

# TAHITI-PACIFIC COCKTAIL



**DOCUMENTARY**

## **BILLING**

TAHITI—PACIFIC COCKTAIL  
AN INTERTEL PRODUCTION  
SOUND RECORDIST: GEOFFREY DANIELS  
CAMERAMEN:  
PETER PURVIS, BILL GRIMMOND  
SOUND EDITOR: ARTHUR COX  
FILM EDITOR: ARTHUR SOUTHGATE  
DIRECTOR: JOHN GRAY  
WRITER/PRODUCER: IVAN CHAPMAN  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:  
NEIL EDWARDS

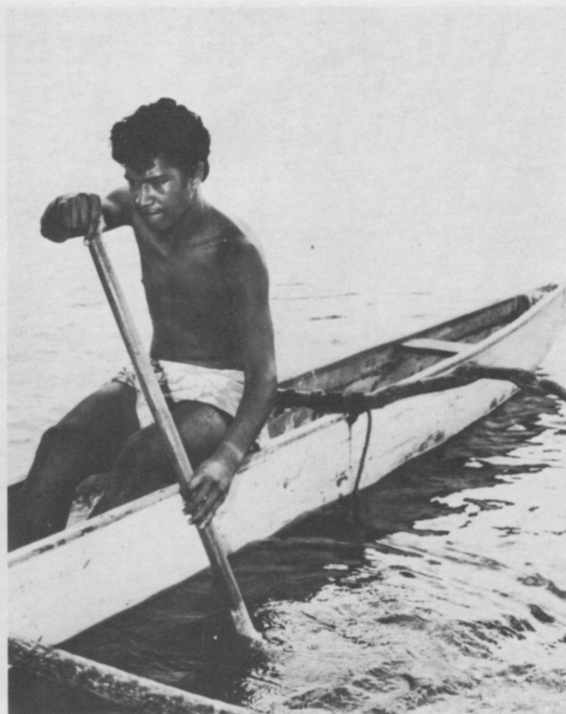
## **IN BRIEF**

Tahiti, one of the world's last "paradise islands" has attracted and enchanted countless sailors, painters and writers for the past 300 years. Today, the roar of the surf on the reef mingles with the roar of jet engines, as this exotic Pacific hideaway comes to terms with 20 century civilisation. Tahiti—Pacific Cocktail tells the story of the island that awaits the tourist—and examines the impact of tourism on these ancient Polynesian people. For Tahiti, tourism can be a mixed blessing. The trade it brings could transform the island economy and dramatically change her primitive living standards. It can also destroy forever the island's old, untroubled life. This programme explores Tahiti's dilemma in terms of three young Tahitians, two girls and a boy, who must make the choice, and the adjustment, between the old and the new.

**AN  
INTERTEL  
PRODUCTION**

Available through  
Global Television Services Ltd.,  
3 Vere Street, London, W.1.  
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Cables: Helpful, London

**TIME SLOT  
55 MINUTES**



## SYNOPSIS

The Pacific island of Tahiti was once remote and exclusive. Now the big jets have brought it within easy range of many thousands of people. How are Tahiti and its people reacting to the pressures of today and to the tourist?

"Tahiti—Pacific Cocktail", a 60-minute feature programme, examines the changes that have taken place in the island over the past few years and asks "Is it the paradise that so enchanted the Maughams, the Stevensons, the Gaughins and the countless sailors and escapist?"

The people of Tahiti—an amalgam of Polynesian, European and Chinese—generally understand little of the economic realities that prompted France to throw her Pacific island open to the gaze of the world. But they accept that tourism is a necessity in which they have some sort of role.

There are some, however, who hold different opinions. Seventy-two-year-old Martial Iorrs, a widely-respected Tahitian who speaks part of the programme's narration, declares "The tourist is an intruder who is doing us no good". He does concede France's wisdom in seeking a way to bolster the economy of Polynesia—but is tourism the right way?

"Tahiti—Pacific Cocktail" focuses on three people. Leone Tairapa was educated in France and trained as a shorthand/typist. She now works as a stewardess for TAI, the Tahitian airline. Marie-Louise Metuarea is a housemaid at a local hotel. Edgar Tua travels to Makatea Island to work in the rapidly dying phosphate industry; with the incentive bonuses he earns he hopes to buy himself a motor-scooter, a radio and an outboard motor for his outrigger.

Says writer/producer Ivan Chapman: "We, as outsiders, felt that the Tahitians are slightly bewildered, slightly hesitant, about the new era which Paris has decreed shall be theirs. They still talk of their innumerable problems—the Chinese minority which, through sheer hard work, now dominates the Territory's commercial life, the rising cost of living, the uncertain future of copra, the housing shortage which has resulted in squalid shanty-towns, the incredibly rapid birth-rate, the ravages of alcohol, the flexible morals, the search for new gimmicks to attract more visitors and money, the official stand that Tahiti must never become a "tourist factory" like Honolulu. Some argue that paradise has never had it so good. One wonders just how deep the changes go".

"Tahiti—Pacific Cocktail" was photographed by Peter Purvis and Bill Grimmond, and directed by John Gray.

## TAHITI-PACIFIC COCKTAIL



Left to right:

The three people featured in the programme.

Marie-Louise Metuarea, a housemaid at a hotel, leaves the hairdresser.

Edgar Tua goes to work in the phosphate industry to earn money to buy himself an outboard motor for his outrigger.

Leone Tairapa works as a stewardess for the Tahitian airline.

## THE BACKGROUND

Tahiti, the main island of the Society Group, lies mid-way between Australia and the United States of America. The island is 37 miles long by 25 miles wide, mountainous with sub-tropical vegetation. Its population is about 40,000, with about 5,000 Chinese and 2,000 Europeans.

Some Tahitians refer to 1959 as "the last normal year", the year before they began to feel the effects of their new industry—tourism. Until recently Tahiti's income came mainly from its exports of copra and phosphates and from substantial regular gifts from metropolitan France. But the imminent closure of the phosphate mines and the threat to copra from the destructive rhinoceros beetle made the need for another source of income very urgent.

Tourism seemed the obvious choice and in the last few years tourist organisations in Tahiti have increased in number and size. Today visitors are offered a variety of tours by launch, glass-bottom boat and, on the island itself, by motor coach. The number of hotels has grown rapidly—most have swimming-pools or are close to beaches and are staffed almost entirely by Polynesians.

Many Polynesians, and also many French, state that tourism is spoiling the old Tahiti they once knew, that it is bringing a revolution rather than an evolution. Others argue, with equal emphasis, that Paradise has never had it so good.

Tahiti may well have been one of the last lands to be discovered on our planet but it is now well and truly at grips with the twentieth century.



Top: The big jets have brought Tahiti within easy range of thousands.

Bottom: The programme examines the effect of the tourist trade on people like these two young Tahitians.