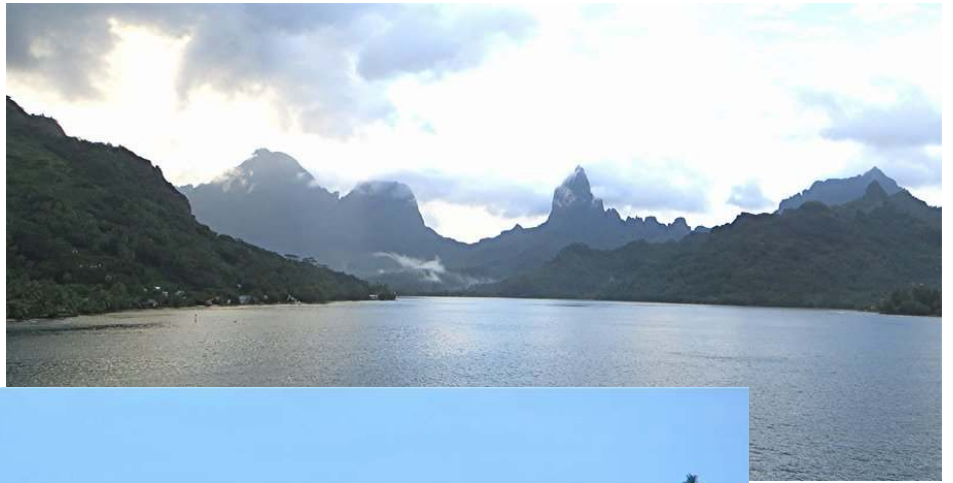


1/28/13 - Day 23 – Moorea Island: The island of Moorea is just 15 or 20 miles from Tahiti in the Society Islands of French Polynesia. We left Papeete last evening and spent the night sailing slowly around in the ocean. About 7am this morning the Amsterdam dropped anchor in the Opunohu Bay in Moorea. The location of the Amsterdam and path of a tour we took later in the day are shown in the map on the right.



Moorea is one of the most beautiful islands in the world so a person with a camera is compelled to snap pictures no matter which direction he looks. A few of our first pictures are shown below.



Since we were anchored in the bay and not tied up to a dock it was necessary to take a tender boat to shore. We caught a tender boat and arrived at the usual scene of souvenir vendor tents at the landing in the village of Papeotai, as shown on the left.



One of the “Dogs of Moorea” had already picked out a spot to spend his day.

Vendors were plentiful and it didn’t take long to negotiate a tour of the island with Albert Safari (Tel 784660). For a charge of \$40 each we would get a 3 hour tour and be riding in the



back of a 4x4 Toyota pickup to see a pineapple farm, the view from Belvedere, ancient Polynesian religious site at Marae Titiroa, and other local attractions along Cook Bay and Opunohu Bay shoreline. We joined 3 other couples from the Amsterdam, who were looking for a “no-frills” tour of Moorea.

Our tour guide/driver, Christina, quickly got us going as we cruised south along the west coast of Opunohu Bay. The route of our tour is shown on the map of Moorea above. Along the way we made stops for a closer look. We approached our first stop by turning off the pavement onto a dirt road that showed the effects of 3 rainy days that had preceded our arrival in Moorea.



After bumping along for a mile or two and exercising the 4x4 feature a few times we came to a stop at a field of pineapple plants. Christina explained what we were seeing as the cameras clicked away.



Here, on the left is a view of the pineapple field, with the incomparable Moorea backdrop view thrown in at no extra charge.

We climbed back into our truck but at this point Christina saw Barbara struggling to climb into the back of the truck. She took pity on Barbara's "short leg challenge" and let her make the easier entrance up front into the air conditioned comfort of the cab.

We got back onto pavement and wound our way up the mountain to our second stop at the Belvedere Lookout. This high point provides a spectacular view of the mountain peaks and northern shoreline of Moorea.



Christina explained the view we were seeing and then took a break as we tourists did our thing. We got a picture of Christina and friend, Barbara. After riding for a few miles “up front” Barbara had learned that Christina has 3 girls and one grandchild.

Christina explained that a prominent peak on Moorea, known as Mt Mouaroa, is shown on the French Pacific 50 franc coin. Here is a comparison of a view we saw and the 50 franc coin.



Although we didn't see any gasoline prices posted on Moorea, Christina said that regular gas was selling for \$1.50 USD per liter. That would be about \$6 USD per gallon which is typical of what we have seen in the South Sea Islands.



We left the Belvedere Lookout and wound our way a short distance down the mountain to the 3rd stop which was at the Marae Titiroa. Luckily, Orlin's high carbohydrate diet of bread rolls at dinner time was providing the energy needed for clambering in and out of our truck. The Marae is a stone enclosure that had great religious significance for the ancient



Polynesians. The Marae Titiroa has been well preserved with huge cypress-like trees growing within its boundaries, as shown in the photo on the left.



Our 4th stop was further down the mountain at an agricultural school known as Lycee Agricole. Christina

said this was a trade school that catered to young people who were not inclined toward highly academic studies but were more interested in farming and food production. The tour of Lycee Agricole started with a sample of some different fruit jellies that were



produced at the school. The buildings were well maintained and the grounds immaculate.



From the Lycee Agricole school we motored down the mountain and through the farming community of Pao Pao. We came to the main road and turned left to drive along the west bank of Cook Bay.

Christina pointed out the St. Joseph Catholic Church on the side of the road. She said it was the church she attended when she was a child.



Further on we made our 5th stop at the Jus de Fruits de Moorea

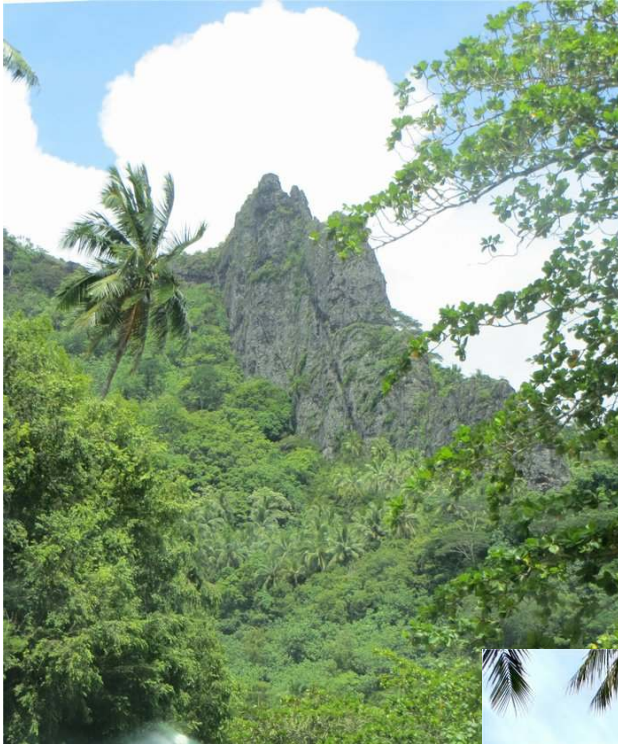


factory where juice from local farm produce is prepared and marketed.

Here we were treated to some delicious samples of tropical fruit juice, some of them laced with rum for added punch.

Outside, another “Dogs of Moorea” was guarding the back entrance.





From the fruit juice factory we continued along the coast road to Opunohu Bay where the Amsterdam was anchored. We continued to be awed by the tropical beauty of the passing scene.

The Amsterdam came briefly into view and we captured this scene below on our camera.

The road took us around Opunohu Bay and on to the Moorea Beachcomber Intercontinental Resort where we made a brief stop. Some of our group left here for swimming and snorkeling at the beach but we opted to return to the Amsterdam.



Christina took us back to the landing at Papetooa Village. Here we photographed the Octagonal Church which is a landmark for the area and familiar to anyone who has visited here.



There was a brief moment of panic when



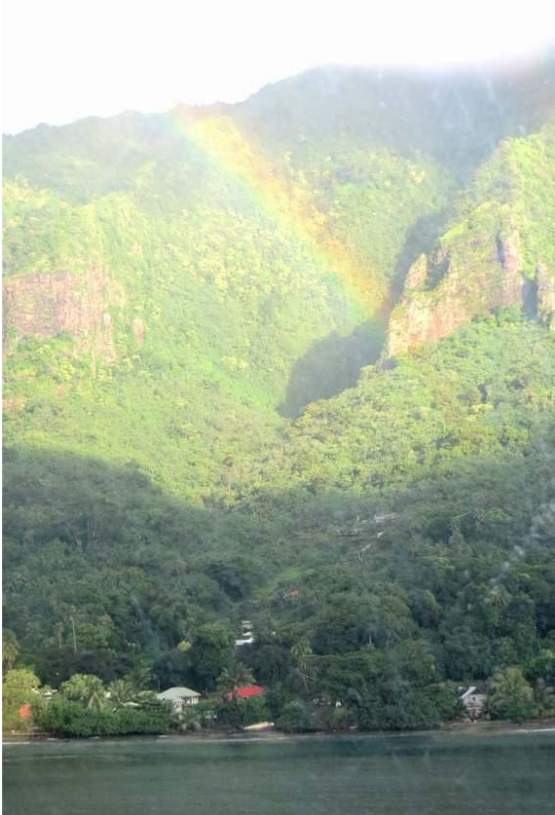
we realized that the visit of Barbara's library card to Moorea had not yet been documented. An imposing sign for the village of Papetoa was out of the question so we settled for this photo of our tour vendor's sign showing that the well worn card had arrived in Moorea.



An Amsterdam tender boat was waiting at the dock.

Also on the dock was a lady in Polynesian costume greeting passengers coming and going from the Amsterdam.





We arrived back at the Amsterdam about the same time that there was a brief little shower of rain drifting down. A faint rainbow suddenly appeared and our camera automatically caught this image on the left before it got away.

Our “Pot of Gold” today was definitely in Moorea and this seemed like a very appropriate scene to take away with us.

The Amsterdam got underway about 6pm. We sailed away from beautiful Moorea over smooth seas toward nearby Bora Bora where we would be visiting tomorrow.