in the line-up for the Kangaroo Island ferry. We couldn't see the rain-shrouded island off the coast of South Australia; we had no place to stay and we weren't sure what we would do when we got there. We even wondered if we should call the whole thing off and head for Adelaide. And then we met Tom Bettess.

Tom had been behind us at the ticket window and overheard our unsuccessful inquiry about places to stay. He beckoned us to one side. "I've got a cottage for rent about halfway along the south coast of the island," he said. "If you like, I'll call my wife to see if it's available." It was.

After a blustery crossing to Penneshaw, we followed Tom's car off the ferry. We drove west through open bushland and dense thickets of scrubby eucalyptis. Near Penneshaw, at the island's centre, we turned off the main highway and headed south on a red gravel road. In the fading evening light, we stopped just in from the coast at Vivonne Bay. Tom led us through a gap in the gum trees to an attractive and fully equipped cottage. We'll take it," we said. It was still raining.

Looking over a detailed map that evening, we saw that Kangaroo Island was 145 kms long and about 40 kms wide; Australia's third largest island. It was uninhabited when Matthew Flinders, a British naval explorer, landed there in 1802. His supply of food was running low, so he named the island in gratitude for the large numbers of easily caught grey kangaroos he encountered.

Mainland aborigines called the deserted island the Land of the Dead although aborigines had lived there for 4,000 years. Their fate is still a mystery. No-one knows whether they reached the mainland by some type of crude boat, or whether they were wiped out by disease or war.

Within a few years of its sighting, the island was occupied by roving bands of escaped convicts and sealers who plundered the shores for sea lion pelts. In July 1836, the island became the site of the first permanent settlement in South Australia when the Duke of York dropped anchor in Nepean Bay on the island's north shore. This first settlement, however, existed for only five years.

Today, Kangaroo Island seems to be an Australia in miniature. It has a little of everything for visitors: wild coastlines, quiet beaches, red ironstone roads, dense eucalypt forests, spectacular rock formations, dazzling white sand dunes, sea lions, sheep ranches and, of course, kangaroos and koala bears. Even tiny penguins. On the other hand, the island has only about 4,000 people.

Some visitors come to Kangaroo Island just to mingle with the sea lions at Seal Bay National Park, a couple of kil-

ometres east of Vivonne Bay. Long hunted for their skins and meat, only four or five thousand of these Australian sea lions survive, making them one of the rarest of their species. Seal Bay is one of the world's largest accessible colonies of sea lions. Over the years, the colony has come to tolerate humans to an astonishing degree. In the company of a park ranger, you can approach to within a few metres of the sea lions as they waddle in from the sea and flop down to snooze on the white sandy beach.

The entire western end of Kangaroo Island is preserved as Flinders Chase National Park, the largest park in South Australia. Here you can experience rough, untamed Australia. Several bushwalks run off roads that wind through the park's dense eucalypt forests. We took the walk to the coast from Snake Lagoon and even saw feral pigs high up on the hillside.

At the southern tip of the park, near Cape du Couedic, are the Remarkable Rocks. These huge boulders, scattered across a dramatic granite dome high above the Southern Ocean, are aptly named. Sculpted into bizarre shapes by the wind and sea, they sit there mysteriously like a giant's discarded plaything.

Within the park, at the Cape du Couedic lighthouse, are Parmadana and Karatta Lodge. Built as lighthouse keepers' houses, these lonely stone cottages now have modern kitchens and bathrooms and can be rented by visitors who want to experience the park's wildlife and wilderness areas. Another of these remote cottages is available at Cape Borda on the northwest tip of Flinders Chase park.

The best place on the island to see koalas is near the park information office at Rocky River. In a grove of the manna gum trees favoured by these cuddly-looking creatures, you will almost certainly spot them dozing the day away. They often nestle into a fork on a high limb, but if you are lucky, one or two will be low enough for you to get a closer look.

The Rocky River area is also the best place to see the island's grey kangaroos. You will scarcely be able to avoid them as they cadge food from visitors. Take along some celery or buy some "roo food" and they will hop towards you to eat gently out of your hand.

Please see ISLAND — D2

X X



Seal Bay is one of the world's largest accessible colonies of sea lions and they are astonishingly tolerant of uninvited human guests.



A party of polite pelicans participate in their daily feeding at Kingscote.



In Rocky River, the manna gum tree is the favoured hangout of the laid-back koala bear.

Photos by Gerald Fitzpatrick

(100)

Little Sahara is one of the many beaches on Kangaroo Island.

Photo by Gerald Fitzpatrick



• From Page D1

After leaving the park on our third day, we drove along the less rugged northern coast to explore some of the beaches Tom had mentioned. Then we headed for his home at

Wedgewood Farm where we had arranged to stay the night. Tom had been a sheep farmer on the South Australia mainland before moving to Kangaroo Island some years before. Nowadays, he divides his time between looking after his sheep and operating a wilderness tour operation, while his wife Liz looks after the bed and breakfast end of the business.

As Tom showed us around the farm, his dogs tagging along behind the Land Cruiser, he noticed one of his sheep stuck in soft ground. Tom managed to pull it out and said that he would check it again the next day. After dinner, Tom took us on a night drive to search for wildlife. Driving through scrubland and along river banks we saw scores of wallabies and several larger kangaroos. With the aid of a spotlight, we also caught bright reflections in the eyes of koalas staring back at us as they feasted in their gum trees.

We spent our last night on the island at Penneshaw near the ferry landing. Tom had suggested that we walk along the sea front at dusk and watch for the fairy penguins. These tiny creatures return to land here every night of the year. As we stood quietly, watching the penguins struggle up the bank to their nests in the sandhills, we thought how lucky we were to have found this corner of Australia that we scarcely knew existed — and almost didn't see.

Gerald Fitzpatrick is a planner for the Ontario Government.

Island's ruggedness a true delight

IF YOU GO

Most visitors come to Kangaroo Island between December and February.

The most direct route is by Sealink car ferry from Cape Jervis to Penneshaw. Cape Jervis is a two-hour drive from Adelaide on the Fleurieu Peninsula. One hour crossing time. Up to eight sailings daily in summer. Return fares: Adults \$48 (Cdn.); vehicles \$100.

Advance reservations are essential. Call Sealink 13 1301 or book through a travel agent.

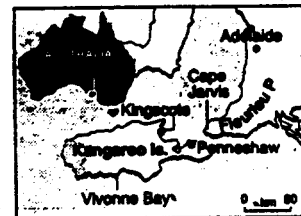
Several small airlines operate regular flights from Adelaide to Kingscote, the island's largest community. Flying time is about half an hour. Several rental car agencies are here.

The Parndana and Karatta lighthouse keepers cottages in Flinders Chase National Park can be rented for \$35 a night. The Flinders Keep cottage at Cape Borda is just over \$40 a night. You will need to bring your own linen, blankets, towels, toilet

paper and, of course, all your food — it's a long, long walk to the store.

For bookings and information contact Flinders Chase National Park PMB 246, Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, South Australia 5223. Tel.: (0848) 37 231, fax: (0848) 37 268.

To stay at Tom's Raven Cottage at Vivonne Bay, or to take one of his four-wheel-drive day-long wilderness tours (\$130 per person), or to have bed and breakfast at Wedgewood Farm, contact Tom and Liz Bettess, P.O. Box 33, Parndana, Kangaroo Island, South Australia, 5220. Tel.: (0848) 96043, fax: (0848)



For tourist information: Contact the South Australia Government Travel Centre, 18 King William St., Adelaide, SA 5000. Tel.: (08) 212 1505, fax: (08) 212 4251. Or the Australian Tourist Commission, 31st floor, 489 Fifth Ave., New York, New York 10017. Tel.: (212) 687-6300, fax: (212) 661-3340.



3000 PERDITION AVE. EAST
SHERBROOKE, QUE. J1L 1P5

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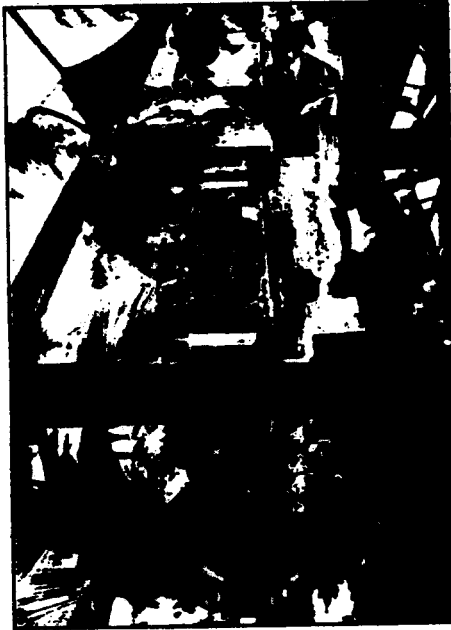
TRAVEL

SECTION
L

Editor: Jane Defalco, 596-3721 †

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Saturday, December 4, 1993



UNIQUE HOTEL: All the Reef House's 42 balconied rooms are set around a garden filled with dense stands of shadowy tropical trees



ABOVE: A rain forest look-alike
LEFT: Queensland beach, at Fraser Island, is the newly proclaimed World Heritage site

It's a magical place, its basilican pillars and buttresses fashioned from strange, ancient timbers now bearing the larrikin names of the New World — oriana and wait-a-while palms, bull oaks, soapboxes, hairy marys and black beans

Australia's exotic rain forests

By Alexander Frater
London Observer

After half a lifetime in the sky, you cross the Australian coast at dusk. Arnhem Land, glowing redly below, throws up water glasses that go ripping across the landscape like gunpowder trails.

The Gulf of Carpentaria, next, turns into a genuine ocean crossing that serves to emphasize the physical vastness of Australia. This, plainly, is a country of unimaginable distances, territorial superlatives.

You reach Cape York Peninsula after dark and have to take the pilot's word that you've made landfall; during the hour it takes to transit the Cape you look down into impenetrable blackness. As you search in vain for a single light, Australia makes another important point about itself. It's empty.

Cairns, twinkling away beside the Pacific, takes you abruptly from one dimension to four; so much of nocturnal Cairns is reflected and repeated in the sea that it starts to echo the starry Pacific sky. The Milky Way has crashed! This is Australia's newest and most beguiling boom city.

The Great Barrier Reef runs a few kilometres in front, the lovely Atherton Tablelands a few behind. The climate is equable, there are fine hotels and well-stocked shops, you can subsist year-long on a diet of fresh fish, prime Cape beef and succulent tropical fruit.

Cairns combines big-city facilities with a homely, small-town atmosphere. No wonder it's now attracting so many Australian writers, artists and intellectuals.

Outside the terminal I sniffed the balmy Pacific night and suddenly felt glad to be here. I had been booked into the Reef House, set on the beach a few kilometres beyond Cairns and allegedly one of Australia's best hotels.

All the Reef House's 42 balconied rooms are set around a garden filled with dense stands of shadowy tropical trees. They conceal three small swimming pools and a waterfall, and that's one of the sounds you wake to. (You may also catch the murmur of the tide rising beyond the walls.) The other is birds. No one seems certain of the number turning up for early morning choir practice, but they fill the air with lovely fluting calls and wild tracer bursts of color.

Canadian connection

The Reef House is managed by a disarming, very funny Canadian named Colin Smith and his ebullient Russian wife Irene. Colin, an ex-advertising tycoon, was a vice president of McCann-Erickson in New York. Irene, a celebrated beauty and singer, had two TV shows running concurrently in Canada. They met during the filming of a banana commercial. The place, like the Smiths, is relaxed, efficient and unfussy with, nocturnally, a beguiling hint of big-city sophistication. It's one of the nicest hotels I know — the Garden of Eden with deluxe accommodation and five-star cuisine. It's also adjacent to the real rain forest for which, in the company of a lanky young Englishman whose father once rode steeplechasers for the Queen Mother, I headed next.

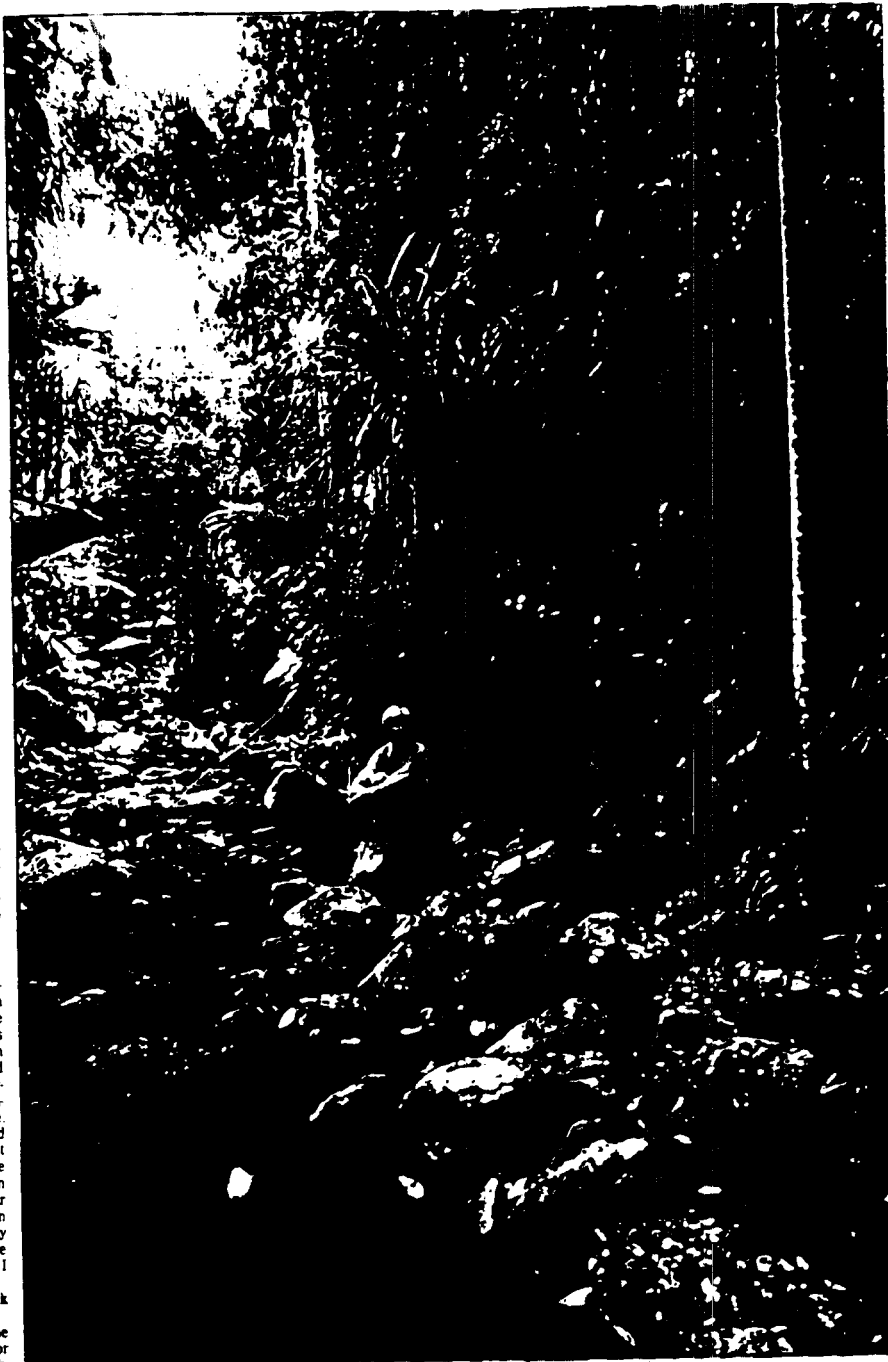
Nick Marshall picked me up at the crack of dawn in a battered 4WD vehicle.

"I thought I might take you over the CREB track," he said. "That stands for Cairns Regional Electricity Board and it's, uh, pretty rough." He paused. "OK by you?"

One never admits to any sort of physical or moral decline in north Queensland. So off we went, Nick talking urgently about trees. Cape York's rain forest is claimed by some locals to be the world's oldest, the wet tropics possess trees said to have evolved over 120 million years. Nick feels so passionately about the rain forest that he lives in it.

The CREB track, impassable in the wet season, barely passable now, was a 100-kilometre succession of improbable gradients surfaced by boulders. Some were coconut-sized, some as big as wardrobes, all lay embedded in dust.

At dusk we reached the hamlet of He-



WET TROPICS: Cape York's rain forest in north Queensland is claimed by locals to be the world's oldest

lenvale and Mungumby Lodge. Nick's rain forest retreat — a dozen wooden chalets set in a large, quiet, tree-lined garden.

Lizzy, his personable English wife, brought tea and freshly-baked scones as Nick told me he had, with the help of local labor, built the whole place himself. He looked after the guests. Lizzy cooked for them. While they put the kids to bed I slipped cold gin and read an air-mail copy of the Spectator. Later we dined on prime roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. But this entertaining, resourceful English couple spoke little of England. Nick's father, a two-time winner of the Grand National, bred horses. Nick had always planned to do the

same — but not anymore. Now they had made their lives in the forest, and it was in the forest they intended to stay.

In the morning Nick took me in. It was a magical place, its basilican pillars and buttresses fashioned from strange, ancient timbers now bearing the tarlatan names of the New World — orana and wait-a-while palms, bull oaks, soapboxes, hairy marys and black beans (some blasted by lightning or engulfed by strangler figs).

I heard the call of curlews, the liquid notes of the yellow-back oriel, and saw flocks of lorikeets and rosellas erupt from the trees like fireworks. But the forest, he warned, faces an uncertain future. Not all

is protected. Some real estate dealers even specialize in rain forest properties.

One thoroughly protected tract lies a few kilometres offshore and, coast-crawling towards it aboard a light aircraft, rocking in slight morning turbulence, I studied a pamphlet left in the seat pocket — an illustrated list of marine species inhabiting the warm waters below. Barred grunter, bream, bananas prawn, ladderick, mangrove jack, snapping shrimp.

"Every so often," Russ the pilot shouted, "the air force bombs the Corolla Rocks over there. For bloody hours. Plane after plane."

"Boon?" I gazed in the direction in

Getting there

If you go to Australia: From Ottawa you can fly with Air Canada or Canadian Airlines International and then Qantas Airways for the final leg to Sydney. Published fares for one-month stays range from \$1,568 to \$1,938 when booked 21 days in advance and \$1,688 to \$2,058 for three-month stays. An excursion fare valid for up to a year is \$2,838. Check with your travel agent for discounted airfares to Australia.

More information: A copy of the Australia Tourist Commission's Destination Australia consumer guide is available by calling 1-800-333-4305.

Visas: Visitors require a visa to enter Australia. Ottawa area residents can obtain visas from the Australian High Commission, 50 O'Connor St., 7710, from 9 a.m. to noon and 2-4 p.m. Monday to Friday. For information call 236-0841.

which he was pointing.

"If the bombs miss they just explode harmlessly in the sea. No worries."

"What about the fish?" That was such a silly question he chose to ignore it. "Hinchinbrook!" he yelled and pointed ahead at a misty green shape on the horizon. Viewed from a distance, the world's largest island national park looked conspicuously high wide and handsome. Indeed Captain Cook who named Hinchinbrook, took it to be part of a mainland mountain range.

Then the island supported a large Aboriginal population — one passing Navy ship noted wisps of blue smoke rising from campfires all over the island. They were according to contemporary accounts, a kindly, compassionate, hospitable people. A botanist named Dallachy, sleeping in the bush one night, awoke to find gifts of a sword and shield left by benefactors who had moved quietly on. A settler confronting his first Aborigines recalled: "Observing me shaking with fear, they warmed their hands at the fire, and put them on my face and all over my body to reassure me."

Aborigines slaughtered

Every foot of the island had strong dreamtime links, song lines criss-crossed like spiders' webs. Mount Diamantina possessed important dreaming connections: with thunderstorms. Islanders travelled to the mainland on rafts of wild banana stems, or paddled over surfboard-style or their shields. Inter-tribal fights were ritualized affairs, a kind of martial ballet, people got things out of their system and nobody was hurt.

Then, despite an 1837 British Government ruling that the natives of the Empire should not be harmed, the old racist rituals began. Aborigines were slaughtered, kidnaped for slave labor, hounded, driven away.

In 1874, a missionary named Fuller arrived on Hinchinbrook to "save" those who remained. He built a shack, planted a garden of cassava, sweet potatoes and pumpkins and, for several months, waited for them to appear. No one showed up.

Today, the only evidence of many centuries' habitation is a few middens and rock-walled fishtraps. Not a single Aboriginal remains on Hinchinbrook. It has become, instead, a refuge for affluent vacationers. The resort of wooden chalets is built, swallows'-nest style, along a wooded cliff face. Guests do their rain forest walk along well-marked paths where, at their own pace, they may ponder the state: bloodwoods, ironbarks, quandongs, aranga palms, swamp boxes, acacias, she-oaks, paperbarks and grass trees. Huge turtles browse among the rocks, dolphins come nudging into the shallows.

Yet, after a day or so, I was ready for a banana raft back to the mainland. This huge, beautiful island was empty.

Sydney: Host to the Olympic Games. L2

**SPECIAL PROMOTIONS
PRINT MEDIA**

SUNNY SYDNEY

Why the Olympic Choice Was a Winner for Agencies, Too

While Sydney was celebrating its selection as host city for the 2000 Olympic games, Americans in advertising might well have celebrated the choice as well: Of the cities that remained in the running—Beijing, Berlin, Istanbul, Manchester and Sydney—the winner was the only one that's a natural locale for cheerful, fun-in-the-sun commercials aimed at the American market. Beijing would have been too saddled with the memory of Tiananmen Square. Manchester may be a lovely place these days, but the name alone evokes images of dark, satanic mills—if it evokes any image at all. Berlin, too, carries more historical baggage in the American consciousness than a commercial could comfortably work around. And with Islamic fundamentalism challenging Turkey's secular

identity, Istanbul is too exotic by half for the average soft-drink spot. Meanwhile, Sydney is the one finalist city to which American creatives would cheerfully repair for commercial shoots when winter grips the northern hemisphere. And it attains this prominence just when Florida and California have lost much luster as sun-drenched paradises. So put a few extra shrimp on the barbie for American agency types.



MACTE BARR
Come winter, would you rather be in Sydney or in Manchester?

Tour & Travel News
Oct. 25

Sydney's 2000 Olympics: More 'Gold' For Agents?

LOS ANGELES — Travel agents should be bracing for more requests for information about Australia over the next seven years as a result of Sydney's successful bid to host the Summer Olympic Games in 2000.

A study conducted by the accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick predicted an additional 1.32 million overseas visitors will go to Australia between 1994 and 2004 as a result of the country's higher profile in the tourism sector.

Many of those who come will want to visit other major tourist attractions outside of the city. The study predicted a surge in tourism to the northern state of Queensland, home of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Australian Tourist Commission's offices here and in New York have been trying to capitalize

on Sydney's victory by playing it up through public and media relations.

"We're looking at ways to work with the industry to develop specific programs to capitalize on Sydney's success," said Greg Wren, ATC consumer marketing manager here.

"We want to educate agents about the potential Australia offers."

Wren said one of the biggest short-term benefits to Sydney's successful bid is that it gives the ATC the opportunity to dispel some myths about Australia, particularly that it is too far away.

"Sydney is only 14 hours from the West Coast, which is about as far away as Athens," he said.

"There'll be a lot more information out there about Australia, so we'll be able to overcome some of the perceived barriers we've seen in the past."

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

DENVER, CO
MONTHLY \$8,279

NOVEMBER 1993

BURRELLE'S

-4224
CROSS

OF
OF

6675 AUSSIES
PROMISE FAIR
PRICES FOR
OLYMPIC
VISITORS

Jubilant at the news that the International Olympic Committee has awarded the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney, Australian tourism officials are telling potential visitors that they will be assured fair prices for everything from hotel accommodations to the Games themselves.

"From the beginning of the bid process, ensuring equitable pricing and easy access to the Games has been an important consideration," said Bill Baker, regional director of the Americas for the Australian Tourist Commission. "This is reflected in the united commitment from the tourism industry to fair pricing."

Members of the Australian Hoteliers Association have agreed to limit hotel rates during the Games, and spectators will be able to buy tickets for as little as \$10.

Among the major factors in Sydney's selection was the city's plan for an ecologically sound Olympic Village, designed in collaboration with Greenpeace, the international environmentalist group. The Olympic

Village will, for the first time, accommodate all the athletes in competition at the Games. Approximately 15,000 athletes and team personnel are expected.

Because Sydney is in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are the opposite of those in the United States, this will be largely an autumn event, lasting Sept. 16 through Oct. 1. The only other Southern Hemisphere Games were held in Melbourne, Australia, in 1956.

The Olympic committee's decision rewards a Brisbane bid unsuccessfully for the 1992 Games, and Melbourne was on the short list for 1996.

While the International Olympic Committee was meeting in Monaco in September to make its final site selection, Baker and other Australian tourism officials were attending the Incentive Travel & Meetings Executives show at McCormick Place in Chicago. Hundreds of people at the Australian booth greeted the news with cheers and launched spontaneously into a raucous celebration. The mood was considerably more subdued at China's booth, diagonally across the aisle; Beijing was Sydney's main competition for the Games. ■

WESTERN PRESS
CLIPPINGS

A DIVISION OF M H MEDIA MONITORING LTD.

(604) 669-0338

The Vancouver Courier

Vancouver, BC
Community Paper 65000

07 NOV 93

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VANCOUVER B.C. V6C 1A5

S&A
**Aussies
already
gearing up
for games**

Officials estimate more than 1.32 million overseas visitors will visit Sydney over the next 10 years now that the city has won the 2000 Olympic Games.

"In our view, this is a conservative estimate considering the enormous publicity awareness the Games will generate for Australia," said Bill Baker, America's regional director of the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC).

Australia's quest to secure the Olympics has been pursued for more than a decade. Brisbane bid unsuccessfully for the 1992 Games while Melbourne was short-listed for the 1996 event.

The Australian government wants to ensure that visitors to the 2000 Olympic games will be assured fair prices for everything from hotel accommodations, to taxis, restaurants and the Games themselves.

"From the beginning of the bid process, ensuring equitable pricing and easy access to the Games has been an important consideration," Baker said.

Members of the Australian Hoteliers Association (AHA) and the Motor Inn and Motel Association have agreed to limit accommodation prices during the Games. Retail and hospitality spectators will be able to buy tickets to Olympic Games in Sydney for as little as \$10.

ASIA/PACIFIC

Sydney goes for the gold in the year 2000

Australians throughout the world are celebrating the just-announced news that Sydney will be the site of the 2000 Olympics, the second time in Olympic history the Games have been hosted in the Land Down Under.

The decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Monte Carlo to host the 27th Olympics in Sydney was determined by a majority vote of the 90-member panel.

"The win is a tribute to the monumental preparations made by the Sydney 2000 Bid Committee, and the teamwork, spirit and determination of the Australian people," said the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC) America's Regional Director, Bill Baker.

According to Baker, Sydney's cooperative spirit, facilities, accessibility, accommodations, and the leadership and dedication of the Sydney 2000 Bid Committee were key factors in choosing Sydney over the competing cities of Manchester, Beijing, Berlin and Istanbul.

Baker said the Games would prove as a springboard for raising Australia's visitor arrivals. According to the ATC, an independent economic impact study estimates the Games will add 1.32 million overseas visitors and 174,000 domestic tourists to existing projections between 1994 and 2004.

The win can also be attributed to the technical superiority of Sydney's bid, which included an environmentally acclaimed Olympic Village, prepared in collaboration with Greenpeace. The Olympic Village's ecologically sound facilities and features foreshadow the sustainable city of the 21st Century.

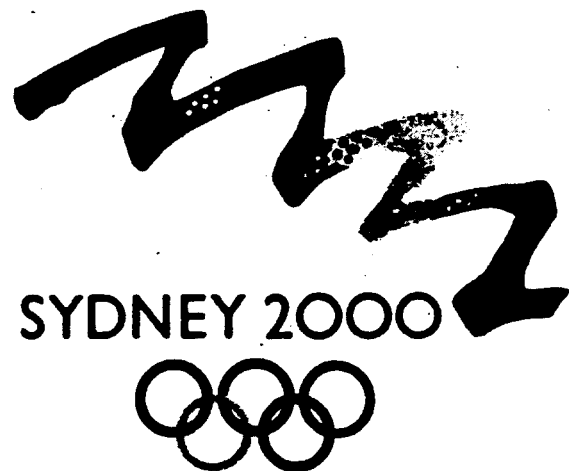
"Sydney's unsurpassed natural beauty, with miles of scenic harbors, vast beaches, and spectacular nearby wilderness areas are also favorable characteristics," said Baker.

The bid has also highlighted Australia's proud sporting heritage. Australia is one of only two countries to have participated in every Olympics since the Games were re-established in 1896.

"The Sydney 2000 campaign to lure the Olympics was a colorful and inspirational effort," said Baker. "The overwhelming public enthusiasm is reflective of Australia's outstanding hospitality and its passion for sports of all kinds," he said.

"This is a proud day for Australia," Baker said. "Let the Games begin."

For further information, contact the Australian Tourist Commission, tel. (310) 552-1988, Ext. 200. □



Australia has participated in every Olympics since the Games were re-established in 1896.

ITC introduces new Mauritius program

ITC International Travel Co. has released a new program featuring the island of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean.

Mauritius is popular as an extension to an African safari or as a destination of its own. Either option can easily be coordinated with Air Mauritius' flights from the African continent or Europe.

A selection of hotels are featured, ranging from the moderately priced beach hotel *PLM Azur Mont Choisy* to the classic resort *Le Saint Geran*, with its own golf course and casino. Also featured are *Le Touessrok*, a luxury hotel set on its own private island, and *La Piroque*, with its thatched chalets and deep-sea fishing.

Prices start from \$460 per person, double occupancy, and include four nights accommodations, breakfast and dinner, airport meet and greet, transfers, half-day sight-seeing tour, and daily assistance.

For more information, contact ITC, 4134 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, CA 90807, tel. (800) 257-4981 or (310) 595-6905. □

Japan & Orient Tours appoints new executive

Kurt A. Bodmer has been appointed *vice president, business development* for Japan & Orient Tours, Inc., *president Tyler Tanaka* recently announced.

Bodmer, who joined J&O in May of 1992 when he relocated to San Diego, was Director, Special Projects. The appointment will include development of new products and refinement of existing ones, including air and land negotiations, as well as the overall responsibility for J&O Air.

For further information, contact Japan & Orient Tours, Inc., 3131 Camino del Rio North, Suite 1080, San Diego, CA 92108-5789, tel. (800) 377-1080 or (619) 282-3131, Fax (619) 283-3131. □

January 1994

PUBLIC RELATIONS & PROMOTIONS

- Total Advertising Equivalency \$2,710,468.00
- Number of Media Releases Issued 1
 Sydney Bushfires Release
- Number of Journalist Interviews Given XX
- Number of VJP Visits to Australia 3
 Gordon Elliott/CBS This Morning
 Namhee Han/KTLA-TV (CANCELLED)
 Paul Sinclair/ Mirabella Magazine
 Bobbi Zane/Orange County Register &
 Daily News

News Bureau/Media Liaison

- Distributed the Sydney "Bushfires" Release via MCI Broadcast fax to the ATC's core list and to Business Wire's budget national circuit to the attention of travel editors on January 10.
- Awaiting revisions from Amy Shearer on "Cruising Australia" release.
- Made revisions to and fact checked "Australia '94 Festivals" release. Need to resubmit to Amy Shearer for final approval.
- Holidaymaker - Vancouver Radio AM 1040: Provided information on Sydney Bushfires for report they were preparing to air Sunday, Jan. 30.
- Researched wire service databases for stories on Sydney firestorms.
- Made calls to key trade media in Los Angeles to encourage attendance at the January ATMC meeting.
- Fulfilled 49 additional requests for information or photography including:
 1. Bob Bruce, Abilene Reporter
 2. Paul Troutman, Camargo Travel
 3. Arthur Frommer
 4. Liz Rogers, Islands in the Sun
 5. Jocelyn Craugh, Meetings & Conventions

6. David Ghitleman, Meetings & Conventions
7. Bea Riemschneider, Physicians' Travel & Meeting Guide
8. Patricia Dellegar, M. Silver and Associates
9. Betty Jupa, Student
10. Frank Bocchino, Tobacco International
11. Terry Sokol, Travel Weekly
12. Dinah Spritzer, Travel Weekly
13. Ivan Cohen, TV Guide
14. Barbara Curcio/Renee Leslie, Washington Post
15. Richard Slosser, Washington Times
16. Harvey Lloyd, Royal Viking Lines
17. Russ Johnson, Travel Media
18. Vicky Wilkens, Pace Communications
19. David Wishart, Freelancer
20. Lyn Urubek, Air New Zealand
21. Lisa Gabor, Bridal Guide
22. Diane Hardisty/Gary Funk, Bakersfield Californian
23. Risa Weinreb, Freelance writer for Modern Bride
24. Doreen Ormiston, Canadian Traveller Magazine
25. Michael Rubens, ABC
26. Nick Selby, Australian Consolidated
27. Helen Brower, Freelancer
28. Jack Goldfarb, Freelancer for the Los Angeles Times
29. Ruth Rudner, Freelancer
30. Earlene Hill, Hill Management Concepts Inc.
31. Carolyn Wixson, National Geographic Traveller
32. Marie Mundaca, Natural History
33. Ron Zakar, Freelancer
34. Richard Slosser, Washington Times
35. Kate Wheatman, Santa Rosa Business Journal
36. Craig Peterson, World Trade Magazine
37. Lisa Finn, Hemispheres
38. Eric Abramson
39. Joe Fisher, Freelance
40. Heather Martin, Canadian Traveller
41. Leslie Woit, Canadian Airlines Magazine
42. Andrea Welch, Successful Meetings
43. Zeke Wigglesworth, San Jose Mercury News
44. Suzy Lavenas, Travel Weekly
45. Lyn Hikida, TravelAge West
46. Anita Stewart, Freelance
47. Jane Matenaer, WMYX Radio
48. Ms. Mary Scoviak, Hotels Magazine
49. Carl Sommers, NY Times

VJP

Worked with 25 journalists and 4 TV stations/networks during the month, either to invite them to visit Australia or to coordinate their itineraries and plan their upcoming trips. Updated the VJP database with current articles and advertising equivalencies. There were four planned VJP visits to Australia in the month of January with the exception of KTLA as they cancelled at the last minute.. Journalists worked with included:

1. Cane - Lasko/WABC Radio/NY
2. David Wishart, Freelance
3. Kathie Levine, Freelance
4. Michael Gray & Amy Smith, Freelance
5. James Gaffney, Mature Life Features
6. Bobbi Zane
7. Mirabella Magazine
8. Stacy March, Front Runners, KOMO TV 4
9. Guy DeMarino (Heritage Theme Tour)
10. Christopher Guly
11. Debbie Selinsky, Freelance
12. Philip Szporer, Freelance
13. Michael Justice, Syndicated Travel Writer & Photographer
14. Andrew Scott, Freelance
15. Patti Nickell, Freelance
16. Ann Jones, Freelance
17. Sally Kilbridge, Bride's and Your New Home
18. Wendy Lyon Moonan, Freelance
19. Stephen W. Byers, Men's Journal
20. Jim Hutchison
21. Janet Rae Brooks
22. Michael O'Byrne, Sunday Edition
23. Kevin Smith, Sports Traveller Magazine
24. Brian Brenn
25. Ken Hoffman, The Houston Post
26. Steve Payne, Toronto Sun
27. Nashville Network
28. Entertainment Tonight

VJP Other

- Dreamtime: Finalized post-touring for media delegates; prepared and sent visa information to media delegates; initiated Int'l. ticketing arrangements.
- KTLA: Prepared detailed MAF and TAF; researched and prepared list of story ideas; coordinated ticket arrangements with Air New Zealand and Hayman Island; wrote apology and request for KTLA to reschedule to Namhee Han, senior producer.

- CBS This Morning: Provided ATC/Sydney with background on CBS This Morning shoot; requested ATC/Sydney cooperation with research and story idea planning.
- Sent original publications of VJP articles to Amy for forwarding to Sydney.
- Updated the VJP database with articles produced and received in November.

Aboriginal and Environmental U.S. Tour

- Received an additional \$30,964.00 in advertising equivalency making the total ad equivalency \$1,039,653.

Trade Media Relations

- Pitched the "Aussie Specialist" story to Tour & Travel News, Travel Weekly and Travel Agent.

Weekend to Weekend

- Met with Qantas Vacations to discuss the Program.
 - Prepared outline of program activities
 - Drafted media release
 - Prepared list of media targets

Special Interest Australia

- Researched Associations lists
- Researched publications for media coverage
- Prepared YOGO program outline

Miscellaneous

- Participated in PR meeting in Los Angeles on January 12.
- Prepared entry for the 1994 PATA Marketing Programme Awards on the "Good Morning America" promotion.
- Prepared list of media for consideration to participate on Austravel's gourmet tour this Spring.
- Attended HSMIA Awards dinner and accepted Golden Bell and Silver Addrian Awards on behalf of the ATC.
- Attended ATMC luncheon.
- Attended cocktail reception by the Consulate to bid farewell to Terry Hunt, Trade Commissioner, and welcome Ian Taylor, his replacement.

- Prepared list of promotional ideas for consideration of YOGO and other special interest budgets.
- Checked ATC stationery supply and ordered mailing labels.
- Ordered black and white photos of the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge
- Ordered back issue of the Milwaukee Sentinel to distribute to ATC/Sydney.
- Completed the December clips and status reports and sent to client.
- Updated visa issuance/consulate chart for distribution to possible VJPers.
- Investigated the possibility of canceling the 800 number from Canada coming into AVISO. Submitted memo to Amy Shearer. Awaiting her response.

PUBLICATIONS & INFORMATION

Newsletters

Meetings & Conventions Update

- Writing copy for the Spring '94 issue.

US Advertising Equivalency

Visiting Journalists Program	\$1,279,644.00
Press Releases/Interviews	\$ 63,068.00
Photo/Information Assistance	\$ 878,464.00
U.S. Aboriginal Road Show	<u>\$ 30,964.00</u>

TOTAL US AD EQUIVALENCY **\$2,252,140.00**

Canadian Advertising Equivalency

Visiting Journalists Program	\$ 144,264.00
Press Releases/Interviews	\$ 104,224.00
Photo/Information Assistance	<u>\$ 209,840.00</u>

TOTAL CANADIAN AD EQUIVALENCY **\$ 458,328.00**

**TOTAL NORTH AMERICAN
ADVERTISING EQUIVALENCY** **\$ 2,710,468.00**

AVISO INC.
MARKETING COMMUNICATION

AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION

CLIPS REPORT

JANUARY 1994

RECEIVED
DEPT. OF JUSTICE
CRIMINAL DIVISION
96 FEB -5 AMO:36
INTERNAL SECURITY
SECTION
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**AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION
CLIPS REPORT
JANUARY 1994**

U.S. VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM

JUL 14	ARIZONA DAILY STAR (TUCSON, AZ) (S-175,000) "It's not what you might think" by Glen Putman	\$19,316.00
NOV 21	DAILY BREEZE (TORRANCE, CA) (S-130,000) "On the Rocks" by Stanton H. Patty	\$39,328.00
NOV 23	SHERBORN TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-1,394) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$220.00
	WELLESLEY TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-8,220) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$340.00
	ASHLAND TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-3,664) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$240.00
	NEWTON TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-23,730) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$692.00
	WAYLAND TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-3,495) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$308.00
	CAMBRIDGE TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-21,300) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$544.00
	WESTON TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-3,635) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$132.00

U.S. VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

NOV 23	SUDBURY TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-4,646) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$308.00
	HOLLISTON TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-3,566) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$240.00
	NATICK TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-9,500) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$312.00
	BROOKLINE TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-20,464) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$680.00
	FRAMINGHAM TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-25,593) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$468.00
	BOSTON TAB (BOSTON, MA) (W-24,141) "Island deals" by George Hobic	\$544.00
DEC 93	HEMISPHERES (GREENSBORO, NC) (M-437,699) "Hiking through Aussie Country" by Elizabeth Hansen	\$193,792.00
DEC 01	TOUR & TRAVEL NEWS (MANHASSET, NY) (W-48,000) "Things Are Starting To Look Up Down Under" by Mark Roberti	\$16,276.00
DEC 03	THE HOUSTON POST (HOUSTON, TX) (S-358,121) "Waltzing lesson to Aussie anthem" by Ken Hoffman	\$11,080.00
DEC 04	THE HOUSTON POST (HOUSTON, TX) (S-358,121) "Kangaroos are now fair game" by Ken Hoffman	\$11,080.00

U.S VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

DEC 05	THE POST-CRESCENT (APPLETON, WI) (S-71,857) "Down Under" by Patrick Soran	\$12,452.00
DEC 10	THE HOUSTON POST (HOUSTON, TX) (S-358,121) "Darwin's natural selection is beer" by Ken Hoffman	\$11,080.00
DEC 11	THE HOUSTON POST (HOUSTON, TX) (S-358,121) "Doctors over Down Under" by Ken Hoffman	\$11,080.00
DEC 12	THE HOUSTON POST (HOUSTON, TX) (S-358,121) "Even the nighttime sky is different Down Under" by Ken Hoffman	\$16,800.00
DEC 14	SALEM EVENING NEWS (SALEM, MA) (D-30,180) "In the Outback" by Janet Celesta Lowe	\$5,872.00
DEC 14	SALEM EVENING NEWS (SALEM, MA) (D-30,180) "Enjoying fun and sun in Sydney, Australia" by Janet Celesta Lowe	\$5,748.00
DEC 14	THE HOUSTON POST (HOUSTON, TX) (S-358,121) "Australia's most unlikely export" by Ken Hoffman	\$11,080.00
DEC 18	THE TORONTO STAR (TORONTO, ON) (D-505,000) "Exploring the desolate Outback..." by Jeff Miller	\$117,424.00
DEC 19	THE SUNDAY OKLAHOMAN (OKLAHOMA CITY, OK) (S-323,763) "Take a Stroll on Scenic Sydney Harbor" by Janet Lowe	\$19,324.00
DEC 24	THE VANCOUVER SUN (VANCOUVER, BC) (D-222,401) "Big Wheels Turning" by Jeff Miller	\$55,192.00

U.S. VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

DEC	26	WASHINGTON POST (WASHINGTON, DC) (S-1,141,089) "It's a Bungle Out There" by David Yeadon	\$273,672.00
DEC	26	ARIZONA DAILY STAR (TUCSON, AZ) (S-175,000) "A New GI Invasion" by Robert W. Bone	\$40,220.00
DEC	26	ATLANTIC CITY PRESS (PLEASANTVILLE, NJ) (S-90,150) "Experience beauty of the wilderness in northwest Australia" by Jeff Miller	\$13,148.00
DEC	29	MILWAUKEE SENTINEL (MILWAUKEE, WI) (D-169,961) "In Touch with Australia's far Outback" by Mike Nichols	\$65,952.00
JAN	94	PERFORMING ARTS (LOS ANGELES, CA) (M-700,000) "What's Up, Down Under" by Norm Chandler Fox	\$37,996.00
JAN	02	THE SUNDAY DENVER POST (DENVER, CO) (S-428,253) "Other wild west echoes the tread of tough pioneers" by Mary Ellen Botter	\$6,660.00
JAN	02	NEWS-HERALD (WILLOUGHBY, OH) (S-66,668) "Industry has good news for travelers in '94" by Janet Podolak	\$284.00
JAN	02	MIAMI HERALD (MIAMI, FL) (S-527,851) "A Real Walkabout" by Mary Ellen Botter	\$11,672.00
JAN	02	ST. PETERSBURG TIMES (ST. PETERSBURG, FL) (S-460,319) "Tourists aren't so bad" by Catherine Watson	\$16,056.00
JAN	09	GRAND RAPIDS PRESS (GRAND RAPIDS, MI) (S-196,960) "Track Australia's beauty on transcontinental train" by Jeff Miller	\$9,172.00

U.S. VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

JAN 09	CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (CHICAGO, IL) (S-531,226) "Australia's Wild Side" by Mary Ellen Botter	\$5,560.00
JAN 09	DAILY BREEZE (TORRANCE, CA) (S-130,000) "Australian Adventures" by John Penisten	\$36,388.00
JAN 09	THE TIMES-PICAYUNE (NEW ORLEANS, LA) (S-425,000) "Adventurous spirits find nuptial hideaways off the beaten path" by James B. Gaffney	\$1,640.00
JAN 16	BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE (BOSTON, MA) (S-812,021) "Australia in easy steps" by Robert W. Bone	\$119,992.00
JAN 23	FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM (FORT WORTH, TX) (S-360,000) "The Heart of Australia" by Mike Nichols	\$74,268.00
FEB 94	OUT (PITTSBURGH, PA) (M-37,000) "Party Down Under" by George Hobic	\$5,012.00

CANADIAN VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM

JAN 13	CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS (TORONTO, ON) (W-14,000) "From the West" by Arthur Proudfoot	\$1,696.00
	CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS (TORONTO, ON) (W-14,000) "From the West" by Arthur Proudfoot	\$848.00
JAN 20	CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS (TORONTO, ON) (W-14,000) "From the West" by Arthur Proudfoot	\$3,956.00
JAN 23	THE SUNDAY SUN (TORONTO, ON) (S-457,000) "On Track in Australia" by Steve Payne	\$136,068.00

CANADIAN VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

JAN 27 CANADIAN TRAVEL PRESS (TORONTO, ON) (W-14,000)
"From the West"
by Arthur Proudfoot **\$1,696.00**

U.S. PRESS RELEASES / INTERVIEWS

NOV 93 RECOMMEND MAGAZINE (MIAMI LAKES, FL) (M-43,021)
"Australia Report"
by Ed Rampell **\$8,616.00**

NOV 11 ATLANTA DAILY WORLD (ATLANTA, GA) (D & S-19,000)
"Aboriginals Share Their Country's History,
And Uniqueness Today" **\$940.00**

NOV 27 FAIRBANKS DAILY-NEWS-MINER (FAIRBANKS, AK) (D-17,007)
"Australian Christmas" **\$224.00**

NOV 28 VALLEY MORNING STAR (HARLINGEN, TX) (D-28,346)
"Option Offered"
by Alison Ashton **\$172.00**

NOV 29 TRAVELAGE WEST (SAN FRANCISCO, CA) (W-36,000)
"Victoria Joins Partnership To Cut Costs" **\$1,544.00**

DEC 93 MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS (DENVER, CO) (M-80,279)
"Cultural Tourism Comes of Age in the Outback" **\$26,152.00**

DEC 01 DAILY NEWS-SUN (SUN CITY, AZ) (D-21,000)
"Australian Christmas" **\$216.00**

DEC 01 TOUR & TRAVEL NEWS (MANHASSET, NY) (W-48,000)
"Australia Debuts Tourism Plan That Simplifies U.S. Promotion"
by Mark Roberti **\$6,704.00**

DEC 05 CORSICANA DAILY SUN (CORSICANA, TX) (D & S-8,041)
"Staying Connected Overseas" **\$72.00**

DEC 05 DAILY NEWS (WOODLAND HILLS, CA) (D-223,647)
"Way Down Under" **\$3,960.00**

DEC 06 TOUR & TRAVEL NEWS (MANHASSET, NY) (W-48,000)
"Partnership Postponed" **\$1,436.00**

U.S. PRESS RELEASES / INTERVIEWS (CONTINUED)

DEC 16	HYDRO REVIEW (HYDRO, OK) (W-1,860) "Christmas around the world" by Dee Ann Ray	\$12.00
DEC 17	TRAVEL MANAGEMENT DAILY (NEW YORK, NY) (DAILY) "Partnership Australia"	\$1,800.00
DEC 19	HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE (HIBBING, MN) (D & S- 10,091) "It's Christmas Time Around the World"	\$68.00
DEC 20	TRAVEL AGENT (NEW YORK, NY) (W-52,132) "Market Watch: Australia"	\$7,920.00
DEC 26	NEWS-TIMES (DANBURY, CT) (S-45,519) "Travel trend: See how people live" by William A. Davis	\$312.00
DEC 27	TRAVEL WEEKLY (NEW YORK, NY) (2-TIMES/WEEK-21,198) "ATC Unifies Aussie Regions Under Worldwide Marketing Plan"	\$9,760.00
JAN 02	NEWS AND OBSERVER (RALEIGH, NC) (S-189,168) "Caution: Cultures Crossing" by William A. Davis	\$320.00
JAN 02	BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD (BOSTON, MA) (S-223,190) "Adelaide Festival celebrates ethnic diversity Down Under"	\$8,064.00
JAN 03	TRAVELAGE WEST (SAN FRANCISCO, CA) (W-36,000) "Australian Tourism marketing Returns"	\$3,084.00
JAN 09	WEST COUNTY TIMES (RICHMOND, CA) (D & S-34,000) "How to tread softly when visiting indigenous peoples" by Laura Bly	\$3,240.00
JAN 17	ADVERTISING AGE (NEW YORK, NY) (W-87,334) "Aussie tourism industry links up" by Geoffrey Le Martin	\$9,416.00

CANADIAN PRESS RELEASES / INTERVIEWS

NOV 16 AGENT CANADA TRAVEL MAGAZINE (VANCOUVER, BC) (10,700)
"Australian Tourist Commission Appoints New Managers"
\$300.00

JAN 15 THE FINANCIAL POST (TORONTO, ON) (D-100,000)
"Founder circled Adelaide with green"
by Tanya Buchdahl \$72,000.00

JAN 29 THE GLOBE AND MAIL (TORONTO, ON) (M-305,723)
"Australia jumps on the ecotourism marketing bandwagon"
by Alan Harman \$31,924.00

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NOV 93 JAX FAX TRAVEL MARKETING MAGAZINE (DARIEN, CT) (M-28,000)
"Australia rates high marks for American traveler satisfaction"
\$8,548.00

NOV 21 LOS ANGELES TIMES (LOS ANGELES, CA) (S-1,576,425)
"Destination: Australia At 20, Sydney Opera House Flies High"
by Catherine Foster \$6,440.00

NOV 28 WEST HAWAII TODAY (KAILUA KONA, HI) (D & S-11,167)
"Holiday travel packages available worldwide"
by Alison Ashton \$88.00

DEC 93 MEETING MANAGER (DALLAS, TX) (M-10,600)
"Focus On Melbourne, Australia: A City With No Limits"
by Rudy R. Wright, CMP \$24,120.00

DEC 93 INCENTIVE (NEW YORK, NY) (M-40,000)
"Here's to the Winners!" \$3,332.00

DEC 05 SUNDAY STAR-LEDGER (NEWARK, NJ) (S-720,174)
"Jailhouse Chic"
by Jason Szep \$32,372.00

DEC 05 SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS (SANTA BARBARA, CA) (D-53,300)
"A '60s-style surfer's paradise in Australia"
by Brian Alexander \$5,600.00

U.S. PHOTO / INFORMATION ASSISTANCE (CONTINUED)

DEC 19	SUNDAY REGISTER (DES MOINES, IA) (S-327,105) "New adventures for a new year" by Judi Dash	\$6,520.00
DEC 26	CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (CHICAGO, IL) (S-531,226) "Fresh Horizons" by Judi Dash	\$2,224.00
DEC 28	THE SEATTLE TIMES (SEATTLE, WA) (D-239,478) "Traveling down under"	\$1,380.00
JAN 94	EARTHWATCH (WATERTOWN, MA) (BI-MONTHLY-60,000) "Birds of Western Australia"	\$2,140.00
JAN 94	EARTHWATCH (WATERTOWN, MA) (BI-MONTHLY-60,000) "Australian Honey-Feeders"	\$8,252.00
JAN 94	EARTHWATCH (WATERTOWN, MA) (BI-MONTHLY-60,000) "Australia's Rainforest Canopy"	\$9,780.00
JAN 94	MIRABELLA (NEW YORK, NY) (M-450,000) "The Transcendental Tourist"	\$10,108.00
JAN 94	MIRABELLA (NEW YORK, NY) (M-450,000) "Travel Debriefing"	\$37,316.00
JAN 94	JAX FAX TRAVEL MARKETING MAGAZINE (DARIEN, CT) (M-28,000) "Best of Australia featured in new escorted tour programs from Mount Cook Line"	\$12,824.00
	JAX FAX TRAVEL MARKETING MAGAZINE (DARIEN, CT) (M-28,000) "Australian Tourist Commission announces appointment of three managers"	\$3,108.00
JAN 94	TRAVEL/HOLIDAY (NEW YORK, NY) (M-550,000) "Australia" by John Melick	\$152,616.00
JAN 94	PATA TRAVEL NEWS "Vintage Valley"	\$ N/A
JAN 94	HEMISPHERES "Australia 25 Fascinating Facts"	\$122,668.00

U.S. PHOTO / INFORMATION ASSISTANCE (CONTINUED)

JAN	94	TRAVEL/HOLIDAY (NEW YORK, NY) (M-550,000) "The Globetrotter's Indispensable Index"	\$10,088.00
JAN	02	HOUSTON CHRONICLE (HOUSTON, TX) (S-607,539) "New Twists on Familiar Roads" by Judi Dash	\$2,496.00
JAN	02	NEW YORK TIMES (NEW YORK, NY) (S-1,735,706) "In Two Seas, Worlds of Beauty" by James Grant	\$8,128.00
JAN	02	MIAMI HERALD (MIAMI, FL) (S-527,851) "Making Contact" by Judi Dash	\$1,168.00
JAN	02	BURLINGTON COUNTY TIMES (WILLINGBORO, NJ) (S-47,800) "The right stuff: Tips on packing light" by Laura Bly	\$1,356.00
JAN	02	RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH (RICHMOND, VA) (S-258,303) "For '94 adventurers, the wild, the mild"	\$1,952.00
JAN	09	THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS (DALLAS, TX) (S-809,188) "The Active Traveler in '94: A World of Adventures" by Judi Dash	\$17,940.00
JAN	09	CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (CHICAGO, IL) (S-531,226) "A Whole World of Helpful Brochures and Advice"	\$1,112.00
JAN	31	THE BUSINESS JOURNAL (SANTA ROSA, CA) (M-8,500) "Australia: The Gateway To The Asia-Pacific, The Gateway To Your Future"	\$5,540.00
FEB	94	SKIN DIVER MAGAZINE (LOS ANGELES, CA) (M-217,795) "Australia: There Is No Other Place In The World Like It!"	\$379,248.00

CANADIAN PHOTO/INFORMATION ASSISTANCE

NOV 22	TOURISME (MONTREAL, PQ) "Melbourne dans toute sa diversité" by Serge Lamarre	\$3,092.00
NOV 24	THE GLOBE AND MAIL (TORONTO, ON) (M-305,723) "Kangaroo Island, Hopping along in roo time" by Gerald Fitzpatrick	\$127,696.00
DEC 04	THE OTTAWA CITIZEN (OTTAWA, ON) (S- 191,200) "Australia's exotic rain forests" by Alexander Frater	\$58,820.00
DEC 31	WINNIPEG FREE PRESS (WINNIPEG, MB) (S-180,000) "Aussies cater to backpackers" by Mike Ward	\$5,760.00
DEC 31	THE EDMONTON JOURNAL (EDMONTON, AB) (D-155,000) "Spruced-up Sydney becoming hub city of the Pacific Basin" by Desmond Balmer	\$1,468.00
JAN 08	THE CHRONICLE-HERALD (HALIFAX, NS) (D-83,400) "Cultural classic: Sydney Opera House turns 21" by Jerry Wingenbach	\$13,004.00

U.S.
VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM

It's not what you might think

Good, honest Australian food
is in a world class of its own

July 14, 1993
Washington D.C.
Arizona Daily

By Glen Putman
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The food in Australia certainly fooled me. During a recent trip, I didn't have one bite of kangaroo, or skippys, as the Aussies call them, and nary a smidgen of crocodile, snake or emu touched my lips. Aussie meat pie? No way. The koala? Bite your tongue, I'd rather devour a cuddly puppy!

What I did enjoy was an incredible cornucopia of native Australian fish and shellfish, lamb, vegetables and fruits, local cheeses and more — all lovingly prepared by a cosmopolitan brew of foreign chefs who have emigrated from United States, France, Switzerland and Japan. And, of course, this was all washed down with the world-class Australian wines.

Frankly, I was expecting Australian fare to be a spinoff of the bland offerings most usually associated with food in England. What I got instead was a sophisticated cuisine and culinary style reminiscent of the best any New York or California chef could concoct, enhanced with European flair and distinct Pacific Rim accents. Fair *Dinkum tucker* (good, honest food) in Aussie parlance.

Dietmar Sawyere, a 29-year-old Swiss, who is the executive chef at the new Park Lane Hotel in Sydney, is a typical apostle of the new Australian cuisine. On an early morning tour through Sydney's ultra-high-tech fish market, Sawyere explained how he chooses the freshest and finest-quality Tasmanian salmon, sea scallops, mud crabs, Nambucca River oysters and other delicacies he and his 60 chefs prepare in the hotel's extraordinary Gekko restaurant.

Sawyere, whose parents are both chefs, began his career at 16 in London and at age 19 was named Young Chef of the Year and Savoy Hotel's Best Young Chef. Before coming to Australia in 1987, Sawyere worked in Hong Kong, Thailand and New Zealand, where he was twice named Chef of the Year. His philosophy is "to bring reality back to food and produce consistently good food, which is not pretentious."

After sampling his peppered tataki of tuna, Thai fish cakes, an incredible Oriental consommé, salmon steamed in Chinese cabbage on black bean and coriander sauce, and grilled lamb fillets in mustard jus, I can attest to the excellence.

The Gekko wine list includes two excellent Chardonnays: Lakes Folly, 1990, from the Hunter Valley, and Petaluma, 1990, from South Australia. A Jasper Hill-Emily's Paddock 1988 Cabernet was delicious. The price ranges between \$35-\$42, Australian, about 30 percent less in U.S. currency. The Park Lane Hotel is ideally located opposite Hyde Park with sweeping views of Sydney Harbor and the city skyline.

Tetsuya Wakuda blends the best of Japanese and Pacific Rim touches with the outstanding local ingredients. At Tetsuya's on Darling Street, Sydney,

*News item: Australian
Airlines is offering a
smoked kangaroo salad
to first- and
business-class
passengers on domestic
flights.*

we were charmed by a sugar-cured Tasmanian ocean trout set on sushi rice with wasabi mayonnaise, *shiso* and salmon roe. A nifty presentation of grilled veal fillets with sauteed leeks, *miso* and fried taro was also outstanding.

The only place I came close to having "a shrimp from the barbie" was at Doyle's at Watson's Bay, a huge locals' hangout where Sunday brunch can last from 11 a.m. until after 3 p.m. (try the barramundi, an excellent local fish).

The view of Sydney across the harbor is wonderful, and fifth-generation owner Peter Doyle pours his Hunter Valley Endless Summer Chardonnay and delights guests with his mixed Aussie-Irish blarney.

In the Hunter Valley, a two-hour drive from Sydney, the winemakers say they have the perfect combination of soil and climate (*terroir*) to produce the highest quality wines. Australia produces about 500,000 tons of grapes annually (25,000 tons from the Hunter Valley). This compares with about 2.1 million tons from California wineries.

One of the most interesting Australian wines we tasted was a Wyndham Estate 1992 Verdelho, a pale straw-green Portuguese varietal with citrus overtones and a dry, crisp finish. Ian and Merralea Scarborough, owners of Scarborough Winery in the Hunter, spend part of each year in Callistoga. They ship their grape picking equipment to California and rent it to Napa Valley winemakers, whose harvest season (September) is opposite that in Australia.

Over dinner at Chez Pok at Peppers Guest House, we enjoyed a wonderful selection of wines from McGuigan Brothers, Mount Pleasant and Tyrrell, with the excellent cuisine of chef Jean-Marc Pollet, who was born in Calais and has worked in some of the world's top hotels in Monte Carlo, Geneva and Paris. Chez Pok was named Best Restaurant in the Hunter Region for 1992.

Our menu included fresh river yabbies (similar to crayfish), a whole Tasmanian salmon encased in rock salt and cracked open at the table, and

iced gateau with Grand Marnier and marshmallow flambé. Delightful.

A couple of miles up the valley, chef Robert Molines presides over his Robert's at Pepper Tree, a unique restaurant furnished with antiques and set in an original settler's slab cottage, built in 1876. Robert uses a wood-fired oven to produce his excellent cuisine, including char-grilled quail, with Hunter Valley snails, stuffed *calamari* with saffron butter and roast suckling lamb with herbs and Pinot Noir glaze.

The French Algerian worked in Monaco, Nice and Cannes before coming to Australia. While his Australian wine list is extensive, this Frenchman continues to serve French champagne instead of a local sparkling wine.

Off the coast of North Queensland, the Great Barrier Reef is one of the great natural attractions in the world. Hayman, one of The Leading Hotels of World, is a mega-deluxe resort in the nearby Whitsunday Islands, and the food and wine at the Chef's Table at Hayman, hosted by executive chef

Jean-Marie Pougnet, are worth a trip halfway around the world. Pougnet, a Frenchman who trained in France, Switzerland, Dubai and the United States, simply stuns the score of selected guests who join him once a week in a long, candlelit table set in the huge kitchen at the resort.

For about \$55 (Australian) per person (wines are extra), the diners are lavished with the likes of *ravioli de foie gras*, gateau of witlook with chicken and sweetbreads, John Dory on a bed of fennel with garlic jus and an onion and potato cake, lamb loin encased in puff pastry, and chocolate and banana truffle in vanilla sauce. Incredible, when you realize the resort is the only business on the island. Virtually everything is prepared on site.

Beer notes

Compared with the United States, it seems hardly anyone in Australia drinks Foster's. My favorite beers were Victoria Bitter, brewed in Melbourne; Tooheys Blue, a dark beer

from Sydney; and Cascade Lager, from Australia's oldest brewery and made with Tasmanian barley. The label features a painting of two Tasmanian devils. Tasty!

Last bite

Australian Airlines, the domestic arm of Qantas, is offering a smoked kangaroo salad to first- and business-class passengers flying out of Adelaide. Qantas is said to be considering offering kangaroo meat on international flights. The taste is considered "excellent," but some Aussies are concerned.

"We can see all those American wildlife campaigners doing a lot of worrying," commented one reporter. But many Australians we talked with consider the prolific "skippys" a scourge, since they feast on farmers' crops. Stay tuned.

P.S.: And wouldn't you know: In Sydney, there's a place called Sam's Designer Hot Dogs. I passed.

Glen Putman is a Los Altos, Calif., free-lance writer.



A sous chef at Peppers Guest House, in the Hunter Valley wine region, collects fresh herbs in the nearby garden Glen Putman photo