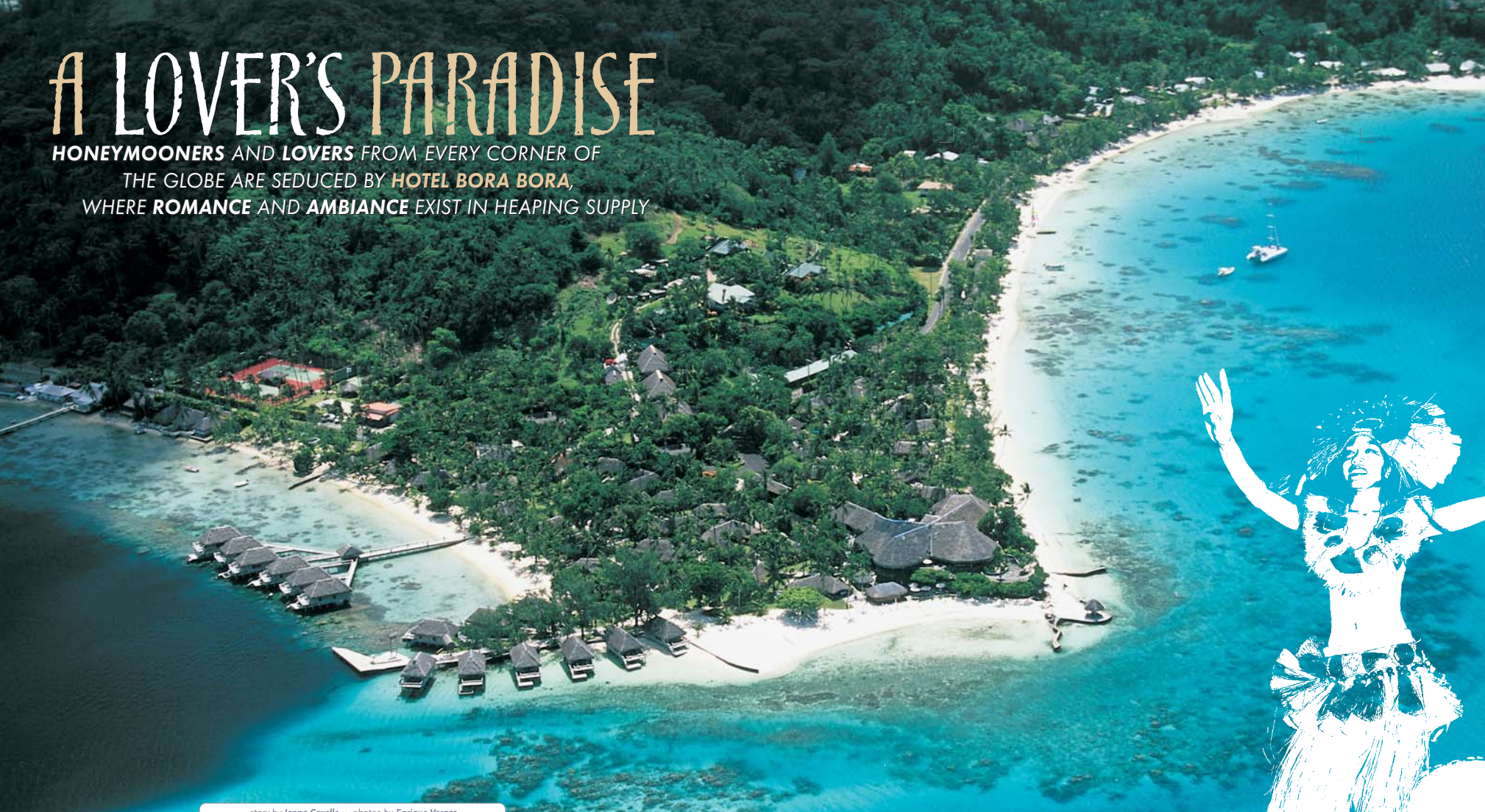


A LOVER'S PARADISE

HONEYMOONERS AND **LOVERS** FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE ARE SEDUCED BY **HOTEL BORA BORA**, WHERE **ROMANCE** AND **AMBIANCE** EXIST IN HEAPING SUPPLY



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IA ORANA!

WELCOME TO FRENCH POLYNESIA'S HOTEL BORA BORA, THE ULTIMATE RESORT DESTINATION THAT HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH HONEYMOONERS, ROMANCE, LUXURY AND EXTREME FORCES OF NATURE!

If the acquisition of Hotel Bora Bora by Amanresorts in 1988 was a blessing to the resort world, then they have been particularly generous in creating this ultimate Polynesian destination – a gift for which you will be eternally grateful. Hotel Bora Bora is nestled on the shore of a turquoise lagoon that cradles a magnificent barrier reef giving way to three pristine beaches that laze under the lush, emerald-green summit of Mount Otemanu.

When you step onto the wooden-planked dock of this lagoon lair you're greeted by friendly staff, euro-cheek kisses, cool champagne, a Tiari lei and the immediate recognition that you'll be returning to this haven sooner than later. As I was gently ushered off the dock, I witnessed a mother and child grabbing fresh bread rolls from baskets hanging on the dock rail. They tossed the torn pieces into the cerulean water and dozens of finned rainbows spiraled upward from beneath the dock, gleefully swallowing the tiny pots of gold. Had I been magically transported to paradise? I think so.

At daybreak, barefoot gardeners quietly rake the resort's meandering walkways and tend the natural gardens while housekeepers balance their linen wheelbarrows and everyone, and I mean everyone, says "Hello." My accommodation was a thatched faré (the Tahitian word for home, pronounced 'faray'), set amidst a tropical garden, with a short pathway leading to the lagoon. I entered my home by the sea and was later informed that I lit up like a "dinoflagellate" – a minuscule sea creature that emits flashes of light whenever they are excited. I was excited for an obvious reason – this simple abode was simply grand. The fare boasted a living room, a bedroom with a king-size, four-poster bed, an en-suite sitting room, a bathroom with



(OPPOSITE) HOTEL BORA BORA SPILLS OUT INTO THE LAGOON, WHERE BRIGHTLY COLORED FISH SWIM BENEATH YOUR FEET. FROM THE FAMED GAZEBO ON THE POINT, YOU CAN ENJOY THE MORNING BREEZE OR A FIERY SUNSET. (ABOVE) NUMEROUS CORAL HEADS OFFER SHELTER FOR ALL TYPES OF MARINE LIFE. THE TRANSPARENT, TURQUOISE WATER PROVIDES GREAT SNORKELING JUST OFF THE BEACH IN FRONT OF THE HOTEL.



(LEFT) IN PERFECT RHYTHM, BEAUTIFUL TAHITIAN DANCERS INTRODUCE GUESTS TO A SENSUAL AND ELECTRIFYING DOSE OF FRENCH POLYNESIAN CULTURE. (OPPOSITE TOP) LONG STRETCHES OF WHITE SAND BEACH ENCIRCLE THE PROPERTY, OFFERING SPECTACULAR VIEWS TO INFINITY. FREQUENTLY DESERTED, YOU CAN STROLL THE SHORELINE HAND IN HAND OR BATHE IN THE WARM SHALLOW WATERS OF THE PROTECTED LAGOON. (OPPOSITE BOTTOM) THE NIGHT IS ABLAZE WITH ARTISTRY, AS PATRICK THE FIRE DANCER TWIRLS BURNING TORCHES IN A CHOREOGRAPHED BALLET OF FLAMES.

a pedestal tub, and was enclosed by lava stonewalls, a private swimming pool and an outdoor sundeck. Atop the coffee table sat a massive complimentary gift basket overflowing with island fruits and a bottle of champagne. On the duvet-covered bed lay bright blue and yellow, hand-dyed Tahitian pareos and an array of flower petals. I've discovered that what separates good hotels from the great, is that great hotels are all about details and service. Clearly, Hotel Bora Bora understands this distinction.

Taking notice of my growling stomach, I decided it was time to put the hotel restaurant to a taste test. Lunch at the resort's Matira Terrace Restaurant overlooking the breezy lagoon, was nothing short of fantastic. The tables are built from monkey-pod trees, the roof is of pandanus and the waitresses are barefoot and smiling. I indulged myself with a freshly grilled tuna sandwich, crisp pomme frites and French Polynesia's legendary Hinano beer. The food and drink here is delish I tell you, simply delish!

After finishing lunch I walked the grounds and soon realized that I might not even dust off the sand to explore the island because everything I could possibly need or see lay just inside these castle walls. The resort's quaint boutique presents a selection of local art and crafts with a range of books and island clothing, including the colorful pareos that were peacefully resting on my bed. Hotel Bora Bora also houses a black pearl showroom that drips seductively with certified pearls and original jewelry. Okay, I admit it – I treated myself to a pair of black pearl studs – and my girlfriends are soooo jealous! There are two tennis courts that can be lit for night play and rackets and balls are provided complimentary. The resort also offers volleyball and basketball. And, if you're feeling social, there's an activity center with a pool table, card tables, a book exchange



and a selection of games. If action and adventure is what you seek, the hotel offers a myriad of excursions such as Aquascope – a semi-submersible submarine that gives a full underwater experience – snorkeling, diving and jeep safaris, breathtaking helicopter rides, deep-sea fishing, overnight sail boat charters, horse back riding, water and jet skiing, parasailing and glass bottom boat rides. All outings can be arranged on site at the Hotel's Raititi Lounge. And when you're exhausted from the fun – schedule a massage in the privacy of your fare. Now, this is what I call all-inclusive!

Wednesday night is the spectacular, Soiree Polynesienne, a weekly event put on by the Hotel. And let me tell you - this spectacle is awe-inspiring! The evening of color begins with a buffet style feast boasting a cornucopia of succulent meats, fresh fish and seafood, seasonal fruits and vegetables with a dessert bar that lends a new meaning to "aphrodisiac properties"! Down on the beach, rows of hotel guests encircled a curious palm tree and a proud bonfire roared neared the water's edge. Hula-clad dancers sashayed in a single file line onto their stage of white sand as an ensemble of musicians played guitar chords, beat drums and crooned Tahitian lyrics. The dancing dames swayed their hips and shimmed their shoulders until sweat beaded on their skin like tiny lucent pearls. The finale – Patrick the fire dancer, an island celebrity, is the flesh and blood replica of a romance novel hero. As the flames cast light on his



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) SIMPLE AND ELEGANT, TRADITIONAL POLYNESIAN TEAK FURNITURE ADorns THE SUITES, INVITING GUESTS TO EMBRACE THE INTERIOR WITH AN AFTERNOON NAP; THE HOTEL BORA BORA Oozes OF TROPICAL AMBIENCE—LUXURY SUITES FEATURE PERSONAL SWIMMING POOLS AND SECLUDED GARDENS FOR THE ULTIMATE, INTIMATE ESCAPE; HAMMOCKS ARE STRUNG FROM TREE TO TREE AMIDST THE LUSH MANICURED GARDENS ENTICING GUESTS TO STOP AND REST IN THE TROPICAL PARADISE; A SPECIAL GIFT IS PLACED ON YOUR BED DAILY. TIARE FLOWERS ADD A RICH FRAGRANCE AND HAND-MADE PAREOS ADD SPLASHES OF COLOR TO THE DÉCOR WHILE PROVIDING STYLE AND PRACTICALITY AS AN AFTERNOON DRESS.



sculptured torso, he twirled batons of fire between his legs, under his arms, behind his back and twenty-feet into the air. Just when I thought the show was over the dancers invited the audience to participate in one-on-one dance lessons. The folklore and traditional Tahitian music and dance created images of art in motion that still float around in my mind months later.

As I stood on the dock embracing a gracious farewell by the hotel staff, an occasion that was marked by the presentation of hand-strung seashell necklaces and more champagne, I recalled something the hotel manager, Martial Thevenaz said to me. "You know something? There's no word for "service" in the Tahitian language. But that's never stopped

us and never will." Now let me tell you, experiencing five-star service at Hotel Bora Bora, where there is no word to describe "service" in the native tongue is as much of a delicious contradiction as one might hope to uncover. In fact, I suspect that the reason there's no word for "service" is because hospitality is such an instinctive way of life for Tahitians that they don't even consider the absence of it. I give five stars and three cheers to the Hotel Bora Bora – Hip, Hip, Hooraay!!!

HOTEL BORA BORA

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