

Orchids in The Wild

The OCA goes to New Guinea and New Britain!



Oct 14-28 with optional extension to New Britain Oct 29-Nov 3, 2019

This “Orchids in the Wild” trip to the the highlands of Papua New Guinea starts by everyone meeting in the city of Port Moresby. We fly to the town of Mt. Hagen where we will spend the next week. We will stay at the Magic Mountain lodge, a lovely resort nestled at the base of Magic Mountain and Mt. Hagen. From this base of operations we will make day trips into different parts of the New Guinea highlands, enjoying the culture, local people, incredible birds and the amazing orchids of this incredible area. Mid week we will travel to a lodge at the base of the highest mountain in New Guinea (Mt. Wilhelm), where we will make several treks into the cloud forest to see orchids in situ. Back to Mt. Hagen where we will fly back to Port Moresby and then two additional days in this area exploring nature parks and reserves.



PROPOSED ITINERARY

Monday Oct 14. Arrival in Port Moresby, welcome dinner at hotel. Those arriving early may want to visit the national museum in Port Moresby at their own expense.

Tuesday Oct 15. Tour group transfers from Port Moresby to Magic Mountain lodge at 2400 m elevation in the Western Highlands Province. If daylight permits, go in search of orchids around the lodge. In the trees surrounding the lodge look for *Dendrobium vexillarius*, *Mediocalcar decoratum*, *Cadetia* sp., *Spathoglottis papuana*, *Epiblastis* sp. and *Dendrobilum* sp. There is also the opportunity to spot a number of bird species here including honeyeaters, brown sicklebills and pygmy parrots.



Overnight in lodge.

Wednesday, October 16. In the morning we will follow some trails into the bush looking for orchids. We hope to find *Dendrobium cutbberstonii*, *D. subclausum*, *Mediocalcar bifolium*, *Cadetia* sp. and *M. decoratum* in bloom. We should also find some terrestrial species including *Spathoglottis* and *Liparis*. After lunch we will transfer to a small orchid farm near Magic Mountain. Expect to see orchids, exotic plants, birds, waterfall (small) and a cave with skeletons of a man who died in tribal warfare some 50-100 years back who was left in the bush/ jungle to suffer & die. Last year we found quite a few *Balanophora papuana* (a saprophyte, not an orchid), several different *Bulbophyllum* and *Dendrobium* species, and *Coelogyne fragrans*. The view overlooking Mt. Hagen valley is spectacular. Retire to Magic Mountain in the late afternoon. As always, just sitting on the deck outside your cabin you are likely to spot honeyeaters, birds of paradise and other New Guinea endemic birds.

Thursday, October 17. After breakfast we will travel to Mr. Pint's orchid farm, about 1 hr from the lodge. The site is on a mountain overlooking Mt. Hagen city, villages and farms down the valley. The garden features an amazing collection of orchids found in the surrounding forest, naturalized on the trees, shrubs, and tree ferns as well as directly in the garden. There are fantastic displays of *Dendrobium cutbberstonii*, *D. helwigianum*, *D. violaceum*, *D. cyanocentrum*, *D. subclausum*, *Coelogyne fragrans*, *Paphiopedilum violascens*, a *Pterostylis* native to New Guinea, and lots of other gems naturalized in the garden. Nearby we can hike to some plants of the carnivorous species, *Nepenthes maxima*.

Following lunch we visit the Mt. Hagen market, one of the best markets in PNG, where produce from the gardens is sold. After

To enhance the experience for each traveler, the total number of participants will be strictly limited to 12. Although there will not be extremely strenuous hikes on this trip, much of it will be at altitudes of 6000-8000 feet. Thus, all participants should be in good health and physical condition. The OCA reserves the right to limit participants due to health or fitness reasons. Because of the limited number of spaces, interested participants should send their deposits to the OCA as soon as possible to reserve a spot on the tour.



the visit to the market we transfer to the village of Wrup to see the mudmen and discover why they create such elaborate masks and paint their bodies with grey mud.

Friday, October 18. We start the day off early, traveling to a ridge about 1 hr from the lodge. After a short hike to the top of the ridge, we will spend the morning bird-watching. On this ridge we should be able to see at least two different species of bird of paradise, as well as numerous other colorful bird species. The forest here also has some interesting plants including orchids, and gesneriads. We return to Mt. Hagen for lunch, then journey to the Wagi Valley where we will visit a delightful tropical garden featuring a native orchid collection and a world class collection of different Heliconias. This village is the home of the skeleton men, and they will put on a show and explain their customs.

Saturday October 19. In the morning we travel to Rondon Ridge, roughly 1.5 hr from Magic Mountain lodge. The morning starts with a short hike up to the top of the ridge for more bird watching, where we should see the displays of several bird of paradise species. As we hike up the ridge we will look for orchids and other interesting plants and animals (e.g, insects, small lizards, birds) along the way. We plan to have lunch at a nearby lodge, where we will have the opportunity to visit their private orchid garden and their small collection of native animals (tree kangaroo, cuscus, wallaby, deer).



Sunday, October 20. After breakfast we transfer to the Paiya village where we can attend a church service with the local people, meet the members, sing songs and play music. Visitors are encouraged to present a song, and the locals are always eager to





Hagen village dancers.
Photo by Mary Gerritsen



Dendrobium dichaeoides
Photo by Mary Gerritsen by Gary

learn more about where the tourists come from etc. Those not wanting to come can have a relaxing morning at Magic Mountain. After lunch we will visit the Kumul Lodge in adjacent Enga province. Here there is a lovely balcony where one can watch many different species of birds (including parrots, honey eaters and birds of paradise) feeding on fruit and seeds. We will then take a walk through the forest (or we can drive) down to a local orchid farm. The orchids are

from the adjacent forests and have been naturalized on tree ferns, trees and shrubs and are present in profusion! Expect to see a variety of *Bulbophyllum*, *Dendrobium*, and *Coelogyne* species, and there are sure to be species that you have never seen before!

Monday October 21. In the morning we will do some botanizing along the road to Tambul and then spend the remainder of the day at Paiya village where we will meet the Hagen wigmen, Paiya women dancing, facepainting, tour the cultural center (throwing spears and shooting arrows if you like) and meet the chief and his wives. We will have a special treat, a traditional mumu, a pig roast with vegetables, cooked in a pit with hot stones. The entire community joins in on the feasting.

Tuesday Oct 22. Today we transfer to Mt. Wilhelm where we will stay at Betty's Lodge in Kegesegul. Most of this day will be spent driving as it will take over 6 hours to get to the lodge. Lots of great scenery!

Tour Costs

Double Occupancy (shared accommodation) \$4800

Single Occupancy \$5500

If you would like to have a roommate to reduce costs please let us know, and we will do our best to match you with another traveler.

To ensure a spot on the tour, submit your \$1000 deposit as soon as possible. Due to the transportation and hotel limitations, the number of participants will be strictly limited.

Included:

- Accommodation at all hotels mentioned in the itinerary.
- Meals as specified (basically full board throughout)
- Vehicle, driver / guide and gas throughout the tour
- Internal flight
- Taxes, Tolls and Entrance fees and guided walks at all parks/ reserves in the itinerary.

Not included:

- Alcoholic Drinks and beverages
- Tips
- International flights. Participants to make own flight arrangements



Dendrobium cutbertsonii
Photo by Mary Gerritsen



Dendrobium helwigianum
Photo by Mary Gerritsen



Bulbophyllum aristolabre
Photo by Mary Gerritsen



Huli wigman
Photo by Mary Gerritsen



Hagen wigwomen
Photo by Mary Gerritsen

Key Dates

April 1, 2019

Deposit (\$1000 per person) due. However, due to the limited numbers, to ensure a spot, you are advised to get your deposit in as soon as possible! Early deposits are needed to book flights from Port Moresby to Mt. Hagen. It is also suggested that travelers make their international plane reservations early to ensure the best prices.

July 1, 2019

Balance of trip costs due. Refund of deposit can not be made after this date. For double occupancy the amount due would be \$3800, single \$4500.

October 14, 2019

Plan to arrive in Port Moresby, PNG. International connections can be made through Singapore or Brisbane Australia.

October 28, 2019

End of tour. Participants may either fly home or continue on optional New Britain extension.

Payment and more information

Checks should be made **payable to the OCA** and mailed to:

Mary Gerritsen, OCA Treasurer

541 Parrott Drive

San Mateo, CA 94402

International travelers, contact Mary Gerritsen for bank transfer information

(mary@orchidconservationalliance.org) bank transfer information.



Mt Hagen Wigmen and their chief
Photo by Mary Gerritsen

Wednesday October 23. Today we go on the longest trek of the tour, an approximately 3 hr hike to the Base Camp and Lake Piunde and Yaundo. We will be accompanied by local guides and porters. We will spend the day exploring orchids around the lakes, extensive grassland, and subalpine forest. We then walk back to Betty's lodge. Some of the orchids that grow here include *Bulbophyllum lagarophyllum*, *Ceratostylis acutifolia*, *Corybas subalpinus*, *Dendrobium alaticulinum*, *Dendrobium aurantoroseum*, *Dendrobium polysema*, *Dendrobium sulfureum*, various *Oberonia* sp., *Phreatia* sp., *Pterostylis caulescens*,

Thursday October 24. Today we will explore more of the orchid rich trails around Betty's lodge. Betty's lodge is renowned for its fresh fruit and vegetables from their garden and locally harvested trout.

Friday October 25. After breakfast we will transfer back to Mt Hagen. Overnight in guesthouse in Mt. Hagen.

Saturday October 26. After breakfast we will go to the airport and travel back to Port Moresby. After check in we will tour the highlights of Port Moresby-the Botanic Garden, the handicraft market and the fish market. Overnight at the Holiday Inn Express in Port Moresby

Sunday October 27. After an early awakening, we travel to Warirata National Park where we will observe the Raggiana Bird of Paradise, hopefully putting on its mating display. This park is also rich in orchids, and we will explore different areas in search of them. *Bulbophyllum fletcherianum* is reputed to grow here! This is a lower elevation area, so expect lowland orchids and other interesting flora. In the afternoon we will visit the Port Moresby Adventure Park featuring endemic fauna and the National Orchid Collection.

Sunday October 28. End of tour. Participants travel home, or can join the RedFern tour to New Britain.



Dendrobium sulfureum

Photo by Gary Yong Gee



Bulbophyllum lagarophyllum

Photo by Gary Yong Gee



Pterostylis caulescens

Photo by Gary Yong Gee GEeGee

Level of activity and accommodation

Walks in the reserves and to the birding sites are at most 3 hrs (with the exception of the Mt. Wilhelm hike) and can be on a variety of paths, some slippery and narrow, others easy and flat. Some climbing can be expected. The order of walks may change. In general a good fitness level and open mind will be required. Car journeys will be a maximum of 2-3 hours, with the exception of the days we travel to and from Betty's Lodge, which are an all day journey. We will stay in comfortable though not luxurious lodges and hotels throughout the trip. Vegetarians are likely to find limited food options, and it is suggested you bring (or purchase locally) some snacks and foods for those days when there is no vegetarian option (e.g. the mumu in the Paiya village). New Guinea has a wide range of tropical diseases and it is advised to check with your physician to determine recommended immunizations or other precautions (e.g. medications to prevent altitude sickness, anti-malarial medications). We do suggest that you take malaria prophylactics, and make sure your immunizations for tetanus and polio are up to date. Mosquitos and other biting insects are present in some places, particularly in lowland forests. There are also occasional venomous snakes (lowland), although it is unlikely we will encounter them. Regardless, sturdy shoes and attention to the environment surrounding you are suggested. We will send out a list of recommended clothing, equipment, etc. to tour participants a few months prior to our departure.

NEW BRITAIN ADD ON TOUR



Optional Add-on Post New Guinea Tour to New Britain

We have teamed up with Stewart McPherson of RedFern Adventures to offer an optional, and really cool, trip to New Britain. New Britain is the largest island in the Bismark archipelago of Papua New Guinea. The island is roughly the size of Taiwan. New Britain was largely formed by volcanic processes, and there are several active volcanoes on the island, including [Ulawun](#) (the highest volcano in Papua New Guinea), [Langila](#), the [Garbuna Group](#), the [Sulu Range](#), and the volcanoes [Tavurvur](#) and [Vulcan](#) of the [Rabaul caldera](#). A major eruption of Tavurvur in 1994 destroyed the [East New Britain](#) provincial capital of [Rabaul](#). Most of the town still lies under metres

New Britain Add on tour

Total cost of New Britain tour: Double occupancy \$2300, single \$2600.

April 1, 2019

\$1000 deposit due. Note this is **in addition** to the New Guinea Orchid Tour. Tour price includes hotels, meals, round trip airfare from Port Moresby to New Britain, ground transportation. It does not include tips, alcoholic beverages or international airfares. Early deposit needed to book in country air transport.

July 1, 2019

Full price of tour due. Balance of \$1300 double, \$1600 single occupancy due July 1.

October 29, 2019

Tour participants meet up with Stewart McPherson's group in Port Moresby

November 3, End of tour.

We plan to take the first available flight in the morning; late afternoon/evening flights from Port Moresby to home countries can be planned or participants can stay an extra day and fly home on November 4. Note extra night hotel is not included in tour price.

of ash, and the capital has been moved to nearby [Kokopo](#).

Proposed Itinerary for the New Britain tour (note this is an extra cost, see side bar)

(Held in partnership with RedFern Adventures)

Tuesday October 29th

We meet in Port Moresby, and fly to Rabaul on the island of New Britain. Rabaul is a modern-day Pompeii. We explore the ruins of the city, which was buried in ash in 1994 (but completely safe to visit today). Dinner and overnight at Rabaul Hotel.

Wednesday October 30th: An early breakfast is followed by a transfer to the base of Mount Tavurvur, one of the volcanos that covered Rabaul in 1994. An easy, 40 minute climb takes us to the crater where we see steaming sulphur vents at sunrise (incredible views!). We descend the volcano, and visit geothermal hot springs, the wrecks of

crashed World War 2 planes, a fascinating local museum (filled with WW2 relics and tribal artefacts), WW2 Japanese bunkers and barge tunnels, and another museum collection of the WW2 vehicles left behind by both sides. In the afternoon, we meet artefact traders to see their beautiful carvings and traditional shell money. Dinner and overnight at Rabaul Hotel.

Thursday October 31st: We have four wheel drive vehicles available to explore orchid sites along roads and tracks in the Baining Mountains and highlands of New Britain. We may be able to visit several small orchid gardens and collections in Rabaul and Kokopo. Dinner and overnight at Rabaul Hotel.

Friday November 1st: We drive into the Baining Mountains to visit a village of the Kaket people. They invite us to take part in a traditional mumu feast (cooked on red-hot stones in an earth oven), and after dark, we witness their traditional fire dance (Baining men in large bark head-dresses jump through fire and sparks)! Dinner and overnight at Rabaul Hotel.



Fire dance of the Kaket people

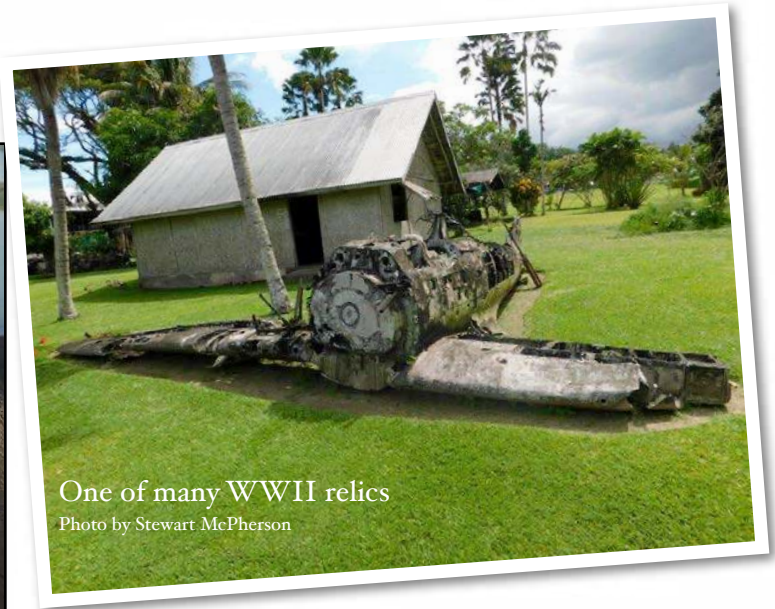
Photo by Stewart McPherson

Saturday November 2nd: We have a second day using four wheel drive vehicles to explore orchid sites in the highlands of New Britain. In the afternoon, we return to Rabaul and a BBQ lunch and (optional) snorkel on coral reefs, close to a Japanese WW2 submarine base (with tunnels which we can explore). Dinner and overnight at Rabaul Hotel.

Sunday November 3rd: Early morning flight to Port Moresby to connect to afternoon departing flights.



View of volcanoes on New Britain
Photo by Stewart McPherson



One of many WWII relics
Photo by Stewart McPherson



Shell money of New Britain
Photo by Stewart McPherson



View of volcanoes on New Britain
Photo by Stewart McPherson

ORCHIDS IN THE WILD TOURS

The Orchid Conservation Alliance offers several different tours every year. Our goals are to introduce orchid lovers to the habitats in which orchids grow, as well as to give participants an introduction to the countries we visit. We try to incorporate different aspects of the culture and natural history of the countries we visit in every tour. Thus you can expect to see orchids and other plants, birds, mammals, nature reserves, cultural features and other attractions of the countries we visit. Our tours are not “first

class” but we do try to have comfortable accommodations and good food. Expect to do some hiking, a little “roughing it” and have a great time. Many of our tour participants are repeat “visitors” who have joined us on as many as 7 tours! We hope you will join us to learn more about distant parts of the world and the orchids that grow there, and make some new orchid friends as well. We have lots of single tour participants, so don’t be afraid to go on your own.

If you have any questions about the tours, costs, itineraries or anything else, please do not hesitate to contact the OCA director in charge of the tour.

A portion of your tour cost is a tax deductible donation to the Orchid Conservation Alliance, a 501(c)3 not for profit organization. Thank you for your support!



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