

APRIL - MAY - JUNE - 2023

FREE EDITION

ISSUE | n°7

NAWIMBA



Your Tourism Guide



Calendar of events

Immerse yourself into the Vanuatu culture

Surfing up north

Discover waves in Banks Islands

Colorful world of corals

Learn about microspecies

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I'M NOT A TOURIST,
I'M A TRAVELLER !

Vanuatu
TOURISM OFFICE
ANSWERING THE CALL

Editorial

Welkam Olgeta ! As people say in Bislama.

The Vanuatu Tourism Office welcomes you to this edition of Nawimba, our quarterly magazine. This issue is all about “An Ocean of Opportunities,” and we can't wait to share all the amazing things that await you in this stunning archipelago.

Vanuatu is not just a destination for tourists, it is a place for travelers who seek unique experiences that are off the beaten path. Here, you will have the opportunity to immerse yourself in the local culture, interact with friendly locals, and explore the many diverse landscapes that make up this stunning island nation.

And what better way to do that than by diving into the ocean, the star of this edition of Nawimba? Whether you want to swim with turtles, dive among shipwrecks, or simply relax on the beach and soak up the sun, Vanuatu has everything you need for an unforgettable seaside vacation.

But beyond the shoreline, you will find even more opportunities to discover all that Vanuatu has to offer. From hiking through lush forests to exploring traditional villages and experiencing the vibrant local music and dance scene, there's no shortage of adventure to be found in Vanuatu.

In Vanuatu, you won't feel like a tourist, but rather like an adventurer discovering a new world. And with the warm and welcoming spirit of the locals, you'll feel like you've found a home away from home.

So if you're ready for an unforgettable travel experience, come and discover all that Vanuatu has to offer. We can't wait to welcome you to this incredible ocean of opportunities.

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Editor-In-Chief: Jaimeen Kenni, **Editor:** Vanina Galloni-Weber, **Graphic Designer:** Christopher Malili, **Illustration Artist:** John Joseph **Photographers:** The Islander, Niki Kuautonga, **Contributors:** Kersom Richard, Alexina Delaplane, Martin David





2023

JULY

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 14th-15th | - Fanla Festival (North Ambrym) |
| 19th-30th | - Melanesian Arts & Culture Festival (Port Vila) |
| 23rd | - Slow Food Day (Aneityum) |
| 24th | - Children's Day (Vanuatu) |
| 25th-27th | - Maskelyne Canoe Festival (South Malekula) |
| 30th | - Independence Day (Vanuatu) |



AUGUST

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| 21st-22nd | - Rom Dance (North Ambrym) |
| 23rd-24th | - Nalawan Festival (South Malekula) |

To book, visit VTO's Port Vila Visitor Information Centre,
call 22 813 / 5146771 or email info@vanuatu.travel



Surfing & Travel: Vanua Lava & Surrounding Islands

Exploring Vanua Lava in search of surfing spots will have you feeling like you're discovering faraway lands and a whole new way of life. Expect to travel across vast distances by banana boats with nothing but the open sky above you. It's a freeing experience to say the least.

Vanua Lava is the largest island of the Banks and Torres and it's the perfect starting point for your ultimate northern islands experience. There is plenty to experience. There's mountains, a volcano, crocodiles, reefs, rivers, waterfalls and tropical rainforests that will leave you captivated. Fly to Sola from Port Vila and from there you can go on excursions to Mt Sere Ama, the Selva River or Kwakea Island. West Vanua Lava is mountainous and wet with plenty of rainforest and several rivers. The forest on the hills around Vureas Bay is also good

for bird watching.

SOLA, PROVINCIAL HEARDQUATER

Sola is the provincial town for the Banks and Torres Islands and is often referred to as the Capital of Torba Province. There are a number of accommodations that you can book to stay at, however being the central hub of activity for the northern islands, accommodations can fill up fast on government travellers so it's best to book your accommodations in advance. In terms of food, you can stock

up on pretty much anything and seafood such as crabs, fish and lobsters is abundant all year round. This a great place to stock up on intricate Torba handicraft from the markets before you return home. You can also organise most of your day tours with the help of locals around Sola but it's good to book in advance so your guides are aware of your coming. In terms of surfing, there aren't any evident surfing spots in Port Patteson Bay, but kids can often be seen surfing the waves ashore on their canoes!

PANGLAP TURTLE SANCTUARY & HOMESTAY

Panglap Turtle Sanctuary is located on the east coast of Vanua Lava, and is one of the main places to stay when you're looking to surf at Ravenga Island. The community has established a protected area for turtles to feed on seagrasses on the beach located in front of the Panglap Homestay owned by Alphonse Yemen and his wife. The homestay has two bungalows, with two single beds each and can house four people. Camping is also possible as there

is large grass areas around the bungalow. There's also a nearby accommodation just a five minute walk from Alphonse which is separated by a beautiful plantation and creek. Alphonse's wife is known for serving up the best seafood and vegetarian meals! It's a great way to fuel up after a hard day of surf. The sunset here is absolutely stunning. Just make sure you pack insect repellent!



LALNETAK

Lalnetak Village is the closest Village to Ravenga Island and is said by the locals to be the closest starting point if you want to combine your surfing experience with a 2.5 hour hike to Mt. Suretamati, which is an active basaltic – to – andesitic stratovolcano at an elevation of 727 metres. The beach in front of Lalnetak has warm springs running out from under the dark sand which locals say, the source is the active volcano itself. There's even a small inlet with visible disturbance on the surface of the water where hot springs spring through the sides of the sandy coral banks.

It is customary to come by Lalnetak just before you head out to Ravenga to make your intentions known that you are planning to surf on the northern tip of Ravenga Island as their community here are part land owners of Ravenga Island.

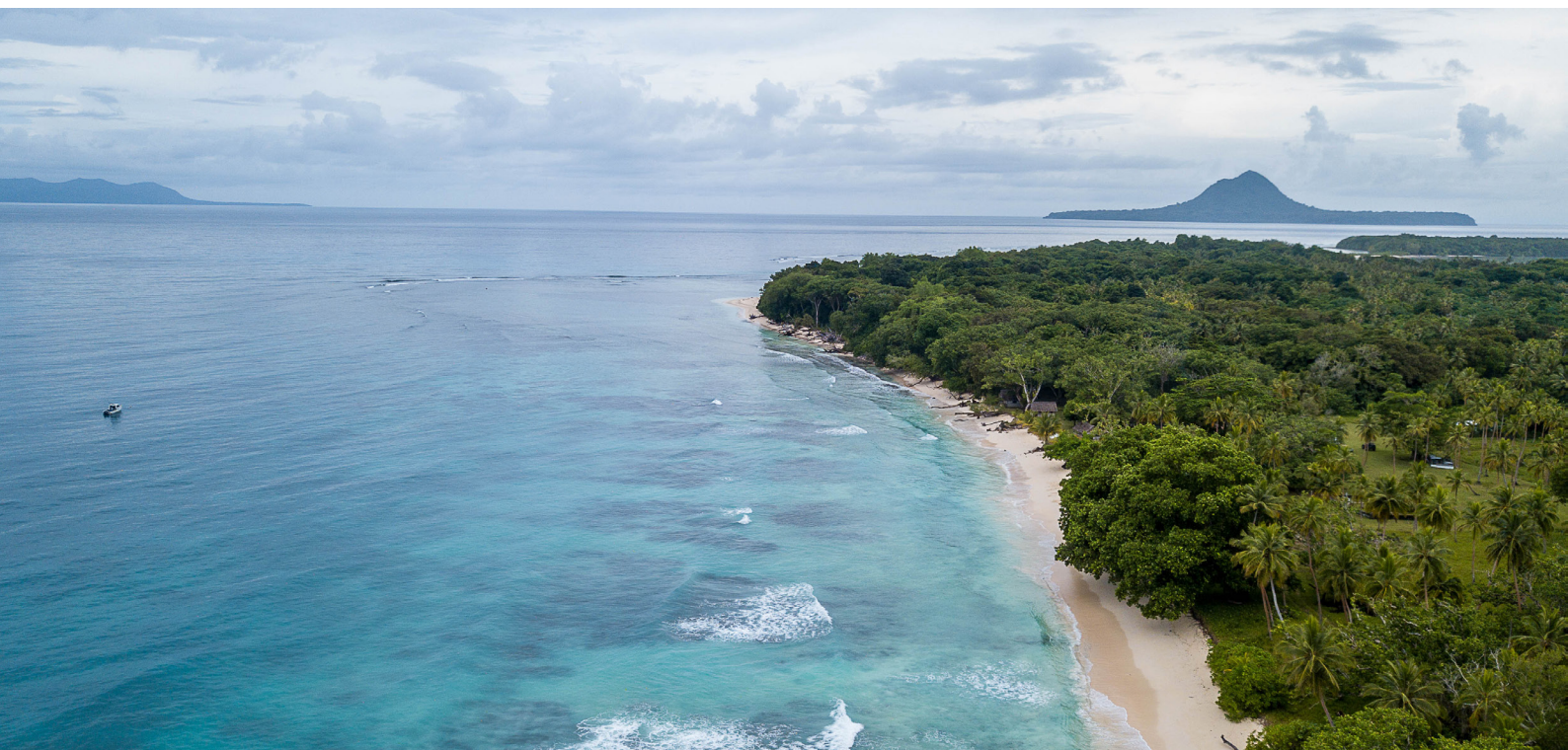
Although there are no accommodations here, you can still opt for homestays or camping options organised through Alphonse at Panglap or your host in Sola. There are however, community plans in place for new bungalows to be built this year to accommodate surfers and hikers alike which makes it much easier to kick off your activities early in the morning. The community is friendly and welcoming and might even head out on their own boats to join you in the surf!



RAVENGA ISLAND

Ravenga island is surrounded by beautiful reef, white sandy beaches and a great surf break onto the reef (during high tide) at its northern point. The waves here are long and with a southwest to south-east wind and the right swell, could provide consistently great waves. There are no accommodation facilities on the island currently so access will be by boat from Panglap or Lalnetak. However, if you get hungry, a delicious catering can easily be organized on the sandy white beaches. The

locals here know how to put on a feast! You can order a seafood feast from Alphonse for around Vt5000 which includes fruits, local nuts, fish, lobster, crab, fried yam, yummy boiled navel nuts (local delicacy) and more. Ravenga island has much to offer apart from surfing and beautiful beaches. There's a lake in the middle of the island that is home to a number of bird species, and some say it's even a temporary resting place for crocodiles.



KWAKEA ISLAND

Kwakea is a privately owned Island that offers guests a unique, cultural experience with an array of activities available including, spearfishing, snorkelling, beach fishing, day-trips to nearby islands, simply relax on the beach and more. The island is owned and run by Brett Kerr and his team of friendly local staff. Kwakea Island is approximately 3km long and 1km wide with beautiful white

sandy beaches that are simply the definition of untouched. There's a large lagoon, beautiful coral reef for snorkelling directly off the beach set against a backdrop of Vanua Lava's mountains, coconut plantations, and a forest with an abundance of fruit trees, vegetables and native animals. There's really good surf on the north side of the island and the shape of the reef provides for a very long wave. Our

experts say, it's best on a North to South-east swell with a South to East wind. The waves, which are located just out the front are a

The island is already set-up to accommodate guests and bookings can be made through owner and guide - Brett Kerr, by emailing info@kwakeaisland.com or calling +678 5323254.



MATTAN

Mattan is a very beautiful village with two river mouths, beautiful people, and amazing hospitality. Mattan can be accessed from road or by boat and you can choose to stay with the local villagers or camp out. Although access by boat can be limited during high seas.

In good surfing weather, the boat normally can't go directly into Mattan Bay, instead it goes along the side of a river where people would then disembark.

The waves here break on sand and not reefs due to the very large bay. With rivermouths in each corner and one in the middle, great sandbanks are created for the waves to break on. The best time according to our team of surfers would be with a east to north west wind and swell coming from the south to east direction. A trip to Mattan can be organized through Moses, the owner of Ulkel Guest House in Sola. Moses is very helpful and friendly and can be reached on +678 5693858. Moses can also call ahead if you're just visiting for the day to organize a feed for you or your group of friends.



MOSINA

Mosina or Musina Bay is a great place to include in your Vanua Lava itinerary. It's a beautiful bay that can be reached by truck or by boat on your return from Mattan when you're on your way to Vanua Lava. There's a beautiful shallow lagoon where you may find kids jumping off trees into the picturesque water below and also the iciest cold stream just near the beach to rinse off the salt after a hard day of surfing. Make sure to stop here before you return to Sola or include it your Vanua Lava itinerary.



DIVE INTO HISTORY

Diving into History: Discovering the Fascinating Million Dollar Point in Vanuatu

Located in Luganville the largest town in Santo, Million Dollar Point is a fascinating dive site that provides a unique glimpse into World War II history. The site is named after the large amount of military equipment and supplies that were dumped into the ocean by the US military after the war, creating an underwater treasure trove that attracts divers from around the world

The historical context of Million Dollar Point dates back to 1942 when the US military established a base in Santo to support the war effort in the Pacific. After the war ended, the US military abandoned the base, leaving behind a large amount of equipment and supplies. Rather than handing them over to the French, who controlled Vanuatu at the time, the US military decided to dump the equipment into the sea, resulting in what is now known as Million Dollar Point.

Today, Million Dollar Point is an ideal dive site for those interested in history, as well as marine life enthusiasts. The site is home to a wide range of marine creatures, including schools of colorful fish, rays, and even sea turtles. The underwater scenery is truly stunning, with equipment such as trucks, bulldozers, and even piles of ammunition providing an eerie but fascinating backdrop. In addition to diving, visitors can also visit the nearby Museum, which provides more information about the site's historical context and offers a glimpse into the impact of the war on the local population.

Overall, Million Dollar Point offers a one-of-a-kind diving experience that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Exploring History and Marine Life: Diving the Coolidge Wreck in Luganville

The SS President Coolidge was once a luxurious ocean liner, but today it lies at the bottom of the sea near Luganville in Vanuatu. The ship sank during World War II after hitting two mines. It has become today a popular dive site that attracts divers from around the world.

Diving the Coolidge is an incredible experience for both novice and experienced divers. The wreck is massive and is covered with marine life, including colorful corals, sponges, and schools of fish. The ship's bow is at a depth of around 20 meters, while the stern sits at around 70 meters, making it an ideal dive for those looking for a challenging deep dive. There are also plenty of swim-throughs and tunnels to explore, and the ship's artifacts are still intact, such as jeeps, helmets, and ammunition.

The Coolidge is also a great site for those interested in history. The ship was carrying troops and supplies during the war, and the evacuation of the passengers and crew was one of the largest single-ship rescues in history. Many of the ship's artifacts, such as its stunning chandeliers and ornate tiles, give visitors a glimpse into the ship's opulent past.

Just a short 10-minute boat ride from Luganville will deliver you to your own tropical Island paradise, yet it's close enough to access all the amenities and delights Santo has to offer including tours to the Millennium Caves, Blue Holes, World War II sites and the east coast to visit famous Champagne Beach and Port Orly.



SANMA PROVINCE

Where to stay

Aore Adventure Sports & Lodge

Owner: Paul White

Contact: 5550271 or 678 5990271

Email: info@aoreadventures.com

Aore Hibiscus Retreat

Owner: Russel Kinght

Contact: 5691086

Email: aorehibiscusretreat@gmail.com

Aore Island Resort

Aore Day Spa is a place where you can let us wash away your stresses. It is here you will find inner calm as you breathe in the fresh air and soak in the tranquility of this unique setting.

+678 36705 | aore@vanuatu.com.vu



THE MOON CAVE: A MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE



The Maewo Moon Cave, or the 'cave of the hole of the moon' is hidden in the west coastline of the island, closest to **Nasawa village**. At this breathtaking natural wonder, you'll have the opportunity to swim through three canals that flow through the cave and hear about the God of the Sea, Tagaro, from the locals.

It's believed that a long time ago, the moon lived in this cave, and the light did not shine beyond the walls. The **God of the Sea Tagaro** saw that this was not good, so he threw the moon out to the south. Then he realised that only the people in the south had light, and the people in the north were in darkness. So he took the moon and threw it to the north. But then the people in the south didn't have light. Tagaro took the moon back to the cave and threw it out to the west. Its light shone on all people in Maewo, and Tagaro saw that it was good.

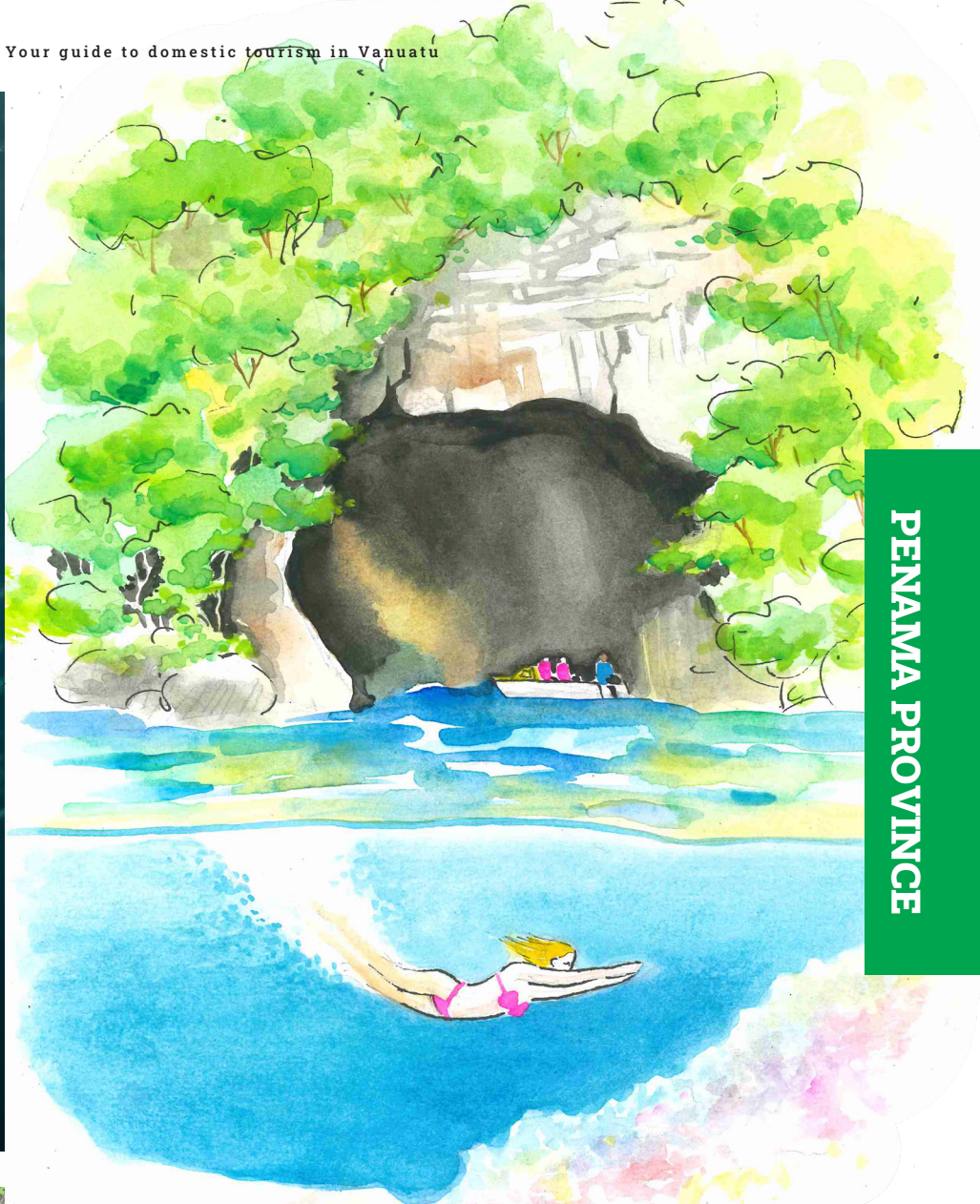
Top Tips

Be sure to have your snorkeling gear at the ready and some money to pay for your entry. Your donation goes direct to the local community and is a much appreciated and rare source of income.

How to get there

You can visit the Moon Cave on your way to Asanvari, South Maewo. To get there, it's a 50 minute truck transfer from the Airport to Narovorovo and then another 15 minutes boat ride to the Moon Cave. If you're not planning on heading out to Asanvari, you can pay for a boat transfer which includes entrance to the Moon Cave.





PENAMA PROVINCE



The cave is known for its mystical and otherworldly atmosphere, making it a popular destination for tourists and locals alike.

You will need first to head to the beautiful village of Nasawa. From there you need to get ready for a short boat ride. Do not forget to bring a hat and your snorkeling equipment!

The Moon Cave is a large, open-air cave with a large opening that allows sunlight to filter in.

The beauty of sunlight in the deep crystal blue water is an awe-inspiring sight that captivates the senses and leaves one feeling peaceful and relaxed. The deep blue color of the water itself creates a sense of calm and serenity, while the sunlight shining through the water creates a dazzling display of colors and patterns. Kaleidoscopic patterns that change with every movement of the water.

Schools of colorful fish shimmer in the light, while coral reefs and other underwater formations are bathed in a warm, golden glow.

It is among the greatest experiences in Vanuatu that can leave one feeling connected to the natural world and awestruck by its beauty.

Where to stay

Mahun Bungalows

Situated above the lagoon the bungalow offers panoramic views, the promise of a spectacular sunrise and a refreshing breeze. Only 10 minutes by boat from the Wintua Airport, Mahun on the Lagoon is the perfect base to experience this unique environment and the rich cultural diversity South West Bay has to offer.

A balcony offers a cool dining area and spectacular views. Price per night per person is 2850 vt and includes a standard breakfast.

+678 537 1976 | mahunbungalows@gmail.com

DISCOVERING THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF TISRI LAGOON

Malekula Island

The importance of the mangroves and birdlife in the area

One of the must-see places in Vanuatu is the Tisri Lagoon, located in South West Bay on the island of Malekula. The small village of Lembinwen is at the heart of a remarkable ecosystem. The coastline is lined with mangroves, and birds of all kinds like to nest there. During the tides, the shoreline becomes fertile, and prosperous gardens grow everywhere. It is also known as one of the most fish-rich places in Vanuatu. Fishing enthusiasts

are familiar with vivano (poulet fish), mangru (a type of mackerel), and picot, which can be found in abundance and often end up on the best tables of the archipelago.

The local community is aware of the priceless value of this environment and takes special care to respect the area, nature, and ancient customs. They practice responsible fishing for the sustainable enjoyment of both the eyes and the taste buds.

South West Bay in the province of Malampa is a true natural wonder, and the Tsiri Lagoon is the perfect example of how to preserve and protect the local environment while still allowing visitors to appreciate its beauty. Whether you are a fishing enthusiast or simply looking for a serene, picturesque spot to relax, South West Bay is the perfect destination to experience Vanuatu's natural beauty.

MALAMPA PROVINCE



THE COLORFUL WORLD OF CORAL

WONDERS OF NATURE

They are tiny animals that live in colonies and create hard structures around their bodies to protect themselves. These structures, called coral reefs, provide habitats for a wide variety of marine life, such as fish, crabs, sea turtles, and thousands of other creatures. They have a unique relationship with algae, which are tiny plants that live within their tissues. The algae provide the corals with energy through photosynthesis, while the corals provide the algae with a safe place to live.

Corals come in many different shapes and colors, and they are found in tropical waters all over the world. They are crucial to the health of the ocean ecosystem, providing food and shelter for many different species of marine life.

Amateur and professional divers will discover a diverse range of coral species in Vanuatu, including hard corals, soft corals, and gorgonian fans. Hard corals, also known as reef-building corals, are the backbone of the coral reef ecosystem, providing the structure and habitat that support a wide range of marine life. Soft corals, on the other hand, are more flexible and often brightly colored, providing a striking visual display.

One of the unique features of Vanuatu's corals is their ability to withstand high water temperatures. This is particularly important given the threat of climate change, which is causing ocean temperatures to rise and coral reefs to bleach and die. Vanuatu's corals have evolved to thrive in the warm waters of the South Pacific and are thus more resilient to rising temperatures.

LET'S PRESERVE THE OCEAN

Vanuatu, an archipelago of volcanic islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, is a vital reserve of coral and reefs. Its geography, combined with the water movements from East to West, impacts the shape of the reefs and the variety of species nesting there found here.

According to Christina Shawn, a veterinarian surgeon, founder and director of the Vanuatu Environment Scientist Society, and owner of the Big Blue diving company, "Because our coral reefs in Vanuatu are young, they are close to shore, we can discover the beauty of the underwater world almost at our doorstep, meaning that Vanuatu's are some of the most

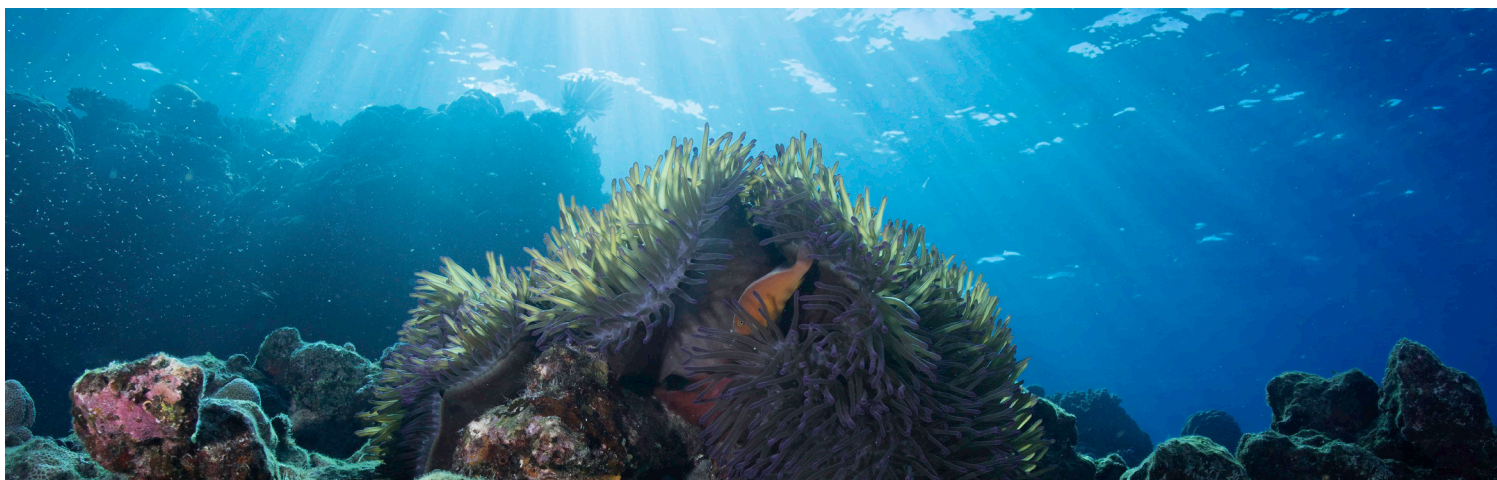
accessible reefs for diving in the world. But because they are accessible and young, they are vulnerable to damaging human activities so we need to be extra careful. They are home to some incredible species and they deserve care and respect for future generations.»

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: EXPLORING MICROSPECIES

This environment, combined with the warm and crystal-clear water, makes Vanuatu an amazing place to explore microspecies. It is difficult to imagine the large variety of species living underwater. John Warmington became a diving addict thanks to his school teacher who had the excellent idea years ago to take the students diving. Over the years, from Australia to Vanuatu, he has developed a passion for microspecies. He founded, with his dear wife, Sandy and other passionate divers, the Facebook group «Underwater Vanuatu» and has gathered thousands of breathtaking pictures. According to him, «It is



SHEFA PROVINCE



crucial to protect this natural treasure, as coral reefs are not only home to many species, but they also serve as a barrier that protects the island from storms and erosion. Tourists can do their part by taking care not to damage the reefs and being mindful of their impact on the environment. With its proximity to the shore and the abundance of marine life, Vanuatu is a unique and breathtaking destination for divers and nature lovers alike. «With a torch or a strobe and thanks to the low light absorption, you can get a kaleidoscopic view of the marine wonders of Vanuatu.»



@Underwater Vanuatu Group



@critter.spotter

TOURISM SPOTLIGHT

For the love of Food, History & all things Ni-Vanuatu: L'houstalet Restaurant turns 50 years old

It's often said that it's the sum of the parts that makes an experience truly remarkable. L'houstalet Restaurant is one of those establishments that makes a visit to Vanuatu remarkable.

Clement Martinez, the original founder & owner of L'houstalet

Restaurant moved to Vanuatu in the 1970s and opened his restaurant which at the time, was known as New Hebrides and jointly governed by France and Britain. This year the L'houstalet celebrates its 50th year anniversary and in honour of this phenomenal achievement, L'houstalet takes

our spotlight of this edition.

L'houstalet completes our ultimate Vanuatu experience for the following reasons.

The personal touch

L'houstalet Restaurant holds a special place in the hearts & minds of the Ni-Vanuatu people due to the many fond memories that were created within the walls of the establishment over the span of 50 years. The long-standing establishment has seen its fair share of first dates, wedding engagements, birthdays and various other occasions over its 50 years of operations. The unique personal connection to L'houstalet is Clement himself.

One such celebration is that of Vanuatu's constitution finally being submitted at 4 am one morning. However, it's the people behind the place that gives L'houstalet extra depth that pulls it away from the usual commercial.

The ultimate French Pacific cuisine experience

L'houstalet Restaurant is known for the amazing Pacific French Cuisine it serves to its guests for the past 50 years.

A dining experience in the L'houstalet Restaurant is like that final puzzle piece to the ultimate Vanuatu experience. And if you've been living in Vanuatu and haven't dined out at L'houstalet Restaurant, just know that you've been missing out on a true gem sitting right under your nose.





THE INCREDIBLE FLYING FISH OF VANUATU

Vanuatu is a captivating island group that attracts visitors from around the world with its rich marine life. Another one of the most fascinating sea creatures to observe while snorkeling or diving in the clear waters of Vanuatu is the flying fish.

These small fish have specially adapted fins that allow them to glide through the air for up to 200 meters. They can reach impressive

speeds of up to 70 kilometers per hour while flying. You can spot flying fish in Vanuatu throughout the year, but they are most common during the summer months.

Local people consider flying fish a delicacy and catch them using traditional methods like hand nets or traps. On the island of Futuna, fishermen use a torch made of dry coconut leaves to attract the fish to the surface. They catch the fish

with a fishing net attached to a stick they have made themselves. If you are interested in seeing flying fish up close, there are many tour operators in Vanuatu that offer snorkeling and diving trips. Don't miss the chance to witness the beauty of the flying fish and learn about traditional fishing methods during your visit to Vanuatu.

GENTLE GIANTS OF THE SEA



Dugongs, also known as sea cows, are fascinating marine mammals that inhabit the waters around Vanuatu. These gentle giants can grow up to 3 meters in length and weigh up to 500 kg. They feed on seagrass and can consume up to 40 kg per day. Dugongs are social creatures and can be found living in groups in shallow coastal areas.

If you're hoping to catch a glimpse of these incredible creatures, your best bet is

to head to Port Resolution or Epi. However, you'll need to be patient as they can be elusive. It's important to be respectful if you do encounter a dugong, as they are a protected species. The Vanuatu Environmental Science Society (VESS) has written a guide to help educate people on how to safely interact with dugongs while diving or sailing. Take the time to read it and do your part to help protect these wonderful animals.



ARTIST'S CORNER

For the second time, Nawimba magazine has chosen to feature the beautiful artwork of John Joseph, an artist renowned for his unique style and ability to capture the essence of the Vanuatu way of life.

Joseph's drawings are soft and delicate, yet they manage to convey the joy and happiness that is so much a part of the Vanuatu culture.

For those who are interested in discovering more about him and his art, his Facebook page is a great place to start.

Soon, Joseph's work will be on display as part of an exhibition of Ni Vanuatu artists during the Melanesian Cultural Festival.

In addition to his work as an artist, Joseph is also a dedicated teacher. He is currently busy teaching art at the Vanuatu School of Education, where he is preparing the next generation of teachers to promote and incorporate the arts into their classrooms. It is clear that Joseph's passion for art and his commitment to his students are both key factors in his success as an artist and as a teacher.



<https://www.facebook.com/JosephJohnArt>



joejohn.artist@gmail.com



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