

## Home safe and sound.

Hi folks, I'm home again, safe and sound as they say. It's good to be back to the simple routines of everyday life, not least of all a decent cuppa in the morning. One of my little eccentricities when travelling is to take a couple of packets of my beloved Earl Grey tea with me whenever and wherever I go, so that I can at least simulate the luxury of a normal start to my day. (Strong black coffee and a ciggie, has never cut it for me but seems to be de rigueur for many in places like Suriname and Europe.) Of course, it's nothing more than a simulation, as the milk is never quite the same, neither is the water for that matter; but at least it gives me the feeling of normalcy no matter what the day ahead may bring.

But normalcy can be a bit of a shocker. Having flown over thirty odd thousand miles, and by sheer luck avoided the traveller's hell of getting caught up in either of Europe's most recent hassles: being grounded due to the smoke and ash clouds from Iceland's volcano, or the e-coli outbreak, (and yes I did eat salads with both tomato and cucumber in them while in Amsterdam but before the e-coli outbreak was known about), for the most part, it feels good to be back to normal in New Zealand.

But..... and I am afraid there is a **But**, the headline news on the day of my return was the death and public mourning of Shrek the sheep. Now come on. Really! One wonders at the paucity of reportable news that day that the local media could find this nonsense of such merit to make it headline news. Don't get me wrong, I'm not in favour of all the customary doom and gloom they hammer us with either but Shrek the sheep as headline news? What moron decided that? Needless to say, I switched the tv off and went back to my own little world; which brings me to one of the reasons I am so glad to be home: food!

The food in Suriname is just great and is as far as I can tell, especially the fruit and vegetables, all locally grown, much of it in small family type plots that is then sold in local neighbourhood markets. It seems for the most part to be reasonably pesticide free. Rather, it's the worry of food safety and freshness in Europe and Singapore that struck me hard on this trip.

I had ten days in Singapore on the way back as I undertook Grand Master Lo's intensive Four Pillars

of Destiny and I-Ching classes again and so had routed my trip via Singapore. While there I had several discussions with local people about the safety of the food. This struck me as incredible. Singapore has for years been considered one of Asia's prime food capitals. It seems there is now real concern among many as to the quality of food coming in from places like China, Thailand and Vietnam. They import almost everything so pesticides and the use of hormone growth agents for both produce and meat are of real concern to people in the region. How lucky we are here in New Zealand not to have to worry about such basic issues as they safety of our food; a pity the media here don't focus a little more on the positive - but then that wouldn't help sell advertising copy now would it!

### Trip to see the river dolphins of Paramaribo:

While in Suriname I had the privilege of going fresh water dolphin watching just outside Paramaribo along the confluence of the Suriname and Commeweyne Rivers. Expecting something a bit like the highly commercial tourist traps of the Bay of Islands or Kaikoura I was blown away by the sheer excitement and joy of getting down so close and intimate with these delightful creatures from our little converted fishing boats. About the size of a very large dog and really colourful, their bellies are a vibrant pink and cream, with jet black dorsal fins, they suddenly appeared all around our small boat and were close enough to have reached out and caressed them. (No one did I'm glad to say.) Coming right up to us, they stuck their heads up out of the water as if to greet us and certainly took a good look at the curious visitors to their world. They stayed with us frolicking and leaping right out of the water for close to an hour. It was enthralling and not one of us on that boat, young or old alike, were unmoved by their absolute beauty; thanks to my friend Mariette for suggesting and organising the day.



Freshwater Dolphin on the Suriname River:

### ***New Round of Beginner's Palmistry:***

Following the success of the first class, I will be offering my eight week beginner's palmistry class starting Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June. This is your invitation to join and learn this fascinating traditional art. Contrary to common belief, palmistry is not related to any of the *psychic* arts; based instead very much on the science of statistical probability. Learn how to identify all the major lines in the palm, the mounts and fingers and their significances, estimate timing of events in the life and the primary personality types. This is an art which is great fun to learn, is easy to gain practise in (after all, everyone loves to have their palms read), and has practical applications which will make your newly acquired knowledge useful and gives the student real insight to some of life's mysteries.

This certificated course gives students a solid understanding of traditional palmistry. After the eight week course students will be able to give a basic palm reading with confidence.

Class times: from 1:30pm - 3pm Tuesdays. (A Tuesday evening class may also be offered, depending on numbers.) Price: \$350 per person – Course materials inclusive.

Please call Danny for details but early registration is recommended as class sizes will be strictly limited.

### **Fu Lo Sho, Singapore's grand old feng shui dame:**

Once more in Singapore, I headed where so many in the world of feng shui head to, the Fu Lo Sho Centre. A bit of a shabby down at heel old gal these days rather than the grand dame she once was, Fu Lo Sho is a four or five storied complex with a great open well at its centre and shops and offices ranged around the mezzanine floors.

Many sell crystals and water features and supply feng shui trinkets to the hordes of superstitious; there are shops full of lucky toads, dragons and other such useless gimmicks all made from the ubiquitous and tawdry red resin.

The more reputable shops supply legitimate feng shui enhancements to those in the trade. (There are similar places albeit on a much smaller, individual scale in Hong Kong and Taipei but Singapore's Fu Lo Sho is something of an institution in the trade.) There are also several feng shui consultants with their offices on the upper floors and many these days offering things like aroma therapy and reflexology.

I collected what I had gone for and went for something to eat in the neighbouring Bugis area. Once a notorious nightlife zone, it's a pretty tame tourist shopping precinct now.

But staying in Chinatown was fun. Close to the MRT underground system it meant catching the subway to

class was easy, cheap and efficient. Opposite the Chinatown MRT is a large complex called the People's Park Shopping Complex and it too has several shops similar to those in Fu Lo So. Browsing in one of these I stumbled across a place selling strange wrist watches. The face had a phrase in some obscure script zooming around it. Asking what it was I was informed the watch, (in fact a tacky plastic thing) had been designed by a very famous feng shui master. It turned out to be what was termed a *Health Dragon Watch*, (really???) Seems the 'master' had designed it to have a health Mandela running around the face in Sanskrit. The cost was an astronomical s\$200 odd! And the *Master* - Yep, you guessed it, Lillian Too.

Now that's just plain tacky Ms Too, shame on you! *I'm glad to say the sales assistant told me they weren't popular.*



**Traditional Suriname-style House, Paramaribo**

### ***QUOTE:***

*"Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve."*

Roger Lewin PhD British anthropologist and science writer.

I will try to get my Spring Newsletter out before I leave for China sometime towards the end of August, beginning of September. I will be away again for about a month hopefully with a stopover in Sth Korea for a side trip to see two of my ex-home stay kids.

**Please note: I have a new mobile telephone number: 021-1993-888**

### **Review of My Services:**

- ☛ Land and Site Pre-Inspection/Advice
- ☛ Audits on Existing Buildings (Domestic, Commercial and Industrial)
- ☛ Full Four Pillars of Destiny Charts (Chinese Astrology)
- ☛ I-Ching Consultations
- ☛ Public Speaking Engagements

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