CARIBBEAN COMPASS

FEBRUARY 2024 NO. 332

The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore

DOMINICA: NATURE ISLE

— SEE STORY ON PAGE 19

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CHRIS DOYLE

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Marigot Bay, St. Lucia, isn't just an idyllic anchorage on the west coast of St. Lucia, it's also a great hurricane hole. Caribbean Compass *editor Elaine Lembo made a stop there during landfall of the ARC 2023. For more on the ARC+ and ARC, turn to page 21.*

ELAINE LEMBO

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On the Cover

Sailing to Dominica is like exploring the Eastern Caribbean back in the early days. Because cruisers are increasingly discovering the virtues of this gorgeous landfall, services such as moorings and shoreside facilities are on the rise. For the full story from offshore delivery skipper Hank Schmitt, turn to page 19.

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Caribbean Compass

Caribbean Compass is published by Compass Publishing LLC of Connecticut, USA. www.caribbeancompass.com

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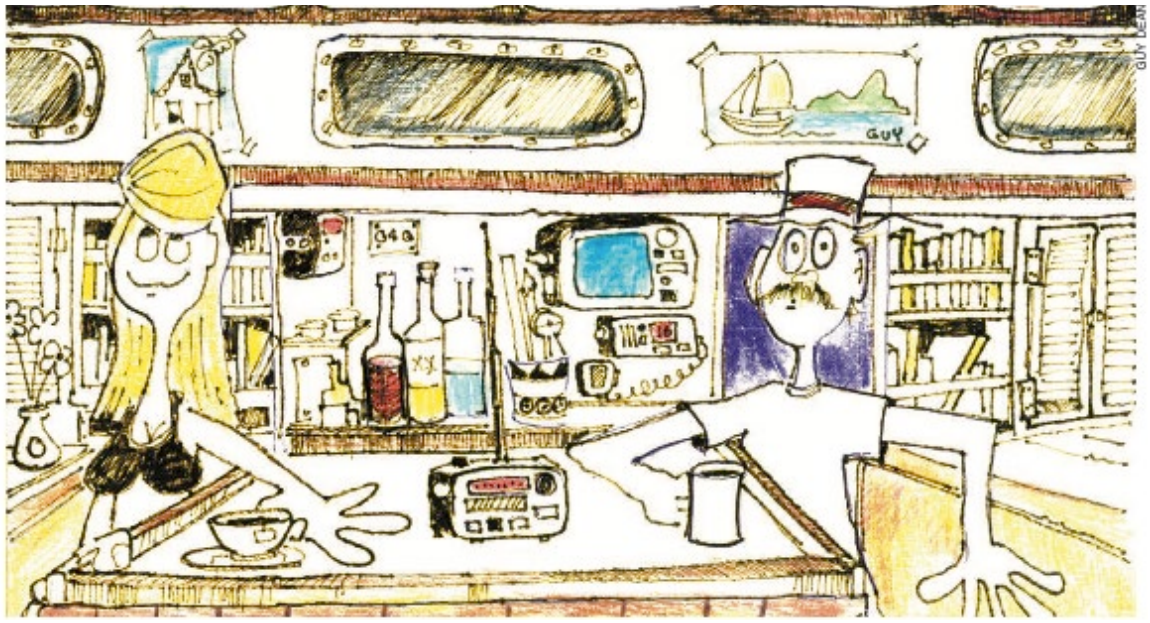
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ISSN 1605 - 1998



Selected Caribbean Shortwave Weather Reports Winter 2024

By Ken Goodings

UTC	AST*	STATION & REPORT DESCRIPTION	FREQ	TYPE	MODE
0915	0515	NOAA Daily Offshore Forecast			Voice USB
01000	0600	Daily Caribbean Weather	6215 kHz	USB (Uncontrolled 1000-1200)	
1030	0630	Trinidad Emergency Net	3855 kHz	LSB/Ham	
1030	0630	Caribbean Emergency & Weather Net	3815 kHz	LSB/Ham	
1100	0700	Caribbean Net 7250 kHz LSB/Ham			
1100	0700	Eastern Caribbean Weather (Chris)	4045 & 8137 kHz	USB *(Note 1)*	
1130	0730	Bahamas Weather (Chris)	4045 & 8137 kHz	USB *(Note 1)*	
1200	0800	Coconut Telegraph 4060		USB *then joining the KPK net on 8104 kHz USB at 0815*	
1215	0815	Cruising Safety Net - Radio KPK (Sponsored by SSCA)	8104 kHz USB		
1220	UTC	Bahamas Weather Net	7096/3696 kHz	LSB/Ham	
1230	UTC	US East Coast, Western Atlantic N&W of Bermuda Weather (Parker)	8137 & 12350 USB kHz		
(Note 1)					
1245	UTC	Waterway Cruising Club	7268 kHz	LSB/Ham	
1330	0930	Western Caribbean Weather (Parker) 8137 and 12350 kHz USB *(see Note 1) - local time 0730*			
1330	UTC	Panama Connection Net, (Weather, security, and general info) 8107/8167 kHz USB			
1330	0930	Cruizheimers Net	8152 kHz	USB	
1400	UTC	Northwest Caribbean Net	6209 kHz	USB	
1530	1130	NOAA Daily Offshore Forecast			Voice USB
2130	1730	Caribbean Cocktail & Weather Net	7086 kHz	LSB/Ham	
2130	1730	NOAA Offshore Forecast			Voice USB
2130	UTC	Trans Atlantic Cruiser's Net - Radio KPK (Sponsored by SSCA) 12350 kHz USB *(see Note 3)*			
2200	1800	Caribbean and Atlantic Weather (Parker) 8137 and 12350 kHz USB *(see Notes 1 and 2)*			
2230	1830	NOAA Offshore Forecast			Voice USB

24/7/365 24-Hour Maritime Mobile Net (Emergency, Weather and Cruiser Assistance) 14300 kHz USB/Ham
NOAA Radio Frequencies (in kHz):
NMN, Chesapeake, 4426, 6501, 8764, 13089
NMG, New Orleans, 4316, 8502, 12788

Note 1: Unless severe weather threatens, this net is not conducted on Sundays.

When there are active tropical systems in the Atlantic, Marine Weather Center (Parker) runs a net at 2300 UTC /1900 AST on 8.137 kHz USB.

Note 2: Please hail Marine Weather Center 15 minutes before the net so that Parker knows where to aim his antenna to reach you. This net is geared primarily to offshore Atlantic and Pacific passage makers. For schedule updates see www.mwxc.com

Note 3: The Trans-Atlanta Cruisers Net is only live during migration periods when boats are coming and going from Europe to North America. That Net is always on 12.350 kHz at 1230 hrs UTC. KPK as net controller will be assisted by stations WCY, KNC and KJM

• WWV discontinued the High Seas Storm Warnings (Voice) January 31, 2019

• During severe tropical storm or hurricane activity, information can be found continuously on the Hurricane Watch Net on 14.325 kHz USB Ham and 3.950 kHz LSB Ham.

• Anyone, licensed or not, may legally operate on any radio frequency in the event of life threatening or distress situations.

A more complete schedule of cruising nets is available at

www.docksideradio.com/east_coast.htm

Selected Cruisers VHF Nets (local time)

Nassau, Bahamas 0715 Ch-14

Luperon, Dominican Republic 0900 Ch-72

St. Martin/Maarten 0730 Ch-10 Monday-Saturday

English Harbour, Antigua 0900 Ch-06 Daily

Le Marin/St Anne, Martinique 0830 Ch-08 Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Rodney Bay, St Lucia 0800 Ch-69 Monday-Saturday

Bequia, St. V & Grenadines 0800 Ch-68 Daily

Grenada 0730 Ch-66 (International) Monday-Saturday

Note: If the 66 repeater is unavailable, listen on the alternate Ch-69 for this net.

Chaguaramas, Trinidad 0800 Ch-68 Daily

Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela 0745 Ch-72 as available
Curaçao 0745 Ch-72 Monday-Saturday

Weather Websites

• ABCs Weather: www.meteo.cw/rad_loop.php

• Curaçao Met Department: www.meteo.cw

• Barbados Weather Satellite: barbadosweather.org/GOES16/Jiren_Satellite_Products.php#

• Martinique Weather Radar (French): www.meteofrance.gp/previsions-meteo-antilles-guyane/animation/radar/antilles

• Panama Weather (Spanish; requires Adobe Flash Player and is not Android compatible): www.hidromet.com.pa/index.php

• Trinidad & Tobago Weather Radar: www.metoffice.gov.tt/observations

• US National Weather Service (for USVI and Puerto Rico): www.srh.noaa.gov/sju

General Weather Websites

• Mike's Weather Page: www.spaghettimodels.com

• WINDFinder: www.windfinder.com

• www.windyty.com

(shows wind speed and direction for 14 days in about three-hour increments)

• Ventusky (same look as Windytv, but different): www.ventusky.com

• ON Board ON Line: www.onboardonline.com/weathertools

• PassageWeather passageweather.com (provides seven-day wind, wave and weather forecasts)

• Weather Underground: www.wunderground.com/hurricane

• General weather discussion on Wunderground Cat 6

Lead authors: Cofounder Dr. Jeff Masters, who flew NOAA Hurricane Hunters 1986-1990, & meteorologist Bob Henson, @bhensonweatherwww.wunderground.com/cat6

Weather Conversions

• www.weather.org/conversion-chart

Commercial Marine Weather Service Websites

• Buoyweather (free two-day forecasts in addition to paid-for custom forecasts): www.buoyweather.com

• Chris Parker's Marine Weather Center (listen free on daily SSB nets or subscribe for daily e-mails for your area): mwxc.com

• Atlantic severe storm prediction: stormpulse.com

Hurricane Information Websites

• Caribbean Hurricane Network: www.stormcarib.com

• US National Hurricane Center: www.nhc.noaa.gov

NHC Marine Weather Discussion https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/text/MIAMIMATS.shtml

• NHC Offshore Reports: www.nhc.noaa.gov/marine/offshores.php

• AccuWeather: http://sirocco.accuweather.com

• Atlantic Hurricane Tracking Chart: www.nhc.noaa.gov/pdf/tracking_chart_atlantic.pdf

NOAA Climate Discussion: www.climate.gov/news-features

• NHC Marine Graphicast: www.nhc.noaa.gov/marine/graphicast.php?basin=at#contentw.nws.noaa

John J. Kettlewell says, "The map at earth.nullschool.net is an interactive pilot chart, showing current conditions around the world. Click on 'Earth' in the lower left to get a menu. You can choose to see the world's current wind or current patterns, or ocean waves, all with animation."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Nonstop Flights to Belize

JetBlue Airlines announces the first-ever nonstop service between New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and Belize's Phillip S.W. Goldson International Airport (BZE). JetBlue will operate year-round roundtrip flights three times a week – Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.



Belize welcomes Jet Blue

Starting December 20, American Airlines also doubled its flights to Miami from Belize. The double daily frequencies will run through August 2024.

WestJet has extended its service to Belize. Nonstop service from Calgary, Canada, to Belize runs through the beginning of May 2024. Nonstop service from Toronto to Belize will also be extended by a month and run until May 25, 2024.

Blue Lagoon Charter Boats Expands

Blue Lagoon Charter Boats, based at Blue Lagoon Marina and Hotel in St. Vincent, offers day charters on a 40-foot Intrepid power boat and a 58-foot sailing catamaran, suitable for groups of around ten people for short hops to the islands or leisurely day and sunset cruises. The company is also in the process of adding larger day catamarans for fully catered trips on the mainland and to the Grenadines. Those parties interested in being the first to charter the new fleet should contact BLCB for introductory group pricing. *Contact by telephone at 1 (784) 433-6338, or email at bluelagooncharterboats@gmail.com. For more information check out bluelagooncharterboats.com.*



58-foot Catana Catamaran Sweet Janina

New Rope Products from Budget Marine

Budget Marine offers economical mooring, anchor and utility rope to the Caribbean market for this season.



COURTESY BUDGET MARINE

Braided line, black

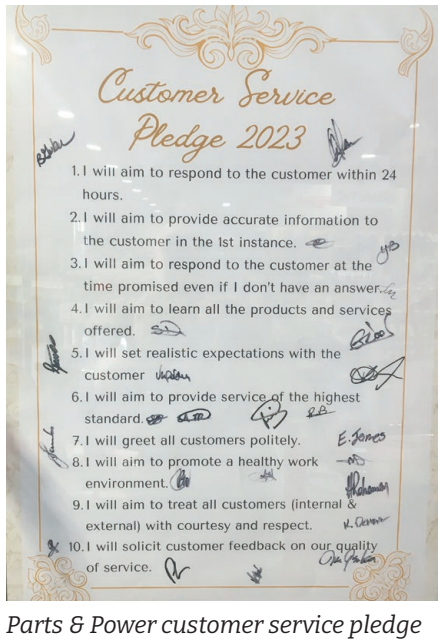
Some are already in all Budget Marine outlets and others are still to come. Budget Marine has tested all these ropes for the past two years and has found them to be at least as good as the stock they have carried for the last 20 years but available from more economical sources, particularly for black nylon rope, now only slightly more expensive than the white nylon. Black has the advantage of not showing dirt as easily as white.

Braided anchor line also has the needed great stretch and can be coiled more easily than the three-strand nylon line. Budget Marine has it in white, black or blue at competitive prices.

Team Building Exercises at Parts & Power

Parts & Power, celebrating its 50th anniversary, started the holiday season in November 2023, closing the company down for the annual customer service seminar.

The annual Christmas party took place at De Coal Pot in Carrot Bay, with food prepared and served by De Coal Pot staff. Service staff also organized a company BBQ, and to wrap up the holidays, the parts department held a customer appreciation day with food and drinks served from noon on.



COURTESY PARTS AND POWER

Parts & Power customer service pledge

MAY 10-12
2024
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VIBE
VIRGIN ISLANDS BOATING EXPO

A DESTINATION BOAT SHOW

ST. THOMAS US VIRGIN ISLANDS



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WWW.VIBE.VI

CRYSTAL-CLEAR TURQUOISE WATERS AND ENDLESS SUN-DRENCHED BEACHES, AMERICA'S CARIBBEAN PARADISE IS THE PERFECT BACKDROP FOR THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND EVENT.

Channel 16

St. Vincent tops list for crimes against yachtsmen

2022 saw an overall rise in reported crimes in the Caribbean against yachtsmen from 102 to 121, a 19 percent increase, according to the Caribbean Safety and Security Net (CSSN) annual report. The report stated that the multi-island nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines topped the list with 26 incidents, mostly theft, one violent (an assault in Buccament Bay, St. Vincent).

Bequia accounted for almost half of the reported incidents and included four burglaries (breaking or entering a locked and unoccupied yacht). Officials there reopened the Coast Guard station and began patrols, but no arrests were made.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines accounted for 21 percent of all reports. Martinique was second, with Panama third. St. Lucia and Dutch and French St. Martin rounded out the top group.

The CSSN 2022 report said that the overall rise in reported incidents wasn't a surprise because of the return to more normal levels of cruising in general and the effects of the hardships made worse by COVID. And, it added, officials are still not doing enough to enforce the law.

"Even as cruisers have upgraded, so have thieves, at times arriving well prepared with tools of their own. Video surveillance at dinghy docks remains uncommon… Lifting and secure locking [are] the best [security] practices. Intrusion alarms have become more affordable and common and are now used on many cruising yachts," the report stated.

From the St. Vincent Times article by Ernesto Cooke.

New Appointments at BVI Spring Regatta, Festival

The British Virgin Islands Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival has announced the appointments of Chris Haycraft as chairman and Cayley Smit as executive director.

Haycraft becomes just the third regatta chairman in its 51-year history, behind his father and founding chairman Peter Haycraft and Bob Phillips, each serving 25 years in the position. Haycraft has been on the board of director for 25 years, working with Phillips. Smit replaces longtime regatta staffer Judy Petz as executive director.

St. Maarten Heineken Regatta Expands Next Generation

The Next Generation Race, introduced at the 2023 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, will grow from 18 to 24 students as part of the 2024 event (February 29-March 3), racing on RS Zest boats. The youngsters are from the sailing school of the Sint Maarten Yacht Club. Ten students will be specifically selected from the Optimist race team and the primary school program. Two teams of more experienced sailors, including the winner of last year's Next Generation Race, will participate in the four days of the regatta on small keelboats, the Sunfast 20s.

COURTESY VIKING EXPLORERS



Explorers gather for a group photo.

Viking Explorers Rally Kicks Off

The Viking Explorers Rally across the Atlantic, with an international fleet of 25 boats ranging from 34 to 76 feet, launched in early January 2024, heading for Port Louis Marina in Grenada. The rally, first held in 2018, is a noncompetitive 2,700-nautical-mile sailing adventure that maximizes safety and camaraderie.

World ARC Rally Sets Sail

The 13th edition of the World ARC circumnavigation rally set sail on January 13 from Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia. First destination is Santa Marta in Colombia, before heading through the Panama Canal and on into the Pacific. The fleet of 37 yachts will cover 26,000 nautical miles over the next 15 months.

Denis Sullivan returns to St. Croix

Christiansted Harbor welcomed the *Denis Sullivan* back for its second year to St. Croix along with the World Ocean School, a Boston-based nonprofit that has been working in the U.S. Virgin Islands for eighteen seasons.

The ship, a replica of a Great Lakes schooner, looks straight out of a pirate movie. The crew, which is mostly female, encourage guests to take part in preparing for the sail. The *Denis Sullivan* will also welcome students from St. Croix public schools to participate in multi-day programs. Crew members and deckhand educators provide lessons while underway.

Condensed from an article in Virgin Islands Source *by Diana Dias. To learn more about Denis Sullivan and World Ocean School, visit worldoceanschool.org.*

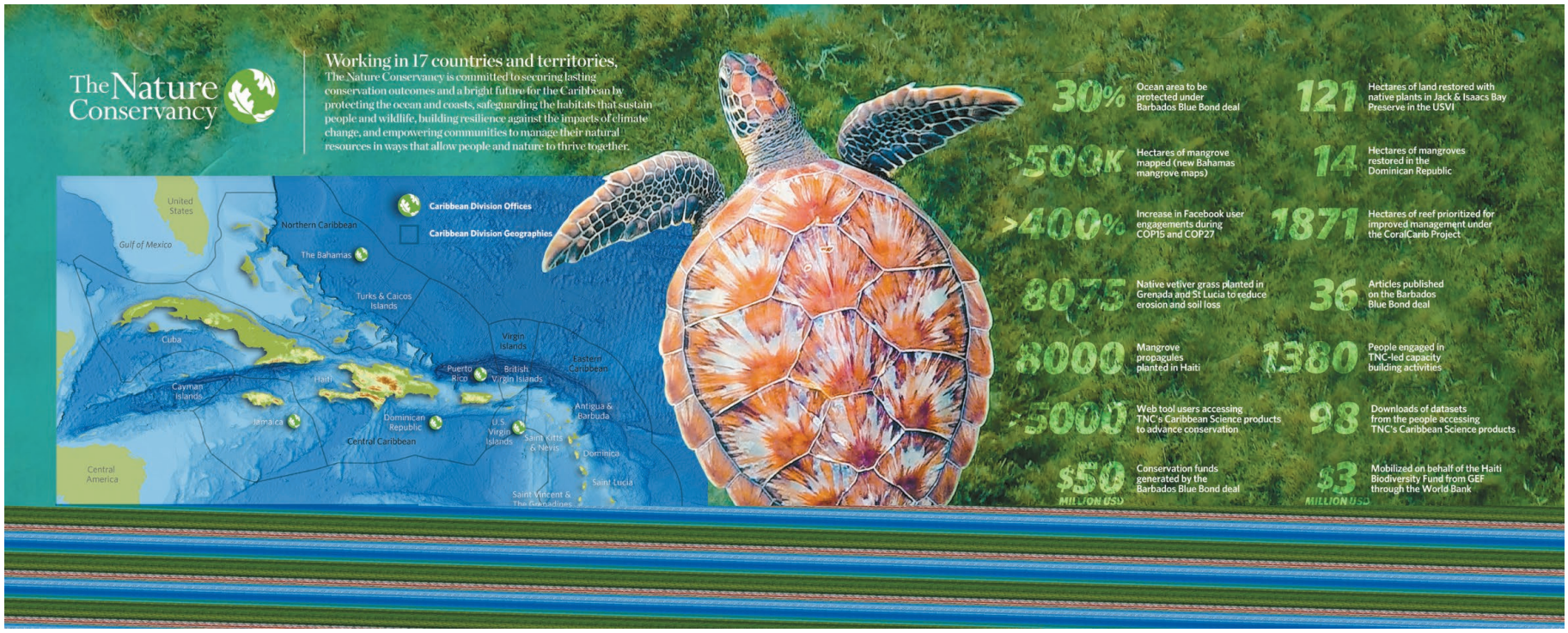
Grenadans Honored

Congratulations to Petra Roach, CEO of the Grenada Tourism Authority, named Caribbean Tourism director of the year in the 10th edition of *Caribbean Journal's* Caribbean Travel Awards.

Associates Times also reports that Grenada boat builder Alwyn Enoe has been awarded the British Empire Medal by King Charles. Enoe, born and bred in the boat-building village of Windward and a shipwright for over 40 years, has built 12 open deck sloops, with some operating charter businesses in several Caribbean islands.




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EPIC Projects: Tracking Red-footed Boobies, Seafloor Surveys

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) is expanding its protection of seabird nesting islands to identifying and protecting the islands where birds find food. In March last year an EPIC team outfitted GPS data loggers on 28 adult red-footed boobies nesting on Battowia island, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which is a globally recognized Important Bird Area (IBA) and a wildlife reserve. Battowia hosts two globally important seabird colonies — red-footed booby and red-billed tropicbird — and it's one of the most threatened habitats.

Researchers found that while the birds generally flew eastward, some traveled far into the exclusive economic zone waters of neighboring nations, such as Barbados, Saint Lucia and Martinique, while others approached important seabird nesting islands farther south in the Grenadines, such as Petit Canouan and Sail Rock. This indicates that some birds are far-ranging. One went north of Barbados on an overnight trip, covering about 500 kilometers (300 miles), and was recaptured at the same nest where it was initially caught, an important data tool for advocating for the protection of marine habitats.

Field efforts were led by Juliana Coffey and Dr. Louise Soanes, with field support and local expertise provided by fisherfolk and seafarers from Bequia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Carriacou, Grenada. The project was funded by the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund.

In other EPIC news, the group has been selected to conduct an assessment of the biodiversity in key land areas on St. Maarten, as part of the CORENA (Coastal Resilience and Needs Assessments) project in partnership with the Nature Foundation.

The Nature Foundation has started mapping the seafloor to observe seagrass, reef and sandy areas. EPIC is conducting field surveys to document the variety of plants and animals found in St. Maarten, with the goal of establishing a baseline upon which informed decisions can be made about the sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment.

COURTESY EPIC



A red-footed booby on Battowia

EPIC will share its findings through updates on social media. Those interested in bringing a particular species to EPIC's attention should send an email to epicsxm@epicislands.org.

—Continued on next page



—Continued from previous page

Partnership Aims at Coastal Habitat Restoration

A new partnership between World Wide Fund for Nature – Netherlands (WWF-NL), the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) and Coastal Dynamics will spearhead an initiative to define future conservation and restoration projects within coastal habitats and create projects which will fortify mangroves and seagrass beds against escalating threats like climate change, pollution, and unsustainable coastal development. The principal aim of the study is to develop a nature-inclusive approach with nature-based solutions to enhance resilience and sustainability.



KAI WULF

Sea grass makes a meal for this green turtle.

Sailors for the Sea Launches Clean Class Initiative

Sailors for the Sea Powered by Oceana has launched a Clean Class initiative, which recognizes entire classes of boats whose members are committed to sustainability. The initiative is open to any interested one-design fleet with a desire to lessen the class's environmental impact. For Clean Class recognition, 25 percent of a class's events need to achieve at least a Bronze-level Clean Regatta certification.

The Thistle Class, which has more than 50 active fleets across the United States, worked with Sailors for the Sea to develop and pilot the Clean Class initiative. During the first full year of the pilot in 2021, the Thistle Class registered 21 new Clean Regattas, a 420 percent increase in Thistle events participating in the program. In 2022, six additional events registered, with many of the recurring regattas achieving higher levels of sustainability certification.



JOHN YINGLING

The Thistle Green Team

Most sailors are advocates for protecting their waters, and sustainability is at the forefront of many regattas. The Clean Class framework provides guidance and the tools necessary to help standardize sustainability initiatives across class events. Sailors for the Sea looks forward to working with interested class associations to support and grow this community of sailors who are taking action to restore the health of our seas.

To learn more, check out www.sailorsforthesea.org/programs/clean-regattas/clean-class



By Tad Richards



COURTESY TOURISM TRINIDAD LIMITE

Trinidad Carnival

February is a month for big events throughout the Caribbean, with the carnivals these islands are famous for. Tourists love 'em, cruisers love 'em, locals love 'em. Anyone with a camera loves them, anyone with dancing feet. They've got music, they've got costumes (many of them skimpy), they've got flash and fire...and food, from the finest street vendors. Most of all, they've got tradition, as each island's carnival celebrates the unique traditional culture of that island.

Carnival Time

You won't have to go far to find a carnival celebration in the Dominican Republic on a February Sunday, as every city and town and village has its own **Carnaval Dominicano**, with its own variants. Colorful and elaborate masks are a staple of the street parades, and so is *la vejiga*, so expect a little playful whipping. Oh, and you can count on meeting up with the devil. *barcelo.com/guia-turismo/en/dominican-republic/republica-dominicana/things-to-do/carnaval-dominicano*

February 7-13 is actually the climax of the **Trinidad Carnival** that started right after Christmas and has been going strong through January, but if you're island-hopping and carnival-hopping, this would be the time to hit Trinidad. *Caribbeanevents.com/event/trinidad-carnival*

Another climax to a carnival that's been in full swing since the beginning of the year comes on February 11 with the **Grand Carnival Parade, Aruba.** There's one in San Nicolas the day before, but this one, in Oranjestad, is the big one, culminating in the midnight burning of King Momo. *Visitaruba.com/things-to-do/carnival/aruba-carnival-schedule*

St. Croix offers its February 9 **Valentine's Day Jump-Up** (the Friday before Valentine's Day), where the streets are closed to traffic and open to — what else? Dancing.

February 10-11 is the weekend before Mardi Gras, and it sees notable carnival celebrations in **Martinique, Ponce** (Puerto Rico), **Curaçao**, **Dominica, Haiti** and **St. Barth**, all extending into Fat Tuesday.

And it's the beginning of **The Holetown Festival** in Barbados, a commemoration of that island's first English settlement in 1627, a week-long celebration of all things Barbadian. *visitbarbados.org/the-holetown-festival*

Dominica's **Mas Domnik** is held on February 12-13, and this "Nature Isle" of stunning natural beauty boasts a prelenten celebration that honors every facet of Dominican tradition. It's the culmination of a month of festivities, including the **Sun Rise Carnival** on February 9, which features Dominica's own Bouyon legend **Asa Bantan.** *Avirtualdominica.com/project/carnival-in-dominica*

And February 16-21 sees Carriacou's **Kayak Mas**, with its own unique twists, including **Shakespeare Mas**, impromptu verbal jousts that spring up all over the island when extravagantly garbed participants challenge each other to a duel of Shakespeare quotes. *ourcarriacou.com/carriacou-carnival-kayak-mas*

February 18-21 are the dates for Colombia's **Baranquilla Carnival**, leading off with the Battle of Flowers, and featuring as Grand Marshal the redoubtable King Momo, who first graced the parade, we are told, in 1888. *viahero.com/travel-to-colombia/barranquilla-carnival*

And the rest of February—Bequia's **International Theater Festival** has been covered by David Lyman in January's *Compass (caribbeancompass.com/bequia-theater-on-the-beach).*

The carnivals all feature plenty of music, and they overshadow the strictly musical events for the month, but there's still music to look forward to.

February 5: Caribbean Goes Country, Cuba

A country music festival in Cuba? But it's scheduled, with some of the top names in Canadian country music: Canadian Country Music Award winner **Doc Walker, Craig Moritz, David Boyd Janes, Quinton Blair, Ivan Daigle** and others.

February 10: Juan Luis Guerra, Dominican Republic

If you want to expand your musical horizons a bit to include an artist who has captured audiences for five decades and can still fill an arena, this is an hombre worth listening to. His music is a fusion of Latin, Afro-pop, rock and roll, hip-hop and you name it, and he has sold 15 million records worldwide. Felix Sanchez Olympic Stadium, Santo Domingo.

February 13-19: Dancehall Week, Jamaica

Dancehall is another Jamaican-born, worldwide phenomenon, born from reggae, morphed into disco and then hip-hop, with the raw musical spirit of Jamaica channeled into dance-inviting grooves. It gets its first officially sanctioned celebration on the island. It kicks off with "Fashion Roadblock," celebrating and encouraging the most extravagant dancehall attire, homegrown or crafted by local designers, and concludes with a gala street parade on Sunday. In between, the action is loud, varied, wild, and nonstop.



TAD RICHARDS

Benzly Hype

Shaggy, Spice, Sean Paul, and **Benzly Hype** are booked so far. *our.today/jamaica-introduces-dancehall-week-in-february-2024*

February 25: Kany Garcia, Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rican singer-songwriter is a three-time Grammy Award nominee and a six-time winner at the Latin Grammy Awards. Her debut album, *Cualquier Día* (2007), spawned four Top Forty singles, all with her own songs. Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot, San Juan.

March 1-3: ACT (Arts and Culture, Community and Technology), Barbados

This was scheduled as a one-day festival for November, now rescheduled and expanded to three days.

Barceló Desalia Festival, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

No firm dates set as we went to press, but this is the second largest electronic dance music festival in the Caribbean, and is known to draw upwards of 5,000 revelers.

DuPont Brass at Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts

DuPont Brass, a brass-driven supergroup from Washington, D.C., is in residence at the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts (CMCArts) in Frederiksted, St. Croix, conducting educational workshops and giving a series of concerts during February.



COURTESY DUPONT BRASS

DuPont Brass

DuPont Brass is a nine-piece ensemble blending brass, a rhythm section and vocalists into a musical experience they call "Eclectic Soul," incorporating elements of jazz, hip-hop and R&B. *For more information about this and other CMCArts programs, visit cmcarts.org.*

And on the horizon: Fiesta del Tambor, Havana, Cuba, March 5-10. The Virgin Islands Jam Fest, March 7-9. The SXM electronic music festival, St. Maarten, March 11-18. We'll be back with these and other events in next month's column. *¡Viva la música caribeña!*

Artist Spotlight: Sasha Dream

By Vincent Mattiola



COURTESY DIVINE INFLUENCE PR

Sasha Dream

In the male-dominated world of reggae, R&B, and afrobeat Caribbean music, talented female artists can face an uphill battle to establish themselves among the field of performers entering the scene. All too often, the standard mantra of determination, sacrifice, and perseverance alone falls short of the impact deserved, leaving ripples where there should be waves. To truly make a splash, it can take a few extra ingredients, but you won't find this recipe in your typical cookbook.

With her roots in Jamaica, and a boundary-breaking approach to viewing music as medicine for the soul, one artist is persistently dedicated to following her heart. Sasha Dream is living this reality and writing her own story like a chef experimenting with blending rhythms, flavors, genres, and sensations.

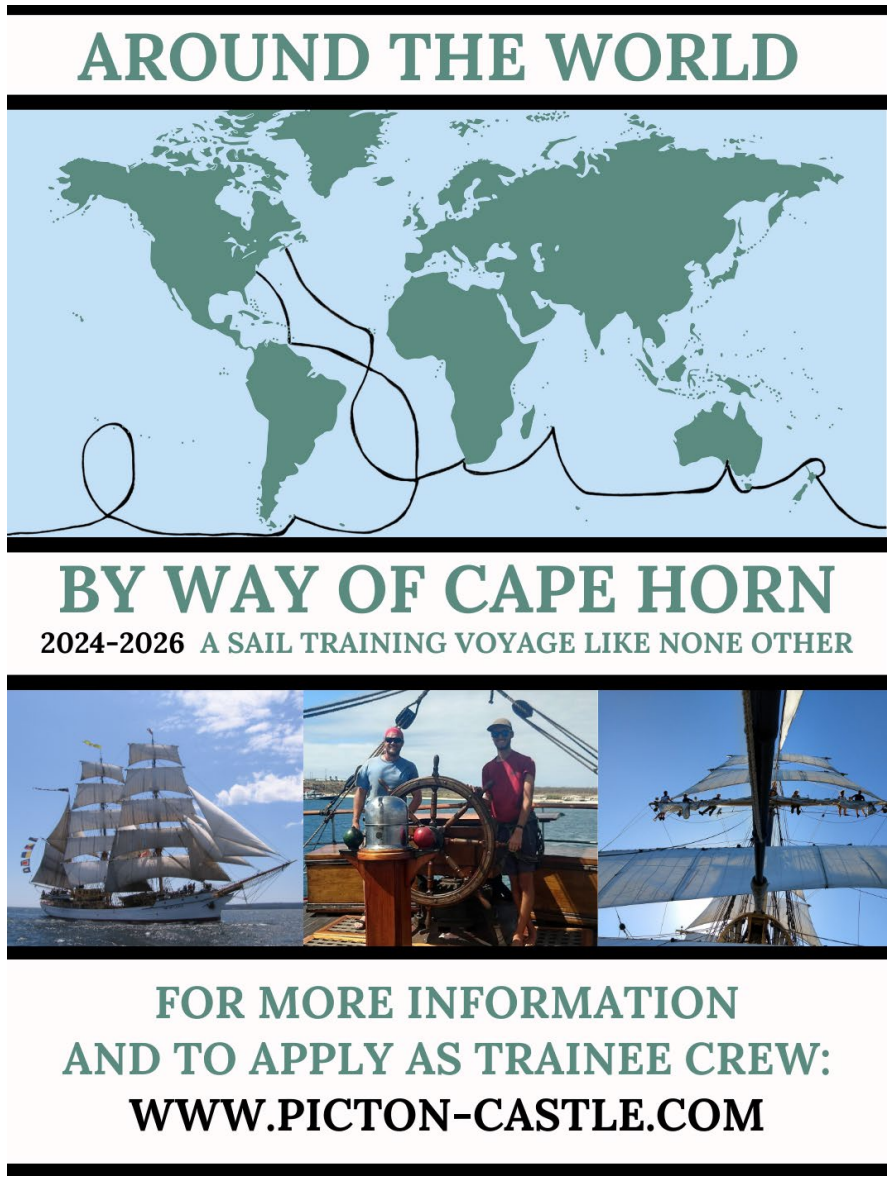
She transports listeners to a time where the fondest memories were formed, leaving a warm, comforting sense of familiarity, while also raising the eyebrows of curious desires. To indulge in Dream's music is to taste sounds, hear flavors, or smell beats in a way that "no matter what comes toward you, have it in your heart to know that each battle is a test of how strong you are" — her own words.

Her latest release, "Picture on the Wall," is a remake of the 1972 Phyllis Dillon rocksteady classic, and a testament to the women of reggae and roots music. When she performed recently at the Atlanta Jerk Festival, her entertaining set aimed to "let [the audience] hear the true words from each song."

As a mother, mentor, entrepreneur, and now performing artist, Dream has big ambitions to step into stardom within the soul, afrobeat, R&B scene. Smooth vocals, creative transitions, and genre-jumping EP releases are just the beginning. When the beat kicks at the opening of her single, "My Baby," it's impossible to not let yourself groove with the rhythm of her entrance. The more you listen to the song, the more nuance you'll discover with intentional breaks and subtle, creative instrumentation, masterful vocal layers and confidence that draws you to hang on every word.

Her first single, "Think About Me", was a catapult anthem originally written by Javon the Goat, who had been waiting for the perfect voice to bring the song to life. Dream showcases her versatility from the starting gate with melodic harmonies alongside lyrics which tether her among the most talented rappers in this genre.

While she climbs the ladder and continues releasing new content, the memory of her childhood brush with cancer is a motivation that we are all lucky to be alive. During our interview, she stressed the importance of always "remembering the people who were there for you" in the beginning, and the significant influence of family, friends, and positive role models for young people. When she's not recording music or performing, she's publishing cookbooks and dreaming of opening a restaurant. Listeners can find her singles on all major streaming platforms and follow her on Instagram to keep up with the latest upcoming shows and musical releases.





REGATTAS & RALLIES

Heineken Regatta Means Serious Fun

The 44th St. Maarten Heineken Regatta celebrates "Serious Fun!" February 29-March 3, 2024, with a range of entrants from family catamarans to professional maxi teams, complemented by world-class entertainment by night. Over 100 boats participated in the 2023 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, with a fleet that ranged from 24-foot performance trimarans to 70-foot ocean racing monohulls to those family cruisers-turned-racers.

Along with the world-class racers who are attracted to the Heineken Regatta's challenging courses and top competitors is the unique Island Time Class — Made for Cruisers, designed for liveaboards, world travelers and even racing yachts who prefer a more laid-back way to take part. "Island Time" means a later start, one race per day, a simplified CSA rating and shorter courses. Hank Schmitt, originator of the Island Time Class races, and winner of 2023's Robbie Ferron Trophy for Promoter of Sailing in the Caribbean, will return for the 19th time with his yacht, *Avocation*, with paying crew aboard.



LAURENSMOREL/SMHR

During the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, the daily Bridge Show parade of sail through the iconic Simpson Bay Bridge allows crews to win some points and pride from adoring fans at the Sint Maarten Yacht Club.

The Regatta extends the concept of serious fun to its spectators, including a daily bridge show parade of sail through the Simpson Bay Bridge. Teams don their best costumes and bust out the dance moves in front of a panel of judges and a roaring crowd.

Volunteers are always welcome to work behind the scenes in hospitality, race committee, operations and entertainment, with the only requirement being a serious commitment to fun.

Learn more about these opportunities and how to sign up at www.heinekenregatta.com

CMC Gets Under Way

There's plenty of excitement in store as the sixth Caribbean Multihull Challenge gets underway, starting with some great match.ups in CSA 1. That class will see five races with three of them distance romps: the 60 mile around St Barts sponsored by FKG Rigging; the Around Saba Dash sponsored by the Sint Maarten Tourism Bureau, and the around island Circle Race sponsored by Amstel Bright Beer.

Riccardo Pavoncelli's 66-foot Gunboat *Mana* and Todd Slyngstad's 66-foot HH *Nemo* will face off, with *Nemo* looking to defend its winning performance in previous CMC editions.

Perennial winner Anthony McVeigh's speedy 2 *2 Tango*, a Schionning 53, faces off against a newcomer, Richard Wooldridge's Kelsail 47 *Triple Jack*. And we welcome back the legendary Guy Chester aboard his rugged Crowther trimaran *Oceans Tribute*, looking to set new records.

LAURENS MOREL



Anthony McVeigh's speedy 2 2 Tango, *a Schionning 53, broad reaches along the shore in Sint Maarten.*

First-timers in the race include Harry Fugate and *Off-Piste*; another HH - but this time a 50 foot-cat; and Pierre-Yves Legris's Alibi 65 *Surprise* in the rally.

One of the hottest competitions will pit at least ten VPLP designed French-built Diam 24 open trimarans against each other, racing for four days in and around the southern shore of St Maarten. Just a few years back, Pierre Altier, Diam agent, entered only four boats, and this category will only keep growing in popularity.

And finally, CMC takes the lead with a breakthrough event which has never been tried before, Time Trials for Cruising Multihulls, creating a place for those skippers who do not want to officially race, but who want a chance to grab a podium spot at a prize giving. This is *not* a race, but rather a timed event with a parade start and no turning marks where collisions can happen. The Time Trials will test a skipper's speed through the water from point A to point B, adjusted for a simplified rating each skipper will receive from CMC officials.

To cap all of this off, CMC has partnered with the Caribbean Cetacean Society and CLEAR Caribbean to raise money for their marine mammal and coral reef preservation operations through the sale of the new official CMC sailing polo from the Netherland's Magic Marine (available in limited quantities at $60US; 10 percent of the sale price will be is donated 50/50 to these two organizations.)

For more information on the CMC, go to CaribbeanMultihullChallengecom.

COURTESY M2



M2

Also on the Horizon

Over 50 yachts are expected to race in the 50th Anniversary St. Thomas International Regatta (STIR) March 29-31, 2024. Returning are Cape 31 *M2*, from San Francisco, and St. Croix, USVI's Peter Stanton with his IC24, *Big Island*. Newcomers from England are JPK1180 *Dawn Treader* and *Escapado*, a Beneteau First 40.7.

STIR is still accepting entrants in the following categories: CSA (Caribbean Sailing Association-handicap rule), racing, cruising, and bareboat classes; ORC; large multihulls; Hobie Waves; and one-design classes with a minimum length of 20 feet. *Go to yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eid=16227 to enter.*

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MATIAS CAPIZZANO

Optimist fleet for IOR

Registration is also now open for St. Thomas's 31st International Optimist Regatta (IOR), which will take place, along with the TOTE Clinic and the TOTE Team Race, June 9-16, 2024, at the St. Thomas Yacht Club.

Registration is at www.regattanetwork.com. The fee for the IOR is $300, with late registration after May 1 of $350. The fee to enter the IOR and TOTE Clinic is $700, or $400 for the clinic only. The 2024 IOR can accept only a maximum of 125 sailors; register early.

Aberson Series Results at St. Maarten Yacht Club

The Sint Maarten Yacht Club hosted the Aberson Series sailing race in December 2023 as part of the dinghy season championship.

Twenty boats in three classes competed, with winds between 10 to 15 knots and strong gusts reaching 23 to 24 knots. The challenging conditions caused a few boats to capsize.

In the ILCA fleet, Rio Stomp from the SMYC took the first place, followed by Emilien Le Normand from Club de Voile de Friars Bay. Frits Bus, also from SMYC, came in third place.

In the Optimist fleet, with ten young sailors showcasing their talent, Lourenso Rolo Couto Jorge ended in third place, right after Carmona Bouvrais Tao, who came in second place. Thomas Magras won the first position. All three Optimist winners represented St. Barths Yacht Club.



COURTESY SMYC

Optimist fleet

In the Quest fleet, two boats competed: Jesse Lake and Mathijs Detering finished first, and Caii Banting and Arthus, from the Sint Maarten Yacht Club, ended second.

Foiling Championships in St. Martin

The Caribbean Foiling Championships in December 2023 at Ocean Bay Beach, St. Martin, featured a series of windfoiling, wingfoiling and kitefoiling events, leading up to the grand finale, the Around the Island Kitefoil Race.

This was nearly upstaged in the Halfway Around the Island wingfoiling event, won by Mahe Thebault of Guadeloupe in a time of 53 minutes. Thebault made the full around-island circuit, finishing with an unofficial record time for a wingfoiler of 2 hours, 16 minutes, 40 seconds. Arthur Thebaut was second, Solenn Gaul finished third. Overall kitefoil finishers were Mahe Thebault first, Anthony Smith second, Arthur Thebault third.

—Continued on next page



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The full Around the Island kitefoil event was won by Julien Quentel of St. Martin in 1 hour, 15 minutes, 0 seconds, challenging but falling short of his own world record by three minutes. Frank Balvay finished second, Aurelie Garreau was third. Quentel was also the overall Kitefoil Pro champion, followed by Sasha Letthulier and Willan Dolmin.



Lucas Marot of St. Barts won the Around the Island Windfoil Pro event in the record time of 1 hour 56 minutes 47 seconds, followed by Clement Jeanjean and Raphael Payen. The top three finishers in the overall Windfoil Pro standings were Neels Pechoux, Clement Jeanjean and Raphael Payen.

SVG/CG United Insurance National Sailing Championships

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines CG United Insurance National Sailing Championships wound up competition at Calliaqua Bay in mid December 2023. Oreakay Joseph claimed first place in the ILCA6 category, with Jamark Osborne finishing second, and Logan Banfield third.

In the Optimist class, Joshua Weinhardt emerged the winner, with Tegan Deane the first girl finisher and second place overall. Kai Marks Dasent was third.

Madison Allcock's four first place finishes made her the overall champion in the Optimist Green Fleet. Rohana Warran and Ira Hadley had one point between them for second and third place respectively.

SEBASTIAN CYRUS



Competitive ILCA 6 racing

SEBASTIAN CYRUS



Optimist Green Fleet winner Madison Allcock



Trophy winners Joshua Weinhardt and Oreakay Joseph

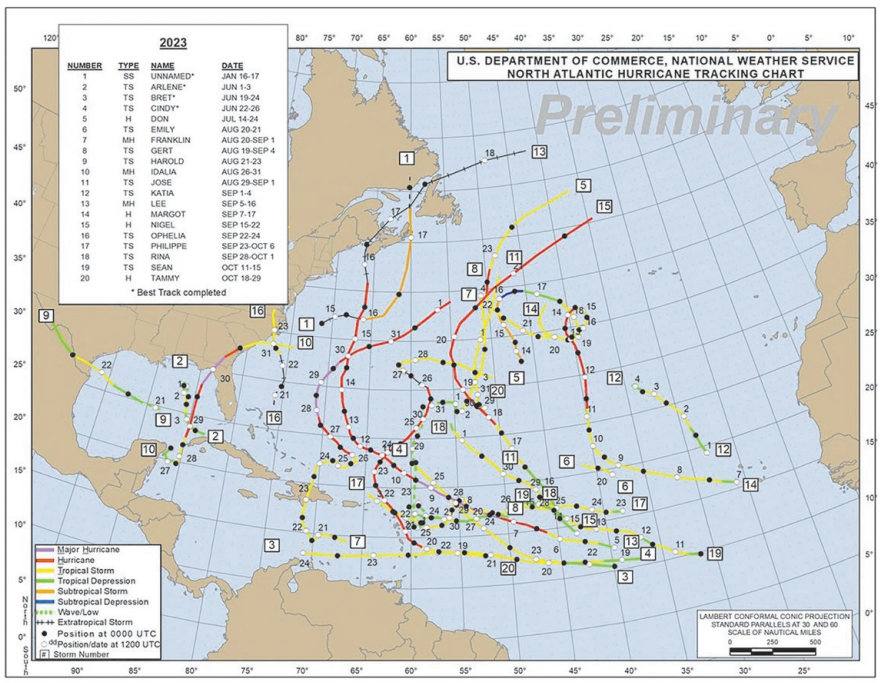


The Impact of El Niño in 2023 and in 2024

By Amanda Delaney

The 2023 Atlantic hurricane season officially ended as of November 30. Predictions for the year's tropical cyclone season were challenging, with a strengthening El Niño expected last spring and unusually high sea surface temperatures over the Caribbean Sea and, particularly, near Florida. How did these conditions impact the Caribbean tropics last summer, and will they continue to impact the weather over the Caribbean during winter and spring 2024?

The challenge for predicting the number of tropical cyclones and hurricanes this season for the Atlantic Ocean came down to two main features. The first was a moderate El Niño last spring that was expected to strengthen during the summer through fall. While El Niño is the reversal of sea surface temperatures over the tropical Pacific Ocean (where sea surface temperatures usually cool off northeastern Australia and warm off Ecuador and Peru), it also generates stronger than normal upper-level winds across the Caribbean Sea and tropical Atlantic Ocean.



COURTESY WRI'S SEAWEATHER.NET

Figure 1: Tropical cyclone tracks

Tropical cyclones need light winds aloft to allow thunderstorms to generate, strengthen and organize near the center of circulation. If the thunderstorms are blown away from the center of circulation, then this will hinder any tropical development. As a result, there are usually fewer tropical cyclones that form in the Atlantic during El Niño years. Those that do form, especially over the Eastern and Central Atlantic, are more likely to be deflected to the east of the Caribbean Sea due to the unfavorable upper-level winds.

Sea surface temperatures were the highest that have ever been recorded over the North Atlantic in May (2.5 C higher than normal), as well as higher than normal over the Caribbean Sea (by 1-3 C). Record setting sea surface temperatures off Florida ranged between 3-5 C higher than normal in July. Tropical cyclones can develop in sea surface temperatures above 26°C (79 F) and with sea surface temperatures well above average, this would allow tropical cyclones to not only develop, but to strengthen rapidly in warmer than normal waters.

This presented some challenges in predicting the upcoming tropical cyclone season, as there were already unusually high sea surface temperatures that would promote more tropical cyclone development, but there would be higher than normal upper-level winds due to El Niño that would promote below average development.

In May, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forecast a near normal tropical cyclone season with 12-17 named tropical cyclones, 5-9 hurricanes and 1-4 major hurricanes. However, between May and July, three tropical storms and a hurricane had already developed in the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, NOAA revised its predictions in August to 14-21 named tropical cyclones, 6-11 hurricanes and 2-5 major hurricanes. This revised forecast proved more accurate by the end of the season.

By November 30, a total of 19 named tropical cyclones developed (not counting an unnamed subtropical storm that developed over the northwestern Atlantic in January). Seven were hurricanes and three were major hurricanes. The tropical cyclone tracks are summarized in figure 1.

And how did the Caribbean fare during this tropical cyclone season? In total, five named tropical cyclones and two additional unnamed systems impacted the Caribbean Sea this season.

—Continued on page 17







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- Tropical Storm Bret formed in mid-June over the western tropical Atlantic. This was the earliest system to develop as far south and east in the Atlantic, and its development was likely due to the higher than average sea surface temperatures in the region. Tropical Storm Bret passed north of Barbados and made landfall over St. Vincent during the evening of June 22. A wind gust of 49 knots was reported at the airport in Barbados and up to 60 knots at the airport in St. Lucia. In its wake, Tropical Storm Bret damaged buildings in Barbados and St. Vincent, and brought widespread power outages to St. Lucia.
- Tropical Depression Franklin also formed over the southwestern North Atlantic in mid-August and passed over the southern Windward Islands before strengthening into a tropical storm in the southeastern Caribbean Sea. The system stalled and lifted to the north ahead of a strong front moving over the western Atlantic, passing over Hispañiola. Tropical Storm Franklin dropped as much as 13.1 inches of rain near Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Two people were killed and there was extensive flooding to homes and crops in the Dominican Republic. The system eventually strengthened into a category 4 hurricane over the western Atlantic before accelerating to the northeast of Bermuda.
- Tropical Depression Idalia formed off northeastern Honduras and moved off the eastern Yucatan Peninsula before strengthening into a tropical storm. The system slowly lifted north and became a hurricane off northwestern Cuba. This system eventually moved northeast and made landfall as a Cnategory 3 hurricane near Cedar Key, Florida.
- Tropical Storm Philippe developed over the eastern tropical Atlantic in mid-September and tracked across the western tropical Atlantic before moving northwest and passing over the northern Leeward Islands. Tropical Storm Philippe made landfall over Barbuda on October 2 before passing east of the Virgin Islands and moving back out over the Western Atlantic. There was flooding and building damage reported in Guadeloupe, Antigua and Barbuda. Twelve people were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard after a cargo ship ran aground off the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- The most significant tropical cyclone in the Caribbean was Hurricane Tammy. Hurricane Tammy took a similar route as Tropical Storm Philippe in mid-October and passed over Barbuda as well on October 21 before moving back over the western Atlantic. Antigua and Barbuda reported building damage and power outages. Winds were estimated up to 80 knots in eastern Guadeloupe. Rainfall ranged from 101-203mm (4-8 inches) and a storm surge of 0.3-0.9 meters (1-3 feet) across the Leeward Islands.
- Two additional systems, Tropical Depression 21 and Potential Tropical Cyclone 22, formed over the southwestern Caribbean Sea during late October and November. Tropical Depression 21 eventually moved inland over Nicaragua while Potential Tropical Cyclone 22 was drawn northeast and merged with a cold front tracking over the Southern Bahamas in mid-November.

Tropical Storm Bret and Tropical Depression 21 generally took more typical west-to-northwest tracks over the Caribbean. The rest of the systems were influenced by stronger than normal upper-level winds that helped steer most of them toward the northwest and north, either over the Atlantic Ocean or into the Gulf of Mexico.

Now that the tropical cyclone season is officially over, how will El Niño and the sea surface temperatures influence winter and early spring over the Caribbean Sea? The NOAA Climate Prediction Center forecasts that a moderate to strong El Niño will remain into April.

Typically, El Niño strengthens an upper-level jet stream (strong winds) from the subtropical eastern Pacific over the southern United States. This allows a series of strong lows to track over the southwestern United States or northern Gulf of Mexico and pass over northern Florida and into the southwestern North Atlantic during the winter and early spring. As a result, more rainfall and cooler temperatures can be expected over the southern United States and northern Bahamas.

The northeastern Caribbean and eastern shores of Latin America may also have slightly higher than normal rainfall during the dry season and cooler temperatures. However, the southernmost Caribbean Sea, from Panama east along the northern coast of South America, generally has drier than normal weather.

As of late November, sea surface temperatures remained approximately 1-3 C higher than normal over the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. This could allow for stronger than normal lows to develop over the Gulf of Mexico and southwestern North Atlantic during the early winter months.

If these systems do produce more cloud cover and rain in these regions, this could lower sea surface temperatures back to normal over the Bahamas and northern Caribbean Sea. Should this scenario play out, it could allow for a delayed start into the Atlantic tropical cyclone season for 2024.

If the sea surface temperatures remain higher than normal through the rest of the winter, then we could see a repeat of tropical cyclones developing toward late May through July.

If El Niño lingers later into the spring, this could keep upper-level winds unfavorable near the Caribbean Sea. This will keep any tropical cyclones weaker than normal if any were to form in the Caribbean Sea.

A senior meteorologist at Weather Routing Inc. (www.wriwx.com), Delaney provides customized forecasts for mariners worldwide.

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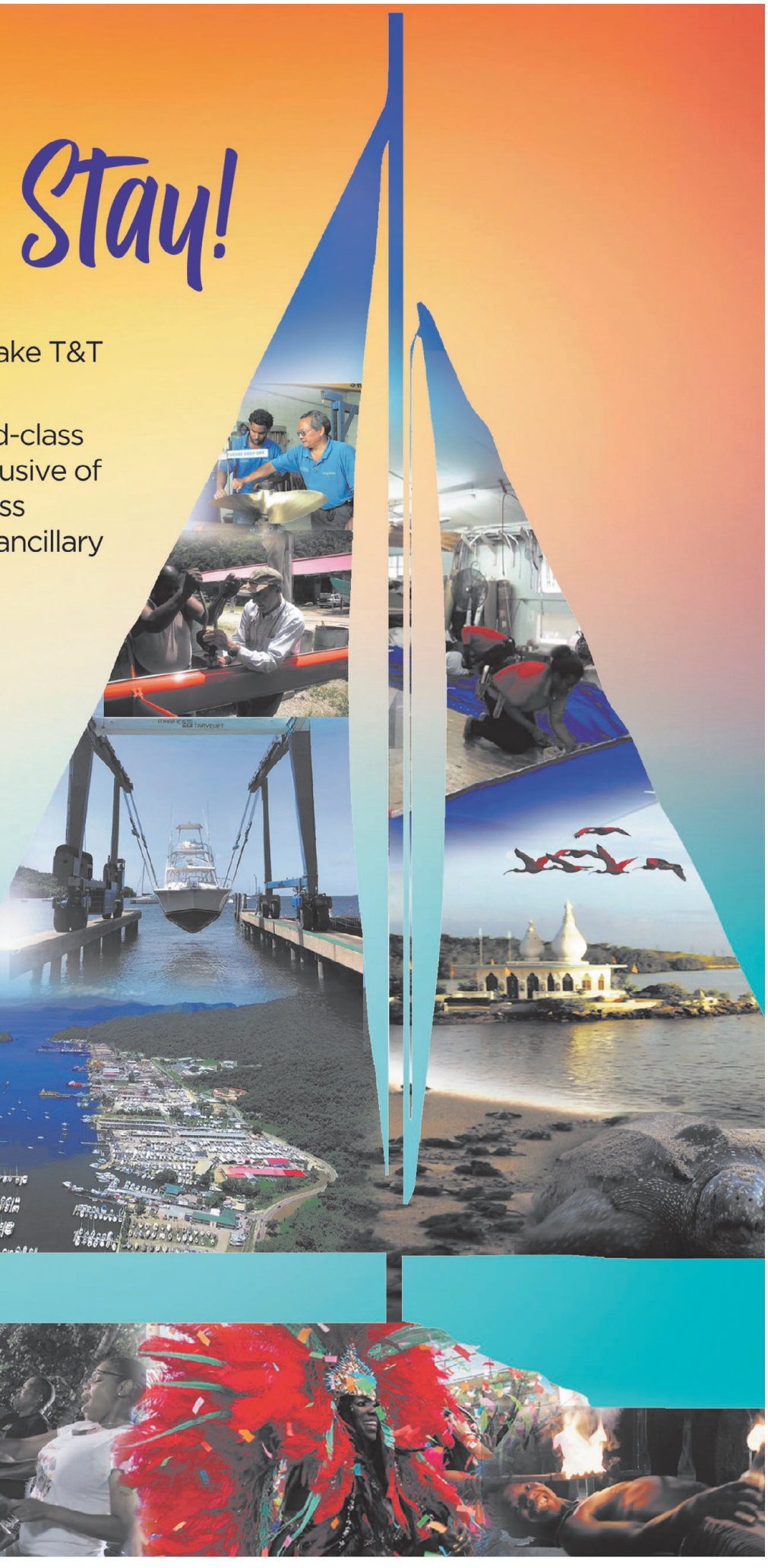
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Why Dominica?

Story and photos by Hank Schmitt

There are two types of sailors in the Caribbean. There are those who come down and charter for a week or two and sail from beach bar to beach bar, taking a short break from life. And then there are cruisers who come to the Caribbean for the season and have several months to live the dream life. Cruisers tend to spend a week or more in as many islands as possible, based on how expensive they are and how much there is to see and do. The island that best meets these criteria is the less traveled island of Dominica.

Why Dominica? After all, there are no docks to pull up to so you can wash your boat, get fuel or provision with a dock cart. When I first visited years ago there were still rusting hulks littering the main shoreline of Portsmouth. How could an ex-British island sandwiched between the two culinarily delightful French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe hope to compete as a Caribbean standout destination?



"Boat boy" Albert taking us up the Indian River

Dominica got independence from Great Britain in 1978 only to be decimated by Hurricane Frederick in 1979. With no white sandy beaches and a small airport on the wrong side of the island, Dominica for many years was passed over as a desirable vacation spot. Some European guidebooks still list it as a dangerous place to visit.

Nothing can be further from the truth. Dominica is a very safe and welcoming place to visit. Only recently, cruising sailors have begun to discover what the Discover Dominica tourism authority has been extolling for years. And others are taking notice. *Travel & Leisure* magazine has named Dominica the top island in the Caribbean for two years in a row, in 2022 and 2023. *National Geographic Traveler* included it in its "Cool List 2024." *Rough Guides* listed it as a Best Destination 2024. And *Time* magazine went even further in 2023, naming Dominica one of the world's greatest places.

To start with, entering the country is very easy. If it is your first visit to Portsmouth, ask one of the "boat boys" to bring you to the custom house. You can clear in and out at the same time if you are visiting for a week or less. It costs very little, $35 EC, which is about $15 US, and while you're there, you can get a sense of how much sailing in Dominica is like sailing in the Caribbean in the early days: They still use carbon paper to make copies. When was the last time you saw carbon paper? If you want your passport stamped, you must go to the police station in town.

Dominica, the premiere eco-tourism island in the Caribbean, is 70 percent undeveloped. Everything grows there except apples. The island has the second largest boiling lake in the world, with the largest being in New Zealand. It has the only Indian reservation in the Caribbean, the Kalinago, formerly known as Island Caribs or simply Caribs. It boasts 365 rivers. The Indian River tour highlights the only Caribbean island river that you can travel up for 1.6 km. Years ago, the island was organized into fourteen walking trails called the Waitukubuli National Hiking Trails. They have not all been fully cleared since Maria, but some segments have reopened including Segment 2, which was cleared with help from volunteers from my organization, Offshore Passage Opportunities (OPO) Crew Network. Segment 2 is not far from the Portsmouth anchorage.

New this year is a similarly numbered 14-segment 60-mile kayaking Waitukubuli Sea Trail, the first in the Caribbean. The sea trail, a collaboration between privately owned Soufrière Outdoor Center and the Ministry of Tourism and Discover Dominica, starts in the south at Scott's Head. While some people take up to a week to kayak this multi segment sea trail, cruisers have more time and can pick nicer weather to see some of this more rugged southern and eastern shore.

Antigua has a donkey reserve for older animals with a tagline "Save your ass." In contrast, Dominica this year created the first sperm whale reserve to the west of Dominica, with its own preservation tagline, "Saving the sperm whales," and a mission to control ship traffic and interaction between man and whale. Recently featured in a segment on *60 Minutes*, sperm whales visit Dominica in the winter to eat deep sea squid and calf their young. The Ministry of Tourism must balance access to the whales and protection of their habitat to perpetuate the mission of sustainability.

Catering to the cruise ship trade, Dominica is building a 4.1-mile cable car to hoist visiting cruise ship passengers up the Roseau valley to the Boiling Lake in about 20 minutes. This is far easier than the difficult five to six-hour round trip hike. To further embrace their image as an eco-tourism island, geothermal wells have already been drilled to harness the heat from the earth. This will create electricity not only for Dominica, but eventually for Guadeloupe and Martinique as well.

In Dominica you want to get off the boat early in the morning before it gets too hot and get an early start on any of the many eco-tourism excursions. With Morne Diablotins topping out at 4,747 feet, there are many options in higher and cooler elevations to hike or swim in numerous waterfalls throughout the island. However, experienced cruisers will not leave their boats unattended if they think there is poor holding ground or suspect moorings. They also will not leave their boats if they think someone will come "borrow" something.

The boat boys in Dominica have organized themselves into PAYS, which stands



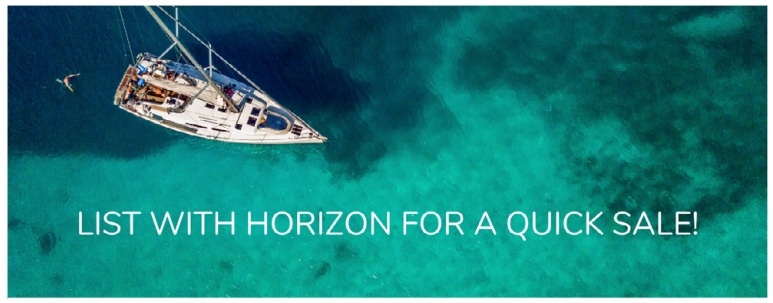
The crew of Avocation *and OPO members volunteering to clear trail number 2 of the 14 Waitukubuli National Hiking Trails after Hurricane Maria.*

for the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services. This local group of fourteen original members, with help from the government, have a secure anchorage in the northern corner of Portsmouth's Prince Rupert Bay. They have about forty moorings set in 15 to 40 feet of water in front of the PAYS pavilion and dinghy dock. They also have a shower and shoreside facility. Proceeds from barbecues held every Sunday and often additional Wednesdays in season go toward hiring a security boat which keeps watch at night. PAYS members are around to handle security during the day.

My connection with PAYS goes back to a chance meeting in 2012 with member Albert Lawrence. When I saw Albert was taking risks fishing well offshore on his small boat during the off-season, I offered to send materials to build a new and bigger boat. This led to a successful fundraiser from OPO, and a decades-long friendship with Albert. Other fund raisers for PAYS followed: An offer to raise money for a mooring field started in 2015, and a relief effort came after Hurricane Maria in 2017.

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The PAYS beach, dinghy dock, and pavilion, which is the headquarters and location of Sunday and Wednesday barbecues.

This winter, PAYS will receive thirty new moorings shipped from the Gilman Corporation in Gilman, CT. This will expand the PAYS moorings brand to other anchorages on the protected west coast between Toucari in the north and Mero, south of Portsmouth. Ten moorings will also be placed in front of the old Ross University in the southern, quieter corner of Prince Rupert Bay. These moorings are available to sailors for $12 a day. With a secure mooring field and additional materials donated by the Moran Tugboat Company Norfolk Station and mooring buoys donated by members of OPO, visiting skippers and crew can feel more comfortable leaving their boat for the day to explore Dominica.

Without PAYS, none of this could have happened. Past president Jeff "Seabird" Frank was instrumental in getting the first mooring field in place. Three years ago, Andrew "Cobra" O'Brien took over as president. Along with treasurer Eddison Lavelle, they continue to work toward making Dominica a safe and affordable place to visit. More recently, Minister of Tourism Denis Charles-Pemberton and Permanent Secretary Miss Lisa Valmond have taken a keen interest in helping expand the PAYS brand with a MAYS (Mero Association of Yacht Services) to copy the success in Portsmouth. Cruisers can see more of the island without having to go by car. Plans are to add a dinghy dock in Mero Beach next season and perhaps expand the PAYS brand to Newtown in the south.

By adding moorings in other anchorages in Dominica, the goal is to have cruising sailors spend more time exploring. Many sailors want to give back after having a successful working career. They want to enjoy life, but also not ignore those who may need assistance. Dominica is a great place to spend some time and volunteer for some of the community-based needs. The PAYS office can put you in touch with local humanitarian project leaders.

Houston-based Macario Advantage, a humanitarian group, can also provide direction for those who want to help. Co-founders Clair and Magoe manage the Eastern Caribbean islands to enhance the effectiveness of local organizations that serve the youth, elderly, abandoned, dispossessed, and homeless. Their belief is that we can all work together to alleviate some of the suffering associated with poverty and help give people hope that they will see a brighter day. Read more about them at macarioadvantage.org.

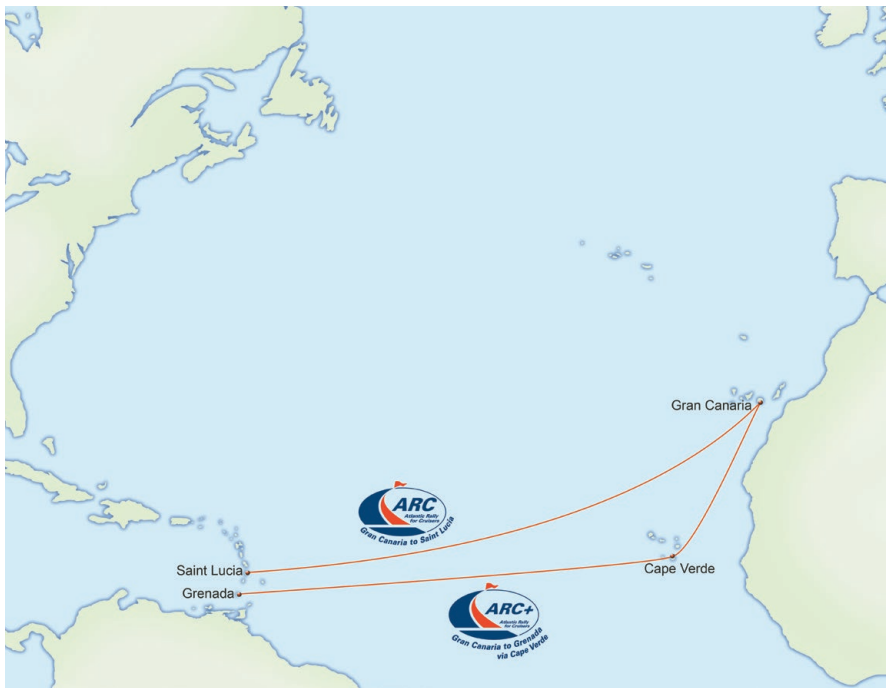
To get the word out about the moorings field, PAYS started a week-long event called Yachtie Appreciation Week several years ago. Last year, with government support, it morphed into the **PAYS Dominica Yachting Festival**. The secomd annual event will take place **March 23-31, 2024**. Moorings will be free for the week for those who sign up and take part in a full schedule of events planned for the nine-day event. There will be discount tours offered, several PAYS barbecues and a closing free dinner at the Cabrits Fort. On Thursday there will be a race to the beach community of Mero for a party that night. Sailors will race back Friday morning to be in Toucari for a mash-up street party that night.

To contact PAYS, visit paysdominica.com.

As Bluewater Miles Slip By, Life Goes On

By Elaine Lembo

A teething ring, a bridal veil, and Barbie — outfitted in pink, no less — were as much a part of the November 2023 ARC+ and ARC transatlantic rallies from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean as the people who stowed them for the ride.



COURTESY WORLD CRUISING CLUB

ARC+ 2023 departed November 5 from Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, bound for Marina Mindelo, Sao Vicente, in the Cape Verde islands, then Port Louis Marina, Grenada, a distance of 850 nautical miles and 2,150 nautical miles.

ARC 2023 departed November 19 from Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, bound for Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia, a distance of 2,800 nautical miles.

Chasing mostly moderate trade winds, the 1,353 individuals and their totems expressed nautical choices, whether ARC+ (425) vs. ARC (928), monohull vs. multihull, Starlink vs. SSB, racer vs. cruiser, kids aboard vs. adult-only, pre-prepared frozen meals vs. unrefrigerated one-pot wonders, parasailors vs. spinnakers without windows or wings.

By the end of the two respective landfalls — a record-breaking 92 boats in ARC+ to Port Louis, Grenada, 152 boats in the ARC to Rodney Bay, St. Lucia — amid joyful round the clock greetings by the World Cruising Club's "yellow shirt" team and marina managers, parties thrown by tourism authorities, fish fries, barbecues, seminars for adults, fun stuff for kids, vast differences melted like butter in the tropical heat.

During dockside visits to Grenada and St. Lucia, it quickly became apparent that whether the fleet came in aboard one hull or two, recorded their passage via clicks or cursive, what united all rally goers was the single prodigious feat of sailing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean.

"We all have this thing we love," said Evelina Mrosk of *Athena*, a 50-foot Contest sloop that completed the ARC, "boats and sailing. The mix is interesting, and it's interesting to hear how they all prepared. It's also special because you get this feeling for every crew as they enter the harbor. I'm so glad this is my first passage because it's a big affirmation that this is right for us."

The two popular annual rallies are key components of a continuous program of international sailing odysseys organized by World Cruising Club of Cowes in the United Kingdom. Its origins reach back to the first ARC in 1986. ARC+, a two-leg passage, came along in 2013 and until 2020 sailed via Cape Verde to Saint Lucia.

The 2023 rally marked the third year that ARC+, which started November 5, 2023, finished in Grenada, after a stop 850 miles in at Marina Mindelo, Sao Vicente, Cape Verde. Another record-shattering year, with 95 entries (one dismasted and returned to Cape Verde, one diverted to Barbados, and another to Martinique), far eclipsing the 44-yacht field of a decade ago. Crews hailed from 24 countries. Other notable statistics from ARC+ 2023 include entry by 26 multihulls, a 30 percent increase from 2022.

Kids ruled both rallies. In 2023, 43 children aged from eight months to 16 years sailed with their families on 20 boats in ARC+. ARC saw 20 children aboard 11 boats. The total record number of 63 children inspired organizers to cater to them with activities that gave parents time to provision and tend to boat chores.

ARC 2023, which set out November 19, 2023, also broke records, with 43 catamarans and one trimaran entered. Of 155 entries, 152 sailed into Saint Lucia (one returned to Gran Canaria, two diverted to Martinique); crews hailed from 40 countries.

As if sailing across one ocean isn't enough to satisfy dreamers and doers, a subfleet of four ARC+ boats and nine ARC boats planned to head out in January 2024 from St. Lucia on the globe girdling World ARC, part of a fleet of 37 boats.

For the most part, weather and passage conditions were light, with one exception. The weather on the ARC+ leg to Sao Vicente was boisterous, evening out on the second half of the trip. ARC participants complained of light winds, though overall passage length didn't stretch to a month's time as it did in the faint airs of 2022.

That doesn't mean hardware, sails and spirits didn't break – spinnakers split in gusts, one mast failed, as did at least one boom, not to mention self-steering giving way and refrigeration going on the fritz. As for crews, aside from seasickness and sore muscles and a range of boat bites, physical transformations included weight loss and gain, cutting a tooth, and (mostly) successful potty training. For those who subscribed, Elon Musk's Starlink was the communications game-changer, allowing rally goers to go on the rally Whatsapp channel to stay in touch, help each other out, swap trivia and recipes, and boost bored and sleepy souls.

Throughout, WCC staff and volunteers kept abreast of their progress, and ashore, family and friends could follow through the YB Races app.

"Everyone at World Cruising Club is so proud to play a small part in helping to realize the dreams of so many sailors," said managing director Paul Tetlow. "Participants can find like-minded individuals or meet people who give them new ideas. We provide the structure, the safety guidelines, the equipment requirements, but the participants run with it."

ARC is the only World Cruising Club rally with a racing division, and this time, 14 monohulls raced under the International Racing Certificate from Gran Canaria to Saint Lucia. Although ARC+ is strictly a cruising rally, the first to finish takes line honors. An array of awards and prizes for performance, spirit and sportsmanship are bestowed in ceremonies after each rally.

"I have such admiration for you, I could never do what you do, I know that," Ernest Hilaire, deputy prime minister of St. Lucia, told ARC crews at their ceremony. "You are a unique breed of human beings. And I'll tell you another unique thing about ARC ceremonies — I am always amazed at the sheer joy when you are called on for your prizes. If I had crossed the Atlantic for so many days, who cares about the prizes, you know! But as I said, you are unique."

—Continued on next page

ELAINE LEMBO



Paul Tetlow, managing director of World Cruising Club, first joined the group to do a transatlantic crossing in 2006. He welcomes new ideas from rally participants to improve the event as well as input from local authorities to help boost the nautical sector of island economies.



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Top honors for the 2023 Atlantic rally crossing season went to Italian teams: Andrea Nevi's Italia Yachts 15.98 *Nessun Dorma (ITA)* crossed the line first in the ARC+ rally to Grenada after 11 days, 18 hours from Cape Verde. Marco Rodolfi, who took line honors in ARC 2010, claimed them again after 12 days, 13 hours, 54 minutes and 34 seconds into St. Lucia aboard the Swan 90 B*erenice Cube* (GBR).

Just over 15 percent of the ARC+ fleet have sailed with World Cruising Club in previous rallies. Almost half of the ARC fleet has sailed with World Cruising Club before, with many regular ARC participants. Wait lists for upcoming rallies fill fast; by December, ARC+ 2024 was nearly full.

With so many dreams realized, how could anyone possibly find a downside? With a jolly laugh, Kristoffer Larsen of *Celeste of Solent*, a Farr 65r, supplied it. "The worst thing about the ARC is the heat!" he exclaimed during the welcome party at the Cap Estate Golf and Country Club in Rodney Bay, St. Lucia.

Caribbean Compass *thanks those who made this report possible, including World Cruising Club and the tireless, good-humored yellow shirts team; Grenada Tourism Authority, the St. Lucia Tourism Authority, Camper & Nicholsons Port Louis Marina, IGY Rodney Bay Marina.*

COURTESY PINNACLE SAILING



Pinnacle *under way in ARC+*

An interesting backstory sails with every rally boat. Here are just a few that Caribbean Compass caught dockside in Grenada and St. Lucia.

Youngest Crew
s/v *Pinnacle*

To those who think taking a months-old infant and a toddler along for a 3,000-nautical-mile ride is insane, grandfather David Seymour, crew of *Pinnacle*, a Nautitech 46 Open, offers an easy solution.

COURTESY PINNACLE SAILING



Stef, Rich, Roux Stevens

Concerned about how his family would fare, he chose to head out with daughter Stef, 35, and husband, Rich Stevens, 39, and Rich's brother Jonty Stevens, along with infant Roux and two-year-old Jesse for ARC+.

"From a grandfather's point of view, you're a bit fearful, but actually Stef and Rich are very competent, and very skilled," Seymour said. Roux and Jesse did their part, too; Roux teethed and cut a tooth, and Jesse potty trained.

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Noted Stef: "Now he's lived and breathed it with us. It's so special to have had my dad with us." She added that having a family didn't complicate the decision to go sailing, it was the reason for shoving off from Jersey, in the Channel Islands, where she and Rich operated a RIB day skippering business.



COURTESY PINNACLE SAILING

Rich and Roux Stevens

"Having a family made us re analyze things," Rich added. "Jersey is amazing, and our job was fun, but you're busy all summer, when you want to be with your family." The Stevens clan plans to stay aboard for the foreseeable future and will head to the Pacific Ocean next.

Oldest Crew
s/v *Carrick*

There's no time like the present for Jonathan Duncan Hutchinson. At 89, he's the oldest crewmate of both rallies, having crossed in the ARC aboard s/v *Carrick*, a Rustler 42. The sturdy model is well-known for its long-distance cruising capabilities.



ELAINE LEMBO

At 89, Jonathan Duncan Hutchinson is the oldest crewmate of both rallies, having crossed in the ARC aboard s/v Carrick*, a Rustler 42.*

"I've been sailing for 83 years and I'd never crossed the ocean," he said. "It seemed if I was going to do it before I dropped off the perch, I'd better get on with it." Hutchinson did the trip with his two sons and a family friend. "When my sons invited me to join them I could hardly refuse, could I?"

His biggest frustration with the passage — besides his son's choice of pink crew polo shirts — was the wind direction, which prevented them from relying on the spinnaker as much as they'd hoped. Nevertheless, Hutchinson stood his share of watches and hand-steered his shifts over two and a half days when the self-steering failed.

"I enjoy being with my family," he said. "What more could you want?"

Brave New Provisioning
s/v *Northern Light*

Sophie Mack Smith's family were "scandalized" when Mack Smith told them she was headed out on ARC+ to help longtime partner Jeremy Loveless attain a lifelong dream, crossing an ocean aboard the 2009 Hallberg Rassy *Northern Light*. From landlocked Oxford, Britain, neither Mack Smith nor her friends or family sailed. But the pair of 60-year-olds, former staff of the humanitarian agency Oxfam, were no strangers to roughing it all over the world.



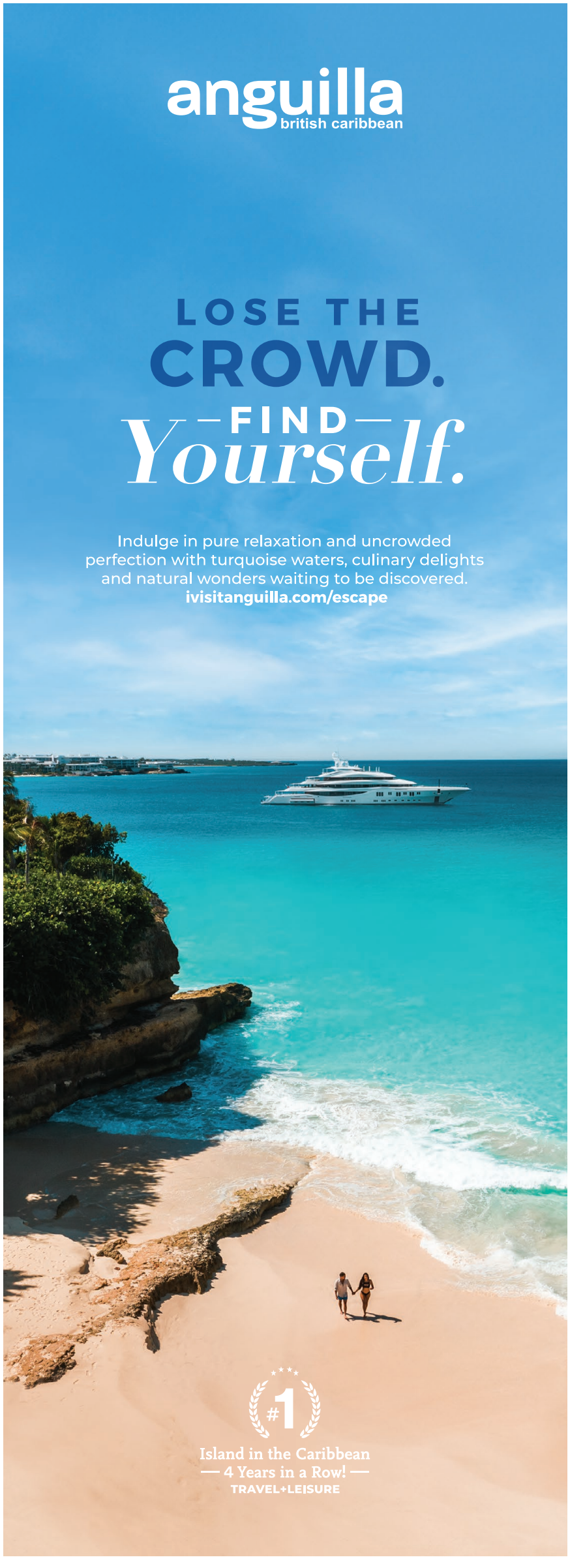
ELAINE LEMBO

Sophie Mack Smith and ingredients of her "fridgeless" recipe

So Mack Smith signed on, encouraging Loveless to join the rally. Then came the next surprise: Loveless told her that to conserve power, they'd voyage without refrigeration. After she got over the initial panic, she got creative, provisioning with fresh food as well as vacuum packed salamis, long life milk, vegetarian meat substitutes, soup stock, beans, pastas, and an array of spices and herbs. "We had pancakes and maple syrup on my birthday," she said, adding, "we never ate the same thing twice."

A few thousand miles later, Mack Smith still isn't sure if she likes sailing but the night watches "were glorious, and the blueness of the infinite in the early morning was beautiful." She adds: "If I'd dodged this I would have felt terrible. And? Here I am. We've met all these people and they're the best."

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Sophie's One Pot Green Lentil & Squash Curry

Green lentils
One onion
Garlic
Ginger
Cumin, pinch
Teaspoon fennel powder
Cardamom – 10 pods
Olive oil (not extra virgin)

One butternut squash, chopped and slivered
Coconut powder
Vegetable stock – 1 cube
One cinnamon stick

Parcook lentils; set aside. Chop and fry onion in olive oil. Add spices and saute. Chop squash, simmer 10 minutes with lid on. When onion is brown and spices have mixed in, add to squash. Simmer 5 minutes. Add lentils, coconut powder, vegetable stock, cinnamon stick and enough water to cover. Simmer for 20 minutes or until squash is tender.

Nuptials at 16 05' 02N & 38 36' 03W
s/v *Athena*

It's one thing to decide you want the captain to perform your wedding at sea. It's completely another to have the ceremony sprung on you. That's exactly what happened to Evelina Mrosk, 29, whose husband, Philip Mrosk, 32, orchestrated the ceremony mid-Atlantic with approval of his crewmates and dear friend Carsten Seebach, owner and captain of *Athena*, a 50-foot Contest that joined the ARC.

Phil made the unilateral decision two months after the couple were legally married at city hall in Munich, Germany. "Our families were there, but we were missing the emotional part," Phil said. "I thought if we are going to do the Atlantic crossing that would be much more fitting than a church wedding because we love sailing. It's something that bonds us together, we love our crew mates and skipper, and our long-term plan is at some point to have our own boat and go sailing around the world. Getting married on the ocean by a skipper we love and who knows us makes it personal and it just felt completely right to do it this way."

So Phil instructed his mates to bring long pants and shirts, and packed a suit for himself. He also stowed a wedding veil aboard, out of Evelina's sight. To complete the ruse, Phil told Evelina that it's traditional to have a formal party mid-ocean, and asked her to bring along a dress with bright colors. At the appointed time of the party, 1600, on December 1, the entire crew assembled at the helm, and Evelina, struck by seeing Phil in a suit and tie, became suspicious. "In front of our gods — Neptune and Poseidon — will you marry me?" he asked.

COURTESY PHILIP MROSK



Evelina and Philip Mrosk tied the knot at 16 05' 02N & 38 36' 03W aboard s/v Athena.

And there, under main and genoa, at a cruising speed of seven knots and blessed by Captain Seebach, Phil and Evelina tied theirs.

—*Continued on page 26*

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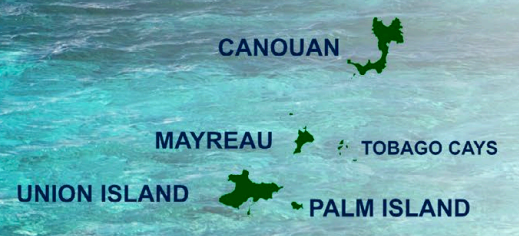














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Rescue
s/v *Champagne Hippy*

"There's a turtle in there!" shouted a crewmate aboard *Champagne Hippy*, an Oyster 825. Actually, there were two, and the boat's new crew of six, five days into the ARC, went into action similar to a man-overboard drill, keeping sight of the yellow net that contained them. But first, they had to drop the spinnaker, which they'd only just set for the first time.

"We really wanted to help these turtles, but also it was very stressful," said chef Giverny Sanders. "And turning a boat this size around isn't necessarily an easy task. We'd also caught a dorado without realizing it."



COURTESY S/V *CHAMPAGNE HIPPY*

Crew of s/v Champagne Hippy *freed turtles from fishing nets.*

But the crew, under the direction of captain Josh Cole, pulled off the maneuver and pulled the turtles, which were caught in the net, aboard. Carefully cutting them out of the tangle with diving knives, they then set them free. The fishing rod snapped and they lost the dorado, but the rescue was a success.

Impossible Is Possible
s/v *Peristera*

Hours after the all-female crew of seven aboard the Beneteau Oceanis *Peristera* made their ARC landfall in Rodney Bay, they were found chatting, laughing, and staying together, which was no different from how they'd spent the previous three-plus weeks aboard.

Such harmony might be challenging to fathom, but not for this group, led by captain Linda Lindenau, who's taken women crews on sail training trips around the world since 2010.

"The advantage with going on a sailing trip, short or long, with other women is that when you come back you've started to think for yourself," said Lindenau. "You realize that there are different ways to do things and you can think through the best way to do things on your own."

Daughter-mother duo Carla Larsson, 20, and Charlott Frisk, 50, broke barriers on the adventure.

Said Larsson: "Sailing across the Atlantic has always been a dream since I was a little child, a very fuzzy dream, kind of like it's so big that it could only be a dream and not really possible to do. Now I realize there's so much more stuff that I want to do. When I think about my younger me — the child me — she would be proud."



ELAINE LEMBO

Peristera *captain Linda Lindenau (second from right) is flanked by her crew, which included daughter – mother duo Carla Larsson, 20, and Charlott Frisk, 50 (fourth from left, right).*

—Continued on page 28





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—*Continued from page 26*

For Frisk, the opportunity to share the experience with her daughter as well as other women who'd been strangers before the ARC are key. "We had good harmony on board, everyone had the intention to sail and to do this together. The connection to each other for me was one of the big adventures, as well as having time to myself and together with others in something totally different from daily life. I can actually do this. I can be my own captain aboard, and in life."

Barbie Goes Transatlantic
s/v *Escapado*

Germaine Williams's first experience sailing was transatlantic, so it makes sense that when the 41-year-old decided to embark on a racing-cruising sail training career with his business, Sail Racing Academy (www.sailracingacademy.org), ARC crossings were part of the annual itinerary. Aboard *Escapado*, a 40-foot Beneteau that has now completed six ARCs, while Williams and his crew of nine at one point led the 2023 ARC racing division.

ELAINE LEMBO



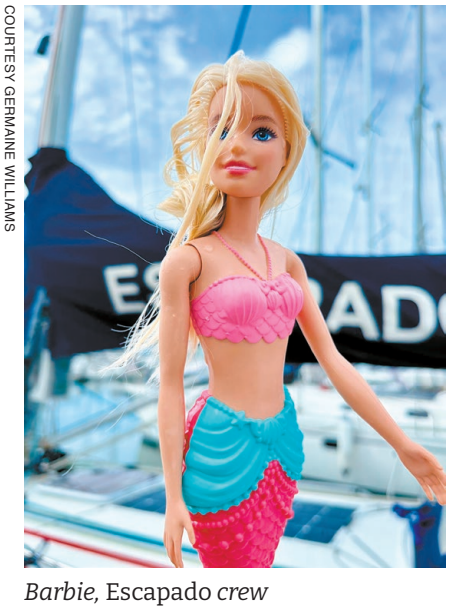
Captain Germaine Williams of the Beneteau s/v Escapado

"Then we blew out our spinnaker," he said. Oh well, the passage was great and Williams said he was incredibly lucky to have such a great crew. "You've got to have the racing mentality with all this crew, otherwise it would be a dull passage," he said.

And how could anything go wrong with Barbie as the mascot? "She came to Escapado as a bon voyage gift to the first mate and was immediately adopted by the entire team," Williams said.

"Sunsets, sunrises, sail changes, squalls and dolphin encounters, she experienced it all securely tied to the pulpit for the entire crossing. As a member of the crew someone would check on her daily to ensure her safety during the trip. Barbie, in pink, will return to the ARC in the future!"

COURTESY GERMAINE WILLIAMS



Barbie, Escapado *crew*

View the Caribbean Compass *photo scrapbook of ARC+ and ARC scenes at caribbeancompass.com/2023-world-cruising-club-arc-and-arc-recap-3000-miles-244-boats-1353-crew*

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Falmouth Freddy and the Cruising Kanes

By Niamh McAnally



TAD RICHARDS

Chapter 4: St. Barts

Charlotte hung suspended mid-water, captivated by the graceful sway of the soft gorgonian corals in the currents off the coast of St. Barts. Although the underwater world wasn't as silent as non-divers assumed, the hiss of her breathing, and the sounds of bubbles belching their way to the surface, was soothing. For the first time in days, she felt relaxed. Between her concern for her baby nephew's recovery from a fall, the disappointing news that her brother's family couldn't visit as a result, and Freddy the parrot's incessant squawking, she'd had little sleep. But Logan said he had *un autre plan pour* disposing of *le perroquet*. She couldn't help but smile at her husband's attempts to learn French, recalling his expression when they'd reached Île Fourchue two nights ago. Despite his Duolingo lessons, he didn't get a chance to practice a word of her mother tongue. Theirs was the sole sailboat in the mooring field, and only goats roamed the hills around the collapsed caldera.

Yet when they'd arrived in St. Barts, they met the delightful Birdy, owner/operator of Island Diving, who was happy to chat in both French and English. He offered to take them on this morning's dive. Charlotte was swimming to his left, Logan on his right. It was a beautiful February day, but the sun's rays couldn't penetrate to this depth. Charlotte switched on her flashlight. The muted green and blue hues exploded into vibrant reds and oranges. The beam bounced off fish scales, creating silver and gold flashes as they darted about. She searched for her favorite, the French angel, but saw no sign of its distinctive dark oval shape adorned with yellow flecks. Several parrotfish were busy chomping on coral; it seemed, even here, she couldn't escape the aviary world. As she turned away, her light caught something unusual protruding from a patch of sand. She descended a few feet and hovered, careful not to harm the delicate ecosystem of this marine park.

But the object was not of the natural world, nor had it been added to provide an artificial reef. Using her breathing to fine-tune her buoyancy, she dropped another couple of inches and waved her hand across it. A cloud of fine silt rose, uncovering more. It was about a quarter inch wide and two inches long. There were letters. S E L. "Sel?" Why would it say salt? Unless it wasn't French? Curious, she continued, revealing more letters. She wondered if… She wanted Logan to see it, but Birdy had signaled it was time to surface. Charlotte snapped a quick photo and joined the ascent.

"Birdy, *regarde*!" Charlotte showed the picture when they were back on the dive boat. "Look what I found. Could it be—"

"Ah, *oui*," said Birdy, a grin tickling his lips. "You have seen a great treasure."

"I knew it! It's Selene, *n'est-ce-pas*, the goddess of the moon?

Birdy winked at Logan.

"*Quoi*?" Charlotte asked, puzzled.

"We found one too," said Logan.

"Really? Let me see your shot."

"I do better," said Birdy, pulling something shiny from his buoyancy compensator. "*Eh voilà!*"

Charlotte stared at the silver object sticking out of his closed hand, the same thin shaft, the same inscription, but then Birdy uncurled his fingers like a magician and revealed the bulbous end.

"A spoon?"

"Sorry to disappoint you, *ma chérie. Oui*, a spoon."

"What? Who has a spoon named after her?" Charlotte asked, in mild disgust, yet she was intrigued enough to want to meet this woman and return it. "Do you know anyone named Selene?"

Birdy smiled. "Yes, I know a Selene."

"Really? Where can we find her?"

"She might be gone."

"Oh."

"But she might not."

"What does she look like?"

Birdy scratched his bald head. "Let me see. She's *très belle*. Such pretty blue—"

"Men!" Charlotte scoffed.

"And she's about fifty-three, I think."

"*Formidable*!" said Charlotte. "We're looking for a pretty, blue-eyed woman in her fifties. That should narrow it down!"

Birdy could no longer hold in his chuckle.

"Non! It's easy, peasy. *Venez avec moi!*" He started the engine and headed toward shore.

"Can we pass by our boat on the way?" asked Logan.

"*Bien sûr*!"

After a brief stop at s/v *Market Play* to pick up Logan's bag, they docked on the west pier. Once everything was hosed down, Birdy led them around Gustavia's U-shaped harbor. The red roofs, enticing restaurants, and classy shops gave the town an upscale feel. Charlotte tried not to ogle the mega yachts or the sparkly flip-flops arranged in rows at the end of gangways. While Logan was a successful day trader, she knew the day they could own a vessel complete with monogrammed staff would be… um… never.

"*Ça va*, Birdy?" a crew member hailed.

"Bordering in excellence," Birdy called back.

The road climbed out of town. At the roundabout at the top of the hill, Logan set down his bag and caught his breath, while Charlotte satisfied her thirst. The panoramic vista below them was spectacular. However, Birdy pointed upward. A twin-prop aircraft passed just a few feet above their heads. Charlotte could see the whites of the pilot's eyes as he descended down the steep embankment onto one of the shortest and most dangerous runways in the world. The plane came to a halt just shy of the beach.

"Don't tell me, Selene is on that plane?"

"No, over there!" Birdy said, handing her a pair of binoculars. Charlotte scanned the water, until her gaze fell upon a blue and white trawler.

"It's a 53-foot Selene," said Birdy, "you can return the spoons to them."

"Tu te moques de moi!"

"No joking," said Birdy, who loved to joke.

Charlotte wondered about these people. Were they so wealthy they just tossed out expensive silverware after every meal? Or, was there some other reason the spoons ended up underwater? She vowed to find out.

Just then, the bag on the ground wiggled.

"*Mon Dieu*, what's that?" said Birdy.

"Ah, yes," Logan replied, unzipping the bag. "You have been so kind; we wanted to leave you with a gift. Birdy, meet Freddy," Logan announced.

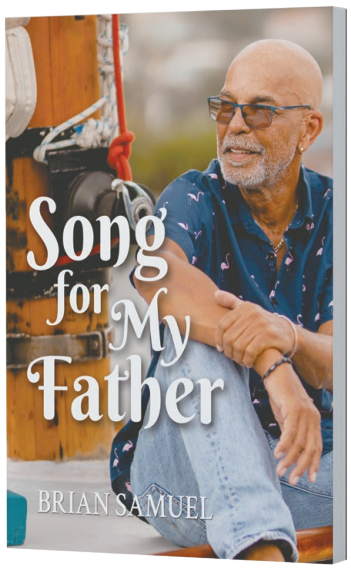
"Birdy is a Freddy; Freddy is a Birdy! New home, new home!" the parrot screeched.

For the first time since Charlotte and Logan had met him, Birdy didn't smile.

Irish-born author Niamh McAnally and her husband, Gary, spent six years sailing through the Bahamas and the Caribbean islands. Log on to www.caribbeancompass.com to follow the remaining installments of Falmouth Freddy and the Cruising Kanes. *To learn more about McAnally's published works, visit www.thewriteronthewater.com.*

Stories from a Family

Book Review by Caitlin Richards



Song for My Father, *by S. Brian Samuel. Ian Randle Publishers, Kingston, Jamaica, 2023, 262 pages*

"Follow me as we go from the hills of Grenada to the arse end of London in an unforgettable West Indian journey, full of dramatic twists and escapades. This is my story — my tribute to our father and to all those unsung fathers, who have 'mothered' countless generations of Caribbean men and women."

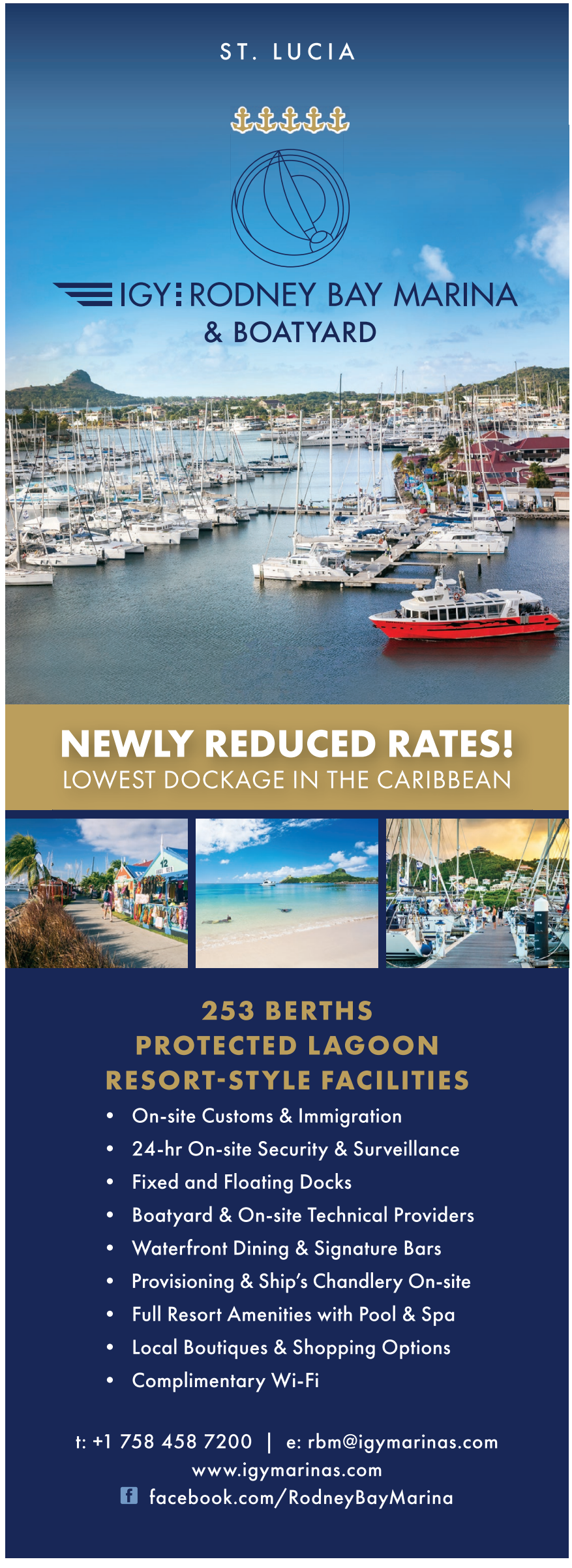
> ***"The narrative of Song for My Father reads like the conversations a family would have at a reunion — an excited jumping from story to story as the group remembers them."***

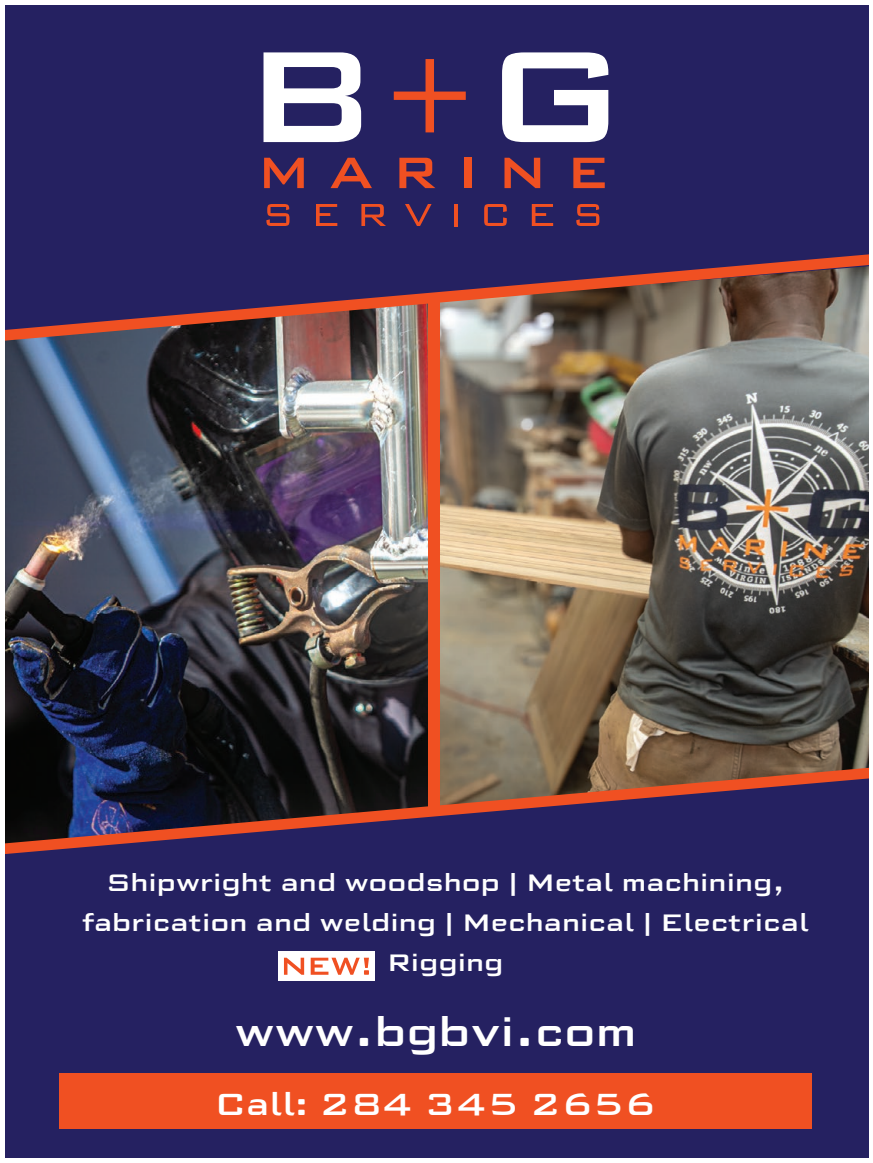
S. Brian Samuel's mother walked out on her husband and three young sons when Samuel was six, leaving his father, Darwin, to raise the three boys on his own. Darwin being a bit of a nomad, this meant moving a lot — by the time Samuel was 18 he had lived in five countries — and a core family of four men on their own. Or were they? There seems to have been a lot of girlfriends in Darwin's life, and a second wife. The timing of all of them and how long they were in the lives of the Samuels is muddled.

The narrative of *Song for My Father* reads like the conversations a family would have at a reunion — an excited jumping from story to story as the group remembers them — which often had me rereading paragraphs, wondering if I'd missed something.

> "Carbide is a raw material used in the manufacture of explosives and exists in abundance in Trinidad. So naturally most boys at some point will learn how to make a rudimentary mini-bomb. I forget the details but you needed an old tin of Lyle's Golden Syrup, a hunk of soft carbide, lots of spit, strike a match, stand back and ... BOOM! One day a bunch of us were digging in the back yard, chasing a crapaud (toad) ever deeper into his hole. All I heard was:
>
> 'Brian! Watch out!'
>
> "I looked up, remember a nanosecond of pure terror, then blackness. The drainpipe, which had sat there along the side of the house for decades, decided at that moment to give way. It spanned a wide arc, picking up momentum until it landed with a jarring thud, half an inch from my left eye. In the ensuing commotion our maid came running outside, to see me lying on the ground, unconscious, blood pouring down my face. She rushed inside to call Dad."

Is the mini-bomb related to the collapsing drainpipe? The book is full of such anecdotes that flow from Samuel's pen in an order that can leave the reader scratching her head. Confused narrative aside, *Song for My Father* is often engrossing. Samuel punctuates the story with letters, diary excerpts, photos, and memories from his brothers. Darwin was often a harsh father but there seems to have been a lot of love there as well. As promised, the author delivers dramatic twists and escapades.







Spotlight: Dominica

by Chris Doyle and Lexi Fisher

Every February the people of Dominica gather in the streets to celebrate Mas Dominik, the island's annual carnival and a cultural extravaganza like no other. Festivities start weeks in advance but the days leading up to Lent are filled with parades of costumed dancers, sky-high stilt walkers, the rhythmic beat of goatskin drums, and general bacchanal. The drama of carnival is matched only by the island's breathtaking landscape and mountainous interior.

If Christopher Columbus came back today, Dominica is the only island he might recognize. This is because Dominica is the region's most unspoiled country and its most exciting destination for spectacular natural beauty. When Columbus was before King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, trying to describe the awe-inspiring mountains of Dominica, he had to resort to crumpling up a sheet of paper to illustrate the dramatic form of the land, with its valleys, gorges, and pinnacles. This gives an idea of its topography, but tells nothing of its amazingly lush vegetation. Greenery erupts everywhere, thrusting upwards, curling, stretching, climbing, and falling, till the whole land is covered in a verdant tangle of trees, vines, shrubs, and ferns. Add to this a plethora of birds, butterflies, and brightly colored flowers, and you can begin to imagine its almost magical nature. In addition, there are such unusual natural phenomena as a boiling lake and hot waterfalls, to say nothing of the more usual sulfur springs and crater lakes. The high mountains attract clouds, creating frequent showers interspersed with sunshine, and as a result the island is known as the land of many rivers. It could equally be known as the land of many rainbows. You are sure to see some and, around the full moon, you might see a moonbow. Dominica has some lovely beaches, but not as abundantly as the islands to the north and south, so tourism is low-key.



Scotts Head

Dominica has about 73,000 inhabitants who have a natural curiosity about outsiders and enjoy meeting visitors. Nature lovers and free spirits will likely rate this majestic land their favorite. Some of the island can be seen from the boat, but the best times are found walking inland. Light rain gear is advisable, as the island attracts frequent showers, which alternate with bursts of bright sunshine. If you only stop at one anchorage, you can reach most of the others by road, but anchoring at both Portsmouth and Roseau will allow you to see more. It should be noted that many of Dominica's hikes, including the one to Trafalgar Falls, may be over slippery and muddy terrain and should only be undertaken by those who are reasonably agile and fit. Best to take your camera in a waterproof bag. The Dominica Forestry Department has laid many hiking trails in the island's national parks. Staff have done an amazing job; some sections include miles of log walkways. The Waitukubuli Trail runs the full length of Dominica, and it has 14 segments, most of which take 6-7 hours to hike. You can hike any of them with a guide or on your own. A link for downloading maps and details can be found on the Dominica page of Doyle Guides.

You can buy trail maps from the Forestry Department in the botanical gardens in Roseau. There are charges for visiting park sites and tickets can be bought per visit ($5 US single site), or all sites by the week ($12 US). All the money goes towards park maintenance. The Waitukubuli Trail has a separate charge, $12 US for a day, or $40 US for 15 days. In Portsmouth tickets may be purchased in the parks office at the mouth of the Indian River. The Forestry Department also has several books on Dominica's natural history.

Just about all of Dominica is spectacular, and there are a number of lovely hikes on small roads and paths that are not part of the park. Dominica has seven potentially active volcanoes (most other Caribbean islands only have one). Eruptions are not expected anytime soon, but this history helps explain the dramatic scenery. An undersea fault to the north of the island occasionally shakes Dominica, the Saintes, and Marie-Galante.

Though less development also means fewer technical yacht services, the untouched natural beauty and friendliness of the people, particularly the members of the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services (PAYS), make Dominica one of the region's hidden gems for yachting visitors. Anyone with even a hint of appreciation for nature would be remiss to pass up the opportunity to explore the magic of Dominica.

Doyle Guides contain the Eastern Caribbean's most comprehensive and reliable sailing guide content, available in hard copy and online through a free mobile app, website, and Facebook group (www.doyleguides.com).

Diving Deep and Flying High in Many Hearts

Story and photos by Chris Doyle

On January 4, 2024, a single-engine plane took off from Bequia. On board were pilot Bob Sachs with actor Christian Oliver (*Speed Racer*) and his two pre-teen daughters, Madita and Annik. Just after take-off the engine failed and the plane crashed into the sea with no survivors.



Early days: Bob, Cathy, Robyn at Lower Bay

Bequia lost a larger-than-life figure whose presence on the waterfront was palpable, like a Belisha beacon on a dark night. Many of us find Bob Sachs' absence hard to accept. As must Oliver's family and friends.

Bob came from New Jersey and was loud, brash, engaging, and entertaining. He could be moody: his wife, Cathy, recently posted on Facebook: "Stop by for a visit with me and grumpy Bob." He was open and hid nothing, including how he felt. He was generous and had no trace of meanness or vindictiveness. He lacked social inhibitions and would talk to anyone, pulling many into his orbit. We loved him just as he was.

I met Bob over 40 years ago in St. Vincent. I was sailing in my Carib 41 and writing an early version of *Sailors Guide to the Windward Islands*. I heard that new owners had bought the dive shop in Calliaqua. They were still unpacking boxes, and were most surprised when I walked in and said, "I have come to put you in my guide." That's how I met Bob and Bill Tewes, an unlikely duo who were to be pivotal in the St. Vincent and Grenadines diving industry.



Bob in his favorite seat in the Gingerbread

Within a very short while, Bill and Bob fell out. Bob moved to the Sunny Caribee, Bequia.

Bob's shop was hopping: divers socializing, après-dive drinks (sometimes many), laughter and lively talk. It became a magnet for me; I anchored my boat right outside. When Bob moved to the Gingerbread Hotel, I followed. I took his PADI course and was soon diving; Bob's diving enthusiasm was infectious. When I started living with Kristina, from Sweden, who I later married, he taught her. For our first night dive Bob said, "Most shops do night dives just after dark. The time to go is 4 a.m., when the night is well established, and we return at dawn." It was great. Many Bequia diving fishermen were getting the bends, so Bob taught them to dive properly.

—Continued on next page



—*Continued from previous page*

Years later, when we were in Sweden, our marriage broke up. It was a bad moment. Bob was in Europe and not too far away. When he heard, he drove to Sweden, and we left for some summer adventures.

Bob had girlfriends, but when he met Cathy, he got serious. Cathy had a young daughter, Willow. Bob found the combination of lovely mother and her bright and funny young daughter irresistible. They married.

Robyn, their baby, was born, and Bob's enthusiasm for diving waned. As Cathy took over his Dive Bequia, Bob became enthused with his four-seater Bellanca aircraft. Early in his Bellanca years, Bob, Cathy and Willow flew to the U.S. to visit various places and people, including me and my significant other (now wife), Ginny, whom he also trained to dive. It was amazing to see his Bellanca so far from home, landing on the tiny light-aircraft field in our summer home in Post Mills, Vermont. I showed him our local dive shop, many miles from the sea. Willow and Ginny spent hours harvesting food in the garden.



The Bellanca, Bob at the back and Jeff Fisher forward, preparing to fly

I added color photos to my cruising guide and needed aerial photos. I bought an opening port for Bob's plane and on countless flights took photos from St. Martin to Grenada. In the Saintes, Bob had to fly to Guadeloupe, pick up a pilot, and be trained to land at the tiny airstrip.

Long ago, Dominica's minister of tourism invited me to a yachting conference in Dominica. I accepted, but just as I was to leave, LIAT went on strike. Bob said "let's go!" My entrance at the conference during the strike raised a cheer. This was the first step in getting regulations changed, making Dominica a yachting destination.

Bob always helped people in need. Once I had a problem with the diesel outboard on my catamaran, Ti Kanot. I discovered that I could buy a used part in Tobago. It is a longish flight, but again Bob took me. Another time, early during Covid, I wanted to get to the U.S. but was stuck in Grenada with no flights. When flights returned to St. Vincent, Bob flew to Grenada and took me up.



At Daffodil's with friends

Bob had an outsized place in my heart. I am sure that was true for many others. Bill Tewes died some years ago. But between them, Bill and Bob were responsible for making St. Vincent and the Grenadines a diving destination. Bob also trained Glenroy, whose dive shop in Union Island is the center of diving in the Grenadines. As proprietress of Dive Bequia, Cathy is an immensely popular dive instructor who can turn anxious and nail-biting students into confident and relaxed divers. She also runs Bequia's reef-growing project and is a vital part of Bequia's waterfront.

I am sad Bob is no more, but the positive effect he had on the waterfront in Bequia, and in many of our hearts, lives on.

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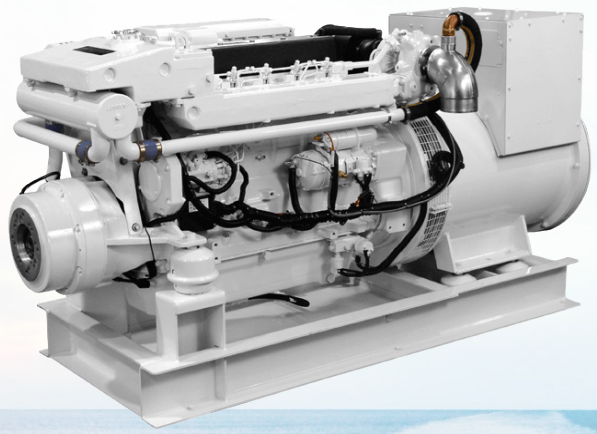
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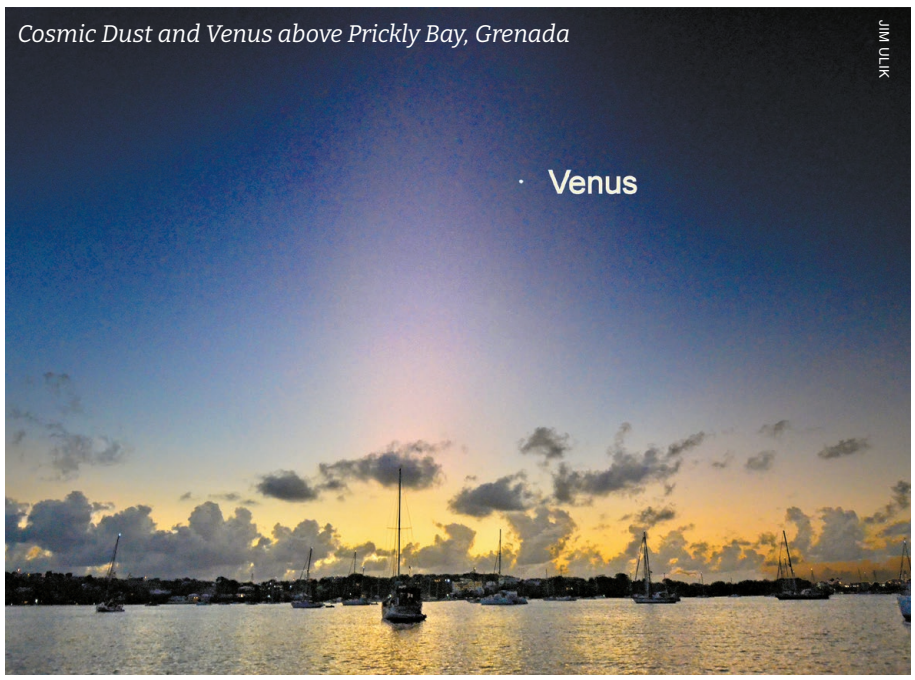
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February Sky

By Jim Ulik

"Those who fall in love with practice without science are like a sailor who steers a ship without a helm or compass and can never be certain whither he is going." Leonardo da Vinci

As Earth sails through space along its orbital path it will be apparent that there is little celestial activity this month. Spaceship Earth is experiencing a celestial version of the "hole in the wind." Earth will experience minimal impacts of debris left behind from comets or asteroids. That doesn't mean an undiscovered meteor won't intercept Earth. What may be seen in the pre-dawn sky is zodiacal light. The inner solar system is filled with cosmic dust. More than one hundred metric tons of space dust falls to Earth every day. Zodiacal light is illuminated dust that can be seen during the twilight hours. The volume of dust has been measured by instruments aboard spacecraft. The amount of dust is determined from what is collected from collection plates on planes or the surface of Arctic and Antarctica ice. The composition of cosmic dust may have implications on the origins of life and sources of water throughout the galaxy.



Cosmic Dust and Venus above Prickly Bay, Grenada JIM ULIK

Thursday, February 01

Venus, Mars and Mercury will usher in a relatively calm celestial sky over the next few days. Venus will lead the planet parade rising out of the east-southeast sky around 0430. Mars will rise about 45 minutes later. Mercury appears above the horizon 10 minutes later. The three planets will break the horizon near 113 degrees in Sagittarius.

Friday, February 02

The Moon has traveled to its third or last quarter position. Look for it to rise around midnight and set around noon. In a few days as it continues along its elliptical orbit the Moon will reach its closest approach to Earth.

Wednesday, February 07

The Moon has caught up to Venus as they make their easterly movement toward the Sun. The conjunction between the pair can be seen low in the eastern sky before sunrise. Venus is 87 percent illuminated and very bright this morning. The fine crescent Moon will still shine brighter even though it is nine percent illuminated.

Thursday, February 08

The Moon has shifted east this morning positioned near Mars and Mercury. This triangle of celestial objects will linger between Sagittarius and Capricornus.

There is a chance to see a few meteors entering the pre-dawn sky around 0500. The alpha Centaurid meteor shower peaks this morning. The shooting stars will radiate out of the constellation Centaurus as it crosses the southern sky. Centaurus is positioned east or left of Crux or the Southern Cross. The meteors entering the atmosphere will travel at a shallow angle generating long tails. This shower is active January 30 – February 20.

Friday, February 09

The Moon is having a greater gravitational effect on Earth's bodies of water today. It has reached its closest approach to Earth. Tidal effects are also enhanced because the New Moon rises this morning in line with the Sun. Before dawn will be the best time to spot any meteors in February as the Centaurid shower is the only event occurring during this quiet month.

Saturday, February 10

There is a close approach between the Moon and Saturn at sunset. Both objects can be found low in the west southwestern sky. The fine sliver Moon will be mostly illuminated by the sunlight reflected off Earth. Saturn is the object above and right of the Moon.

Wednesday, February 14

There is a close approach between Jupiter and the waxing crescent Moon in the constellation Aries.

Thursday, February 15

Today marks the 10th anniversary of the discovery of an asteroid that was heading on a collision course with Earth. The astute sailor was Jaime Nomen. He was remotely observing images from a land-based observatory while making a passage. After contacting the Minor Planet Center, additional telescopes were used to observe the asteroid and determine its orbital path. Asteroid redirection is still not in place, but fortunately, it only passed between Earth and the constellation of geosynchronous communications satellites. Asteroid 2012 DA14 is 45 meters (148 feet) across. That is similar in size to the space rock that exploded over the uninhabited Tunguska region of Siberia in 1908, ripping up 80 million trees across 2000 square kilometers (772 square miles).

Friday, February 16 – Wednesday, February 21

The Moon is passing near three celestial objects over these six days. Besides reaching its first quarter phase on February 16 the Moon makes a close approach to the Seven Sisters or Pleiades. The Moon then leaves Taurus and enters Gemini over the next two nights. In another day it will take up position about one degree away from the twin Pollux, one of the sailors that joined Jason and the Argonauts on the voyage to find the Golden Fleece. Lastly, the Moon finally makes its monthly pass of the Beehive Cluster on February 21.

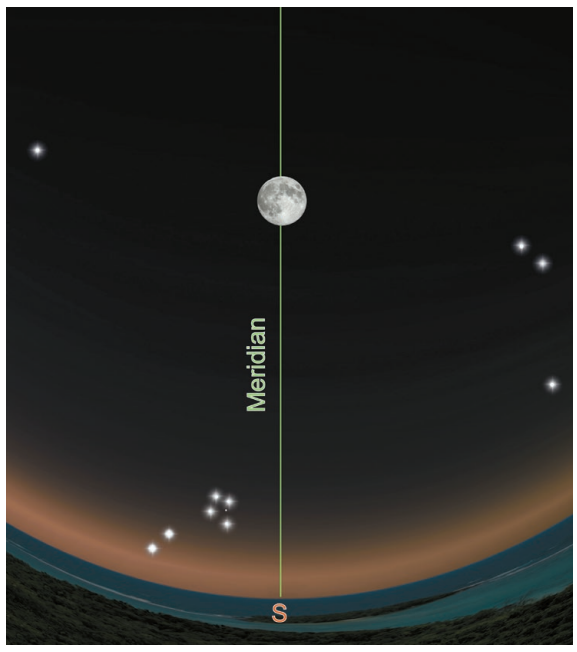
Thursday, February 22

Venus will appear low in the east southeastern sky before sunrise. A closer look through binoculars will reveal two planets less than one half degree apart. Mars and Venus will remain very close over the next four days.

Saturday, February 24

The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun. The actual Full Moon occurs about two hours after setting. Look for the Moon to appear full over these two days.

JIM ULIK



The distant Moon crossing the meridian on February 25.

Sunday, February 25

When the Moon crosses the meridian it will be at its farthest distance (apogee) from Earth this month (see image). The meridian crossing will occur a few minutes past zero hundred hours.

Wednesday, February 28

The Moon has moved into Virgo. It is making a close approach to the double star Spica. Spica is 1,900 times more luminous than the Sun. The light leaving Spica takes 250 years to reach Earth. It is the brightest star in Virgo and the sixteenth brightest star in the night sky.

The identification number used in The Nautical Almanac and Astronomical Ephemeris was first published in 1766. For identification purposes in celestial navigation Spica was assigned the number 33.

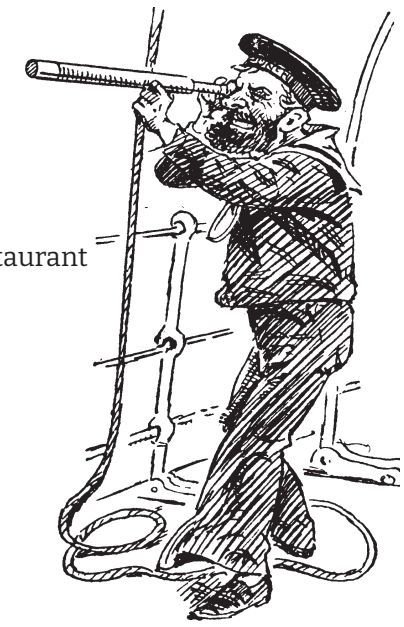
**All times are given as Atlantic Standard Time (AST) unless otherwise noted.*

PICK UP!

Ahoy, *Compass* readers! When in Dominica, pick up your free copy of the *Caribbean Compass* at any of these locations (advertisers in **bold**):

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- Indian River Bar & Restaurant
- Purple Turtle Beach Bar & Restaurant





rossing the channels between Eastern Caribbean islands, an ebb tide carries you off to leeward and a strong flood tide creates lumpy seas, so crossing with a favorable tide is faster and more comfortable. The table below, showing the local time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water generally tries to run toward the moon. The flood tide starts running eastward soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then ebbs westward. From just after the moon's setting to just after its nadir, the tide runs eastward; and from just after its nadir to soon after its rising, the tide runs westward.

The first hour after moonrise, the westerly current is barely negated. The second hour the flood tide is stronger, the third and fourth hour it's strongest, then it eases off in the fifth and sixth hours. The maximum tide is three or four days after the new and full moons.

February 2024	
DATE	**TIME**
1	0437
2	0519
3	0604
4	0653
5	0748
6	0847
7	0950
8	1053
9	1154
10	1251
11	1345
12	1436
13	1526
14	1616
15	1707
16	1759
17	1854
18	1949
19	2044
20	2137
21	2227
22	2314
23	2357
24	0000 FULL MOON
25	0038
26	0118
27	0157
28	0236
29	0316

March 2024	
1	0359
2	0446
3	0537
4	0633
5	0732
6	0833
7	0934
8	1032
9	1128
10	1221
11	1321
12	1404
13	1456
14	1550
15	1645
16	1742
17	1838
18	1933
19	2024
20	2112
21	2156
22	2238
23	2317
24	2356
25	0000 FULL MOON
26	0035
27	0116
28	0158
29	0243
30	0333
31	0426

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2024

1-2 Bequia International Theater Festival: Sweet Dreams — the Music of Patsy Cline. tickettailor.com/events/slimgoodbodycorp/904770

1-2 Continuation of Grenada Sailing Week, including Grenada Workboat Regatta. grenadasailingweek.com

1-4 Caribbean Multihull Challenge. smyc.com/caribbean-multihull-challenge

2 World Wetlands Day. ramsar.org/activity/world-wetlands-day

3 Island Water World's Seminar: Diesel Service and Maintenance (Yanmar), Cole Bay, St. Maarten. islandwaterworld.com (provisional date—check back)

4 Carnaval Dominicano, Dominical Republic (every Sunday in February). colonialzone-dr.com/carnival-dominican-republic

5-6 Bequia International Theater Festival: Same Time Next Year. tickettailor.com/events/slimgoodbodycorp/904770

7 Public holiday in Grenada (Independence Day — celebrating Grenada's 50th anniversary)

7-8 Bequia International Theater Festival: Darrow. tickettailor.com/events/slimgoodbodycorp/904770

8-15 Trinidad Carnival week. caribbeanevents.com/event/trinidad-carnival/

9 Sun Rise Carnival, Windsor Park, Roseau, Dominica.

9 Valentine's Day Jump-Up, St. Croix. https://www.gotostcroix.com/events/jump-up-in-christiansted

9-10 Bequia International Theater Festival: And the Winner Is. tickettailor.com/events/slimgoodbodycorp/904770

9-11 Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta, Antigua. jhycantigua.com

9-13 Semaine Nautique Internationale de Schoelcher, Martinique. cnschoelcher.net

11-14 Carnival in Martinique, Ponce (Puerto Rico), Barranquilla (Colombia), Aruba, Carriacou, Curaçao, Dominica, Haiti and St. Barth

11 Grand Carnival Parade, Oranjestad, Aruba. visitaruba.com/things-to-do/carnival/aruba-carnival-schedule/ for full Carnival schedule

11-18 Holetown Festival, Barbados. visitbarbados.org/the-holetown-festival

12-13 Bequia International Theater Festival: The Hunt for Milo Gatto. tickettailor.com/events/slimgoodbodycorp/904770

13 Mas Domnik, Dominica. avirtualdominica.com/project/carnival-in-dominica

13-19 Dancehall Week, Jamaica. our.today/jamaica-introduces-dancehall-week-in-february-2024

13 – 24 RORC Nelson's Cup Series, Antigua. caribbean600.rorc.org

14 Public holiday in many places (Ash Wednesday)

16 Antigua 360 RTI Race, Antigua Yacht Club. antigua360race.com

16-21 Carriacou Carnival "Kayak Mas." ourcarriacou.com/carriacou-carnival-kayak-mas

17 Dinghy Championship Hoedemaker Series Day 1, St. Maarten. smyc.com/dinghy-season-championship

17 Bocas del Toro Regatta, Panama. bocasmarina.com

18 Public holiday in Aruba (Flag Day)

18-23 ProCigar Festival, Dominican Republic

19-23 RORC Caribbean 600 race, Antigua. caribbean600.rorc.org

20 Public holiday in Puerto Rico & USVI (Presidents' Day)

22 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Independence Day)

23 Public holiday in Guyana (Mashramani Carnival)

23-25 Union Island Conch Festival, St. Vincent & Grenadines. caribbeanevents.com/event/union-island-conch-festival

24 FULL MOON (Full Snow Moon)

24 Island Water World's Seminar: Rigging Tips and Tricks (SKG), Cole Bay, St. Maarten. islandwaterworld.com (provisional date—check back)

25 Public holiday in Suriname (Liberation Day)

25 Keelboat Season Championship, Heineken Regatta Warmup, St. Maarten. smyc.com/keelboat-season-championship

27 Public holiday in Dominican Republic (Independence Day)

29-Mar 3 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta. heinekenregatta.com

TBA Barcelo Desalia electronic dance music Festival, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

TBA Oyster World Rally stop in Grenada. oysteryachts.com

TBA Sweethearts of the Caribbean & Classic Regatta, BVI (as close as possible to Valentine's Day) www.westendyachtclubbvi.com

See the entire calendar of events at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar

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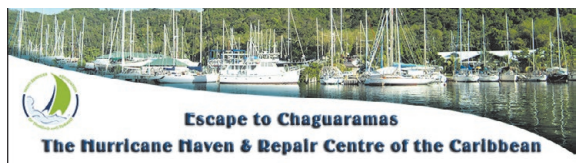
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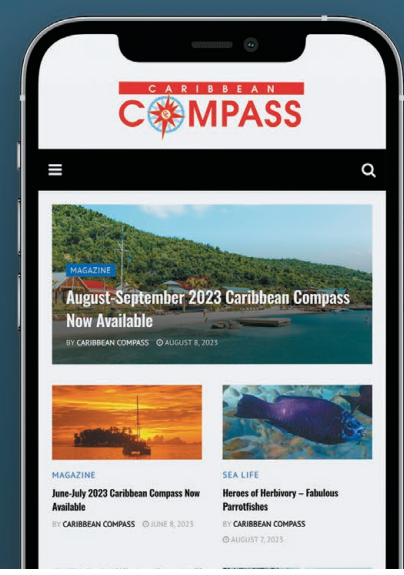
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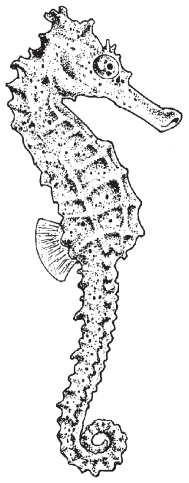


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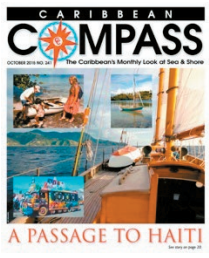
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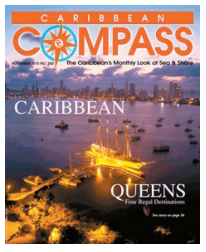
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