

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

TRAVEL + INDULGENCE

MARCH 21-22, 2020

DESTINATION ADVENTURE

- Glamp it up around the world
- Serengeti cheetahs in the spotlight

COLD MOUNTAIN

CHILLING OUT ON TASMANIA'S CLASSIC HIKE Page 6



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THE INSIDER

MICHAEL DILLON
ADVENTURE FILMMAKER



MEMORABLE DESTINATION

I love Nepal for its mountains, including Everest (pictured), and people, and India for its unrivalled mix of landscapes and cultures. In 1970, I spent months roaming the region researching a travel book, during which I was granted an hour-long private audience with the Dalai Lama. Since then, many filming trips have yielded priceless memor-

ies. From a beach in the Bay of Bengal, I set off on two of my greatest adventures — filming Sir Edmund Hillary's jet boat journey up the Ganges and Tim Macartney-Snape's climb of Everest from sea level.

TRAVEL TIP

Buy a little video camera, sling it around your neck, keep it on wide

angle, hold it still and press record. You'll have the highlights of your trip, in brilliant colour and sound, with you forever.

COMING UP

I'm choosing highlights of my adventure filming for a speaking tour organised by World Expeditions. And soon after that, I'll be road-showing Ocean to Sky, my new fea-

ture film featuring Sir Edmund Hillary.

Michael Dillon AM is an adventure filmmaker who has been nominated for an Emmy and is a Logie and AFI award winner. He was to screen rare footage at events in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in March-April. These have been rescheduled for September; worldexpeditions.com.

ON THE ROAD

L'OCCITANE SHEA HIBISCUS SOLIDARITY BALM, 20G, \$8

All sales profits from this hibiscus-fragranced balm, enriched with almost 98 per cent shea butter to soften hair and skin, go to finance NGO projects to promote women's leadership and solidarity in Burkina Faso. This Provençal brand's L'Occitane Foundation works with several thousand women in this sub-Saharan nation to develop a sustainable, fair trade shea butter supply chain and has recently pledged \$320,000 via its Ecosystem Restoration Fund to tree plantation and regeneration following the Australian bushfires.

■ au.loccitane.com
SUSAN KUROSAWA



OSPREY CENTAURI BACKPACK, \$99.95

This recent addition to Osprey's 24/7 series is compact and streamlined, and designed for everyday use. With a 22-litre capacity, it includes a padded sleeve suited to a 15-inch laptop, several internal organisation pockets and two mesh side pockets for drink bottles. A sternum strap, breathable back panel and soft hardness round out the features. Available in five colours.



■ osprey.com/au

SUKIN SPF30 SHEER TOUCH FACIAL SUNSCREEN, 60ML, \$24.95

This popular natural skincare brand has released a sunscreen free from oxybenzone, which means it is reef friendly. Zinc oxide provides protection from UVA and UVB rays, while rosehip oil, green tea and cucumber extracts hydrate and nourish.



PENNY HUNTER

HOME + AWAY



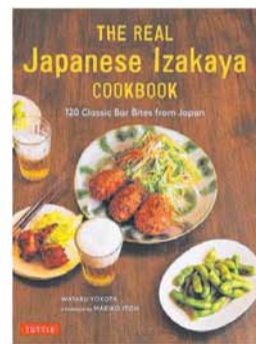
A new tapas lounge, Panen Padi (pictured), set in a villa amid rice fields near Ubud, has opened as part of Tanah Gajah — A Resort by Hadiprana, formerly managed by GHM under the Chedi Club banner. The 5ha Tanah Gajah estate was owned by the late Indonesian architect Hendra Hadiprana, whose hotel projects in Bali included the The Legian Seminyak; he established the Ubud property in the late 80s as a retreat. A dining and lounging terrace has been added to the villa and the resort's executive chef, Singapore-born Khairudin (Dean) Nor, creates small-plate bites and cures and smokes much of the meat and sea-

food used in his signature dishes, such as a taco sushi with salmon or slow-cooked pork or beef, avocado and edible flowers. Mocktails include Padi Senja, a blend of tamarind, passionfruit, calamansi lime puree, mint leaves and mango, while cocktails are enlivened with the likes of torch ginger flower. Open to guests and non-guests (bookings recommended), from noon-8pm. The resort offers 20 club suites and villas, the latter category with private pools and two-bedroom options, and all featuring pieces of original art and decor based on traditional crafts.

■ tanahgajahubud.com
SUSAN KUROSAWA

TASTE

It's not so long ago that the word izakaya was an esoteric oddity, maybe something to do with martial arts or Japanese dressing gowns. But since the tapas and mezze revolutions took hold, oriental bar bites have also become all the rage. In Japan, an izakaya also means a gastropub or tavern, so the approach to food has to be fast and cooked to order with minimum fuss and maximum flavour. But speed doesn't mean less finesse. Even the Michelin Guide to Tokyo has about two dozen izakaya in its most recent listing, mostly accorded Bib Gourmand status by inspectors and described as "delightful little restaurants [and] very good value for money". The central district of Shinjuku, with one of Tokyo's busiest railway stations, yields myriad izakaya, with most patronised by commuters for quick evening "sets" of appetiser, soup and snack and optional mains to follow. Sounds tempting? Released late last year, *The Real Japanese Izakaya Cookbook: 120 Classic Bar Bites from Japan* by Wataru Yokota (Tuttle/New South Books, \$27.99) includes 120 recipes to try at home, and the author demystifies ingredients and simplifies cooking methods with



step-by-step guidelines, including the kitchen staple of dashi broth. That starter plate of salt-flaked edamame served at most Japanese restaurants is a good example of the approach, as are karaage, better known at my local izakaya in Sydney as "crispy chicken nuggets". Yokota, a chef and restaurant consultant, lets grilled meats lead the charge in this well-illustrated book, alongside yakitori skewers, crispy gyoza, tofu dishes, lightly battered tempura bites and tossed salads with daikon and yuzu dressing. Drink pairings are suggested (bring on the Asahi or Kirin beer and flasks of warm sake) and Yokota suggests a bit of freestyling, too. As he writes in his introduction: "When the izakaya is your own home ... you don't need to feel constrained by any rules."

■ newsouthbooks.com.au
SUSAN KUROSAWA

SNAP DECISIONS

Reasons to be cheerful

SUSAN KUROSAWA

At Kokomo Private Island in Fiji, head chef Caroline Oakley looks me in the eye and raises an eyebrow. I am a pernickety eater who's asked for a dish without a few ingredients and have boldly suggested what could work as replacements.

Her fellow chef, Manasa Burekama Jr, is

almost doubled over with suppressed laughter. He prods Caroline from behind and she can hold that stern look no longer. Suddenly she lets out a gale of giggles, Manasa joins in, and their combined laughter almost raises the roof of the resort's beachside casual restaurant, which goes by the corny name of Walker D'Plank, a shout-out to the billionaire Australian owner, Lang Walker.

Caroline is an accomplished chef, dishing up the most delicious lobster tempura imaginable. But her kitchen skills are not the sole reason for this column. Friday was the International Day of Happiness and Caroline has been named an ambassador in Tourism Fiji's 2020 Bulanaire Program, designed to recognise Fiji's "tourism front-liners" and spread the so-called Bula Spirit with visitors from across the world.

"Nothing is more rewarding to me than seeing someone celebrate my food [and] every



Caroline Oakley at Kokomo Private Island

single person I have ever cooked for, I remember and celebrate their return as if they were my own family," says Caroline.

It's the second year of the campaign, which surely comes with perfect timing as the world

reels from the effects of COVID-19 and climate change disruption.

Meantime, at Kokomo Private Island, and indeed so many other resorts in Fiji, there's a sense of time stood still, despite the advent of private plunge pools, freshly trained mixologists shaking up Bulatinis and the welcome expansion of nature-based options on activities agendas. This pause-button mood feels reassuringly right, as if the world is not so out of kilter after all.

And that's Fiji all over — wide smiles that lasso you in, the choral singing of angels, rugby-sized chaps lifting you off the ground in bear hugs, the pranks (here's looking at you, Manasa), the genuine tears shed during the Isa Lei song of farewell, the almost instant but abiding friendships. Bula, vinaka.

■ fiji.travel/bula

Follow on Instagram: @susankurosawa