

For Six Month Period Ending Aug 31, 1994
(Insert date)

Name of Registrant **AVISO, INC.** Registration No. **04220**

Business Address of Registrant
**1150 Marina Village Parkway, Ste. 104
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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
Ann Black	Vice President	7/15/94

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CANADIAN
VISITING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM



by Arthur Proudfoot

The title "From The West" is something of a misnomer this week, and will be for weeks to come. CTP's western correspondent has taken flight and touched down in Brisbane on Australia's east coast (From The East?) where he will spend the next couple of months. Here is his first instalment from "The Wonder Down Under."

Non-Stop Comfort

Getting here was part of the fun on a Qantas daylight flight non-stop Los Angeles to Sydney. Four movies and umpteen meals and snacks helped pass the tedium. This LAX flight was made even more comfortable by an overnight in Los Angeles. It's not a mandatory stay, as there is a connecting flight to Qantas out of Vancouver. A daylight departure on Qantas means 12:45 p.m. — no rushing, no fussing. But, I digress. Brisbane and Melbourne passengers transfer in Sydney and go through immigration/customs at their chosen destination. A pleasure indeed, providing time to buy the duty-free essentials at real duty-free prices. Vancouver: duty-free, please note.

Coolangatta Revisited

So why the Gold Coast? With two months to squander this winter, and the thought of guaranteed sun, revisiting Coolangatta seemed the natural thing to do. I spent a week in Brisbane doing a preview of their Expo some years ago and a day trip to the Gold Coast, at the time, left its impression. One has to come back and see.

Car Wanted

Some travel pointers. On the Gold Coast you need a car. There are buses and a few cabs, but without a car one would be stuck. It would be great to have a vacation without having to drive anywhere, but it's not to be. There are all kinds of accommodations from the fantastic Marriott Surfers Paradise, Conrad International, Jupiter's Casino and Pan Pacific to furnished apartments in modern high-rises to motel-style units. For many places, one has to hire bed linens by the week, as well as towels and pillow cases! Some basics need to be purchased; for example, soap. Not complex, only different.

Honeymooners Everywhere

Take, for example, that first morning in this sea-view apartment where I am staying. It has a kitchen to die for with every cooking item known to Julia Child. But where's the coffee pot? Off to the Marriott in Surfer's Paradise, about 30 minutes south of here to drink the perfect cup of coffee in an environment only money can buy. Amazing number of young Japanese couples here, most of them honeymooners. Reminis-

cent of Waikiki days when honeymoon groups would arrive in large parties filling JAL's Boeing 747s. Have the Japanese tour operators, who dominate the honeymoon market, found a better deal on the very affordable Gold Coast than that which they had in Waikiki? Check this one out (Coffee pot problem solved for \$39 in the local hardware).

WATS The Deal?

At press time, I still hadn't had the opportunity to talk with any of the people of either Australia or Queensland's tourist industry. Local reports indicate that there is an increase in tourist numbers to Victoria and that New South Wales was doing better than Queensland. How the Canadian market fits in, I'll find out. Closing all of Australia's state and country bureaus in Canada is bound to have a serious effect. WATS lines to LAX may be cheaper, but how effective are they? And, of course, a lot of the burden is put on the backs of those tour operators who specialize in this wonderful land — ANZA Travel and Qantas.

Value For Money

The Gold Coast is affordable. A full roast beef dinner can be had for \$2.40 in any of the sports cum gambling clubs. Anyone coming for an extended stay, which would be more than

three weeks by my definition of extended, would find they could live here at the same pace and price as they do in Canada, without the winter rigours of cold weather. Dining out is, generally speaking, much cheaper on the Gold Coast than anywhere in Canada. Go to one of the posh hotels, of course, and you pay accordingly.

Canada Too, Eh?

Vis-a-vis my recent item on Fiji. Currently, the destination attracts a few younger Japanese visitors, but the Fiji Visitors Bureau would like to increase these numbers. To be successful, however, Fiji will have to produce for this special group of visitors their favourite pastime — shopping. Canada catered to the Japanese. Vancouver, for example, has a small city block that sells the creme-de-la-creme of gifts to Japanese travellers. Fiji can follow using the infrastructure of the dizzy days of duty-free Fiji, when travellers rerouted themselves specifically through Fiji for just one thing — shopping. With an election just happening, tourism will likely be put on the back burner and onto a very low flame. If they forget to turn up the flame and start cooking, tourism, which is a vital item in the country's economy, will be forgotten. Fiji could turn into a "remember when" item. Canada too, eh?

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Original



by Arthur Proudfoot

CTP columnist Arthur Proudfoot is in Australia for the next two months, from where he'll send updates on tourism "Downunder style"

News Travels Fast

I learn that Ontario's tour operators do not like having to advertise their price with taxes displayed for the consumer to read. Look at the other side of the coin and see that consumers won't be staggered when asked for another \$50 or so to cover the extras of a "\$199 special." Since the gross figure will have been already spelled out in the advertising copy, agents can sing out the total cost rather than mumble it.

The New California?

There was a time when immigration to Southern California averaged out at 4,000 people a day. The draw was lifestyle, be-

country to Queensland's Gold Coast. Everyone wants to work and reside on the beach. I don't blame them, but it puts much pressure on the infrastructure.

Full At The Inn

During the cricket test matches between Australia and South Africa last month, Melbourne's wet weather permitted four hours of play as Queensland was cooking away nicely to a nice medium well. Suffice to say that "full" signs are on display at all the beach motels, and will stay there until after the school break.

Packers Backed

Backpackers are appreciated as "real tourists" in Australia. In Queensland they have status and deserve it. Queensland's tourism industry counted 115,000 of them in 1992, all of whom left an average of \$3,267 per pack. That's a lot of money. In fact, it is said to be more than what the average traveller staying at a hotel spends. Backpackers travel Australia's length and breadth by bus and train. Changing this is a new company, "Up Over Down Under" which will fly these hardy hikers to the places backpackers

will fly to multiple destinations. Three more aircraft are coming on line soon.

Price Check

Do you pay more for an item at an airport concession than you do downtown? I'm sure you do. John Tabart, who heads up Brisbane Airport, is preparing to prove that airport buying is the same as elsewhere. I'd like to agree. Not too many years ago, I did a price check on an Eaton-purchased camera with one in Sydney airport's duty-free shop. My retail item was cheaper than their duty-free merchandise. And I was comparing apples with apples. Honest.

Card Or Cheque?

My Visa card finally produced money from the Advance Bank ATM. Why not carry traveller's cheques? I'm glad you asked. Why carry traveller's cheques when one lives in this electronic age with, supposedly, access to cash through friendly ATMs throughout the world? Back this up with an American Express card and a cheque book and Amex will provide the coin of the country. The very same bank is in the local press.

Air NZ Plan

I also hear that Air New Zealand would like to fly into the Gold Coast/Coolangatta airport in order to cater to its Gold Coast passengers. For Air

NZ to do so, customs and immigration facilities would have to be established.

G'day? No Way

G'day is a greeting seldom heard. The only people I've heard use the greeting are Paul Hogan, Australian Tourism Commission personnel abroad, homesick Aussies and the local

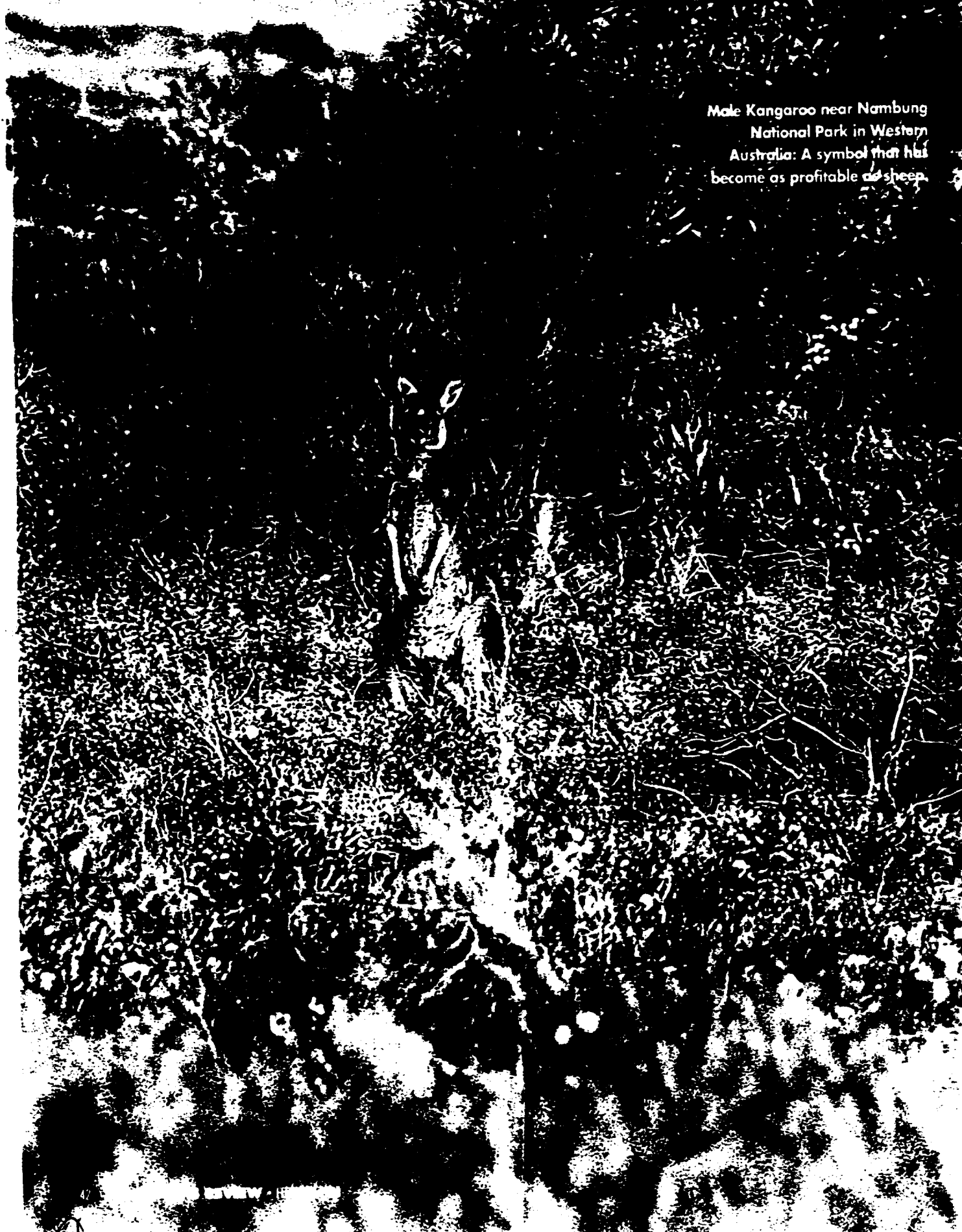
butcher. Women of culture do not g'day, my source being a couple of Australian women in real estate. It's not a critical issue, no more than an item which one mulls over, seeking some kind of an answer that would be politically correct, without being wimpish -- which I'm finding this to be G'day!

FROM THE WEST

DOCTOR'S REVIEW

FEB 1 94

Male Kangaroo near Nambung
National Park in Western
Australia: A symbol that has
become as profitable as sheep.



THE BOTTOM END OF DOWN UNDER

Australia is great and Australians realize it. Finally

It's the Top End of Down Under that has garnered much of the media attention lately — blame it on the film *Crocodile Dundee* for lack of a more obvious villain. The connected series of articles that follow are about the other end of the country — the Bottom End. They are also a celebration of sorts.

When the plane touched down at Sydney International late last October, it had been 10 years since I'd visited Australia. With me was this magazine's travel editor, Australian-born novelist Valmai Howe. She visits and writes about her native land regularly, but this trip was an eye-opener for me. This was not the same country I had traveled through a decade earlier. There was a new dynamism, a new sense of real confidence rather than the blowhard variety which too often characterized the old Australia. There was a new openness to ideas, to native people, to minorities — ethnic and sexual, and significantly, between men and women. The air has always been astonishingly clear, now you can also breathe easily in mixed company without fear of choking on chauvinism. You see the changes everywhere. Coffee houses are as popular as the pubs once were. You can get an excellent espresso in even the smallest bush town. Salads, fresh vegetables and a focus on fine food have replaced the fish and chips, steak and eggs, and anything else deep fried in batter. Women and men talk to each other in public and even stop and embrace every now and then. The hottest political issue in Canberra last fall was aboriginal rights and land claims, this in a country that pretended for decades, much as Canada did, that it didn't have many natives and certainly none with rights.

The timing of this coming of age is also auspicious. Australia gives a whole new meaning to the word "inspired." This is what Canada was like when you were a kid, when

your parents were kids, when their parents were kids. Everywhere we went, from Shark Bay and Rottnest Island in Western Australia, to Kangaroo Island in South Australia, to Tasmania, we were amazed and delighted by the way Australia is and by the efforts of Australians everywhere to keep it that way.

— David Elkins, Publisher



**A Kangaroo's Paw in the old cemetery in Gin Gin, WA:
Who is the mysterious spotted figure in the foreground?**

THE GEEKO

AUSTRALIA WILD AND NATURAL

Your guided tour begins here

by Valmai Howe

photos by David Elkins

Day 1:

We're 27 hours out of Montreal when our Qantas flight lands in Sydney at 6:20 AM. Ragged clouds scud by as we land, but the air seems different, lighter, clearer, bluer, undoubtedly cleaner. Three and a half million people and their cars, and yet today, there's hardly a trace of pollution. The air is spicy with the tang of eucalyptus. Even at the airport, the morning is alive with birdsong.

We're determined to battle jet-lag and win. So far, we've done all the right things: Set our watches to Sydney time before leaving Canada; taken meals en route at Australian times; taken plenty of water and fruit juice. Now the challenge is to stay awake until Sydney goes to bed.

A sunny cruise around spectacular Sydney Harbour may be the ideal antidote to lag. We drink tea and munch biscuits on the upper deck as the Captain Cook cruise glides by the white-petal sails of the Opera House, which celebrated its 20th birthday this year with a \$A 120 million refurbishing, the same amount as the cost of the original construction.

This is probably the most beautiful city harbour in the world. We pass the royal Botanical Gardens, the bank luxuriant with spring trees, including the blue-purple blooms of the jacaranda. Fort Dennison slips by on its rocky island. The fort was called "Pinchgut" by the early convicts

Hyde Park and beyond as seen from The Gekko, Park Lane Hotel, Sydney: informal elegance and large nouvelle '90s portions.



p3
Doc. Re

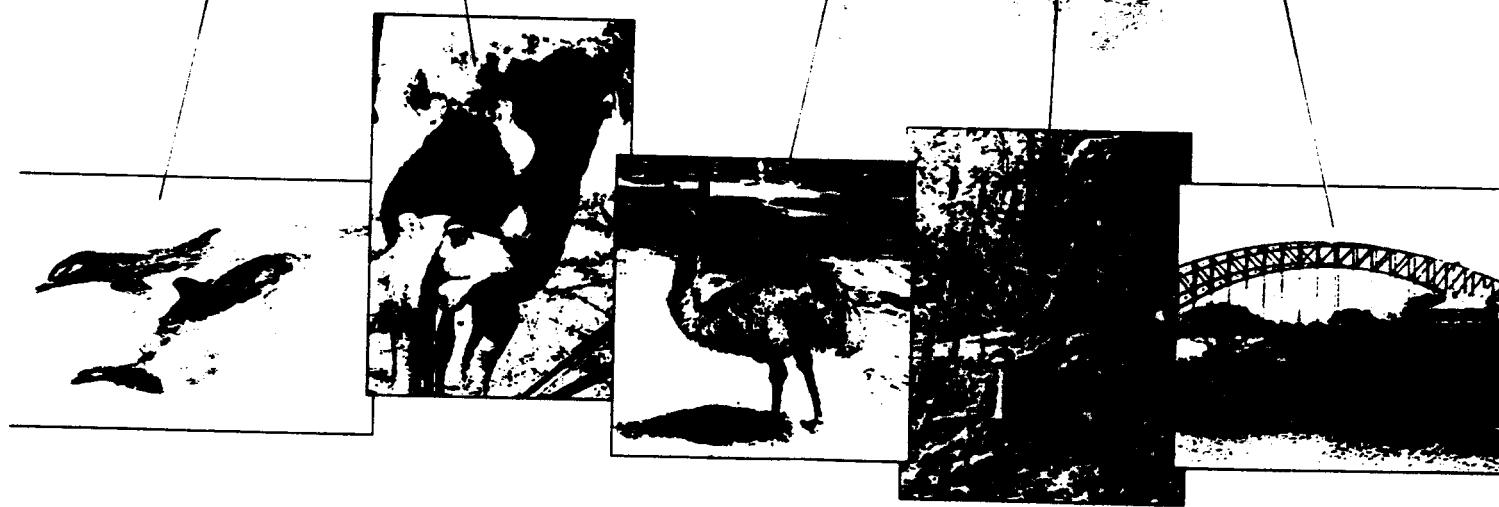
THE GEKKO EXPERIENCE

To eat well is
to thumb your
nose at jet-lag

The flight, no matter how pleasant, lasts an eternity. Thirteen hours away from North America, the still cabin encloses you like a womb. The mind, lost in the long dark and endless hum of the engines and shredded by the vast Pacific winds, now vibrates to some other frequency. The body surrenders. You feel, in the pink and lemon light of dawn 600 kilometres out of Sydney, that you are not who you were. What you thought was important in your life has grown hazy, insubstantial, without weight. Like a newborn, you are ready for everything — and nothing.

The driver of the cab into Sydney is older than God. It's a small miracle that he's able to keep himself upright behind the wheel, let alone navigate through the early morning traffic. Perhaps I can be forgiven, then, if for an instant after I enter the lobby and behold the twin staircases spiralling up, up into the light, I believe I've wandered, not into the Park Lane Hotel on Elizabeth Street, but into an anteroom of heaven. I later learn that this is what the architect intended. The Park Lane is the first truly new hotel in Sydney in 50 years. He was going for the "WOW" effect.

Our room produces another "WOW," thanks to the enormous polished black granite extravaganza that dazzles you as soon as you enter. It's called the bathroom. At first I think, "Lord, this is too much," but after



shower in the big glass stall and a shave at the white enamel sink set in a granite and teak counter. I change my mind. The best hotel rooms indulge the body, and this was indulgence at a very high level.

Jet-lag smothers you in gauze and cotton wool. It sets the mind spinning like a top. The only way to deal with

it is to ignore it," advises globe-hopping Hans Vos, the noted Darwin architect, writing in *Australian Way*, the Qantas in-flight magazine. That's easy for Mr. Vos to say. By the end of the first day, I'm bone weary and still separated from myself. It's only five pm. If I crash now, I'll be awake at two am

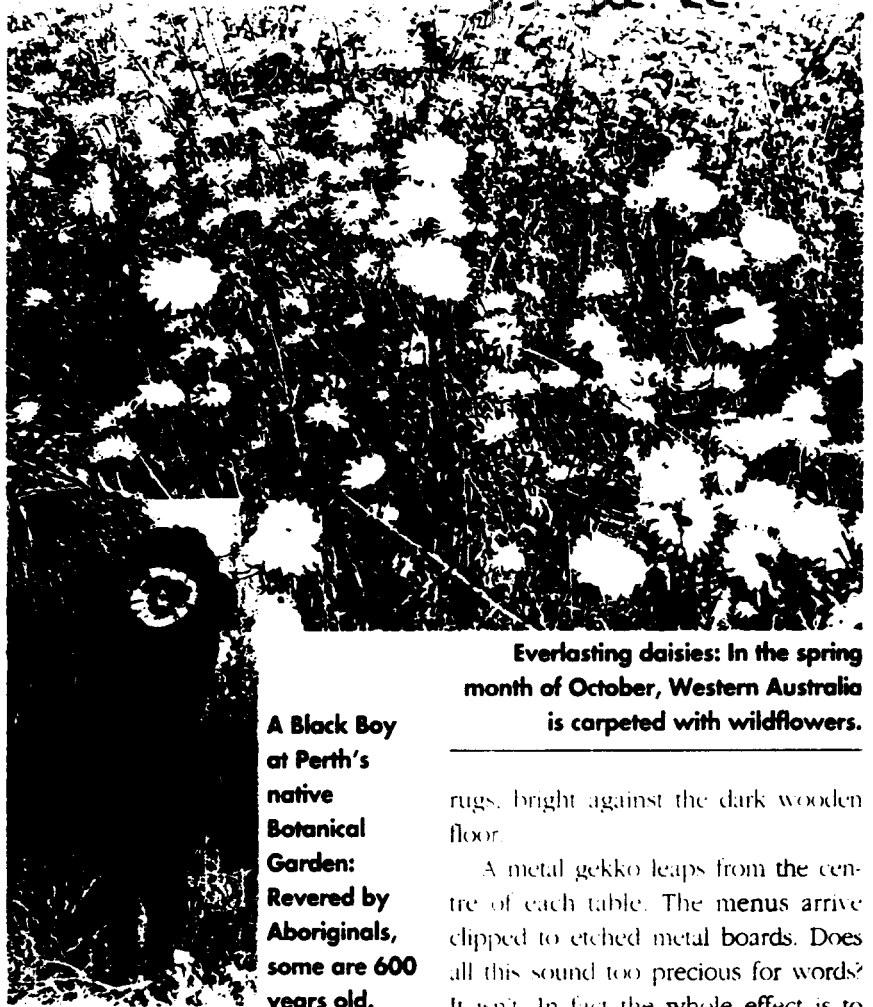
which, in the topsy-turvy world of racing the sun around the planet, translates into four pm the day before in Montreal. I must not sleep until Sydney sleeps. I make dinner reservations for seven at the Gekko, the Park Lane's 1990s-inspired main dining room. I take another shower.

You enter the Gekko through the "Wine Library" — bookshelf wine-

caught stealing food who were put there to die of starvation. Now, on a bluff above us, Taronga Park Zoo appears; once a standard animal lock-up, cages are now being eliminated and the zoo runs an ambitious program to breed endangered species and return them to the wild. We float past the luxurious official residence of the Australian Prime Minister, solitary on its own dramatic point under the landmark parabolic arch of Sydney Harbour bridge, where actor Paul Hogan painted iron before he swaggered onto the world stage as Crocodile Dundee. Next we pass the exclusive suburb of Balmain, named after Dr. William Balmain, the first physician in the colony. He arrived in 1788 and was given the land by Captain Arthur Phillips for saving his life. The good doctor was better at medicine than real estate — he later sold it for five shillings.

We dine at **The Ox On the Rocks**, a jaunty pub that opens onto tranquil Surgeon's Court, shaded by a generous plane tree. This is the site of the original convict settlement. Despite its horrific past, the stone houses and twisted cobblestone streets and lanes give this part of Sydney an unexpected old-world Mediterranean feel. Fragrant jasmine drips from stone walls, grapevines and magenta bougainvillea curtain outdoor cafés. We while away the time until dinner strolling through the shi-shi shops and galleries, as sleepy as koalas in the daytime, but we manage to stay on our feet. Lucky for us because the meal turns out to be sensational in the trendy **Gekko** restaurant of the Park Lane Hotel. (See **The Gekko Experience** on page 44.)

RECOMMENDATION: If you follow the knock 'em, sock 'em 10-day dash we're on, you won't have much more time than this in Sydney. That's fine if you know the city. If you don't, allow at least three days. It's much bigger than Toronto and as brash as
Continued on page 50



Everlasting daisies: In the spring month of October, Western Australia is carpeted with wildflowers.

A Black Boy at Perth's native Botanical Garden: Revered by Aborigines, some are 600 years old.

■ racks whose labels read like a catalogue of Australia's finest. The dining room is sassy. To one side there's a brilliantly lit kitchen where the chefs, in their tall white hats, perform like magicians — very stagey but it works. An enormous bouquet of tropical flowers appears to grow out of the bar. Against a dark far wall, four massive iron rings hold heavy glass vials, each containing a single Bird of Paradise highlighted by a halogen. The tables sit at odd angles on woven area

rugs, bright against the dark wooden floor.

A metal gekko leaps from the centre of each table. The menus arrive clipped to etched metal boards. Does all this sound too precious for words? It isn't. In fact the whole effect is to produce a gentle, informal elegance — a far more salubrious place to dine than in the stiff hotel dining rooms of yore. The upbeat atmosphere succeeds in whetting the palate for something new, something different, say Sydney rock oysters in melted butter served with masses of julienne fried potatoes. Tasmania salmon done over charcoal-grilled vegetables glistening in double virgin olive oil; prawns the size of small lobsters. Each dish is served on a different presentation plate arranged with the kind of attention which characterizes the work of Dutch precision painter Modrian. The meal is a master piece of flavour and the portions — goodbye nouvelle '80s — are generous.

By nine our heads droop dangerously toward our plates. We agree for the fourth time, on how beautiful Hyde Park looks through the window with its large old trees and rows of lights like lanterns. We know it's time for bed. ● — DE

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You could be the proud owner of the very elusive Mimih you see in these pages. Just count how many times it appears and send your answer to

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STALKING THE WILD QUOKKA

Why would anyone trek halfway around the world to see a marsupial rat? Because they're there?

We've been cycling for close to two hours in a stiff sea breeze. Ahead of us, a large Bobtail lizard ventures out. Then mid-road it freezes. With visions of the unfortunate reptile squashed beneath an oncoming bicycle, we guard the road for it to cross. But it appears to be enjoying a siesta.

An Englishwoman in a voluminous raincoat passes. She is, she tells us, hunting quokka. A light rain begins to fall. Island weather. Just as we set up to photograph the lizard it scuttles into the waving grass by the roadside and disappears.

"You'll see quokkas everywhere," the man at the bike rental had assured us. "There are about 10,000 of them. You can't miss." As we huddle beside a Rottnest pine and wait for the squall to blow over, we toy with the idea that perhaps the quokka is a well-guarded island joke, a sort of mythical creature to entice the traveller. What sort of creature would have a name like that anyway?

The rain subsides. A welcome sun drenches the pellucid waters of a small cove. We devour our picnic and snooze on fine white sand fringed with the plentiful Blue Lace flower.

Perhaps we'll find a quokka or two hanging around the back door of the Quokka Arms. Vigorous pedalling on a smooth seaside bike path brings us to the village in record time. A pandemonium of peacocks greets us as we enter the historic courtyard.

A male, fantailed and flamboyant, struts before a female. She doesn't even look up from her pecking. Another male, tail streaming luxuriantly, perches on the metal roof. A light wind ruffles the red hibiscus by the seaside bar garden. There's no sign

of a quokka begging for food by the back door.

An hour later we wheel into the Kingstown Barracks which housed some of the 2500 soldiers stationed on the island during World War II. Now it's an Environmental Education Centre and Youth Hostel. A man in khaki shorts is mowing the grass.

"Yeah, quokkas are nocturnal but you can see them in the day. They come out all along the road to Thompson Bay." We exchange glances of disbelief. He waves casually toward a grassy incline. "There's usually one under that palm tree." He makes it sound as commonplace as garden furniture. The grass beneath the swaying tree is empty.

Our ferry is scheduled to leave in two hours. Somewhat disgruntled, we turn back to Thompson Bay. Clearly we're as likely to see the ghost of the old lighthouse — the Aboriginal beaten to death by a warden — as we are to find a quokka.

Then a small movement beneath a fallen tree catches our eye. We practically fall off our bikes. There it is — about the size of a large cat, light-tipped brown fur, pointed ears, bright little eyes set close together and a raty tail. It's sitting up, wallaby style, twitching its front paws. We size each other up. Another hops out from under the bare branches. Several minutes later a baby peers out at us. Then another. Now the whole family scrutinizes us. The first quokka approaches. Does it expect a tidbit? But visitors are cautioned not to feed the quok-

kas. In any case, Mrs. and Mr. Quokka and Baby Quokka are out of luck. Cycling in bracing sea air makes you hungry. Our packs are bare.

The small marsupials seem unafraid. The more adventurous of the adults fingers our packs. Then for some reason they all turn and with that improbable boing-boing hop, vanish beneath the skeletal tree.

We wait for the ferry in the village square beneath the shade of a giant



A Quokka, native to Rottsnest Island off Freemantle: Once you develop an eye for them, they're as common as squirrels.

Moreton Bay fig tree. The cream buns at the Rottnest Bakery are delicious. A sign says, *Do Not Feed The Birds*. Peacocks saunter beneath the outdoor tables, ravens and gulls swoop by our heads. A small boy skips through the open door of a General Store that smells of sun-mellowed chocolate, soap, fresh fruit and warm meat pies.

We're very glad we spotted those quokkas. ●

Continued from page 46

New York. The **Park Lane Hotel** at \$A 190 per night, double occupancy, is pricey, but Sydney is the place to splurge and the hotel does things right. Even if you don't stay here, try the restaurant — you won't be disappointed.

Perth — Day 2:

The four-and-a-half-hour flight to Perth, the capital of Western Australia on the Indian Ocean, takes us closer to Singapore than Sydney. From our base at the splashy, international-style **Burswood Resort and Casino** we take the short drive to **King's Park**, the botanical garden of cultivated bush that overlooks this modern city. It's late October and we're at the tail end of the spring wildflower season which, by all accounts, is a rave not to be missed. In the park, fields are still frosted with pink and white everlasting daisies and deep red and green Kangaroo Paws. Green parrots screech in the trees. The variety of flora is bewildering.

At nearby Lake Monger we stop at a sign warning "Tortoise Crossing" in the vain hope of spotting the unique long-necked shellback. Black swans, bold as monkeys, pressure us for food, making efficient use of their long red beaks. After a stop for cappuccino at **Café Valentino**, one of dozens of coffee houses in Perth's Subiaco district, we take a swing through shady streets to view the area's galvanized-iron-roofed brick cottages. Once worker housing, they are now much sought after.

By 6:00 PM, we're again struggling with the dreaded jet-lag but manage to stay awake long enough to pull up a chair at the **No Bones** vegetarian restaurant in Carr Place. It's a BYOB spot and since we haven't, we begin with a powerful and tasty fresh-blended concoction of apple, mint and beet juice. The green pea and avocado soup is light and

THE DOLPHINS OF MONKEY MIA...

...swim right up
to the beach
and take fish
out of your
hand. They've
been doing it
for years

Four years ago I swam with dolphins in the Bahamas. This was not exactly in the wild: the dolphins had access to a lagoon, not the open sea, and they appeared in a specially-built pool at scheduled times. But the intelligent eyes of the dolphin who rubbed against me and the smooth

Pelican and friend in front of Monkey Mia Café: When they can't get Chihuahua, they'll eat whatever's offered.



rubbery side of his skin as he allowed me to stroke him are among my favourite memories. He swam beside me, then disappeared. A few minutes later he leapt from the water just ahead of me. I chose to think he liked to play.

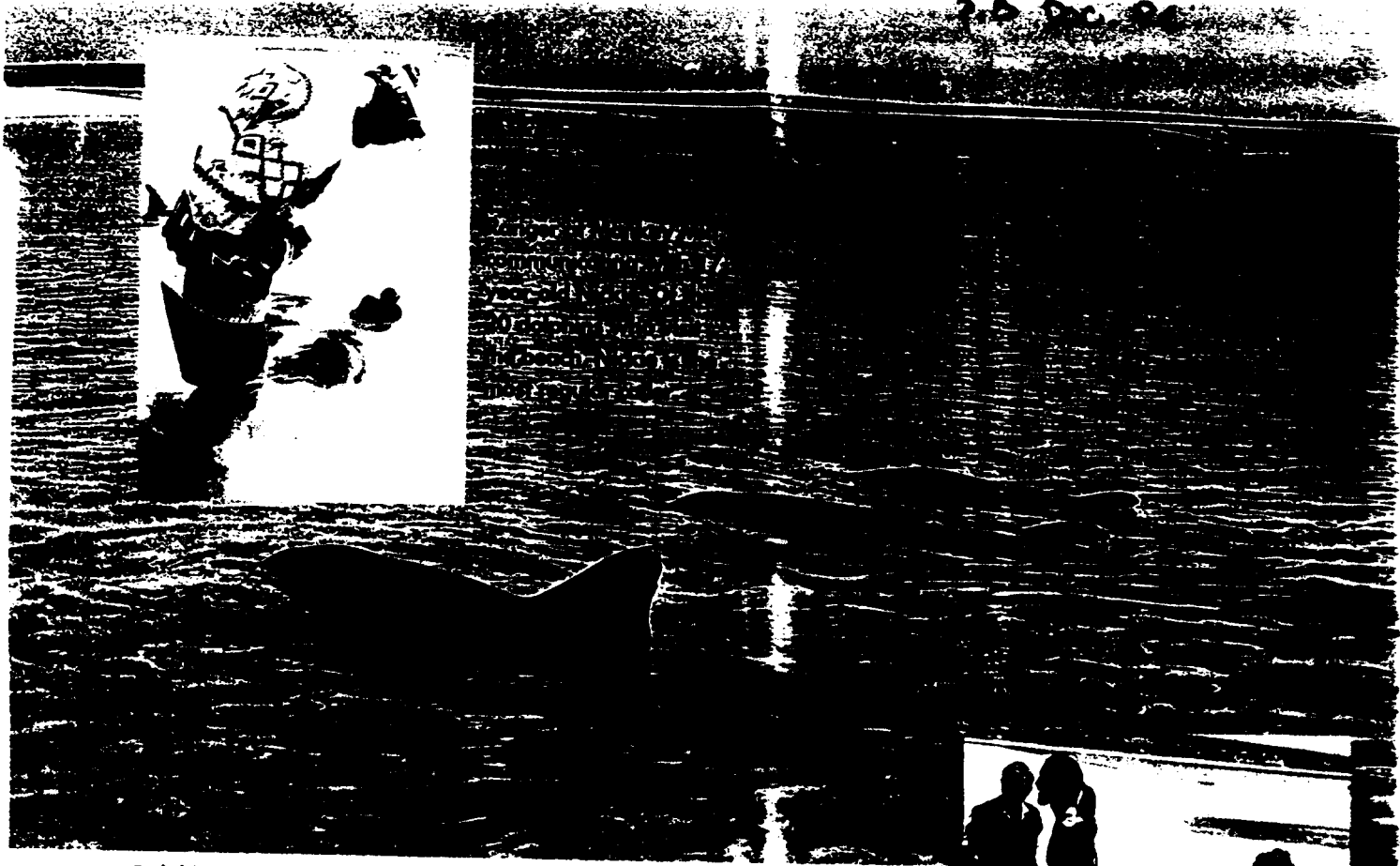
Since then I've read everything about dolphins that comes my way. Dolphin literature is intriguing, often unexpected. One recent book suggests that dolphins are extraterrestrials, rising in these troubled times to interact with people. Then there's the woman in New Zealand who encourages women to birth underwater and avail themselves of the natural midwifery skills of dolphins. I've read accounts of dolphins who've rescued swimmers in distress, and I joined the outcry when these lovely creatures were dragged to cruel deaths in tuna fishing nets. I couldn't wait to visit the wild dolphins of this remote part of Western Australia.

Finally I'm standing calf deep in the turquoise sea at Monkey Mia. The ranger, who has named herself after the 17-year-old dolphin, Nickie, is watching the gentle waves.

"I was out in the channel floating and I called, 'Puck, come and play with me.' Within 10 minutes three dolphins swam up and one of them was Puck. Then a little later she came back alone. I floated on my back and so did she.

"I've been here four years. Every time I try to leave I feel the dolphins drawing me back. We need each other."

It's 11 AM and there's no sign of a dorsal fin, but there's every reason to be hopeful. The dolphins of Monkey Mia seem to enjoy the company of humans as much as we enjoy theirs. Thirty years ago they began interacting with fishermen, then the word leaked slowly — you can swim with the dolphins at Monkey Mia. Gradually the band of dolphin seekers grew, until a small clump of tents and caravans by the beach became a reg-



Dolphins looking for handouts near the beach at Monkey Mia, Shark Bay, WA: Feedings are kept to one-fifth of their daily requirements.



ular sight. Now the area is rigorously protected and regulated by CALM (Conservation and Land Management).

There are no set feeding times, these are wild creatures who come if and when they choose. To avoid dependence, rangers are careful to provide only one-fifth of each dolphin's daily fish requirement.

Suddenly there's a flash of dorsal fin, then two. Now the streamlined bodies glide like bright shadows through the clear water just ahead of us.

"There's Nickie and there's her new calf, Finnick." Nickie-the-dolphin heads right in and nudges the ranger's leg with her long bottlenose. As she turns on her side we catch her large intelligent eye. A small group gathers quietly at the water's edge. Then Holy Fin approaches, Nickie's mother, now 32 and expecting another calf in a month. She's easily identified because her back is mottled pink from

old sunburn. Nickie-the-ranger rescued her from a sandbank where she'd been marooned.

Puck and her calf Piccolo join the group. The little fellow seems perfectly at ease with humans.

"They bring their new babies in to show us," says Ross Massie, owner of the Resort. "And they're really sensitive to individual members of the group. If there's a pregnant woman or a child with learning disabilities they'll head straight over."

Usually it's the females and their calves who come in. Among the 15 to 20 dolphins who visit, there are **eight** regulars. The mortality rate among the calves is high; after all, **this isn't** called Shark Bay for nothing.

After about half an hour the rangers bring buckets of herring and we feed the dolphins. It's a real thrill to have a wild creature creak loudly beside you and accept a fish from your hand.

A little while later the fins head

out to sea and four enormous pelicans join us on the beach.

"We had a lady here three years ago," reminisces Ross. "She had a tiny little dog in her arms, a Chihuahua called Precious. We were all standing around and suddenly she screamed, 'Oh, my Precious! Oh, my Precious!' A pelican had swooped down and flown off with the dog. We never did find him." ●

rewarding, ditto for the main course of roasted eggplant, green beans, sun-dried tomatoes and Greek olives in a puff pastry drenched with wild mushroom sauce. And so to bed.

RECOMMENDATION: On this trip, Perth was a jumping-off point to the wild and natural pleasures of the surrounding countryside, but you don't have to leave town to have a good time. The Western Australians are even more horse-racing mad than the rest of the country. There are two handsome tracks that offer both trots and flat racing. Golf courses and tennis courts abound and there's a first-rate running track that will take you 38 kilometres south to Freemantle, where they say the sailing's not bad either. Indeed, those sailors who competed here in the 1990 America's Cup thought it was pretty good. After tennis, a run and a sail, you can always dance and gamble the night away at the elegant Burswood — you won't be alone.

Rottnest Island — Day 3:

The Starflyte ferry sails to Rottnest Island from the port of Freemantle. It's only a 30-minute ride to the tiny peaceful island, a childhood place of wind and sea and gulls, free from cars and city time. This was early in the season and the ferry was half deserted and quiet — not so the sea. White caps towered out of the turquoise water; the wind was making an excellent attempt at blowing the sun out of the sky.

Dutch explorers first landed in 1658 in search of shipwreck survivors — no trouble believing that on a day like today — and later dubbed it Rottnest Island after the abundance of what they thought were "rotts" — rats, that is. Fortunately, they turned out to be not rats but quokkas, a small breed of wallaby about the size of a cat which sport hairless tails. The quokkas were the

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THE SHIP OF THE OUTBACK

Forget
everything
you've ever
heard about
the camel.
The truth is
it's as lovable
as a Gund toy

You hear stories about camels and they're usually unfavourable. Camels are evil-tempered. They smell. They bite. They spit.

Hardly. If they're treated badly they respond in kind, but according to John Bekkers, proprietor of the Blue Gum Camel Farm, the way to train a camel is to win its trust.

"First you make friends with him, then you show him what you want him to do." (John cares not a whit for political correctness — he calls all his camels "him.") "The main thing is to get his confidence," he says as we approach the towering bulk of Imran. The 7'6" camel — actually he's a

dromedary and has one hump — inclines his head curiously towards our notebooks and camera. His eyes are large and limpid, fringed with thick dark eyelashes. And there's no smell.

John reaches up to pat him and Imran stretches out his neck and makes a strange hummphing sigh of pleasure. Certainly this beast does not fit our camel image.

"I started out with horses 20 years ago," says John. "Then, for a joke, a friend gave me a couple of wild camels. After that I never went back to horses. Camels are perfect for this country. They'll eat any vegetation, their feet don't scar the land like sheep or cows and they can go as long as two weeks without water. Actually they drink two gallons of water a day, but if they miss a day they'll just drink four the next, and so on, right up to two weeks. Apart from worms if they're out to pasture, they don't get sick. And they live 50 to 60 years."

We're seeing Imran with new respect. He gazes down his nose at us and hummphs again.


John's warming up. "Once I was in the Outback with 18 camels pulling a wagon that weighed about 35 tons. We'd cover about 25 miles a day and in the evening we'd sit them down, take off their collars and hobble them with bells. We'd just run them loose. They'd walk around all night and next morning we'd harness them and off we'd go again."

He points to a plastic peg in Imran's left nostril. Attached to it there's a rope.

"That's all you need to lead a camel: no bit, no bridle, just a collar and his nose peg with the tie line." He pauses.

"But if you expect a camel to act like a horse you're dead wrong. He thinks like a person. A horse will do whatever you want — he'll go where you tell him. Once I had a horse who'd jump off the bank and into

HOW MANY MIMIHS SO FAR?



One of you will call this Mimih your own. Make sure you count its every appearance in this section (Hint: It's in many photos too!) and send your answers to:

Mimih Contest, DOCTOR'S REVIEW
400 McGill St. 3rd Floor
Montreal, QC
H2Y 2G1



John Bekkers, owner of the Blue Gum Camel Farm, bottle-feeds five-month-old Smoky: "The main thing is to get his confidence."



Eight kilometres from Perth: Camels saddled up for a trek in the Outback.

a camel just because I told him to. You tell a camel to jump over something and you can't get him to do it. He's thinking about what you're asking and he says why not walk around it? A horse will follow your orders blindly but you have to give a camel a good reason."

By now it's obvious that John Bekkers is thoroughly devoted to his camels, and our opinions are rapidly changing.

Smoky, a beguiling baby, is all gentle eyes and paws as he nose-prods John, reaches a bottle of milk from the kitchen, and the little camel empties it greedily.

"We'll bottle-feed her until six months," says John as the last drop disappears. With camels, the bull comes into heat instead of the female. It happens once a year for 3 months in winter and the pregnancy lasts 12 months.

By now we're eager to try a ride. John has designed special saddles for his camels: one seat in front and one behind the hump, which, as it's made up of stored fat, varies in size according to food intake.

"I use the Arabic words for commands," John tells us. Then he grins. "I used to use 'okay' for 'up.' One day I had a lady who was about to mount the camel and I happened to say 'okay' to her. Before she knew it she was dangling above the ground in the strap. That's when I changed to Arabic."

Immar kneels obligingly and we swing a leg over the saddle. Suddenly

we're keeling backwards, then tilting forward. The unexpected lurching takes our breath.

Unlike the horse, the camel paces with both legs on the same side together. His loping gait can cover six km an hour. We set off down a bush track, the odd sideways roll quite comfortable due to the well-designed saddle. As John says, you don't have to ride a camel like a horse. He claims it's like sitting on an armchair. We decided it's somewhere in between.

By the end of the ride through the sparkling morning bush with magpies carolling, we're hooked on camels and regret that our itinerary does not include trekking and camping.

The Blue Gum Camel Farm offers short camel rides, a day's bush trek with a stop for lunch at a local pub, and longer treks into the outback for SA \$100 a day per person which includes everything from meals to camping equipment. Mr. Bekkers would be only too happy to organize as long or as short a trek as you wish. For booking details, see *Blueprint for Adventure* on page 61. ●

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reason we were going to Rottsnest.

For a full report on how we fared on our quokka hunt, see Stalking the Wild Quokka on page 47.

RECOMMENDATION: This is far too idyllic a spot to pass through in a single day. Plan at least one overnight at one of the sparse but inexpensive government-run beach units — \$127 for four people — or at the **Rottsnest Hotel (Quokka Arms)** or the highly-regarded **Rottsnest Lodge Resort**, about \$A 100 for a double. The Rottsnest Island Authority Visitor Centre adjacent to the ferry dock can make all the arrangements. You can bike the island end-to-end in half a day. The rolling hills and hidden coves with their often empty white sand beaches are, indeed, like a dream of childhood.

The Pinnacles — Day 4:

Diane Mossenson, a family physician, runs Indigenart, a gallery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art on Hay St. It's a fine place to launch a day that'll be spent largely in the outback. We browse through clapsticks and paintings of Dreamtime, boomerangs, of course, and didgeridoos before selecting a carved Mimih doll from Arnhem Land. The mimihs, with their long fragile necks, are elusive, sometimes mischievous spirits, frequently used in stories to scare children into more desirable behaviour. We name our Mimih "Mimi" and she turns into a most mischievous character with a nasty habit of popping up in photographs when we least expect her.

By noon we've driven 100 kilometres north to Gin Gin, where we've heard the local cemetery is thick with Kangaroo Paw. It is. We lunch in the town's nature preserve, drawn by the thick vegetation and stunning three-foot-high lilies. The trees are full of magpies. In a distant tree, a kookaburra chuckles loudly.

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THE ARK AND ITS KEEPERS

Kangaroo
Island is a
paradise from
another time.
Even the
honey bees
are unique

Named in 1802 by Captain Matthew Flinders, Kangaroo Island until the 1830s was a backwater of deserters, escaped convicts, whalers and brutal sealers. In 1804 alone, records show that 70,000 sea lion skins were exported.

Today's Islander, however, is making up for the past. The 700-hectare Conservation Park on the wild South Coast is now a haven for a colony of 700 sea lions, about a sixth of the world's total population — and the

**Remarkable Rocks, KI:
like works by Henry
Moore, but bigger.**



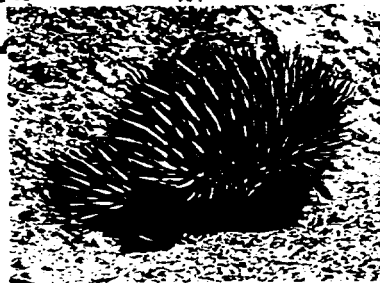
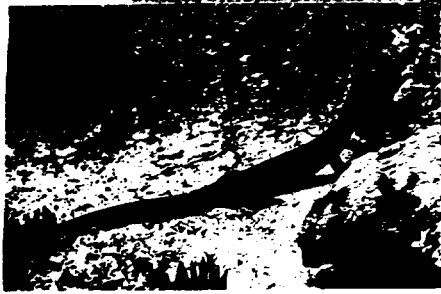
most accessible to visitors

A young sea lion suns himself beneath the wooden steps that lead to a wide white beach. He doesn't even open his eyes as we pass. But we're on his turf and we keep a respectful distance of five metres from the group a little further down.

Huge bewhiskered males, distinguished by a white patch on the head which grows larger and whiter with age, lol voluptuously on the sand. An old male heads ponderously down for a surfside roll in damp sand. Unlike the seal, the sea lion has articulated hindquarters, better adapted to land movement.

High up the beach a pup calls for its mother with a guttural cry. But she's gone to sea to hunt — for fish, squid, octopus or crayfish. Just as the pup's cries begin to sound desperate, a dark head surfaces in the shallows; though she's been away for as long as three days, her pup spots her as soon as her head is visible in the surf. As the big female waddles up the beach, the pup breaks into full gallop. Soon it's nursing greedily. Two big males bark at each other. A high wind roughens the surface of the sea.

Since the first record-keeping in 1968, the size of the colony has remained stable. Life expectancy is 18 to 20 years for males and about 12 for females, who mature at three and bear one pup every 18 months. Survival rate during the first two years of life is only 50 percent, and scar-



Sea lions on the beach in Flinders Chase National Park, KI, South Australia: a haven for 600 — about a sixth of the world's population. Insets: Monitor lizard and echidna on KI: Island life in an astonishing number of forms.

ring on many colony members attests to the presence of sharks.

The sea lion beach is just a small part of the 74,000 hectares which make up Flinders Chase National Park, one of the largest in Australia. Isolated from mainland predators such as the feral fox, native mammals thrive — Kangaroo Island kangaroos, Dama wallabies, brush-tailed possums and

short-nosed bandicoots. Over 400 species of native flora have been recorded, including over 50 different orchids. Then there are the birds, everywhere you look, 130 species including the rare glossy black cockatoo and the western whiplbird. Flocks of stunning pink grey galah are considered a nuisance by farmers, although everyone tolerates the beautiful deep green and multi-hued rainbow lorikeets.

The keepers — the Ark are a band of rugged individuals adroit at adjusting to a fluctuating Island economy. At the Fma Ridge Eucalyptus Dis-

tillery, Larry and Bev Turner have revived an Island industry which flagged in the '50s.

The heady aroma of the oil fills their small headquarters, once the old MacGillivray Post Office. They recommend the oil for everything from coughs and colds, muscle aches and pains, disinfectant and mosquito repellent, to spot and stain remover.

Larry harvests the fast-growing Kangaroo Island Narrow Leaf Mallee (*eucalyptus neofohii*) every 12 months and brews the oil right there in the yard — an enormous rescued tank filled with a ton of leaves ■



Continued from page 56

Beyond Gin Gin, the bush alternates with cattle-dotted pasture and roadsides thick with blue, crimson and golden wildflowers. Australia is one of the most urban countries in the world — fully four-fifths of the population crowds together in towns and cities, which means the countryside is almost deserted. Traffic is light to nonexistent. At Cervantes, a fishing village 245 km north of Perth, we fill the tank and move into Nambung National Park, home of the Pinnacles, one of the continent's most bizarre landscapes. Thousands of limestone pillars, up to four metres high and contorted by time, wind and water, rise from a stark sweep of yellow sand. Four large, grey kangaroos watch as we plough down the narrow red dust track. Three emus stride through the grey-green brush on the opposite side like refugees from a tale by Dr. Seuss. Suddenly we're among the pinnacles. Sun drenches the towering golden pillars: whole families of them seem to lean together as though deep in a conversation that has been going on since the wind blew away the sand that covered them and set them free. There's no one else around — we feel like intruders. We wander among them until the sun dips into the Indian Ocean. A full moon rises in a deep violet sky. It's magic.

RECOMMENDED: It's a long run up to Nambung and back in a single day. You might prefer to make two days of it. There are a couple of modest 1950s-style motels in Cervantes; the beaches are good and there's plenty of wildlife to see in the area. An extra day would also give you some time to visit the Swan River vineyards just north of Perth. Western Australia has a new and much deserved reputation for its vineyards. See the Wine column in this issue for a foray into yet another wine country, this time along the Margaret River, south of Perth, where two physicians



Wanderer's Rest, America River, KI:
wonderful views, great breakfasts, quiet nights.

► steams over a furnace from a defunct distillery. Long pipes lead to a cool pond.

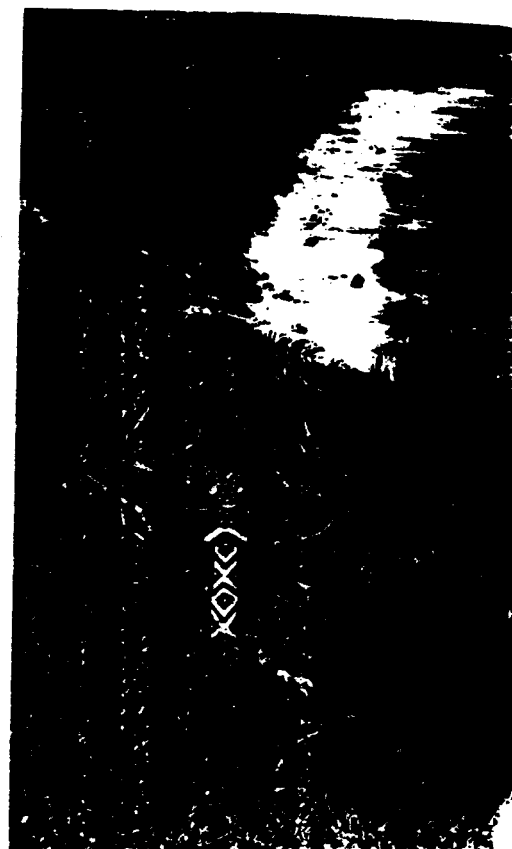
In the Cygnet Park shearing shed, Dean Bell and sons, along with an itinerant shearer, are finishing off the season's crop of five-month-old lambs. The shed smells of lanolin. A colourful character in bush folklore, the shearer may be tough but his hands are smooth as a child's. These days the radio has replaced traditional shearing songs, but the camaraderie of the shed remains strong.

Each shearer drags his lamb from the holding pen. Surprisingly there's little protest, just a few half-hearted baas. These men mean business: belly, hind legs, rump, face, chest, neck and back. In just 90 seconds the rich Merino fleece falls to the wooden floor. Lambs take roughly 30 percent less time to shear than sheep. Shearers are paid per fleece and a top shearer can earn SA 200 a day.

The Island Pure Sheep Dairy is a pilot project for the Island. While industry success is concentrated in Mediterranean countries, sheep products, especially yoghurt and cheese, have been enthusiastically received in Australia. Sheep milk is highly nutritious. The yoghurt is pleasantly mild, smoother and of higher organoleptic quality than cow's milk yoghurt, it's

also 50 percent more nutritious. Lured by a trough of protein-rich lupin seeds, the sheep enter the milking pens. Afterwards they return to green paddocks fringed with tall eucalypts.

Not far away, the Cygnet River Café is a new watering hole with fine coffee and a pleasant menu. Run by Vincent and Michael, the walls display Vincent's bold, sun-brilliant paintings. Here Islanders and adventurers mingle into the night. ●



BLUEPRINT FOR ADVENTURE

Qantas Airways offers evening departures from Vancouver and Los Angeles to Sydney. The non-stop flight is 14 1/2 hours, or as they say, three meals, two movies and one long nap. A recent addition out of L.A. is the choice of an exclusive non-smoking flight.

In Sydney: The Park Lane, 161 Elizabeth Street on Hyde Park, GPO Box 505, Sydney 2001.

Tel: (612) 286-6000; Fax: (612) 286 6686.

Qantas Airways recently merged with Australian for domestic flights. Flight time Sydney-Perth, 4 hrs 50 mins.

In Perth: The Burswood Resort and Casino, Great Eastern Highway, Victoria Park, WA. Tel: (09) 362 7777, Fax: (09) 362 7945. An ideal jumping-off point for the city and destinations north.

Rottnest Island: Drive to Boat Torque Cruises Northport Terminal, North Fremantle and take Starflyte Ferry (20 mins) to the Island. Tel: (09) 221 5844, Fax: (09) 325 3717. Two nights on the Island. Try the Rottnest

Lodge Resort or the older Rottnest Hotel (Quokka Arms).

Best times to view The Pinnacles are sunrise and sunset: to avoid risk of

hitting a kangaroo at night, overnight in Cervantes. Cervantes Pinnacles Motel, Lot 227, Aragon St. (096) 527 145, Fax: (096) 527 214.

To Monkey Mia: Contact Peter Wierland, Chief Pilot, Flightseeing Tours, P.O. Box 415, Hamilton WA 6163. Tel: (09) 314 1926, Fax: (09) 314 1926. Thirty-minute drive from The Burswood to

the Royal Aero Club, 41 Eagle Drive, Jandakot Airport. Flying time to Shark Bay, 3 hours.

Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort. Shark Bay, WA 6537. Tel: (099) 48 1320, Fax: (099) 48 1034.

Blue Gum Camel Trekking: Drive one hour to Clackline. John Bekkers, Proprietor, Blue Gum Camel Farm, Spencers Brook Road Clackline WA 6401. Tel: (09) 574 1480. Overnight bush camel trek.

To Kangaroo Island: Qantas/Australian Airways. Perth-Adelaide (2

hours 40 mins). Overnight at the Terrace Intercontinental, 150 North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000. Tel: (08) 217 7552.

Morning Departure with Kendall Airways, for Kingscote, Kangaroo Island. Flying time, 30 minutes.

Wanderer's Rest, Bayview Road, American River, SA. Tel: (0848) 33140, Fax: (0848) 33282.

Adventure Charters, Craig Wickham, Bayview Road, American River, SA 5221, Tel: (0848) 33204, Fax: (0848) 33282.

To Tasmania: Morning flight Kingscote-Adelaide. Qantas/Australian to Melbourne. Flying time, 1 hour. Connect with South Australian Airways to Devonport.

Cradle Mountain Lodge: P.O. Box 153 Sheffield Tas. 7306. Tel: (004) 921 303, Fax: (004) 921 309.

For additional information contact the Australian Tourist Commission, 1150 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 104, Alameda, California 94501. Tel: (800) 727-5165. ●

AUSTRALIA'S TOP 14 WINES

Jeremy Oliver calls it a list of the best of the best. 812 Australian wines catalogued in a little handbook for the do-it-yourself cellar builder. For the first time, he says, his **Australian Wine Handbook** (Portside Publications, \$15) delves into questions such as why drink old wine, which wines should improve, what happens when they age and change, how to serve it, what food suits it and how best to cellar it.

What's more he has stuck out his neck and nominated his best 14 Aussie drops, which are:

- Craiglee Cabernet*
- Mount Mary Cabernet Quintet*
- Henschke Cabernet*
- Henschke Hill of Grace*
- Penfold Cabernet 707*
- Cape Mentelle Cabernet*
- Mosswood Cabernet*

- Grange Hermitage*
- Pierris Chardonnay*
- Rosemount Roxburgh Chardonnay*
- Giaconda Chardonnay*
- Bannockburn Chardonnay*
- De Bortoli Nohle One*
- Chateau Reynella Vintage Port*

With about 800 wine producers turning out some 10,000 different wines annually in Australia, even the keenest amateur observer would have trouble, without the help of a constantly renewed computer data base, to keep track of vintages and value. So Oliver has done it for us, spending 18 months tasting and noting. He explains how wine matures, ruminates on exploring one's palate, but always returns to the basis that wine is subjective and so are our tastes. Amen to that.

From *Australian Way*

Left: Kangaroo Island, South Australia: Like PEI except for the sea lions, kangaroos, wallabies, bandicoots, koalas, rainbow lorakeets, pink and grey galas...

set up the first vineyards in the late 1960s — page 21.

Shark Bay and Monkey Mia — Day 5:

Our Cessna 210 leaves the Royal Aero Club on a cool pearly morning. We climb over Perth and again head north, this time skimming the coast at 175 metres. Less than an hour later we're over the Pinnacles and in another hour and a half we set down at Shark Bay after a stunning flight along 700 kilometres of deserted beaches and looming headlands. Sam Romano, the pilot of the six seater, is disappointed that we didn't see any whales. "Bit late in the season," he shouts over the roar of the engine. "They're farther south now, I reckon."

Shark Bay is utterly unique, even for Australia. In 1991, 22,000 square kilometres were given World Heritage Site status. It consists of a set of sprawling fingers of land thrust into a shallow blue-turquoise sea, just at the 26th parallel which marks the start of the tropics. The land is rugged, sand and rocks and cliffs all bleached to a uniform beige by a relentless sun. In and around the warm water, marine and bird life flourish. The world's largest meadow of sea grass is home to 10,000 dugongs, the cow-like creatures who struggle against encroaching civilization in the Florida Keys, where they're called manatees. Shark Bay also shelters green and loggerhead turtles, manta rays, sharks and 323 species of fish, not forgetting those stars of undersea life — the Dolphins of Monkey Mia.

It's searingly hot at the dirt strip airport in the middle of a blasted landscape, and you can't help but feel a little like Indiana Jones as you swing down from the Cessna. At the **Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort** a few kilometres away, though, the ocean breezes blow and tropical vegetation grows — cotton, coconut palms and clouds of magenta bougainvilleas.

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Shark Bay, WA: an area worth preserving.

AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE AREAS

As a safety net for the nation's natural and cultural heritage. Increasingly aware of the fragility of its environment, the Australia of the '90s is conservation-minded. Criteria for a list-

ing are stringent. Shark Bay, Western Australia, and Cradle Mountain, Tasmania, have been cited for:

- Outstanding examples of the major stages of the Earth's Evolutionary History

- Significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and human interaction with the natural environment

- Certain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features of exceptional natural beauty

- The most important and significant habitats where threatened species of plants and animals of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation still survive. ●

SEEN MANY MIMIHS?



Count every Mimih you've seen in this section and you could win the Mimih itself. (Hint: Every one, large or small) Send your answers to

Mimih Contest, DOCTOR'S REVIEW
400 McGill St. 3rd Floor
Montreal, QC
H2Y 2G1



HIKING IN THE GREEN

Tasmania's temperate rain forest keeps on giving

When Van Damien sailed along this coast in 1620 he thought, with good reason, that he had come to the very furthest reaches of the world. He called it Van Damien's Land, claimed it for Holland and sailed away forever. The map he sketched showed Tasmania attached to the mainland.

It took the British 180 years to find out it wasn't. Though the discovery cut two weeks off the sailing time from Bristol to the penal colony at Sydney, many lived — and died — to regret it. The Bass Strait contains some of the roughest water on the globe. Even from 20,000 feet you can see it froth and foam. The ferry from Melbourne to Devonport takes 13 hours and at \$79, it's a bargain. Still, I'm glad I took the plane. Despite myself, when I see the "Welcome to Tasmania" sign at Devonport Airport, I get a little tingle of what Van Damien must have felt. After this there's nothing but cold salt water all the way to Antarctica.

The airport is a spotless, 1960s-looking affair. On my way toward the rental car lot I stick my head in the gift shop. I'm not disappointed. There's a counter piled high with plush Tasmanian Devils, right down



Cradle Mountain Lodge: Pandemelons, carrawongs and delicious Heron Island Bugs.

to their sharp looking white felt teeth. A rack of T-shirts depict Devils in every guise. Another shelf is stacked high with ashtrays, coasters, shot glasses and coffee mugs which feature Devils. This must be the place.

The road out of town winds through rich red farm land. They call it "The Apple Isle" but Tassie, as it's affectionately known, is equally famous for its potatoes. If it wasn't for the tall scraggly-topped gum trees and the sharp outline of mountain cliffs in the distance, this could be P.E.I. We're headed for those cliffs and the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park, a World Heritage Site, one of only three areas in the world which contain temperate rain forests. The other two are in Argentina and New Zealand.

Cradle Mountain Lodge spins into view after a twisty 90-minute climb to

"The Ballroom Forest," Cradle Mountain, Tasmania: Like living inside a damp emerald.

2800 feet. At first glimpse, in the fading light, it looks astonishingly familiar like the place in the Laurentians north of Montreal, where my grandparents spent two weeks every summer. The large log building with the slanted green roof and dormer windows, the cabins set back in the trees, smoke rising from their chimneys, the cool freshness of the air, the fish pond, those crows. (Could this be Ste. Agathe? Well, no. The crows turn out to be carrawongs, a variety of raven with large shiny black bills and arresting yellow-rimmed eyes, and like so many Australian birds and animals, friendly to a fault. On the way to our cabin we almost fall over half a dozen pandemelons, a small version of the wallaby which is a small version of a kangaroo. Hop. Hop. Hop. The clerk at the desk has warned us to keep the cabin windows shut unless we want possums snuggling into bed with us after raiding the refrigerator. Ste. Agathe, this isn't.

The best meal at Cradle Mountain is served at the Ballroom Forest.

Continued from page 63

tain Lodge is but the overture of what's to come. To begin, the "fry" crepes with Heron Island Bugs — translation, crepes stuffed with small tender white fish topped with tropical crawfish and finished with a lemony butter sauce. Divine. The main course, Tasmanian salmon in a light mustard cream, sweet roasted Tasmanian potatoes and a salad of six mixed greens. The desert, raspberry trifle made with rich, rich, rich King Island cream, an area famous for the flavour of its dairy products — something to do with the salt spray affecting the grass the cows eat.

We didn't come here to eat, though — that was all a bonus. We came here to hike or, as it's put here, to bushwalk. By 9 AM the next morning, we're ready, suited up and in the Lodge bus riding down the 7.5 km road to Dove Lake in Cradle Mountain National Park. Laurie is our guide for the day. He's 74, looks 60, and knows enough about the region to be 110. Dove Lake is situated at the start of The Overland Trek, a five-day hike that takes you from Cradle Mountain to Lake Clair through some of the most arrestingly beautiful terrain imaginable, utterly unlike anything in the Northern Hemisphere. Unique. Inspiring in its beauty. We head along the east shore of the lake on the far side of Suicide Rock, an enormous boulder rolled into the glacial lake by the last ice age. Above us looms Mount Hanson, its sharp, almost vertical crags soaring above the glaciers as do the sharp, characteristic cliffs of Cradle Mountain, shaped like the cradles miners once used for scooping up ore. The land below the peaks is as smooth and rounded as the Cambrian Shield; the contrast is bizarre, stagey, Disneyish. A heavy mist shrouds Cradle when we first see it, but not to worry — the weather here is as varied as the landscape.

We troop along on a splendid gravel track that runs beside the lake then curves into a deep grove of trees.

High above, a waterfall plunges into the valley. Suddenly it's as though the gauzy sunlight has turned green. Every tree trunk and rock is covered with emerald moss and lichen. The ground is a springy carpet of rich green. Even the stream bed is covered with an interlacing of green water plants. Ancient myrtle and sassafras, their knobby trunks laced with green, reach into the sky. King Billy pines soar. This area was dubbed "The Ball Room Forest" by Gustave Woldheim, a German who came to Cradle Mountain in the early part of the century and made it his life work to have the area preserved and protected as a place "for all time, for all humanity." His efforts kept miners and loggers out, and as a result the area is as pristine as it was when the glaciers receded.

In the afternoon we trek through an even greener portion of rain forest to Weaning Paddock Falls, which plunge into a deep gorge and resemble a 19th-century nature painting. Again the green sweeps you away like a current in a stream; you seem almost to float along the trail as though underwater.

The next day — this is early November — there's a blizzard. It's a weird one by Canadian standards, something like warm snow. One moment it's falling so thickly you can't see 10 metres and in the next the sun is out and everything is dripping. Five minutes after that the wind is driving the flakes almost horizontally and when it clears every tree is white on one side and green on the other. I talk to some folks from tropical Brisbane who drove the 1700 miles down here just for this, and they're flabbergasted. I tell them that frankly, so am I. I've never seen snow quite like this and I'm from Snow City.

At dusk, Valmai and I are skulking around the bridge below the lodge looking for wombats. Though the creatures are nocturnal, they're also territorial and we're told there's an old one who likes to come out before

the sun is down and beat the competition. Laurie, the guide, is convinced it's a female called Womshe he raised 15 years before. "They're the most wonderful animals," he says. "the little ones will climb right up your legs when you're sitting down and snuggle into your armpit. They'll stay there as long as you let them. But the wonderful thing about wombats is they'll always go back to the wild. When Womshe was two, she started going off by herself for a night or two. We'd always leave food out for her and for about six months she came and took it, then she disappeared. They live 15 years and more. I'm sure that wombat down by the bridge is Womshe. Oh yes. Wombats. Wonderful creatures. They're my favourite of all the Australian animals." There's a catch in his throat as he remembers Womshe as a baby.

We didn't see Womshe, but the next and final day at Cradle Mountain I saw six big kangaroos on my morning run and each time was as startled as they were. I visited Woldheim's original cabin — well, the "original" cabin erected by the Park Service in 1977 after they'd torn down the one Gustave built and there was an uproar you could hear all the way to Hobart, the capital. I imagined how remote the area must have been in the 1930s. All his life Woldheim had urged the government to put a road through so people could get into the region. Instead there was just a track and he came and went by motorcycle. One morning in June 1932 a local farmer's son found his body lying in the path beside the bike. It had been there for a few days. A letter he'd been writing the night before described how he was having trouble starting the bike and planned to try to run it down the hill and pop the gears the next day. He died of a heart attack at 56. Some now say it was his favourite dish that killed him — thick, cholesterol-laced wombat stew. ● — DE

Continued from page 62

Manager Dean Massie shows us around. The units, in perfect keeping with the back-of-beyond spirit of the place, are modest but comfortable.

"It's the dolphins that make Monkey Mia," explains Dean. "We're doing everything we can to protect the environment. Our sewage is treated and pumped a mile and a half away. We use enzyme cleaning agents. We keep everything low key. This is the '90s — things have changed. People used to come here to kill the fish, now they come here to watch them."

We're interrupted by a flurry of activity near the water. The dolphins are coming in for a mid-morning snack. We repair to the beach. To find out what outrageous behaviour went on there, see The Dolphins of Monkey Mia on page 50.

RECOMMENDED: Don't come here for just a day as we did — that's far too short — especially if you visit Western Australia in the spring or fall when temperatures south of here can be just shy of beach weather. Not at Monkey Mia — this is the place to put in some serious beach time. The motel units go for around \$A 100 a night, depending on the season, and will sleep as many as six. You can stay in a van for as little as \$30 a night for three, or pay \$A 50 for something called a Canvas Condo that sleeps four. Tent sites are \$A 5. Backpackers pay \$A 10. Anyone who stays six days gets the seventh free.

Here are a few ways you could fill up a week. Swim, feed the pelicans, lie on the miles of empty white sand beach, fish, play tennis, see stromatolites — the world's oldest life form — visit Shelly Beach, a piece of real estate a kilometre wide and 10 kilometres long made entirely of white shells the size of fingernails, sail a Hobie Cat, hike around the coast, eat wonderful

seafood in the open air washed down by some fine Australian Chardonnays. Five mornings a week, the live-in naturalist gives an hour long briefing about this astonishing region.

The Blue Gum Camel Farm — Day 5:

We suffer from a mild case of if-this-is-Tuesday-I-must-be-a-didgeridoo syndrome — we've conquered jet-lag but the effects of the blistering pace are beginning to kick in. Still, we've finally mastered the art of driving on the wrong side of the road. It's been almost 24 hours since we swerved into the oncoming traffic. All in all, it's time for a camel.

The Blue Gum Camel Farm lies an hour's drive east of Perth in the centre of magnificent ranch farm country near Clackline. Beyond a frame farmhouse stretches a dramatic blue-purple field of Patters: n's Curse, so called because like so many other foreign flora and fauna it ran amok when it hit the fertile plains of Western Australia. It arrived here, explains John Bekkers, the farm's owner and camel master, as stuffing in the saddles of camels who came with their Afghan drivers in the latter part of the last century. The camels, like rabbits, foxes and pigs before them, relished their new lifestyle. Today, more than 150,000 feral camels roam the interior. Sadly, they're hunted for dog food. Double that "sadly" — once we got to know these remarkable beasts we were hooked. Camels are, without question, one of the most underrated animals on the planet. Everything you've ever heard about them is dead wrong. For full details see The Ship of the Outback on page 52.

RECOMMENDED: Whatever else you do on your visit to Western Australia, make sure you do this. Arrange with John Bekkers to spend at least three days and two nights

on a camel trek in the outback. It costs \$A 100 a day and that includes everything from the camels to food to all the equipment you'll require.

Kangaroo Island — Day 7 & 8:

Last night we slept in Adelaide. Today we're on Kangaroo Island, which sits in the Great Bight 30 minutes from the South Australia capital. It's a lulu. Picture an island the size of Puerto Rico, with a population of just 4000, roads as red as any in PEI, a coastline of pounding surf, rugged headlands, sheltered bathing coves, a breeding colony of rare sea lions, a huge national park which teems with kangaroos, wallabies, bandicoots, koalas and exotic birds of every description. There's even a species of honey bee which was imported from Italy in 1884 and subsequently wiped out by disease in Europe; today it exists only here. That's Kangaroo Island: so rich in wildlife that it's often referred to as The Ark.

We're met at the airport by Craig Wickham of Adventure Charters. He conducts four-wheel drive tours of the island, probably the best — and certainly the most efficient — way of exploring. We load up and set off for Flinders Chase National Park, a vast expanse that covers about a quarter of the island. Here we visit the sea lion colony; explore Remarkable Rocks, a group of massive nature-sculpted boulders that look like works by Henry Moore, except for the scale — they're as big as houses. Down the track, we call in at the old Lighthouse, spot an echnida, a monitor lizard, three koalas, one holding her baby in front of her high up in a eucalypt, and finally we stop for lunch. We end a full day at the **Wanderer's Rest**, a hideaway on a lush hill overlooking the tiny hamlet

Continued on page 100

of American River, named after a whaler of the same name that broke up in the mouth of the bay in the 1880s. After settling into a comfortable room complete with refrigerator, the fixings for tea and coffee, and a lovely outside deck, we return to the glassed-in dining room to watch the light fade while we sup on oysters, plump and rich from the inlet we can see from the window, whiting caught that morning and a rich vegetable curry.

The Wanderer's Rest serves a full Aussie breakfast — fruit juice, cereal with cream, eggs from free-range chickens, grilled mushrooms and tomatoes literally covered with a huge rasher of bacon so lean it could be ham, and the prerequisite toast and Vegemite, that dark brown spread made from yeast that's an acquired taste unless you're born with the Aussie gene. We stagger away from the table to explore the north coast on our own in a rental car and even manage to cram in a swim at Stokes Baby, a beach so tucked away you reach it by going through a natural tunnel in the rock. For full details see The Ark and Its Keepers on page 56.

RECOMMENDATION: Well, Kangaroo Island. It's a paradise: If you can get your mind around the concept — you have to give up all the anxieties and frustrations that have been your friends for so long — it may be the place that will change your life. There are only three MDs on the island so you might even find work (watch for a profile of a Kangaroo Island practice in a future issue). To try heaven out, plan to spend at least five days here, which actually isn't sufficient time to see more than a smattering of the island. The National Parks and Wildlife Service offers unusual accommodation in historic stone cottages in Flinder Chase Park. Adventure Charters can also

arrange for a house on 200 acres by the sea at a price that won't break the bank. Indeed, Craig and his wife-to-be, Janet, can set up any activity you might fancy, from fishing to scuba diving to rock climbing to nature hikes to horse riding and yes, even camel trekking, though Craig is less enthusiastic about camels than we are.

Tasmania — Day 9, 10, 11 & 12:

Rottsnest. Kangaroo. And now the third and final island, Tasmania. We connect through Melbourne to Devonport on the north coast and head off through lush green farm country, reminiscent of Ireland; indeed, the two islands are about the same size. Soon, however, the similarities drop away. The road climbs and snakes through forests of eucalypts 50 metres feet tall. It's apparent that this part of Australia has a dependable annual rainfall. An hour and a half later we reach the second of our World Heritage destinations, Cradle Mountain — a rugged preserve of temperate rain forest, one of only three in the world, and the starting point for a five-day hike along The Overland Track to Lake Clair.

The **Cradle Mountain Lodge** is a low wooden building that would look right at home beside any Canadian mountain lake. Smoke curls from cabin chimneys. Mist hangs low on the peaks. The air is chill and bracing.

The path from our cabin to the lodge is a four-minute stroll on a narrow winding boardwalk flanked by an abundance of fearless pademelons, yet another marsupial, this one not unlike the quokka of Rottsnest fame, except that the tail is furred.

The lodge is worth a visit for the meals alone: Tasmanian scallops tossed with diced tomatoes, served in a puff pastry with smoked

salmon, fresh local asparagus in Hollandaise sauce, ambrosial Tasmanian Rainbow Trout, gourmet island potatoes — the list goes on. There's even a walk-in wine cellar where you browse and make your selection from the finest wines the country has to offer. (See Australia's 14 Top Wines on page 61.)

The next morning we hike through primeval forest of myrtle, sassafras, oandani and King William pines and the fagus, or deciduous beech, along the shores of Dove Lake to a very special place dubbed "The Ballroom Forest." That afternoon we visit the Weaning Paddock Falls in a forest so green and iridescent you feel you've fallen into a damp and glistening emerald.

The next day the plan was to do the "high circuit," up and along the spine of the mountains to Cradle, but a funny thing happened during the night — it snowed! And it's still snowing. Three forest rangers caution against the trip and so instead we eat a large breakfast and stick to circuits of a few hours around the lodge.

In the evening, we gather on the veranda. A single red light illumines the wooden two-decker feeding platform. Six possums are already sorting through the fruit and vegetables, including a baby who periodically rushes back to the security of its mother's back. An hour later there's a swarm of 30 or more. But where is the prize? Where is the Tasmanian Devil? Around 10:30, after the crowd has thinned out, a dark form shoots out of the night, grabs something and disappears. My God, it's a Devil! But nooo... it turns out, instead, to be the significant, but not as significant, spotted quoll.

We leave early the next morning. The snow has gone, and as we wind down to the plain, the sun comes out. We stop at a waterfall

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which plunges casually 60 metres into a gorge. There's not another car in sight. At Gunn's Plains we visit an out-of-the-way cave that contains some of the largest "bacon" formations in the world and much else of wonder. The ceiling seems hung with giant rashers of the breakfast meat, quite a phenomenon and worth seeing even if you have to put up with the guide's sexist jokes. (For the full rundown on hiking Cradle Mountain and surroundings, see Hiking in the Green on page 63.)

RECOMMENDED: Plan to spend at least two days at the Cradle Mountain Lodge and take short hikes — there are a dozen of them from which to choose. The only risk is that it will so whet your appetite for the region you'll want to do the five-day Overland Trek. I'm told it's one of those hikes you talk about for years afterwards. The Lodge itself may

seduce you into a longer stay. It's run by P&O and meals are so good you'll never want to cook in your fully-equipped cabin. Rates are excellent value at just \$A 75 a night for the cabins which sleep six and contain wood-burning airtight stoves — a rarity in Australia. The food, as in the rest of the country, is pricey — a full dinner from soup to nuts comes in at \$A 25.

Sydney, Farewell — Day 13:

We're back in the sophisticated city splendour of the Park Lane Hotel, Elizabeth Street, Sydney. It's one of those peerless Sydney days. Early November, the sky bluer than a robin's egg, the temperature a sweet 22°C. The flowering trees in the park opposite are in full, bursting bloom. At 6 AM I'm lapping across the rooftops in the finest hotel swimming pool I've ever

experienced. It's a sybaritic delight of glass and light and sound. Warm water flows continuously over all edges to create the illusion that you're floating on an enormous glistening table top which has miraculously turned to liquid. Handel's Water Music fills not only the air but the water as well through underwater speakers.

The bus to the airport for the flight home leaves at noon — just enough time to visit the elaborately restored Queen Victoria Building in Market Street. Beneath a graceful dome of stained glass there are over 80 shops on four airy, impeccably restored mezzanines. But the clock is ticking and the airport bus waits for no one. A quick stop at Food Glorious Food, the emporium at Sydney's upscale department store David Jones for — what else — a giant jar of Vegemite, and then we're out of there. ■



by Arthur Proudfoot

Fees Displease

Parking meters are thin on the ground on Australia's Gold Coast. In the small town of Coolangatta, which I visit daily, there are none. Across the state line in Tweed, New South Wales, same thing. In Coolangatta, one parallel parks on either side of the main street — a main street wide enough to receive "boulevard" appellation. Gold Coast/Coolangatta airport is not so generous. On the acres of land they have, an airport authority collects \$1 for the first half hour. Baggage carts rent at \$2. Doing an unofficial assessment, I paid the parking fee to make a survey of cart utilization. "Two dollars for a \$1.50 cart" was one comment. "It's getting like New York" was another, and one that appeared to cover the situation I found.

Buck-ing Closures

"Agency Crashes Costing Millions" screamed the headlines of the Sunday Mail in mid-January. If there were a cross-Canada Sunday paper with 160 pages to fill, Canada's travel consumers, too, would be getting this information to digest and cogitate for the Monday morning phone calls. Canada has ACTA. Australia has AFTA or the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, the Australian group dealing only with the retail industry. There is an obvious difference. AFTA would like the consumer to pay a dollar — or even two — on every transaction in excess of \$500 or \$1,000. According to my information, \$11-million has been paid out over the last five years, \$4-million of which was for 1993 to cover 60 closures. There are also unlicensed travel agents in Australia who would have to bear the loss themselves or tell their clients that they were out of luck. I am still trying to unearth some more information on this type of retailer.

Fare Game(s)

At press time, price wars and the inevitable matching of prices between Qantas and Ansett over the slack times in domestic traffic were still being

waged. Two for the price of one was popular — limited seating and money up front. Australian people, who enjoy a bargain as much as Canadians, bit and bought.

This Miami's Got 'Roos

A casual look at a road map of the Gold Coast and you'd believe you were in Florida.

FROM THE WEST

There's a Palm Beach and a Miami. Going along with this is a section of avenues in numeric progression from 1 to 30, a reminder of when American GIs trained on these beaches prior to their assault on the Japanese-captured Pacific Islands.

Chowder Down

Too late did I learn about the

annual Fish and Chip Festival in nearby Brunswick Heads. This may be the only F&C festival in the whole world, and for we aficionados of the very unhealthy "fry of the deep," a celebration we should support and cherish.

No Room At The Inn

If you've got someone traveling to Brisbane between March

17 to 30, don't be surprised to find that no matter how important he, she or they may be, beds could be at a premium. These are Indy race days on the Gold Coast and the last report I have is that there's not a bed available here. Brisbane, being less than an hour away, will receive most of the overflow. The Conrad's

Continued on Page 17

From The West

Continued from Page 11

605 rooms are booked. Same goes for the Marriott, Pan Pacific, Travelodge and the Prince at Royal Pines.

A "Shonky Ocker"

Living in Australia, for even a short time, is an education in language. A couple of new words in my dictionary of Oz

are "ocker" and "shonky." Ocker can mean "not very nice person," even a rough diamond, someone who would neglect to extend his little finger while drinking tea. Shonky is a negative term and can apparently be used at will for something or someone you don't like: "Gotta real shonky bit of pie for lunch." "He's proper shonky. Won't pay his debts." There has to be a root for ocker and shonky. Dame Edna would know.

J-1024

Tasmania has replaced tarnish with taste

*Shedding its image as a penal colony,
Australia's island state has drinkable wine
and superb oysters and salmon*

BY JEREMY FERGUSON
Special to The Globe and Mail
Hobart, Tasmania

MARK Semmens is a modern pioneer in pursuit of an old-fashioned dream: To build something out of nothing, build it well and pass it on to the next generation. To do this, the expatriate Californian, who describes himself as a "burnt-out old hippie," sought the last frontier in a land of last frontiers — Tasmania.

What Semmens built was a vest-pocket-sized winery on the verdant slopes of the Tamar Valley in northern Tasmania. "A cross between Bordeaux and the Napa Valley," he decided when he found his place in the sun more than a decade ago and bought it in 20 minutes flat. He grows grapes for chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon. His wines are young and feisty, with some finesse and a ways to go, like Tasmania itself.

Tasmania's allure is that of the new land, the new start, the second chance. If it is about as far as you can go without falling over the edge of the world, it compensates for the distance with surroundings of stunning natural beauty, rain forest, mountains, moors, exotic wildlife from wombats and wallabies to Tasmanian devils and surprisingly sophisticated pleasures of the table.

Tasmania is a relatively new tourist destination, even for Australians, who fly in from Sydney and Melbourne to savour a pace of life out of the mainstream. It wasn't long ago that Australia's island state was regarded as quaint and backward. It

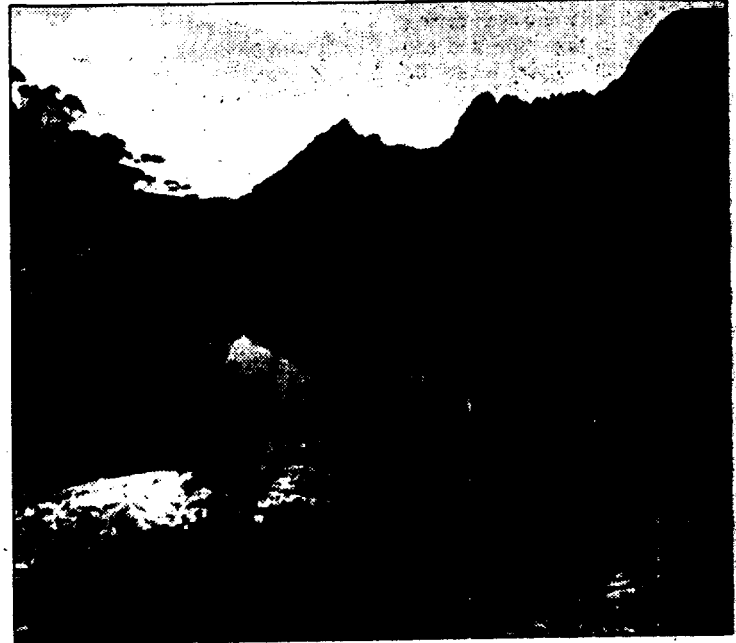
Cradle Mountain on one of the rare days when it is not covered with clouds. Below at far right is a Tasmanian devil, a ferocious marsupial.

(Photos by Jeremy Ferguson)

remains the butt of many a "Tassie" joke by mainlanders, who quickly add that the scenery is breathtaking and the oysters out of this world.

The island was discovered by the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman in 1642. He named it Van Diemen's Land, for a governor of the Dutch East Indies. Famous sea captains James Cook and William Bligh visited it in the 18th century, but settlers didn't arrive until the establishment of Hobart as Britain's second Australian colony in 1804. The notorious penal colonies followed in the 1820s.

The treatment of native peoples in Tasmania was probably the most brutal and genocidal in Australian history. Aborigines were hunted and shot for sport. Women were raped. Friendly tribes were fed poisoned flour. The aborigines fought back, but the figures tell all: In 35 years of conflict, 183 Europeans and 4,000 aborigines were killed. Modern Tasmanians do not speak too loudly or proudly of their ancestors.



I began my exploration in the north, in the wine country of the Tamar Valley and Pipers River. With a cool climate ideally suited to chardonnay and pinot noir, these areas have emerged as Australia's newest wine region.

A handful of boutique wineries turn out promising wines, but it's difficult to evaluate their potential because of the cradle-robbing: Tasmanians drink their wine almost immediately after bottling. Tassie wines tend to be more austere than

IF YOU GO

GETTING THERE

I flew Qantas Airlines from Los Angeles via Sydney to Melbourne and transferred to a connecting flight to Launceston in northern Tasmania. Qantas flies from Los Angeles and Melbourne to Launceston daily.

WHERE TO STAY

Battery Point Manor, 13 Cromwell St., Battery Point, Hobart 7004, telephone (002) 24 0888, fax (002) 31 0972; Crabtree House, Crabtree Road, Crabtree 7109, telephone (002) 66 4227; the 1826 Hagley House, Hagley, tele-

phone (003) 92 2366; Cradle Mountain Lodge, P.O. Box 153, Sheffield 7306, telephone (004) 921303, fax (004) 921309.

MORE READING

Recommended guidebook: Lonely Planet's Australia (Raincoast Books, \$27.95), widely available.

INFORMATION

Australian Tourist Commission, 20 Budget Terrace, Unit # 1, Toronto M6S 1B4; telephone (416) 760-9249; fax (416) 760-7968.

Jeremy Ferguson is a Toronto writer and photographer.

the soft, luscious mainland wines, but by the turn of the millennium, when both wines and wine drinkers have matured, watch out.

As in wine country anywhere, the traveller can follow a circuit from winery to winery, tipping all the way. Rochembe produces a roaring sauvignon blanc, but avoid the winery's restaurant. Heemskerk, in partnership with Louis Roederer of Reims, makes a dry, *methode Champenoise* sparkling wine under the Jansz label. At Marion's Vineyard, Semmens dazzles his peers with a pinot gris that sells out on the day of its release.

This is a realm of farms planted with pink-eyed potatoes, country pubs transplanted from terminally quaint English villages, arts and crafts galleries, country retreats offering Devonshire teas, charming bed-and-breakfast houses and in spring (in November) a profusion of oranges and rusts in the trees; signs of new growth on the eucalyptus trees.

The Tamar Valley provides a deceptively gentle first impression of Tasmania. A leisurely half-day drive takes you westward to the wild and brooding landscape of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair UNESCO World Heritage area. Here, in a wilderness of 1,262 square kilometres, is Tasmania's most spectacular scenery, highest mountain, deepest lake and wildest wildlife.

Australians are crazy about taking off into the wilderness for days at a stretch. They call this bushwalking. They join bushwalking clubs and bushwalk into their old age. The 80-kilometre Overland Track between Cradle Mountain and Lake St. Clair is bushwalkers' Valhalla. The customary route from Cradle Mountain to Lake St. Clair takes eight days of rugged going. Mainlanders and Tasmanians alike set out at a rate of 100 walkers a day in summertime.

Trudging through muck in the rain, hunched like Quasimodo under bulging backpacks, seeing only the tops of your shoes, sidestepping deadly tiger snakes: "Why on Earth do you do this?" I queried lifetime bushwalker Scotty Bond.

"The enjoyment has partly to do with camaraderie," he said. "And it is about peace. You're slowing down and you don't even notice that it's hard on the body. Being up to your knees in mud and having the wind blowing you off your feet are part of the fun, some of the things that attain, in retrospect, their own romance."

"You see wildlife from wombats to the occasional platypus. You get exercise, beauty, companionship, a composite pleasure from which you emerge not only restored but rehabilitated. At the end, you're not so eager to get back to work as to do it all over again."

I found solace in Woody Allen's classic city-slicker line, "I am at two with nature."

I checked into Cradle Mountain Lodge, a luxury facility on the fringe of the national park. Cradle Mountain is only a few minutes' drive from the lodge. The view would be enough for me. Luckily, there was a view. The mountain has only 32 days of sunshine a year and is frequently lost in fog and mist. It plays strip and tease with wreaths of cloud, but when you see it naked, surrounded by heaths and moors, it is impressive.

Cradle Mountain Lodge offers very comfortable chalet and cabin accommodations. Better still, the restaurant has a walk-in wine cellar where you choose the evening's wines from a selection encompassing all the principal wine regions of Australia. How utterly civilized, especially when you come from thin-lipped Ontario. The food is very good — smoked salmon, whitebait fritters, fresh trout, marvellous lamb and organic vegetables.

But its greatest charm is the wildlife everywhere around the lodge. After dinner, guests make for the verandas, where wallabies, wombats, possums and occasionally Tasmanian devils congregate for a smorgasbord of fruits and vegetables. Except for the misanthropic devils, these marsupials are socially adept. Steven Spielberg didn't invent this sort of thing, after all.

In the spring, marsupials can be seen carrying their young in their pouches, tiny heads and paws hanging out. The wallabies, really miniature kangaroos, are particularly endearing. A few days later, when I was served wallaby sausage for breakfast, I felt like an eco-ogre.

Next, I journeyed south to Hobart and the Tasman Peninsula. Tasmania's oldest and largest city sits majestically on the banks of the Derwent River between mountains and ocean. From 1,270-metre-high Mount Wellington, it presents a stunning panorama, sprawling mightily for a city of only 129,000.

What was originally a village of tents sheltering 13 settlers, 25 marines, 15 women, 21 children and 178 convicts now is a livable city with extraordinarily handsome Georgian architecture, a fine collection of historical buildings and one of the world's loveliest harbours. Its old quarter, Battery Point, is a pleasure to explore on foot.

I stayed in Crabtree House, an 1870 guest house in Crabtree, a half-hour south of Hobart. Run by Peter and Gianna Gavagna, it offers exceptionally comfortable bedrooms

and Italian home cooking from Gianna's immaculate kitchen. The Gavagnas came from Sydney to retire five years ago. Peter Gavagna had planned to fish for the rest of his life, but the guest house came first. I asked him how many times he had gone fishing. Once, he said, only once.

From Hobart, it is a 100-kilometre drive down the Tasman Peninsula to Port Arthur. En route, I stopped at Tasmanian Devil Park to get a close look at these strange, foul-tempered marsupials. They are not to be fooled with: They have a ferocious bite. The males are fond of eating their young.

As a pair of devils snarled and ripped at one another, I listened carefully for any similarity to Mel Blanc's hilarious impersonation in Warner Bros. cartoons. Actually, he wasn't far off: The devil's yowl is a combination of a wheeze and a death rattle.

The scenery on the Tasman Peninsula is rugged and beautiful, but in 1830 Governor Arthur had seen it as a "natural penitentiary." Nowadays, people travel this way to examine the remnants of one of Australia's most infamous penal colonies, the Port Arthur Historic Site.

From 1830 to 1877, about 12,500 convicts were sent to Port Arthur. Convicts could have been as young as 9 years old and represented 48 nationalities, of whom a number were Canadian political prisoners. Conditions were appalling. In 1841 alone, 648 men received a total of 18,500 lashes. Only 11 prisoners succeeded in escaping.

It was to eradicate this frightful past that Van Diemen's Land underwent a name change to Tasmania in 1856.

Governor Arthur, in the meantime, had been shipped off to Canada, where he promptly named a second Port Arthur — now Thunder Bay, Ont. — for himself.

Visitors can tour the 40 hectares of grounds and 60 buildings, including the church, model prison, lunatic asylum and museum. The Commandant's House, reputed to be haunted by a prisoner's ghost, is a worthy stop if only to discover what the prison boss ate for dinner — kangaroo, wombat, muttonbird, parrot and owl. Presumably, he was both talkative and wise.



Contemporary Tasmanians do much, much better at the table. Tassie cuisine is making its mark on the whole of Australia. A quote from the Hobart Town Courier in February of 1828 suggests Tasmanians have always been fond of food: "One day last week, a body of natives attacked a number of women who were washing clothes and some men who were bathing. . . . They took away such of the property of the fugitives as they chose, retired, were pursued but not found. Parties, at last, went out professedly in pursuit, of whom some dined in the country, and others returned to town to dinner."

Among the joys of the Tassie table are miraculous oysters, buttery Atlantic salmon farmed in the cold waters of the South Pacific, firm-fleshed whitefish like trevalla and barramundi, quail, venison, kangaroo, pink-eyed potatoes and the unique, sublimely aromatic honey made from leatherwood trees and found only in Tasmania.

In Launceston, Tasmania's northern city, I ate at the Terrace Restaurant in the Country Club Casino complex. A sophisticated and deftly executed menu with an East-meets-West theme included those incredible oysters drizzled with ginger and shallot vinaigrette, pumpkin and apple soup, octopus and calamari salad, grilled trevalla with coriander salsa, saddle of venison and Cajun salmon. Cajun? In a casino at the far edge of the world? Talk about the global village kitchen.

At Port Arthur, the restaurant of choice is Kelley's, where three bright young restaurateurs confound their critics and continue to pack the place despite the remote location. "Accidental Occy" — octopus grilled in a sauce of orange, ginger and soy — melts in the mouth. A smoked plate, of quail, trevalla, salmon, mussels and, horrors, wallaby, is sensational. Oysters are rich and unctuous. Ditto the salmon. Only frozen french fries, displaying none of the fineness of the Tasmanian potato, are an embarrassment.

In Hobart, seafood lovers flock to the Mures Fish Centre on the waterfront near Battery Park. At Mures, the fantastic oysters come dolloped with smoked salmon and salmon caviar. The homely mussel is rendered sexy with sun-dried tomatoes, parmesan and chili. A salmon duet is a happy marriage of smoked salmon and sashimi.

I had come to see Tasmanian devils, but, downing another oyster, I found Tasmanian angels instead.



by Arthur Proudfoot

FROM THE WEST

Farewell, Gold Coast

A two-month stay on Australia's Gold Coast does not make me an expert, but I'll be happy to pose as one to let readers know that Canadians wanting a longer stay in a delightful climate will not go wrong on the Queensland coast. The distance between our two countries is

great, and to plant oneself into one location anywhere in the South Pacific requires a minimum stay of four weeks. Prices? A two-bedroom beach apartment can start at \$395 a week in the off-season, which goes to \$840 a week over Christmas. This Christmas premium rate can be avoided by arriving in Australia about the second week in January when Gold Coast rates are reduced. Retail food stuffs are distinctly cheaper than Canada. Getting an apartment near the local attractions and amenities makes a "stay-put" holiday without car quite possible. Funds normally budgeted for car hire, which can be pricey, can be spent on cabs when necessary.

tion can be purchased as a conducted tour out of Darwin. Travel agents with vision can tuck this one away for the moment of truth. More info from the ATC or the Northern Territories office in LAX.

Smoker Fumes Over Fine

A Singapore Airlines flight out of Melbourne left a passenger in Adelaide in the hands of Australia's federal police. Seems this traveller wanted to smoke, which is verboten while flying over Australia. The passenger became obstreperous. Alcohol is suspected of being a contributing factor. The captain's decision was to dump the nuisance (no, not while they were aloft). In Adelaide, the

fed's removed the irritation, and SIA continued on its way. For his deeds, the recalcitrant passenger earned himself a couple of days in Adelaide's alcohol-free lock-up and a \$950 fine. Pass the word that "no smoking" means exactly that.

Comfort Zone

I felt comfortable in Australia. I enjoyed the frankness and forthright honesty of the people I met there. They have respect for their fellow man and are, in general terms, fearless in today's world of the politically correct. They still have a sense of humour, which is what we are losing, and all because of this need to be politically correct.

Concorde's The Ticket

There's only one way to bring Australia closer to North America and that's by Concorde. Non-stop, low-rate flights are the practical alternative for volume business from anywhere. There are none out of Canada. My passage was by a Qantas day flight out of LAX. On the return portion, from boarding time in Brisbane to touch down in LAX, 16 hours and ten minutes elapsed, which includes a transfer in Sydney. Add the extras, such as the two hours before departure for check-in, the flight north to Vancouver, customs and immigration, and the exercise works out to be a long, long day.

Hubbing and spoking through Honolulu would have been faster, but one would've lost out on the more comfortable Boeing 747-400 Qantas aircraft. Despite the time span, the Boeing 747-400 Qantas day flight has the greatest appeal for this long haul.

Snake And Eggs, Anyone?

The South Pacific is cluttered with islands, some the size of Europe, others dry atolls. Australia's coast line has its share visited more by the home market. Great Barrier Reef resorts are the world famous ones, but how many readers have heard of Bathurst and Melville? They're close to Darwin and are contenders in the "something different" category. These islands have been the ancestral homes of the Tiwi people forever. Tourists are welcome and can induct themselves into the culture by accepting a Tiwi meal: fruit bats, wallabies, bandicoots and snakes. A dull steak and eggs is for the asking. Tiwi guests sleep in superior tents. Complete cultural indoctrina-

U.S.
PRESS RELEASES / INTERVIEWS

CORPORATE MEETINGS &
INCENTIVES

NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 48 000

DECEMBER 1993

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41 ■ The Australian Tourist Com-
mission has appointed Nigel
Bramich to head its North
American incentives and
meetings market program,
based in the Commission's
New York office. Bramich was
previously manager of market
development, North America
for All Nippon Airways
(ANA). Andrea Williams is
the new manager of incentive
travel. Prior to joining the
Commission, Williams was
business travel officer with the
British Tourist Authority.

Corporate & Incentive Travel
Jan 94

AUSTRALIA — THE INCENTIVE

6675

In a game of word association, the unenlightened traveler (i.e., one who has never ventured "Down Under"), would be hard-pressed to respond to "Australia" with much more than "kangaroos," "koalas" and "Crocodile Dundee." Contrast this to the leagues of American globe-trotters who have not only visited the oldest and most isolated continent on earth, but ranked it one of the world's most desirable destinations.

Not surprisingly, Australia's burgeoning popularity with the U.S. meetings market seems to have developed naturally in response to such factors as a strong TV ad campaign, an increase in non-stop flights leaving from the West Coast and the incentive industry's ongoing quest to find destinations that have not been "done to death."

Of course, hotels in all of Australia's major cities are equipped to handle meetings of varying sizes and needs; and — a big selling point — these properties are often willing to give group business the benefit of the buck.

A HIGH VALUE DESTINATION

According to Jon Hutchinson, managing director of the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC), Australia's current profile as a "high-value destination" has been fueled by competitive air fares across the Pacific, low hotel rates (clearly, overbuild is not exclusive to North America), and a favorable exchange rate (at press time, \$1.46 Australian to the U.S. dollar). "Americans are also pleasantly surprised by the fact that they don't have to tip, and rooms and other tourist items



Helpful too is the concerted effort of carriers to provide group-specific services. A case in point is Qantas, which offers planners a detailed roster of customized options, ranging from personalized handling at airports to personalized tags, amenity kits and menus.

Word of Australia's extensive collection of convention centers in Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra and Melbourne is also spreading, as is news of two new state-of-the-art facilities slated for opening in Brisbane and Cairns in 1995. When completed, the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Center will be the largest facility of its type in the Southern Hemisphere.

are not burdened by bed taxes," he observes.

Nigel Bramich, ATC's marketing manager, meetings, conventions and incentives, agrees with Hutchinson, and adds: "To Americans, Australia represents a very exotic and unique destination with unlimited options and activities. At the same time, it is also seen as a very safe and secure destination where we speak the same language. And — I feel this is quite important — Australians have a reputation for being warm and friendly people."

Whether it's the people, the adventure, the price or a combination of all three, this remote land of primeval beauty and modern amenities has undeniably piqued the attention of

ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

p. 2
Corporate & Incentive

BY GRIFFIN MILLER

planners who, as recently as five years ago, hesitated to give the area a second look. States John Broughan of UMI Incentives, "My fourth visit to Australia — my first in four years — convinced me that the country is now ready and able to host the most important U.S. incentive programs. Most importantly, Australia is one of the few places in the world where the U.S. dollar has increased in value, making the destination a greater value than Europe or many Asian countries — in spite of the distance."

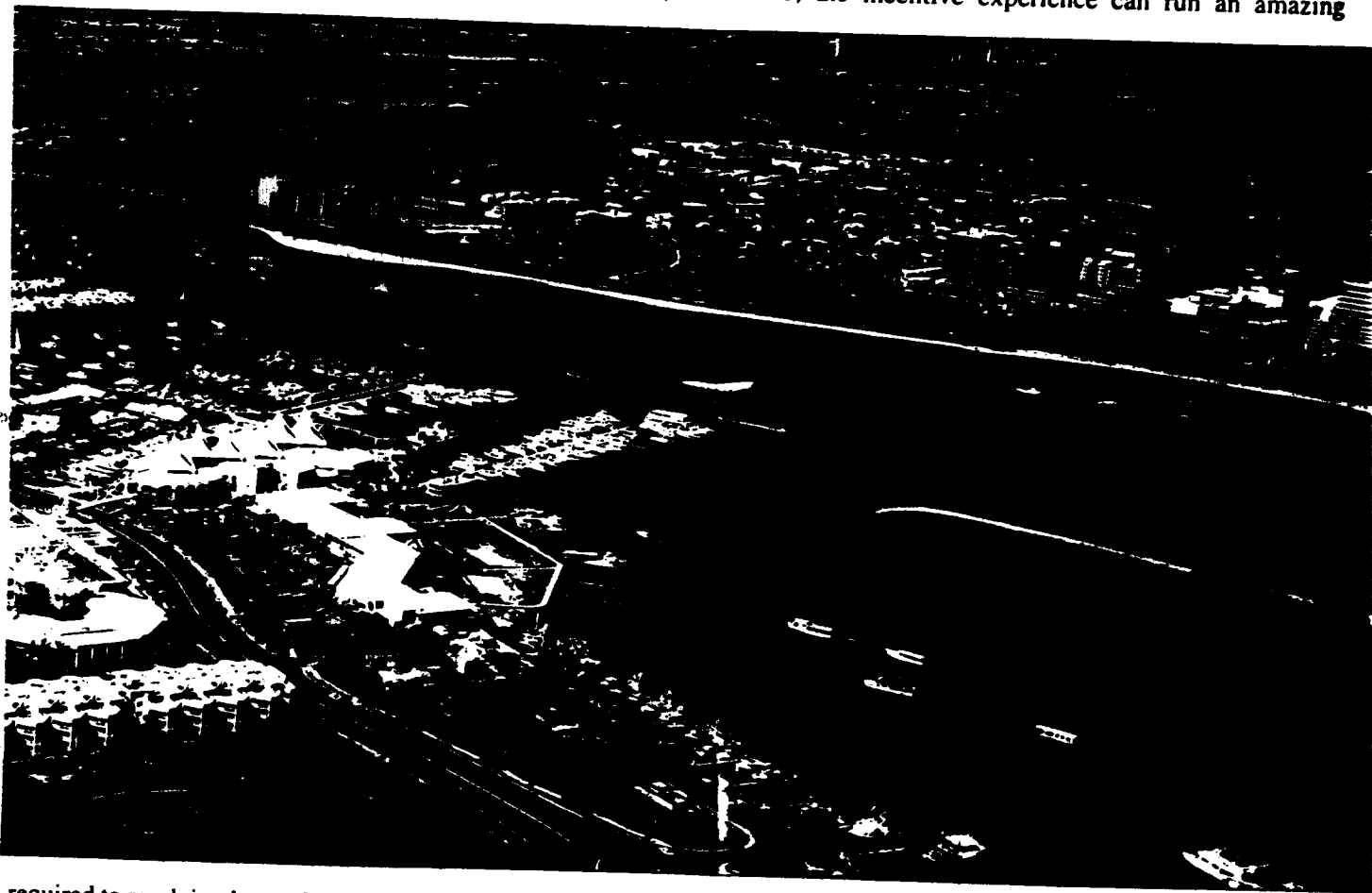
THE LAY OF THE LAND

A country-cum-continent roughly the size of the U.S., Australia has a geographic diversity that overshadows the substantial airborne hours (12 to 14 from the West Coast)

Since such diversity can't help but pose a kid-in-a-candy-store type dilemma for planners eyeing Australia for the first time, the ATC has dedicated itself to narrowing down the options.

"Australia has to be looked at as you would the U.S. No one would want to do the entire U.S. in one trip. However, there are a wide variety of experiences that are do-able over a seven- to 10-day period. ATC is a deliberately impartial and confidential organization, so we can help you pick areas based solely on your group's interests and desires," explains Bramich. "In addition, we can offer referrals to CVBs, industry representatives and DMCs. One call to us automatically puts you in touch with an unlimited number of resources."

Indeed, the incentive experience can run an amazing



required to reach its shores. Bounded by the Indian Ocean to the west, the Arafura and Timor Seas to the north, the Tasman Sea and the Southern Ocean to the south and the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean to the east, Australia is comprised of five inland states: Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland; and the off-shore island-state of Tasmania.

In short, Australia offers visitors every imaginable climate and setting from beaches to mountains to rain forests to deserts: cosmopolitan cities coexist with Aboriginal culture; the Outback with the Great Barrier Reef; sunbathing with skiing; Land Rovers with casinos.

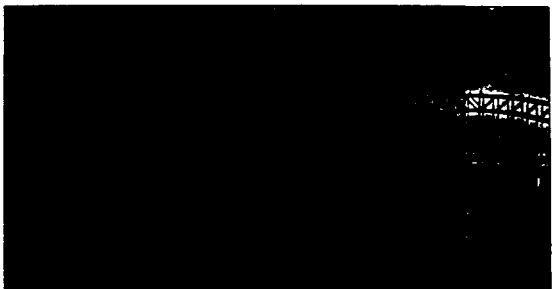
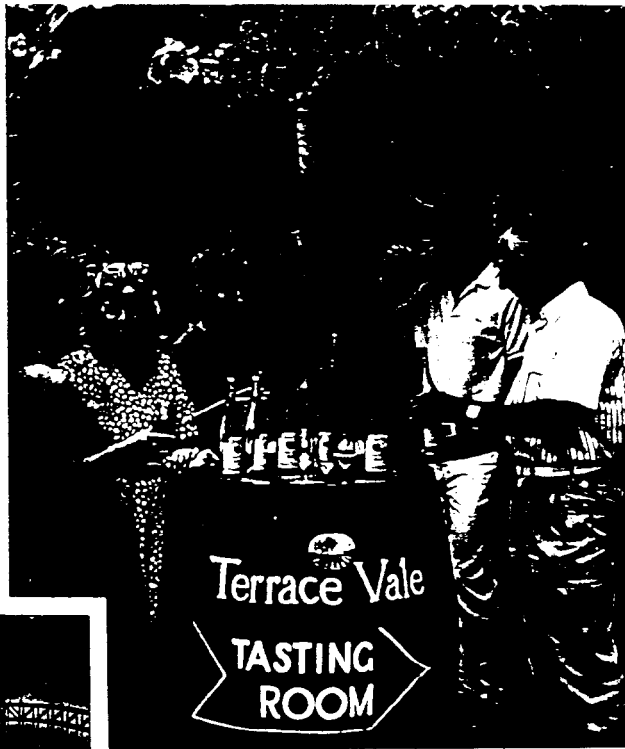
Queensland's attractions ranging from its fabulous "Gold Coast" to the Great Barrier Reef to the tropical rain forests of Cape Tribulation, offer enough diversity to fulfill any planner's wish list for unusual and spectacular group activities. This northern state's tourists' infrastructure is well equipped to handle all of your needs.

game in Australia, with a single itinerary encompassing a formal dinner under the stars, a "barbie" featuring wallaby and kangaroo guests, a walk through a rain forest, snorkeling, golf, tennis, shopping and yachting. More daring itineraries — heli-fishing in Western Australia or camel rides in the desert Outback — are guaranteed to dazzle even the most venturesome of spirits.

CITY TOUR IN BRIEF

While it is impossible to encapsulate Australia — each region is profoundly unique, offering countless opportunities for group programs — below is a brief introduction to several of Australia's major cities.

SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES: Located on the southeast coast, sophisticated and cosmopolitan Sydney was originally established as a British penal colony in 1770. In its 1994 incarnation, Sydney is a blend of upscale hotels, fine restaurants, harbor cruises, art



museums, galleries, parks, historic buildings, inlets, lakes and a wide range of

nightlife alternatives. With more than 34 beaches within the city limits, water sports dominate the recreational picture. Major hotels include the ANA Hotel Sydney (533 guest rooms, 10 meeting rooms); Hotel Nikko Darling Harbour Sydney (645 guest rooms, seven meeting rooms); Hyatt Kingsgate Sydney (389 guest rooms, 14 meeting rooms); The Regent, Sydney (530 guest rooms; seven meeting rooms); the Sydney Renaissance Hotel (545 guest rooms; eight meeting rooms); and the Ritz-Carlton Sydney.

Off-site excursions and theme parties are easily arranged in Sydney and its surrounding areas. Just an hour west of the city, the Blue Mountains of the Great Dividing Range offer hiking and wildlife expeditions, while Hunter Valley, 90 miles north of Sydney, is home to more than 30 vineyards.

As host city for the 2000 Olympics, Sydney has already begun laying the groundwork for the big event, including construction of an ecologically sound Olympic Village and a \$2.7-billion upgrade of the city's international air, bus, rail, road and bridge systems.

CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND: Pronounced "Cars," this waterfront town situated in Far North Queensland has been dubbed "Australia's Hawaii," due in part to its association with the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest living coral chain. Snorkeling, boating and marlin fishing stand out on the recreational front, as does the city's open-air recreated rain forest habitat featuring 65 species of local birds, as well as various examples of indigenous flora and fauna.

Outside Cairns, options include a day trip to the Atherton Tablelands, a cruise on the Mossman River in Daintree National Park, and an historic train ride through Barron Gorge to the township of Kuranda for a performance of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Dance Theater.

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA: Known for its European ambiance, culture, art, cuisine, fashion, and cabaret scene,

(Far Left) Sydney's Opera House, of Australia's most recognizable landmarks, is a favorite stop of visiting groups. (Left) Hunter Valley, north east of Sydney, is famous for its full bodied vintages, especially its red w

Melbourne is part of Victoria Australia's smallest mainland state. More than 70 parks and gardens dot the city while sporting life — from horseracing to tennis to Australian football (aka "footy") — is a major contributor to Melbourne's distinctive personality.

Hotels catering to the meeting market include Cetra Melbourne on The Yarra, the Grand Hotel Melbourne, the Melbourne Hilton on the Park, the Park Royal Melbourne and The South Cross Hotel. These properties range in size from 362 to 1,000 guest rooms with anywhere

from five to 17 meeting rooms.

Outside the city, Australia's gold rush days are re-enacted in the village of Sovereign Hill, an attraction filled with costumed characters and period buildings. Also recommended is an evening tour of Phillip Island, just south of the city, where thousands of fairy penguins make a nightly journey, en masse, to the beach.

ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Alive with activity, Adelaide is known throughout Australia as "Fest City." In addition to hosting the Adelaide Arts Fest (held in even-numbered years) and the Barossa Valley Vintage Festival (held in odd-numbered years), the city welcomes the Southern Hemisphere's only Formula 1 Grand Prix to its streets every November.

Situated northwest of Melbourne (on the continent's southern end), the port of Adelaide is also known for opals, (75 percent of the world's opals come from South Australia), its wine (from nearby Barossa Valley), and proximity to Kangaroo Island, a former whaling base that now houses a wildlife paradise.

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY: Australia's capital city can be described as the D.C. Under equivalent to Washington, D.C. Here, the tree-lined boulevards form arteries to the administrative and diplomatic heart of the city. The new Parliament House (built in 1988), the Australian National Gallery, the National Library, Commonwealth Park and the Questacon National Science and Technology Center are all part of the scientific and political landscape that comprise this striking city.

Recommended outings include a day trip to the Canberra Space Center in Tidbinbilla; a drive into the Snowy Mountains; and/or a visit to Kosciusko National Park's ski village.

BRISBANE, SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND: Gateway to the Gold and Sunshine Coasts and Southern Cross Barrier Reef, Brisbane is just beginning to tap into its potential as a tourist destination. During the next five years, Queensland's vibrant capital city will open a \$200-million

(Continued on page 63)

Australia (Continued from page 62)

Convention and Exhibition Center, a casino (the city's first) and the new Brisbane International Airport terminal.

At present, Brisbane's South Bank Parklands and self-contained Queensland Cultural Center draw visitors throughout the year. Hotels in the city include the 413-room Sheraton Brisbane Hotel & Towers, the 141-room Brisbane Parkroyal, and the 191-room Brisbane City Travelodge.

The Gold Coast, home of Jupiters Casino, multiple theme parks and Koala Country, a wildlife sanctuary, is only an hour's drive from Brisbane; while Lamington National Park — waterfalls, sub-tropical rainforests, caves and gorges — lies 62 miles south of the city. On the Sunshine Coast, also only an hour away, beaches and water sports beckon. Several excellent resorts can be found on both these "coasts," among them Conrad Jupiters, Hyatt Regency Coolum, and Marriott Surfers Paradise Resort.

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Dominated by the Swan River, Perth invites visitors to indulge

in windsurfing, sailing, waterskiing and cruising. Beach aficionados find their haven on the sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean. And, because marine life flourishes along Western Australia's coast, whales can be observed from the deck of a cruiser, while sea lions, seals, dolphins and penguins inhabit the Penguin and Seal Islands just off the coast.

Tranquil Rottneest Island with its car-free roads is a popular day trip from Perth, while the city of Fremantle is a study in historic architecture and quaint outdoor cafes. Hotels in this area include the Burswood Resort Hotel & Casino, the Hyatt Regency Perth, Perth Parkroyal, Radisson Observation City Hotel and Esplanade Hotel Fremantle.

In addition to the cities mentioned above, Hobart, the capital of Tasmania; Darwin, the Northern Territory's capital; and Alice Springs, the outback's communications center and home base for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, also offer many venues of interest to meeting and incentive planners.

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**AUSTRALIA: Tourism Victoria
restructures N American operations**

Tourism Victoria, the tourism promotion agency for the Australian state of Victoria, has announced the restructuring of its North American operations.

According to Tourism Victoria chairman David Grant, promotion for the state of Victoria and its capital, Melbourne, will be handled through a new relationship with the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC) called Partnership Australia. Mr. Grant said the ATC and Tourism Victoria will share resources and facilities.

"We're delighted to join forces with Tourism Victoria in promoting the region's attractions to the dynamic North American market," said Bill Baker, regional director, ATC.

As part of the restructuring, Tourism Victoria has retained Margaret Sparrow in the position of *product development manager*. She will oversee marketing initiatives with the ATC and will update the travel trade on Victorian tourism products. She will be based at the ATC's office in Los Angeles.

For information, contact: AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION,
800/433-2877; FAX 708/635-3718. □

Hamilton Spectator

Jan 22 74

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TRAVEL

Should disasters halt travel to Australia or Puerto Rico?

By CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS
Los Angeles Times

AUSTRALIA BOUND? Proceed with caution, and expect a substantial portion of the national parkland to be black and crunchy.

Puerto Rico? Don't cancel your plans, but if your arrival date is in the next week or two, prepare for the sight of oil-spill cleanup crews along the island's most prominent 25 kilometres of beaches.

From any angle, the images of the recent fires in New South Wales and oil spill off Puerto Rico were troubling.

Authorities say that some of the affected territory, most notably Australia's Royal National Park, may not be the same for generations. Scores of fires burned many out of control for days. But if you're a traveller already holding tickets to either accident-marred destination -- or if you're contemplating a trip to those locales -- take a much closer look before you abandon plans.

Along with the devastation in Australia, you're likely to find some reassuring news about most of the country's top tourist attractions.

In Puerto Rico, the spill trouble is much milder, and recovery projections quicker.

The bush fires in southeast Australia -- more than 150 of them, more than half attributed to arsonists -- began to break out in the first days of January. About 1.5 million acres of grassland and forest in the state of

New South Wales have burned. Some flames rose in Sydney's suburbs, destroying more than 200 homes, killing four people. But downtown Sydney, its picturesque harbor, bridge and opera house all escaped damage. Airline schedules are normal, and though highway access and rail service were curtailed during the worst of the fires, authorities said all those routes should be functioning as normal by now.

Australia's three other most visible destinations lie well clear of the afflicted area. Ayers Rock, 1,609 kilometres (1,000 miles) to the northwest, the Great Barrier Reef, 965 kilometres (600 miles) north at its southernmost point, Melbourne, 644 kilometres (400 miles) southwest.

Among wilderness destinations outside Sydney, however, the damage is considerable. About two dozen of the 70 national parks in the state closed during the fires, either because of immediate flames or to reduce fire risks posed by 38C (100F) temperatures and 96 km/h (60 mph) winds.

The prime casualty -- 98 per cent charred -- was the 37,099-acre Royal National Park, a retreat of cliff-top hiking paths, surfing beaches and river rowboating 32 kilometres (20 miles) south of Sydney. Royal is the world's second oldest national park, predated only by Yellowstone in the United States.

The Blue Mountains, a popular destination 48 kilometres (30 miles) northwest of Sydney, were blackened in the Grose Valley area.

Authorities said fire also affected parts of Morton National Park, a 377,931-acre preserve that guidebook authors John and Monica Chapman say includes "the best bushwalking in the state."

In Puerto Rico, the trouble began Jan 7 when the barge Morris J. Berman hit a coral reef and spilled 750,000 gallons of heating oil, coating an estimated 20 square miles of ocean. Cleanup operations collected a large share of the spill, but the damaged areas included Puerto Rico's most visible beaches -- the Condado area near San Juan. There, the spill fouled 10 kilometres (six miles) of shoreline, including a 2.5-kilometre (1.5-mile) stretch of beaches that serve the island's primary group of international hotels, now in their peak tourist season.

Local authorities said the odor of petroleum lifted in the first few days, and estimated that the beach cleanup would take two to three weeks. The nearest hotels to the spill, the landmark Caribe Hilton and the Art Deco Radisson Normandie, pledged free transportation to other beaches. Puerto Rico has some 415 kilometres (258 miles) of beaches. The neighboring Condado Plaza, Regency, Condado Beach and La Concha hotels made similar offers.

San Juan is a busy stop for Miami-based cruise ship traffic, and its port lies within walking distance of the oil-stained beaches. But Lawrence Fishkin, president of The Cruise Line, a clearinghouse of information on the industry, said the spill and cleanup have had no effect on ship schedules.

JAN 23 1994

BURRELLE'S

Should disasters halt travel to Australia, Puerto Rico?

By CHRIS REYNOLDS

Los Angeles Times

Australia-bound? Proceed with caution, and expect a substantial portion of the national parkland to be black and crunchy.

Puerto Rico? Don't cancel your plans, but if your arrival date is in the next week or two, prepare for the sight of oil-spill cleanup crews along the island's most prominent mile and a half of beaches.

From any angle, the images of last week's fires in New South Wales and oil spill off Puerto Rico were troubling. Authorities say that some of the affected territory, most notably Australia's Royal National Park, may not be the same for generations. Scores of fires burned, many out of control for days. But if you're a traveler already holding tickets to either accident-marred destination — or if you're contemplating a trip to those locales — take a much closer look before you abandon plans. Along with the devastation in Australia, you're likely to find some reassuring news about most of the country's top tourist attractions. In Puerto Rico, the spill trouble is much milder, the recovery projections quicker.

The bush fires in southeast Australia — more than 150 of them, more than half attributed to arsonists — began to break out in the first days of January. About 1.5 million acres of grassland and forest in the state of New South Wales have burned. Some flames rose in Sydney's suburbs, destroying more than 200 homes, killing four people. But downtown Sydney, its pictur-

esque harbor, bridge and opera house all escaped damage. Airline schedules are normal, and though highway access and rail service were curtailed during the worst of the fires, authorities said all those routes should be functioning as normal by now. (Australia's three other most visible destinations lie well clear of the afflicted area: Ayers Rock, about 1,000 miles to the northwest; the Great Barrier Reef, about 600 miles north at its southernmost point; Melbourne, about 400 miles southwest.)

Among wilderness destinations outside Sydney, however, the damage is considerable. About two dozen of the 70 national parks in the state closed during the fires, either because of immediate flames or to reduce fire risks posed by 100-degree temperatures and 60 mph winds.

The prime casualty — 98 percent charred — was the 37,099-acre Royal National Park, a retreat of cliff-top hiking paths, surfing beaches and river rowboating about 20 miles south of Sydney. Royal is the world's second oldest national park, predated only by Yellowstone in the United States.

The Blue Mountains, a popular destination about 30 miles northwest of Sydney, were blackened in the Grose Valley area and many others: as of Jan. 11, fire had reached an estimated 250,000 acres of the 2 million acres in the area's several national parks. But one of that area's most popular tourist spots, the Three Sisters rock formation and Echo Point lookout, was unaffected. Authorities said bus tours to the Three Sisters and other

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attractions are still being offered, but off-road tours and other activities in the park system were closed.

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Travel Agent
Jan 24 94

PACIFIC/ASIA
SOUTH PACIFIC

MARKET WATCH: AUSTRALIA

If the **Australian Tourism Commission (ATC)** has its way, the 27th Olympics in the year 2000 won't see prices going through the roof. The ATC has secured the cooperation of the Australian Hoteliers Association and the Motor Inn and Motel Association to limit room prices during the games. The Aussies are also promising that tickets to the events will begin as low as \$10. The ATC is predicting that publicity from the games will add 1.32 million foreign visitors between the years 1994 and 2004...The Fourth World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism is scheduled to be held at the **Wrest Point Hotel Casino** in Hobart, Tasmania, in September...Another Tasmanian tidbit has Utell (800-44-UTELL) handling sales, marketing and reservations for Launceston's **Great**

Northern Hotel and Hobart's **Westside Hotel**. Both properties will subscribe to Paytell, a Utell system that allows agents to take their commissions up front...**Adventure Center** (800-227-8747) is offering motorcycle tours of one to 14 days in Australia. Using 600cc cycles, the itineraries will wander off the road as well as on it...This year's **Adelaide Festival** (Feb. 25 through March 13) will emphasize the arts of Asia with performances by Japan's National Bunraku Theater and Javanese shadow puppets, as well as by the Frankfurt Ballet and New York's Mark Morris Dance Company...The ATC is reporting that travel to **Sydney** is "functioning normally" despite the recent brushfires in rural **New South Wales**. The fires occurred in national park areas close to the sea.

PROFILING THE U.S. MARKET DOWN UNDER

American Visitors' Region of Stay

New South Wales	79%
Australian Capital Territory	11%
Victoria	40%
Queensland	51%
South Australia	11%
Western Australia	8%
Tasmania	5%
Northern Territory	15%

American Visitors to Australia

First visit:	64%
Age 30 to 49:	41%
Hotel stay with facilities:	68%
Used travel agent for booking:	70%

Source: Australian Tourist Commission

JAN 30 1994

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TRAVEL TIPS

By Barbara Ann Curcio

The Washington Post 6675

In the wake of the oil spill in Puerto Rico and the Sydney, Australia, bush fires earlier this month, it's still possible to salvage winter trips.

Fouled beaches east of San Juan — on the 1½ miles serving the big international hotels — are currently being cleaned up, with work expected to be completed by the end of February. All hotels in the Condado area are open and are busing guests to beaches in the Isla Verde area, four miles away. Information: Puerto Rico Tourism Co., (800) 815-7391.

And in Australia's New South Wales, while Sydney and its tourist attractions went unscathed, the Royal National Park, about 20 miles south of the city and popular with hikers, boaters and surfers, was largely destroyed. Airline schedules and highway and rail routes, however, are all back to normal, tourism officials report. Northwest of the city, attractions in the Blue Mountains, such as the Three Sisters rock formation and Echo Point lookout, are open. Information: Australian Tourist Commission, (212) 687-6300.

Miami Safety: In a continuing effort to safeguard tourists in South Florida, a specialized police unit will next month begin patrolling Miami International Airport's car rental area around the clock. Members of the new Tourist-Oriented Police Unit, part of the regular Dade County police department, will patrol the triangular area east of the airport in specially identified cars and uniforms. Officers

are bilingual (in either Spanish, French, Japanese or German) and are trained to assist travelers and give directions.

Other new safety measures in and around the airport:

Two special information booths have been set up by the City of Miami police.

Police and state troopers have stepped up patrols and undercover surveillance.

Montreal Gamble: Gamble on Montreal, now that the new Casino de Montreal is open. Canada's first world-class casino, on its own island in the Parc des Iles, has blackjack, roulette, midi-baccarat and keno, plus electronic track horse racing and more than 1,200 slot machines. For non-gamblers, there are diverting views of the river and the Montreal skyline, dining, entertainment and shop ops, including a tax-free boutique and souvenir shop. There are no entrance fees and parking is free for the casino, about four miles from downtown. Information: (800) 665-2274 or (212) 397-0220.

Geronimo! Just in time for movie fans, it's an eight-day "study adventure," in the footsteps of the indomitable Native American leader, March 6-13. The historian-led tour, "Cochise, Geronimo and Crook: The Apache Wars in Arizona," visits the scene of the struggle for control of Arizona, including historic Tombstone, Cochise's Stronghold, Geronimo's Surrender Monument and Forts Huachuca, Bowie and Apache. Cost is \$859 per person, double occupancy, including accommodations and all meals, not including air fare to Phoenix. Information: HistoryAmerica Tours, (800) 628-8542. //

TIMES

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TRAVEL/RESORTS

THE TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1994 DD3

TRAVEL CALENDAR

Carnival sweeps islands

10675
NOTE: Before setting out for any event or festival, please check with various tourist offices to verify dates and sites. Dates and locations often change without too much advance notice.

THE ISLANDS

ARUBA

Aruba's Tivoli Lighting Parade, Oranjestad, Feb. 5.
The Grand Children's Carnival Parade, Oranjestad, Feb. 6.
Children's Carnival Parade, Santa Cruz, Feb. 9.
Grand Carnival Parade, Oranjestad, Feb. 13.
Grand Evening Parade and Burning of King Momo, Oranjestad, Feb. 15.

BERMUDA

Bermuda Valentine's Mixed Foursome, Devonshire, Southampton and St. George's, Feb. 13-19. At Ocean View, Port Royal and St. George's Golf Courses.

Bermuda Golf Festival, Southampton, Tucker's Town, Warwick and St. George's, Feb. 20-Mar. 5. At the Port Royal, Castle Harbour, Southampton Princess, Belmont Hotel Golf & Country Club and St. George's Golf Courses.

GUERNSEY

Carnival Celebrations, Carriacou, Feb. 5-15.
20th Annual Independence Day Celebrations, Islandwide, Feb. 7.

JAMAICA

Chukka Cove Appleton Cup Polo, Chukka Cove, Drax Hall, Feb. 10-12. 14-goal international polo tournament finals.

MEXICO AND SOUTH AMERICA

MEXICO

Candelmas Day, nationwide, Feb. 2. Blessing of Candles. Special fiestas in Tlacoalpan and Veracruz.
Constitution Day, nationwide, Feb. 5. Legal holiday.
Carnival, nationwide, Feb. 11-15.

SOUTH AMERICA

BRAZIL

Carnival, Rio de Janeiro, Feb. 15.

URUGUAY

Carnival, Montevideo, Feb. 1-15.

WESTERN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Haydn Festival, Vienna, Feb. 20-Mar. 3.

BELGIUM

50th Anniversary of The Bulge, nationwide, Feb. 3.

DENMARK

Exhibit: "Kiki Smith," Humlebaek, North Sealand, Feb. 25-May 1. Work of an American artist at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

FRANCE

50th Anniversary of D-Day, Normandy,

Feb. 1-Dec. 31.

Carnival, Nice, Feb. 15.

GERMANY

Fasching or Mardi Gras Celebrations, Munich and throughout Bavaria, Feb. 15.

GREECE

Carnival Celebrations, nationwide, Feb. 20-Mar. 13. Follows the old calendar.

ITALY

Carnivale, Venice, Feb. 15.

MALTA

Carnival, nationwide, Feb. 11-15.

NETHERLANDS

Exhibit: "Dawn of the Golden Age," Amsterdam, through Mar. 7. Dutch art from the beginning of the 17th century at the Rijksmuseum.

Tulip 400 Celebrations, Leiden and nationwide, Feb. 1-Dec. 31. Tulip-related events mark the planting of the first tulip at the Botanical Garden in Leiden.

NORWAY

1994 Winter Olympics, Lillehammer, Feb. 12-27.

PORTUGAL

Lisbon '94, Lisbon, Feb. 1-Dec. 31. European capital of culture year. Visual and performing arts salute Lisbon.

Carnival Festivities, Loule, Nazare and Ovar, Feb. 13-15.

SPAIN

Exhibit: "Goya: Whimsy and Fantasy," Madrid, through Feb. 15. At the Prado Museum.

Women's World Ski Championships: Sierram Downhill, Granada, Feb. 4-6. At the Sierra Nevada Ski Resort.
The Valencia Marathon, Valencia, Feb. 6.

ARCO: International Contemporary Art Fair, Madrid, Feb. 10-15. At the Crystal Palace, Casa de Campo.

Carnival, Cadix, Feb. 11-20.
The Seville Marathon, Seville, Feb. 27.

UNITED KINGDOM

Exhibit: "Modigliani Drawings," London, through April 4. At the Royal Academy, Piccadilly.

Exhibit: "Picasso," London, Feb. 16-May 8. At the Tate Gallery, Millbank.

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL

Photomix: Exhibition of Photography, Video Equipment and Accessories, Tel Aviv, Feb. 7-9. At the Israel Trade Fairs and Convention Center.

Giora/Dead Sea Running Marathon, Ein Gedi, Feb. 12.
Purim of Feast of Lots, nationwide, Feb. 25.

ASIA, PACIFIC AND THE FAR EAST

AUSTRALIA

50th Biennial International Festival, Adelaide, Feb. 25-Mar. 13. A showcase for Australia's Euro-New World roots.

HONG KONG

Lunar New Year Celebration: Year of the Dog, Feb. 10-12.
22nd Hong Kong Arts Festival, Feb. 19-Mar. 13. Visual and performing arts.

JAPAN

National Foundation Day, Feb. 11.

— Frances Shemanski

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Australian incentive travel: Nigel Bramich has been appointed to head the Australian Tourist Commission's incentives and meetings market program, and **Andrea Williams** has been appointed to the newly created position of manager, incentive travel. Bramich brings to the job 20 years of marketing experience with All Nippon Airways and Pan American World Airways. Williams was previously a business travel officer with the British Tourist Authority. Both are based in New York City.

Black Aborigines Of Australia

Another Dimension Of The Pan-African Panorama?

By SANDRA JACKSON-OPOKU

Quick! Name three things about Australia. Were they kangaroos, koala bears, and "Crocodile Dundee?" Now name three things about Black Australia. Most of us would be hard-pressed to come up with one. But that's about to change.

This past "International Year of Indigenous Peoples" indicates that Blacks from the Land Down Under are coming into their own. Aborigines were well represented in a recent campaign promoting cultural and ecological tourism in Australia's Northern Territory. And *AFRIQUE* met with some of them when they passed through Chicago.

Black Australia had until recently been overlooked by the tourism industry. In fact, Australia once had the reputation of being cool towards Black people altogether.

"Remember when Black singer Leslie Uggams married an Aussie back in the 1960's?" Terry White of ETA recalls. "They wouldn't even let her in the country."

The hitherto limited contact between Black Americans and Black Australians is changing, as our community begins to travel more, and Aborigines become involved in their nation's tourism.

Though dark in complexion and African-like in features, Australoids (a racial subgroup native to various Oceanic Islands) are thought to be of southeast Asian stock. Given this, can there be any real basis for cultural connections between our two communities? Is it true, as a White Australian recently told me, that "their situation is completely different from yours?" And can we be all that different, when the same person later misidentified a slide of an African-American touring the outback of western Arnhem Land as an Aborigine?

During a visit to the ETA Theater complex on Chicago's southside, Manuel Pankal, tour guide with Manyallaluk Cultural Tours, and president of his set-



Black Australian members of the Tjapuka Dance Theatre.

dlement in the Northern Territory area of Katherine, looked around and nodded in quiet affirmation.

"It is good," he stated. "To see our Black people building up something like this."

Bill Harney, artist, musician, and proprietor of the Jankangyina "Lightening Brothers" Tour Company, stated that African-Americans would be recognized by most Black Australians as family.

"When you come to Australia," he promised me, "we will adopt you as a countryman. We will give you tribal skin."

Tribal skin is a complex kinship system determining family ties and social relationships among Aborigine communities. Linley Brum, box office manager of Tjapuka Aboriginal Dance Theater in the rainforest village of Karanda, reports that there are close ties between her people and the growing community of African immigrants in Queensland.

This pan-African identification goes back at least 20 years, when a delegation of Aborigines participated in the Congress of African Peoples held in Atlanta during the 1970's.

Although "aborigine" means "native of," some Black Australians consider this a loaded term and prefer to identify themselves by ethnic group. Koonie (an amalgam of South Australia groups), Pintupi, Tiwi, Wardaman, etc. But the ones we met seemed comfortable with this designation.

Aborigines began migrating to the Australian continent as early as 40,000

BC. Over 100 groups, each with their own culture and language, once ranged throughout this huge island the size of the United States. But with colonial contact came conquest, genocide, displacement, and ultimately cultural disintegration. Assimilation was the state policy of the Commonwealth Government.

"In the course of time, it is expected," said Sir Paul Hasluck, the architect of that policy, "that all persons of Aboriginal blood or mixed blood will live like White Australians do."

During the 1970's as African-Americans fought for Civil Rights...Black Australians were also organizing.

Mirroring the expansion policy that victimized Native Peoples in the Americas, Aborigines were massacred, their survivors displaced from ancestral lands to reservations and work stations. When aboriginal women were sexually exploited, their mixed blood descendants were routinely removed from them and raised in white foster homes and orphanages.

But there has also been a tradition of resistance. Vestiges of Aboriginal culture endured the onslaught. Where language, culture, and societal structures were destroyed, the people never completely lost their identity. During the 1970's as African-Americans fought for Civil Rights and African and Caribbean nations were achieving national independence, Black Australians were also organizing.

Protesting centuries of exploitation as cheap labor, they staged strikes, pickets, walk-outs. In 1972 assimilation was finally scrapped in favor of a policy of self-determination. The Land Rights Acts of 1976 legislated a gradual return of traditional lands that is still ongoing.

Aborigines are now emerging into the Australian mainstream. They can be found in business and the professions, entrepreneurs, educators, judges. There is even a Black television company, radio station, and airlines. Aboriginal artists and crafts people are gaining worldwide recognition. But there remains a legacy of political, economic and social inequity.

Can tourism be one way to meet these challenges? That was the concept behind an Aboriginal and Environmental Tourism Roadshow that took Black and White Australian tour operators and performing artists to 16 American cities. These companies combine safaris and nature hikes with visits to Aboriginal settlements, explorations of native arts and historic sites, and hands-on exposure to traditional life in the Northern Territory. Though aboriginal communities are scattered throughout Australia, they form a substantial 25% of the population in the Northern Territory.

Bill Harney states it simply: "Tourism is good for our people, because we can have jobs and work on our own lands."

Tourism can also be a force in cultural preservation, according to Linley Brum.

"The Tjapuka culture had died out. This dance theatre has helped to revive it. Now we are relearning our language, even starting to teach it in our schools."

Because of racial mixing and ethnic variations, Aborigines range in complexion from golden brown to jet black. Hair textures vary from loosely waved to super curly; some desert aborigines even have blond-tipped tresses. Facial features tend to be bold and striking.

Aboriginal people consider themselves the custodians of their land and all its assets. They believe that people can't own land, but the land owns them. Their complex belief system of "Dream Time" (the period of ancestors and creation) has produced a rich culture of stories and myth, performing and visual arts.

The Black Australians we met were friendly, down to earth, and remarkably open. But I, ever aware of the need to be sensitive to other cultures and avoid stereotyping, was suitably aghast when my seven-year-old daughter asked Linley over dinner: "Do you eat kangaroos?"

However, our guest responded with grace and aplomb. Although her community had become westernized and bought their meat at the butcher shop, she explained, Aborigines in the outback subsisted largely on "bush tucker" (wild food). She even showed us a picture of fresh kangaroo roasting in a traditional outdoor underground oven.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

For general information on travel to Australia, contact the Australia Tourism Commission at 800-333-0262. For information on Aboriginal Tourism, contact Northern Territory Tourism at 800-4-OUTBAC or the Queensland Tourism & Travel Corporation at 320-788-887.

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AUSTRALIA'S *Aboriginal Culture & More*

CAROL U. OZEMHLOVA



Tjapukai Dance Theatre performs Kangaroo Dance.

When people think of Australia they imagine the rough and rugged outback or a cuddly koala bear. But they should also think of sophisticated, cosmopolitan cities, beautiful beaches, magnificent reefs and a country steeped in art, history and culture. It's no wonder the land down under has been chosen to host the Olympics in the year 2000.

To assist with marketing, the Australian Tourist Commission and Australia's six state and two territory tourism authorities formed **Partnership Australia**, a three-tier program. Level One includes the development of consumer and trade telephone services. Level Two involves material fulfillment and industry liaison and the coordination of trade shows. And Level Three focuses on price and product-specific programs. Travel agents can reach an information service bureau at 800-433-AUSSIE.

About the size of the

continental United States, Australia abounds with natural beauty and wonder. Majestic mountains covered with lush rainforests contrast a vast desert that stretches across the interior. Sleek, glass office towers reach for the sky and colonial style churches in modern cities, while one of the oldest cultures in the world thrives in the rugged countryside.

Aboriginal tourism. No doubt, one of the world's most fascinating cultures is that of the Aboriginal people. With traditions and customs that date back some 60,000 years, their story is one of endurance, courage, intellect and a respect for nature that the rest of the world is just catching on to.

Visitors can now experience the mystique of Aboriginal life first-hand through more than 20 Aboriginal tour operators. It's a new style of tourism, where the needs of the land and its indigenous people are paramount. The tours are low-impact, done in small groups and with limited duration to protect the environment and Aboriginal privacy. Aborigines also gain

economic benefits, with an estimated 45 percent of revenue being returned to Aboriginal communities.

Aborigine-owned tour companies include **Aussie Safaris**, which offers a trek to a community of farmers who have autonomy over their land as they continue to practice ancient cultural traditions. **Manyallaluk Tours** features safaris that allow visitors to experience Aboriginal customs and traditions, such as spear-throwing, fire-lighting using one stick, bark-painting and didgeridoo-playing. **Tjapukai Dance Theatre** performs a musical comedy based on an Aboriginal legend. The well-known dance company's 300-seat theater is in a village in the rainforest.

Land of the Lightning Brothers features a fascinating adventure into Aboriginal history and culture with its camping programs. Clients visit sandstone cliffs lined with ancient rock art. They'll also learn about ancient medicines and folklore. Exclusive safaris into traditional Aboriginal lands are the specialty of **Umorrduk Safaris Arnhem Land**. Visitors are led to rock art sites dated at 65,000 years old and guides demonstrate Aboriginal food and medicines.

For more information, contact Australia's Northern Territory Tourist Commission, (800) 4-OUTBAC.

Sun and fun. Australia offers an array of activities that'll please the couch potato, avid sportsman and everyone in between. Sun-drenched beaches stretch for miles. Surfers challenge the waves while the world-famous Great Barrier Reef beckons divers. **Intaussic Tours** specializes in the reef. (800) 531-9222.

What else is there? Sportsmen will find trout-filled lakes, inviting greens and mountains to climb. Las Vegas-style shows compete with glistening casinos. The cultural arts,

theater, opera, art shows and endless musical events—light up marquees.

Shopping is extraordinary, featuring silk, pottery and rugs from the Orient, Aboriginal arts and crafts and clothing made from wool freshly shaven from sheep in the Outback.

Marriott and AeroTours International offer a delightful honeymoon special for six nights, three at the Marriott in Sydney and three on the Gold Coast in a place called Paradise. Including air fare from Los Angeles, packages start at \$1,490. (800) 223-4555.

Australian Pacific Tours, Australia's largest tour operator, has a free-companion program. Couples booking one of its tours or safaris pay only one air fare. Twelve-day land-only tour packages start around \$2,000 per person. (800) 290-8687.

Clients can explore Australia's varied landscape with **Australian Pacific International**. The six- or 11-day *Opal Wanderer*, starting at \$497 land-only, covers everything from the charm and beauty of Adelaide to the natural wonders of the Great Barrier Reef, Kangaroo Island and Ayers Rock.

AAT King offers an *Australian Highlights* package for \$1,899, which includes three nights in Sydney, three nights in Melbourne, cruises and 15 meals. Air-inclusive packages are available through California-based **New Zealand Central Reservation Office**. A 12-night package starts at \$1,899 and 15-day tours begin at \$2,599. (800) 351-2317.

Southern Pacific Hotels Freedom Down Under Hotel Pass lets clients purchase as many vouchers as they would like for a night's stay at \$99 each. The passes include taxes and service charges and are good at 70 hotels throughout Australia, New Zealand, French Polynesia, Fiji, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Papua New Guinea. (800) 441-8847.

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ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide, Australia, February 25 through March 13.

They sent out invitations to performers from countries who share their time zones (Japan, Indonesia, and the island nations of the Western Pacific), then added on Europe and the United States. This festival focuses on the indigenous cultures of the Asia/Pacific areas but includes cultural performances from many other countries as well. There will be ballet, Japanese puppetry, opera, modern dance, Vietnamese Water Puppets, and the Wuhan Acrobatic Circus. See the greatest screen lover of all time in the film *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Rudolph Valentino works his silent magic to a new musical accompaniment performed by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Ooooo la la! Watch for swooning women. Tickets: \$7-\$43. Tel: 714-852-2270 or 800-546-2155, both in the U.S.

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ASIA/PACIFIC

Hosting Olympic Games ensures tourism boost for Sydney

Following the announcement of Sydney as host city for the 2000 Olympic Games, officials estimate more than 1.32 million overseas visitors will visit Sydney over the next ten years.

"In our view, this is a conservative estimate considering the enormous publicity awareness the Games will generate for Australia," said **Bill Baker**, *Americas regional director* of the **Australian Tourist Commission (ATC)**. "We are targeting 6.8 million international visitors by the year 2000, a figure some may have labeled as overly ambitious. By winning the Games, we are now more assured of exceeding that target," he added.

Aside from the obvious benefits to tourism, the Games will create more than 150,000 jobs (over 14 years), inject A\$7.3 billion into the Australian economy, give a A\$3.5 billion boost to export earnings, and generate an increase of almost A\$10 billion in Gross National Product between 1991 and 2004.

"The ATC, which has strongly supported Sydney's Olympic bid since its inception, is obviously elated with the International Olympic Committee's decision," Baker said. "We believe this is a popular win."

The ATC has actively promoted Sydney's bid in all key overseas markets. When the first of the ATC's five-year Special Interest marketing themes—1993 Play in the Australian Year of Sport—was launched last year, part of its intention was to provide strong support for Sydney's bid. The campaign has stimulated a great deal of consumer interest in Australian sporting events and holidays.

"In North America alone, 21,000 consumers with specific sporting interests have inquired about travel to Australia," said Baker.

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.



Photo—Australian Tourist Commission

Sydney is a city of superlatives. Certainly one of her best features is the spectacular Opera House, located on one of the most magnificent harbors in the world.

The bid has also underscored Australia's proud sporting heritage—Australia is one of only three nations to have competed in every Game of the modern Olympiad—and provided additional focus for their highly successful athletes.

For further information, contact the **Australian Tourist Commission**, 2121 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1200, Los Angeles, CA 90067, tel. (310) 552-1988, Ext. 200. Fax (310) 552-1215.

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Hong Kong hotel giving its guests the royal treatment

By Jerry Morris
BOSTON GLOBE

The Peninsula hotel in Hong Kong recently purchased nine new Rolls-Royce Silver Spur IIIs to transport its guests throughout the territory. The cars, valued at more than \$2 million, represent the fifth order of Rolls-Royce cars for the hotel and will replace the existing eight Silver Spirits that were purchased in 1987.

Each car is finished in the hotel's "Peninsula Green" and includes the hotel's crest on its doors. Inside is an iced-towel compartment to allow guests to freshen up as they travel. The Rolls-Royces at the Peninsula first gained fame from the James Bond film "The Man with the Golden Gun" and have been used by the hotel for 23 years.

Rolls-Royces are also available to guests staying at the Peninsula Beverly Hills in California and the Palace Hotel in Beijing.

Celebrating with food

Boston is celebrating the winter season with a series of food and wine events — Brewer's Feasts, wine expositions, Memphis and Texas rib parties, Chinese New Year banquets, wine tastings, gospel Sunday brunches and romantic dinners for Valentine's Day.

TRAVEL DIGEST

The celebration, which continues through March, is designed for weekend getaways and allows visitors to sample many events over a two-day period and create a personal holiday out of the festival.

The festival features the ethnic culinary diversity of Boston, along with a celebration of the arts — the Museum of Fine Arts offers a major watercolor exhibition and has themed its restaurant menu to the show. All the events, along with ideas for weekend accommodations, are described in a free brochure available by calling the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 888-5515.

Mystery weekend

Karen Kijewski is one of the top mystery writers in the country, and on March 4-6 she will play host and script a special mystery weekend at Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, N.Y.

Ms. Kijewski's newest novel, "Wild Kat," is in bookstores now and features, as her other novels have, Kat Colorado, a female private investigator who also works as a bartender. Ms. Kijewski notes she has never been a PI but

has done bartending — 12 years' worth, including a stint at an Irish pub in Cambridge, along with 10 years as an English teacher at Brookline High School. The weekend at the famed Mohonk Mountain House also will feature some celebrity mystery writers. For information on the Mardi Gras Murders, call (800) 772-6646.

Disasters abroad

Should you head for Los Angeles? Puerto Rico? Australia? Each has had a major disaster recently, from earthquake to oil spill to fire, but all say these should not cause travelers to change their plans.

On Puerto Rico, an oil spill that fouled beaches serving the major hotels is expected to be completely cleaned up by the end of February. In the meantime, hotels are busing guests to beaches in the Isla Verde area, 4 miles away. For information on Puerto Rico, call (800) 815-7391.

In Australia, where fires swept areas in New South Wales, Sydney was not touched. However, the Royal National Park, 20 miles south of the city, was almost destroyed. Otherwise, tourist sites and travel services are operating normally. For information, call the Australian Tourist Commission in New York at (212) 687-6300.

SUNDAY RECORD

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TARNISHED BUT ENJOYABLE

In the wake of the oil spill in Puerto Rico and the Sydney, Australia, bush fires last month, it's possible to salvage winter trips to both places.

Fouled beaches east of San Juan — on the 1½ miles serving the big international hotels — are being cleaned up, with work expected to be completed by the end of February. All hotels in the Condado area are open and are busing guests to beaches in the Isla Verde area, four miles away. Information: Puerto Rico Tourism Co., (800) 815-7391.

In Australia's New South Wales, the Royal National Park was largely destroyed. Airline schedules and highway and rail routes, however, are all back to normal, tourism officials report. Northwest of the city, attractions in the Blue Mountains, such as the Three Sisters rock formation and Echo Point lookout, are open. Information: Australian Tourist Commission, (212) 687-6300.

FEB 7 1994

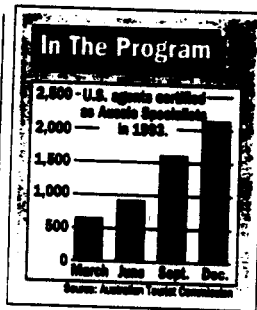
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Down Under Deal Draws Agents

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BY MARK ROBERTI

Good leads lead to good sales. That's the theory behind the Australian Tourist Commission's Aussie Specialist Program. Less than two years after being introduced, the theory is being proven correct. Travel agents across the United States who have signed up for the program report it has boosted their Australia bookings—and



their income. They attribute this largely to the referrals they receive from the ATC each month.

"I do about 100 trips to Australia a year with two to six people on each," said Danny Warner, a travel consultant at Davenport Travel in Bowling Green, Ky. "Before I joined the Aussie Specialist Program, I did only about 20 a year."

Each month, Warner gets an average of 10 to 15 names and addresses of people in his area who have responded to an ATC print or television advertisement. The population of Bowling Green is only 50,000. Agents in larger cities get more than 100 referrals a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

U.S. Agents: Aussie Program Boosts Bookings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

month. Warner calls each person on the list

"I'd say that out of every five referrals, I get one couple that books a trip," he said. "Before, you didn't even know there was a market out there for Australia."

"We've had eight big trips [by individuals] since I joined the program," said Saralee Debley, a travel consultant at Colonial Travel of Olney Inc. in Olney, Md. "Each was for about \$6,000, which is a lot because we're a small agency. We did very little Australia before."

The Aussie Specialist Program grew out of the ATC's desire to convert the high level of interest in travel to Australia into more bookings. In August 1992, it revamped its Destination Australia training program.

Those travel agents who paid the \$24.95 for the training materials and passed a basic test on the destination would be certified as Aussie Specialists, and for the first time, they would be given a monthly list of people in their area who called a toll-free number seeking information on travel to Australia.

More than 2,000 agents have been certified as Aussie Specialists, and 150 to 200 more are completing the program each month. Last year, about 330,000 leads were passed to the specialists.

Lyndel Gray, marketing manager/trade for the ATC, said it is too early to tell how many actual bookings resulted from the referrals. But she pointed out that arrivals were up 8 percent in 1993. "We did a survey recently of all the Aussie Specialists and 60 percent said they can definitely attribute an increase in the Australia bookings to the referrals they get from us," she said.

TRACKING THE BOOKINGS

The survey asked about the average value of bookings. They ranged from \$1,000 to \$8,000 per person. The ATC plans to calculate the average value of all bookings and then track increases or decreases to measure the success of the program.

The Aussie Specialists, however, have no doubt the program is a success. Mike McPike, owner of Global Adventures in Highlands Ranch, Colo., said the program helped him get his business off the

ground. "I was looking to get referrals, and the Aussie Specialist Program caught my eye," he said. "It's a tremendous marketing help. . . these are people who've already expressed an interest in going to Australia. It's much more effective to target them."

Another benefit is access to suppliers, said Carol Biskup, a travel consultant at Expertours Inc. in Ro-

selle, Ill. "I get invited to functions I would not ordinarily be invited to. I get to meet the suppliers almost one-on-one when they come up from Australia. It's a much better way for us to sell the product."

Other benefits are less tangible. "It's hard to get airspace right now," said Biskup. "If you're an Aussie Specialist, the major airlines that fly to Australia give you

special treatment for wait-listed clients because they know you."

If there's one drawback, agents said, it's that the ATC plans to certify as many agents as complete the course. "I'd like them to limit the number because this gives me a leg up on the competition," said McPike. "If everyone is an Aussie Specialist, there's no advantage to me."

MORNING CALL

ALLENTOWN, PA
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BURRELLE'S OF

Tourism works for some indigenous people

By WILLIAM A. DAVIS
Of The Boston Globe

I was walking along a beach in Fiji, also called the Tevoro color spot, and a South Pacific sunset Sunday. From behind a palm tree a massive young man carrying a long spear and dressed only in a sarong, the ubiquitous Fijian sarong, came charging toward me.

Startled, I well, terrified to tell the truth, I froze in place, expecting to be skewered like some sort of Moushian shish kebabs.

Instead, the spear carrier stopped in front of me and lowered his lance, which I now could 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. I'm late and they're waiting for me."

And he took me down the beach and introduced me to his friends, an amiable bunch of guys. They taught me a lot about Fiji and a bit about spearfishing, a practical recreation activity that is one of the ways modern Fijians preserve the traditions — and cuisine — of their ancestors.

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 declared 1993 to be International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. But compared to the political hoopla surrounding other such events — such as 1992's the Year of the Woman, for example — not much happened at the government level to make the world more aware of the problems and potential of its indigenous residents.

Main reason for the lack of interest in indigenous peoples is that they are scattered very thinly around the planet and are a clueless 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 pot-so-re-

mote 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 handouts.

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 head-dresses.

However, indigenous people themselves frequently see ecotourism as a way to 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 come from Australia's vast but barren and thinly populated Northern Territories where ancient aboriginal tribal traditions — derived from the "Dream Time" when the world was made — are still preserved and vital. Thus, 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 inhabited it for some 60,000 years. To dramatize their sales pitch, they traveled with a native dance troupe, the Gukul Wilderness Dancers of Arnhem Land, home of the mythical Rainbow Serpent whose bite made water gush from the desert.

Lessons on the didjeridu, an eerie sounding aboriginal instrument, 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.

"Aborigines are taking an increasingly active role in presenting their culture to tourists," said Bili 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 impact of ecotourism are unfounded, said Brian Rooke, who operates Umorruuk 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."

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 tough and fearsome Mescaleros terrorized the Southwest in the last century. In the case of the Mescaleros, however, yesterday's ferocious 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 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.

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

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ATC Develops New Markets

Continued from page 80
expected to attract more than 600 delegates from some 60 countries.

The Australian government has allocated A\$10 million (approximately US\$6.75 million) over the next four years to develop and implement a national ecotourism strategy.

Proposals for the strategy will include infrastructure development, education and training for natural resource managers and ecotourism operators, scientific research to monitor visitor impact on ecotourism destinations, and waste minimization and energy conservation measures.

Marketing Budget

The federal government also has given the commission an A\$77.8-million (approximately US\$52.25-million) budget for the 1993/94 fiscal year, which will be spread throughout all major markets. Some 80% of this money will be used for marketing activities.

In North America, the Australians' "Feel the Wonder" campaign is being used in TV and print advertising to strengthen the "Brand Australia" image, alongside direct and tactical marketing.

The campaign is intended to increase visitor numbers from the U.S. and English-speaking Canada

and to develop new markets in Mexico, South America and Quebec.

Partnership Australia — a joint overseas marketing initiative between the commission and state and territory tourism authorities — will play a major role in ensuring that a wider range of Australian tourism products is marketed to consumers (TA-West, Jan. 3).

Tourism Boom

"International tourism to Australia is continuing to boom, signaling a return to confidence in major world economies," Hutchison said. "The latest figures show nearly 240,000 visitors arrived in Australia in August — the equivalent of 19 jumbo jet loads a day."

The August figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed arrivals were up nearly 21% over the same month the previous year. Total visitor arrivals in the eight months to August were up 15% on the same period of 1992 and up 28% over the 1991 period.

"Australia must ensure that it maintains a high profile as a desirable travel destination in order to build on the momentum and increase its share of tourism receipts as the pace of recovery in world economies picks up," Hutchison said.

ATC Touts the Great Australian Outdoors for '94

By ALAN HARMAN

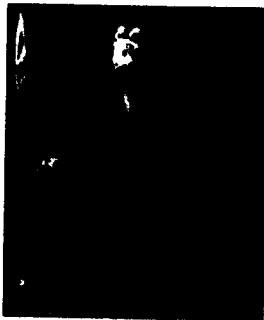
SYDNEY — The Australian Tourist Commission has launched a multimillion-dollar campaign to promote 1994 as the year to Discover the Great Australian Outdoors.

The campaign aims to position Australia as a leading ecotourism destination and to persuade overseas tourists to explore more of Australia's natural attractions.

"Ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the holiday market with some U.S. studies projecting a growth rate of 30% in this sector worldwide, compared with forecast growth for general tourism of around 8%," said ATC Managing Director John Hutchison. "We aim to appeal to both ecotourists and general holidaymakers who are keen to experience outdoor activities ranging from diving to bushwalking," he said.

The commission plans to attract visitors to a country that offers miles of beaches, vast stretches of virtually unexplored Outback and wilderness areas where environmental extremes range from sandy deserts to tropical rainforests.

Wildlife attractions include 750



Diving near Heron Island

species of birds — 300 of them found only in Australia — as well as 40 species of kangaroo and wallaby, koalas, platypus and wombats. There also is the world's only wild population of one-humped camels, first introduced for transportation purposes in the Outback.

Worldwide promotions are designed to increase consumer awareness of Australia's top natural attractions, including 10 World Heritage areas.

The Australians see a bonanza in ecotourism, citing figures from the Pacific Asia Travel Assn., which

estimated that in 1990, some 412,000 ecotourists spent A\$24 million in Australia. Furthermore, ATC studies show that 70% of American and European travelers consider scenery, vastness, cleanliness, natural wonders and high-quality beaches as important factors influencing holiday destination choices.

Tourism authorities here view Australia's record on environmental matters as a natural base for the promotion. It created the world's first nature reserve in 1866, the world's second national park in 1879 and to date, more than 40 million hectares — 5% of the total land mass — comprise some 3,000 national parks and reserves.

"While there are considerable variations, the chief characteristics of group ecotourists are that they are well-educated, professional/

semiprofessional, independent and looking for different experiences," a commission report said.

As part of the 1994 campaign, the ATC has produced an 82-page Natural Holiday Guide aimed at identifying ecotourism operators and creating awareness of Australia's outdoor holiday market overseas.

The guide lists 300 tour operators together with a checklist of measures they take to ensure their businesses are environmentally sensitive. It includes information on beaches, island and wilderness retreats, World Heritage areas, wildlife viewing and outdoor activities.

The ATC also is staging the 4th World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism in Hobart, Tasmania, Nov. 7-12. The congress is

Continued on page 82

TRAVEL WEEKLY
NEW YORK NY
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THURSDAY
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Dance Theatre Offers a Rare Sample of Aboriginal Culture

BY DINAH A. SPRITZER

KURANDA, Australia — Visitors to Australia who haven't been to the Tjapukai Dance Theatre have missed an essential part of the Australian experience.

Unlike the U.S., where travelers can choose among a variety of Native American cultural performances, visitors here rarely get a chance to enjoy Australian aboriginal entertainment.

Since aboriginal culture is an integral part of Australia's identity, some type of aboriginal experience, if at all possible, is a must for visitors.

But why the Tjapukai? The Tjapukai have won numerous accolades and awards, including the 1989 PATA Gold Award, the 1990, 1992 and 1993 Queensland Tourism Award and the 1992 Australian Tourism Award.

The aboriginal troupe has performed all over the world, including at theaters in London's West End and at several international arts festivals.

When it began eight years ago, the dance theater helped bring Kuranda, a sleepy little town 30 minutes from Cairns, into the tourism limelight.

This led to the expansion of two outdoor shopping markets, an increase in the popularity of

of the troupe's founders, Don Freeman, a native New Yorker.

It is easy for Western travelers to misunderstand the aborigines, but the Tjapukai show fosters multicultural understanding.

The performance is extremely entertaining.

Bunna, one of the performers, sits on stage alone at the show's beginning and plays a haunting tune on the didgeridoo, an aboriginal musical instrument.

Audiences are captivated by the story the 17 dancers tell — through traditional dance, pantomime and often comic narration — of a young warrior accused of murdering his tribal brother.

The story is accompanied by a humorous lesson on the art of playing the didgeridoo.

The performance offers insight into the lives and legends of the aborigines, and the show culminates with an uplifting song, now famous in Australia, called "Proud to Be Aborigine."

Freeman, who founded the troupe with his wife, Judy, has more than 20 years of theater experience, ranging from Broadway to Native American presentations.

The couple had never even heard of Kuranda or Australian aborigines when they moved here 10 years ago.

They joined with local residents to write a musical comedy about the arrival of whites



The Tjapukai dancers.

Only a small percentage of visitors to Australia have contact with aboriginal culture.

the scenic Kuranda-Cairns train ride and the generation of business from 40 international tour operators.

Despite such exposure, it is still common for escorted tour travelers to travel throughout Australia and receive only a glimpse of its native people without learning anything about them.

"It has been identified by our tourist board that 70% of Australia's visitors would like to have an interaction with aboriginal culture, [yet] at this point only a very small percentage do," according to one

in Far North Queensland more than a century ago.

The play was so successful that a few months later a theater company was born.

Elders of Kuranda's aboriginal community were consulted, and local aborigines were recruited to perform in the fledgling troupe.

Freeman said the troupe's continuing success is partly due to its location.

"The Tjupukai people live in a town that was close enough to the city for them to be comfortable with the Western work ethic, and, at the same time, close enough to the country to be comfortably aware of their own needs and culture."

The one-hour performance

is held two or three times daily in an air-conditioned, 300-seat theater. A gift shop and bistro for lunch or tea are nearby.

The show is priced at \$16 for adults and \$8 for children ages 4 to 14.

Travelers should show up about 20 minutes before show time to get good seats.

The dance troupe's brochure states: "If your tour doesn't include Tjapukai, you're on the wrong tour!"

For more information, call the Aussie Helpline at (800) 433-AUSSIE.

GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS, MI
SUNDAY 196,960

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U.S. sets higher customs fees

Washington Post

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Returning to the United States from trips to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean will cost you a bit more now that the U.S. Customs Service has instituted new fees for North American arrivals.

Passengers arriving from those destinations were previously exempt from the \$5 customs inspection fees paid by arrivals from outside North America; they will now pay \$6.50, thanks to an act of Congress.

In addition, the \$5 fee for arrivals from outside North America has been raised to \$6.50 — the first hike in more than seven years, according to Customs.

Travel After Disasters

In the wake of the oil spill in Puerto Rico and the Sydney, Australia, bush fires last month, it's still possible to salvage winter trips to both places.

Fouled beaches east of San Juan — on the 1½ miles serving the big international hotels — are currently being cleaned up, with work expected to be completed by the end of February. All hotels in the Condado area are open and are busing guests to beaches in the Isla Verde area, four miles away. Information: Puerto Rico Tourism Co., (800) 815-7391.

And in Australia's New South Wales, while Sydney and its tourist attractions went unscathed, the Royal National Park, about 20 miles south of the city and popular with hikers, boaters and surfers, was largely

destroyed.

Airline schedules and highway and rail routes, however, are all back to normal, tourism officials report. Northwest of the city, attractions in the Blue Mountains, such as the Three Sisters rock formation and Echo Point lookout, are open. Information: Australian Tourist Commission, (212) 687-6300.

Gamble on Montreal

The new Casino de Montreal is open, Canada's first world-class casino, on its own island in the Parc des Îles. It offers blackjack, roulette, midi-baccarat and keno, plus electronic track horse racing and over 1,200 slot machines.

For non-gambiers, there are diverting views of the river and the Montreal skyline, dining, entertainment and shop ops, including a tax-free boutique and souvenir shop. There are no entrance fees and parking is free for the casino, about four miles from downtown. Information: (800) 685-2274 or (212) 397-0220.

Wyoming Park Academic Boosters is sponsoring a March 26 trip to Manufacturers Marketplace in Birch Run and dinner in Frankenmuth. The bus will leave Wyoming Park High School at 7 a.m. Cost is \$25. Call Terry, 538-1816, or Kathi, 531-5467, to reserve a spot.

SUNDAY SUN-TIMES

CHICAGO, IL
SUNDAY 531,226

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Laura Bly/Special to the Sun-Times

Australia's Northern Territory is home to what some experts consider the world's most extensive ancient rock-art galleries.

Australia's Aborigines

Northern Territory Natives Cope With Burgeoning Tourism

By Laura Bly

KATHERINE, Australia. The thunderstorms that sweep across Australia's sun-baked Top End each spring are among the most prolific and dramatic in the world.

To Bill Harney, a senior member of the Wardaman clan of Aborigines near the Northern Territory town of Katherine, the fireworks signal something more than rattling windows and bouts of relentless rain.

As Harney watches a line of dark clouds march north out of the Tanami Desert, he knows that Jabiringi and Yadjaghula are preparing for battle. When the two "lightning brothers" finally lift their stone axes in anger, they're performing a task as old as time: bringing lush new life to Wardaman country.

Harney, who grew up near what is now a 1,100-acre cattle ranch owned by the Sultan of Brunei, never went to school. He taught himself to read by studying food-can labels. Now, twice a week, he loads tourists into his air-conditioned, four-wheel-drive van for two-day camping trips at the sultan's isolated ranch—"the land of the lightning brothers."

Many of the activities on my recent "lightning brothers" tour were typical of other, more mainstream Outback adventures.

We swatted helplessly at legions of mozzies and blowies. (That's mosquitoes and flies to you, mate.)

We searched for the Southern Cross from open-air, aptly named "chloroform beds." (They lulled us to sleep almost immediately.)

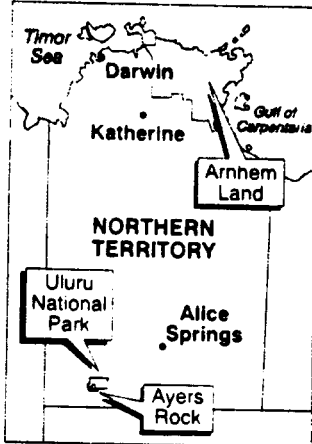
We even swam in a refreshing billabong (water hole) rumored to harbor several crocodiles. (At least they were the normally harmless freshwater version.)

But on this journey into Australia's past, we also slurped tea made from just-picked handfuls of a native plant that looked like rosemary and tasted like anise. We held our ears to a tiny hole in a black plum tree, listening to the thunder of unseen bees somewhere deep inside.

And we crouched in caves whose rust-colored walls were daubed with astonishing, millennia-old drawings—the preserved footprints, Harney told us, of creatures who had scampered to higher ground during a great flood at the dawn of creation called Dreamtime.

Once ignored by the travel industry or trivialized as "noble savages" throwing boomerangs and wearing ochre face paint, Australia's Aboriginal people are starting to explore the financial benefits—and cultural pitfalls—of introducing visitors to their ways of life.

The Aboriginal tourism whose



SUN-TIMES

early childhood in an Aranda village helped earn him the trust and cultural confidences no other white man had achieved.

But several pioneers of Aboriginal tourism already have folded up shop, and future opportunities for widespread employment or ownership remain clouded.

Generalizations can be dangerous when describing Aboriginal people—who in the Northern Territory alone, speak more than 90 languages. At the same time, tourism officials warn, travelers are in danger of expecting too much from complex, private cultures.

During my visit to Uluuru National Park—which encompasses both Ayers Rock and the Olgas, called Kata Tjuta—I learned (from a white ranger) that there is no visitor center or guided walks among the massive red domes of Kata Tjuta because the site is considered too sensitive to the Aboriginal owners, the Anangu.

The same owners discourage use of the popularized term Dreamtime. That's because too many outsiders fail to recognize that it defines not only the mythic time when all living things sprang from deep beneath the Earth, but also a still-vibrant transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next.

Within Australia's mainstream tourism industry, paternalistic or overtly racist attitudes remain common—witness my tour-bus driver who told an off-color joke about Aboriginal intelligence before bemoaning the "two sets of rules" that covered white and black Australians. The resentment was rampant during my visit last year, when newspapers were full of nervous speculation about the impact of a recent Australian court decision that validated Aboriginal claims to ancestral land.

And those who lobby for depicting contemporary rather than idealized Aboriginal lifestyles face a Catch-22. Alcoholism and chronic unemployment remain crushing problems. And the reluctance of many Aborigines to deal with the public means that many tourists' face-to-face contact with Aboriginal culture is still primarily through whites.

In John Williams' corner of Arnhem Land, a vast Aboriginal-owned reserve that requires permission for outsiders to enter, six people live in an area 620 miles square.

Sure, they've got a generator-powered answering machine, with a fax on the way. But when Williams and his family talk about going into town, they mean Darwin—a six-hour drive away, much of it via a corrugated dirt road.

On this Sunday morning in late June, the population has temporarily exploded to 11—thanks to the arrival on a small plane of our Umorrduk Safari tour.

Over the next couple of hours, Williams will lead us to the top of a sandstone escarpment, one of many that poke defiantly above the floodplains of north-central Australia. They conceal veritable Tut's tombs of artistic wonders, some of which predate the ancient Egyptian king by tens of thousands of years.

From this perch, the air is washed with cool breezes. A flock of pink-breasted gulls squawks somewhere far below. At dizzyingly close range, we admire the tightly coiled body of a fork-tongued serpent—drawn in the same style as similar paintings in nearby Kakadu National Park. (Catalpited to prominence by the on-site filming of "Crocodile Dundee," the park attracts an estimated 400,000 tourists a year.)

I asked Williams about Songlines, the Bruce Chatwin book about nomads that delves into the Aboriginal love of the land and their uncanny ability to navigate through an intimate knowledge of every plant and animal in their territory.

Williams hadn't heard of the book, but he did know about navigation skills. Seems he and his son-in-law, company owner Brian Rooke, once had made plans to meet at a specific spot some four miles distant. Rooke carried along a GPS (global positioning satellite) receiver; Williams relied on his internal compass. They left separately, and wound up at the same patch of ground.

"Brian told me, 'Old man, you're too good. You've got GPS in your head,'" said Williams, his smooth, 62-year-old face crinkling with laughter.

And so he does.

Laura Bly is travel editor of California's Orange County Register.

VISITING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Aborigine-owned or guided tours are cropping up across Australia, but the largest concentration of Aboriginal communities, tours and art galleries is in the Northern Territory.

Visitors must obtain a permit to visit Aboriginal lands unless they travel on organized tours.

"Come Share Our Culture," a brochure updated annually by the Northern Territory Tourist Commission lists 42 tours, varying in length from one hour to 11 days. Costs range from about \$2.80 U.S. for a one-hour dance performance in Alice Springs to about \$1,352 per person for an 11-day Aboriginal Arts Tour.

My choices included a three-day tour of the Katherine Gorge and a "Land of the Lightning Brothers" camping trip with Bill Harney, a member of the Wardaman tribe (about \$275 per person), and a one-day flight and tour from Darwin to northwest Arnhem Land with Umorrduk Aboriginal Safaris (about \$149 per person, plus airfare of \$147 or \$114, depending on the size of the group).

WHEN TO GO: Weather is an important consid-

eration when planning a trip to the Northern Territory, particularly in the Top End where many Aboriginal tours are based. There are two basic seasons in the Top End: the summer "dry" (hot and typically clear, from April to September) and the winter "wet" (hotter and much rainier, from October to March).

Waterfalls and wildlife are abundant during the lush wet, but tours may be canceled or suspend operations entirely because of washed-out roads. In the Red Centre, which includes Ayers Rock and Alice Springs, temperatures can be teeth-chattering on winter nights in July or August and soar well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer in January or February.

INFORMATION: One of the best Australian guidebooks is Lonely Planet's *Australia: A Travel Survival Kit* (\$21.95).

The tourist commission also publishes a general-interest brochure, "Aboriginal People of the Northern Territory." It and "Come Share Our Culture" both are free. For copies or more information, call (800) 333-0199.

Laura Bly

JOURNAL INQUIRER

**MANCHESTER, CT
DAILY 48,319**

**THURSDAY
MAR 3 1994**

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And Australia

Festivals and sporting events of all sorts are listed in a new calendar of events from Australia. They include the Australian Surf Life-saving Championships, March 25 to 27 in New South Wales, where 50,000 spectators watch 5,000 competitors in rescue events, Iron Man competitions, and swimming and surfboard races.

In Canberra, there's a National Folk Festival on March 31, and in Sydney, the Royal Easter Show from March 25 to April 5. (667)

Melbourne hosts an International Comedy Festival from April 1 to 24 and in June in Darwin there's the Bougainvillea Festival from June 3 to June 20. You can do a Winery Walkabout from June 10 to 13 in Victoria.

For more information on the festivals and a copy of the 136-page Australian travel planner, call the Australia Tourist Commission at 1-800-333-0262.

STANDARD EXAMINER

STANDARD EXAMINER

MAR 6 1994

BURRELLE'S

TRAVEL TIPS

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Standard-Examiner staff and wire services

These brochures and services are offered at no or minimal cost:

■ **Guam USA**, a new guide to travel in Guam, is now available. The 48-page color publication deals with all aspects of travel to the island, including snorkeling, diving and golf. For a free copy, call (800) US-3-GUAM.

■ For a free copy of the 136-page Australian travel planner, call the **Australian Tourist Commission** at (800) 333-0262. The guide details arts festival and historical events.

■ The city by the bay is offering its annual **The San Francisco Book**, winter-spring edition, and **The San Francisco 1994 Lodging Guide**. The 96-page San Francisco Book offers articles on the city's history, points of interest and maps. The books are available by mail for \$2 from the Visitor Infor-

mation Center, P.O. Box 429097, San Francisco, CA 94142-9097.

■ Pennsylvania is doing its annual guide in a big way — 228 color pages detailing 850 attractions and 1,000 special events across the state. For a free copy of the **1994 Pennsylvania Visitors Guide**, call (800) VISIT-PA.

■ The World Cup Soccer Championship and major league baseball's spring training are just two of the events held in Kissimmee-St. Cloud, Fla., this year. For a **Kissimmee-St. Cloud Calendar of Events**, call (800) 327-9159.

SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

SAN JOSE, CA
SUNDAY 330,847

MAR 13 1994

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DATEBOOK

Around the world: *tw* 475

■ Hellip Australian Surf Lifesaving Championships, March 25-27, New South Wales. About 5,000 competitors will turn out to compete in lifesaving techniques at Blacksmiths Beach. More than 50,000 spectators are expected to crowd the beach to watch the rescue events as well as Iron Man competitions and swimming and surfboard races.

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PHOTO / INFORMATION
ASSISTANCE

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NEW YORK, NY
MONTHLY 862,338

FEBRUARY 1994

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ELLE TRAVELER

0675 CAPE TRIBULATION, AUSTRALIA



ELLE TRAVELER

Greetings From: Cape Tribulation, Australia.

Don't I Get Enough at Home? Cape Trib—a point of land about 70 miles north of the Queensland city of Cairns—was named by its first white visitor. In 1770, the explorer Captain James Cook saw it and then ran aground on the great barrier reef. "Here begun all our troubles," he later wrote. Yours won't. For one, you won't actually be staying at the cape, which is now in a national park, but just below it at a resort with the much more pleasant name of Silky Oaks Wilderness Lodge (61-70-98-1666).

Which Isn't to Say It's Gotten a Hell of a Lot Easier to Get Here: First you have to get to Cairns, Australia, which is almost enough said on the subject. From there it's a long drive over bumps, over logs, over bumps, over rocks, over bumps, but not over rivers. Those you plow right through.

And You Thought Bush Gardens Was Eco-Tourism: One recent visitor described Silky Oaks as "where the rain forest meets the barrier reef." The main activity, she went on to say, "is to hang out and appreciate the wilderness in a low-key kind of way." Beware, low-key may mean driving to the beach and snorkeling out to see the sharks.

Which Isn't to Say You'll Exactly Be Suffering: The nearby golf course, the tennis court and the natural rock swimming holes are never crowded. Nor are the tortoise-feeding and platypus-sighting tours ever overbooked. And if you tire of all that, your private bungalow is air-conditioned, its mini-bar is stocked and most important, its porch is screened.

Speaking of Insects: The food at Silky Oaks is good, especially the dish that is unfortunately named "Bugs" but fortunately isn't. They're actually tiny local crayfish, spicily fried and perfect with a tall Australian lager.

NEWS TRIBUNE

WOODBRIDGE, NJ
SUNDAY 52,915

FEB 6 1994

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TARNISHED BUT ENJOYABLE

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In the wake of the oil spill in Puerto Rico and the Sydney, Australia, bush fires last month, it's possible to salvage winter trips to both places.

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Continuing Travel Press

Feb. 10, 1974

Australian Hotels Join Utell

Three Australian properties have signed on with Utell International.

The related properties of the Powerhouse Boutique Hotel in Brisbane and the Powerhouse Boutique Motor Inn in Tamworth, New South Wales, are a pair of upscale additions to Utell. The Medina on Crown in Sydney is an all-suite hotel also catering to discriminating travellers.

Just five minutes from Brisbane's city centre, the 90-room Powerhouse Boutique Hotel offers two restaurants, two bars, a jogging track and secretarial services. Mountain and river

views can be seen from its rooms.

The Tamworth hotel boasts 60 rooms and also has two restaurants, three bars, a gym and secretarial services.

The Medina on Crown has 85 apartment units of one and two bedrooms. Living areas and full kitchens are features of each. Hotel amenities include a pool, spa, sauna, gymnasium, rooftop tennis court, two restaurants and conference facilities for up to 150 people.

Each of the properties is participating in the Paytell system, where agents can deduct commissions up front.



KOKOMO TRIBUNE
FEB 17, 1974

Sydney's Opera House part of evening

(Photo provided)

Visit with Aussies Tuesday

Let Kiwanis take you on an Australian adventure

6675

From the quiet innocence of a bears in the remote outback to the bustling metropolis of Sydney, New Zealander Grant Foster als "Amazing Australia" at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Kokomo High School, south campus.

Foster's program will be part of Kiwanis Club of Metropolitan Kokomo's Travel and Adventure Series. More information on program and ticket prices may be obtained by calling 453-2058.

Visit the "Land Down Under" meet the friendly but rugged Aussies. See Sydney's modern Opera House; then travel back to the 18th century to learn about Australia's early history in Old Sydney Town.

As the sea comes alive with amazing colors and shapes during an underwater expedition of the Barrier Reef. Marvel at the varieties of animal and plant life living in this crystal clear water. In stark con-

trast, watch some modern cowboys choke in the dust during a typical outback cattle roundup.

Australia's colorful animals are not limited to the Barrier Reef. On a paddle steamer cruise down the Murray River, hundreds of exotic birds in every hue will excite the eye. Another bird watcher's delight will be exploring Kakadu National Park to find the most vibrant array of birds anywhere. Reptile lovers will thrill at crocodiles jumping out of the water for bait dangled from the boat.

Journey to the outback and visit Alice Springs, home of the "Flying Doctors." Further on into this arid land, witness the awesome sunset

at the giant monolith, Ayers Rock, while listening to some haunting aboriginal music.

Descend into an opal mine and discover that Australia's brilliant colors also include minerals by sharing the beauty of the world's most colorful gem stone. Visit the native Aborigines to see their ancient art forms, and to learn about their culture and history.

On to Melbourne to ride the vintage street cars — "trams" — through the city. End the trip in Canberra, the nation's Capital, and visit the new \$1 billion dollar Parliament House and the diplomatic embassies.

From the interior deserts to the fertile sea coasts, see why it's a

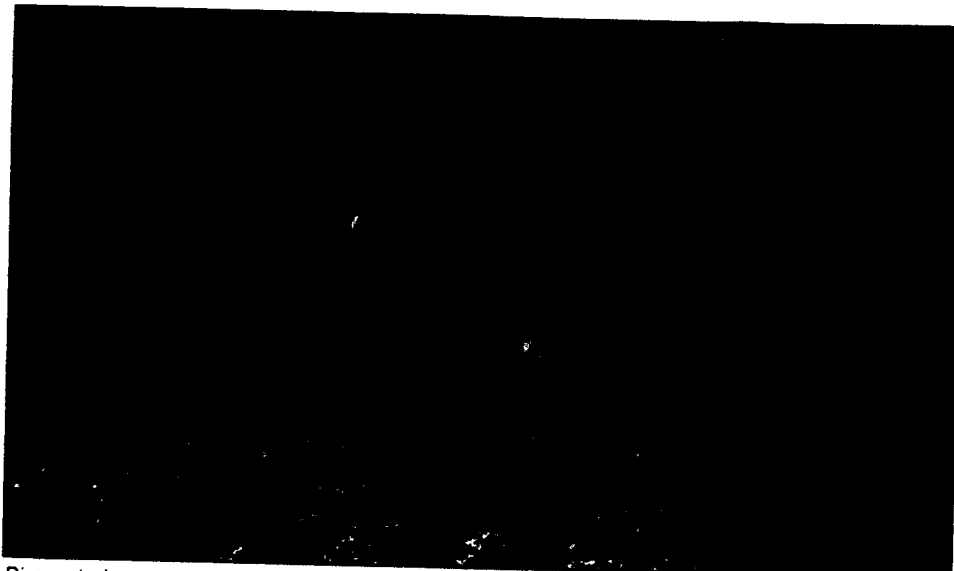
truly "Amazing Australia".

A New Zealander, Foster lives his life in perpetual cold. He travels across the U.S. and Canada.

Travel - 1974
Feb 21, 1974

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Tropical Dive Destinations 101



Divers study a more recent shipwreck in Florida's temperate waters.

Some of the best-loved dive destinations are found in warm waters all around the world. There are also many preferred locations for temperate and cold water diving — watch for them in upcoming issues.

Destinations Close to Home

Florida: A variety of diving is available in our own backyard, in the Sunshine State. The temperate waters of the Gulf of Mexico (74 to 78° F) are home to shipwrecks and abundant marine life, while both manatees and divers are attracted to the state's central region by the constant water temperature (72°) of its clear freshwater springs.

The state's porous limestone base has created an underwater labyrinth of caves,

tunnels and sinkholes, which should be attempted only by certified cave divers. At the state's southernmost tip, the Florida Keys are the world's most visited dive destination, providing comfortable water temperatures (76 to 82°) and visibility ranging from 40 to 100 feet depending on weather and season.

Bahamas: With 700-plus islands and cays clustered in the nutrient-rich waters of the Gulf Stream, the Bahamas offers thousands of diving opportunities, including walls, shallow and mid-range reefs, shipwrecks, shark feeding dives and dolphin dives. The water temperature ranges from 76 to 85° and visibility varies from 200 feet in some areas to below 60 feet during rough weather.

Caribbean Diving Haunts

Cayman Islands: The three Cayman islands — Grand Cayman, Little Cayman

and Cayman Brac — are considered a diver's Shangri-la. Their dramatic walls support a prolific coral reef system, and jacks, eagle rays and the occasional reef shark parade along the drop-offs. The islands' shallow reefs harbor a tremendous variety of colorful marine life, including tame fish, which make excellent subjects for underwater photography. There is consistent diving throughout the year; the outstanding visibility ranges from 80 to 200 feet and warm water temperatures from 79 to 82°. The nation is also home to Stingray City, the world's only site where divers and snorkelers can play with friendly rays.

The ABCs: The islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao lie off Venezuela's northern coast and are known for good diving. Divers will find consistent diving year-round with good visibility and warm water. Bonaire is known as the "Macro Capital of the Caribbean," attracting

Dive Travel Primer #3



Cozumel's three-mile-long Palancar Reef features lovely coral formations and excellent viz.

underwater photo buffs with macro (close-up) lenses.

Cozumel: Mexico's most popular diving destination, the island of Cozumel, is

famous for its walls and drift diving. Seasonal water temperatures range from 77 to 84° and visibility ranges from 100 to 150 feet. Deep wall diving (60 to 90 feet) brings divers face-to-face with groupers, sharks, turtles and eagle rays, while shallow reef drift diving reveals a multitude of smaller reef creatures.

Belize: Lying on the second largest barrier reef in the world, this Central American country is characterized by unspoiled reefs with deep water walls and an intricate system of atolls and cays. Many of the popular diving resorts are found on the cays off mainland Belize behind the barrier reef. Visibility ranges from 50 to 100 feet at the barrier reef and 100 to over 150 feet along the three unique offshore atolls. The famous Blue Hole, a deep dive to 130 feet, is recommended for experienced divers.

Bay Islands: Over 60 in number, includ-

ing well-known Roatan and Guanaja, the Bay Islands lie 30 miles off the coast of Honduras. The underwater topography consists of extensive tunnels, grottoes, caverns and walls that provide refuge for an infinite number of sea creatures. Visibility is in the 100-foot range with warm water between 78 and 84°.

Turks and Caicos: Sparsely populated and remote, the seven main islands and more than 30 cays of this nation provide what some say is the Caribbean's last diving frontier. The signature turquoise blue waters support a healthy coral reef environment. Spectacular wall diving features black coral and huge orange elephant ear sponge. Divers will find tunnels, caverns, shallow reefs, shipwrecks, mantas, eagle rays and turtles. A major attraction is the migration of humpback whales moving through the Grand Turk Passage as they migrate south to their breeding grounds.

3

Other Caribbean Destinations:

There are some diving treasures to be found off the beaten path. These little known regions offer a variety of topside and underwater experiences for divers who are looking for a total Caribbean experience. Water temperature ranges from 76-85°, while visibility varies with the location. The Virgin Islands (American and British), Dominica, Saba, Barbados, Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines are already known for their diving possibilities, while Jamaica, Cuba and Puerto Rico also offer some excellent diving. Since each island has its own personality, it is best to consult the appropriate tourist board for further information.

The Pacific

Hawaii: In America's most exotic state, divers will find underwater lava formations, including caverns, pinna-

cles, drop-offs and tunnels created by volcanic activity found on the Hawaiian island chain. Sharks, dolphins, mantas, eagle rays and turtles are common, along with 600 species of tropical fish (176 of these species are unique to the state). Visibility ranges

from 80 to 100 feet and almost 200 feet in the fall. During the winter, divers can witness the annual humpback whale migration.

Australia: Oz's best-known aquatic attraction is its Great Barrier reef, which

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Dive Travel Primer #3

extends 1,200 miles along the continent's east coast and ranges from 20 to 200 miles from shore. There are pastel coral reefs, sharks, giant clams and over 1,400 species of fish here. Many islands between the barrier and the shore attract divers to the diving outposts found there. Popular destinations include Heron Island, a marine park, and Lizard Island, a posh resort island near famous Coral Sea. Live-aboards also ply the waters along the barrier reef; they depart from Cairns, Townsville and Port Douglas.

The South Pacific: This huge area has only recently begun to develop as a popular spot, notably for Australian and Japanese recreational divers. It features many destinations. Each of the major destinations — Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, French Polynesia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Micronesia (including the much talked about diving islands of Truk, Palau, Yap and the up-and-coming

Marshall Islands) and the Philippines — is an aggregation of many mini-destinations.

They offer a range of diving experiences, from those that would suit the beginner to those for the highly experienced, from diving in shallow protected lagoons to sheer wall dives on outside reefs and drift diving in strong currents. Operators have a varying degree of services, so travel homework is imperative. Some of the remote destinations are serviced by one or more live-aboard dive boats. Water temperatures vary with the seasons (78 to 84°) as does visibility (60 to 150+ feet). Monsoon season will reduce visibility and accessibility to some of the dive sites.

Indian Ocean

European divers have been visiting this area for years. Lovely Indian Ocean island locations, such as the Seychelles and Maldives, are a rare and remote treat for most

North American divers. And diving off East Africa has increased in popularity in the past few years as divers combine an underwater safari with a wildlife safari to Kenya or Tanzania and visits to farflung ports such as Mombasa.

The Red Sea

Some say the Red Sea has the world's best diving. Above water, divers are surrounded by desert, but under water the Red Sea is a lush jungle of marine life. Many wrecks are also found in this ancient shipping lane of the Middle East.

Its reef follows the entire coastline of the Red Sea, but some of the most accessible diving is found at several northern locations found in Israel, Jordan, "mainland" Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula (most Sinai diving is wall diving). Water temperatures range from 71 to 78° and visibility is good to excellent depending on the time of year.

P-2 Hotels

Congress sessions and social programs will introduce delegates to the city and hotels that will welcome the Olympic Games.

has been a 100% increase in these categories in the last six years), they feature some state-of-the-art approaches to meeting environmental challenges that could help operators worldwide preserve, conserve and control energy or waste costs.

Most of the business program will be conducted during morning sessions. Hoteliers will have ample opportunity to network with colleagues and partners in the international hotel industry during luncheons, afternoon sightseeing excursions or special evening events highlighting Australia's cuisine and culture.

The timing is right for a visit to Australia in general. Like many of their colleagues worldwide, Australia's hoteliers have had to find ways to survive challenges ranging from a deep and lingering

recession, an extended pilot's strike, high labor costs, overbuilding in some areas and, most recently, last January's devastating fires near Sydney. The Olympics is just six years away, though, and tourism and conference/congress business is already building quickly. Australia "is about to enter a recovery phase," states Neil Tobin, manager for chartered accountant/consultant Horwath Asia Pacific Pty. in Sydney.

An area in which Australia's hoteliers may have profitable tips for their colleagues: controlling labor costs. Based on Horwath's 1993 Australian Industry Survey of Operations, Tobin noted that the total cost per employee fell from 43% of revenue in 1992 to 39% in 1993.

Food and beverage (F&B) performance is another area in which innovation is paying off for Australia's hoteliers. F&B profits for upscale hotels increased to 10% in 1993 from 7% of revenues in 1992. Mid-market hotels did even better, boosting F&B's contribution to revenues to 15%.

Despite its perception as a long-haul destination, Australia's aggressive tourism promotions have helped spur visitor arrival increases of 9.8% annually since 1991. Affordable, high quality hotel accommodations have been a lure for group travel.

The government has also recognized the importance of tourism. As Knapp pointed out, the minister of tourism is a senior cabinet position in Australia. In 1992, record increases were approved for tourism promotion budgets at both the state and federal levels, Knapp said.

The interests of the hotel industry are well-represented in tourism planning. John Haddad, managing director of Australia's Federal Hotels Group and national chairman of the AHA's Accommodations Division, is also chairman of the Australian Tourism Commission. He has played a significant role in the marketing and promotion of Australia and the growth of tourism. Knapp credited Haddad, an



Sydney


Greg Knapp (left), chief executive officer of the Australian Hotels Association's New South Wales office, and Wolfgang Grimm, general manager of the Inter-Continental Sydney, invite hoteliers to learn more about their industry and one of the South Pacific's leading cities during IHA's 1994 Annual Congress set for October in Sydney.

active supporter of IHA, as the person who convinced IHA to choose Sydney as the venue for this year's congress.

Sydney itself will be a major attraction for many delegates. From its beginnings as a British penal colony in 1788, the city has grown to more than 3 million people. Its landmarks range from the beautifully restored Rocks areas, the city's birthplace, to the ultra-modern appeal of its signature opera house and skyscrapers. Famous for its harbors, Sydney also has a variety of beaches and a sampling of Australia's unique flora and fauna, noted Wolfgang Grimm, general manager of the 502-room Inter-Continental Sydney.

Grimm is also chairman of AHA's Accommodations Division, representing 36,000 rooms in hotels and resorts. He also is the new chairman of the New South Wales Tourism Commission.

The congress is open to members and non-members, owners and managers of chain and independent hotels, hotel association chief executives and suppliers to and representatives of the international hotel and tourism industry. For registration information, fill out and return the coupon shown in this article. ❊

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Natural
History
March 1974



Exotic DESTINATIONS

BY ANDREW B...

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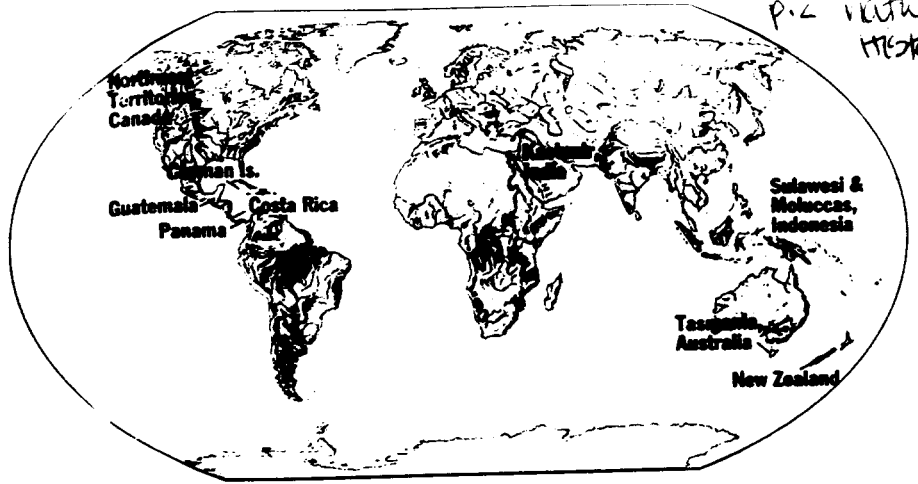
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Exotic DESTINATIONS

Broadly speaking, today's vacationers fall neatly into two groups—passive tourists and active travelers. The first go in search of familiarity, albeit spiced with sun and sea, while the second group travels primarily to explore and learn. Not content with pre-packaged culture, travelers prefer to dig down through the thin crust of modern civilization to their destination's ancient core: unexcited by nature that has been brought to heel, they want it without fences, untamed and pristine. Instead of resorts, they visit exotic destinations.

Discovering these destinations is part of the game—often requiring several detours off the thruway of mass tourism. To indicate some of the signposts, we present nine recommendations, all suitable for a week-long trips and all guaranteed to uncover the traveler in you.

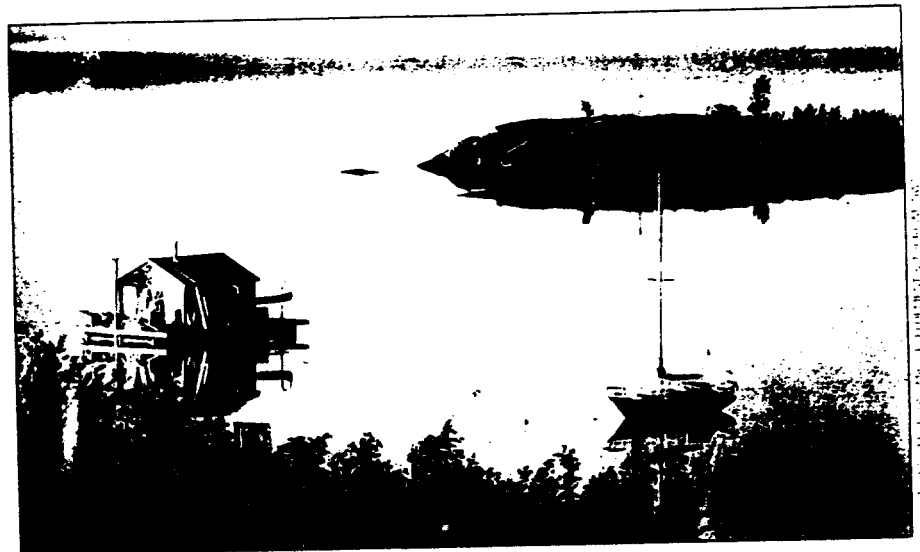


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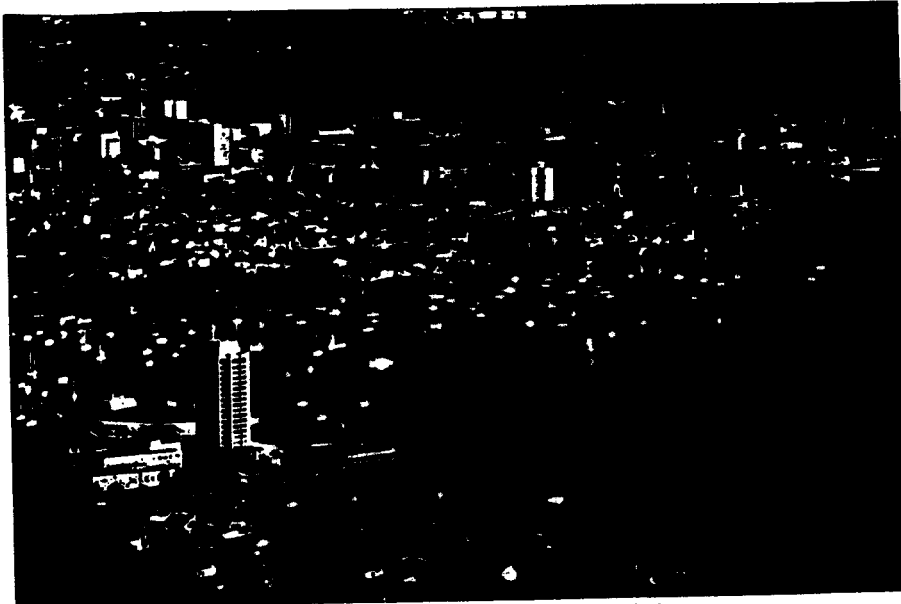
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Houseboat and sailboat, on Great Slave Lake, in Yellowknife.

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TASMANIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, SPORT & RECREATION

A view of Hobart, Australia's second oldest city, as seen from Mount Nelson

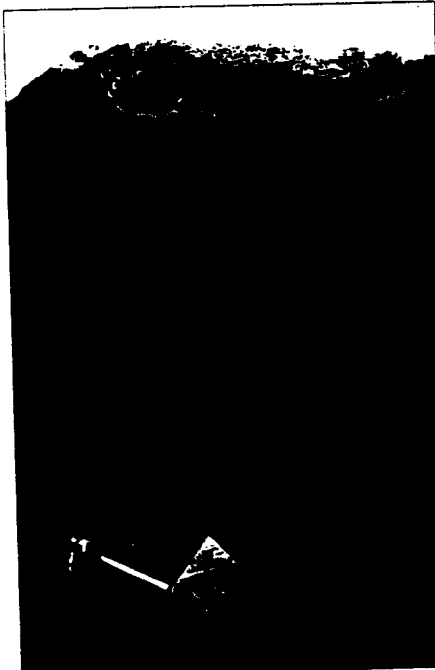
**TASMANIA,
AUSTRALIA**

With a gamut of ecosystems, from dust deserts to dripping rainforest, and a collection of fauna that looks like the output of evolution's test laboratory, Australia presents a dilemma — where to start? One option is Tasmania, historical and scenic, a bite-size version of its mother continent.

As is often the way with islands, time has moved more slowly here, making the past easier to catch. A rosy picture of early British set-

dlement is conjured up by the historic center of Hobart, Battery Park, the city's early warehouses at Salamanca Palace and small country towns like Stanley, ancient and atmospheric. The rolling, grassy pastures of the midland region combine with enduring habits like afternoon tea served with scones to complete the colonial connection. But its harsher realities are visible at Port Arthur in the southwest, where ruins of the old penal settlement are said to be overrun by the ghosts of ill-treated prisoners.

Tasmania's other allure is one noticeably unaffected by the course of time — a range of spectacular wilderness areas and coastlines. One of the most dramatic hikes in the world runs through 50 miles of rugged mountains and alpine moorlands from Lake St. Clair to Cradle Mountain. Another park on the Freycinet Peninsular has a 17-mile loop around travel-poster country. And wherever you go, you will be met by Australia's Alice-In-Wonderland cast of animals and birds — from the shy platypus and friendly wallaby to the Tasmanian devil and screeching cockatoo.



TASMANIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, SPORT & RECREATION

Hikers' "Cradle Hut" with a view of Cradle Mountain, Tasmania

peaks, the major attraction is hiking through the mountains to Kolahoi Glacier, or taking a rod and line out to a trout stream, originally stocked by the British as a diversion from serving the Empire.

THE WESTERN ROAD, SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's unique charm is that it's so comfortable to visit and yet so untamed at the same time. English-speaking, it has a sound and intriguing tourist infrastructure and yet has only three million people (most in the major cities) scattered around a stunningly-beautiful country that's green, pristine, and untrammled by the 20th Century.

Just a short but dramatic ferry crossing from the capital city of Wellington brings you to Picton, the top of the South Island and the beginning of the 700-mile drive down the west coast. It winds first through towns like Nelson, with its Bishop Suter Art Gallery and even the odd winery, before the towns thin out, separated by long expanses of coast torn by bleached-white breakers, lonely moorland, snow-capped mountains, and stands of deciduous woods. Distractions along the way include national parks — Abel Tasman and Mount Cook among others —



The Earnslaw on Lake Wakatipu with the Remarkable Mountains in the background

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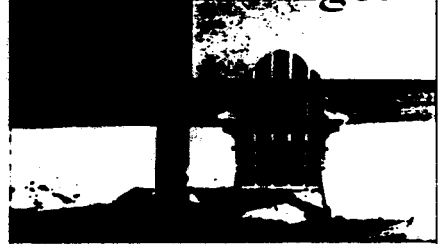
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Milford Sound, on New Zealand's South Island, is unspoiled by tourism.

hardly necessary among this wilderness, and a helicopter ride high up to the snow fields atop the mighty Fox Glacier. By night you can choose between rustic inns serving piping bowls of lamb stew, or more sophisticated inns and hotels in the farm towns that intermittently dot the route.

Your final destination is Queenstown, the outdoor activity center of New Zealand. Tumbling down the hill to Lake Wakatipu, the town is buzzing with options from hiking down the now-legendary trails like the Routeburn and Milford Sound and rafting or jet-boating down the Shotover River to the more extreme thrills of bungee jumping and paragliding in the Remarkables, the local mountain range.

THE PAN-AMERICAN HIGHWAY, PANAMA

Its position as the land bridge between North and South America has given Panama two distinct pluses in the modern travel department. It has attracted the advances (always unwelcome) of the major powers since the days of Columbus and it has become home to an enormous wealth of wildlife. Passing through over millennia of migration, hundreds of species liked it and stayed.

The first plus is easily appreciated upon landing in the capital of Panama City, one of the more exciting Latin American cities. Strolling the narrow streets of the old quarter, you will find solid colonial facades, granite with ironwork, the baroque affluence of the Church of San José,

and the tree-shaded French Plaza. The Promenade of the Dungeons, along the top of the city walls, hints at a darker past. But probably the best place to soak up the tales of Spain's gunpowder and attack-dog diplomacy is the nearby former capital, Viejo Panama, founded in 1513 by the dubiously named Pedrarias the Cruel and once the Fort Knox of Pizarro's looting of the Inca Empire. Crumbling walls, torn down by marauding buccaneers under Henry Morgan, have survived to mock colonial conceit.

The other plus is best uncovered by taking the 350-mile stretch of the Pan-American Highway that runs from the Canal up to the Costa Rican border. This is the quieter side of Panama, where traditional ways of life have flourished far from world affairs. The pleasures here are long beaches empty of people, wilderness areas filled with over 800 species of native birds (not including the 200 seasonal visitors), and volcanoes, stark against the sky. Here you can find Guaymí Indian culture unchanged since the days of the conquistadors and small towns like Los Cantos and El Valle that come alive in the Sunday morning markets and folkloric celebrations.

Andrew Bill is a free-lance journalist based in New York and specializing in travel and design.

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Los Angeles Times

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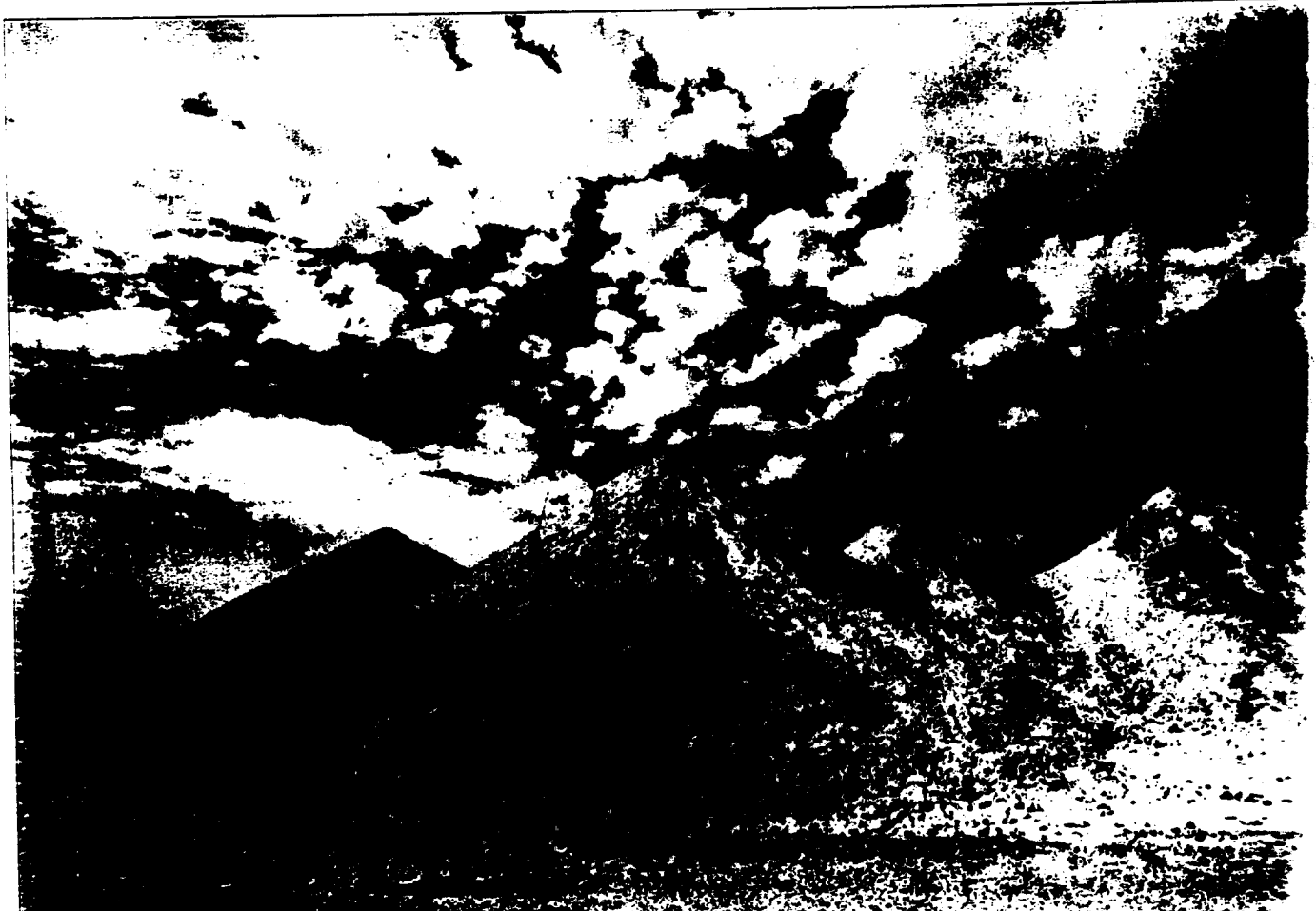
SEPTEMBER 1993

BURRELLE'S

Destination: Australia

Dig this Town

- Visitors Venture to
- the Outback's Coober
- Pedy to 'Noodle' for
- Opals and Stay in
- Underground Hotels



BY ⁶⁶⁷⁵
JACK GOLDFARB

COOBER PEDY, Australia—The bleak lunar landscape, pock-marked by thousands of pot-holes, craters and chalky white mounds, loomed up toward us as we gently descended in our little twin-engined craft. Astronauts on a moon landing? Hardly. But a sense of excitement gripped us as our Saab turbo-prop plane from Adelaide touched down at Coober Pedy, the unique "underground town" in the arid outback of South Australia. A hand-lettered sign on the shack-like terminal building spelled out: "Welcome to Coober Pedy—Opal Capital of the World."

A lone airport worker, a dark-haired young woman, met our Kendell Airlines flight—the drowsy airport's total traffic for the day. She tossed our hefty suitcase into a mini-van, climbed behind the wheel and asked which of the town's half-dozen accommodations we were headed for. Our slung cameras and bug-eyed looks served to emblazon the label "Tourist" across our chests. My wife, Simone, and I were booked at the Desert Cave Hotel, eager, yet a bit wary, to experience its advertised claim: "The World's Only Underground Hotel."

On earlier visits Down Under, we had talked of getting away from Australia's big coastal cities and heading for the red desert heartland. Especially intriguing was the legendary Coober Pedy. We knew that maximum daytime temperatures here, capable of soaring from 95 to 115 degrees for eight months of the year, had brought about a lifestyle of "dugout" cave-style dwelling. A network of underground shops, accommodations, restaurants and churches sheltered the Coober Pedians from the scorching heat, occasional stifling dust storms, and swarming desert flies that afflict the austral summer between December and February. We had planned our trip for the relatively "milder" Australian winter (June-August), and the temperatures hovered in the 70s during the day.

But the mining of opals is really what Coober Pedy is all about.

Chauffeuring us into town last July, Laura Campagna was a mine of information. "Most of the world's opals come from Australia, and most of those stones are dug up right around here," she said. "It tallies up to \$20 to \$40 million dollars' worth a year."

We had heard that fortune-seeking adventurers trekked to Coober Pedy from all over the world, lured by the "Queen of Gems." The town's population of 5,000, Laura told us, included 42 different nationalities. This was no simple ethnic mix. It was probably the most motley work force outside Babel or the U.N. Building in New York. Laura dropped us off at the hotel, in the heart of town. With typical outback friendliness she invited us to stop in to the sightseeing office or souvenir shop any-

time, even if just to say "G'day!"

Our underground hotel room, a cube-like chamber burrowed into the side of a hill, reposed about 13 feet below a solid rock surface. A door led out into the open air, but the pink sandstone walls produced the effect of a snug crypt—complete with air-conditioning, television and international telephone. Whorled patterns on the striated walls, like giant fingerprints, were the telltale marks of powerful tunneling machines that had hollowed out this room.

In the rambling subterranean hotel arcade, illuminated only by electric lights, we found an art gallery, a well-stocked bookshop, cozy bar, theatre, and, for sure, shops selling opals. The hotel also maintained aboveground rooms for claustrophobic guests. Upstairs, a first-class restaurant featured international cuisine, as well as local dishes such as pan-fried crocodile tail, oven-baked kangaroo fillet with strawberry and cassis sauce and medallions of char-grilled water buffalo.

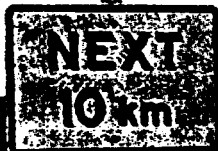
Venturing outside, we surveyed the scene on Hutchinson Street, the town's main drag, named in honor of Willie Hutchinson, the 14-year-old youngster who "founded" Coober Pedy.

On Feb. 1, 1911, Willie was left to look after a desert base camp while a group of gold prospectors, including his father, went in search of water. It was during one of Australia's worst droughts. When the men returned empty-handed after dark and found Willie missing, they grew anxious and prepared to light a signal fire. But a grinning Willie stumbled into camp, announcing he had found pieces of precious opal. And water too.

Within days more opal was discovered, eventually leading to the establishment of the town. Tragically, young Willie drowned five years later in a swimming accident in Queensland.

Dust-blown Hutchinson Street, astir with general stores, gas stations, cafes and pickup trucks, has all the atmosphere of a frontier mining town, the feel of the old American Wild West. But a close-up look reveals how different it really is. Worshipers emerge from an underground church hewn out of solid sandstone; at the busy post office wall notices advertise: "Dugout Home for Sale, 3 bedrooms, large lounge, office, wall-to-wall carpeting, rainwater tank, fully-tiled bathroom, \$55,000." (About half of Coober Pedians live in private homes underground.) Other ads suggest miners ready to move on, having made their fortunes, or gone broke: "For Sale, Second-hand opal-cutting machines. Tunneling machine. Blower Extractor."

But 100,000 visitors pass through here every year, most of them en route to Ayers Rock and Alice Springs, 450 miles north. The opal dealers of Hutchinson Street transact a brisk business, often entertaining bargain-hunting customers with embellished tales of Coober Pedy's rough and ready past. Stories about "Moonlight" Burgess, the notorious opal bandit, or "Carney" Jimmy, the miserly miner who



feasted on lizards. At both ends of Hutchinson Street's half-mile stretch lies the harsh, treeless desert that surrounds the town. An inland sea 100 million years ago, the outback in South Australia, the driest state in the world's driest continent, is inhabited today by dingoes, wild camels and kangaroos. About six miles north of Coober Pedy stands the 5,950-mile-long "Dog Fence," a chain-link fence winding across Australia from coastal Queensland to South Australia to protect grazing sheep in the eastern part of the country from dingoes, the fierce desert dogs that roam the outback. Aussies claim it's the longest fence in the world.

Although opal mining is not allowed within the town limits, the perimeter and beyond are littered with conically-shaped heaps of mullock (waste dirt) piled next to thousands of drill-holes where mine shafts have been sunk.

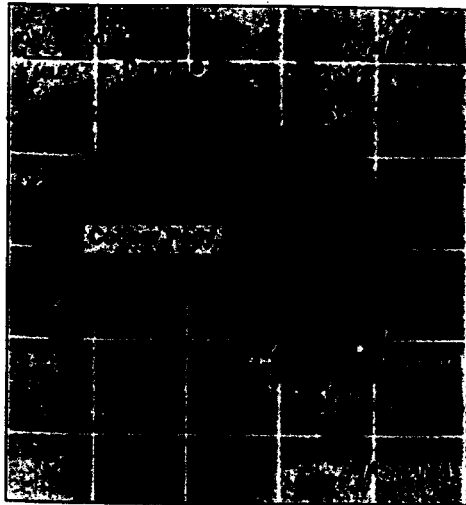
A permit to dig in one of the 75 fields around Coober Pedy is easy to obtain. For \$35 the Department of Mines and Energy will let you "peg" your claim to a 50-square-meter area for a year. But only individuals can mine. No companies. You must be at least 16 years old (Willie Hutchinson wouldn't qualify.) In fact, according to locals, many Coober Pedy visitors have stayed on, enticed by the prospect of unearthly lodes of the rainbow-colored gemstones.

Miners often pool their efforts, sharing equipment and splitting profits. Instead of the old method of dynamiting, the modern mining technique employs a high-powered tunneling machine with a steel-bladed rotating head that chomps into earth and rocks with a meter-wide bite. A truck-mounted mechanical monster, thundering like a huge vacuum cleaner, then moves in, whooshes the debris to the surface and spits it into huge piles to be scrutinized for traces of opal. When all the opal is believed removed, the rubble is abandoned to the "noodlers."

"Noodlers," (or "fossickers") are those hopeful souls, mostly housewives, tourists, children, even miners on their day off, who scour the mullock mounds with tin sieves, trowels or bare hands for any overlooked leftovers. More sophisticated noodlers use a conveyor belt to pass the discard under an ultraviolet light that makes opal look yellow.

Unique among gemstones, opals gain their beauty from the brilliant play of colors created by the breaking up of white light into the iridescent colors of the spectrum. Layers of tiny silica spheres produce this diffraction when the stone is rotated in a bright light.

Most treasured of all are the black opals whose dark (black, blue or gray) background enhances the flaming bursts of red, gold, blue and green. Lesser in value are the crystal clear and milky-white opals. If you are not *au fait* with the world of opals, the Hutchinson Street experts are quick to tell you that solid opals, cut in rounded cabochon style, will cost you much more than a "doublet" (thin slices of opal glued



VICTOR KOTOWITZ / Los Angeles Times

to a dark backing) or a "triple" (a clear quartz cover topping a "doublet" to intensify the stone's luster and shield its delicate surface).

If the opal sellers perceive you to be a connoisseur, they'll bring out the expensive trays of harlequins, with dazzling patchwork patterns, or pinfires, with closely-spaced blazing specks of varied colors. Quality stones like these sell for hundreds, even thousands of dollars per carat. Afford it or not, few tourists leave Coober Pedy empty-handed, as crude bits of flawed opal are freely available to take

home as souvenirs.

Before ending our five-day stay, Simone and I called on the mayor at City Hall. We had met tall, affable, Cyprus-born Eric Malliotis the night before at his cheerful little restaurant on Hutchinson Street. He had not only cooked our tasty fried fish dinner—of locally popular barramundi—but had personally served us, adding on a huge pile of French fries and ice cream for dessert. Neither did he spare the wine. Our extended conversation had ranged from Middle Eastern politics to Aboriginal folk medicine. As we left at midnight closing time, Malliotis asked us to stop by his office in the morning. He had something "special" to show us.

In his brick-walled, aboveground cubbyhole office at City Hall, Malliotis, in open-necked shirt, welcomed us warmly, proudly holding a letter on White House stationery signed by President George Bush. The mayor explained that he had presented an opal and a wooden nameplate to the President at an official reception in Canberra when Bush visited Australia in early 1992.

"Mrs. Bush and I had a memorable visit to Australia," wrote President Bush. "The only drawback was we missed the pleasure of visiting Coober Pedy . . ."

I looked at my wife and smiled. I'm glad we didn't," I said.

Goldfarb is a New York City-based freelance writer.

GUIDEBOOK

Underground Down Under

Getting there: From Los Angeles, United Airlines, Northwest, Qantas, Air New Zealand and Canadian Airlines International fly via Australian gateway cities to Adelaide (about 17 hours). Lowest current, high-season, round-trip fares range \$1,230-\$1,280 for 14-day advance purchase tickets. From Adelaide, Kendall Airlines operates daily 2½-hour flights into Coober Pedy for about \$196 round trip. Daily bus service by Greyhound Pioneer costs \$60 one-way for the nearly 12-hour trip. The celebrated Ghan train from Adelaide takes 13 hours to Manguri, a whistlestop 24 miles west of Coober Pedy. From there, transportation by hotel car or taxi from Coober Pedy costs about \$60.

Where to stay: The Desert Cave Motel (P.O. 223, Coober Pedy, South Australia 5723; tel. 011-61-86-725-688, fax 011-61-86-725-198) provides both underground and aboveground rooms and first-class facilities, around \$85 single/double/twin. The Opal Inn (Coober Pedy, South Australia 5723; tel. 011-61-86-725-054, fax 011-61-86-725-501) offers motel-type accommodations for \$45-\$50 singles/doubles. Under- or overground

lodgings for budget travelers/backpackers are available at Opal Cave Bedrock, Lookout Cave and Radeka Underground Hostel for less than \$25.

Where to eat: Umberto's at the Desert Cave Hotel offers an elegant menu; dinner for two with wine, about \$70. The Last Resort Cafe, just behind the Desert Cave, serves superb food prepared by its Swiss owner-chef who grinds his own coffee, bakes pastries and makes his own ice cream; moderately-priced, breakfast and lunch only. Also in town, a plethora of Greek restaurants offer traditional Hellenic dishes; even the mayor operates one, the hospitable Blue Marlin, where he cooks and waits on tables.

Getting around: Among the half dozen local tour operators are Coober Pedy Tours and Prospectors Opal Tours, who excel in showing off the town's unique features: working opal mines, underground living styles and heaps of discarded opal ore where you can hunt for overlooked gemstones.

For more information: Contact the Australian Tourist Commission, 2121 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1200, Los Angeles 90067; (310) 552-1988.

—J.G.

Travel Age West

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Congressional population to only

All-Australia Tour Revised

PAWTUCKET, R.I. — Collette Tours has revised its all-Australia tour for 1994.

The 19-day Australia—The Land Down Under program has been shortened to 18 days, and will feature Canberra instead of Adelaide. The in-depth tour begins in Canberra and includes Hobart, Melbourne, Ayers Rock, Alice Springs, Darwin, Cairns and Sydney. Sights such as Queen Victoria Gardens, Kakadu National Park, the Great Barrier Reef and Koala Park are included, as well as a show at the Sydney Opera House.

The land rate of \$2,999 per person, double, includes 26 meals, deluxe accommodations and sight-seeing costs.

Round-trip international air and inter-Australia air also are available through Collette.

Contact 800-832-4656 within the U.S. or 800-468-5955 in Canada.

Monday, March 14, 1994 TravelAge

ISLAND
Apr-May 84

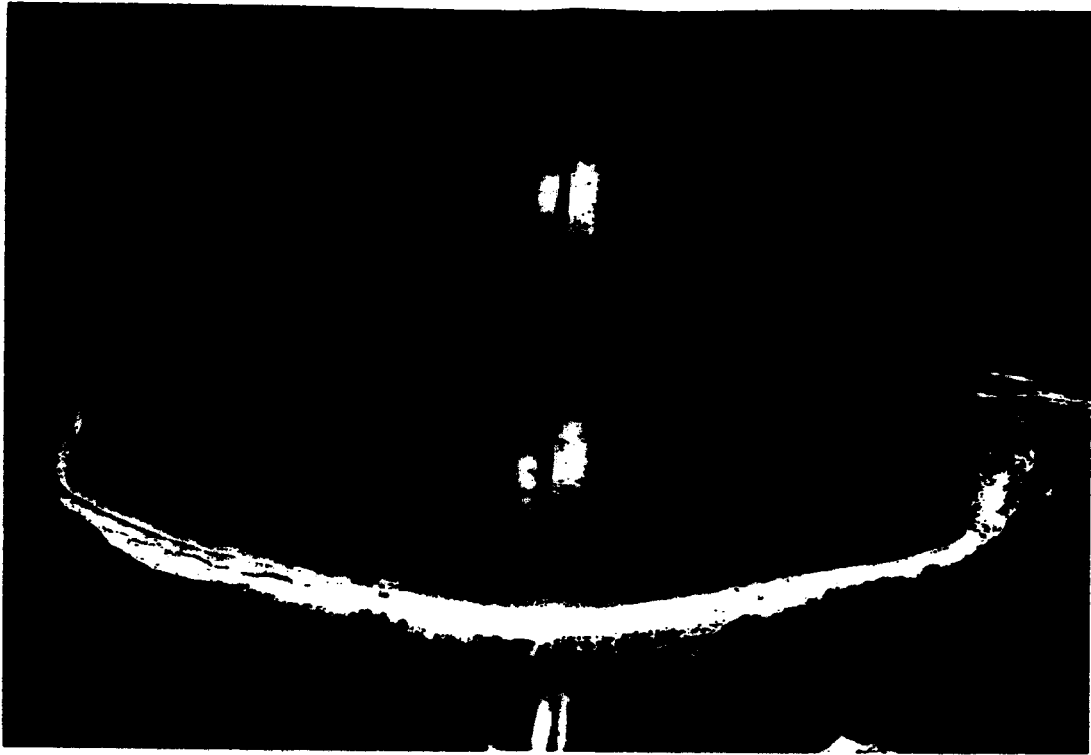
LORD HOWE ISLAND

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Australia's
Genteel Paradise

BY JAN MORRIS



Shawn David Miller

SEEN FROM THE SURFACE OF THE Tasman Sea, Lord Howe Island suggests to me some sort of scorpion, with the two high mountains at its southern end representing the sting in the tail. In fact, a simile could be more invidious, because of all the islands of the world Lord Howe is, I would guess, the least toxic.

There are no vicious animals on Lord Howe. There are very few biting insects. There are no stinging nettles or poison ivies. There are no criminals to be mugged by, no high-rise buildings to fall out of, hardly any traffic to knock you down, no racial tension, no poverty, no litter, no touts, no rabies, no AIDS, and precious little envy. It is a very genteel paradise, an Eden without a snake.

Actually I suspect it to be more beautiful than the Garden of Eden, which was presumably in an early state of development. Lord Howe is at its peak. It looks as though it was created a couple of hundred years ago by one of the great landscape gardeners of the Enlightenment — “Capability” Brown, perhaps — given a carte blanche to produce the perfect subtropical isle. It is about

seven miles long from north to south, never as much as two miles from east to west — a speck in the South Pacific, 400 miles east from the Australian coast, 1,000 miles northwest of New Zealand. But within these miniature limits it is virtuosic.

Those two big mountains, Gower and Lidgbird, rise to 2,500 feet, and their summits are often misty. They overlook an exquisite ensemble of rain forests, pasturelands, and wooded hills. In the western lee of the island, the world’s southernmost coral reef protects a lagoon of marvelous fecundity, while on the other shore, only a walk away, sandy beaches are set in a rocky, foamy surf-washed coast. To cap it all, away to the south, like the resolving chord at the end of a great symphony, there rises sheer from the sea a stark pyramid of rock, 1,500 feet high: Hill’s Pyramid, one of the great ocean sights of the world, and a perfect foil to the benign green composition of Lord Howe.

No Adam or Eve set eyes on this island until 1788 (five years, as it happens, after the death of “Capability”). It is one of the rare places that can truly claim to have been discovered by the explorers of the European expansion, because there were no indigenous natives. Even now, 200 years on, it seems odd to find no Aborigines here but instead to encounter a popula-

On Lord Howe Island, tropical splendor remains the rule rather than the exception, from the white sands of Ned’s Beach (above) to a waterfall cascading through the greenery of Mount Gower (opposite).

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAWN DAVID MILLER

I SAW A NAME FROM ONE OF THOSE OLD CLANS ON A WEATHERED TOMBSTONE, DECORATED WITH SEASHELLS.

tion that would not seem out of place somewhere like Orkney or Borkum – weathered northern-type people, rather stocky and very tough, as who wouldn't be after a couple of hundred years 400 miles from anywhere else.

The earliest settlers were a mixed bag of wanderers, mostly British and American, together with some Maori women and a chieftain's daughter from the Gilbert Islands. Most of today's 300 islanders are descended from one or other of the founding fathers, and one very soon gets to know their names and pedigrees. Half of them are somehow related to each other, and they remember with pride their pioneering antecedents. I was only on the island a short while when I saw a name from one of those old clans on a weathered tombstone, perhaps decorated with seashells, or carved on the war memorial beneath its World War I machine gun, but I came to feel a pang of almost familial sympathy myself.

If there were no humans here when the first British seamen gingerly set foot in this place, there were plenty of other creatures.

Lord Howe is an exhibition of nature's profligacy. It is clothed, for a start, in a thick tangle of forest, reaching from its shoreline to its highest peaks. Palm trees, banyans, the peculiar pandanus, stinkwood and pumpkin trees, vines, creepers, flowering shrubs of wonderful variety, roots, brambles, and ferns are inextricably massed, all mixed up, some growing one on top of the other, so that it is hard to know where one tree ends and the next begins. Sometimes the forest floor is made of hard dry sand, looking like elephant skin, sometimes it seems to be one treacherous expanse of knotted roots.

Around this foliage pullulates a cageless menagerie – an aquarium without glass and a roofless aviary. There are birds everywhere, flashes of sudden yellow, bundles of gray, blobs of white on headlands, shearwaters disappearing into burrows, hawks diving into grasses, kingfishers balanced on impossible twigs, and the ever-present squawks and groans and cackles and whistles. The green-winged pigeon forever forages about the undergrowth. The unique flightless wooden was, until a few years ago, reduced to a troop of 30 living on the inaccessible summit of Mount Gower. But now

it struts and screeches all over the place.

The lagoon is so aswirl with tropical colors, blues and pinks and yellows, that it looks to me edible, like some vivid dessert sauce, and it is alive with all manner of amazing fish. Whales and dolphins appear offshore. In the forests live 103 kinds of spider, not to mention 51 types of snail and 24 sorts of butterfly. The only mammal indigenous to Lord Howe is a small shy bat, but many animals have been introduced over the years, and today cattle amble around the pasturelands, feral goats haunt the mountains, and I am told that somewhere in the forest there is a single cunning survivor of a once numerous company of pigs, all the rest having been hunted out of existence.

Even now many of these creatures are relatively unafraid of

man. They have not learned the worst about us. I opened my door one evening to find a plump shearwater (which they call a muttonbird here) resting with perfect confidence on my doorstep. Pigeons, blackbirds, and even woodhens scarcely trouble themselves to get out of your way. The providence petrel, which lives in the high mountains, will come fearlessly to a human call, and little kingfishers allow you almost within touching distance before they fly testily away, more irritated than alarmed.

At Ned's Beach, one of the sandy beaches of the eastern shore, it has long been the custom to feed the fish. You have only to paddle into the water with a chunk of bread to find yourself surrounded by multitudes of them, gray, gold, red, and silver in the shallows. They are aggressive in their approach and sometimes nip you rather than the bread, but after all, they have to compete with a squadron of piratical ducks that follow you implacably off the beach into the water and seldom miss a crumb.

IT IS HARD TO REALIZE, IN THE DEPTHS OF THIS LITTLE ISLAND sanctuary, that the 300 islanders are all somewhere about, every one of them within a few miles, as well as the 400-odd visitors who are the most the island can accommodate. If you take a flight in a light aircraft over the island, however, all becomes clear. Up you circle, laboriously up the sheer gull-whirled cliffs of Mount Gower, over the forested plateau of its



Ball's Pyramid (opposite), a haven for nesting seabirds, stands sentinel 14 miles southeast of Lord Howe.



"I think," she replied severely, "you are expected to do some walking."

Walking and fishing are indeed the chief things to do, and except for honeymooners, most of the visitors I met on Lord Howe were elderly Australians of a fairly snowy kind - aging hikers, nature bush walkers, members of adult education groups or environmental protection societies, liable to be wearing T-shirts with slogans like Operation Challenge. Their stamens seemed to me amazing. High on rainy ridges, as I staggered, shivering, and panting from tree to tree, I would come across groups of laughing elders in easy and agile promenade. There was apparently no shortage of candidates for the guided climb up Mount Gower, which takes nine hours, which involves creeping along a cliffside path three feet wide high above the sea, and which rainstorms fortunately excused me from undertaking.

Twice a week for more than a decade, weather permitting, Mr. Ray Shack has led this expedition, and he seems to me the perfect exemplar of the well-balanced islander. He lives on the edge of pastureland toward the south end of the island, and until only the other day twice daily milked his two cows (now retired and seen happily mooching about the green attended by a variety of exotic birds). His house is well-couched in flowers and foliage, and an elderly grace-and-favor cat sits inconspicuously on its veranda.

Mr. Shack, who is shortly to hand over his mountain guide duties to one of his sons, can remember when Lord Howe was quite another place. He can remember when the only tourists came by ship, or later by flying boat. He can remember going pig hunting all alone with his dogs in the high forest (though he never ate the consequent pork, being a Seventh-Day Adventist). When he is recalling those days he talks like a pioneer and a mountain man. Yet twice a week for all those years, he has shepherded tourists from Pinetrees Lodge and Ocean View to the Leamish-Let Apartments and the Wainman Holiday Flats, with cameras and picnic lunches, up the track to Mount Gower.

He has succeeded, in short, in combining the organic with the commercial, and so on the whole has Lord Howe Island, tamest, most genial and most civilized of South Seas islands. If there is one temptation that does frequent this serpent-leaf paradise, it is perhaps the maverick urge. Like some of the less conformist islanders, every now and then I felt like breaking out, disgracing myself, behaving with Environmental In-correctness or just subsiding into languid decadence. It was a shame, a particularly green person said to me on my last day on the island, that I had missed the opportunity to make the ascent of Mount Gower: I might have seen one of Lord Howe's most curious creatures, the minuscule freshwater crab, *Halicarcinus locustus*, which lives in rock pools along the way.

I allowed my eye to stray up the mass of the mountain, up the dizzying cliff path, to the forest-clad summit veiled in cloud. Temptation struck, and I felt rising within me the spirit of the original Lord Howe islanders, some of them scamps and washbucklers I feel sure, with their Maori women and their Gilbert Island mistresses, their pig herds and their taste for roast muttonbird.

"Bugger the freshwater crabs," I heard myself saying, there beside the sweet lagoon. ♦

Little mountain palms thrive in the mist of Mount Gower's cloud forest.

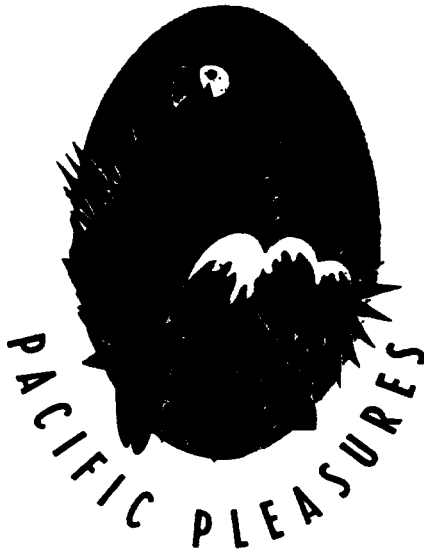


Off the east coast of Australia, the Great Barrier Reef creates one of the world's best scuba and snorkeling environments. It is actually made of about 2,900 different reefs stretching 1,250 miles along the Queensland coast in a region that accommodates travelers seeking nonstop sporting and social activities as well as do-not-disturb quiet. You can choose from more than 20 offshore resort islands, all reef-related, each with distinct personalities and styles. Head for free-wheeling, action-packed resorts at Hamilton, Great Keppel and Dunk; intimate rain-forest retreats at Bedarra and Hitchenbrook; or kid-free hideaways at Lizard, Orpheus and Bedarra. Divers rave about Heron, Lady Elliot and Lizard, and beach aficionados extol the virtues of Lizard and Great Keppel. Near the city of Cairns, the

reefs are closer to the mainland and more accessible, but many resort islands have boats on hand for day trips and charters.

Cairns is also a good departure point for Outback adventure. Take a vintage train past rain forests and waterfalls to Kuranda, a small town perched on a tropical escarpment, to see a butterfly sanctuary and wildlife noctarium, and the Jilli Binna Aboriginal Museum. Or head further into the Outback, to Simpson Desert, for a camel safari.

Honeymoon Travel Tips



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

SEE THE "BOOKLETS FOR THE TWO OF YOU" SECTION IN THIS ISSUE, OR CONTACT ONE OF THE TOURISM BUREAUS LISTED BELOW, THEN SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT. YOU MAY ALSO WANT TO INVESTIGATE THE LONELY PLANET OR MOON TRAVEL HANDBOOK GUIDEBOOK SERIES. BOTH PROVIDE DETAILED WELL-RESEARCHED INFORMATION.

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▶ **Australian** TOURIST COMMISSION, 2121 AVENUE OF THE STARS, STE. 1200, LOS ANGELES, CA 90067 (310)552-1988.

▶ **China** NATIONAL TOURIST OF-

FICE, 333 W. BROADWAY #201, GLENDALE, CA 91204 (818)545-7505.

▶ **Cook Islands** TOURIST AUTHORITY, 6033 W. CENTURY BLVD., STE. 690, LOS ANGELES, CA 90045 (800)624-6250.

▶ **Fiji** VISITORS BUREAU, 5777 W. CENTURY BLVD., STE. 220, LOS ANGELES, CA 90045 (310)568-1616.

▶ **Guam** VISITORS BUREAU, 1150 MARINA VILLAGE PKWY., ALAMEDA, CA 94501 (800)US3-GUAM.

▶ **Hawaii** VISITORS BUREAU, 2270 KALAKAUA AVE., WAIKIKI BUSINESS PLAZA, STE. 801, HONOLULU, HI 96815 (808)923-1811.

▶ **Hong Kong** TOURIST ASSOCIATION, 590 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10036 (212)869-5008.

▶ **India:** GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TOURIST OFFICE, 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NORTH MEZZANINE, NEW YORK, NY 10112 (212)586-4901.

▶ **Indonesia** TOURIST PROMOTION OFFICE, 3457 WILSHIRE BLVD., LOS ANGELES, CA 90010 (213)387-2078.

▶ **Japan** NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATION, ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, 630 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10111 (212)757-5640.

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▶ **Macau** TOURIST INFORMATION BUREAU, P.O. BOX 1860, LOS ANGELES, CA 90078 (800)331-7150.

▶ **Malaysia** TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD, 804 W. SEVENTH ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90017 (213)689-9702.

▶ **Micronesia:** FSM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, DEPT. OF RESOURCES & DEV., CAPITOL POSTAL STATION,

P.O. BOX 12, PALIKIR POHNPEI 96941 FED. STATES OF MICRONESIA.

▶ **New Caledonia:** DESTINATION NOUVELLE-CALEDONIA, 39-41 RUE DE VERDUN, IMMEUBLE MANHATTAN, P.O. BOX 688 NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA.

▶ **New Zealand** TOURISM BOARD, 501 SANTA MONICA BLVD. #300, LOS ANGELES, CA 90401 (310)395-7480.

▶ **Northern Marianas** VISITORS BUREAU, P.O. BOX 861, SAIPAN, MP 96950.

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▶ **Papua New Guinea** TOURIST OFFICE, C/O AIR NIUGINI, 5000 BIRCH ST., STE. 3000, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92660 (714)752-5440.

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▶ **Tonga** VISITORS BUREAU, P.O. BOX 37, NUKU'ALOFA TONGATAPU, TONGA.

▶ **Vanuatu** NATIONAL TOURISM OFFICE, 520 MONTEREY DR., RIO DEL MAR, CA 95003 (408)685-8901.

▶ **Vietnam** NATIONAL DEPT. OF TOURISM, 80 QUAN SU ST., HANOI, VIETNAM.

**CANADIAN
PHOTO / INFORMATION
ASSISTANCE**

DESTINATION: AUSTRALIA

By Brynne Kenyaata



Photo: Ron and Valerie Taylor

Following a denizen of the Great Barrier Reef.

Open an atlas and study Australia for a moment. The vastness is intriguing, with each of the states and territories stretching over an amazing amount of land. What makes this country so unusual is that each region has its own characteristics and its own special attractions. And even within the boundaries of a state, the variety can be quite remarkable. For to know one part of Australia is not to know the whole.

In some regions, the land is sun-splashed and the water lapis-blue. Pristine beaches fringe the coastline as the water gently washes up on shore. In other areas, rain forests stand close by deserts; lakes and rivers run wet and dry, and monolithic rocks crop up where least expected. And everywhere, the visitor is rewarded with distinctive flora and fauna, from the gum tree or eucalyptus to the flowering wattle, Australia's floral emblem; from kangaroos bounding across the countryside to koalas sunning in the branches of trees.

This is Australia, a country of wide open spaces where the landscape, weathered by eons of time, changes dramatically as one travels from one region to another, each providing unique and out-of-the-ordinary views of a world of natural wonders. Few countries in the world are more magnificent in scale and few unveil such a diverse character. The Great Western Plateau features wind-carved caves and ranges, incredibly flat sand plains and undulating sand ridges. And in the outlying Nullarbor Plain, once the bed of an ancient sea, the land is covered with a thin coat of soil and dotted with saltbrush and bluebush.

Australia's Northern Territory is a land of contrasts with its hot, open harsh desert regions and its wet, sub-tropical wonderlands. It occupies one-sixth of the land mass and can arguably lay claim to more features of geographical note than any other state or territory in Australia.

Within the Territory are found some of Australia's most striking sights, including the famous monolith of Ayers Rock; Kakadu, the country's best-known national park; the uncanny red sands of Central Australia; ancient Aboriginal cave and rock paintings; and tiny sub-tropical islands inhabited by traditional Aboriginal owners.

Part of the enchantment for visitors — particularly those interested in nature-related or eco-tourism — is that the country contains ecologically interesting areas that can be found nowhere else on Earth and an aboriginal culture that has a unique relationship to this unusual land.

The stunning wonders of Australia are in evidence in The Great Barrier Reef which stretches more than 1,200 miles along the northern half of Australia's east coast and is the world's mightiest, most fascinating coral formation, composed of

more than 400 species of brilliantly coloured coral polyps and inhabited by 1,500 kinds of fish and 4,000 kinds of mollusks.

There is another side to Australia, a more contemporary and perhaps sophisticated view of the world, found throughout the country's pulsating cities and thriving centers. Here modern office towers, grand shopping concourses and luxurious hotels add the dash of glamour and glitz so inherent to modern urbanization while still maintaining a truly "Aussie" feel. For even in the cities the visitor is greeted to the Australians' unique brand of charm and their casualness that is at once ingratiating and downright friendly.

From vibrant, cosmopolitan Sydney — the nation's ravishing natural beauty — to the tropical "Top End" crossroads of Darwin, from the casual sun-drenched lifestyle of Brisbane to the 19th-century Georgian elegance of Hobart, Australia's cities offer visitors a wealth of opportunities. Cobble-stoned streets with boutiques and cafes, broad boulevards and manicured lawns fringe areas filled with museums and theatres, world-famous stores and exciting restaurants. But even these modern adjuncts don't dilute the uniqueness of Australia's strange and different sights. For nowhere else in the world can one share a golf course with inquisitive kangaroos or explore Aboriginal rock art painted thousands of years ago and minutes later swim lengths at a resort hotel. And in this great land where trees shed bark instead of leaves and kookaburra laugh like hyenas, one faces each day in anticipation of all that delights the senses. Ω

Australia section continued on page 42.

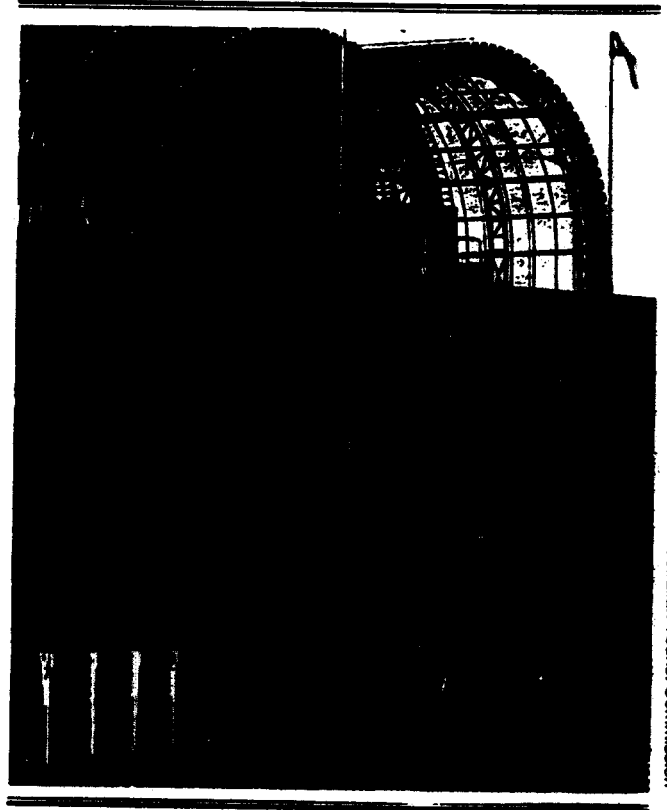


Photo: Australian Tourist Commission

TRACS ACROSS THE WORLD



DISCOVER AUSTRALIA



DISCOVER THE WONDER

Now you're going places in style. "The Queenslander" allows 32 wonderful hours, where you can relax while exploring the beauty of Queensland from the window of the train, a journey that will be long remembered.

There is luxury at every turn. In fact it is like travelling in a deluxe hotel on wheels while taking in all the unique things the "Great Barrier Reef State" has to offer.

The Coral Cay Restaurant offers food prepared by skillful chefs with a mouth-watering menu of tropical delicacies in this fine dining restaurant carriage. The wine menu offers award-winning wines that are made in Queensland just waiting to be sampled.

The Daintree Lounge offers Mango Daiquiri, pineapple fruit punch and other cocktails indigenous to the area. It is here that one can sing all the favorite melodies of days gone by as the pianist entertains and is more than willing to take requests.

Amidst all this refinement, your cabin measures up to the rest of the train. Each air-conditioned cabin features comfortable beds, reading lights, complimentary wetpack, toiletries and dressing gown for onboard use.

This journey starts at Brisbane and travels to Cairns, a distance of 1681 kilometres by rail, and it is in service once a week, leaving on Sunday and returning on Wednesday. Seven sleeping cars with 96 berths make this Sunshine run. For centuries, Europeans have enjoyed the world's most famous luxury train ride- the famous "Orient Express."

Now Australia is the scene for a "Five Star Hotel on Wheels".

Yet the view is constantly changing - from waving fields of sugar cane, to the depths of a wet tropic rainforest, to tall coconut palms and pineapple plantations, there is always something for the passenger to enjoy as magical scenery unfolds.

The visitors book is filled with volumes of praise from past travellers who were appreciative of the standard of service and the friendliness of the staff. The Queenslander gets a hearty seal of approval.

Queensland is a big place but it is easy to get around. It boasts three international airports, Cairns and Townsville in the north and Brisbane in the south. Synonymous with Australia is Qantas, which offers the widest choice of flights from Canada and the US. Within Australia, Qantas and Australian Airlines can fly virtually anywhere you want to go.

Evidence of aboriginal and islander occupation in Queensland dates back around 40,000 years. The region was settled by Europeans as a penal colony in 1824. It is the fastest growing state with a population of about 2.7 million

The climate is typical tropical and subtropical with the seasons not as distinctive as those of cooler climates. Spring is from September to November; Summer is from December to February; Autumn is from March to May; and winter from June to August. In summer, the coastal cities benefit from the cooling sea breezes while inland, though temperatures are high, the humidity is low so they are usually not uncomfortable.

THE TIMELESS BEAUTY OF THE REEF

The Great Barrier Reef extends along the Queensland coastline for more than 2000 kilometres and comprises 2900 individual reefs and 71 coral islands. There are many access points to the Reef and as you wander up and down the coast, you can see the full extent of this marvel often called the "Eighth Wonder of the World". The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority manages and protects an area of 345,000 sq km of waters round the reef. It is the largest marine park in the world. In these protected waters, even the fish are curious and friendly. With the diverse and dense population of fish, sponge, coral, mollusks and echinoderms divers estimate that it would take a thousand dives just to see the highlights of the reef.

One does not have to be a scuba diving expert to see these sights. There is plenty of help available and one can be snorkeling in twenty minutes after arriving, even if you have never done it before. Of course, there is another way to do it!

See it all from a glass bottomed or semi-submersible vessel, where visibility extends up to 60 metres and the water is teeming with 2000 varieties of tropical fish. And you don't even need to get wet! However, if you are more adventurous you can be diving after two hours of instructions and day trips offer the ideal opportunity for this first hand experience. There are good diving conditions the year round, but for the experienced diver, May to December are the prime months.

The underwater reef experience is so enticing that many visitors of all ages who start with snorkeling, soon progress to scuba diving. Registered diving schools and perfect diving conditions bring spectacular rewards. Brian Kirk has dived the world over and claims, "the greatest diving experience ever is around November/December when the coral has its annual spawning. It happens on the full moon and the only way I can describe it is underwater fireworks!"

Hundreds of tropical islands divided up into those of the North or the South Reef are there to explore. Some are special for diving holidays and some are best known for their beauty and sheer luxury resorts. To mention just a few, one of these would have to be Lizard Island which is a favorite with royalty and heads of state, film stars and business tycoons. Or it is the choice of anyone in search of an extraordinary holiday.

Fitzroy Island has accommodation to suit every taste and is ideal for backpackers or families on a tight budget. Finchinbrook Island is the largest island national park in the world, and offers bungalow or tree house accommodations. Teeming with wild life, its jagged mountains and rainforests are a bushwalker's paradise.

The Whitsunday Islands located just north of Mackay, are made up of a group of seventy-four idyllic islands. The Whitsunday Passage is the safest sailing water in the world. Many of the islands are national parks, some are deserted and waiting to be explored, others offer the last word in resort luxury.

All the islands are beautiful and all of them are easily accessible.

Over half of Australia's rainforest is in Queensland, about 2.9 million hectares. Ecologically, speaking, these are some of the world's most significant area. The Undara Lava Tubes at Mt. Surprise inland from Cairns, has underground tunnels formed by lava flow 190,000 years ago, with dense patches of rainforest forming where the tunnels break through to the surface. These tunnels can be explored on a guided tour. Another unusual tourist attraction is the Carnarvon Gorge west of Gladstone where one of the finest examples of Aboriginal stencil art exists. Towering sandstone ravines with ancient ferns and moss gardens are enhanced by crystal clear mountain spring streams, and make for fascinating walks.

The Cape Tribulation Rainforest in the wet tropics, is the

oldest rainforest on earth. It is largely intact and displays a remarkable diversity. It is here that one may see the cassowary, a 2 metre high flightless bird, or a tree-climbing kangaroo. There are guided tours available for rainforest walks and where the rainforest meets the reef, the stretch of coast

that has captivated travellers for centuries, is a mix of white sandy beaches, rocky headlands, blue sea and coral gardens.

Fraser Island is the largest sand island on Earth and an ecological masterpiece. Vast tracts of sand dunes with deep midnight blue freshwater lakes trapped 212 metres above sea level are balanced with lush rainforest and surrounded by endless white beaches. Native wildlife bounds including dingoes, brumbies (wild horses), echidnas, wallabies and 206 species of birds. Because almost all the island is a protected National Park, there is much to see and do. There are Aboriginal sites to

explore, ancient shipwrecks to observe, lake fishing and bush walking, to mention just a few of the activities. Is it any wonder that 200,000 people visit the island each year?



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AUSTRALIA

FEEL THE WONDER

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THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Stretching 1700 kilometres from north to south and 900 kilometres from east to west, the Northern Territory can lay claim to more features of geographical note than any other State in Australia.

The territory is home to the most famous monolith in Australia ...Uluru (Ayers Rock), the uncanny red sands of Central Australia, the ancient Aboriginal cave and rock paintings of Kakadu National Park, tiny sub-tropical islands inhabited by traditional Aboriginal owners, and flora and fauna that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world.

Home to only about 158,000 people, or just over one percent of the population, the Territories are sparsely occupied. About two thirds of these people live in the four largest cities and towns, and the balance live in the "outback" on immense cattle stations, in mining towns, and in remote areas where small but personal tour operations thrive.

Mining, tourism and primary production are the three biggest income earners. But the people who stay in the Territory have a keen sense of humour and mateship plus an adventurous spirit, all prerequisites of life in the outback.

The ancestors of the present day Aboriginal people are believed to have arrived in the Top End from Asia via land bridges and large bamboo rafts, at least 40,000 years ago. Their progress southwards was slow, and it wasn't until about 10,000 years ago that Ayers Rock and the Olgas became inhabited.

Darwin is the capital and is home to 76,000 people followed by Alice Springs with 23,000.

The finest attractions in the Territory are nature-made and often closely linked to ancient geological events. Uluru (Ayers Rock) and the 36 domes of nearby *Kata Tjuta* (The Olgas) are, for example, remnants of a mountain chain that was thrust from the earth about 600 million years ago. Still these are young when compared to Kakadu National Park, where the youngest rocks of the Arnhem Land Escarpment are 1 billion years old and the oldest date back 2 billion years.

Between these rock formations at the Centre and the Top End are Kings Canyon and its lush Garden of Eden, the Macdonnell Ranges separated by magnificent gaps, chasms and gorges, Palm Valley where the world's only *Livistonia Mariae* palms grow, the mysterious Devils Marbles just south of Tennant Creek, and further north the great canyons of Nitmiluk National Park.

The differences in climate between the arid centre and a sub-tropical north can be best illustrated by the rainfall which varies from an annual average of 127 centimetres in the north to 15 in the south. Along with the climatic differences incredibly diverse flora such as lotus flowers, wild orchids and water lilies in the northern rain-forest contrast drastically to the hardy spinifex grass, the Desert Oak and mulga of the Centre.

OUTBACK COMMUNICATIONS

The isolation of the outback is best understood through a visit to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which for many years has provided the only medical service to people in remote settlements. It operates on a radio network just as the School of the Air. It acts as a support system for between 100 and 150 children in the bush who are educated through correspondence lessons.

The Territory boasts some unusual industries. At Chateau Hornsby the visitor can meet the only wine maker. Denis Hornsby managed to develop a flourishing vineyard in the arid lands of the Centre and produce a fine product.




The Mecca Date Gardens are Australia's only commercial date producers but the Government is presently experimenting with date palm production with hopes of setting up a large scale plantation. Most unusual is the only wild herds of single-humped camels in the world and about half are found in the Northern Territories. A fledgling camel export industry has begun shipping young camels to dealers world wide, and the Frontier Camel Farm can provide more information on this. Of course, camel rides are available.

The kinds of holidays here are as varied as the countryside. See the Australian bush and taste real home cooked Aussie meals. Learn to become a Jackaroo or Jillaroo (cow hand). Entertainment is the name of the game and Aussies now how to do it. Enjoy Billy tea on a bush picnic by a billabong and throw in a Eucalyptus leaf. Ω

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Toronto Sun
Feb 13 94

Romantic Rendezvous

*These special places are perfect
for a Valentine's Day vacation*



JILL Rigby

Tomorrow, I will be plying my way through the Drake and Beagle Passages aboard a Russian ice-breaker in Antarctica.

Not a conventional way to spend Valentine's Day, nonetheless it suits me just fine.

Should the Antarctic Peninsula not tempt your romantic palate then possibly some other places I have visited might better fit your taste.

I have always thought affairs of the heart were well-staged against a backdrop of rustling palm trees, bleached ivory beaches and shades of an aquamarine sea and sky, especially at this time of year when the climate, for some, leaves much to be desired. And that's what Feb. 14 is all about ... desire.

If I cast my mind back to those sultry weeks spent in the Caribbean, I long for the French cuisine and icing sugar beaches of St. Barthelemy. Cossetting does not get much better than this, especially if ensconced at the resorts of Manapany and Guanahani, or in your own private villa.

This is an island of beautiful bodies. Coconut tans on nude beaches add much allure to the siren St. Barth's. (Packing tip: Diaphanous clothing of any description, plenty of film and lots of cash.)

Cold-weather pleasures await those languishing in love in the picturesque setting of Zermatt. Nestled beneath the craggy hook of the Matterhorn, this is the consummate Swiss village. Straight from the pages of a Brothers Grimm fairy tale, horses still clop along the streets with passengers covered in fur blankets while skiers schuss the perfectly-groomed slopes. (Packing tip: Thermal underwear and a hearty appetite for glog.)

"Mush, mush!" harps the refrain as dog sleds cut the snow and riders imagine themselves Arctic explorers. Much of the lure of this centuries-old form of transportation is the animals. It is not possible to venture into the Canadian North aboard a dog sled and not fall in love with the rambunctious huskies. (Packing tip: Snacks for you and the dogs.)

To my mind, Plettenberg remains the most bewitching place I chanced upon in South Africa. Great sweeps of beach where people appear but specks, quaint architecture reminiscent of rural England, gracious gentry and an unequalled hotel known simply as The Plettenberg, help to engrave this spot in my

memory. (Packing tip: A string bikini and sun-tan lotion SPF 25.)

There is no city in the world that has a firmer grasp on my heart than Paris. It is a place to fall in love, be in love or find someone to love. All that is Parisian is rooted in amour whether it be the architecture, cuisine, clothes, wine or song. (Packing tip: Buy something seductive there; no one does it better than the French.)

A Maui sunrise on the summit of Haleakala is enough to make anyone feel like a Greek god. Nowhere does the big, red ball of fire enter the world so languidly, then build slowly into a Beethoven symphony. (Packing Tip: Two sleeping bags that zip together.)

Kyoto after a fresh snowfall is so laced with serenity it's easy to forget to breathe. Kinkau-ji, famous as the Golden Temple, is breathtaking bathed in white, as is Ryoan-ji where the Zen arrangement of 15 rocks awash in a sea of sand tugs on the psyche like a contemplative magnet. (Packing tip from Wordsworth:

"Wise passiveness.")

"Daintree" has a magical ring to it, like something from a Tennessee Williams play. Hidden in the northeastern corner of Australia near Cape Tribulation where Captain Cook shipwrecked, the rainforest is an exotic pastiche of animals and vegetation. Set snack dab in the middle of the jungle, Silky Oaks has cozy wooden cabins open to the world outside. (Packing tip: Binoculars to spot the crocodiles.)

Joe Pilaar, owner of Canadian Himalayan Expeditions, waxes about "the romantic tranquility of the silence of the mountains." The Himalayas have been coddled by time although, some of us think, changes are being wrought too fast. Still, up in the mountains, there are moments when the sand seems to stop falling through the hourglass and romance takes root. (Packing tip: ThermaRest Couples Kit.)



DOGS LINE

JUST THE FACTS:

- Antarctica: Myth and Co. at 964-2569
- St. Barth's: Contact your travel agent
- Zermatt: Swiss National Tourist Office at 971-9734
- Dogsledding: Outward Bound at 421-8111
- Plettenberg: South African Tourism Board at 283-0563
- Paris: French Government Tourist Office at 593-4717
- Maui: Contact your travel agent.
- Kyoto: Japan National Tourist Organization at 366-7140
- The Daintree: Australian Tourist Board at 1-800-727-5165
- Nepal/Pakistan/India: Canadian Himalayan Expeditions at 360-4300.

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Show gives travellers ^{HCHG} ticket to great holiday

The Holiday Travel Showcase and the Vancouver Travel Show have joined forces to bring travelling consumers one of the biggest and best travel productions Vancouver has seen.

The show, being held at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre this Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., is the direct result of a merger between Rick Buecking of the Vancouver Travel Show and David Savage of Great Canadian Travel Shows, Inc.

"Lots of people have asked me what a travel show is," says Savage. "Everyone knows about the boat show, the home show, the auto show and the ski show. A travel show is the same idea. It's a marketplace where, under one roof, the people who know about travel and put tours together come and tell customers about the →"

Vacation spending has remained a priority for many people despite the belt-tightening that's taken place in the '90s. What's different, Savage says, is that consumers are more particular about where they

put their vacation dollars.

"Lots of people — and I include myself — invest a lot of hopes and dreams in their vacation time. Holidays are somehow supposed to make up for the stress and angst of daily life. It makes sense to find out all you can about where you're

"It makes sense to find out all you can about where you're going before you plunk down your money."

David Savage

going before you plunk down your money."

For instance, Savage says, you might want to talk to Mike Tomlinson of Islands in the Sun about barefoot cruises in Greece, Hawaii or the Virgin Islands; or to Mark Quayle of Princess Cruises, Ian Perkins of Royal Cruise Lines or Kim Lucy of Norwegian Cruise Lines, about what sort of fitness

program their cruises offer; or to some Aussies from the Australia Tourist Commission about Lizard Island and the Great Barrier Reef.

Buecking says there's never been such a diverse group of exhibitors in one show. This show has something for everyone, he says, from touring exotic Asia, to cruising the Mediterranean, and even as close to home as a weekend in Victoria, Harrison or Whistler.

Video programs, free talks and presentations by travel experts, packing demonstrations by Gulliver's (not to be missed) all add to the "infomix" that travellers can expect to find at the show.

Value for money comes next to information when you're planning a vacation, Savage says, adding the show offers more special travel discounts, deals and prize trips than you'll find under one roof at any other event in town.

Two grand prizes are on the books for this show — one to Australia via Quantas and one to Rio de Janeiro with Canadian Airlines and Gateways International.

March 1994



OCEANIA & BEYOND

RANDY KECK
Contributing Editor

You may write to Randy at ASI
Tours, 5655 East River Road, Ste.
101-A, Tuscon, AZ 85715; 602/299-
6700.

Wilson's Promontory National Park — a great Melbourne escape

One of the great features of Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne, is the variety of scenic attractions within a half day's drive of the city.

One of the most popular is Wilson's Promontory National Park, situated a comfortable 3-hour drive east of Melbourne. The park currently receives over 500,000 annual visitors anxious to explore its multitude of natural attractions.

The park was named by Governor Hunter in 1798, on the recommendation of the famous Australian explorers Bass and Flinders, after Thomas Wilson. Wilson was a London merchant who provided them with their provisions for their journeys along the coast.

Main draws

Wilson's Promontory forms the

Randy poses with "Issie" the emu in Western Australia.

southern extremity of the Australian mainland protruding well out into Bass Strait, the stretch of sea that separates the mainland from the island state of Tasmania to the south.

In addition to providing seemingly limitless vistas for visitors, it offers protection for the unique flora and fauna of Australia. One of the main features of the park is the wide variety and tameness of the wildlife species, such as kangaroos, emus, possums, koalas and wombats.

Visitors are also well rewarded by the prolific birdlife resident within the park's boundaries, including wattle birds, many types of seabirds and the very colorful rosellas and lorikeets. Beautiful native parrots that live in the wild are tame enough to feed from the hands of visitors.

Perhaps the main draw for most visitors is the more than 200 walking tracks which lead to most parts of the "Prom." These range from easy walks on flat ground to overnight hikes. During the summer (November-February), on Easter and during various other holiday periods, rangers and other staff guide visitors on walks and spotlight tours.

Places of interest

Some of the prime places of interest in the park are Tidal River, Lilly Pilly Gully, Darby River, Squeaky Bay, Mount Oberon, Sealer's Cove and the Lighthouse Museum and information center.

Picnic and camping areas are available in the park and a variety of beaches and inlets provide opportunities for swimming, surfing, fishing or just relaxing.

The Shire of South Gippsland, where the park is located, is rich in historical interest with museums at Port Welshpool, Foster and at Tidal River in the park.

In addition to the beautiful coastal regions, rugged mountain ranges contain important rainforests, and fertile farmland is kept green by an assured rainfall.

Overall, the region contains some of Victoria's most dramatic and diverse scenery. The region is also a haven for skilled artisans, and numerous small studios and galleries display the works of local painters and other talented crafts people.

Camping info

In Wilson's Promontory, campsites are in great demand during holiday seasons and should be booked well in advance. Lodges are also available at Tidal River in the park. Reservations for both can be made through the park office at Tidal River; phone (056) 80-8538.

Information leaflets are available for Wilson's Promontory and all of Victoria's national parks. For these and other publications such as camping guides, nature walks and historical notes, contact the head office of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, 240 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria, Australia; phone (03) 651-4011.

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TRAVEL

Exmouth, Australia: the sunniest place on earth

Story / JAMIE ROBINSON

"I moved here to retire", says 62-year-old Tony Medcraft. "I've never been busier." Medcraft is speaking of Exmouth, Australia, the down-under destination for retired Aussies. Like their Florida-bound Canadian counterparts, the men and women who flock to the Northern Australian coast each year also have their own term of endearment - instead of "snowbirds," they're known as "seagulls."

Escaping the wet winter months in the southern region of Western Australia, the trek north begins mid-April, as the summery weather north of the Tropic of Capricorn beckons. With a yearly maximum temperature of 31 degrees Celsius and minimums of only 18, Exmouth boasts around 3,500 hours of sunshine per year, making it one of the sunniest places on earth.

Exmouth is one of the newest towns in Australia, founded in 1967 as a support centre for the U.S. Naval Communications Station. But Aussies have been drawn to this paradise for years. Once the home of Aboriginal people, the region has been witness to historic expeditions, severe cyclones, military activity and a variety of maritime industries.

The rich cultural and natural heritage of this area is now protected within two major parks - Cape Range National Park and the Ningaloo Marine Park, stretching along 260 kilometres of coastline.

Exmouth and the North-West Cape jut out into the aqua waters of the Indian Ocean. Known as the Coral Coast, this tropical paradise combines the underwaters of Western Australia's largest coral reef with the uniqueness of the Outback.

Here you can discover ancient gorges and silted-in land the catch of a lifetime: explore an underwater kingdom, teeming with life, encounter an elusive sail fish as it soars high into a cloudless sky, savor the delights of seafood caught by your own hands or stroll along secluded, sandy white beaches.

The Ningaloo Coral Reef is unique-one of only two coral reefs in the world to be found on a west coast - the other Baja, California. This tropical coral reef sparkles with 700 species of fish and reef building coral.

At beaches like Mandu Mandu and Turquoise Bay, the reef meets the shoreline, making it a haven for swimmers, snorkellers and beachcombers. You can also cruise the coral in comfort in a glass-bottom boat. Or for those who want to take a closer look, the Exmouth Diving and Fishing Centre provide escorted dives and snorkelling excursions daily to areas only accessible by boat. The Navy Pier Dive is rated as one of Australia's top ten dives.

For a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, you can go swimming with the whale sharks - the biggest fish alive. Exmouth is the only place in the world where these massive but gentle creatures are known to appear regularly in waters easily accessible to swimmers. Other sea creatures also come to this aquatic paradise. Just off shore, Humpback Whales can be seen cavorting on their annual migration between the Antarctic and the North-West Shelf. Green and Loggerhead turtles lay their eggs on the sandy shores from November to February. And around 9 weeks later, their babies hatch and make their famous scuttle towards the Indian Ocean.

Exmouth has excellent year round fishing and some world records have been landed here. Catches include Marlin, Spanish Mackerel, Snapper and Coral Trout. Succulent fresh local gull prawns means there's also lots of "shrimp on the barbie."

Inland, the rugged limestone ranges, canyons and gorges of Cape Range National Park leads visitors through a unique landscape that has developed over many thousands of years. The Millering Visitors Centre can answer all your questions as you head into the park. Here you'll find Yardie Creek Gorge, where deep blue waters reflect the sheer red walls of the towering cliffs above - home to the Striped Rock Wallaby and nesting Giant Osprey.

Also worth a look is Mt. Augustus - of the world's most spectacular peaks at twice the size of Australia's famous Ayers Rock. This wild, untouched area is fascinating in geology and wildlife. One ornithologist counted more than 100 species of birds in 2 days. The Outback teems with kangaroos, emus, wild parrots and the prehistoric-like Bungarra lizard.

Further north stands the historic rugged beauty of Hamersley Range National Park. This ancient land is some two thousand million years old and includes some of the oldest rock formations known to man. Millions of years of erosion have carved deep winding gorges, tranquil pools and rugged landscape.

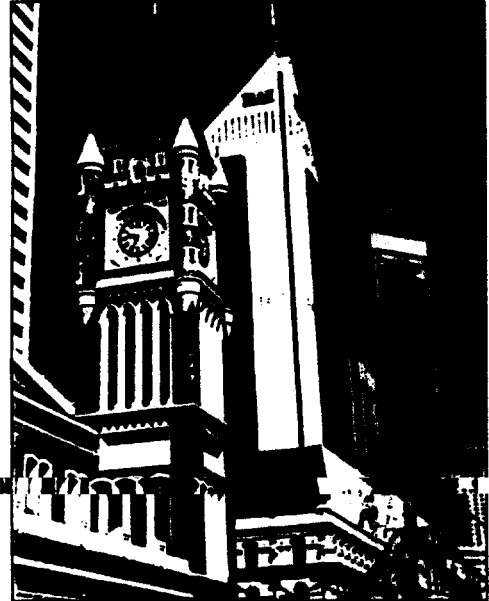
Back on the coast, the small resort of Coral Bay is just 150 kilometres south of Exmouth. Continue another three hours and you'll arrive in Carnarvon, almost as famous for its climate and its bananas. Bougainvilleas and hibiscus line the streets of the coastal town. Don't miss the tasy tour at Munro's Banana Plantation and the Blowholes, just north of Carnarvon, are an amazing sight.

Further yet down the coast is the home of WA's famous dolphins. Monkey Mia's wild dolphins drop by each day to visit. They swim right up to you in the knee-deep water, so get your camera ready. You might even get a chance to touch one.

Western Australia is "the Wildflower State", and from July to October, the Coral Coast and Outback puts on a dazzling display of color. There are over 3000 different species of wildflowers, many unique to the region, so make sure you pick up a book to help identify them all.

This Australian retirement destination does have one drawback for the Canadian traveller though - getting there. Western Australia is not part of the traditional Aussie tour package. Canadians tend to stay on the east coast of this vast country. And Exmouth is 1300 kilometres north of Perth and almost the same distance south of Broome. Both cities have international airports but you'll still have to take a domestic flight to nearby Learmonth. (From \$299) Bus Australia offered 3 services per week from Perth to Exmouth. (from \$185) Tours and rentals offer further options.

When you finally arrive in Exmouth, you'll find the town has everything you'll need. Accommodations range from the luxury of Potshot Hotel Resort to budget holiday units. Exmouth Cape Tourist Village offers everything from chalets to camping to backpackers cabins. A more rustic experience can be found at the restored homestead of the historic Vlamming Head Lighthouse.



Perth: Gateway to Australia's last frontier

Story and photo/ MICHAEL BAGINSKI

PERTH, Western Australia - A chill wind coaxes goosebumps from my bare arms. My jacket is at home; after all it's supposed to be summer in Australia. "I'm sorry," the guide sheepishly professes, as if it's his fault. "It's never ever this cold." Such is life in tiny, nearly perfect Perth, where wicked weather still warrants an apology to the tourists.

But then, this is sunny Western Australia (W.A.), where the tourist game is as new as cool summer days. Only after a recent string of events, starting with the America's Cup yachting spectacle in 1987 and culminating with deregulated airfares in 1992, has the world's most isolated capital truly blossomed for visitors.

To conceive just how far out Perth really is, consider the 2-1/2 day, 4,348 km rail journey from Sydney; for much of the trip (west of Adelaide) your only companions are the scrub bushes littering the Nullarbor Plain. Even the 4-1/2 hour flight from Sydney has only become affordable at \$A400-500, a third of the cost before deregulation. For the first time, even domestic travellers are trekking west.

Perth's isolation has been both its bane and boon. Being so far off the beaten track makes it a well thought-out destination. You have to want to visit here and plan accordingly; but those who do will discover a clean, friendly city that has nicely balanced its sudden growth with its frontier heritage, and which blends in the great Australian love of the outdoors in its attractions and activities.

Start with the beach, or rather, beaches. There's 19 of them, each one a scene of tropical splendor along the Indian Ocean coast. Perthites rightly boast of the fine swimming and water activities here, as well as in their remarkably pollution-free Swan River, which connects the city to its port, Fremantle, 19 km downstream.

Ah, Fremantle (pronounced as it's spelled, not Free-mantle), a name you may recall suddenly appearing on the international map in 1987 when, along with parent Perth, it hosted Australia's defence of the America's Cup. Aussies are yachting mad and not a day goes by that the event isn't remembered over a cool lager or vegemite on toast. 1987 surely must be the watermark in history of the towns, save perhaps their founding in 1829.

Like Canada, the history of Perth, named after its Scottish counterpart, is short and fairly far from the surface, but with a little digging the area's maritime history comes out, along with its place as a port of entry for most of the settlers to Australia from Europe. As recently as the 1950s and '60s, Australia was enticing British settlers here with passage from home for only £10. Of course, that's European history. Native Australians, the Aborigines, go back by some estimates 40,000 years. Bits and pieces of that history can be picked up at several local art galleries, which display and sell exquisite native works, as well as the Western Australia Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia.

Culture in the 1990s of course means shopping, and that is duly represented on Perth's Hay and Murray Street shopping concourses, where designer names rub shoulders with Outback outfitters, and the Paul Hogan look is but a few Aussie dollars away. The boutiques of charming Fremantle also play counterpoint to the cluttered historic market, which offers everything from fruits and vegetables to antiques and T-shirts.

But for all its charm, Perth is still a city of more than a million people and, well, cities are cities. Visiting Perth without going further afield would be like visiting Calgary and not seeing the Rockies. Western Australia is one of the last great frontiers on earth and to bat all of its attractions would take far more space than I have here. Suffice to say that there's a multitude of possibilities, from the wine valleys and renowned wild flower tours south of the city to the mining towns and great canyons and mountain ranges of the north. Not to mention an unlimited number of activities for the adventure-minded, including diving, fishing and sailing.

Perth's fine year-round weather also makes for excellent tennis, golf and cycling, as well as walking and hiking. And although I can't guarantee you perfect weather for all of those options, I can safely predict at least several sincere apologies for the rain.

For a free copy of Destination Australia, call 1-800-677-5213; or for information, write: Australian Tourist Commission, 489 Fifth Ave., 31st Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017.



The Red Bankia is common to Western Australia.