

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Angkor Wat, the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Cambodia, houses the largest religious building in the world. The 9th- to 14th-century Buddhist and Hindu monuments dominate the old capital of the Khmer kingdom.

The alluring city of Cuzco, Peru, at an elevation of 11,000 feet, was our first destination and was once the imperial capital of the Incas. It is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the Western Hemisphere.



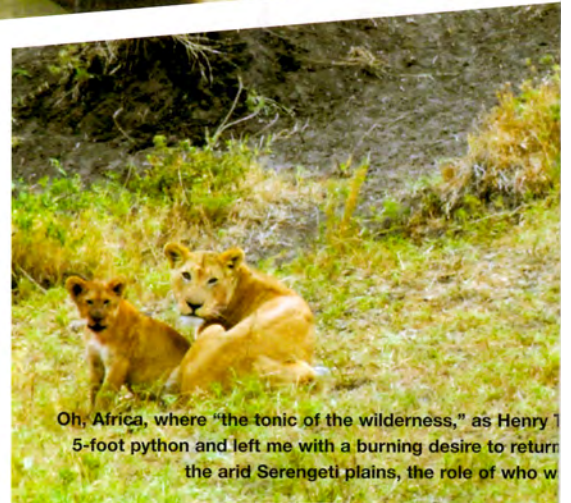
The Giant Panda cub happily sits on my lap while chewing bamboo dipped in honey. Panda are an endangered species with only 1,000 to 1,500 living in the wild and 120 in captivity.



Traveling around the world in 24 days aboard a private 757 jet has fueled my addiction for travel. My journey was a virtual feast for my senses. Each unique and venerable location eclipsed the previous sea of delights. I became fully engaged, alive and awakened. I felt like a girl on her own, set loose to discover an unlimited array of possibilities. Twelve destinations of ancient cultures, vibrant civilizations and nature's hidden wonders on my "life list" were experienced along with 74 other travellers.

The fascination and allure of circumnavigating the globe is not new. In the 1500s, Ferdinand Magellan and Sir Francis Drake made this journey. Mark Twain's words inspired me to cast all doubts to the wind: "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do... Explore. Dream. Discover."

Oh, Africa, where "the tonic of the wilderness," as Henry 1 5-foot python and left me with a burning desire to return to the arid Serengeti plains, the role of who w





On romantic windswept Easter Island, I came face to face with ancient and spiritually powerful stone giants, known as moai. They are believed to confer "mana" – spiritual power.



Three women in Cuzco exude a charming mixture of Inca, Spanish and Colonial influences while sitting in front of the Plaza de Armas, which was considered the center of the Inca Empire.



An enchanting train journey through jungle mountains revealed Machu Picchu. In 1911, American explorer Hiram Bingham III made it possible for the world to see about this truly great marvel of the world, composed of a labyrinth of mysterious grey stone.

This journey of mine was much more than that of a globetrotter set out for fun. Connecting with this planet and its peoples and encountering the unknown were my motivation. As the American poet James Russell Lowell said, "The wise man travels to discover himself." I wanted to return home to Detroit a woman who takes risks in order to live life to it fullest.

It has been not quite two months since I've been back in Detroit. I still awaken each morning with a fresh awareness of the preciousness of each moment. I also have a clear sense of our relative insignificance in the vast timeline of civilization. Civilizations come and go; some are destroyed and others leave a beautiful legacy. My new eyes have shown me hope. By changing the way we view the world and acting accordingly, our legacy will be a better world. 👑 – Linda K. Rodney, words and photos

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