

JULY/AUGUST 2011

# nau**ique**



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## **ROAMIN' HOLIDAY**

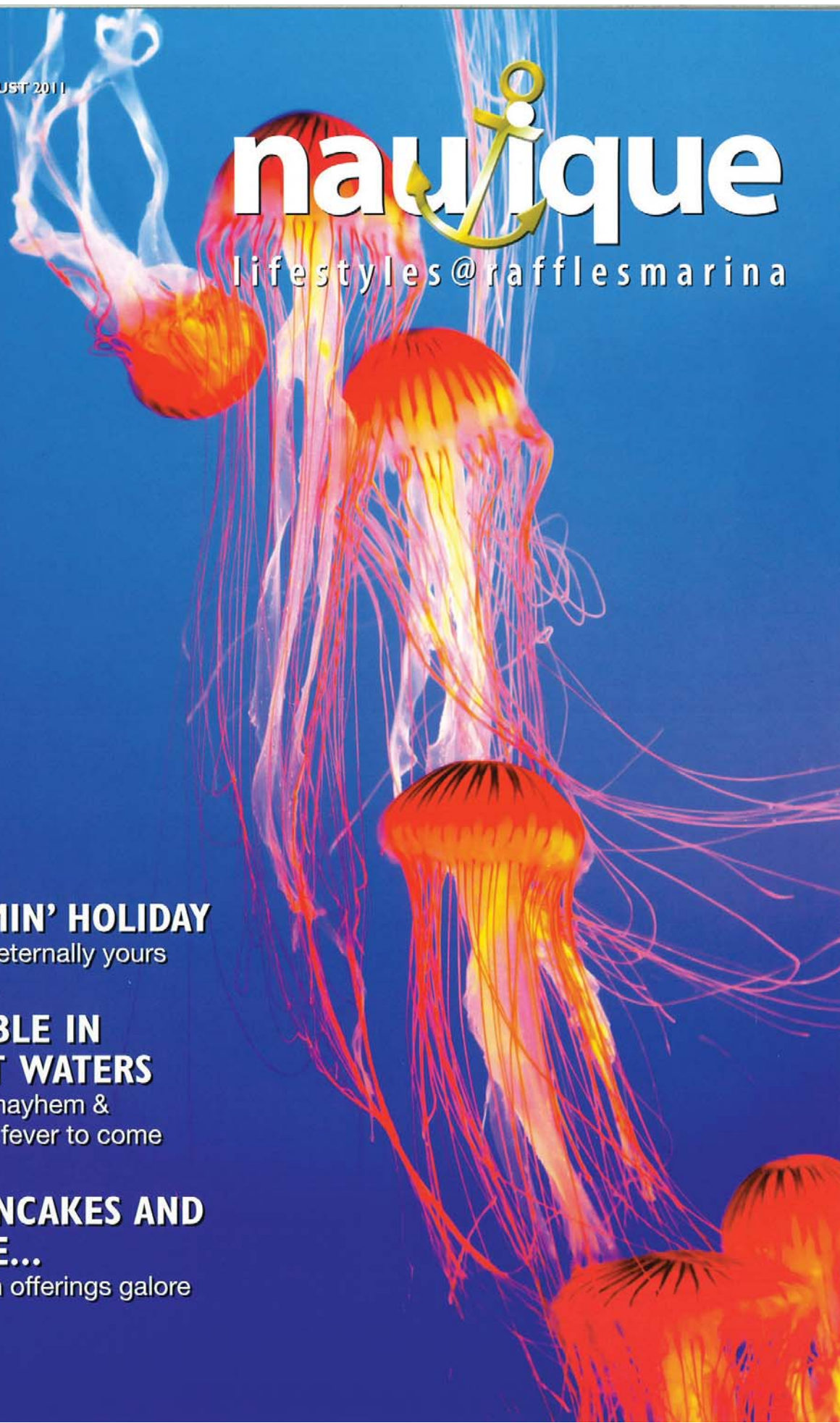
Rome, eternally yours

## **RUMBLE IN WEST WATERS**

Mast, mayhem &  
regatta fever to come

## **MOONCAKES AND MORE...**

Autumn offerings galore





# Refuse, Reuse, Recycle

During our coral reef survey a new substrate category had to be added – “Plastic.”

By Carol Milner



**M**enjangan Island is an idyllic location in northwestern Bali, part of Bali Barat National Park. It is a sacred island, uninhabited and surrounded by mangroves and coral reef. It is also the location of four sacred temples. Mir, Biosphere Foundation’s vessel, is moored close by to facilitate a marine conservation community outreach programme and coral reef survey.

During our survey, bags and wrappers and plastic cups were found amongst the mangroves, on beaches as well as corals and other marine life on the reef and in the water column. But not all the plastic drifts in from somewhere else. Tourists and local Balinese visiting the temples often leave their lunch boxes, bags and cans on the island, ignorant of the need to pick up their own garbage.

The plastic is not only an ugly sight but also harmful to the marine life. Floating plastic bags look like jellyfish, they are eaten by turtles and birds and can trap and entangle both fish and birds. Plastic waste can smother corals and sedentary marine life, limiting their access to sunlight and plankton to feed on, slowly starving and suffocating the animal to death. As plastic eventually breaks down into smaller and smaller particles, the tiny pieces are eaten by fish and enter the food chain. They are not metabolised and move up the chain as large prey feeds on each successive life. Recently there have been reports of plastic being found in fish for human consumption. Plastic also absorbs pollutants that do not dissolve in water and once ingested these pollutants can leach out to the consumer.

Internationally, over 500 billion plastic bags are used each year. Italy, Bangladesh, and Rwanda have banned plastic bags along with some towns and

cities in other countries. In Singapore this year, 11 percent of plastic was recycled ([www.zerowastesg.com](http://www.zerowastesg.com)). Plastic does not take notice of political boundaries and moves around the planet with the wind and currents. Thus it is all of our problem. While we are all responsible for creating a need for plastic, for wasting plastic and for throwing it away, we can make the difference and refuse it (use cloth bags at the market), recycle it if possible, or reuse it (such as plastic bottles).

Here in northwestern Bali, Biosphere Foundation joined with the local community to initiate “Friends of Menjangan”, a community conservation programme to inspire care for Menjangan Island and its reef. On May 7, we gathered together – politicians, fishermen, priests, scientists, lawyers, businessmen, school children and tourists – to pick up trash on the island, its beach and in the sea. There is a movement gathering momentum around the world to join together and stop the destruction of our biosphere. Join the voyage! Visit us at [www.biosfirindonesia.org](http://www.biosfirindonesia.org).

