

NEWSLETTER

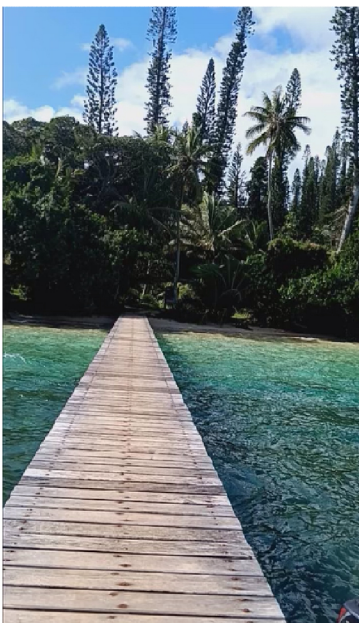
Noumea Trip

By David Bradburn

October 2023



It has been an absolutely wonderful time living and cruising onboard China Girl for my first 2 week cruise after having sailed from Newcastle to Noumea 6 weeks ago. My plans were to sail to Isle of Pines, and the Loyalty Islands in this timeframe. I am glad I abandoned this plan for a much more sensible one to thoroughly explore the Isle of Pines for a full week to fully appreciate this paradise on Earth. I had heard of this Island and been told it was well worth going to see. This is an understatement and in actual fact is a real jewel to behold in many different ways. What initially strikes you is the turquoise water, and generous Kuto Bay to anchor in. Once you have had an initial chance to explore you are gobsmacked with the beauty of Ilot Kanumera. This remarkable place which wets the appetite for further exploration. We stopped at Bay De Bruny for a day to get into the swing of island life which was uninhabited, and a great prelude to what was to come. I first wanted to see everything, but this proved to be allusive in as much as we tried, however, could not comprehend the depth of the culture and beauty without local knowledge to guide us. My first instinct is to hire a bike and go exploring which we did, however, not on an E-Bike which proved to be much slower, and more difficult than what I am used to. Nevertheless, we saw a few things like St Joseph Bay, the town of Vao, and that was about it!!



A day to recover and plan B, hire a local guide and discover Island life and tradition, Queen Hortense's Cave, drink coconut milk and then the magnificent Oro Bay Lagoon. As well learning about the Island's 2000 year old heritage, totems, missionaries, French colonisation, tribal interaction and past wars, no unemployment, infrastructure, community spirit and genuine friendship amongst the 2500 Kanak residents. A really rich and interesting way of life and so much pride and feelings for everyone. Even the local dogs are lovely, so friendly and free. We spent a day sailing to the Isle of Pines, and a magnificent fun day sailing back the 63nm to Noumea starting at 4am. We arrived back in Port Moselle just on dusk and spent all next day cleaning and preparing China Girl for her next adventure to the Loyalty Island Group.

