

Day 17 – Bora Bora – Vaitape – Roofs - Gas Price - 12 Oct 09: The Amsterdam had remained anchored overnight in the Lagoon of Bora Bora. The day started nice and sunny with comfortable temperature and humidity. Looking outside we saw that a beautiful sailing ship, shown below, had joined the Amsterdam in the Lagoon.



The sailing ship was the Star Flyer of Luxembourg which offers cruising accommodations for people who like traveling on a tall sailing ship. We thought it added an exotic touch to the already beautiful setting of the lagoon.

Barbara's head cold was somewhat improved so she decided to accompany Orlin on a last visit to the village of Vaitape on Bora Bora. About 9am we took a tender boat to the pier in Viatape. Since we have recently become aware of the use of pandanus tree leaves as roofing material Orlin became fascinated with the different patterns and conditions of the roofs around the area of the Viatape Tourist Center. The roof on the right looked like it may be reaching the end of its useful life.



The roofs shown below looked a bit more robust.



The roof of the shelter over the Tourist Center pier used the same pandanus leaves as the other roofs but it was laid in a crisscross pattern that seemed to violate common sense for draining rain water off as quickly as possible.



Perhaps the roof was supposed to act mainly as a sun shade because the Tourist Center, with a conventional shingle roof, was nearby for rain shelter.

We were glad to see that the good people of Bora Bora had not resorted to artificial plastic leaves for the roofs. However, most of the roofs were overlaid with a chicken wire mesh (not visible in the photos) to keep the leaves in place during a high

wind. The original Polynesian immigrants would probably have readily used chicken wire if they had it.

After completing our roof study we walked out of the Tourist Center and turned left on the main street toward where the map showed a pharmacy. We were thinking about getting some decongestant tablets for Barbara's head cold. We found the pharmacy and they had what they called decongestant tablets. A box of 20 cost \$13 USD. However, the packaging was all in French and the clerk was giving some warning about taking it before going to sleep so we decided to skip this purchase. Later we bought a box of 20 Dristan decongestant pills on the Amsterdam, but unfortunately at no cost savings.

We headed back toward the Tourist Center and came upon a Mobil gas station. It was an opportunity to continue the gas price survey of French Polynesia. In Nuka Hiva we were told that gas cost 145 Francs per liter which was equivalent to \$7 USD per gallon. Here in Bora Bora we found that non-leaded gas cost 140 Francs (XPF) per liter. At the current exchange rate of 82.57 XPF per 1 USD that works out to \$1.70 USD per liter or about \$6.78 USD per gallon. We got a picture of the pricing on the gas pump just to add credibility to our survey.



In spite of the relatively high price of gasoline the traffic on the one main street in town was heavy at 9am on a Monday morning. We had to wait several minutes for a break so that we could cross the street.

Near the gas filling station a street vendor had laid out an attractive display of garden vegetables for sale. We were intrigued by the extremely long string-bean-like vegetable shown at the near end of the table in the picture on the left.

There were also some flowers to photograph. The hibiscus hedge, shown below was nicely in bloom.



The vendor stalls showing a brightly colored cloth seemed to be everywhere. The cloth piece is used as a piece of clothing for women and is called a Pareo.



Before catching the tender boat back to the Amsterdam we took one last photo of the commercial area across the street from the Tourist Center. The shoulder of Mount Otemanu can be seen in the background.



After browsing through the souvenir vendor's stall one last time we caught a tender boat and rode back to the Amsterdam. As we were leaving the pier we got this photo of one of the tender boats from the sailing cruise ship, Star Flyer.



In the afternoon we mainly just enjoyed the air conditioned luxury of the Amsterdam. Orlin took occasional excursions around the ship to enjoy the view while Barbara nursed her cold.

Sort of related to the issue of artificial plastic palm leaf roofs, some of the teakwood decking on the Amsterdam has been replaced with a plastic decking material within the last year. When we first came on board this cruise in Long Beach we saw that the beautiful teakwood aft Lido Pool Deck had been converted to a plastic material with an imprint simulating the joints between the old teakwood planks. The plastic decking makes a lot of sense from the standpoint of initial cost, maintenance and preservation of the Brazilian rain forests but we had to admit to a little sadness at seeing the passing of the teakwood tradition.

Fortunately, the teakwood on the bench around the Aft Lido Pool was retained and looks wonderful. However, the contrast between the teakwood bench and the plastic decking is obvious. Here are a couple pictures of the Aft Lido Pool Deck area as it now looks.



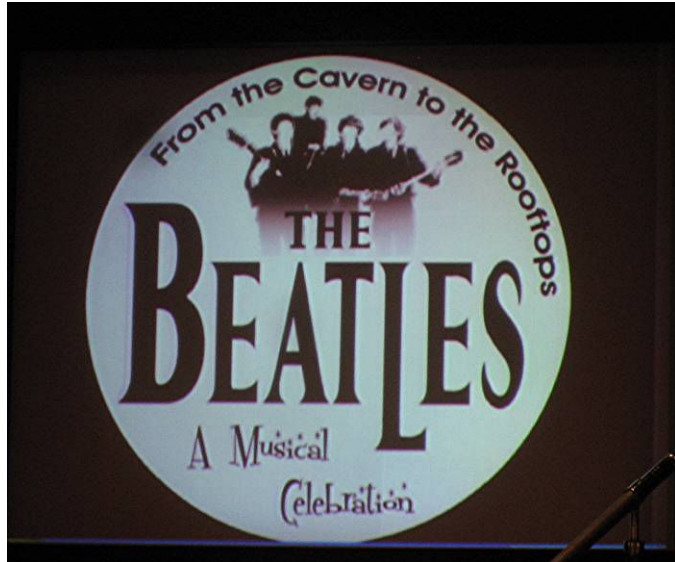
The Aft Lido Pool Deck remains a thing of beauty and opulence with careful tending of the Amsterdam crew. The festive mood of the area, as shown below, can still cheer up the most ardent teakwood lover



In spite of the attractive scene offered by the Lido Pool Deck, Barbara preferred the privacy of the verandah while her congestion abated. As she likes to say, if a person has to suffer through some minor illness like this, it might just as well happen amidst abundant luxury.



The entertainment this evening in the Queen's Lounge was a group from Liverpool, England. The four piece band has copied the look and music of the world-famous Beatles musicians who originated from Liverpool. The logo of this new group is shown on the right. Orlin went to the show while Barbara took a pass to continue convalescence.



It was good entertainment as they looked, played and sang the in the unique Beatles style. However, there was a telling moment in the performance when the band paused in a piece they were playing. To Orlin's surprise, and without prompting, a significant portion of the audience sang the missing words in perfect unison. Apparently, this kind of audience participation for that song was a tradition of the people who really grew up with the Beatles music. As adults in our 30s we had listened and danced to music by the Beatles and thought we were part of that generation. However, tonight Orlin suffered the epiphany that we are of the Elvis Presley generation and the Beatles generation is 10 or 15 years younger than us.

The ship got underway about 6pm bound for Raiatea, a nearby island (~25 miles) that is part of the Society Island group in French Polynesia. We expect to dock about 8am tomorrow.