

# detours



Indulge shoe obsession in city trip  
– Page 84

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APN News & Media



ESCAPE THE RAT RACE: Vanuatu offers visitors astoundingly calm beaches, the remains of World War II United States military installations, and the exquisite Aore Island Resort.

# More than meets the eye

**V**ANUATU is the classic escape destination. It remains in the minds of the world as the stereotypical tropical holiday with askew palm trees lining the beachside and locals nodding hello as you drink a colourful cocktail the size of a fox terrier. Traditionally, honeymooners and rat-race escape artists land in the capital Port Vila, on the island Efate, and don't stray far. It has duty free shopping, easy access to the stunning Cascades waterfalls and rockpools and is also a well-trodden stop for cruise-line passengers to pick up some

**Owen Jacques** discovered that, behind the classic escape destination, Vanuatu has something more exquisite

duty-free wares before ducking back on to their floating resort. But to the lesser-travelled north is Espiritu Santo, a region laced with the husks of United States military installations from World War II. Tourists are treated to crystal-clear waters, tinted blue as the limestone beneath gives an otherworldly feel at the Riri Riri River Blue Hole, and the astounding calm at Champagne Beach, which

is lined with eye-catching coloured fabrics billowing in the breeze. These are the tourist attractions of Santo, but the real pleasure is by the water on tranquil Aore Island. The island is a 10-minute water taxi from the small but lively Santo-town – and is exactly what you imagine Vanuatu to be. The Aore Island Resort – owned by an Australian and run with the help of people from Santo tribes –

is exquisite. The rooms do not have televisions or radios, but when the warmth in the air dies down gently into the evening, you are left with the sound of the water outside your back balcony. It proves a welcome escape after a day of zooming about pot-holed roads en route to beaches and other attractions. And while the resort does have an internet connection, you will be hard-pressed to tear yourself away

from the beachside view of yachts pulling up on the horizon and zipping into shore for a quick bite before ducking back to their waterborne homes. To give an indication of just how serene Aore Island was, on the second night there, an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale hit. I lay in the bed and felt the room shake and, though I was stirred, I was far from perturbed. These small earthly jitters, I was told, were frequent and most enjoy them as being akin to the ultimate massage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82

## Special Gold Coast Holiday Offer 5 Nights for 2 Adults \$299

TOTAL ACCOMODATION COST

Phone Lines open from Monday 9am Through to Thursday 6pm or until sold out

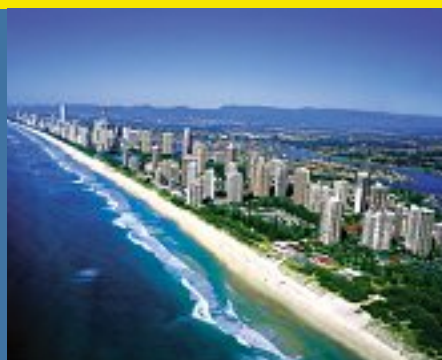
The first 552 people who phone  
**(07) 3420 4104 or  
(07) 3420 4103**

and pay a \$30 deposit with a credit card will secure this fantastic holiday that can be taken anytime in the next 12 months, leaving a balance of \$269. These holidays make great gifts or fund raising prizes.

No hidden catches or clauses. Phone lines will be open from Monday at 9am until sold out.

### BONUS:

Secure 2 holidays with a \$60 deposit (this entitles you to 2x5 nights or 10 nights) and receive a third deposit free, then you can enjoy an even longer holiday or give one away.



### ALSO AVAILABLE

- 5 Nights - Cairns \$399
- 5 Nights - Tropical Island \$379
- 5 Nights - Coffs Harbour \$289
- 5 Nights - Maroochydore \$339
- 5 Nights - Hervey Bay \$399
- 5 Nights - Mooloolaba \$449
- 5 Nights - Nelson Bay \$430
- 5 Nights - Whitsundays \$599

Over some school holidays and special events a surcharge may apply. Children or extra adults only \$15 per night.