



## **French Polynesia Sailing Vacation 2025 by Daniel Jackson “Tahitian Treasures in a Polynesian Paradise”**

la ora na,

The French Polynesian Society Islands were always on my sailing bucket list, but no one could have prepared me for the paradise that awaited us. Situated halfway between the US and Australia in the South Pacific Ocean lies a chain of islands which include Tahiti, Raiatea, Taha'a and Bora Bora. We took a small plane from the capital of Tahiti, Papeete to Uturoa on Raiatea. Looking out of our aircraft window at our anticipated cruising ground was like looking at an image from a fairytale. From the air, the breathtaking views of the volcanic islands, rising from inside the coral barrier reefs, I lost count of how many different colors of blue the water could be.

After 5 flights and a full 24hrs of travelling it was inevitable that my bags would have a different itinerary than me. I've lost my bags on previous Sailing Vacations and even before an Atlantic crossing which inadvertently meant 3 weeks of me borrowing clothes from the other crew, and so before this trip, Klaudia and I had decided to put some of my belongings into her bags should mine take a detour, who would have thought this would result in her losing her bags also!

Greeted by Polynesian dancers and musicians, and equipped with only the clothes on our backs, we were ready for our adventure.....





Raiatea from the sky of Air Tahiti

**Saturday** - Moorings/Sunsail Base – Apooiti Bay (Raiatea)

*16° 43.667' S, 151° 28.645' W (Wind 12kts)*

**Route:** 6 nm - Apooiti Bay Marina (Raiatea) to Apu Bay (Taha'a)

The first day on Charter/Sailing Vacation can be a little chaotic with getting the boats ready and guests flying in at last minute, but I was greeted at 0730hrs with big smiles and tropical punch from the Moorings base staff, Alex, Lawrence, Sophie and Jennifer. They were already loading our boats up with provisions, kayaks and paddleboards. I thought I would go down to the base early to get these things organized but they were already on top of everything. I ran into town for a few last minutes items and a couple of shorts and shirts since my bags were still on their world tour, before the group started to arrive.

At 1000hrs, skippers, mates and crew all sat in on the chart briefing. I'd had a few sleepless nights before arriving as the weather was still a little unstable and we had planned on several passages through the atoll passes which can be a little intimidating in calm weather no mind the 25 knots from the east with 40 knot squalls that we were currently experiencing. Lawrence put all our minds at ease, and he confirmed my preplanned float plan, destinations and anchorages.

By 1200hrs all guests had arrived and were busy exploring their assigned boats:

1<sup>st</sup> Mate Doug helming "Music Box II"





Pat and Klaudia following the Sailing Vacation fleet

**Boat 1:** Moorings 4500 Catamaran  
“Music Box Dancer II” (aka Magic Box)  
*Skipper:* Daniel  
*1<sup>st</sup> Mate:* Doug  
*Crew/Alt Skippers:* Klaudia, Pat and Julie

**Boat 2:** Moorings 4500 Catamaran  
“OA’OA” (aka Hola Hola, Oh Aaahh Oh Aaahhh)  
*Skipper:* Joel  
*1<sup>st</sup> Mate:* Craig  
*Crew/Alt Skippers:* Susan, Barry, Harry and Erica

**Boat 3:** Sunsail 454 Catamaran  
“Ono Ono” (aka Yoko)  
*Skipper:* Ken  
*1<sup>st</sup> Mate:* Kim  
*Crew/Alt Skippers:* Kurt, Devin and Jeff

I was made aware that the Sunsail catamaran “Ono Ono” was a brand-new arrival, the 1st day of charter. So, Ken and his crew were going to put her through the inauguration shakedown cruise..... What could possibly go wrong!!!

I had initially planned to sail about 10nm the first day up to Haamene Bay in Taha’a, but due to the strong easterlies that had come through over the previous few days the river and bay had gotten murky and the mud had shifted so anchoring could have been an issue so we opted to just have a couple of hours of sailing in the bay to get to know our boats and each other and then take a mooring ball at the south end tip of Taha’a by the pearl farm.



By 1730hrs we were all moored and I think there wasn't one person who wasn't in the crystal-clear water within 2 minutes. Dinner on board and early to bed for our next day adventures.

Apu Bay, Taha'a



**Sunday** – Bora Bora Yacht Club – Faanui Bay (Bora Bora)

*16° 29.379' S, 151° 45.660' W (Wind 18kts)*

**Route:** 30 nm - Apu Bay (Taha'a) to Faatahi Bay (Bora Bora)

The sail to the famous Bora Bora Yacht Club had been something on my mind for several years now and so I awoke early to do my rounds of the boats and skipper briefings in eager anticipation of setting off for the 30 Nautical mile broad reach to the island of Bora Bora. After a quick fix of a few items on each boat and engine checks completed, we slipped our mooring lines and motor sailed in tandem counterclockwise around Taha'a to our first navigation through the motu at Passe PaiPai. This pass through the atoll is moderately wide (400 yds), but still we made our way through tentatively in convoy as waves crashed on either side of us on the coral reefs. I think we were all reminded how lucky we were to have good charts and electronic navigation, and I couldn't imagine how the early explorers transited these passes without them.

Once through the pass, all 3 boats raised their sails and eased them out onto a broad reach, pointing approximately 295°T towards Bora Bora.

Upon the approach to the lighthouse of the SW corner of Bora Bora, the wind died so we motor sailed the remainder of the way. 'OA'OA had pulled ahead and had arrived just before the pass ahead of us so they circled around until we managed to catch them up and then along with Ono Ono following suite, MusicBox led the way through Passe Teavanui between Motu Ahuna to the north and Motu Tapu to the south. Sails down and into the bay where we took mooring balls right in front of the Bora Bora Yacht Club.

Like a climber at the top of Mt Everest, I sat on the top deck of the Catamaran and took in the sights of Bora Bora. The extinct volcano with peaks (Mt Otemanu and Mt Pahia) towering 2400ft above us and the crystal-clear water below us. Definitely, a pinch me moment.



Bora Bora Yacht Club with Mt Otemanu

After a swim and dive on the mooring ball we were greeted by the Bora Bora Mooring Service boat who collected the fees for our stay. I had prearranged and reserved the mooring balls through WhatsApp with the mooring service a few days earlier and we were able to pay for all 3 nights locations for all the boats in one transaction.

That evening we enjoyed festivities at our 1<sup>st</sup> event welcome party at the Bora Bora Yacht Club where we were met with "Welcome Punch". Dinner was amazing with a Raw fish with coconut milk and vegetables and Tuna sashimi with cabbage starter, Traditional "Pua Choux" (local dish with pork) and Fish of the day (Red Tuna) for Main courses and an unbelievable melt in your mouth Po é banana, which is a local dessert and Coconut pie. The dinghies were several pounds heavier on the way back to the boats and we stayed up chatting for a while longer on deck on our respective vessels. What a day!!!!



A peaceful anchorage at the reef of Motu Oatara,  
Raiatea

**Monday** – Motu Fareone (Bora Bora)

*16° 32.124' S, 151° 42.236' W (Wind 20kts)*

**Route:** 12 nm - Faatahi Bay (Bora Bora) to Motu Fareone (Bora Bora)

An early morning message from Air Tahiti awoke me at 0530hrs, our bags were arriving..... We launched the dinghy and the crew of MusicBox motored around to the town of Vaitape around 3nm and upwind. To say this was the wettest dinghy ride was an understatement, but we didn't care... The water and air was warm, and we were getting our luggage. In the town, Klaudia and I hurried to the Baggage agency whilst the others perused the local craft market and shops. Back to the boats (bags in hand) to meet up with the 2 other boats who had spent the morning also going into town and snorkeling the bay, we set off from the mooring field around 1230hrs to motor the short but challenging sail around to the other side of the atoll.

[info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](mailto:info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

[www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](http://www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

📞 239-486-3141



During my early studying of the charts and a follow up chat with Lawrence at the Moorings I had decided to avoid the gnarly snaking channel clockwise around the island. There are shallows and coral heads (Bommies) everywhere. The water is so clear though you can see them a mile away when the sun is high and behind you, so we transited the island with ease. We had decided to take a route across the shallow sands down the west of the island and when I saw the channel I was thankful we had decided against using it. The trip took us past the famous floating hut resorts on stilts and we were so close to them we could have had a cocktail on their decks with their guests. Once past the Intercontinental Resort we passed between two large coral heads, and we all held our breath as the numbers on the depth finder quickly disappeared. 1 -2 inches under the keels we floated over the shoals and then back into 400 ft of water just like that.

We were all amazed with the colors of the water and we could see every detail on the bottom of the seabed.



"Bommies", Motu Fareone, Bora Bora

We had looked at the wind and saw a shift with 30 knots coming to the southeast so we took the mooring balls which were all the way in the bay so we could seek shelter in anticipation of the shift. As we approached the moorings, the water got bluer and bluer, and I couldn't remember seeing such clear waters even in Thailand, Croatia or the Bahamas (and they are Blue)!!

I'd heard from other cruisers of a restaurant on the motu called "Ari Motu Grill" and so I called to see if we could reserve a couple of tables that evening. After a wonderful conversation with the owner Ari, it was unfortunate that he had run out of food that day as all his dishes are fresh caught, but we arranged to have a beach lunch the next day at his establishment (unbeknown to us what he had in store for us) and we had promised to stop by for an aperitif and beverage later that evening.

With the rest of the afternoon and evening available, we all took dinghies to the edge of the atoll, and we saw eagle rays dancing all around us as we approached the snorkeling spot. The current was strong in the dive spot, but we were entertained by beautiful coral and fish for a couple of hours whilst we drift snorkeled.



On the way back to the boat we passed by Ari's place for a cool beverage, and he took us all on a tour of his piece of paradise. Back to the boat for dinner.... Wait.... what's that in the water????? We were surrounded by 3 Black Tip Sharks we called Huey, Louie, And Duey. We watched them for hours as they played around us..... anyone for a dip? (I'll pass thanks!!)



Sunset at Ari's Motu Grill, Bora Bora

***Tuesday*** – Motu Toopua (Bora Bora) via the Aquarium and Ari Motu Grill

*16° 31.574' S, 151° 46.595' W (Wind 28kts)*

**Route:** 15 nm - Motu Fareone (Bora Bora) to Motu Toopua (Bora Bora)

A quick look under the boat to check the sharks had gone followed by a quick dip then out to the Aquarium. 'Oa'Oa, had visited the dive site the previous day and their reports were not inaccurate. Behind the 2 Motus of Piti Uta and Piti Tai is a dive spot called "The Aquarium". I'll leave it like this..... I just jumped into a real-life sized fish tank. We spent a couple of hours swimming and snorkeling the site with the crew of Music Box and Ono Ono. Then came the dinghy ride back..... The wind, as predicted, had swung around to the southwest and it had kicked up quite the swell and chop even on the inside of the atoll. The boat was about 2 nm away and about halfway enroute I thought... "we're not going to make it". There was more water in the dinghy than outside, and water was coming in faster than Doug and his bionic arm could bail it..... Ono Ono was also having a similar issue and



as they passed on their dinghy, we all burst into hysteric laughter with our predicament. Disaster barely averted. We arrived at our boat wetter than had we been in the water. So, as mentioned earlier, there's Ari's place. We all arrived on the beach by the resort around 1130 and were greeted by Ari and his partner Paulina who are just starting out with the restaurant after the land adjacent had been passed down by his family.



Lunch on the beach by "The Aquarium", Bora Bora

The young couple led us to some tables on the beach and told us about the menu he had prepared for us. Freshly caught an hour before our arrival and prepared by our hosts we were in awe as they brought a Raw Red Tuna with mango and pineapple.



Freshly caught Raw Red Tuna with Pineapple and Mango

Ari broke open a fresh coconut from a nearby tree and prepared and poured coconut milk and then squeezed fresh lime on top to marinate the fish. I looked around the tables at the



faces of the guests as they tasted this mouthwatering appetizer. The room (Beach) was silent as each mouthful melted before conversation started up again about what we were experiencing. Main course arrived, grilled Mahi with fries and vegetables, followed by a dessert cake prepared by Paulina with her secret ingredient of tomatoes. (Not a secret anymore!!). What a lunch.... Greet food and conversation and we were there experiencing the start of a wonderful life for this young couple. Tears shed, hands shook, and pictures taken we sadly departed, promising to come back.



Tahiti Sailing Vacation Crew with Ari and Paulina from Motu Grill, Bora Bora

It was hard to leave this location, and I think we all agreed that we could spend a month easily at this spot, but there's more to come and some sailing to do.

We debriefed our route back to the west of the island and Joel and his crew on 'Oa'Oa led the way back through the route we had come in on, with Ono Ono in the middle and Musicbox bringing up the rear within a boat length of each other, (Great job Skippers).

Once we had passed the tricky channel marks at the top of the island, we all turned into the wind and raised our sails. Game on..... these boats were flying. So much for a gentle cruise, these guys wanted to race..... there was some close quarter maneuvering, and these floating condos were flying at 8, 9, 10 knots.....

As we approached the channel at the south of the island we let 'Oa'Oa lead the way to the mooring field. I had only seen a couple of mooring balls upon our approach, so we all agreed to continue a little further. 'Oa'Oa called on the vhf that they could see 3 mooring balls a little further up by the resort, they were a different color, but we hurriedly grabbed them. About 30 mins after mooring, we were approached by the resort service boat who



notified us that they were private mooring balls, and we would have to move. Thankfully it was only 6pm and we still had light, but the sun was setting shortly so we back tracked to the earlier mooring field. We only had a few minutes of light by the time we were moored safely, Doug reminisced about anchoring on our OSS Coastal Passage Making course with Instructor Cheyenne in the dark, however, I was glad that the resort had come and told us when they did as I didn't want to try to find these moorings in the dark with 3 boats!! Underwater lights turned on and the show started as the wildlife arrived. Surrounded by dozens of sharks and rays we chatted about our amazing day of snorkeling at the Aquarium and our mouths still watering after Ari's Grill.



Sunset in the Society Islands, French Polynesia

***Wednesday*** – Le Ficus and Black Pearl Farm, Apu Bay (Taha'a)

*16° 40.914' S, 151° 29.094' W (Wind 26kts)*

**Route:** 38 nm - Motu Toopua (Bora Bora) to Apu Bay (Taha'a)

So, we ordered wind (lots of it), unfortunately it was delivered in the wrong direction. It was going to be a beat back to Taha'a. All three boats slipped moorings in Motu Toopua and motored back to the Bora Bora Yacht Club where we all went ashore to make a provisions and water run with taxi driver 'Freedom'.

Once provisions were back onboard, we motor sailed out of the bay and Motu, and back into the Pacific Ocean, which was not very Pacific. The recent shift in wind and increase in speed had kicked up the waves. A bit of a confused sea with not much time between waves on the nose taught us all why they call it 'Beating'.

Not to be outdone, we all close hauled out into the blue to try to get far enough out to get an angle back to Taha'a. I think the crew and boats got a workout and it wasn't long before



we started to see some issues. The wind had started to open a small area of Musicbox's Main Sail where the stitches were sun damaged, so we were nursing that. Ono Ono had a reef in but was falling behind after having to deal with a chaffed jib sheet, and 'Oa 'Oa were just getting beaten to death. The waves had dislodged the circuit board on the main distribution panel, and they had lost power (lights, refrigerators and electronics and somehow their toaster had given up too). Having sailed and conducted courses on our OSS Leopard 45 back in Florida frequently, I tried to talk the crew through the repair, but the weather was not cooperating, and I decided to call the base to have a tech come and make the repair. We were now on a time schedule as the tech would only be able to come out to the pass until 4pm. 'Oa'Oa and Musicbox turned towards the pass and met up with the tech who had come out on a skiff who escorted them to our evenings mooring. Musicbox then came back out of the pass to meet up with the approaching Ono Ono and led them back through the pass into Taha'a.



The many shades of blue water, Taha'a

At the mooring field there were dozens of boats, where had they all come from? We had reserved 3 moorings, but they were nowhere to be seen as the wind shift had led the entire Pacific fleet to this protected anchorage.

Things happen for a reason..... I flagged down a passing skiff and struck up conversation with a French gentleman whilst we circled around with the three boats. 'Oh, you must be Daniel', he smiled, "let me make some room". He then started to reorganize the mooring field and moved a couple of smaller boats. "That's ok, they belong to my brother-in-law and a friend". Without questioning further, we put all 3 boats on the newly acquired mooring balls, and I flagged down my new best friend. He told me had sailed over to the islands from Europe and settled in Taha'a and worked at the Black Pearl Farm. "Any chance you can give us a tour?" I asked. "Avec Pleasure, mon ami, demain matin a huit



heure”. I quickly told the crews of our new plan to tour the farm the next morning at 8, but before that could happen, we had our Sailing Vacation Event Dinner.

A couple of months before the Sailing Vacation started, I had contacted Maria. An unbelievable Polynesian lady who has a small restaurant in her home on Taha’a.

We had spoken about creating a Polynesian experience for the Sailing Vacation, and she didn’t disappoint.

Local musicians entertaining at the Tahiti Sailing Vacation Event Dinner, Le Ficus, Taha’a



Polynesian Fire Dancing, Le Ficus, Taha’a

We dinghied up to her dock making sure to pass between the two sticks that mark the dinghy destroying reef channel, (good luck Dan and crew finding them on the way out in the dark). The Polynesian band and dancers were in full voice music and performance as Maria welcomed us all like we had known each other for years.

She then showed us how she had prepared and cooked the meal in a traditional underground oven and food is wrapped in leaves to cook. She blessed the food speaking in Tahitian, French and then English for all to understand.

We ate a buffet style meal consisting of rice, lagoon fish, foie gras, coconut bread, porc, beef and tuna curries, and a fruit dessert with punch and wine.



After the dinner we were entertained by two Polynesian Fire Dancers and some of us even joined them on their stage to celebrate the evening, which was also Skipper Ken's birthday, so he got extra dancing.

We all joined together to take our Sailing Vacation event photo along with Maria before saying our goodbyes to our amazing host.

Now, where were those channel marker sticks.....?



Tahiti Sailing Vacation 2025 group photo with Maria of Le Ficus, Taha'a

**Thursday** – Black Pearl Farm Tour and Botanical Gardens, Faaroa Bay (Raiatea)

*16° 49.122' S, 151° 24.983' W (Wind 30kts)*

**Route:** 12 nm – Apu Bay (Taha'a) to Faaroa Bay (Raiatea)

0700hrs, Swim, coffee, swim, a bit more coffee....

0800hrs, Crew ashore by dinghy and short walk up the island road to the Champon Black Pearl Farm (well Musicbox and 'Oa 'Oa crew), Ono Ono crew had outboard engine issues and before drifting out the atoll towards Hawaii they were able to flag down a passing

[info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](mailto:info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

[www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](http://www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

☎ 239-486-3141



cruising family who brought them ashore. (there are a few things breaking, are you sure the bananas were only on the boat for 5 minutes guys???)

We took an amazing tour of the Black Pearl Farm and saw how they were harvested and graded, then made into custom jewelry. Klaudia had her eye on a couple of items, and I knew my new boat fund would be depleted. “When will we ever have the chance to get black pearls from French Polynesia again?” I guess I lost 10ft of boat in that transaction. Still a little broken from our previous days crossing, we all decided to sail on the inside of the atoll rather than going out of Passe Toahotu and sailing down the outside to Raiatea.



Harvesting Pearls at Champons Black Pearl Farm, Taha'a

A good decision as the waves were still very lumpy from the looks of it. We had planned to go all the way to the south of Raiatea and anchor next to the reef but with the wind direction and speed with gusts still in the 30's I made the call to switch the days around and we would go to Friday's anchorage today, which was up the river by Faaroa Bay. Upon arrival up the river, we found 3 mooring balls. Musicbox circled around whilst Ono Ono and 'Oa 'Oa got settled as our mooring was a little tight to the shoreline. Doug, Pat and Julie were professionals now on the mooring and had a system, but when they pulled up the mooring ball, Julie saw in horror that it was hanging on with a very frayed line. The water up the river was a little murky so Doug dropped the dinghy in the water to take a better look



at the mooring. The news wasn't good, as we examined it we could confirm it had seen better days, and I decided that it was just too dangerous to stay tied to it. With the crew standing by on the helm I drove the dinghy to the other boats to check their moorings and after speaking with the skippers they decided that theirs were substantial, and they could stay put. Once I got back to our boat, I checked the depth..... 250ft!!!! We were going to have to go further down the river if we wanted to anchor. With Julie at the helm, she navigated the waterway down to the bottom of the river and found a nice 40ft shelf were Doug and Pat practiced their Anchoring. First time, dug in, bridle on, backed down, bearings taken. Anchor light on, success (great job Musicbox).

So, the great thing about where we were anchored was that it was right at the mouth of a small river entrance. 'Oa 'Oa and Musicbox dropped their dinghies in the water and all the crews took off up the river ride.



River ride up Faaroa Bay, Raiatea

The river twists and turns and it feels like you're in another world or up the Amazon river with low hanging trees and wildlife around every corner. A mile or so up the river is a small dock where we tied up the dinghies and walked up to the Botanical Gardens. Plants and trees of all shapes, sizes and colors were on display and it was great to stretch our legs around the many paths and trails which led the way.

Getting back to the dinghy, we met a cruising family we had seen earlier that week in another location, and they were holding an assortment of spiky fruits. 'You have to try these,' one of the cruisers exclaimed. They showed us how to open them up by sticking



your fingernails deep into them and prying them open to reveal a white jelly like fruit which you chewed off a seed or pip inside.

Then one of the cruisers pointed to the other side of the river and stated 'Go see Andre and get some'

Doug, Pat, Klaudia and I then rowed across the river and were met by Andre and his wife who immediately invited us into their farm. For the next two hours which flew by in seconds we were welcomed into Andre's life and shared conversation about his extraordinary location which I can only describe as how Charlie must have felt when invited into Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory.



Skipper and 1<sup>st</sup> Mate of "Music Box II", Daniel and Doug enjoying the Botanical Gardens, Raiatea

You name it, he had it..... Fruits from all over the world growing very organically, but with a twist. It's hard to put my finger on the magical wonder we experienced biting into what I can only describe as the best orange I have and probably will ever taste in my life.

Doug and I looked at each other as Andre knocked the fruit from the tree with a 40ft pole in just one swipe, then held the orange in his hand and very methodically severed it into 8 perfect wedges with 2 swings of a giant machete he was wielding. Offering the orange to us



and taking that first bite, Doug and I were nearly in tears with what we were experiencing, and it really is hard to put into words this unbelievable emotion that came over us. (you're just going to have to believe me or go see it for yourself). Andre then collected armfuls of fruits after climbing several trees like Tarzan and then loaded down our dinghy before we had to force him to take some money from us. (It seemed like a bit of a theme throughout the entire Society Islands that the people were so welcoming, generous and just happy. With everything happening around the globe in today's world it was a great reminder of how amazing people can be)

Back at the boat, we were all still in a daze and couldn't wait to tell the others of our adventure. But that would have to wait for tomorrow night's potluck.

Early to bed, as I had an idea for the next day that still needed some planning.....



Sailing Vacation crew enjoying the fruits of Andre's Farm, Raiatea

**Friday** – Offshore Sailing Schools ‘unofficial’ Sailing Vacation Regetta Race - Motu Oatara (Raiatea)

16° 51.061' S, 151° 20.428' W (Wind 15kts)

**Route:** 22 nm –Faaroa Bay (Raiatea) to Motu Oatara via ‘The Virtual Racecourse’



The many different palms of French Polynesia

The original plan for today was to motorsail down to the south of the Island of Raiatea where the site of Taputapuatea, the ancient ruins and sacred Polynesian Temple are located. However, the site was only 5 miles away and I had hatched a plan.

The wind was finally cooperating, and the sea state had started to calm down, 5ft seas with 5-6 seconds between. The Sailing Vacation members had shown me on day 4 how competitive they were when we had sailed down the west side of Bora Bora, and it seemed to me that we needed to host the 1<sup>st</sup> Official 'unofficial' Sailing Vacation Regetta Race for a bit of fun and bragging rights.

We visited each boat just before 0900hrs to discuss the rules (there are no rules) .... And uploaded my virtual marks to each boats navigation systems.

The start line would be at 1000hrs just outside the atoll and I placed a virtual start line on the ocean side outside Passe Iriru ou Marie @  $16^{\circ} 47.138' S$ ,  $151^{\circ} 22.741' W$ .

I then placed a virtual windward mark 4 nm at a bearing of  $35^{\circ} T$  @  $16^{\circ} 43.875' S$ ,  $151^{\circ} 20.409' W$ .

Lastly the finish line which was located another 4 nm after a nice broad reach at a bearing of  $260^{\circ} T$  @  $16^{\circ} 44.587' S$ ,  $151^{\circ} 24.660' W$  at the entrance to Passe Teavapiti.

Ono Ono and 'Oa 'Oa slipped their moorings whilst we on Musicbox raised our anchor and then proceeded to lead the fleet out of the pass.

Once clear of the reef, we headed into the wind, raised the sails just before 1000hrs and everyone sprinted for the line. It was a close haul to the mark, and everyone was seeing great numbers sailing. Under full mains and jibs, 'Oa'Oa pulled into the lead with Ono Ono



following closely behind but just before the mark, Musicbox had found their rhythm and had slightly pulled ahead. After a lively gybe on all 3 boats, we enjoyed the downwind sail to the finish. Champagne sailing at its finest, perfect conditions, reality hit me that our trip was almost over, and I sat on the bow reminiscing about our amazing week and the people who had made it so.

Due to regulations and insurance purposes, I cannot divulge who took line honors over the finish line (you just had to be there).



Ono Ono taking the leeward route behind 'Oa'Oa during the 1<sup>st</sup> Tahiti Sailing Vacation Regetta

Jibs furled, mains sails trimmed and engines on we surfed the large waves through the Passe and turned the boats to port and our final destination.

They always say leave the best to last, and this was no exception. The anchorage at Motu Oatara is in 5-6ft of water which comes up fast since we were in 600 ft on the approach.



The water was crystal clear as we floated the catamarans onto the shallow shelf at the edge of the reef, and we could see every single link of the chain all the way down to the anchor as we set our hooks.

I was awaiting the afternoon weather forecast and so our boat Musicbox decided to stay to keep watch on the Sailing Vacation boats and celebrate our victory (oops), whilst others snorkeled, and visited the ancient site of Taputapuatea by dinghy.

The anchorage was exposed to the ever-changing wind directions SE, E, NE, but the water is flat calm due to the protection from the reef.

In the evening, Musicbox hosted a potluck aboard, and everyone cooked up the last of their provisions and brought the dishes over to share. OMG, the food, company and conversations were amazing, and we all spoke and shared our best days of the Sailing Vacation whilst Eaglerays and Stingrays danced underneath the boat entertaining everyone.

Party over, and everyone back on their boats the wind decided to not cooperate with the forecast and decided to take a complete 180° shift around 0130hrs. I was in contact with the skippers on the other vessels via WhatsApp and VHF, who were now swinging into the shallower water. Anchors were firmly dug in though, and we took regular bearings to each other's boat throughout the night to confirm we were safe. It was a relief to see the sunrise over the atoll with all 3 boats still swinging around their hooks. We were afloat (Phew). Even in Paradise, our skills are tested.



Last night potluck onboard with the members of the Tahiti Sailing Vacation 2025



Ancient Ruins of Taputapuatea, Raiatea



Historic Sacred grounds of Taputapuatea, Raiatea

**Saturday** – Departure Day  
16° 43.667' S, 151° 28.645' W (Wind 10kts)

[info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](mailto:info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)  
[www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](http://www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

☎ 239-486-3141



**Route:** 14 nm – Motu Oatara (Raiatea) to Apooiti Bay (Moorings Base / Raiatea)

Early flights for some crew back to Tahiti meant an early morning departure from our last anchorage. Hooks up at 0600hrs we all slowly edged our way off the atoll shelf and back to the channel. What a week..... Amazing Waters, breathtaking scenery, mouthwatering dining, wonderful people and lifelong friendships.

I think everyone was thinking the same thing on that 12-mile trip back to the marina base..... ‘Can we stay longer?’

Upon arrival at the base, I called for the pilots to come aboard to take us into the marina, relieving the Skippers, Mates and Crew of their duties but not before we had one last hail on our working VHF Ch 72 which we had been monitored along with Ch16 all week.

‘Great sailing and thank you to all, let’s do it again, we’ll be back real soon French Polynesia, signing off for the last time, standing by on Channel 16..... Over.....(and out)!!!’

Thank you to the skippers, mates and crew of Musicbox Dancer II, ‘OA’OA and Ono Ono.

To the staff at The Moorings / Sunsail for the millions of questions I ask daily.

To the wonderful people of French Polynesia whose hospitality went beyond incredible.

And, lastly, thank you Klaudia, for helping me create these wonderful Sailing Vacations. Merci beaucoup, Mauru’ru



Sailing Vacation leaders, Dan and Klaudia

\*Final note: If you are interested in future Sailing Vacations, our schedule has just opened and includes catamaran and monohull sailing in some amazing destinations.

[info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](mailto:info@beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

[www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](http://www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)

📞 239-486-3141



There are limited berths available so call to be sure to get your place reserved. We also offer a variety of cruising and performance courses to brush up on your skills or advance your sailing adventures with our coastal and offshore passage making courses. Info is available on our website: [www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com](http://www.beyondthebluesailingadventures.com)



Crystal clear waters of French Polynesia