

Editorial

Marianas

Mysterious Pagan Island...

We're pleased and excited over the fact that Trust Territory officials have approved the issuance of a foreign business permit to the Pacific Basin Hotel and Development Corporation of Guam, a permit which will allow the firm to construct a 50-room hotel and other facilities on Pagan island in the Northern Marianas.

This is far more than just an opportunity to build a hotel. This is an opportunity to change an entire island, and knowing the participants in the program, we're sure they are well aware of all the ramifications and problems facing them.

Pagan, located several hundred miles north of Saipan, has quite a setting, and it could develop into one of the world's choicest tourism destinations. We applaud Ken and Robert Jones for their imagination, and initiative—and their perseverance—in getting the Pagan hotel plans approved.

The island of Pagan—which has a great name for a starter—is completely gorgeous in appearance, although isolated, and in a way, neglected. It is small, but adequate for such a development. The island is about seven miles long, and about three miles across, almost completely covered with greenery and jungle. Volcanic in origin, it has two striking cones—one that you can still see the lava flow on the side. About 50 people live on Pagan, and while they are undoubtedly content in some ways, we're sure they are looking forward to some of the basic amenities of the 20th century—such as electricity, which means refrigeration, and radio, and perhaps even TV. It could even mean a harbor for them, a better airfield, and perhaps even medical service, something that they lack now. It could also mean jobs for many of the Paganese something they don't now have.

The people were given a voice in the development plans, and decided that they wanted to move ahead. Certainly it will mean a dramatic change in life style for them, and perhaps some of the surrounding islands as well.

In approving the Pagan Hotel, the government specified that the hotel must be valued at not less than \$1 million, and that construction on it must begin no later than 12 months after approval of a land lease, which is the next step in the process. The hotel, of course, will be the first business development of any kind on Pagan.

Present plans call for the construction of a three-story, air conditioned hotel facility that will include a health spa, bar and restaurant, as well as other small gift shops. A lake-front dock on Pagan's large fresh water lake is being planned for water skiing, and fishing. A possibility also is an 18-hole golf course, if sufficient land can be found. Of course, the company expects to provide its own water, electrical power, and wastewater treatment facilities.

Because the island is 250-300 miles north of Guam, the climate is slightly cooler than it is here. It has pleasant breezes, and should make an ideal tropical retreat, and should contribute much to making the Marianas a total tourist destination. We would imagine that the Japanese businessmen would be quite excited about the possibilities of such a paradise. At one time there were more than 10,000 Japanese stationed on Pagan, where they had developed a fighter strip during the war.

We can even imagine the interest, from a local standpoint, of being able to fly to tiny Pagan in a two-hour or so flight, for a couple of days relaxation at a health spa hotel, overlooking a superb fresh water lake packed with fresh water fish.

It is going to be a difficult job in bringing the equipment, and the manpower necessary to build the facilities, starting from scratch. It will be a complete change for the people of Pagan, but we're convinced that they will be pleased in the long run over the facility, and the management. We're convinced that the Pagan idea is a sound one, and we're looking forward to returning again to that delightful little isle. JCM

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