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ket. For visitors, we provide the means to easily make a booking and have access to information.”

It is also the aim of TVET and the Department of Tourism to achieve quality and get all new products to a stage at which they can receive VTO accreditation. Kehana Andrews is the Sanma Information Centre product development officer and her mission is to ascertain and facilitate the training needed by operators to secure their accreditation. “If any areas need to be improved, training, advice and ongoing coaching is available for people to acquire the skills necessary to improve that area,” she explains.

Sustainable Tourism ‘Island Style’

Along the strikingly beautiful east coast of Santo, Lonnoc Beach Bungalows, located in Lonnoc Bay, used to be one of the only locally run and owned bungalows in the area. Sitting on a superb white sand shore, next door to world-renowned Champagne Beach, the location is idyllic. The seven bungalows are island-style, with thatched roofs, basic but with their own showers and toilets and super-cute. Next to Lonnoc Bungalows is the newly

opened Lonnoc Beach Lodge, located on the same bay and offering similar facilities. These businesses have been testimony to how wonderful sustainable tourism can be.

A new comer to this area is Towoc Bungalows which is already famous for the warm hospitality of its hosts, Janette and Peter Toto. Consisting of seven bungalows, including three beachfront bungalows, a family bungalow and a restaurant, the bungalows provide free access to Champagne Beach located a few hundred meters away. Towoc bungalows is managed by Janette, who is also the chef and one of the people who have benefitted from the training and coaching provided by TVET programs.

A few kilometres north along the road, the fishing village of Port Olry emerges as a Tatin painting amidst a perfect tropical landscape. To say that the location is stunning is an understatement. The village regularly receives huge offers from overseas investors wanting to buy some of their beach or one of the nearby islands, to transform it into a first class resort which no doubt, would be an ex-

pensive paradise affordable to only some. Port Olry locals have been adamant that they will not sell their land. Instead, they will develop it themselves, in their own, island-style, low-scale, low-impact way.

Operated by Tarcisius Alguet, the ‘Little Paradise of Port Olry’ is one of the businesses that have been pioneering accommodation in Port Olry in the last decade. With four bungalows located right on the beach, this has been a favourite of those who knew the secret that was Port Olry.

Recently, another four bungalows and two restaurants have opened in the village, all with the help and training facilitated by the TVET program. Chez Louis Restaurant and Port Olry Beach bungalows are located right on the beach, at the entrance of the village. With a lovely natangora roof, the restaurant is ‘island-style’ but not lacking elegance and sophistication. Gorgeous hard wood slab tables, a bamboo bar and a great menu featuring local seafood and vegetables, has turned this restaurant into a true gem and a story of success. It is owned by Louis Tiome and his family. His wife Mikaela is the chef in the kitchen –her skills came from attending one of TVET’s workshops

while their daughter Manuela runs the bar and does the accounting. “We have people coming all the time asking to buy part of the beach and the islands. The village wants to benefit from the income given by the tourism industry but we don’t want to lose our land. The chief and the people of the village decided that we will not sell our land because the land is the future of our children. Instead, we agree that half of the beach will be used for tourism facilities and the other half, where the village is located, will be reserved for the village,” explains Manuela. “We are opening our own business here for visitors.”

As the land which has been dedicated to tourism business is owned by only a few people, the drawback could be that only a few people in the village benefit from the tourism revenue. “I think that the village is happy,” Manuela explains. “The fish for the restaurant comes from Port Olry fishermen and the vegetables from the gardens of the village. The whole village benefits and shares in the profits.”

The three bungalows and tree house located around the restaurant are owned by different members of the extended family. The bungalows are taking island-style accommodation a notch higher, with their elegant design and facilities offered. Resourcefulness and creativity go hand in hand and John Leo decided to do something a little different when he opened his Tree House. Small, peaceful and cute, it is perfect for couples and exudes romanticism as well as being completely in harmony with the surrounding landscape. “It is very exciting to see these businesses operating and doing well,” explains Ellise. “From the best place in which to erect the new bungalows to book-keeping and design, TVET provided advice, training

and coaching to the families. It is very rewarding to see the program working.”

A few hundred meters down the beach from Chez Louis restaurant, is Port Olry Harbour Beach Restaurant owned by Chrisanthe Franck, which opened in 2013, serving fresh fish right on the beach. With an equally stunning design and location and a very similar menu, competition could become another emerging issue. “Our training in TVET follows onto providing advice to villages such as Port Olry which are treading on new ground. Right now, we are working with the community towards building more bungalows and offering a different menu in the existing restaurants so instead of competing business, what we have is businesses supporting each other. The point is to offer progressive training and to incorporate new training modules as the skills grow and new needs arise. For example, we will be delivering a waste management program in Port Olry to deal with the newly created waste,” explains Ellise.

For places like Port Olry, now in the infancy of establishing themselves as a tourist destination, the hurdle would be to keep the harmony within the village while embracing an economic model that widely differs from the traditional one. Competition between emerging businesses, achieving equitable prices between buyers and suppliers of produce, setting fair prices for visitors and ensuring the whole village benefits, will no doubt become issues that will need to be tackled and resolved as the village moves forward in its economic adventure. With the help of programs such as TVET’s however, the village will not be alone on its journey.



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To book online and for more information visit the Sanma Information Centre website www.santo.travel. You can also visit Port Olry Bungalows www.chezlouis-portolry.com website and Wrecks to Rainforest www.wreckstorainforest.com.



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