
STEVE AND MAREE RINGROSE

Follow Steve and Maree as they travel Australia and the Globe on exciting adventures.

29/08/2016 BY STEVE RINGROSE

Maree's Visit to Fiji August & October 2017

Fiji Here I come

29 August 2016

So, what do you do when your husband tells you he has been offered a four month position in Fiji?

First thing I did was work out how long I could get off work to go and visit him. The answer was a total of five weeks. So I thought three weeks to travel on my own and then I would go back for two weeks with my Mum as she deserves a holiday as well.

So the plans began. Since making the decision on how much time I would take off work I was offered a redundancy package so now the time is mine. So I thought I would travel up to Fiji in September. This giving me time to get over the shock of no longer having to roll out of bed and into the shower to be in the office by 8am.

The day has arrived and I'm boarding my Fiji Airways flight to join Steve. I am quite excited. The flight is magic and of course as soon as you board you are immediately on



“Fiji Time”.

The plane is their new A330 and for a small airline they have setup their business class really well.

Oh, by the way, I did mention I was flying both ways business class didn't I. Hmm, Hmm, Hmm.

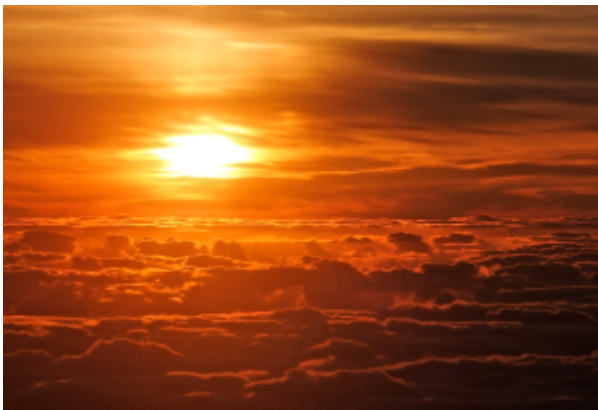


So I'm now sitting back, sipping my champagne watching the ground disappear from my nice business class window seat as we head through the clouds on our way to the wonderful Fiji Islands. The cabin crew are very pleasant and they cannot do enough for you. They have just taken lunch orders and announced that the route is clear and we will arrive in Nadi on schedule at 7pm. I guess that means the pilots don't get to experience true "Fiji Time" otherwise we would never get there. But now lunch has arrived and it is time for another one of those lovely champers. Enjoy – I am.

Arriving in Fiji

29 August 2016

I just witnessed the most beautiful sunset out of the window as we descended into

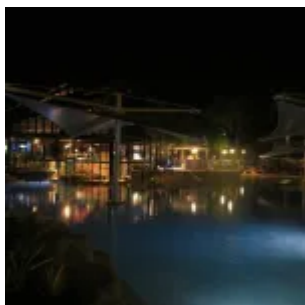


Nadi.

Steve was at the gate to meet me, of course. After the usual greeting, when you haven't seen each other for a couple of months, we headed through immigration, customs and then out into the car park. Steve is provided with a hire car, a Toyota FJ Cruiser, and while it is a safe car for the Fiji roads it did take a bit of climbing 'up' into.

Anyway we are on our way to our accommodation. I suggested during our planning that we stay at the Hilton Fiji Resort and Spa in Denarau for the time we are in Nadi (Steve is actually based in Suva). Steve had booked us in earlier that day so when we arrived this

evening it was just a simple buggy ride transfer from reception to the Deluxe Beach Front Villa, with its own plunge pool.



Being dark Steve gave me a quick tour of the villa, the outside surrounds and then a quick bite before retiring for the day. For sleep of course, I was tired. Until tomorrow. I can't wait.

First Day in Paradise

30 August 2016

Wow. I didn't appreciate the view or scenery last night as it was dark. But we did really well with the villa we picked for our stay. I'm really going to enjoy our time here over the next five days. Time for a quick dip in our plunge pool before breakfast.



After breakfast I went for a walk along the beach with Steve. Steve has two days off – his weekend – so we can do a bit of exploring together. The image below is also the view from our villa which you can see in the image above.





For dinner tonight we went to one of the seafood restaurants located in Port Denarau – Bone Fish. The seafood was to die for – fresh and tasty. They really know how to prepare tuna well. We will be back.

Time to Move on to Suva

2 September 2016

After five lovely days relaxing at the Hilton Beach Resort and Spa we are now heading off to Suva. The road distance to Suva is only 180 kms but as the speed limit is low, there are many villages to drive through and the local drivers are terrible, the travel time is 3 to 4 hours. But there are plenty of places where we can stop along the way.



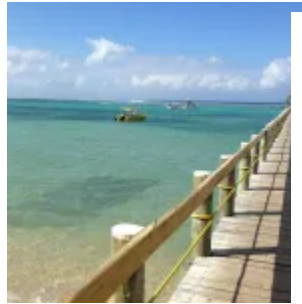
View from the Warwick Hotel

Steve says that when he drives the route from Suva to Nadi on a Wednesday and returns on a Saturday – he always stops at the Warwick Resort which is halfway between Suva and Nadi. Steve refers to this as “just a coffee stop” but when you see the views I can see it is more than just stopping for that coffee – coffee is good by the way – it is very relaxing with the views.



Gardens and view from the Warwick

After leaving the Warwick we stopped at several spots along the way. The coastline is very pretty.



Well we have finally arrived in Suva after a long drive with all the stops we made along the way. It really was an enjoyable journey.



Steve's Bure



Steve lives in a Studio Bure at the Five Princes Hotel. It is a lovely place with relaxing gardens, a pool and a great open air breakfast and dining area. Steve says that when breakfast is finished he will often sit in this area and work on his laptop and take in the views of the coastline. It is a great office.

After unpacking we relaxed on these cosy chairs with a glass of wine and taking in the view of the coastline. On a cloudless day the view is magic. Management asked if we were staying in for dinner and so we decided we would. A perfect end to a perfect day.



James – Natadola Bay Please

6 September 2016



We only spent a couple of days in Suva relaxing and going for walks along the lagoon waterfront as there isn't a lot to do in this city. We had a look through the shops but there isn't a lot, even for the tourists and there was a cruise ship in port. But it was nice to visit to see what the city was like.

We are leaving Suva and we are going to stay at one of the "premier resorts" which is about 40 kilometres from Nadi in a town called Natadola Bay. The resort is the Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa. People rave about the place so we thought we had better check it out. We are only spending two nights as the cost is close on AUD1,000 per night.



We arrive early at around 2pm and check-in is not until 3pm. However Steve had filled out their online form advising that we would be early and they responded advising that the room would be ready. It wasn't and we didn't actually get into the room until 4pm. So a disappointing start to the stay.

We had booked a beach front villa once again and yes we had made the right choice. You can see from the images that the view from our villa is lovely.



View from the villa

We decided we would eat in their signature restaurant while we stayed at the resort. The restaurant is exclusively for adults and this makes for a nice romantic evening. They also service breakfast in the restaurant and once again breakfast is for adults only. This makes for a peaceful dining experience.



View from the villa

We selected the alfresco seating for both dinner and breakfast and the lovely cool sea breeze was very refreshing. Being an exclusive restaurant prices are quite high for the a la carte menu and the portion serves are small. You have to avail yourself of a three course menu to really enjoy the experience

Overall we enjoyed our stay and the food in the restaurant was lovely. While we would most likely come again you have to keep in mind that you are isolated in this location and totally reliant on the resort for all amenities. Of course being a captive audience you also pay for the privilege of staying here.

Well we are off to Nadi in the morning. We will be trying out another resort in Denarau – The Radisson Blu. Let's see how we go with this choice.

Radisson Blu Port Denarau

11 September 2016



Breakfast with lovely views



Evening dinner view



We

stayed at the Radisson Blu for four nights. The resort was nice but more designed for families. We booked a lagoon view room as beach front villas are not an option at this resort. We thought the lagoon view would be a view over the “lagoon” that surrounds the island. This was not to be. The lagoon is a man made waterway around a man made mountain in the centre of the resort. As it turned out the hotel make a mistake with our booking and we were assigned a garden view room instead. The room was quite nice with an outside table but no chairs. The resort wouldn’t supply chairs when we asked. So the stay was very disappointing overall and we would not stay here again.



However; eating at the Radisson Blu Chantara Thai restaurant was a completely different experience. The restaurant provided excellent service and food. Food is incredible in every aspect; near impossible to fault. We used the restaurant

twice for dinner and three times for breakfast. All in all, if you are a lover of Thai food you can't go past the Chantara and no Denarau Island experience is complete without dining at this restaurant.

We will definitely use this restaurant again, especially when we spend our last days at the Hilton Fiji Beach Resort and Spa next week.

Eco Cafe Votua Village

11 September 2016

After leaving the Radisson we travelled back to Suva for the weekend. We spent three days catching up with Steve's work colleagues and going out for dinner at a nice restaurant called the Eden. They serve great meals at this restaurant. Once again we tried the tuna. We ordered the "Seared Tuna with Wasabi Potato Mash". The Fijians really know how to prepare tuna well. We couldn't fault this meal at all.

After a few days relaxing at Steve's Bure at the Five Princes we made our way back to Nadi. Along the way we stopped again at the Warwick for a coffee and to take in the views of the Coral Coast before travelling on another three kilometres for lunch at the rustic Eco Café at Votua Village.



Eco Cafe Coral Coast

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Eco Cafe from Beach

reat location with lovely views of the water.

They serve quality products, traditional recipes and pizzas from a wood fired oven and also great focaccia with various toppings. We had the focaccia. The atmosphere is great and there were three other families for lunch. The Café only opens at 1pm from Wednesday to Saturday. The restaurant is on the beach which definitely adds charm to the place.



Eco Cafe Owners

Last days for Trip 1 to Fiji

18 September 2016

Well after three more lovely days in Nadi it is time for me to finally depart for home. I have had a wonderful holiday with Steve over the last three weeks and I am looking forward to returning soon with mum.



Ocean Views from Eco Cafe

Oh well just time for another quick dip in the plunge pool before packing up and leaving. I can't wait till

October for my return to Fiji.



My Next Trip to Visit Steve in Fiji

29 October 2016

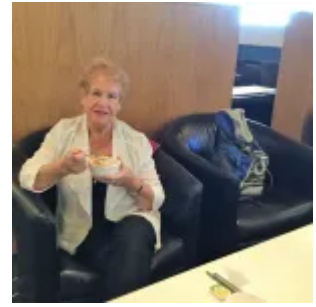
Well today I am returning to Fiji to visit Steve for 14 days and this time I am taking my mum with me. Mum deserves a holiday as well and it also means that we can both do things while Steve is at work.

Mum lives in Bateman's Bay and came up to Canberra the day before so we could travel together from Canberra to Sydney to meet our flight to Fiji. Like the previous visit we are travelling up to Fiji in business class on Fiji Airways. Mum doesn't get the luxury of travelling business class so she is looking forward to the flight as well as the all-expenses paid holiday. She deserves it.

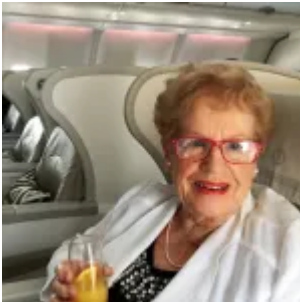
So we start off relaxing in the Business Class lounge at Canberra airport before boarding our Qantas Dash 8 flight up to Sydney. The flight is short, rather noisy being a

propeller driven aircraft, and we are soon in Sydney making our way across to the Qantas Business lounge at the international terminal.

Once in the lounge we settle back, relax and wait for the boarding of our flight.



*Mum in the Qantas
Business Lounge
Canberra*



*Mum relaxing in
Business on Fiji Airways*

The flight is departing on time and it isn't long before we are settling into our business class seats for the short journey of four hours to Nadi. Steve will once again meet us at the arrival gate and escort us through immigration and customs. On this trip we will be staying at the Hilton Fiji Beach Resort and Spa in Denarau for seven days and then travel to Suva where we will stay at the Grand Pacific Hotel for three days and then drive back to Denarau where we will once again stay at the Hilton Resort.



In the Plunge Pool

The arrival went without a hitch and before long we were relaxing once again at our beach front villa. Steve has the next couple of days off so the three of us spent the days travelling around Nadi Town and also took a visit up to Lautoka, Fiji's next biggest city after Suva. We also spent time walking along the white sand beaches in front of the resort as well as spending time in the plunge pool and the main swimming pool.

We also explored the Denarau shops and the restaurants in the evening. Of course we went to the Bonefish restaurant a few times and had that lovely seared tuna and I also tried the chilli crab. Hmm.

As mum was with us we thought we would take one of the day tours out to the islands. We selected the Adrenalin tour following a great recommendation from a guest in the



In the Plunge Pool

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The Jet Ski mum went for a ride on

djoining villa. Well the tour was excellent and we had a great day out on the water visiting islands, beaches with white sands, snorkelling and mum even got to ride on a jet ski. Something she has always wanted to do. At 87 that isn't a bad feat.

Well after seven lovely days relaxing in the Villa, we packed our bags and headed off to the Grand Pacific in Suva. We decided to stay here and not Steve's Bure as there are some steep walkways around Steve's accommodation and we thought they would be a bit hard for mum. We stopped at several places on the drive to Suva to show mum the



sights. We arrived at the Grand Pacific late in the afternoon and decided to stay in for dinner that evening. Mum and I spent the next few days wandering around the sights of Suva, including the Fiji Museum where mum had her



picture taken with the tall Fijian guard Steve also took us for a drive around the lagoon foreshore and around the forests just outside of city on the way to Nausori.

After three lovely days in Suva we headed back to Nadi. On the way we stopped at the Warwick for a coffee and then the Eco Café for lunch. After lunch we took a stroll then jumped back in the car to continue our trip back to Nadi.

It wasn't long before we were back at the Hilton Resort. We went out to the Bonefish for dinner and then came back for a night stroll along the beach before retiring for the evening. We only had a few days left before we were due to fly back to Australia and we spent this time lazing around both the plunge and main swimming pools. It is a hard life.



Lunch at the Eco Cafe

Well departure day arrived and Steve took us back to the airport to see us off. All the staff at Nadi Fiji Airways wanted to meet mum as Steve had told them about her Jet Ski ride. They couldn't believe a woman of 87 would be able to Jet Ski. They were both amazed and impressed when they met her.

Well the flight is being called and so Steve escorts us to the aircraft where we say our goodbyes. We boarded the plane, took our seats and then I looked out the window. Steve and most of the Fiji Airways staff were waving good bye to us from the aircraft entrance. I shed a tear. Oh well it won't be long before Steve is coming back home. He only has three weeks to go.

Maree

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