

# Ogea

October 16<sup>th</sup>  
At 0730 we motored out of the pass at Fulaga and following the “El Holandes Errante” we set a course under power for the SW passage of Ogea arriving there at about 0930.



The Navionics charts show 2 large rocks here but they don't exist. The passage is wide open and very easy. It's usually in the lee of the SE trades so relatively calm and the reefs are easily seen.

Navionics charts also show there is a possible passage to the north of this one at 19°6.387' S and 178°25.001' W but it's not recommended and at least one boat met its demise there.

Once inside the reef the going is really easy and we motored towards the north to what Humberto described as the most beautiful anchorage in Ogea.

The entrance here is a little more complex but not too bad. With good light you can easily see the corals to be avoided.





Once inside you anchor over sand in 2 or 3 meters of water with good holding. What a place. It just keeps getting better and better here in Fiji.

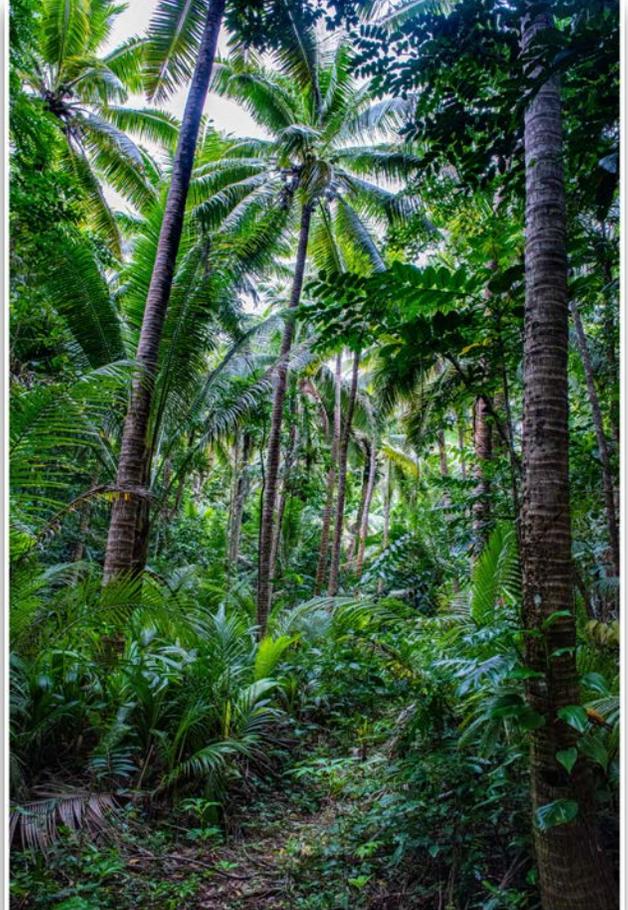


The anchorage looking towards the SSW. There is high water dingy passage to the village at the southern extremity of the bay

The walk to the village leaves from a small beach near the entrance to the bay and takes about 40 minutes through the jungle. It is a very pleasant stroll through tropical forest.



Humberto and Ofelia on the way down the track



Lush jungle along the path

Humberto went bare footed but I highly recommend good shoes.  
Most of the track is soft undergrowth but there are some areas with sharp lava rock thats quite uncomfortable on a mariners soft feet.

Don't forget the mosquito repellent.



Before entering the village you pass through their cultivations



The first order of business in every village and its no different here in Ogea is Sevusevu and we were welcomed by a very cheerful chief with a deep throated boisterous laugh and ready smile.

The chief is quite an artist and his wood carvings can be seen lined up on a table in his home as well as in various places around the village



Traditional Fijian carving adorns one of the village huts



Ofelia, Humberto and Riki having a little chat before a nice cup of lemon grass tea.



More of the chief's art

Humberto knows everyone it seems and is the perfect guide for introducing you to village life in Ogea.

We met the most amazing people who are ever ready to offer a huge smile, a meal and a cup of lemon grass tea.



Sera who made us lunch has the most beautiful smile.



Moce, looks just like Muhammad Ali lights up a suki, the Fijian version of a cigarette.



 Fina



Riki sporting a very healthy beard.



Peter and Epeli take a break in the shade

And then there's the kids





They may not have much in the way of toys or even cloths but happier children you will not find anywhere.



I found my way to the school where they were playing volleyball so I made a few photo's of the kids and then joined in on the game. I'm not sure if my team won or not but at one stage the heavy pole supporting the left hand side of the net fell and missed hitting me on the noggin by just a few inches.

It was then I retired to the sidelines as volleyball is way too dangerous here in Ogea.





Matuatabu Primary School



Asilica, the school director and Ili one of the teachers

October 17<sup>th</sup>

Its a high tide this morning and Ofelia and I decided to go to the village through the rather confusing dingy pass which zig zags through multiple Motu's "Small islands". The first turn we ran into a dead end but slowly we made our way through this beautiful maze to the village.

Ofelia wanted to learn how to make popo buns and was going to Amelias home for a cooking lesson but first we needed to stop in to Sulu's store for 4 kilos of flower. Sulu is the entrepreneur of the village and her son Pinao sells diesel and gasoline.



Sulu owns the village store



It's only possible to approach the village in your dingy at high tide. Luckily the kids volunteer to keep moving our dingy out into deeper water as the tide went down.



Amelia showing Ofelia how to make Popo Buns. A delicious Fijian bread that's soaked in coconut milk. "Lolo"



Like Fulaga, many of the homes are corrugated iron.

Amelias home with a beautiful young Fijian girl standing in the door.



A heart warming smile from a young village girl



These homes have been elevated a few feet to try and combat rising sea levels



This village is in the very forefront of global warming and resulting sea level rise and it's easily visible if you arrive at high tide.

Whether you believe global warming is a man made problem or not its results are quite obvious here on lots of Pacific islands.



Village homes with rising sea water

The Fijian Government has already supported this village by lifting some of the huts onto stilts but the future looks grim for this sight and before long they may have to move the village too much higher ground.

O felia and I procrastinated in the village a little too long and when we tried to return to the O2 through the dingy pass the outgoing tide had left us without sufficient water.



Yours truly dragging the dingy through shallow water

We quickly had to return down the route we had come hoping that we were not already hemmed in by shallow water.

We made it just in time and returned to the O2 on the outside which is a bit longer and more exposed to rough water.

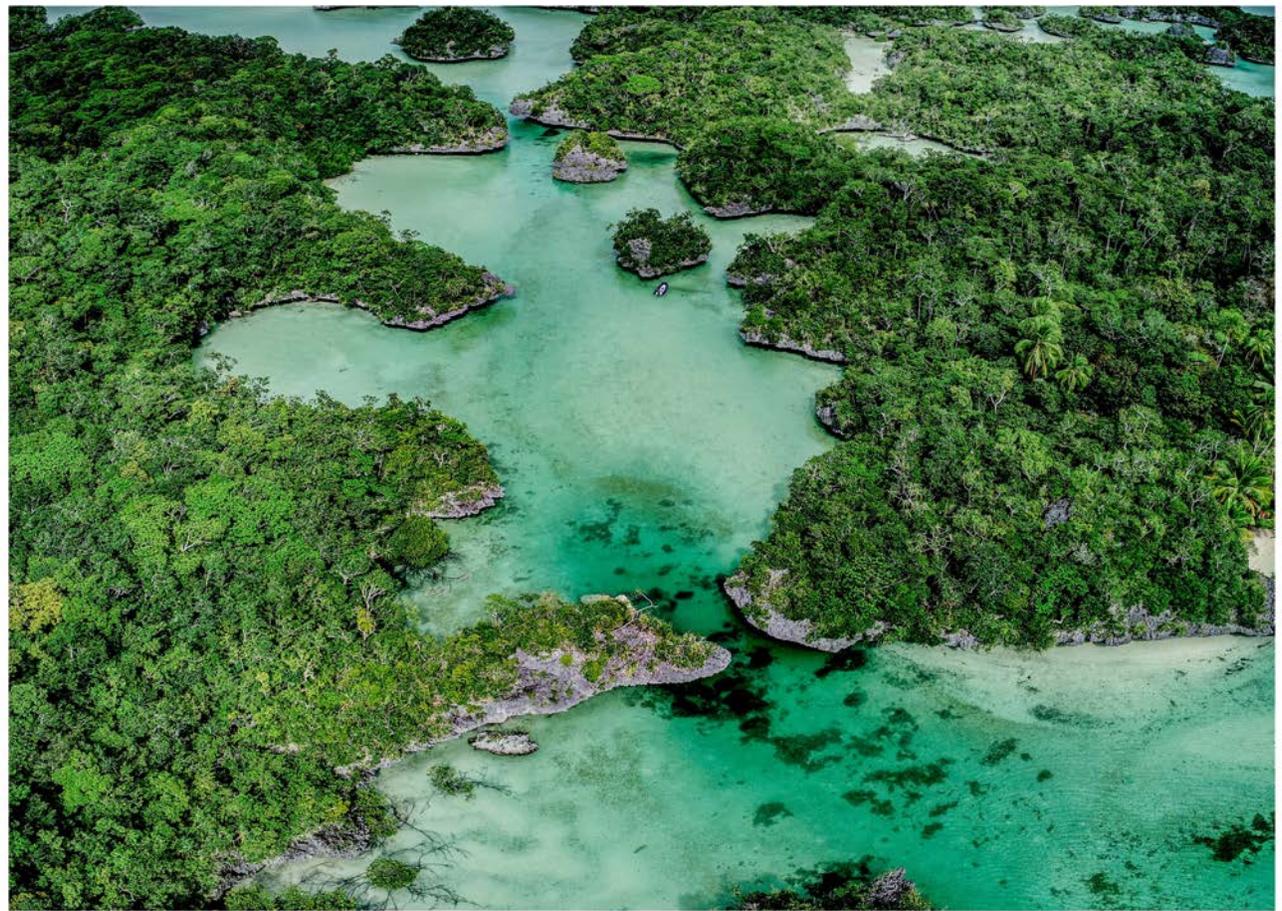
A few minutes more delay and we would have found ourselves stranded in the pass until the incoming tide once again provided sufficient water for us to move.



Entrance to the dingy pass

Anchorage 

It really is beautiful in here but don't get caught with the tide going out. You and your dingy could be stuck for several hours.



The passage completely dries at low tide

**B**ack at the boat we received an invite on the VHF radio to a dingy party that afternoon with all the other yachts present in Ogea so at 1630 we rolled up in our tender and hooked onto 5 other tenders for a few drinks and some old sea stories. Present where the crews from S/V Olena, Coral Tracker, El Holandes Errante, SawaDiva, Vava-U and finally us on the S/V O2.



Our little gathering was rewarded with a nice sunset.



October 18<sup>th</sup>

For the last 15 hours the wind has been turning in a full circle as a front goes through making our anchorage a little uncomfortable. I woke this morning to rain and overcast skies. And then out comes the sun. Nope its gone dark again,

Its Sunday and Kenny has gone of to the village with Humberto and Martin from Vava-U

After lunch the sun came out in force and as it was a low tide Ofelia and I took the dingy over to the extensive tidal flats beside the anchorage. Low tide leaves acres of sand and “motus” to walk around and it really is a magical place to explore.



Lava rock islets “motus” are left high and dry during the low tide



A motu surrounded by sand at low tide



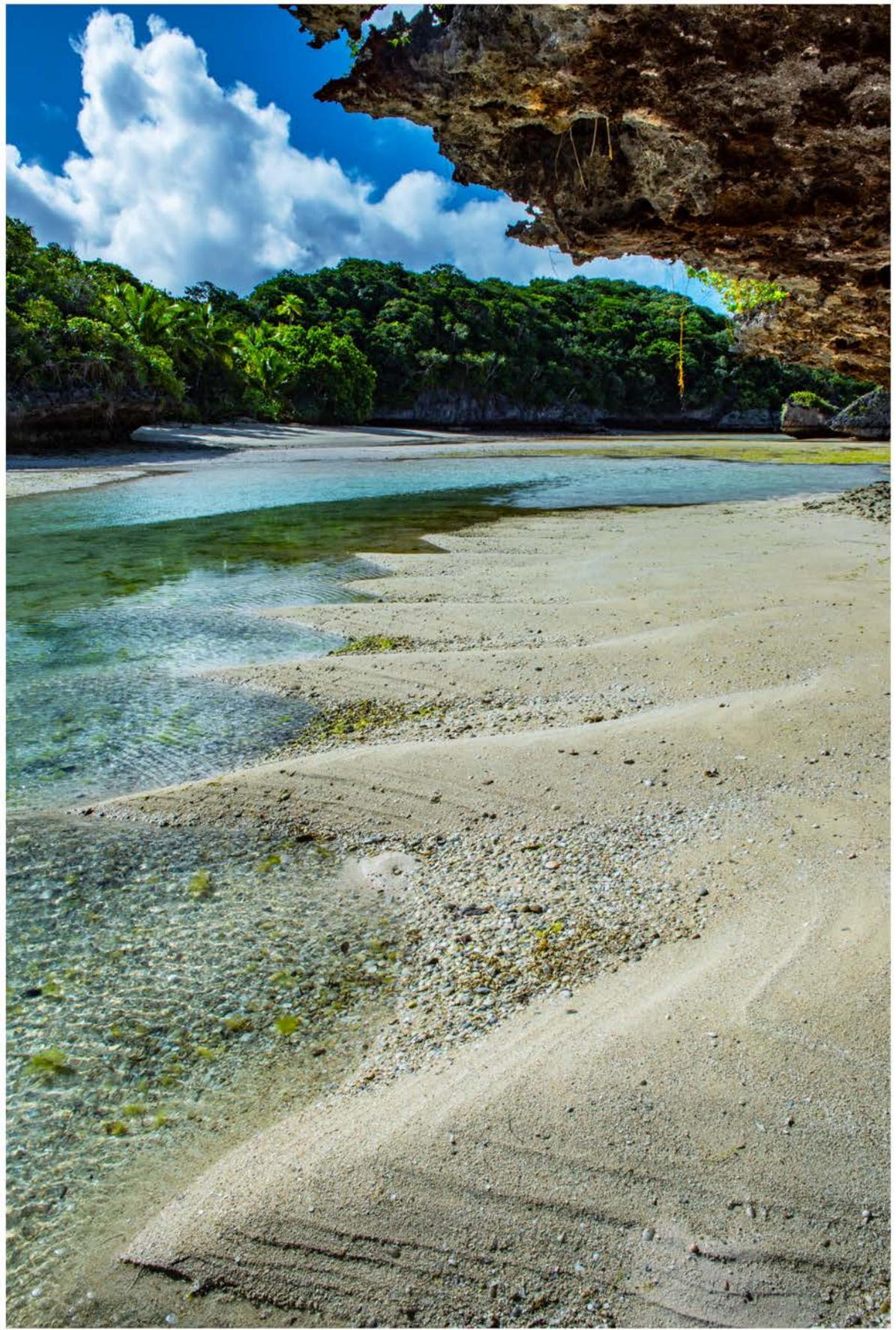
The O2 can be seen at anchor between the motus



From under the overhang of a motu



This base of this motu eroded over time until finally it toppled over.









A local resident defending his territory.

October 19<sup>th</sup>

At 0830 we lifted the big steel thing that's at the end of the chain and holds our boat in place and headed out of the bay towards Ogea Driki just a few miles to the south.

This entrance is a little more challenging but again with a high tide and good light we snaked our way into a nice spot.



El Holandes Errante anchored in Ogea Driki.



The anchorage is at  $19^{\circ}11.744' \text{ S}$ .  $178^{\circ}25.239' \text{ W}$ . the view is towards the west and you can see Fulaga on the horizon and Ogea top right.

Three meters of water over sand the bay has several larger motus and some nice sand beaches.

This is where the men of Ogea have some plantations but Ogea Driki is otherwise uninhabited.



The soft sand on Ogea Driki



The Holandes Errante and O2 at anchor



Ogea 11/2 miles north.

With Ogea just a mile and a half to the north its a quick run in a small boat for the villages to come here and grow crops.

The fishing around the islands here is also excellent so there's no shortage of food.



Our own private beach



Beautiful vegetation decorates the shore



### Late afternoon light on rock formations

Late afternoon and I went for a run in the dingy around the coast. I spotted the catamaran Olena anchored in the lee of Ogea Driki waiting for the right hour to depart for their next destination. For sure we will see them again somewhere down the road. Kenny and Humberto went to the beach to collect some of the plentiful coconuts on shore.



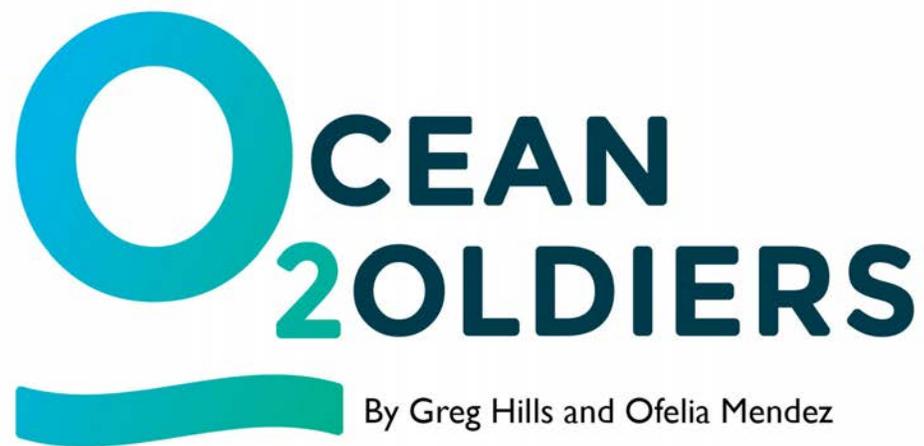
Stéphane and Laure, S/V Olena ready for the next adventure with their kids Elina, Cyliane and Timeo



A miniature version of the Pitons of Saint Lucia.

October 20<sup>th</sup>  
And a lovely day it is for our departure to the north and after a nice cuppa tea with Humberto we said our goodbyes and worked our way out of the anchorage on a rising tide. We cleared the coast by about 1/4 of a mile and turned into wind to raise the mainsail. As soon as the sail was up we set it to port and turned down wind. Smack blab in front of us was a huge coral head. I swung the helm to port jibing the boom and I watched as the bommie slid down our starboard side. Phew that was a close one and it just goes to show how eyeball navigation is king around here.

We sailed on out of the pass of Ogea without further incident and set a course directly down wind towards Lakeba 60 miles away. Stay tuned soldiers, the adventure continues.



[www.oceansoldiers.org](http://www.oceansoldiers.org)



@ocean\_soldiers