

# CINDY MOSEY ISLAND ODYSSEY Aitutaki, Cook Islands

Words. EMMA YORK

Photos. WWW.IANTRAFFORDPHOTOS.COM



Bri Boyd hanging loose



Kirsty Bowe enjoying the breath taking views

The tropical, turquoise waters and breathtaking surrounding islands of Aitutaki were this year the venue for the third annual Cindy Mosey Island Odyssey. 12 girls (well 13 if you count token female lan our photographer) from all over world, had come together to share their same passion and enthusiasm for kiteboarding

There was absolutely no hesitation to get on a plane when I got the call with the dates for the next Cindy Mosey Island Odyssey. My journey was not a trip for the faint hearted as it took 3 days, 4 plane journeys and I crossed the date line twice, but it was all worth it and I wouldn't hesitate to do it again. We will find out what other girls thought of the trip and what you missed out on!

Our home for the week was to be on one of the most beautifully breath-taking places I have ever visited. Aitutaki is one of 15 tiny islands that make up the Cook Islands chain, with Rarotonga being its capital. It takes approximately 30 minutes to get around the island by scooter and a bit longer by bicycle, so this give you a good idea of how small it is. However small the island may be it is bursting with life, as the local people are so very welcoming and proud of their island. This is shown in everything they do from the food to the traditional dancing, it truly is an amazing touch of paradise and we were fortunate enough to have our own pure experience of it all.

Cindy welcomed all the girls to the island; "We have found the perfect spot for the event— an amazing lagoon. The kiting spots we're going to have huge sand bars with beautiful flat warm water riding and steady trade winds. It's truly awesome riding"

Wednesday morning and the event had officially started and the first thing on our agenda was to move to Tamanu Beach Resort, one of the title sponsors and our home for the next week. It was all just getting better as we moved into our little chalets, by our own horizon-swimming pool that over looked the sea and outer reef of Aitutaki. It was here that we were introduced to Ianis a local kitesurfing enthusiast, who would be our rescue boat driver for the week and become a good friend to us all.

Not ones to hang around long, we settled into our rooms and were swiftly on our way to the dock to meet Lawton and Maria and their famous glass bottom boat, where we were whisked out to Honeymoon Island. There are not many words that describe the scenery and view that we experienced on our way out to the island, only that it is very aptly named.

We could tell the wind was coming up and after a safety briefing from Cindy, the girls were rapidly rigging up kites and getting out into the warm, clear blue waters, riding and pulling tricks in front of Ian and Anthony filming out in the water.

Dinner that night was a real treat for us all, as Tamanu beach had their buffet evening. After we had eaten as much as we could manage, there was a show of traditional dancing and singing put on for everyone. Men and Women in their traditional clothing, dancing and singing along to the drums and ukuleles. The warriors (male dancers) were unbelievable and performed the Haka and some energetic fire dancing. Melissa Millen (from Mackay, Australia) and myself were picked out to get taught the dance and perform it with the warriors. I can only describe this as being one of the most hilarious moments of my life! Brianna from New Zealand, our youngest on the trip, put herself forward and was joined

Entertainment local styles



by all the warriors for the final dance of the evening, which was hugely entertaining. A very good evening was had by all and after a day out on the water everyone was shattered and ready for bed.

There was high excitement over breakfast the following day and even though the wind was not as strong as the previous day, everyone was super excited. The morning was filled with exploring the island on scooters and bikes, walking up the hill to take in the scenery or enjoying the pool outside our rooms. Further exploring was done but this time out on Lawton's glass bottomed boat, where he gave us a tour of the reefs. We all got to see a turtle and many shoals of beautifully coloured fish of all shapes and sizes. It was all too much for us to be watching it through the bottom of a boat, so we stopped off on a sand bar and joined the fish in the water. Resident puffer fish came to join us and it wasn't long before we were surrounded by hundreds of fish. Snorkelling amongst the giant clams and coral on the sea bed was a real treat for us all, with many of us coming from areas of the world where we don't normally get to see sights like that.

The following day the wind was waiting for us as we arrived at the island, so we were straight into the teaching clinics. Each pro rider was matched up with a recreational rider and they took to the water for a couple of hours together. "It's all about teaching the social riders and having fun - and there is always plenty of that," says Cindy. The girls were ready to get out on the water and really push themselves to learn new tricks, which is what they came on the trip for. It's amazing when you combine the enthusiasm and passion for kiteboarding, with the commitment to try and push your limits. There is so much you can achieve in such a short space of



time. Julie Godfrey from Christchurch was having a great time, jumping higher and getting some great back loop transitions - she told me on the beach "I really love the one-on-one clinics with the pro girls each day. As well as all the great tips to help me, it's just so much fun. I have learnt more in one week than I have over the last three years!"

The day finished off with 'Trick of the Day' and some free riding before heading back to the local village hall, where we were entertained with a show of dance and music by the "Flowers of Aitutaki" dance group. Ukulele playing and singing from the group while we were feasting. Then the drums and more singers came out followed by the dancing Warriors who opened the show. For the last dance we were all picked out by a warrior. It was brilliant and Cindy really stole the show, dancing with the leader of the band.

Early morning stretching with Laurel Eastman was definitely in need, as there were several of us quite stiff and with sore muscles from the previous days riding. Clinics and video coaching was on the agenda and then we were out on the water. Each and everyday it seemed that the girls were having more fun in the clinics, and would come off the water beaming from ear-to-ear. Laura Adams from Wellington commented on her most favourite moment- "learning to do a front roll in 10 minutes. This rotation has always eluded me, however I was explained the key elements in the clinic and only a short time later I was landing them no problem!"

With the sun really trying to poke out through the clouds it made for some great light on the shallow clear waters, while filming again with Ian and Anthony. After some free riding we had a briefing for the course race, while Ianis was on the beach with the start flags. The race was a very new concept of kiteboarding for many of the girls, so it was great for them to try something new. Heading back we said our good byes to Anthony as he was leaving us and heading back to Melbourne to edit his fabulous work, ready for the TV programme released in Jan 2009.

Having rotating instructors with each coaching session this year was introduced so that we could spend time with each and every one of the girls. It was working so well, with the girls having more determination and excitement every time they went out riding. "I am the only girl out on the water in Wellington, so a key attraction of the CMIO was to kite with other girls" Laura Adams explains. Following an afternoon of free riding, the evening was taken up with a trip to the Boat Shed for dinner and a quick fun game. The winners were awarded fabulous HIVE Bikinis.

From the previous days clinics and video coaching, we spent an hour going back over the video talking to the girls about their riding. A downwinder from One Foot Island was the plan for the day, but unfortunately there was not enough wind for us to make the downwinder back to honeymoon island. So we spent the afternoon walking around and exploring One Foot Island and visiting the smallest post office in the world. The girls - Kirsty Bowe, Bri Boyd, Laura Adams, Julie Godfrey and Jodi Favae proudly posed in the shallow waters for an idyllic photo opportunity with their kiteboards and new HIVE Bikinis!

Sadly the week was coming to an end and before we knew it we were back at Koru Café for another amazing feast and our thoughts from the week. This was followed



by a slideshow from Ian Trafford with the photos that he had captured all week.

As it happens, our last and final days riding all together on Honey Moon Island, were the best of the week. Julie Godfrey and Jodi Favae, both from New Zealand, were going big and pulling-off some of their new tricks. An expression session was put on for the recreational girls and judged by Cindy, Laurel Eastman and Ania Grzelinska. The results from the expression session had Melissa Millen, Australia coming in 3rd place with some great railies, Laura Adams, New Zealand taking 2nd place with her first ever front rolls and big grabbed jumps and overall first place going to Julie Godfrey, New Zealand. They all got some beautiful HIVE Bikinis as their prizes!

The girls were so stoked and it was a great end to an awesome trip. A deserved mention definitely has to go to Brianna for giving it everything she had and learning some great new unhooked tricks, Jodi for keeping us all entertained and getting some stylish new moves and to Carrie who improved so much over the week.

It was so good to see Jodi Favae and Julie Godfrey as they had both joined us in Tonga at the 2007 CMIO. "I came to the CMIO in Tonga and loved it. I knew that if there was wind and I didn't come on this next trip I would never forgive myself. I am super stoked that we got such good wind and were out on the water most days, the gamble paid off, big time!" - Julie.

An enormous thank you has to go to Cindy Mosey for her time, passion and effort into getting more girls out on the water and enjoying everything kiteboarding and Aitutaki had to offer. Also thank you to Andy Reid and Baxter, who had their lives disrupted for a week. To Ian and Anthony who were amazing and have put together some great photos and footage to show everyone how great the event is.

Thank you to the sponsors - Tamanu Beach Resort, North Kiteboarding, Air Rarotonga, Hive swimwear. A big thank you and huge amounts of appreciation has to go to Balance Vector, our title sponsor, who has been generously backing the events since 2006.

And to all the girls - it's you coming to these events and spreading the good word that makes them enjoyable and worthwhile! Good news- the CMIO Event for 2009 has been confirmed and being held back in Aitutaki, Cook Islands. The event will be held from September 18th to 25th 2009.

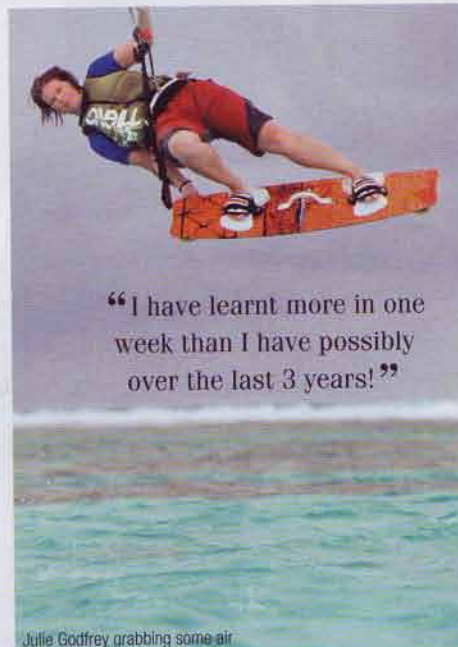
Check out [www.cindymoseyislandodyssey.com](http://www.cindymoseyislandodyssey.com)



Cruising in clear waters with Laura Adams



Cindy's still got the moves!



"I have learnt more in one week than I have possibly over the last 3 years!"

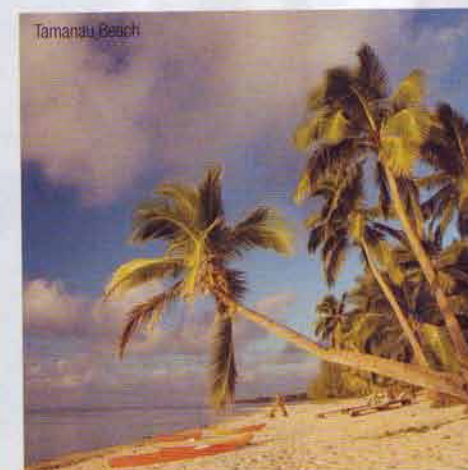
Julie Godfrey grabbing some air



Good times with Jody Favavae



Laura Adams checking out the marine life



Tamanu Beach



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