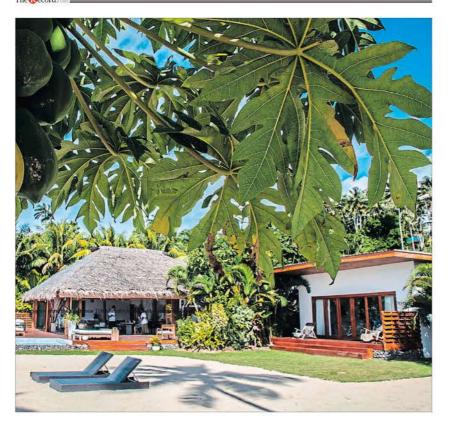
RECORD Travel



Where paradise is more than sand and sea

Fijians love their country, and love to show it off to visitors

TAVENUL PUI — If Piji was nothing more than sand and sea, palm fivods and flowers, it wouldn't nation which South Pucific beach resort you visited. Every vacation would be just another be him achievation.

But after 15 years and a suny visite to this 335-361 and another post years and a suny visite of this 335-361 and another years and a suny visite promises a unique experience.

What is the secret if it is the Fijians themselves, more the Fijians themselves, more the Fijians themselves in the property of the property of

themselves, proud to be Fijian and proud to show you their country.

Sau Bey Resort, on Vanua Levu, the second largest iduals was the first stopen my most recent trip to Piji. Still jed-lagged, I was stilling on the deck of the bodgs, goating our the bey them and two hands and a pair of citypers appeared, fallowed by a been group easter, fallowed by a been group easter, fallowed by a breat part of the bodd look of the wind with the part of the bodd look of the wind with the wind wit



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at these tiny white flowers. These bushes are rare, but native." He paused, scanning the hillisde. "This was beare when we bought it. Carroll and I planted everything you see," "How did you ever find this spot?" I asked. "Coming across the bay, you can't see it."

asked, "Coming across the boy, you can't see if."

"That's easy," he said. "Fiji is home. I've been to must of these islands, dived every reef. Anything you want to know, people, polities, gardens, just task. De you drink wine? Maybe later."

"Islaready not Carrell, who emerged from hor garden to show me San Bay's four coceans'eve burse (BOOR Say), i.e. cottages, each equipped with big beds, mosquito netting, pretate belifs, offer malores, a cookie jar and air conditioning, composed to the condition of the same of the same seems of the same seems

"bulas" and firm handshakes. "You must be thirty," eaid bartonder William Cohra, year termining, big smile, handing me Fji's traditional welcome drink of fewls occount water toughed with flower, Just four years old, Tibles Beach is still growing, adding two burses and a dire shop-later this year. The burses are sleek and simple, unchattered white with minimalist furnishings and bold Asian and Fjiim art. The main folgs, sirty and spacious with two open-air sides, looks out over a sandy beach and the blust of blue water. Aust four years old. Tikes Beach it still growing, adding two but and a dive account of the second o

roared over Fiji, in February 2018. Clumps of newly grown coral, yellow, beige and red, looked healthy, But, couldn't miss the piles of dead coral ripped out by wind and waves. "It was a Category 5 storm, the worst one ever," said Lebaivalu, "The Pacific Ocean is warmer than it used in he."

And it was my second visit, so I knew what to expect. Total privacy among tall palms and landscaped gardens; luxurious hatched burses that feel Fijain but offer the latest in luxury; males of cken white sand, sloping sently out into deep water, with ceen views to the horizon. Less obvious hot more important is that Yasawa Rosent is, in its own way, both sevetern resort and Fijain village. Blending two cultures, it erichants and enlightness travellers and reminds the staff—maids, waiters, guides, gardeners, and handymen—that they aren't just employees, but hosts. Why does this matter? Because Yisawa Island Resort, like most Fijain beach roots, occupies beased land, owned and controlled by the local chief and the clan. A warm parmership and shared traditions benefit both resort and the data of the latest clauses of the sort and the clan.

traditions benefit to one village.

I did what I always do at Yasawa: I swam, organized a beach plenic up the coast, to med Bohama and visited the famous Blue Lagoon Coves, where you take a deep breath, with under water through a narrow channel (guided by a strong, kindly Pijian man's and pop up in a mysterious, sunlit pool.

Figian munit and pop up in a no sumitive sumitive sumitive sumitive sumitive summers are summers as the sum and over the yourdern. Lipided my fellow travellers—Limited spirits all—at my favorative pooliside bar, too string our adventure amid point frounds and flowers, and rebashing another day in paradise.