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THE ASIA ISSUE
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EXCLUSIVES:

COVER STORY: AMELS 242

PLVS VLTRA VISITS ASIA

PRANA: INDONESIA'S

LATEST LUXURY PHINISI

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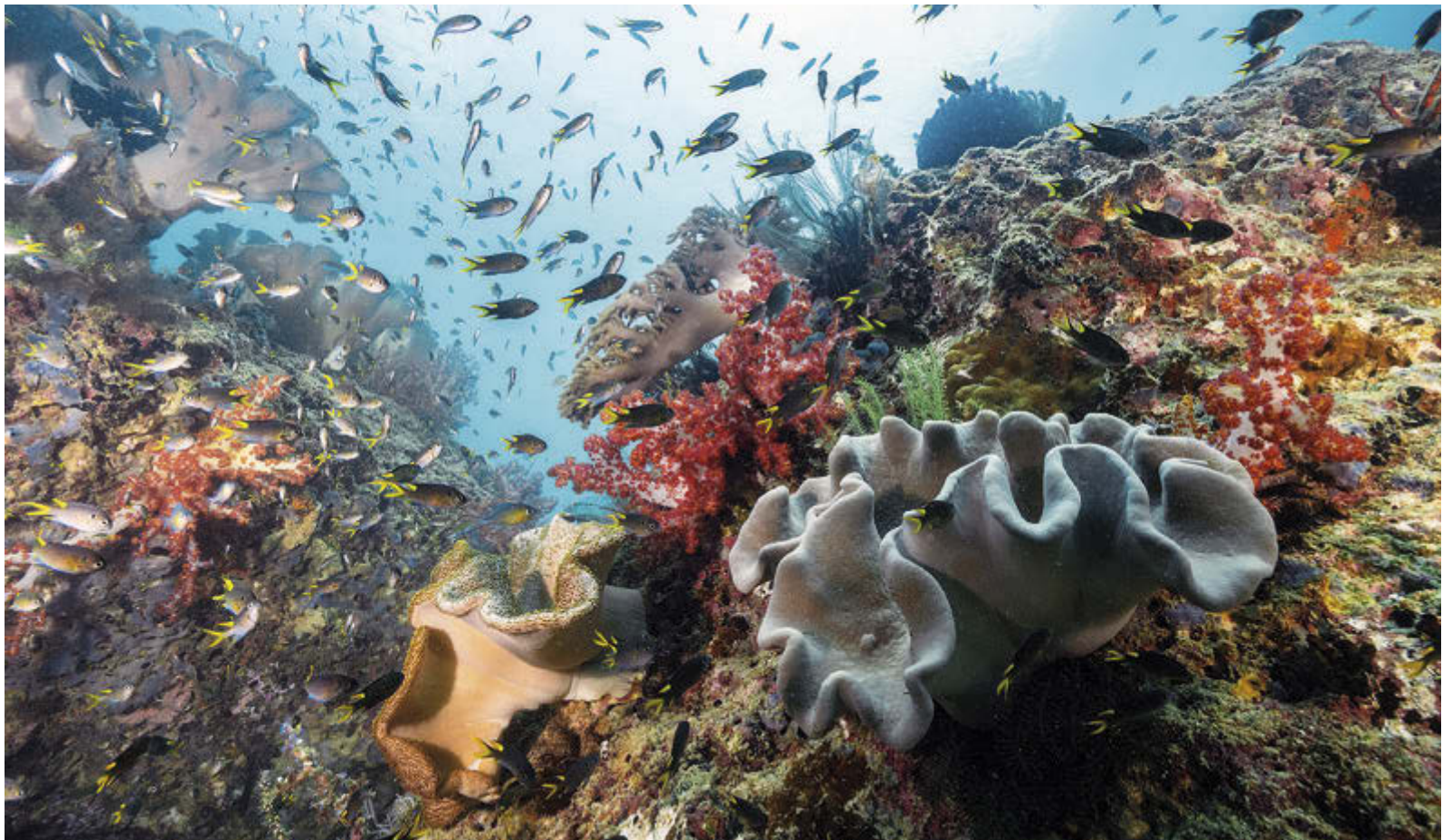




PAPUA'S SECRET WONDERS

In this issue's special focus on eastern Indonesia, Camper & Nicholsons explores the wondrous world of West Papua, where Triton Bay in Kaimana is an enticing destination for whale sharks and home to a colourful array of underwater, coastal and land-based activities.

WORDS **YESSI SARI, FOUNDER OF SEQUOIA YACHT** PHOTOS **SEQUOIA**



The area's marine diversity makes it 'the Amazon' of the underwater world.

Our oceans cover more than 70 per cent of the earth. They are facing a serious threat from increasing human population as we approach 8 billion people. This population swell is among the factors leading to overfishing as well as the burning of more fossil fuel and increasing carbon-dioxide emissions.

The resulting acidification of sea water causes higher sea temperatures and coral bleaching, which is devastating much of the earth's coral reefs.

Fortunately, most of the reefs in and around the Coral Triangle in the western Pacific Ocean have yet to be affected significantly by these threats. In fact, these reefs are part of the planet's most diverse ecosystems, with the region sometimes referred to as the Amazon of the underwater world.

Comprising only 1.6 per cent of the planet's oceans, the Coral Triangle is home to over 76 per cent of all known coral species in the world. At its heart are the 17,000-plus islands of the Indonesian archipelago, where our phinisi sailing yacht *Sequoia* has been chartering since 2017.

One of the country's final frontiers is in the east, where the province of Papua – formerly Irian Jaya – occupies most of the western side of New Guinea. The independent state of Papua New Guinea occupies the east side of this enormous island, which was connected to Australia tens of thousands of years ago.

Today, yachting visitors are most familiar with the surrounding archipelago known as Raja Ampat, an area considered by many to be the world's ultimate site for diving and snorkelling, while it has also been popular with bird watchers and naturalists for decades.

Along the southern coast of West Papua is the region of Kaimana, where only a few people have had the privilege of exploring the area's best-kept secret – Triton Bay.

Triton Bay is home to several local species including Wobbegong carpet sharks and the incredible Epaulette shark, which is also known as the 'walking shark' because it can literally crawl using its fins.

Endemism in Triton evolved the same way as it has throughout the Bird's Head Peninsula on the northwest of the island, because a species' expansion remains restricted by some physical barrier such as a mountain, lake, river, desert or, in this case, ocean.

WHALE SHARK OF A TIME

The reef surrounding the Iris Strait between Kaimana on the mainland and nearby Aiduma Island is filled with sea life and soft corals.

Visitors have the opportunity to be submerged 3m under water with whale sharks, the largest fish on earth, able to grow up to 17m in length. Sometimes there are dolphins below the whale shark and you can hear their high-pitched squeaks.

After this once-in-a-lifetime experience, you can visit one of Papua's most impressive displays of ancient rock art by kayaking around Namatote Island.

During a series of exploratory expeditions conducted by Conservation International and World Wildlife Fund Indonesia,



The Papuan hornbill is among 300 species of birds in the Papua rainforest.



Clockwise from top left: Kayaking at the iconic Mommon Waterfalls along the Kaimana coastline; a traditional dance at a local village; the phinisi charter yacht Sequioa; and face to face with a whale shark.

interviews were conducted in Kaimana with lift-net fishermen, known locally as bagan.

The scientists discovered that the fishermen were having almost daily interactions with whale sharks, particularly when they fed them small baitfish or anchovies.

“Some bagan fisherman said they did this because the sharks represented ancestors and brought good luck,” said Abraham Sianipar of Conservation International.

“Others more pragmatically explained that, if the whale sharks congregate around their bagans in the morning, they are more likely to also attract tuna, Spanish mackerel and sailfish.”

Although Triton Bay may not be as recognised for whale shark encounters as Cenderawasih Bay – off West Papua’s north coast – scientists believe there is a year-round population of these gentle giants present throughout the Bird’s Head seascape.

“We’ve identified 28 sharks in Triton Bay and around 120 animals in Cenderawasih, all but five of them sub-adult males,” Sianipar added.

He also revealed that data from a tagged whale shark from Cenderawasih revealed the animal making quite a journey.

“One of our whale sharks, a 4m male named Kodo, travelled all the way to the east coast of the Philippines before coming back to Raja Ampat, then Kaimana, making a quick visit to the Gulf of Carpentaria in Australia, and finally ending up in Merauke [in Papua], where the tag ran out of battery,” Sianipar explained.

ANIMAL ATTRACTIONS

If bird watching is your passion, the rainforest of Papua is also a major attraction as it’s home to over 300 species of tropical birds. Be sure to spend enough time to look out for the majestic Papuan hornbill, a local bird of paradise.

Sailing north to Fak-Fak regency presents the opportunity to kayak at the iconic Mommon Waterfalls, which fall directly into the sea.

The next destination is the remote island of Karas, a home to

turtles and dugong. Here, it’s possible to paddle inside Batu Lubang, a hole connected to the sea that’s filled with hard coral gardens.

Explore some of the lesser-known villages such as Mas and Antalisa to see for yourself how much the locals here depend on sea-life. You can join locals fishing in front of the village during sunset.

There are very few wildlife ecosystems left. Sustainable lodging, locally grown food sourcing and burning less fossil fuel are some ways each of us can adapt to slow down the rate of global warming.

Sequioa was designed with this philosophy in mind. A modern take on the classic sailing yacht featuring three generous suites, she has combined the best aspects of traditional Sulawesi hull construction – a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity – with the most advanced marine machinery.

A focus on advanced technology increases comfort and safety for the guests, while all installed components are rated at the lowest level of emissions, as per US Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.

Every detail has been handmade by local artisans and/or handpicked with sustainability in mind, from no single-use plastic to palm oil free products on board.

The yacht can explore remote reefs at the edge of the world and offer encounters with the most spectacular marine life while keeping a light footprint. ✽

Camper & Nicholson’s Asia, winner of Best Asia-Based Charter Company (International) at the 2019 Christofle Yacht Style Awards, offers a selection of the world finest luxury yachts for charter. For more information, contact:

Hong Kong: +852 3976 7900

Thailand: +66 81 893 7018

asiacharter@camperandnicholsons.com

www.camperandnicholsons.com