

ISSUE 73



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Gus Kraus

WELKAM FRENS

To all our valued customers

Happenings

Sadly, our CEO of the past 10 years has departed however like they say “the show must go on” and I am glad to report that it is **BUSINESS AS USUAL** for Solomon Airlines with the undersigned appointed by the board in an acting/interim CEO whilst the board is vetting and screening applicants for their new appointment sooner rather than later.

Tri-Partite Partnership

Finally we can confirm that since the beginning of July, the three-way partnership of Melanesian carriers including ourselves, Air Niugini and Air Vanuatu has been settled and at least Solomon Airlines and Air Niugini are now code-sharing on the Port Moresby to Honiara and Port Vila routes.

Air Vanuatu is busy seeking to finalise testing with Air Niugini to enter as a three-way agreement and this should be soon. We can all be proud to say that this Melanesian connection is a first of its type in the region and forges the Melanesian Spearhead grouping partnership to be a stronger body in the South Pacific and we believe other like-minded Polynesian countries are watching with interest to gauge developments.

Our Business

Solomon Airlines are now in full swing with both the BUS and our Dash8 on-line and contributing well for the benefits of our travelers and the airline. We are in discussions with other potential partners in the region to assist their developments and as well with planning our future to ensure we grow our business through prudent planning and controls that will assist in controlling our growth after all, business never stands still!

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- As an airline, we purchase locally and also contribute to the wider SI community

- We assist in export which contributes to our country’s local purse.
- We assist to bring in foreign exchange earnings, a benefit to ensure our country’s economic development.

We commend the following read in this issue for your pleasure-

Including the following-

- Culture in Malaita is a stronghold with pristine adventure offered to Tourists
- The Pacific Arts Festival wrap-up in Guam from our Made in Solomon Islands
- Saeragi in the West...an untouched region for Tourism with a haunting past.
- Heroes of Honiara- another WWII Heroes story in Solomon Islands
- A Diving Luxury live-aboard addition to Solomon Islands
- A country steeped with relevance of the links throughout the British Colonial era when many i-Kiribati families were brought to Solomon Islands to save them from the harshness of their living standards with no drinking water in parts of south Kiribati then known as the Gilbert & Ellis Islands.

We value your business.and trust your experience flying Solomon Airlines and experiencing our country in all its goodness will, by word of mouth, assist us to grow and become a better contributor to our Country’s future development.

Tengiu tumas.

Gus Kraus
CEO (acting) and General Manager
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CONTENTS

Saeragi's haunting past 12

A hike up to the headhunting days of West Gizo



Celebrating Solomon art and culture 16

A look at the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam

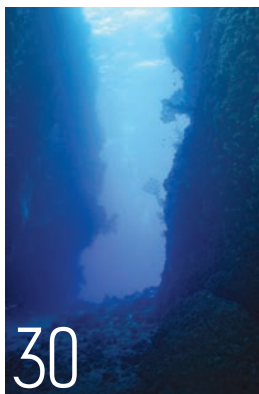
Pristine adventure is what Malaita offers visitors 22

Auki ready to welcome visitors to its many attractions



Luxury Solomon Diving 30

MV Taka is the new addition to viewing below-sea



Serah's Lagoon Hideaway 37

Eco-Lodge in famous Langa Langa Lagoon

Heroes of Honiara 40

The hero behind Henderson Airport

Kiribati: Saving the Last Pristine Seas on Earth 45

Expedition into a remote marine park in the Pacific



Solomon Airlines Fact Sheet 48

Route Maps 50

Airline News 52

Island Sun Guide 54

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WHAT'S ON WHEN & WHERE 2016



AUGUST

AUGUST

Guadalcanal Province 2nd Appointed Day (1st)
Makira Province 2nd Appointed Day (4th)
Artificial Islands & Shell Money Festival, Busu, Langa Langa Lagoon, Malaita Province (4th to 7th)
World War II 71st anniversary (7th)
Malaita Province 2nd Appointed Day (15th)

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER

Kodili Festival - Isabel Province

OCTOBER

OCTOBER

Stunned Mullet Festival - Munda, Western Province

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER

--

DECEMBER

DECEMBER

Lagoon Festival - Munda, Western Province
Western Province 2nd Appointed Day (7th)
Christmas Day (25th)



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OUT & ABOUT

Musical Festival



Musical festival rocks Honiara

Festival with a difference was what Honiara hosted early July this year when 210 children in schools around Honiara participated in the annual Our Telekom Choral Festival. The three day concert was special this year because it featured a 10-strong Pasifika Voices choir from the University of the South Pacific's Fiji Campus under the tutelage of musical maestro Igelese Ete. This year's festival featured Malaga, a musical that celebrates the seafaring and navigational heritage of the people of the Pacific. – Photos by Island Sun



Homestay

Kuila Stay on Savo

Just 40 minutes by speed boat across the Iron Bottom Sound is Kuila Village Home Stay on Savo Island. Boat departs Point Cruz Yacht Club in Honiara at 8.30am.

For a hike up to the volcano, visit the megapodes or swim with dolphins, contact Steve Alioki on +677 7454543 or email sakisavo11@gmail.com.



Art Gallery



Art in Gallery

With no entry fees, always a good thing to pop into the Art Gallery to check on art and artefacts that are on display and most probably available for purchase as well. From reed baskets, figurines carved either from wood or stone, hand-dyed garments to paintings on canvas, the Gallery tend to have something to suit every visitor's tastes. The Gallery is conveniently located too, just beside Heritage on the Park Hotel on Honiara's main Mendana Boulevard, so you won't miss it. – Photos by Samisoni Pareti

Meal To Go



Local favourites, fish and chips served with spring onion and a strand of crispy water cress is what Fire & Spice sells at the NPF Building food court in downtown Honiara. To quench your thirst, choose from fresh coconut juice or bush lime juice.

Saeragi's haunting past

Words and photos by Samisoni Pareti

There is little to show of the ferocious past of this coastal village on the west coast of Gizo Island. Only four limestone wall remains of its ancient village sites, high up the mountain and hidden in sight by thick jungle.

"My ancestors never live by the sea during the headhunting days," says chief of Saeragi, William Giroi. "They live up in those fortified sites up in the mountain. It is only after Christian missionaries arrived did they move down to live by the coast."

I tried visiting one of the four village sites of old, now declared tambu sites in my recent visit to Saeragi. Chief William suggested we hike to the closest one. It still took us 90 minutes of what was generally a gradual climb up the mountain. We took the villager's bush track, passing several



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sweet potatoes, bananas and pineapples in abundance. They look healthy, reflecting the rich agricultural soil. All gardens, including Chief William's are well maintained. In fact, about half of the people of Saeragi live up the mountain today. This they decided to do following the tsunami of 2008 which inflicted widespread damage in Gizo, explains Chief William. Some 50 people perished in that disaster, although none of those were in Saeragi.

"This is the kerosene tree. It's best for dugout canoes," the chief pointed out these tall, towering trees that stand high above us in the jungle canopy. "These ones are good for building houses. These other ones are teaks, they were planted, they are not indigenous timber." Another time, he pointed out a plant, about one and a half metre tall: "These



ones you have to be careful of the leaves. If you touch them, you will start scratching." They are itchy leaves, we call them salato in Fiji. Fire tree is what the chief called them.

Little after an hour in the hike, the ground levelled off. We began to pass more homes, and a big farm. This is Miles 6, an agricultural station that belongs to the Provincial Government. We passed a new telecom tower that is under construction, it's about 50 metres high, says Chief William. The land begins to fall off into a steady slope. We passed some pasture grass for the agricultural station's cattle, as it begins to rain. It tends to rain when people approach the tambu sites, the chief tells me.

food gardens and timber forest. Chief William pointed out plants with medicinal value.

"This one is good for stomach ailment," he tells me. "You take the bark, boil it and take it." We passed a few trees whose barks have been scraped away. He plucked leaves out of a young tree. "This one is good for us men," the chief said, pointing at his groins. "Oi, something like viagra?" I quipped, making a mental note of remembering how the leaves look. Chief William said he can't remember it's local name.

"Do you have kurukuru birds in Fiji," he asked, sometime during the hike. "It's the birds that make the kurukuru sound." We could hear them, they seem to be following us in our trek to the old fortified village sites.

Occasionally, we pass a homestead, villagers and their families who opted to stay and live next to their food gardens. They grow cassava,


As we leave the pasture grounds, we entered a thick jungle, and Chief William raised his voice, and started talking in his Vella language. We are in tambu land. A huge banyan tree, a massive one, towers majestically 80 metres high. Chief William walks around it. We pass two limestone cliffs. We skip over a barbed wire fence, probably belonging to the agricultural station. Then in front of us stands a limestone wall. A semi dry creek runs beneath it. "That is the entrance to the site," the chief points at the creek. It's a crevice really, and not so slim people won't be able to go through. It's like a cave as you go through, quite dark, and you feel your way through for about 3 metres until you reach a clearing. This is where the tour ended for me.

The rain has left the boulders dangerously slippery. I didn't have my hiking shoes with me, and some of these boulders have pointed and rather cutting edges. For good reasons obviously. In fact, any

enemy who dared enter this war village signs his death warrant the moment he enters through the crevice. You can only form a single file, one warrior at a time, too easy and vulnerable to the waiting warriors of Chief William's tribe. In his recollections, none of the marauding tribes in those days ever succeeded in setting foot in his village.

The chief can take you right up to the site if you are game. You have to navigate through three levels of limestone boulders, before you reach a large clearing which used to be the village site. Remains of homes, and fire places can still be seen to this day. This site is the easiest to reach. Three more ancient sites are located well beyond this, and according to the chief, are more difficult to reach.

"You can't enter these sites except through those narrow crevices. It's limestone cliffs all around. I think they were giants in those days, big people with supernatural powers. They must have carried those limestone cliffs and created a fence all around the village sites, making them hard to penetrate, let alone conquer."

Supernatural powers are my words. Chief William used devil power. In those days, the sites had certain mana in them. It always rains, with thunderstorms whenever people try to enter the sites. And if you talk in a language other than Vella at those sites, you tend to get lost in the jungle, unless of course you have a brilliant guide like Chief William. 

To visit Saeragi, Solomon Airlines mounts double daily flights to Gizo from Honiara domestic airport. For bookings, log onto www.flysolomons.com



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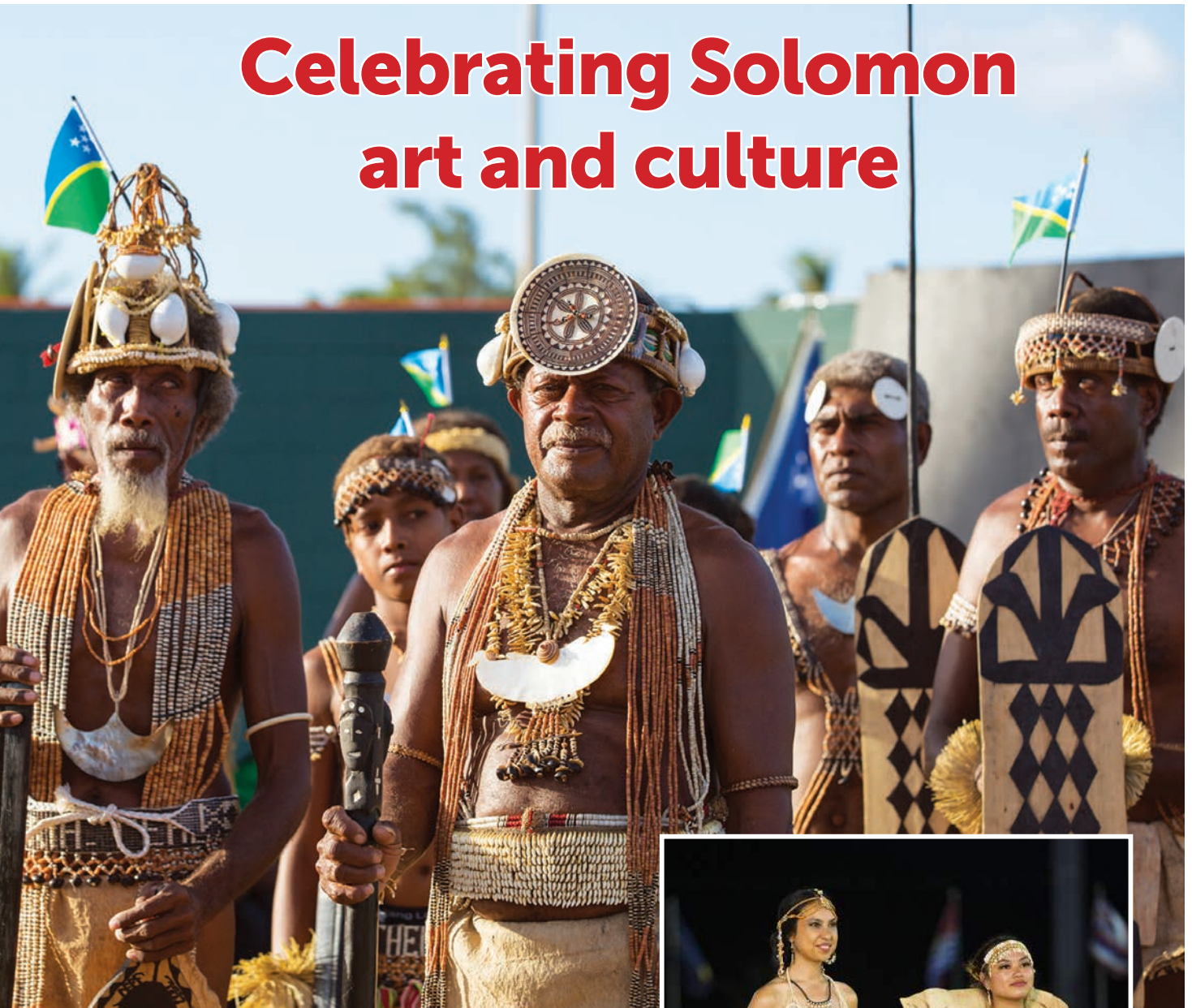
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Celebrating Solomon art and culture



Young Honiara based artist and designer Alisa Vavataga was among Solomon Islands' strong contingent of artists, performers and musicians at the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam in May, 2016. She shares her experience in this personal account of her time in this US territory in the northwest Pacific.

The atmosphere, as I stepped out of the plane onto Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport of Guam was that of much warmth and goodwill. Regardless of the fact that we arrived at four in the morning we were greeted with a hearty 'Hafa Adai' followed by being garlanded with a woven leis and welcoming smiles that only Pacific Islanders can pull off with effortless sincerity.

As is the tradition of the Festival of the Pacific Arts (Festpac), the official opening is normally preceded with the welcoming of the vakas (canoes) at the dawn of the day of the official opening.



Photos by Carson Young



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Welcoming of the Vakas

Around four am, we all make our way down by the festival village shore to witness the arrival of the vakas. As we wait in the dark, I am greeted with a big 'Kia Orana!' on my right from a group of young Cook Islands girls, replied by a 'Hafa adai!' from the Guamanian photographers in front of me and followed by a 'Malo e lelei' from the Tongans behind me. Throughout the crowd one can feel the anticipation and excitement as people from across the Pacific greet and embrace each other. As the sun starts rising, the Vakas start arriving. They are greeted with chants and singing from their own people and a host later welcome the weary sailors with a basket of produce. This continues until all the Vakas have been welcomed.

Official Opening

As twenty seven countries gather for the opening, again an atmosphere of excitement meets me as I make my way to the venue of the opening ceremony, Paseo Stadium. Spectator lines continue out of the stadium and snaked around it several times.

In the stadium, as I make my way in to watch the show, young and old of various Pacific ethnicity warmly greet one another in their own tongue. In the distance, I can see performers and country delegations in their traditional gear line up and prepare for the opening ceremony. A group of Guamanian youths beside me greeted me with a big 'Hafa adai' and asked me where I was from, when I said 'Solomon Islands' they all chorused 'Welcome to Guam!' The opening ceremony, as is the tradition of Festpac, entails all countries showcasing their people and their culture while bearing gifts to the host nation. It is a time where one can really see that however diverse the Pacific is we really are one.



Festival

After the opening of Festpac, countries set up stalls for their crafts people and set up stages for the various performances. As I walk through the village, crafts of all sort are arranged around each stalls. Weavers, carver, painters all bring out their wares to showcase and sell.

The Solomon Islands stall, as always, has already got a crowd around it. Shell money necklaces, baskets, carvings, block printed recycled fibre papers and so much more are laid out for sale. More greetings are exchanged and bargaining begin. In the evenings, the performances and fashion shows are held. The air is filled with chanting, singing and dancing from all corners of the festival village.

Museum & Art Exhibition

Three days after the official opening, is when my specialty genre of art, Visual Art, begins with the opening of the Guam Museum. It was officially opened by the Chamorro people who are the indigenous people of Guam and later by Guam's Governor. After the opening ceremony as I enter the Museum, there is an air of new beginnings. The building, with its paint barely dry, is festooned with beautiful paintings and installations. In front of the first gallery, I am proudly greeted by a painting of a fellow Solomon Islands artist Nelson Horipua of Malaita Province. As I make my way inside the gallery, I am

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Photo by George Herming

ELIZABETH KOMATUA

Traditional dancer, 22-year old Elizabeth Komatua from Isabel Province shared she was so excited to represent her country, Solomon Islands, province and ethnic group to showcase and share her culture with others through song and dance.

“I am so proud since the festival has given our delegation an opportunity to promote our country to the outside world. Not only that but it has inspired my group to keep our cultures alive.”

The Noda Sale Olo group presented stories of their past and how their ancestors have lived through song and dance.

Costumes include grass-skirts made from a bark of a tree, with a decorated bamboo stick that the ladies carry on their shoulders during dancing. Bird feathers and a necklace lined with a white, grayish seed of a reed are hanged around their necks and foreheads. – By Priestly Habru



Photo by Alisa Vavataaga

transfixed with a kaleidoscope of paintings, installations and sculptures. As I made my way around the galleries I was pleased to find installations of artefacts from the various provinces of Solomon Islands that were installed by Jack Saemala, George Taro and Walter Neils. When I asked them what made them come up with the idea, George Taro said: “We realised how these art forms are dying in the Solomon Islands, so we decided to revive them by making installations out of them.”

As I continue further through the galleries, I came across more works by Solomon Islands artists such as Frank Maninga, Riaz Maninga and Paul Ramosaea. As a visual artist myself, exhibition opening is the one event that I always look forward to in Festpac. It is a night where I get to meet my fellow Pacific artists again, make new contacts and I get to savour each and every pieces of artwork on display. After the opening of the Museum and Art exhibition, more genres of art and culture are showcased in various venues. Categories such as Fashion Shows, Tattooing, Weavings, Healing



Practices, Traditional Cooking, Floral Arrangements, 'Architecture, Sculpture and Pottery', Photography, Film, Illustrations and Graphics, Children' Art, 'Canoe and Navigation' and Black Smithing.

New friendships are forged, new connections made, more skills exchanged and most importantly, pride in one's culture is fostered. If you have not been to a Festival of the Pacific Arts, then I would recommend you attend one, if not the next one in Hawaii, but at least once in your lifetime.

As a young Guamanian said in a workshop I attended at the Festival's Green Room, "I never knew how important my culture was until this Festival. Growing up in a US Territory as Guam, I never realised what a big Pacific family we had out there. To be a part of this festival and seeing the number of Pacific countries assembled here, has made me realise how we are not alone here in Guam. This has really reinforced my pride for my culture." 🇬🇺

Solomon Airlines was selected to take 120 participants from Honiara direct to Guam and return.

Photo by George Herming



MELINDA HONGI

This is a Sikaiana Island teenager, Melinda Hongi, who represented her island in performing arts. She said it was an amazing experience to share her culture through song and dance with other Pacific islanders in the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam.

"It was amazing to experience the many different forms of arts and cultures being presented during the two weeks. It really inspires me as a young person to keep our traditional dances alive for our future generations," the softly spoken Sikaiana girl said.

Apart from being a dancer, Melinda also participated in the fashion and design in the traditional category to showcase some of the country's traditional costumes, which amazed the festival crowd when she appeared on stage.

Her skirt, arm bracelets and head attire are made from woven pandanas leaves with bird feathers decorated on her crown. Coconut shells are used instead of a modern bra.

– By Priestly Habru



Passengers ready to board Solomon Airlines' Twin Otter plane at Gwaunaru Airfield in Auki. **Photo:** Samisoni Pareti

Gwaunaru Airfield is open again!

Words and Pictures by Ms Afu Billy

Those were the happy words uttered by residents of Auki as well as regular visitors to the capital of Malaita province who are tired of doing the lengthy return trips from the national capital, Honiara to

Auki on the overcrowded and uncomfortable banana boats and other unreliable shipping journeys. Sea travel is not exactly the travel mode many travellers to Auki prefer, especially for foreign investors and tourists who do not have a lot of time on their hands and prefer to get to their destination much quicker and safer.

No one was happier than the Premier of Malaita Province himself, Honourable Peter Ramohia, who had the biggest smile on his face when he landed at Gwaunaru Airfield on June 1, 2016. He was pleasantly surprised by the reopening ceremony that staff of Solomon Airlines and his provincial headquarter had organised without his knowledge. The Premier and his delegation had just arrived in Honiara from Fiji the day before from a study tour of the land system of that country.

They had spent only one night in Honiara before being whisked off the following morning to be part of the inaugural Solomon Airline's flight to Gwaunaru Airfield after more than three years of closure. As the plane landed and came to a stop near the terminal, Honourable Ramohia and guests were welcomed by a group of pan pipers, followed by spear wielding warriors. The new arrivals were garlanded with frangipani leis.

In his remarks, the Premier thanked the landowners of Gwaunaru for agreeing to the reopening of the airfield. He said he was confident the resumption of air services to Auki would help reconnect Malaita to the rest of the country, and to the world. Representing Solomon Airlines were the former CEO and Colin Sigimanu, executive of the Commercial Team and both welcomed the re-entry of services to the capital of Malaita Province.



Premier Peter Ramohia.



A warrior welcome for the Premier and invited guests.



Beautiful pan-pipe music.



Pristine adventure is what Malaita offers visitors

Words and Pictures by Samisoni Pareti

Langa Langa Lagoon

You haven't been to Malaita if you haven't visited this famous lagoon, on Malaita's northwest coast. It is the home to the creators of islands made of coral slabs, where mints of shell money are located and huge, ocean going timber ships are built. Hundreds of years before European sailors landed on Malaita, the people of Langa Lagoon were practising civil engineering by selecting and dislodging huge coral boulders from the lagoon bed, transporting them to pre-determined location, and coral slab by coral slab, started to build on their artificial island, from the lagoon bed, up. These marvel pieces

of engineering are not held together by cement, but just by the way each slab is piled on top of each other.

Like artificial islands, shell money is an ancient long tradition of the people of Langa Langa. Back in pre-European times, trading thrives on these parts of Malaita, where mountain people batter their yams with the shell money of Langa Langa. Today, shell money hasn't lost their value, as it is still the preferred currency of choice when it

comes to the custom of bride price. The artificial island of Busu still hold shell making demonstrations and bride price ceremony upon request.

Some of these artificial islands are declared cultural demonstration villages. Leafhouses have been built on them, ready to show visitors what life on Langa Langa Lagoon is like. These cultural islands are normally uninhabited, and lagoon dwellers will only visit to do demonstrations and perform cultural dancing to visitors.

The artistic talents of these group of lagoon dwellers is also seen in the huge timber boats they build in their shipyards, most of them located on artificial islands in Langa Langa Lagoon. These are not lifeboats or banana boats as they are called locally, but the Lagoon ship builders regularly put to sea deep ocean going ships. Timber are



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lumbered from forests on the mainland, and a cruise on Langa Langa Lagoon will show several ship yards that are still operating to this day.

Langa Langa Lagoon Tour Contact: Silai Diutee Malai

Discover Malaita Tours

Mobile: +677 7458201

Email: silas.malai@yahoo.com

Accommodation in Langa Langa Lagoon:

1. Serah's Lagoon Hideaway, Mobile +677 7472344, Email serahkei@gmail.com
2. Bataiasi Home Stay, Busu Artificial Island, Mobile +677 7507906



Riba Caves

High up on a ridge overlooking Auki town is the Riba Caves, a labyrinth of limestone caves tucked amidst thick mountain jungle. Access is from Dwukasi village, the traditional owners and a tour generally lasts 60 to 90 minutes. Come with a good gripping sole shoes, and being fit will help too as you need to navigate yourself down pointed and sometimes slippery limestones.

It can be quite dark too, so cave guide Silas comes equipped with a good flashlight. The current track down the cave is three tiered, with a ladder being used at the second descent. At the third tier, the cave floor levelled off into a large open space, and you have to wait for directions from Silas on which crevice opening you need to take. Go through the wrong one and you may get lost, like the man which legend says lost his way around the many crevices in the cave and did not make his way out until four years later! But that won't happen to you with Silas as your guide. He will show the crevice that leads to a beautiful waterfall, and another that leads to a creek!

If Duwakasi elder Albert Suguakado happens to be home on your visit, you will be treated to stories about Riba Caves, which he will tell you is venerated among his people. Souls of their ancestors they believe live deep down in those caves. The 15 to 20 minutes ride up to Riba Caves from downtown Auki is dotted with amazing view of the Auki coastline; from the sea passage inter-island ferries take to enter Auki Harbour to a panorama view of Kelakwai Osi, a body of freshwater lake that runs parallel to the coastline not far from Auki Airport.

Riba Caves Tour Contact: Silai Diutee Malai

Discover Malaita Tours

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Email: silas.malai@yahoo.com



Bio Waterfalls

In the wet months, Bio Waterfalls is a broad and full three tier falls, a refreshing and cool oasis nestled amidst the humid tropical forest of Auki. Twenty minutes by car from downtown Auki, and a pleasant 10-minutes walk past local food gardens, the falls is easy to reach. It has been a favourite hangout for visiting Australian and other Pacific Island police offers on secondment to Auki under the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, RAMSI. A dip in the upper, central or lower pools is relaxing truly, caresses the strained muscles and massages the body of all the work and travel-caused stresses. A hike to Bio Falls is worth the effort, and won't leave you disappointed

Bio Falls Tour Contact: Richard Misi

Riz Tourism Logistics

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Blackbirding Beach

This beach is a permanent reminder of an unsavoury part of Malaita history as it shows the cruel and dishonest practices during

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the 1800s when thousands of young men and some young women of Malaita were tricked and kidnapped to work in white men's plantations abroad, mainly in Australia and in the then British colony of Fiji. Blackbirding is what the practice was called and descendants of this slave trade now live in parts of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu, as well as in Queensland. "The practice is that a sail ship will anchor out in the deep from the beach, and sailors together with a ship officer will row ashore on a lifeboat. Met by curious locals, they will display their tobacco or mirror, and through gestures and hand signals, locals will be told that if they want to have these 'foreign but curious materials,' there's plenty in the ship and that they should all go and take a closer look. "Of course once in the ship, all locals will be locked up in the hold and the ship immediately heaves anchor and set sail for either Queensland or Suva, Fiji," explains tour operator Richard Misi.

Blackbirding Beach Tour Contact: Richard Misi
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Rocky View

Hadahada is the local name of this cliff-hanger but owner Malcolm Moli wants to make it easier for visitors, why the English name. Rocky lookout could be its other name, as its new leafhouse lookout is perched on top of a cliff with a 20 to 25m drop down to the roaring surf below. There's three clear lookouts from Rocky View, each with a commanding view of the northwestern coastline. Malcolm and his family have cleared the formerly bush area to turn it into a serene recreational park. Rocky View he says will be perfect for a family or group picnic, and there are plans to offer hiking to waterfalls up the mountains, or kayaking to the nearby reef. Under creation also is a natural amphitheatre out in the gardens, where



cultural performances can be staged. Trained in Australia as a priest with the South Seas Evangelical religion, Malcolm in 2015 shed his collar to join politics as a representative of Auki Ward in the Malaita Provincial Assembly.

Rocky View Tour Contact: Richard Misi
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Kelakwai Osi

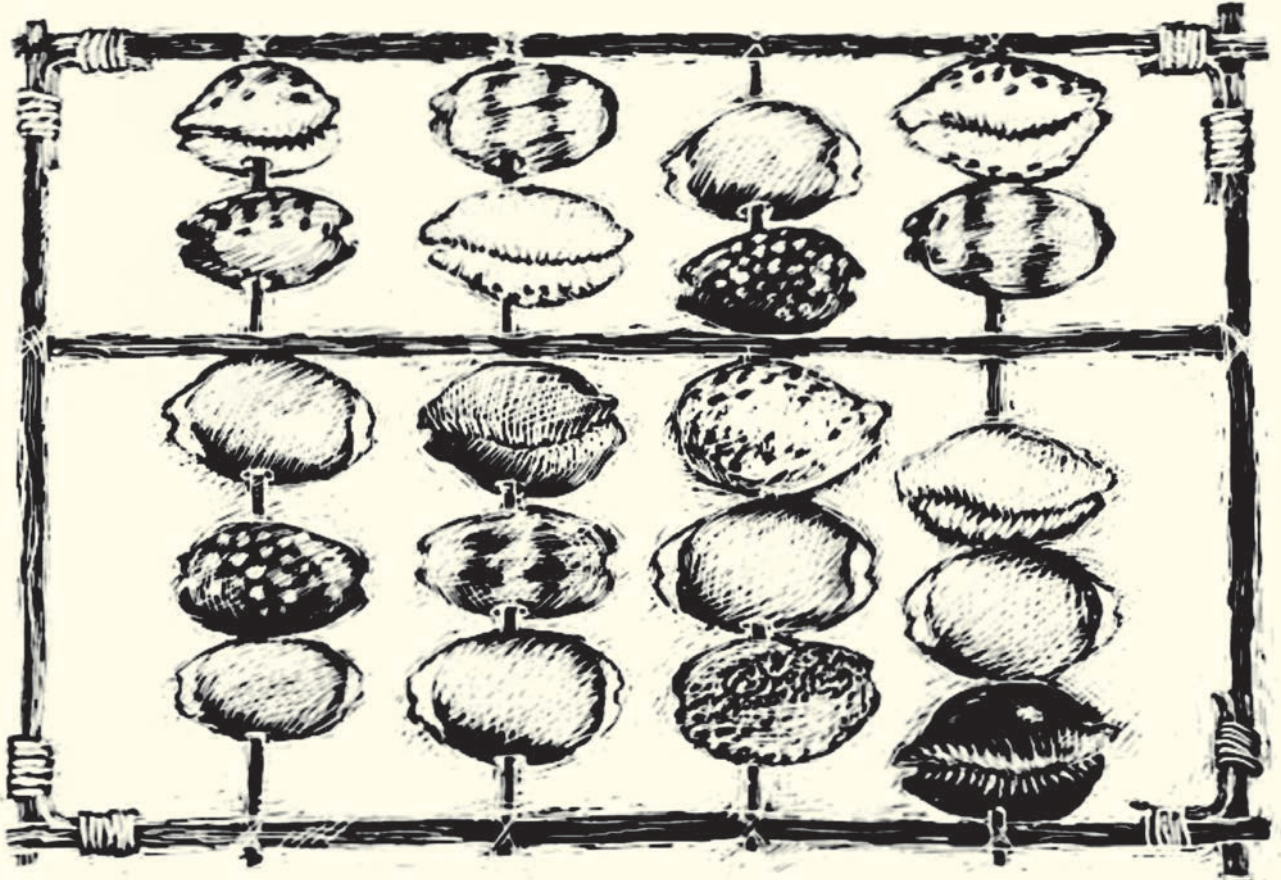
Separated from the sea by a 3 to 4 kilometre long and 20 to 25 metre wide coconut grove, Kelakwai is a fresh water lake. Do not be misled by the flowering waterlily on the lake's southern banks, as freshwater crocodiles make Kelakwai their home too. Locals though believe the crocodiles are harmless; undisturbed they leave swimmers and fishermen and women alone. Kelakwai Osi was a performing venue of the 2012 Festival of Pacific Arts, and their beach bar stands to this day as proof. A dirt but well maintained road takes you down to Kelakwai, and its only a 10-minute drive from Auki Town.



Kelakwai Lake Tour Contact:
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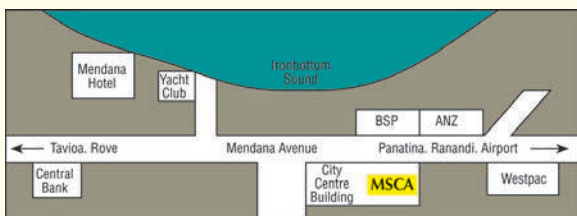
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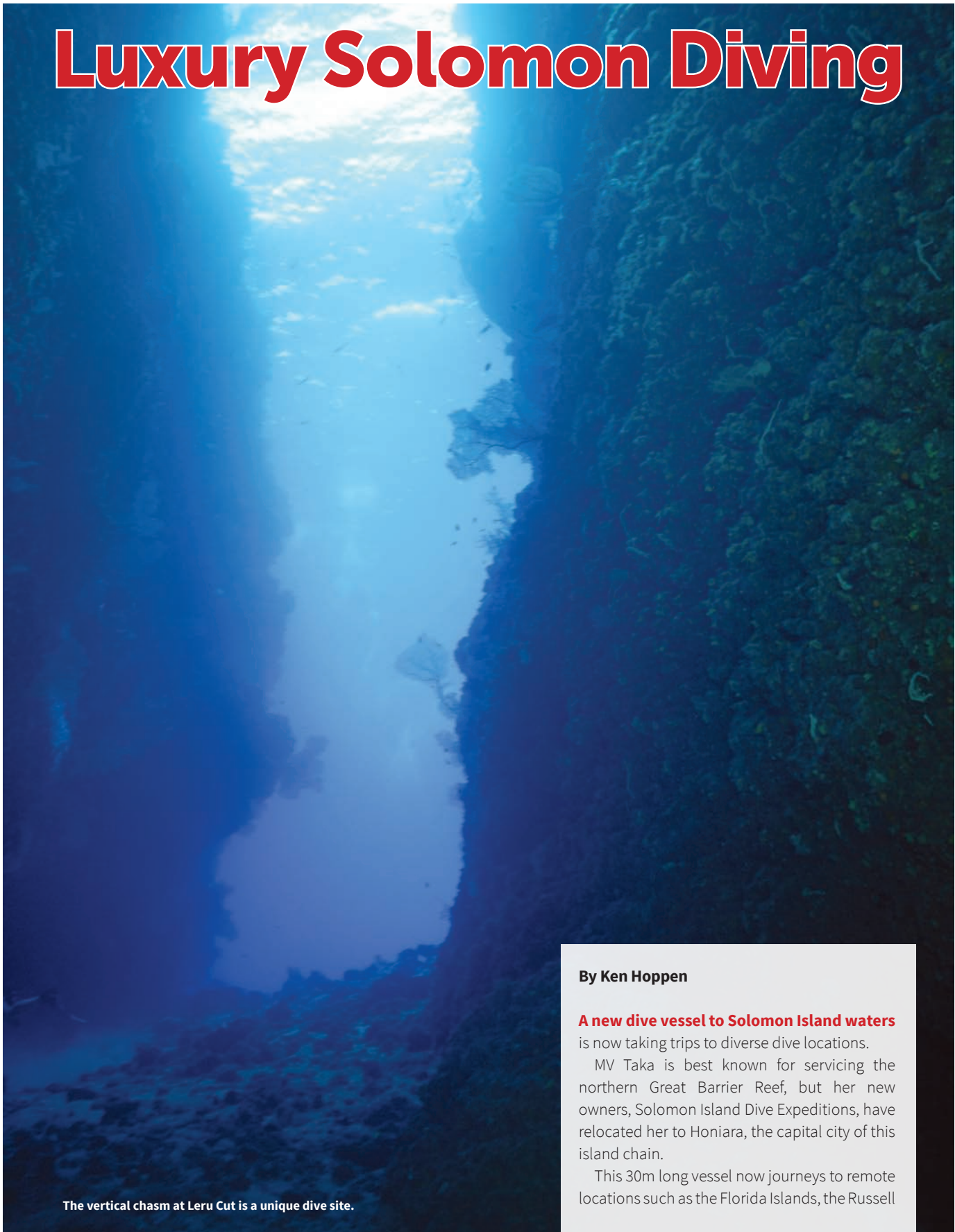


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Luxury Solomon Diving



(Photos Courtesy of Solomon Islands Dive Expeditions)

The vertical chasm at Leru Cut is a unique dive site.

By Ken Hoppen

A new dive vessel to Solomon Island waters is now taking trips to diverse dive locations.

MV Taka is best known for servicing the northern Great Barrier Reef, but her new owners, Solomon Island Dive Expeditions, have relocated her to Honiara, the capital city of this island chain.

This 30m long vessel now journeys to remote locations such as the Florida Islands, the Russell



There are plenty of swim throughs to explore at the Russell Islands.

Islands, and even west to New Georgia.

Our trip was a three night adventure to the Russell Islands, some six hours steaming overnight from Honiara.

The sloping sands that make up White Beach became the location for our first dive. This sandy tract was once a landing area for allied barges during WWII, and some of the floating docks that were here can now be explored sitting on the bottom of the ocean. This is a muck dive. For those uninitiated in diving vocabulary, this means a dive on an area with a sandy or silty substrate. No beautiful reef here, but don't think that there is nothing to see! Pipefish, crabs, gobies, octopus, scorpionfish and other small and strange creatures are the staple here, but one unusual fish caught my attention. Right up in the shallows, near the rocky shore, and under overhanging mangrove roots, perhaps a dozen archerfish hunted the insects flying over their heads. Reflected in the still water, these fish have upwardly-facing vision, perfect for hunting in this shaded environment. Never having seen these fish before, I spent a lot of time watching as they scooted back and forth.

Rainbow Reef isn't far away. This is a magnificent reef that is about 20m deep at the shallowest, with two small peaks topping the reef with a shallow saddle between, and the walls sloping off into the depths on each side. Schooling barracuda cruised slowly in the gentle current, whilst grey reef sharks and white-tip reef sharks patrolled below. A highlight here were the hundreds of little eyes as the eggs of Clarke's anemonefish neared maturation just underneath the frill of a large magnificent anemone.

The best known dive site on the Russell Islands is Leru Cut.



Barracuda school over Rainbow Reef.



White-bonnet anemonefish are rare, and only found in Solomons and PNG.



Majestic angelfish are one of the most spectacular reef fish in the world.

Located on an island of the same name, this cut is as it is named. A vertical chasm has seemingly been hacked out of the island with an imaginary massive cleaver. From close to the surface to 20m deep, it runs straight into the island for some one hundred metres or so. The bright light of the entrance can be seen for most of the distance into the island, and then for the rest a small exit throws light into the furthest recess of the cut. Surfacing here brings you into the local

village!

There are other caves in the area too. Mirror Pond brings you into a small, isolated pool where the water is still and calm. Bat Cave is as it sounds, with the residents of this cut flying just above you as you surface. Definitely a good place to keep your regulator in your mouth!

Many other dive sites around the Russell Group are drift dives on vertical walls, with massive gorgonian corals reaching out into



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There is nothing minor about these two Minor Notodoris. These large yellow nudibranchs can grow to around 15cm in length.



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The MV Taka is a large dive vessel, sturdy and capable of handling any sea conditions, yet nimble enough to navigate the intricate channels between the islands in the Russell Group.

the mild currents to feed on passing nutrients. The walls are full of colour, with small fish darting out into the blue adding to the growths on the wall itself, and the myriad colours of the wall's inhabitants, such as nudibranchs, sponges and gobies. Keep your eyes open and check out the anemones as you pass them. There are many species of anemonefish in the area, but one is special. The white-bonnet anemonefish is only found in the Solomon's and PNG, and can be spotted on these trips. These rare fish are thought to be a true-breeding hybrid of two other anemonefish species, making them the start of a new species.

On other trips, Taka takes divers out to the Florida Islands, where WWII wrecks are on the agenda with Japanese 'Mavis' seaplanes and the bow of the USS New Orleans on the dive agenda. Longer




The living area on board is spacious and friendly.



Clownfish inhabit a magnificent anemone on the top of a wall. At least eight species of clownfish inhabit Solomon Islands waters.

trips take divers and visitors further west to New Georgia, where they explore the pristine waters of Morovo Lagoon, and the many open ocean dive sites that can be found on the outer barrier reefs here.

Whichever trip suits, you can be assured that you are with a professionally run dive company, on an excellent vessel, with superb food, a dive deck that provides easy access to the water, and guides who know their stuff.

I could easily see myself coming back to check out all of the itineraries. 

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The island Serah built Serah's Lagoon Hideaway

Words and Pictures by Samisoni Pareti

At first glance, Serah is petite, fragile even and the only thing missing is a sign on her that declares, 'be careful, don't touch.' Alas looks are deceiving as has been said. This beautiful Malaita lady is perhaps a living, breathing embodiment of it.

The island which hosts her Lagoon Hideaway is hers, as she built it with her own bare, two fragile hands from the seabed up. Coral slab by coral



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slab, one by painstakingly one, she hauled the corals from the sea at low tide, break them up into slabs, then stack them. Twenty-nine years ago, she told me. Today, the artificial island she built features two self-contained bungalows, a dormitory, and a leaf house that is the temporary lounge and restaurant.

“You simply can’t build an island anyhow,” explains Richard Molu, my tour guide to Langa Langa Lagoon, where Serah’s Lagoon Hideaway is. “Each coral slab is stacked in a special way that makes each one of them firm and binding on the other, making these slabs hard to dislodge or move during storms, rough seas, or as happened recently in Malaita, earth tremor.”

Serah’s Lagoon Hideaway comprises one big artificial island linked by timber over the water bridges to five other little artificial islands. The main central one houses her visitors’ lodge, while two are her boat landing, and the rest are used up by her family home and that of her extended family. Its hard to imagine that it was a man, or this time, a woman-made island because of the thriving greenery and flowery shrubs around the islands. Between two bridges to her family homes, a young mangrove forest grows. “I had used the mud in there to fill up the island, and now I grow mangroves to replenish the mud,” says Serah. I love Serah’s own homestead which she shares with Gustav, her husband. Her daughter attends college in the capital, Honiara and her son lives there too. The home extends out to the water, the floor providing sheltered anchorage for the family banana boat.

“Guests get to choose what they want to do when they stay with



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me,” says Serah. “They can do a lagoon cruise if they feel like it, observe the making of shell money, or simply do nothing – just sleep, eat, read, sleep, eat, read!”

Since its an island, a dip in the lagoon is only a few steps away. I even envisage throwing a fishing line from the comforts of your bed, if you fancy some bedtime fishing! If you are feeling adventurous, nothing beats getting Serah to pack a basket lunch and off she takes you to Baali Island for a picnic.

“Depending on the guests’ preference, we can easily host a demonstration on shell money making, and the bride price ceremony. If pan pipe music is what they love, of course, I can also ask for a band to come to the island to do a live concert.”

Shell money of which this coastal region of Malaita is renowned for holds a special place for Serah. Her island, including her 2 bungalow eco lodge were financed mainly from shell money sales. In between building her dream island, Serah said she would also find the time to make shells money to sell. It’s the preferred currency of bride price custom, where the groom and his family presents gifts of shell money in return for the hand of the bride. Held together by a string, a shell money can be as long as 2 metres and could be valued between \$1000 to \$2000 in Solomon currency.

“Future plan is to build two more bungalows and a new restaurant,” Serah

tells me. “I would also like to employ staff to help me look after guests. I have not been able to do that because we have yet to enjoy a steady and constant arrival of guests. The re-opening of the airport at Auki hopefully will open up my Hideaway and Malaita to global tourism.”

To get to Serah’s Lagoon Hideaway in Langa Langa Lagoon, fly Solomon Airlines from Henderson domestic airport in Honiara to Auki, then arrange for Serah to collect you from Auki wharf. For airline bookings, log onto www.flysolomons.com

Contact Serah on mobile: +677 7472344,

Email: serahkei@gmail.com

Or **contact** Jackson, Malaita Provincial Tourism Officer on

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A Hero for Honiara

When you land at Honiara's Henderson Field, you arrive at a place in history. Our war historian Roderick Eime tells the tale of the hero who gave his name for our airport.

In August 1942, US Marines landed in force capturing the airfield Japanese invaders were constructing, setting off the bloody six month Guadalcanal Campaign that continued until February 1943.

Soon after the capture of the airfield at Lunga Point, it was renamed Henderson Field and began operations as an airbase to attack the Japanese forces that were still in strength on the island of Guadalcanal as well as the naval and supply vessels in the surrounding waters.

The naming of the airfield was in honour of Major Lofton Russell Henderson who was already a seasoned naval aviator at the outset of war having been appointed as Second Lieutenant in the United

States Marine Corps in 1926. His career as an aviator began in 1928 when he was "detailed to duty involving flying as a Student Naval Aviator" in California.

Henderson's military career did not begin auspiciously, but by perseverance of character and more than a little charm, he endeared himself to both classmates and superiors as well as developing a reputation as a heartthrob and the nickname "Joe Schmaltz."

"In the course of his extensive experiments to determine the least possible seconds that could be spent in dressing and reaching formation on time, Joe hung up the record of thirteen 'Lates To Formation in one week," recorded his 1926 yearbook biography. "But, all joking aside, despite the fact that he'll keep you waiting three minutes for every two that you spend in his company, still he does



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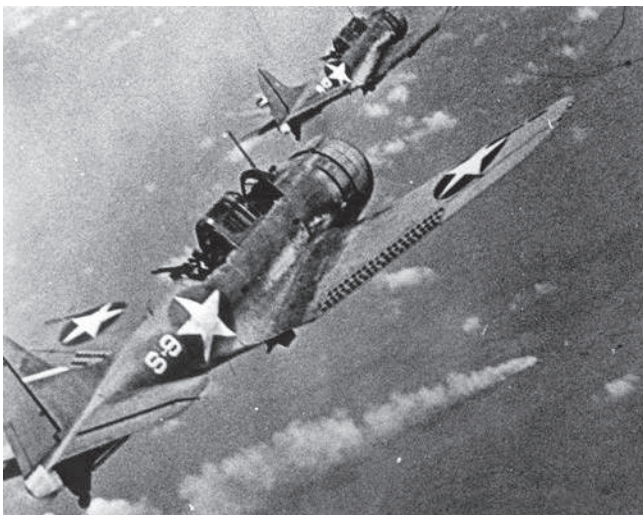


Major Henderson sitting front centre with the pilots of VMSB-241 on Midway in May, 1942. Many would perish in the ensuing battles.

make a good roommate.”

After postings at overseas bases prior to 1941, Henderson was moved to Midway Island in April 1942 and relieved Captain Leo Smith, the commander of VMSB-241 bombing squadron and immediately set about training his pilots and crews for the hazardous task of dive bombing ships.

Henderson began this task with obsolete aircraft. His Vought SB2U Vindicators were the first monoplanes developed to be a



Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless dive bombers at Midway

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Photos by Marine Corps

Major Lofton R. Henderson, USMC

carrier-based dive bomber for the United States Navy in the 1930s and still had fabric wing coverings that were not faring well in the tropical conditions. To allow for the aircraft's inadequacies and poor state of repair, Henderson developed a tactic of 'glide bombing' where the aircraft would approach the target faster, at a much shallower angle and releasing bombs at a lower altitude.

He noted: "Practice is to dive with wheels up instead of down, as has been practiced heretofore. Diving wheels up gives much improved control due to lessened stick forces, and shortens the required arc of pull out, but builds up speeds in excess of 300 knots which has proved to be too great a strain for our tattered, battered ships."

Fortunately some of the brand new and much tougher Douglas

SBD Dauntless aircraft arrived in time for their big test in June of that year: the Battle of Midway, just six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

In the opening phase of the intense battle around the mid-Pacific atoll, Henderson's plan of 'glide bombing' was put to the test on June 4, 1942, when he led his flight of dive bombers into action against the Japanese carrier Hiryu. As his flight began their shallow 30-degree dive, defending Japanese planes identified Henderson's bomber as the command aircraft, and began working their way down the line of closely-formed, slow-moving bombers.

A report from one of the few surviving aircraft stated:


"The first enemy fighter attacks were directed at the squadron leader in an attempt to put him down. After about two passes, one of the enemy put several shots through his plane and the left wing began to burn. It was apparent that he was hit and out of action."

Even though one parachute was seen to come from Henderson's plane, neither he nor his gunner, PFC Reninger, were found. The two become the first crew to be lost in the battle that would go down in history as "the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare."

Henderson, aged 39, was awarded a posthumous Navy Cross for his actions and apart from naming of the new airfield on Guadalcanal, a US Navy destroyer was named in his honour in 1945.

His Navy Cross citation reads:

"The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Major Lofton Russell Henderson (MCSN: 0-4084), United States

Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism and distinguished service in the line of his profession while serving as Squadron Commander and a Pilot in Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron TWO HUNDRED FORTY-ONE (VMSB-241), Marine Air Group TWENTY-TWO (MAG-22), Naval Air Station, Midway, during operations of the U.S. Naval and Marine Forces against the invading Japanese Fleet during the Battle of Midway on 4 June 1942. With utter disregard for his own personal safety, Major Henderson, with keen judgment and courageous aggressiveness in the face of strong enemy fighter opposition, led his squadron in an attack which contributed materially to the defeat of the enemy. He was subsequently reported as missing in action. It is believed he gallantly gave up his life in the service of his country." 

Kiribati: Saving the Last Pristine Seas on Earth



Photographer: David Kirkland

Expedition cruiser, Roderick Eime, joins a Lindblad Expeditions - National Geographic - voyage into the remote South Pacific in search of the last of the world's pristine coral reefs around the islands of Kiribati.

We had seen the pictures and videos, but nothing prepared us for what we were about to experience. After checking our vests and regulators, repositioning our masks, we took a couple of deep breaths and launched ourselves backwards into the blue. As we

turned and looked down, preparing to descend into the turquoise depths, we could see them milling below us, their sleek streamlined bodies gliding effortlessly through the water.

As I pressed the release button, a stream of violent bubbles signaled my intention. I was deliberately dropping down 20 metres below the gentle waves into a swarm of sharks. More than I could count, perhaps thirty, perhaps more, were waiting for us as we invaded their realm from above.



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Photographer: David Kirkland

Here on Millennium Atoll, hundreds of miles from anywhere, we are at what National Geographic researchers believe is one of the last of the truly pristine reefs anywhere on the planet.

In 2009, a team of researchers led by Dr. Enric Sala, a National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, spent more than 1000 hours below the water surveying the region, including Millennium Atoll (formerly Caroline Island) here in Kiribati to assess its viability as a 'Pristine Seas' location. Sala launched the Pristine Seas project to find, survey, and help protect the last wild places in the ocean.

"It is essential that we let the world know that these places exist, that they are threatened, and that they deserve to be protected," says Sala, "We have the rare opportunity, right now, to protect many of the most pristine seas around the world."

As the reef gets closer, so do the sharks, totally unafraid of our presence they investigate us. Most common among the swarm are the svelte black-tipped reef sharks, adorned with a tricolour dorsal fin. White tipped reef sharks can also be seen around the pack, but it's the grey reef sharks that have caught our attention.

Bold, confident and visibly larger than any of the other reef sharks, the greys are one of the most heavily fished species with many local populations all but eliminated due to unrestricted harvesting. They are ever-present, never leaving us alone.

"If an alien had just one day on Earth and wanted to see a coral reef, I would show him Millennium Atoll." - National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Dr. Enric Sala

After 10 to 15 minutes both the sharks and ourselves are familiar and we barely notice each other. Instead, we turn our attention to other animals in the water. Giant trevally, skipjack tuna, snapper of several varieties and an abundance of smaller reef fish like butterflyfish, banner fish and wrasse inhabit the rocky alcoves, careful not to present themselves as too easy a target.

"One of the most unusual features of Millennium Atoll and its reefs is what is called a, 'inverted trophic pyramid,'" says Dave Cochrane, a Lindblad Expeditions – National Geographic naturalist and expedition guide who has been vital to our understanding of the dynamics of the reef, "this means that the biomass of predator species exceeds that of the prey. It might sound like an imbalance, but it's actually a very good sign of robust health."

Travelling aboard the compact but lavish, 4000 ton National Geographic Orion, I am just one of more than 100 passengers on a journey of exploration and discovery from Fiji to Tahiti. Not only are we delving beneath the waves, in awe of the thriving reefs of the remote South Pacific, we go ashore to meet tribal chiefs at communities like Taveuni in Fiji or at Apia in Samoa. We learn about anthropology and ecology, zoology and mythology from naturalists lecturers like 35-year Lindblad veteran Tom Ritchie who loves to tease us with tales of the great South Pacific migrations and cultures.

Despite the curriculum, this is still a vacation. While ashore, we stroll among wild palms and tropical vegetation, many of us toting serious optical equipment like 300mm telephoto lenses and Swarovski binoculars. Angelic terns flutter above our heads as if to mock us,

Photographer: Roderick Eime



Photographer: David Kirkland



while marauding frigate birds swoop and wheel looking for any morsel they can find.

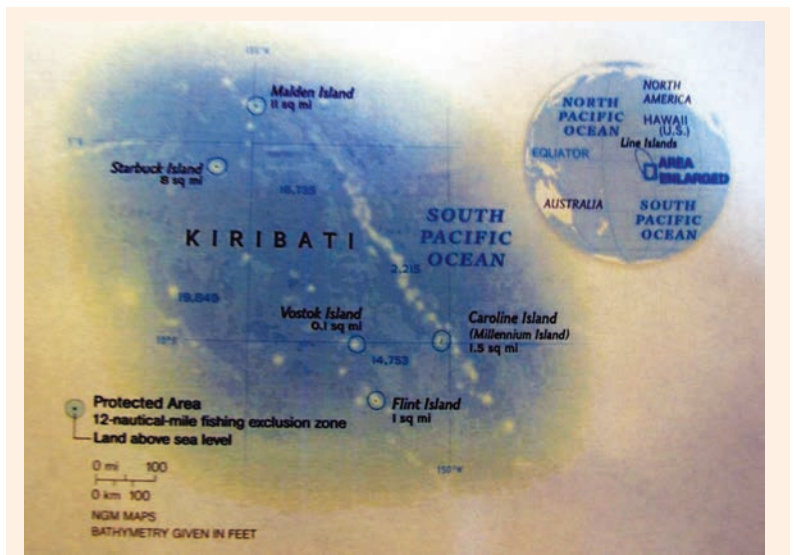
But the takeaway from this immersive, transformational holiday is that our seas and oceans are not in great shape. Man plunders the seas feeding our voracious appetite for fish and marine products without fully understanding the ramifications of our actions. It's not just whales and dolphins that need our protection. It's every living thing in the ocean that needs each other to survive in healthy harmony. Add global warming and other environmental factors like garbage, pollution and toxic waste, and it's clear we are putting irreversible stress on our oceans.

But there is some good news from the tiny island nation of Kiribati. Then President Anote Tong announced an end to all commercial fishing in the country's Phoenix Islands Protected Area on January 1, 2015 followed by the Southern Line Islands later that year.

"We will also close the area around the southern Line Islands to commercial fishing to allow the area to recover," said Tong, speaking at the Our Ocean conference hosted by the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C.

Declarations are one thing, enforcement is another, so the world's marine conservationists will be keeping a close eye on the protected zones of Kiribati for the time being while regular visits by well-informed travellers like those aboard NG Orion take the word home with them among the rest of their souvenirs.

Photographer: Roderick Eime



Fact Box

About the The Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) - an initiative of The Government of Kiribati.

With a size of 408,250 km² (157,626 sq. miles) it is one of the largest marine protected areas in the world and the largest marine conservation effort of its kind by a Least Developed Country (LDC).

Kiribati first declared the creation of PIPA at the 2006 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Brazil. On January 30, 2008, Kiribati adopted formal regulations for PIPA that more than doubled the original size to make it at that time the largest marine protected area on Earth. In 2010 PIPA was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is the largest and deepest World Heritage site on Earth.

PIPA includes all eight atoll and low reef islands of the Kiribati section of the Phoenix Island group, Rawaki, Enderbury, Nikumaroro, McKean, Manra, Birnie, Kanton and Orona. PIPA also includes two submerged reefs, Carondelet Reef and Winslow Reef, with Carondelet Reef being as little as 3 to 4 metres underwater at low tide. It is estimated that there could be more than 30 seamounts within PIPA though to date only nine have been named. The greater part of PIPA by area is comprised of ocean floor with a water column averaging more than 4,000 metres (2.5 miles) deep with a maximum at 6,147 metres.

More: www.phoenixislands.org

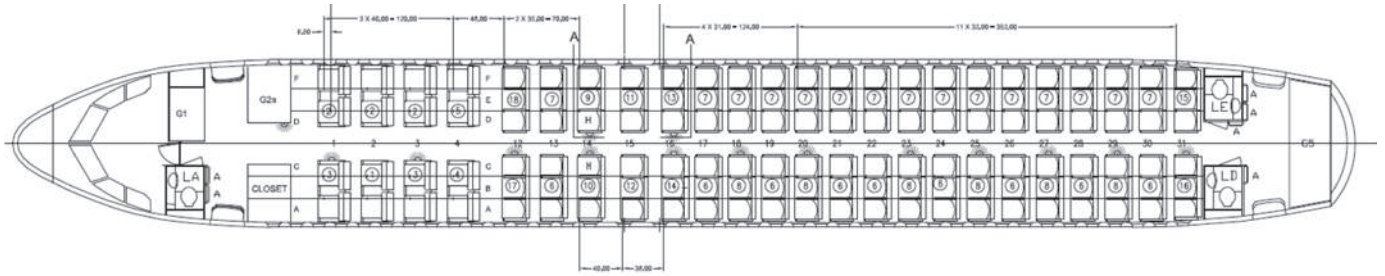


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SOLOMON AIRLINES FACT SHEET

Aircraft: A320

Registration: H4 -BUS
Length: 37.57 m
Wing Span: 34.10m
Range: 3,000 nm
Cruising Speed: 830 kpm
Seating capacity: 136
Configuration: Business:16 Economy: 120
Current Routes: Brisbane, Nadi, Port Vila



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AIRCRAFT: Dash 8-102



Length:	22.25 m
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Seating capacity:	36
Crew:	3 Crew including 1 cabin crew
Current Routes:	Honiara; Seghe: Munda; Gizo; Kira Kira; Santa Cruz
Aircraft in Fleet:	1

AIRCRAFT: Twin Otter



Length:	15.77 m
Wing Span:	19.81 m
Range:	4 hrs 10 minutes
Cruising Speed:	338 kph
Seating capacity:	16
Crew:	2
Current Routes:	All Ports in the Solomon Islands
Aircraft in Fleet:	2

BNI: Islander



Length:	10.86 m
Wing Span:	14.94 m
Range:	5 hrs
Cruising Speed:	257 kph
Seating capacity:	9
Crew:	1
Current Routes:	All ports in the Solomon Islands
Aircraft in Fleet:	1

SOLOMON AIRLINES GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Office

Henderson Airport
P.O.Box 23, Honiara
Solomon Islands
Ph: +677 20031
Fax: +677 20232

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Hibiscus Avenue
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Email: corporate.travel@flysolomons.com.sb

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Fax: +61 7 38604351
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0800 424980 (NZ)
Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

Fiji

Nadi Airport

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Fax: +679 6722140
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International Connections




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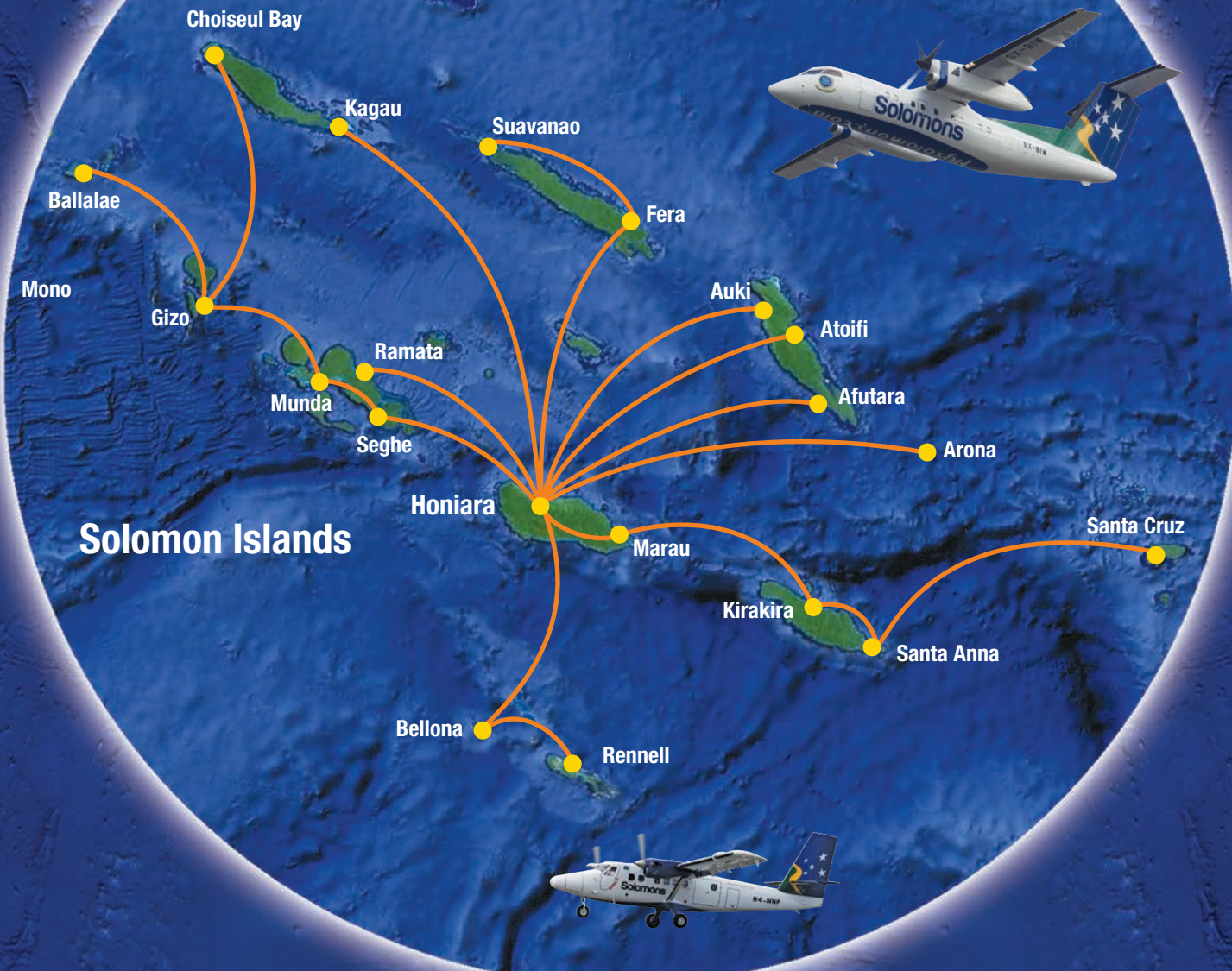
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Domestic Connections



Solomon Islands Offices

Head Office
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 Reservation - 177 (Local calls)

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• Fax: (677) 53092
 • Fax: (677) 60202
 • Fax: (677) 62152

Overseas Administration Offices

AUSTRALIA - Brisbane Airport

Administration Solomon Airlines, Level 1, International Terminal, Brisbane Airport, Eagle Farm, QLD. 4007
 Tel (Aust Wide): 1300 894311 • Tel (Outside Aust): 617 3860 5883
 Fax: 617 3860 4351 • Email: reservations@flysolomons.com

Operations

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FIJI - Nadi

Solomon Airlines
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 • Fax: 679 672 2140

Credit where it is due

A superior client service is as much a philosophy as an activity and it's important to discover just what kind of culture produces the mind-set necessary to exceed customer expectations.


We at Solomon Airlines are proud to note that in our own little way, that has not gone unnoticed.

At the conclusion of a charter agreement to service our international routes whilst our flag ship Air Bus A320 underwent maintenance in Singapore from mid-February to end of May 2016, Qantas Airways

cabin crew have paid high compliments to two of our catering/cabin staff, Mary Duffie and Wilson Karanga who in the course of their normal line of duties, have served the Qantas crew beyond and above the expectations of Qantas crew hence attracting high praise.

A complimentary gesture from a world renowned airline such as Qantas, who are also our code-share partners, is a great vote of



confidence in our ability to offer the best service to all our Ground Handling partners. We hope that this will inspire our staff across all sections of our company to always strive for excellence in serving our clients to the best of their ability. 

Congratulations Mary and Willie for a job well done!

Wings of change

Pilots are an integral part of any aviation business as we all know. Computers can't think their way through the many challenges presented to the crew each day and with copious amounts of training, this allows pilots to calmly maintain a situational awareness unlike most other industries which enables them to react in an exemplary fashion as they navigate through their daily schedules.


At Solomon Airlines we are proud to note that Captain Douglas Uale was recently promoted to the Captain/command on our Domestic 'mother ship', our Dash 8 aircraft. Doug is a product of the airline's commitment to its human resource development program and obviously this will not be the last after some 8 odd years with us operating other smaller aircraft, assuming command has been an internal promotion product of the hard work by our training regime and Doug's own efforts.

"Being a Pilot with Solomon Airlines is a demanding, but rewarding, career. It requires a lifetime commitment



Pictured sitting in the cockpit of our Dash 8 aircraft at the Honiara Domestic Airport from **left**: Captain Douglas Uale, **right**: Captain Geoff Posala

to learning and development, and comes with an immense level of responsibility for the wellbeing of our valued passengers and our multi-million dollar machines that we fly daily.” Stated a soft spoken Uale when quizzed about his latest achievement.

Treading the same lines and none other than our Chief Pilot, a truly Solomon Islands product is Captain Geoff Posala. Geoff who looks after our Domestic fleet of pilots will soon become another Dash 8 pilot as he nears the completion of his Dash8 line training. Starting his flying career with the previous SDA operated Western Pacific Airlines in 1995 Captain Posala has amassed a considerable number of flying hours ranking him one of the most experienced local pilots. He joined the airline in 1999 and besides his recent upgrade to the Dash8 has been our very own Check & Training Captain ensuring that our internal standards are compliant and of a standard we all can be proud of. 



Solomon , Kiribati relations



Solomon Airlines is keen in exploring opportunities with its island neighbours, demonstrated in the recent visit to Tarawa of General Manager Operations & Commercial, now acting CEO, Mr Gus Kraus. In the visit which Mr Kraus described as fleeting, he met with officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation as well as executives of Air Kiribati. He also met the President of Kiribati, HE Taneti Mamau at a social function the Kiribati Government hosted. Mr Kraus said work on upgrading the terminal building at the Tarawa Airport has commenced, together with the rehabilitation of the airport carpark. “This was a fleeting visit by Solomon Airlines to discuss potential Air Services Agreement matters between the airlines and the two countries,” added Mr Kraus. 



Upgrade works at Tarawa International Airport have begun.

Things to know as visitors to our shores:

Climate ... Tropically warm and humid with coastal day temperatures averaging 28C (82.4F). April to November tends to be drier and November to April wetter.

What to wear ... Light and casual. Keep brief beachwear for the beach.

Immigration ... Commonwealth, United States and most European visitors do not need holiday visas but need return or onward tickets. People intending to work must have a work permit.

Honiara ... The capital is eight kilometres (4.97 miles) from Honiara International Airport.

Airport Tax ... SB\$100 payable by passengers (12 years and over) boarding international flights, and these are generally added onto your air ticket.

Health ... Malaria is a problem. Take anti-malarial medication a week before arrival, once a week during your stay, and for four weeks after departure. Consult your chemist or doctor about an appropriate brand of tablet. Maloprin is usually recommended.

Currency ... \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$2 Solomon Islands notes. Coins are \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c.

Business Hours ... Government and some business offices open Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm with a one-hour lunch break normally beginning at noon. Shops and some offices open Saturday 8am – noon.

Banks ... Bank South Pacific opens Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3pm; ANZ Banking Group open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Pan Oceanic Bank Limited opens 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and ts Panatina Plaza branch opens 10am to 1pm on Saturday.

Telecommunications ... Local and international calls may be made from Our Telikom public card phones which are in prominent locations in Honiara and provincial centres or from GSM Mobile services. Telephone and Internet cards are readily available through shops, hotels and Our



Telikom offices and bmobile and Vodafone outlets. GSM prepaid and postpaid mobile cards are available in Honiara, Gizo and in some provincial centres.

Tipping ... Not expected and not encouraged.

Transport ... Taxis and buses are readily available in Honiara. Rental cars are also available from Avis, Economy, Travel Car Solomon and Zome.

International air ... National airline, Solomon Airlines operate out of Honiara International Airport. Other carriers include Fiji Airways, Virgin Australia, Air Niugini and Air Nauru.

Domestic ... Solomon Airlines operates services throughout the country.

Electricity ... 220-240 volts in Honiara and some outer island centres.

News Media ... The country has a vibrant media business offering choice in both English and Pidjin languages. Radio services are offered by state radio, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation and private operators PAOA FM and some religious bodies. Our Telikom relays BBC and other satellite TV networks while the Solomon Star and Island Sun are the two dailies, with a couple of monthly business and lifestyle magazines.

Provinces

The Solomon Islands is made up of 992 islands which are divided into nine provinces:

Choiseul - Provincial capital: Taro • **Central** - Provincial capital: Tulagi

• **Isabel** - Provincial capital: Buala

Renbell/Bellona - Provincial capital: Tigoa • **Guadalcanal** - Provincial (& national capital): Honiara

Makira/Ulawa - Provincial capital: Kira Kira • **Malaita** - Provincial capital: Auki

Western - Provincial capital: Gizo • **Temotu** - Provincial capital: Lata

The Solomon Islands are divided into nine provinces as follows:

Province	Area	Population	Highest Point	Capital
Guadalcanal	5,336 km ²	141,403	2,447m	Honiara
Central	1,000 km ²	27,928	510m	Tulagi
Western	5,279 km ²	81,214	1,661m	Gizo
Ysabel	4,014 km ²	26,310	1,392m	Buala
Malaita	4,234 km ²	159,923	1,303m	Auki
Makira	3,188 km ²	40,386	1,250m	Kirakira
Temotu	926 km ²	24,412	923m	Lata
Choiseul	3,294 km ²	25,870	1,060m	Taro
Rennell & Bellona	276 km ²	3,025	220m	Tingoa

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Pacific Casino Hotel

Solomon Islands

www.pacificcasinohotel.com

Situated on the picturesque of Honiara seafront and set next to the largest and renowned casino in the Solomon Islands, Supreme Casino. Pacific Casino Hotel is ideal for business and leisure travellers alike. It is conveniently located approximately five kilometres from Honiara International Airport and the Honiara CBD. The hotel offers 173 spacious, comfortable and fully airconditioned rooms. Suites boast separate lounge areas and private balconies. Keeping the

comfort, convenience and ease of access in mind for international travellers, modern amenities includes IDD telephone, satellite TV with 24 hours in-house movie channels, refrigerator and coffee/tea service. Internet hotspots are available around the hotel and a wide range of services and facilities includes swimming pool, billiard room, fitness centre, laundry, internet cafe, car rental and conference room facilities.



Paradise Warmth Adventure

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- . Captain's Bar
- . Canoe Bar
- . Supreme Car Rental
- . Supreme Casino



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