

MARCH/APRIL 2007

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**VISIT RIVIERA
AT BOAT ASIA 2007**
From 19 to 22 April

**13TH SINGAPORE
STRAITS REGATTA**

More spills and thrills!

**PLANETARY CORAL
REEF FOUNDATION**

Voyage to Paradise



PARADISE FOUND



Next stop: The Anambas Islands, described by several Indonesians as the 'Paradise Islands' of the South China Sea. But first, a Batam stopover to meet Francis Lee (Raffles Marina), Dr Aji (Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries), Stephen Beng (Singapore Underwater Federation), and many others, who were interested in conserving the Anambas Islands. Before we parted, two pink dolphins surfaced beside us, a good omen for the voyage ahead!

After braving a tumultuous northeast monsoon, we emerged from the channel Selat Onas, which runs between Semut and Matak. In it lies a beautiful ridge of reef, crowned with large colonies of hard coral. Unfortunately there were some dead coral rubble, broken plates and branches, created by dynamite fishing, a popular fishing method in this area, until a few years ago.

At Penjalin, we admired impressive swathes of hard coral, forming reef scenes that were almost

The voyage of the *SV Infinity* continues as they leave Tioman, Malaysia, for the Anambas Islands. By **Orla Doherty**, Managing Director PCRF, on board *SV Infinity*.

perfect. The biomass of the fish life did not equal the diversity of the coral substrate, perhaps due to over-fishing, and oil deposits washed up ashore. Not quite our treasure island. But we were hunting for a different kind of treasure, the kind that comes when a group of people live the sea life that they dream of and synergise with the biosphere around them.

We found this in Terempah, a 'city' of sea-people with houses and roads built over the bay, boats and canoes bustling with cargo ships and ferries at the docks. We cemented friendships with natives including Stephen Kwek and his extended family, and visited the island's fish market, a pre-dawn affair that provided an insight into the surrounding waters. The local catch revealed healthy amounts of skipjack tuna, mackerel *tingiri*, jacks, snappers and other pelagics. But disturbing sights were the fins of juvenile sharks: A 40-cm white tip reef shark, which would have grown to two meters had it not been caught, and a guitarfish less than a third of its adult size.

We explored Dikar, then Bawah, our final anchorage. At last, we found our treasure—rock cliffs, lagoons, deep blue pools, baby blacktip sharks, mangroves and white sandy beaches! We celebrated Eibes' birthday on the beach, with rainbows before sunset, fronted by a silver lagoon and Orion watching over us. We had much to celebrate, as this phase of our expedition drew to a close and winds called us to other parts of Indonesia.

"Join the Voyage" of the SV Infinity, Raffles Marina's "club at sea" in Nautique and PCRF's homepage at www.pcrf.org. Together on our mission to conserve and protect the coral reefs and oceans, we can make a difference!

