

BRAD ASKS ANGELINA: WHY DON'T YOU LOVE SHILOH?

New Idea

APRIL 21, 2007



Suri's BIZARRE BIRTHDAY

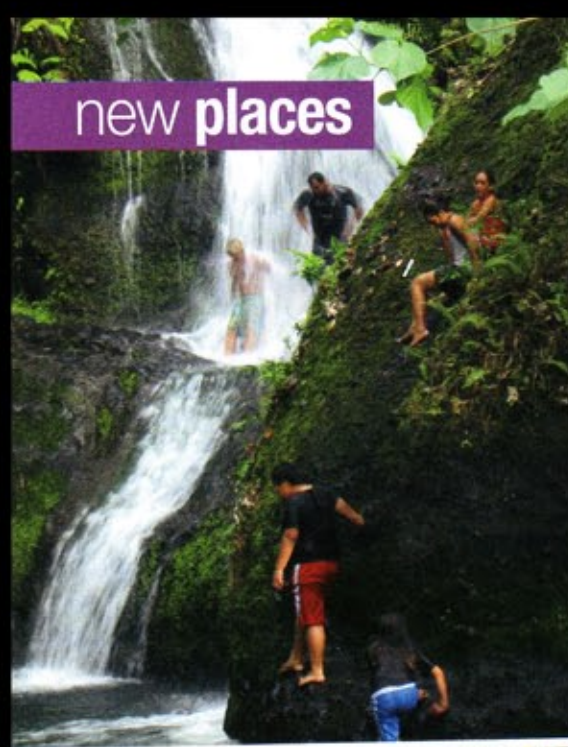
RIVALS & RITUAL
What really happens backstage on Dancing With the Stars

HAPPY AS LARRY... BUT IS TH... WILL A FRAUD?

START ME UP!
Heather Mills' Jagger obsession

BELLISSIMO
Fabulous Italian food special

TUMOUR PATIENT'S TICKING TIME BOMB
'Did hospital give me brain-rotting disease?'



new places



Get up close and personal with the island's tropical fish.

BE CAREFUL AT THE RAROTONGAN BEACH SPA AND RESORT – YOUR CHILDREN MAY NOT WANT TO LEAVE!

It was hard to know how to take the news at first. Some may interpret it as a slight on our parenting skills that our five-year-old was dragged kicking and screaming to the airport transfer van.

We, however, prefer to lay the blame squarely on The Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa's kids' club. The little treasure in question had become so enamoured with the activities and staff at Mokos – named after the friendly gecko that intrigues all children in Rarotonga – the idea of humdrum home life no longer cut it.

Of course the signs were there long before check-out. We'd deposit Jack (name changed to protect our integrity) at 9am each day, and by the time he'd clock out again at 9pm, he would be more excited about going back than spending the next day with the boring old folks.

But what frazzled parent looking for a break from all the stresses of home life is going to complain about that, right? We knew that Mokos looked like fun from the outside, with a mix of the usual games, combined with learning about the natural world and cultural heritage of Rarotonga.

We just didn't fully grasp what an impact the experience would have on our impressionable youngster.

The children, from three to 11, are exposed to everything that makes the Cook Islands so special – the island volcano, the rainforest plants and creatures, tropical fruits, life on the coral reef and the local customs.

And when they're not drumming, dancing, paddling outrigger canoes and making flower garlands they have every conceivable rainy-day gadget they could dream of inside the club. There are computer games, videos, a library with an impressive collection of books, painting and drawing materials, a large range of toys, board games, musical instruments, Lego, PlayStation and sports equipment.

But to tell you the truth, we were sold on The Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa long before we fully grasped the appeal of Mokos.

Sure, the 'Kids Stay and Play Free' factor – two kids up to age 11 can stay free with two parents – is an attraction, but it was the resort setting that was the clincher.

The Cooks' signature spot is set right on the island's best white-sand beach on the sunshine coast, providing safe, sheltered all-tide swimming for kids.

The lagoon is protected by a natural coral reef, so is ideal for both learners and keen snorkellers. Having been a reserve for seven years, the snorkelling here is awe-inspiring, with a wide variety of fish easily seen up close and personal.

You can also take a guided snorkelling tour with The Rarotongan's very own marine biologist, Candace Hood. Who knew that parrot fish sleep tucked up in their own

see-through night blanket? When it's time to dry off, there's a multitude of choices for parents sans kids to seriously unwind.

With Jack in good hands at Mokos, we hit the hammocks, or soothing the remains of city stress away with massages at the Rarotongan's in-house SpaPolynesia.

And long before the kids' club closed, we were usually savouring mouth-watering island cuisine and divine cocktails on the lagoonside deck.

Maybe Jack really did have a point about staying a few days longer. Pacific Blue makes a four-hour flight to Rarotonga twice a week from Auckland, leaving on Tuesday and Saturday at 7.15pm. Go to www.pacificblue.co.nz.



The Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa will keep the whole family happy.

Snorkelling in Rarotonga is an educational experience.

Parents can relax by the pool while the kids head off to Mokos.

Enjoy all that Rarotonga has to offer – including the food.

PHOTOS: THE RAROTONGAN BEACH RESORT AND SPA

Family fun IN RARO

TOP FIVE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1 The 4WD Mountain Safari
A half-day guided tour of the volcano and the rainforests. Visit www.rarosafaritours.co.uk.

2 Learn the ancient skills of the locals
Book a half-day tour of the Cultural Village and learn about such crafts as fishing, dance costumes and how to husk a coconut. Visit www.cookislands.culturalvillage.com.

3 Captain Tama's cruise
A ticket on the glass-bottomed boat cruise of Muri Lagoon should be on every family's list. Watch the fish being fed and snorkel off the

boat, then stop at a deserted island for a beach barbecue. Adults, \$68, children 12 and under, \$34.

4 Swim at Wigmore's Waterfall
Hike or drive up to this popular local swimming spot above the abandoned Sheraton Resort. If you have a head for heights, there's a rock ledge here for all levels too.

5 Island Night spectacular
At The Rarotongan's world-famous 'Legends of Polynesia' Island Night kids can show Mum and Dad how Cook Islanders cook in umus with hot rocks and banana and coconut palm leaves.

TRAVEL BARGAINS FOR NEW IDEA READERS



MAGICAL OMAN

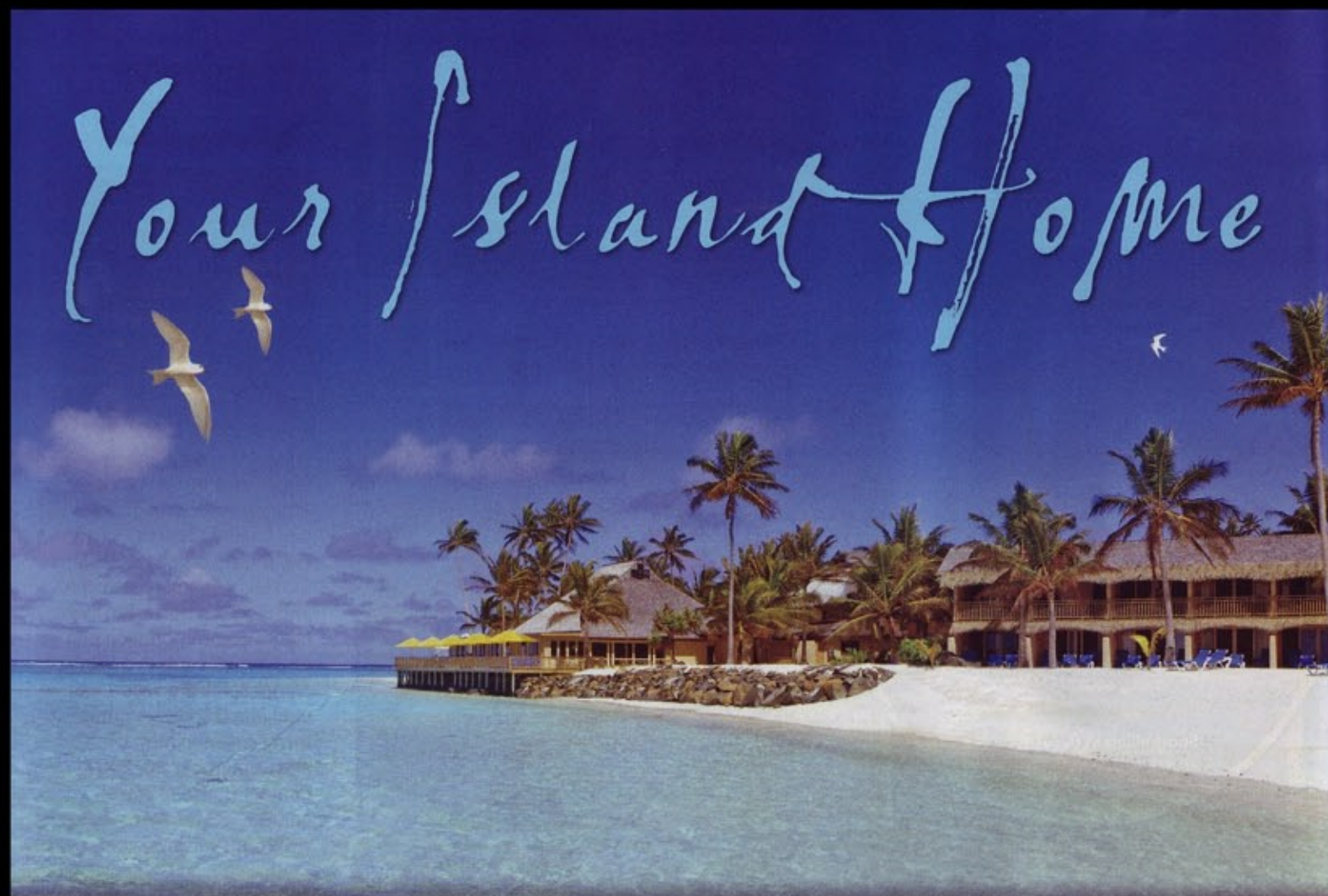
Experience the magic and the diverse terrain of the Arabian Peninsula on a seven-day, six-night tour of Oman. The private tour costs from \$1615 per person, twin share and includes transport, five nights accommodation and an overnight stay in a desert camp. Sales are valid until May 15 and you must travel between May 1 and September 30, 2007. Contact House of Travel on 0800 83 87 47 or visit www.houseoftravel.co.nz.

TAHITIAN DREAMING

Don't let the thought of winter get you down. The cost of a return airfare to Tahiti, flying Air New Zealand, plus five nights accommodation, starts at \$1399 per person. Tahiti is the perfect destination for a romantic getaway or a family holiday and boasts some of the most amazing emerald waters and white sand beaches in the world. Sales are valid until April 30 and you must travel before September 30. For more information phone Flight Centre on 0800 24 35 44 or visit www.flightcentre.co.nz.

GO SOUTH

Autumn is considered one of the best times to visit Queenstown and make the most of all the outdoor activities on offer. To be close to everything, stay at the Nugget Point Boutique Hotel overlooking the Shotover River. It costs \$250 per night, based on a minimum stay of two nights. Visit www.wotif.com/hotel6291.



Everything's right here at the Cook Islands' signature resort, The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa, for your ideal tropical vacation – just the right balance of pure relaxation, South Seas romance and island adventure.

When you've touched down at Rarotonga International Airport, you're just minutes away from starting your holiday. The Rarotongan is superbly located on the island's best white sand beach. Soak up the all-day sun and sensational tropical sunsets. Explore the underwater wonderland of Aroa Lagoon, a protected marine sanctuary offering the island's best snorkelling. Experience a rich and varied culture, warm island hospitality and fine Pacific cuisine. Enjoy the island's most extensive range of complimentary activities, facilities and entertainment options. Paradise, from the heart.

For a very special romantic retreat, add on a few extra days at The Rarotongan's sublime sister resort, The Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, the Cook Islands' only private island resort. Absolute Aitutaki.

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The Rarotongan
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The Aitutaki
Lagoon Resort & Spa

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