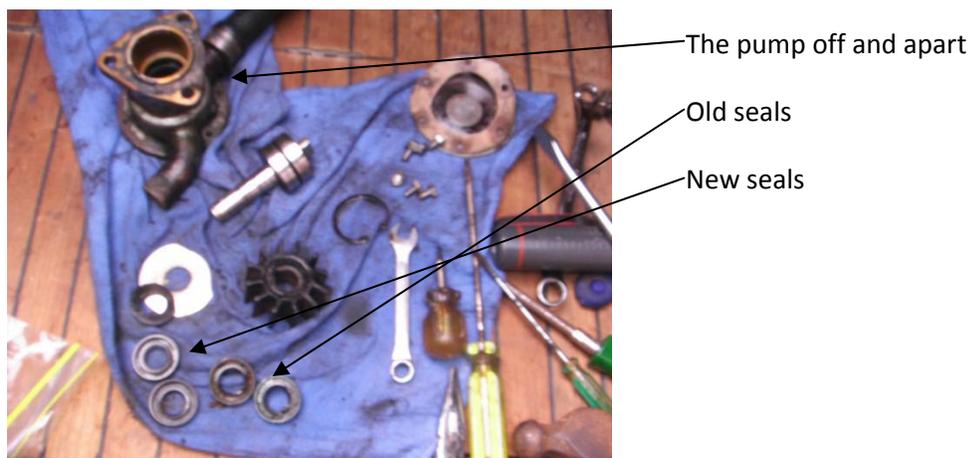


The Diva South Pacific Saga continues

In Port Vila, I notice that we still have water in the bilge after running the engine, so its not the impeller pump gasket – it must be the water seal behind the impeller in the pump body.

A call on the Vila net at 0830 to see if anyone knows where seals can be found....a young American fellow had exactly the same problem with the same brand of engine and found an industrial supplies shop just up the road that had the biggest collection of seals he'd ever seen...Beauty !

OK...lets do it....got the pump off and apart, off up the road with the old seals (they are knackered) and get exactly the right ones !



So put it all back together...and guess what...its still leaks !!

I did notice that the shaft looked worn where the old water seal was, so I guess that's it.

Got on the internet and ordered a new pump from Minards in NSW for delivery to Noumea.

Collected Clif and Angela from the airport and then spent 3 days cruising around Mele Bay and Port Havannah. The weather was calm so it didn't give them any taste of what the voyage to Noumea might be like.

Cleared customs and immigration on September 13<sup>th</sup>, filled diesel tanks on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> and set off from Vila in dull overcast showery weather. Breeze was about 18 knots from SSE, so pretty close to the wind as the course to New Caledonia is 192T.

During the day the breeze came up a bit and the sea certainly did. I'd read about the area SWW of Vila being one of the worst in the Pacific and it lived up to it. I was sick, Clif was so sick he took to his bunk for the rest of the day. Angela was completely unaffected. No-one felt like eating.

We did 3 hrs on, 6 hrs off during the night and it was uneventful.

September 15<sup>th</sup> (my birthday!) saw the weather ease..the breeze went down to SE15...perfect and the seas were certainly lighter....during the night the breeze dropped to 0...motor was on at 0200 on Angela's watch . Later, still dark, passing the island of Lifou we saw on the AIS a freighter, Laura III, which gave a CPA alarm which meant we were going to pass very close. Ten minutes later I saw his lights...he was doing 12 knots. I called him on the VHF and he confirmed that he had seen us. He passed in front of us but only by about 200m.



Clif feeling better



Angela indefatigable

We motored on all the way to the Havannah Canal and actually didn't get there until 1130..3 hours late..I really wanted to be there at 0830. Low tide was 0730 and its is important to go through this pass on a flood tide. Its 40 miles to Noumea from here, so early morning arrival would have meant we could get to Noumea that day.

Well it wasn't happening that way so we stopped at Baie Ire on Isle Ouen at 1500 and stayed overnight..the rest was worth it.



Entering Havannah Canal



Goro Lighthouse

The erosion around this place is amazing – its mentioned in all the cruising guides – and the earth is red..the mud at the bottom of the bay is red...and its very messy stuff.



September 17<sup>th</sup> raised anchor at 0830 and on the way motoring again..no breeze at all and the sea was so flat it looked like oil as Diva carved her way through it.



Oily seas

As we were heading for Ilot Maitre on the way in ..there's a freighter coming toward us..its Laura III. He's heading straight for us so we alter course a little and watch him pass.



Arrived at Port Moselle in the afternoon and directed to a pontoon berth on the visitors dock..all very efficient. Immigration and Quarantine arrived on the boat within 20 minutes. Customs never came but apparently that's normal. The Quarantine woman confiscated our eggs, bananas and garlic (?)...seems bizarre, but she has a bit of a reputation around here...strange thing is sometimes she doesn't even come on the boats ...so its all a bit haphazard.

The marina and facilities are quite good, but the water is filthy and it stinks ! I can't run the watermaker in here, so I've cleaned and pickled it. I'll start it up again when I get outside.

So, here we are in Noumea..Clif and Angela have found a small hotel and are busy exploring the museums and having a great time. I spent Sunday cleaning the boat...gave her a good wash and polished all the stainless steel.... She looks beautiful !



I'm going to the Post Office today to see if my pump has arrived...that will determine what happens next.

Looks like I may have 2 crew for the trip to NZ...should know for sure this week.

So, Salut de la Nouvelle Calédonie !