

on Location

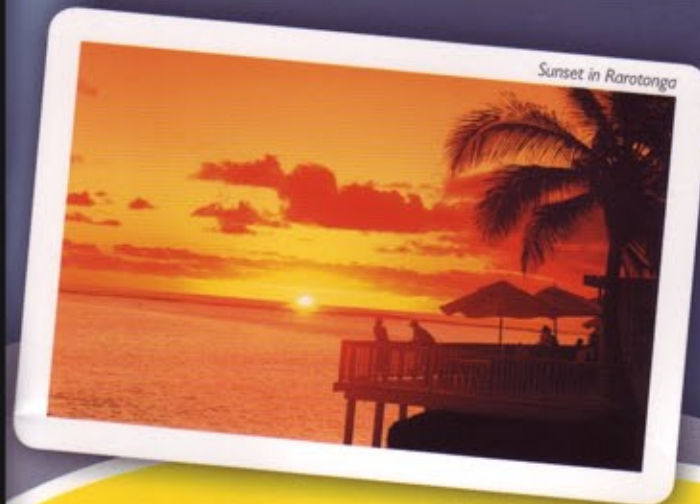
ISSUE 08 SUMMER 2007-08

EXPERIENCE ALL THE BEST SPOTS ON THE PLANET



**'Pure
Luxury!'**

CLUB MED ALBION
IN MAURITIUS



- SAILING ITALY'S COAST
- SELF DRIVE TURKEY
- IN SEARCH OF THE SOUL OF NEW ORLEANS

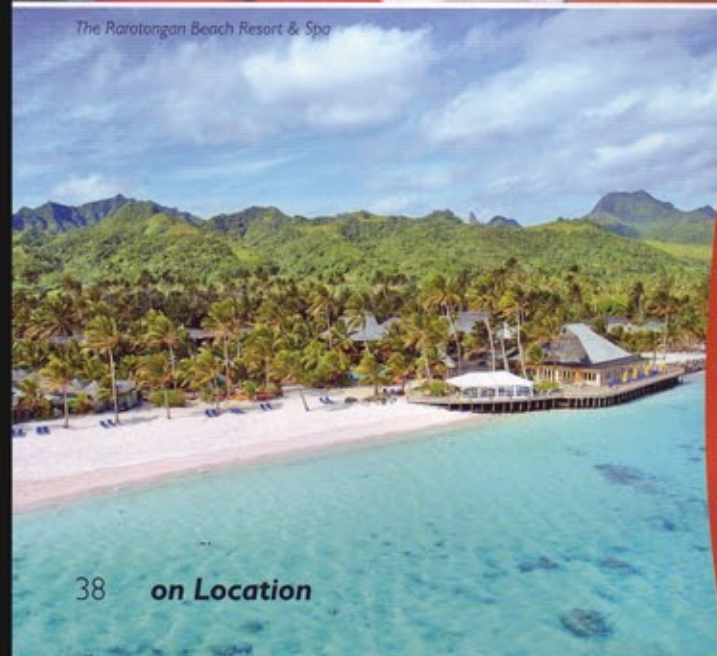


**HOLIDAY
SHOPPE**
Experience. The difference.

Laid back and relaxed Island Style Life in Rarotonga



A relaxing facial at the Edgewater Resort & Spa



The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa

Seasoned business travellers Stu and Trish Freeman decided to take a short break with their family in the Cook Islands where hooning around on scooters, snorkelling in the tepid lagoon and hunting for bargains at the local markets is all in a day's fun.

"Team all this up with a short four hour flight and the New Zealand dollar as local currency and you've got an ideal holiday spot," Stu says. "Having been to Rarotonga on numerous business trips Trish and I thought it would be a great break for both us and the children. It's small and very easy to get around and you can just totally chill – although if you want to be active there's plenty to do."

Rarotonga is ideal for children because of the outdoor, inexpensive options. Horse riding for example, through the waves, into the bush and along village roads, is a great experience. It's really easy to hire a bike and ride around the island.

"The other thing about Rarotonga is that you can be at a resort, but easily go and visit other restaurants, bars in town and markets because the island is so small. Buses regularly run clockwise and anti-clockwise around the island. Driving is easy too – the main circle of the island road is in good condition and never gets particularly busy," Stu says.

Snorkelling straight off the beach is easy; from the Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa you can see giant clams and lots of fish. Even young children can do this without difficulty.

"The people are really friendly, but not over the top. Some people tell me they don't find the Cook Islanders all that friendly, but I think it's just a natural shyness," Stu says.

Rarotonga's cultural appeal is strong, authentic and not commercialised. The culture and traditions, songs and dances, food and delicacies have refreshingly remained unchanged despite the dramatic growth of tourism in the Cook Islands.

The wealth of the land is not measured in real estate prices but rather in the abundance of ripening banana trees, fruiting pawpaw plants, groves of tall coconut palms, giant mango trees laden with juicy mangoes that ripen in the warm summer months, wild guava trees with too much fruit to pick, and modest family houses filled with the sound of children laughing, grandmothers gossiping under the pandanus trees and office executives driving home on a motor scooter after a day of finalising deals with international banks.

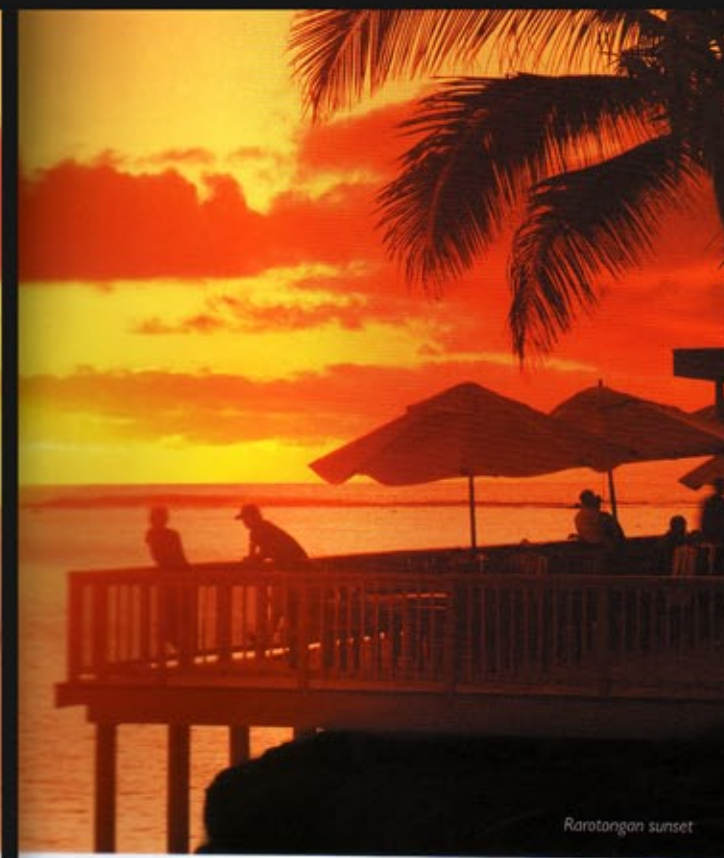
This is how Cook Islanders have lived for decades and it will probably be the way they live for the next few decades. The pace is as they please – relaxed and unhurried, the way life should be.

Stu's picks for accommodation in Rarotonga include the Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa beachside on Aroa Beach. Here the turquoise waters of Aroa Lagoon, the Lagoon of Love, are at your doorstep for swimming, snorkelling, fishing and water sports.

Aroa is one of the finest beaches not just on Rarotonga, but anywhere in the South Pacific. Manicured daily, Aroa Beach is probably Rarotonga's most private and secluded. Set right on the island's sought after southwest coast, Aroa Beach also enjoys all-day sunshine, making the Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa the best located resort on the island.

Another one of Stu's favourites is the Edgewater Resort & Spa which has a fresh new look. The Garden Rooms have been refitted and upgraded now offering a fresh, lighter look, with new beds, furniture and decor.

New Zealanders love the Edgewater Resort & Spa – it has a casual, friendly and unpretentious ambience about the place. The family market is a growing one, and with the introduction of three bedroom villas the resort is sure to see more growth.



Rarotongan sunset

The resort is located on the west coast of Rarotonga, nestled between majestic green mountains and a white sandy beach overlooking a deep blue lagoon. The resort is Rarotonga's largest, with 250 air-conditioned guest rooms, including spacious self-contained 1 and 2 bedroom apartments.

The resort's newly developed villas are proving very popular not only with families, but also small groups, couples travelling with friends and even corporates. The idea of having a private 'home away from home' accommodation option appeals to a lot of people. It's a totally different concept to resort living where a guest can have the privacy offered by the villas and still have access to resort services such as room service, and full use of resort facilities – complimentary use of the tennis courts and equipment, fitness centre and BBQ facilities.

With Avarua, the capital of Rarotonga, only an 8 minute drive away, Edgewater Resort & Spa is well within reach of the island's many urban delights. Avarua has a wide range of retail outlets showcasing local arts and crafts, a cinema, cafés, bars and essential services such as banks and supermarkets.



Lagoon Vaka racing

AITUTAKI

MANUAE

COOK
ISLANDS

TAKUTEA

MITIARO

ATIU

MAUKE

AVARUA

RAROTONGA

MANGAIA