

**NEWS RELEASE**



# UNDERWATER POST OFFICE



# XTREME POSTMEN

Can you think of a more unique job than being an Underwater Post Officer? For five 'Xtreme Posties' this job is a reality. Vanuatu Post's Underwater Post Office, found just off Hideaway Island near Port Vila, was opened for business on 23 May 2003. Situated fifty metres offshore and just three metres below the surface, Vanuatu Post promised all visitors they would accept mail underwater and deliver anywhere in the world.



To meet this challenge Vanuatu Post had four of its staff fully trained by Hideaway Island diving instructors. The staff received their PADI Certificates and began what is now a unique postal service. Of the original postmen (and women) Hapi and Patricia have moved on but Steven and Johny are still fulfilling their duties and they have been joined by Arua, Manii and Sam. The Posties are kept very busy especially in the Cruise ship season when bus loads of visitors don snorkels and masks and take the plunge.

Today the Underwater Post Office has become accepted as home by the many colourful fish who share this underwater paradise. The postmen tell the story of the octopus who eyed up their newly anchored post office as a potential home. With some coaxing he decided that a rocky crevice nearby was a better option and still remains there.

The Underwater Postmen of Vanuatu handle thousands of specially-made waterproof postcards which can be written on land or even underwater. The postcards are collected every day with the post office staffed in the busy season where the Xtreme postmen work on a shift basis. The mail they receive is given a special embossed frank underwater before being sent on its way through the postal channels. Standard mail (non waterproof) that is requested to carry the underwater cancellation is catered for at the main Post Office.



Several stamp issues, the internet and a vast number of editorial features both written and on television have seen the Underwater Post Office become famous in postal and philately circles. Vanuatu Post is proud to contribute to the hobby of stamp collecting and even postal history through their innovative Underwater Post Office. It is however the dedicated Xtreme Postmen that make this post office work and bring alive this amazing concept. They (and their "underwater helpers") deserve the praise for turning an idea into a reality and bringing fun into the lives of so many.

## Collectors' Notes

Designers:	Denise Durkin, Wellington, New Zealand
Printer:	Wyatt and Wilson Print, Christchurch, New Zealand
Process:	Offset lithography
Stamp Size:	42.15 mm x 36.29 mm vertical
Panes:	2 panes of 10 self adhesive stamps per sheet
Denominations:	40,80, 100 and 200 vatu
Period of Sale:	30 July 2008 for a period of 2 years

## For more information please contact:

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