MISOOL & TRITON BAY
MISOOL - THE PISANG ISLANDS - MOMON - TRITON BAY - THE KEI ISLANDS
SORONG TO TUAL
ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Misool & Triton Bay: **Sorong to Tual**

The cruising route used for this itinerary is indicated by the red line shown on the chart.

- **Embarkation Port:** Sorong
- **Disembarkation Port:** Tual
- **Estimated itinerary distance:** This reversible routing runs for 640 nautical miles.
Eastern Indonesia Odyssey

This anchorage and itinerary document concentrates on some of Indonesia’s most spectacular cruising grounds. Beginning at the harbour and airport hub of Sorong, capital of West Papua, the route follows a complex course that covers nearly over 600 nautical miles to finish at the harbour town of Tual, located at the centre of the Kei Islands, in the province of south-east Maluku.

There are several regions covered in this presentation, all of them with slightly different but equally wonderful characteristics. After leaving Sorong we head for the magical region of Misool, one of the famous “Four King” islands of Raja Ampat. Here we can explore a mind boggling array of exciting sites, both on land and under the sea.

Following an overnight motor south-east we come next to our next destination, the outlying Pisang Islands, a haven for divers and beach lovers alike before moving again onto the West Papua mainland to explore the otherworldly Momon waterfall, a gushing giant that flows directly into the Ceram Sea.

From Momon it is another motor down to the famed Triton Bay, one of the newer destinations among the Indonesian archipelago of 17,000 islands. At Triton we hope to be treated to up close encounters with the worlds largest fish, the whaleshark, as well as some of the very best coral reefs and diverse marine life that this amazing country has to offer.

We will finish this adventurous trip in yet another different destination, the Kei Islands, famed for their incredible coral reefs that fringe some of the very best beaches to be found on the planet.
Phase One: **Sorong to Misool**

**Day to day destinations:**
- 1: Sorong, West Papua
- 2: The Thousand Temples
- 3: Wagmab & Farondi
- 4: Balbulol
- 5: The Daram Group
- 6: The Wayil Group
- 7: Fiabacet: Misool Eco Resort
- 8: Gelu, Yillet & Boo

**ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO**
Waterways at The Thousand Temples

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Sorong, West Papua

Sorong is a fairly functional frontier town with few tourist amenities, although this is slowly changing with the construction of hotels and shopping malls. There are several supermarkets in town where basic supplies can be purchased as well as a daily market.

Mooring & Anchoring: Sorong Harbour has become increasingly busy in recent years due to the increase in interest in the Raja Ampat region. It is large though and has two different areas for anchoring.

Airport: Sorong Airport, also known as Domine Eduard Osok Airport, replaced the smaller, former World War II airfield, Jefman Airport on the island of Jefman many years ago. Like many airports in Indonesia it has just been rebuilt and now has a very modern terminal that has replaced the older much less functional building. It is just outside of the main town and only a 15-minute drive down to the pick-up point for boarding yachts in the main harbour area.

Flights to Sorong generally transit in Makassar, Ambon or Manado, all of which are international airports. Makassar links directly to Bali international airport while Manado has links to Singapore. Flight time for Makassar to Sorong is around two and a half hours and from Manado about one and half hours.

Airport Code: SOQ. Runway length: 2,500 metres. Elevation: 4 metres

Hotels: There is a lot of development going on in Sorong at the moment and many new hotels have sprung up, but best at the moment being The Swiss Bell, close to the airport and harbour.

Hospital: Medical facilities are not very good, there is a general hospital but this is fairly run down. There is also a naval hospital located along the main street linking the airport to the harbour.
Dive liveaboards in Sorong harbour

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Misool, South Raja Ampat

Misool Island is a remote tropical hideaway and the most southerly of the “Four King” islands that make up the Raja Ampat National Park. This world-renowned destination is a marine and terrestrial wonderland, and in this presentation, we are going to look more closely at the two island chains that extend far out into the open sea, away from the eastern end of this incredible island as well as the remarkable salt-water mangrove channels at the western end.

On land, the wild territory of east Misool is one of the most visually breath-taking and captivating regions of Raja Ampat. The island is heavily forested and at first sight, reveals nothing but a thick green carpet of dense forests and mangrove swamps. The rugged terrain is predominantly limestone, the frostily coloured rock clashing starkly with the deep green jungle. Moving east of the island a maze of limestone pinnacles jut sharply out of the blue sea, carved and eroded by the wind and waves and carpeted with luxurious vegetation. These are the northern line of islands which extend over 34 nautical miles east-south-east, finishing with the rocky islands of the Daram group.

Mirroring the northern island chain 14 nautical miles south is another line that stretches 24 nautical miles from the islands of the Pele group all the way down to the eastern ends of the islands of Boo and Warakaraket. The south line forms a barrier between the national park and the Ceram sea and, as with the northern mini archipelago, this one also features heavily forested elongated islands, some of them surprisingly high, that hide a wealth of topside treasures and adventures, and unparalleled marine activity options.
In between these two island chains, there are collections of other small islands, some of which support local villages. On many beautiful beaches can be found, most of which are made up of pure white sand, fringed with coconut trees leading out to the stunningly colourful reefs that are a trademark of the area.

The sea gardens of Raja Ampat hold 75% of all known species of corals and tropical marine animals in the world and boast some of the highest levels of marine biodiversity on the planet while the channels formed by the complicated topside layout serve as busy traffic lanes for many large sea creatures, including whales while this relatively small region is home to some of the very best dive sites on the planet.

Caves & Lagoons
Aside from the enchanting panoramic scenery and wealth of marine life, Misool is also home to ancient cultural sites. A number of ancient rock paintings and designs can be found on the walls of the many caves and rock formations throughout the islands, some dating back approximately 5,000 years. There is a great deal to explore and experience at Misool, from cathedral-like cave systems and hidden lagoons to the magnificent reefs that support an incredible array of marine life. Misool Island and the surrounding area is truly one of the earth’s most breath-taking natural wonders, the only problem for any lucky visitors is having the time to explore it all.

Scuba Diving
South-East Misool is a scuba divers’ dream destination featuring some of the most iconic dive sites to be found anywhere in the world. Covering an area of close to 500 square nautical miles...
there are wonderful dive sites to be found everywhere from the caves and walls along the northern line to the small rocky islets connected by marine ridges in the south. There are dive sites here to suit every taste, colourful corals combine with an astounding array of marine life to make diving at Misool and unmissable experience.

Most of the areas written about in this presentation mention just a few of the signature sites that can be visited during a trip to a specific location. At Misool there are far too many signature sites to write about, of such high quality that they are nearly all signature sites, and more are being found all of the time.

**Anchoring & Mooring**

One of the biggest problems for yachts visiting this far-flung region of Indonesia is finding secure anchorages. The nature of the seascape and the islands in it mean that most of the area is in fairly deep water. During our travels with both cruising superyachts and many of the liveaboard dive vessels that operate here, we have tried to come up with a list of useful and usable sites. The sites that are shown in this presentation are anchorages that we know and have used in the past but there are plenty of opportunities to find more.
Sagewin Island

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
The Thousand Temples

This fantastic, almost surreal, anchorage can be found about eight nautical miles along a line of islands extending to the east from the Misool mainland.

**Topside**: There is a lot to see and do from this anchorage area. Cave systems, mysterious jellyfish lakes, unforgettable tender trips through karst island seascapes and ancient rock art are only a few of this location’s many attractions.

**Tomolol Cave**: This is Misool’s most famous and most visited subterranean experience and features a river-sized waterway flowing through its massive interior. The cave is a sacred site for the local people and features a shrine in the waterway close to the entrance. Once at the entry point, it’s time to get ready to explore the inner space of this rocky cathedral. Lights, flotation, fins and wetsuits are the order of the day before making your way into the darkness to view the stalactites, stalagmites and other dark corners and passages of this spooky but fascinating place.
**The Thousand Temples Tender Ride:** An impressive area of sharp jagged rock islands and waterways that include one area where ancient wall paintings can be seen. This area also includes another, much dryer, cave excursion into one of the smaller islands.

**Lenmakana Jellyfish Lake:** A trek up and over into the very centre of one of the larger islands that hides a mysterious lake populated with moon jellyfish.

**Scuba Diving & Snorkelling**
Unfortunately, there are not really any good sites close by, the better diving can be found in what is known as the Farondi Channel, an exciting current swept passage around 10 nautical miles further east along the island line. There are many sites here that feature sheer walls, vast swim-throughs, caves and amazing corals and marine life that thrive in the strong currents. The dives in this channel can be fairly demanding and good diving experience is necessary.

**Anchorages:** Finding anchorages along either the north or south side of this part of the northern island chain is fairly easy. Positions are chosen on the fly, taking weather and sea conditions into consideration. There is a nice site close to the sandy barbecue beach on the north side and several positions along the south, although care must be taken here to avoid the pearl farm further west.

The best, and most secure anchorages are actually in the middle of the rocky Thousand Temple complex. This astonishingly scenic and enclosed area can be entered from either the north or south sides of the island chain, a tender pilot, once inside there is a consistent depth of 30 metres around the rocky bays and waterways with plenty of swinging room.

**Distances:** The Thousand Temples anchorages are around 18 nautical miles north-west of the Fiabacet area and 104 nautical miles south-west of Sorong using the Sagewin Strait route.
One of The Thousand Temples anchorages

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
3 Wagmab & Farondi

Location: Farondi and the larger island of Wagmab can be found almost half-way along the northern island line extending from east Misool.

Topside: The channel that separates Wagmab from Farondi is a favourite passing route for many of the yachts and dive vessels that visit Misool. It can sometimes appear dark and foreboding as the waters of the channel are often in the shadow of the impressive cliff faces of the surrounding islands. There is a long and winding bat cave at the back of one of the lagoons on Wagmab.

Beaches: There are one or two very small coves on the Farondi side but the best beach is on the south side of Wagmab just around the corner from the channel.

Snorkelling & Kayaking: Due to the strong currents that surge through the passage it is not recommended for snorkelling or kayaking but there is a very safe colourful reef just a few metres...
from the Wagmab beach on the south side of the island. Kayaking into the lagoons on the north-west side of Wagmab is the favoured area, especially if a visit to the long and winding bat cave is included. On the Farondi side of the passage, there are some more nice lagoons and channels to explore in a kayak.

**Scuba Diving:** Excellent but demanding. Sheer walls, vast swim-throughs, caves and amazing corals and marine life thrive in the strong currents. The dives in this channel are fairly demanding and good diving experience is necessary.

**Anchorages:** Farondi is not really a good place for overnight stops but there are two serviceable day anchorages on the north and south sides of Wagmab Island. For smaller vessels it is possible to enter and anchor some of the pools on the north side of Wagmab.

**Distances:** The Wagmab/Farondi channel is around 10 nautical miles east of the Thousand Temples anchorages, 15 nautical miles north from the Missol Eco Resort at Fiabacet and around 100 nautical miles south-west of Sorong using the Sagewin Strait route.
Wagmab anchorage

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO

KUDANIL EXPLORER
The Balbulol Island Complex

Location: The Balbulol island complex is just a mile or so to the east of the Wagmab/Farondi channel along the north island line.

Topside: This collection of karst islands is fairly high and very rocky and picturesque. The whole group spans nearly two nautical miles from north-west to south-east and encloses a wonderland of lagoons and islets with extremely steep sides. Another of Raja Ampat’s scenic highlights.

Beaches: There are some splendid beaches in the area too. Just a mile or so to the south lies a small island that features some fabulous white sand beaches along the northern shore surrounded by pretty shallow reefs, perfect for snorkellers.

Watersports: The best snorkelling in the area is over the dive sites of the Sagof group of islands a short distance in more open water to the east. The water clarity and marine life tend to drop off inside the lagoons.

Balbulol is a fantastic area to explore by taking a small tender or kayaks and paddle-boards in and around the waterways and lagoons surrounded by mountainous scenery. One small inlet worth having a look at is the “Beehive Lagoon”. At high tide, it is possible to take a tender into this magical space by crossing over a shallow reef. Once inside several perfectly formed domed karst limestone edifices appears that looks very much like a collection of massive bee-hives.
**Scuba Diving:** Balbulol is a great place to experience the underwater world of Misool. Just to the west there is the aforementioned Farondi channel with its high voltage sites and a little way to the east, following the island line down to Sagof and Epfian there are even more great dive sites.

**Anchorages:** Probably the best anchorage is inside the islands on the south-west side with good protection, depth and space.

**Distances:** Balbulol is 100 nautical miles south-west of Sorong using the Sagewin Strait route.
The Balbulol beehive rock formations

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
The Daram Group

Location: Daram is the last island group and anchorage in the chain extending down from the south-east part of Misool Island and marks the most eastern point of the south-east Misool area. The island group features some incredible dive sites and some fine secluded coves.

Watersports: The reef and island complex is a great place to take a kayak or paddle board out to explore the intricate islands, coves and waterways.

Beaches: The Daram group does not have too many beaches but there are nice sandy areas on the small island off the north-west tip of Daram and also at the Epfian group as well as another collection of small islets both to the north-west of Daram Island.

Snorkelling: The coves of Daram are good for snorkelling but the best places are around the dive sites of the smaller islets with excellent colourful reefs.

Fishing: The Daram island group, like a great many of the locations in Raja Ampat, and particularly Misool, are in a no-take zone. However, it is right on the border of one of marine protected areas so some fishing could be done further east on some marks outside the zone.

Scuba Diving: Not dived very much by liveaboards due to anchoring difficulties, the Daram islets have some of the very best dive sites in the area. Using yacht tenders it is fairly easy to hit these sites from other anchorages.

Anchorage: There are some anchorage sites available around Daram although they are fairly deep and exposed. It is not really a good place to spend a night at anchor, especially in changeable weather and sea conditions, and this can happen a lot in this region.

Distances: Daram is 120 nautical miles from Sorong taking the Sagewin Strait route.
A typical Misool reef scene.

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
The Wayil Island Group

Location: The Wayil anchorage sites can be found at the west end of the southern island line below the Misool mainland.

Topside: Wayil is the collective name for a wonderfully scenic and calm spot sheltered by a series of high rocky islands. Tropical birds screech and chatter in the forest canopy that covers these limestone peaks, a trademark of the location.

Topside: Close to the Wayil anchorage there is another of Raja Ampat’s secret lagoons. This one is only accessible by kayak and features two nice beaches that face the setting sun to spend some time on. There are also some amazing snorkelling opportunities on and around the reefs that border the dive sites and lagoon in this tranquil setting.

Diving: The dive sites here are clustered around the western end of the island of Wayilbatan. Comprising of multiple sea-mounts and karst island ridges they feature abundant coral growth and both pelagic and reef-dwelling marine creatures.
There is something for every level of diver at Wayil, from easy and pretty reef sites and majestic open water sea-mounts to gentle drift dives down some of the most otherworldly marine seascapes that can be imagined.

One of the favourite sites is “The Four Kings”. This incredible underwater experience is out in open sea, to the west of the anchorages and is a four-peaked sea-mount that rises from the deep sea-floor. This intriguing rocky marine structure acts as a magnet for all manner of marine life, large and small.

**Fishing:** This is prohibited in the Wayil area but it might be possible to run out to the south through the channels into open sea for some rod and line action.

**Anchorages:** The most popular anchorage site at Wayil is on the eastern side of the island which is very sheltered and normally calm and also very scenic. There are other anchoring options on the west side.

**Distances:** Wayil is around eight nautical miles west of the Fiabacet area and 124 nautical miles from Sorong harbour using the Sagewin Strait route.
ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO

Overlooking Wayil Island and lagoon
Fiabacet: Misool Eco Resort

**Location:** Close to the end of the southern island line beneath Misool, Fiabacet is the common collective name used by the marine operators in the area for this group of islands, islets, sea-mounts and interconnecting ledges that combine to form, what for some people say are some of the finest reefs on the planet, and it is hard to disagree with that statement.

**Topside:** Although there is not too much topside trekking down here in the furthest reaches of the park, there are some nice small sandy coves and the chance to visit some land-locked lakes in the area. However, it is really the diving and topside scenery that are the main attractions here.

Some years ago, the Misool Eco Resort was built on Batbitiem Island on the south side and these folks managed to make a deal with the local community to keep the area as a “no-take” marine reserve and this has certainly paid off big time. Astonishing coral reefs and underwater formations coupled with the fabulous topside scenery make for great snorkelling around the scattered sea-mounts and interesting kayak routes around islets.
Scuba diving: Most of the sites are centred around karst limestone islets and the corners and coasts of the larger islands of Boo and Kalig, these are washed by currents and upwellings coming in from the Ceram Sea to the south. These currents bring nutrients up from deeper water which sustains the marine life around the area.

At times, the schooling fish are so thick you cannot see the predators patrolling behind them. Grey, white-tip and black-tip reef sharks are seen here frequently and huge Napoleon wrasse, dogtooth tunas, Spanish mackerel, giant trevallies and spectacularly acrobatic mobular rays are among the bigger fish scything into this banquet of bait-fish.

Anchorages: Due to the delicate and exposed nature of the area it is difficult to find anchorages here and weather and sea conditions affect this area from time to time. An alternative is to anchor at Wayil, Boo or Yililet and make short tender trips to the area. It is also a common courtesy to communicate with the resort to discuss any diving plans.

Distances: The Fiabacet area is only five nautical miles east of Wayil and 122 nautical miles south from Sorong.
Gelu, Yillet & Boo

Location: This group of islands can be found at the extreme end of the southern island chain close to the Fiabacet group.

Topside: With the exception of Boo, Yillet and Kamin, there is more seascape than landscape in this area. The rocky islands are very pretty and some can be landed on but this is really a place for serious scuba divers. Having said that there are plenty of places to explore for kayaking and snorkelling enthusiasts.

Beaches: There are no beaches around Boo but Yiliet has a nice one on the north side but there is are some buildings and activity here. The best and most secluded beach that we have found is close to the anchorage on the north side of Sabennibnu Island.

Snorkelling: The reefs that extend from this group of islands provide excellent snorkelling options almost anywhere.

Scuba diving: Boo Windows and further afield Magic Mountain are two of the most iconic dive sites in Raja Ampat, but there are many others to keep scuba divers happy.

Anchorages: Most of the anchorages marked in the area are fairly deep but there are good options on the north side of Yillet and also on the north side of Sabennibnu.

Distances: Boo is 120 nautical miles from Sorong taking the Sagewin Strait route.
Phase Two: Misool to Triton Bay

Day to day destinations:

9: The Pisang Islands
10: Momon: The Kiti Kiti Waterfall
11: Namatote Island & Strait, Triton Bay
12: Mauwara Island & Lobo Village, Triton Bay
13: Aiduma Island & The Iris Strait, Triton Bay
The Fak Fak Peninsula, West Papua

The Fak Fak Peninsula, the second largest landmass on what is collectively known as the Birdshead Peninsula, extends out of the south-west Papua mainland into the Ceram Sea. This destination starts at the Pisang Islands 20 nautical miles out in open water to the north east and runs 120 nautical miles down the West Papua coastline to Cape Papisol. This rarely visited and under explored area features several anchorages and scenic locations with many activities available, both on land and in the sea.

The anchorages in this region are visited mainly by scuba diving liveaboard operations transiting between the major destinations of south-east Misool, Raja Ampat and Triton Bay, part of the West Papua mainland a little further south, however this intriguing coastline and offshore islands is proving to be an amazing cruising ground in its own right.

Although not a great deal is known about this remote part of the Indonesian archipelago, more and more vessels are taking the time to explore its hidden wonders with new dive sites and fascinating land excursions being found along the coastline all the time. The lush tropical forests that rise up from the shoreline to impressive mountainous peaks are full of interesting flora, unique fauna and fascinating wartime artefacts just waiting to be discovered. There are also several areas where ancient rock art and cave paintings can be seen.

The jagged coastline and seascape boasts plenty of small bays and inlets as well as a number of offshore islands that show great promise for enthusiasts of the underwater realm.
ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
The Pisang Islands

Location: The Pisang group of islands can be found 63 nautical miles south-east of the most south-eastern anchorage of the Misool area and just 20 nautical north west of the Fak Fak Peninsula, part of the West Papua mainland.

Topside: The largest island by far is Sabuda which measures over five nautical miles from north-east to south-west but only half a mile wide. It is heavily forested and rises up to nearly 150 metres, surrounded by a sparkling shallow coral reef and featuring some very pretty small beaches and coves.

Nearly a mile to the south of Sabuda is a much smaller group of seven much smaller islands and rocky islets that rise to barely 50 metres, but like Sabuda also features excellent beaches and reefs.

Beaches & Watersports: The Pisang Islands are an oasis of great watersports opportunities, especially around the smaller islands, excellent reefs for snorkelling, paddle boarding and kayaking. The excellent and secluded white sand beaches are easily accessible too.

As a side note, during one trip we were befriended by a group of local fishermen who cooked us an excellent fish lunch on the beach.
Scuba Diving: The healthy reefs and abundant marine life make the Pisang Islands much more than a way-point between Raja Ampat and Triton Bay. Large schools of fish and the occasional manta ray, wonderful macro life and some great underwater topography make the Pisang Islands another of Indonesia’s remote marine paradises.

Anchorages: There are good anchorage opportunities around the smaller islands on the south side and all of the activity hot spots are within easy reach of here.

Distances: The Pisang group is 122 nautical miles from Sorong using the most direct route, 186 nautical miles from Tual in the Kei Islands and 273 nautical miles from Ambon, central Maluku.
Just one of Sabuda Islands’ magnificent beaches

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Momon: The Kiti Kiti Waterfall

Location: The Momon Waterfall anchorage is along the west facing mainland coastline of West Papua province.

Topside: This anchorage features a spectacular waterfall falling directly into the sea. The Momon waterfall stems from a relatively large river that originates in the highlands of the Papuan jungle and terminates in a glorious fashion amongst beautiful primordial jungle at the shoreline. Easily spotted from miles offshore, the falls can be approached by skiff and adventurous guests can jump into the ocean and swim directly to the waterfall.

The water pouring over the edge creates a wide screen of fast flowing fresh water. Tucked in behind the waterfall is a small protected rock ledge; swimmers can enter this cavern and take photographs through the curtain of water for a unique view of the world. The experience of swimming out from behind the waterfall is akin to swimming down a white-water river. A word of warning, the river water is much cooler than the ocean!

Watersports: There are some fantastic snorkelling and kayaking spots along this jungle fringed shoreline with the chance to spot
quirky hornbill birds up in the trees, turtles in the ocean and forest kangaroos can occasionally be seen in the wooded areas close to the waterfall.

**Diving:** The scuba diving in this newly explored region of Indonesia is legendary and close to the anchorages there are several spectacular sea-mount dives. The reefs around the islands outside of the Momon headland are prolific too, with some very unusual marine life sightings.

**Anchorages:** It is possible to anchor directly off-shore close to the waterfall although if conditions are not suitable there is a more sheltered anchorage around six nautical miles to the south inside a quiet bay.

**Distances:** This anchorage can be found around 160 nautical miles south-east of Misool in Raja Ampat and 92 nautical miles due east from the Koon island group, south-east Ceram.
The Kiti Kiti Waterfall plunges into the Ceram Sea.

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Triton Bay, West Papua

Along with Cenderawasih Bay, Triton Bay is one of the latest undiscovered destinations in the Indonesian archipelago. Located on the south-west side of what is the neck of the Bird’s Head Peninsula Triton Bay is only 70 nautical miles away from Cenderawaish bay, as the crow (or hornbill if you prefer) flies, but a lot further away by the sea route. Here there are a wealth of wonders just waiting to be discovered here where few exploration or dive vessels have ever ventured.

The central point for adventures is the beautifully appointed Triton Bay Divers resort which is nestled inside a cove on the east side of Aiduma Island. The professionals that run this operation are always happy to help out visiting vessels from their base, which on first glance looks like the most idyllic place on the planet (and that is not too far away from the reality).

The dive sites in the area feature a wealth of unusual marine life and are decorated with some of the best soft corals to be found anywhere. For fans of topside water-sports activities there are many different kayaking and snorkelling sites to satisfy even the most inquisitive explorer along with plenty of land treks, river adventures and rock art to experience. Close to the island of Namatote, inside the strait that separates it from mainland West Papua, another of Indonesia’s growing list of whaleshark experiences can be found. Very much like the other locations, Namatote is a favourite anchoring place for the local fishing platforms that these huge majestic creatures like to frequent when they are hungry.

Triton Bay and the surrounding land and seascape is now firmly on the list of favourites in a region that should already be at the top of every adventurous cruising yacht’s must see destinations.
Dolphins on one of the Namatote whaleshark fishing platforms.
Namatote Island & Strait

Location: Namatote Island lies very close to the West Papuan mainland in the north-eastern section of Triton Bay, separated by a long passage less than one nautical miles wide that runs between Namatote village on the southern end of the island itself and the village of Wai Wai at the northern end on the mainland.

Topside: Like the rest of the region, the topside scenery consists of high forest crested limestone cliffs. The Namatote passage is over 10 nautical miles from north to south and along it’s course on the mainland side there are some more examples of prehistoric artwork high up on the rocky walls, very similar to those in Raja Ampat as well as those at the Mclure Gulf further north.

Beaches & Watersports: The protected nature of the strait ensures that there is nearly always calm seas therefore it would lend itself well to water skiing. There are one or two beaches and lagoons to explore along it’s length, but there are much better opportunities around the corner at Mauwara Island, however the main attraction here is another of Indonesia’s whaleshark experiences.

In exactly the same manner as their cousins across the isthmus in Cenderawasih Bay, the local population of these huge animals has become accustomed to feeding from the expansive nets of the bagans, the huge anchored fishing platforms used by the white-bait fishermen in the area.

Scuba Diving: The best dive sites at Namatote are centred around the south end of the island and across the wide waterway that separates it from Aiduma.
**Anchorages:** It is certainly possible to anchor inside the strait without causing an obstruction, there is good depth and space, but it is probably better to anchor for around the corner closer to Mauwara Island.

**Distances:** The southern tip of Namatote is only 18 nautical miles to the south of Kaimana, the closes airport/harbour town. The closest international airport and harbour is at Ambon 385 nautical miles away to the west-north-west.
A Namatote whaleshark with attendant remoras

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Mauwara Island & Lobo Village

**Location:** Mauwara Island only two nautical miles east of the bottom of the Namatote Strait and almost attached to the West Papua mainland, separated by a channel only 30 metres wide at the narrowest point.

**Topside:** This extraordinary jungle covered island rises to nearly 200 metres in the centre and features a complex shoreline with many points and inlets as well as the previously mentioned narrow channel.

Above the channel there is a newly constructed stairway that leads intrepid trekkers up to a viewpoint to take in the incredible panorama of the islands below and across to the Iris Strait and Aiduma Island further south.

Another land excursion that proves to be very popular is a visit to Lobo, a small settlement deep inside the waterway. The village is located at the foot of an impressive 1,000 metre plus mountain and populated with friendly locals going about their business in and around the neat streets and houses.

**Beaches & Watersports:** The channel between Mauwara and the mainland, as well as another between Mauwara and Erman, are fantastic places for kayakers to explore and it’s also possible to take a tender through. The bays formed around the perimeter are a paddlers dream and the beaches on the north-east side on the Papuan mainland are absolutely incredible, excellent places to snorkel and sunbathe.
Diving: There are a number of sites associated with these anchorages ranging from shallow reefs to deep walls.

Anchorages: The anchorages on either side of Maumara are nicely sheltered with good holding but are a little deep, in the 50 to 60 metre range. The anchorage at Lobo village is shallower at 30 metres and excellent holding.

Distances: Four nautical miles separate Namatote and Mauwara and Lobo is a further seven from the eastern Mauwara anchorage.
The waterways around Mauwara

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Aiduma Island & The Iris Strait

**Location:** Triton Bay bites into the south-western coastline of West Papua along what forms the neck of the Birdshead Peninsula and Aiduma lies parallel with the mainland separated from it by the Iris Strait, which at the narrowest point is less than a mile offshore.

**Topside:** The main areas of interest are in and around the convoluted collection of islands located close to the mainland. With an appearance very much like the karst limestone islands and islets of Raja Ampat, the seascape is dotted with these magical forest topped rocks surrounded by sparkling coral reefs.

**Beaches & Watersports:** Aiduma and mainland Papua features some wonderful white sand beaches and coves around the complex coastlines and the dazzling coral reefs that extend from them are great places to explore during a snorkelling or kayaking expedition.

**Diving:** The Iris Strait and beyond is fast becoming a big favourite with divers from around the globe and is yet another of Indonesia’s stellar destinations that features marine life both large and small and incredible soft and hard coral gardens.

**Anchorages:** There are plenty of good and very scenic anchorage options inside the bays, especially in and around the eastern side of Aiduma Island and the Papuan coastline.

**Distances:** The closest major port and airport is Kaimana, the capital of the province, and this is 30 nautical miles north-north-west from Aiduma Island.
Phase Three: **Triton Bay to The Kei Islands**

*Day to day destinations:*
14: Bui Island & Sea-Mounts
15: Tual, The Kei Islands
The Kei Islands, South Maluku

The flight over to Tual town, the regional centre of the Kei Islands, is almost worth the trip itself. After leaving Ambon International Airport your plane strikes out across the vast Banda Sea, an ocean all its own, before passing over the enchanting Banda Islands, then, after an hour flying over the deep blue water, the western-most atolls and tiny fringe islands of the Kei archipelago begin to appear.

The beauty of these coral islands rivals any you will see in the south pacific. From the air, the transparent waters present finely blended shades of colour depending on the depth and bottom. From deep blue, almost black to rich cobalt blue, through dark emerald greens and then, in the shallow reefs near the islands, bright turquoise and foam white. The islands tick vegetation, dominated by stately coconut palms, crowds right to the ends of the water, held back only by a ring or brilliant white sand, and it is here that some of the finest snow-white fine grained, beaches in the world can be found.

Along with the Aru and Tanimbar island groups, the Kei Islands are some of the most remote in Indonesia. Three main islands make up the Keis (pronounced Keys), and hundreds of smaller ones for a total of 1,800 square kilometres. The largest is Kei Besar, long, thin and mountainous, while Kei Kecil, made up of Nuhuroa Island and the smaller Dullah Island, is mostly grassy lowland and coastal mangrove forest. About 100,000 people live on the Keis, some one-third of the entire population of the south-eastern Moluccas and features a mix of religions although most are predominantly catholic and muslim. As well as fishing and farming, traditional boat building is still in evidence here with construction using axe, adze and auger still common.

Most often used as an arrival or departure port, Tual does feature a bustling central area with small supermarkets, fish and traditional markets and a hospital but for adventurers the main attractions are on and around the outlying Tayanduis Islands and other rocky reefs and atolls. These are packed with plenty of activity areas for beaching, water-sports and the fine reefs, drop-offs, sea-mounts offer spectacular scuba diving opportunities.
ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Bui Islands & Seamounts

**Location:** Bui is the most northern of a group of three islands just 50 nautical miles north-north-west of the harbour city of Tual. The other two islands in the group are Kaimere, the largest, and Tengah, which sits in the middle and all three are the most northern islands of the Tayanduis group. The sea-mounts associated with the area are located a further 10 nautical miles further to the north and north-west.

**Topside:** The three islands are fairly flat and surrounded by pretty coral reefs. There are one or two villages on Tengah and Kaimere and these are home to many fishermen that ply their trade around the islands. It is also important to report to the village on the west side of Kaimere before starting any diving, snorkelling or other water or land activities.

**Beaches:** There looks to be some fantastic beaches around all of the islands. The main diving area is around Bui island and all along the north side there are some spectacular white sand areas separated by rocky outcrops that don’t look too difficult to get onto.

**Diving:** There are three different types of diving here. The offshore sea-mounts offer thrilling underwater experiences with huge schools of fish to be encountered, as well as the opportunity to spot some of the oceans larger creatures, even marlin. The sites closer to land on the north side of Bui Island are very good too, one is a fabulous coral reef, wall and slope that we called Halimeda Falls that also features a large deeper sandy area dotted with large coral heads. The site gets it name from the flowing growth of halimeda algae that adorns the steep reef. The other site, Bui Wall, is on the north-east side of the island and plummets down from a shallow reef top.
**Fishing:** This could prove very productive over the two sea-mounts to the north. As mentioned a marlin was seen on the dive at Final Frontier as well as some large fish jumping in the distance.

**Snorkelling:** There are some fantastic snorkelling spots on the reef at north-west Bui. The sea-mounts are too deep unless freediving.

**Anchorages:** We have not anchored here as yet but there looks to be opportunities on the west side of the islands and also on the east but the reefs there look to be quite complex.

**Distances:** The north tip of Bui is 50 nautical miles north-north-west from Tual city harbour and 134 nautical miles east-south-east of the Banda Islands.
The lighthouse on the north-west tip of Bui

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
Tual, The Kei Islands

Tual, also known as Langur, is another typical eastern Indonesian port tucked inside a pretty and very sheltered inlet surrounded by low lying islands. The city is split between two islands, Dullah on the north-east side and the much larger Kei Kecil to the south-west and these along with Kei Besar make up the centre of what is known as the Kei Island region. The town and bustling port are centred around a shallow waterway and the bridge that connects them. There are markets and shops, the Gota supermarket on Kei Kecil is the largest, on both sides and plenty of interesting places to visit. The stunning Ngurbloat Beach on the west side of Kai Kecil is a magnificent spot to catch the sunset. This sandy strand stretches for over two kilometres and features many shore side cafes and restaurants as well as some rudimentary bungalow style accommodations.

Mooring & Anchoring: The entrances to the main port area are on the north side and although there is plenty of room there are a number of shallow reefs that need to be avoided. The central anchorages are also fairly tight.

Airport: The Karel Sadsuitubun Domestic Airport is located 18 kilometres south of the city centre and should not be confused with the old Dumatubin airport in the town.

Airport Code: LUV. Runway length: 2,350 metres. Elevation: 24 metres

Hotels: There are a number of hotels around the city but there is nothing approaching luxury.

Hospital: There is a large general hospital on the south (Langur) side of the city that looks to be fairly functional and a number of pharmacies on both sides.
Tual harbour

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO
MISOOL & TRITON BAY
MISOOL - THE PISANG ISLANDS - MOMON - TRITON BAY - THE KEI ISLANDS
SORONG TO TUAL

ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO