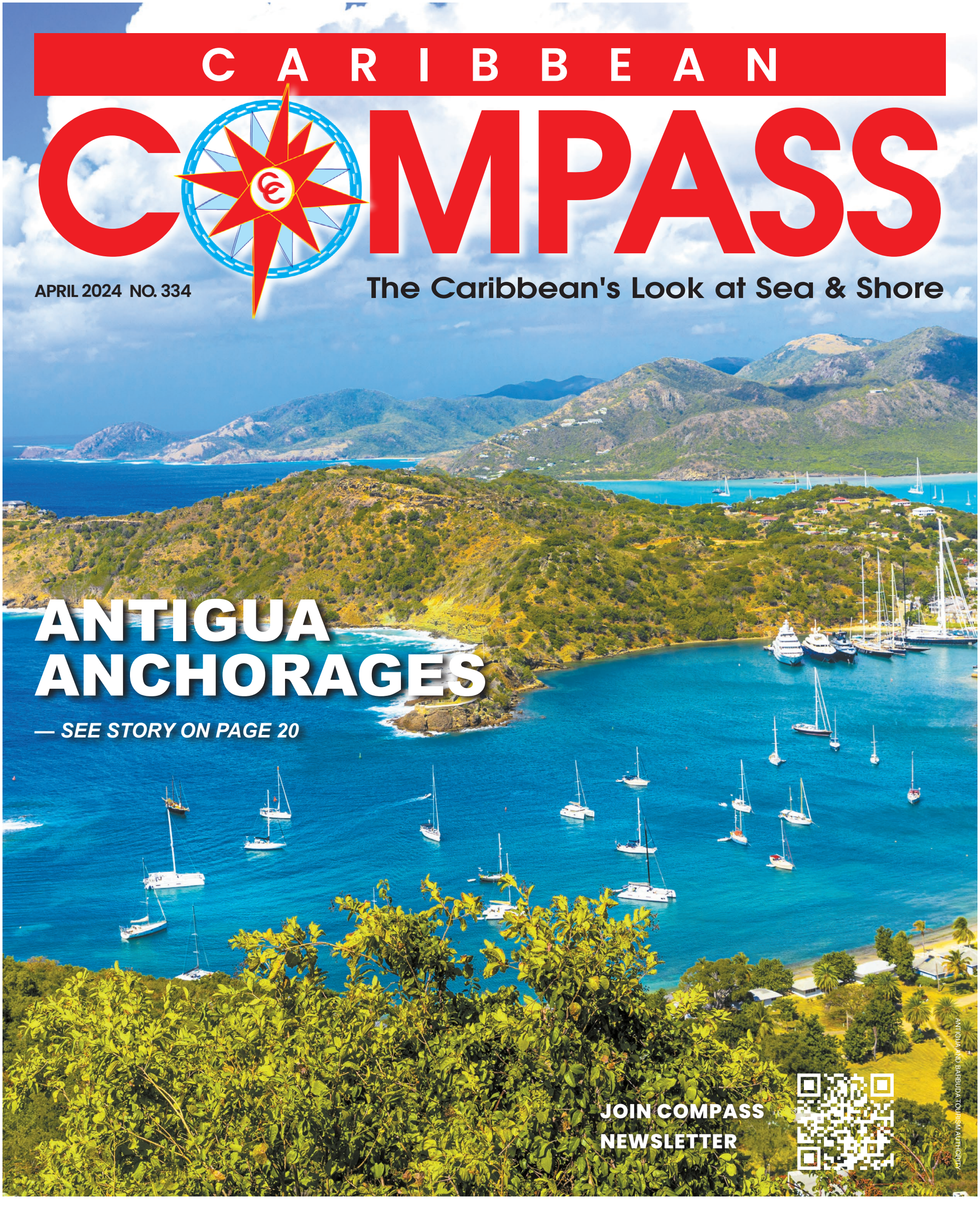
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The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore



ANTIGUA ANCHORAGES

— SEE STORY ON PAGE 20

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Contents

APRIL 2024 • ISSUE 334

4 **In the wake of s/v *Simplicity***
by Chris Doyle

11 **St. Lucia Jazz Festival**
by Tad Richards

16 **CMC Rock Star Sailors**
by Herb McCormick

20 **Five Top Antigua Anchorages**
by Mark Stevens

25 **Cartagena, Colombia to Curaçao**
by Michael C. Wade

29 **Giving Souls — and Soles**
by Joanne and Bill Harris



Early morning in the anchorage at Deep Bay, on Antigua's west coast; for more about the island's fabulous hideaways, turn to page 20.

SHARON MATTHEWS-STEVENS

Featured

8 Channel 16
9 Readers Forum
10 Sounds+
12 Business Briefs
14 Regattas & Rallies
17 Eco News
30 Island Spotlight
31 Caribbean Lives
33 Marine Life
35 Night Sky
36 Calendar of Events
37 Marketplace
39 Advertisers Index

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On the Cover

The view of English and Falmouth Harbours from Shirley Heights. Multiple anchorages, exhilarating passages, 360 beaches and a UNESCO Heritage Site (Nelson's Dockyard), converge to create an appealing boating destination in Antigua. Cover image courtesy Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority.

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Rebounding from the *Simplicity* Tragedy

By Chris Doyle

The February 2024 kidnapping and apparent murder of Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel aboard s/v *Simplicity*, a 48-foot St. Francis catamaran, was a brutal and viscerally emotional event. It reverberated through the yachting community and the Grenadian and St. Vincentian populations, leaving all of us shocked, horrified, deeply saddened, and feeling terrible for the relatives and friends of the victims.



COURTESY BRIAN HENDRY AND NICK BURO

Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel

It is completely antithetical to everything we think of as a normal situation. For those outside the region with loved ones cruising in the area, it can feel more dangerous than it does to those who are here. From afar, you hear the news and have only your imagination to fill in the gaps. At least in the islands you can look outside and see the sun shining, hear birdsong, see normal activities, and realize the sky has not yet fallen.

Our horror is healthy and good, because the last thing we want is to be inured to such events, as I fear has happened in the U.S., where mass shootings have averaged two a day over the last three years and where these have become just another news story unless it happens close to where you live.

Events as awful as this are not unknown but thankfully are rare. In January in 1994 in Barbuda, there was a similarly awful event, when three men went aboard a yacht, bound up the four crew members and executed them. It should be noted that Barbuda has a population of 1,200 people and has had almost no crime before or since. Apart from these incidents, there have been other murders of those on yachts, including the murder of an English captain in Vieux Fort in St. Lucia 10 years ago, and a murder in Wallilabou about 8 years ago.



CHRIS DOYLE

Wallilabou anchorage, St. Vincent

In the aftermath of the *Simplicity* event, communication between the Grenada and St. Vincent police departments was excellent. The Automatic Identification System (AIS) information was reported online, though maybe after the event. Had the coast guard in St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Grenada been aware of and trained in using AIS, they might have been able to intercept the boat in time to prevent the tragedy.

This is a tool that the coast guards of all islands should use. The yachtsman who saw that something was wrong with *Simplicity* and investigated, and the local population who told the St. Vincent police where to find the escapees, acted promptly and well. As a result, the St. Vincent police were able to arrest them quickly.

Had the coast guards in the countries of St. Vincent and Grenada been trained in using the Automatic Identification System (AIS), they might have been able to intercept the boat in time to prevent the tragedy. This is a tool that the coast guards of all islands should use.

The escape of these three men from Grenada's Grand Anse police custody is more concerning. The three yacht hijackings that I know of in Grenada spanning over 50 years were all carried out by escaped prisoners. Plus, at around the same time as the recent tragedy, a man charged with murder escaped from police custody in Grenville, Grenada, and, as I write this, is still at large. I listened with interest to part of the police press conference on this matter and heard a lot about safe and sufficient protocols. What I would like to have heard is someone accepting responsibility for what were two major failures, and an assurance that such a thing would not happen again. I know many Grenadians share my view.



CHRIS DOYLE

Yachts enjoying Tobago Cays

When something like this happens, it naturally puts the whole community on edge, with a tendency to make people think they are in more immediate danger than the facts warrant. Since I arrived in Grenada in 1969, cruising in the Caribbean has been generally safe. I base this on the number of yachts I see sailing up and down and the number of incidents that come to my attention. With a murder rate of four per hundred thousand, less than the U.S. and far less than many other Caribbean nations, Grenada is relatively safe.

Overall in the Caribbean there are many bareboat charter companies, and thousands of cruising boats. The number of these grows annually, with a slight reduction during the Covid pandemic, and now a rebound. Hundreds of boats move up and down and anchor every day without problems. This is the reality against which to balance this recent disaster.

Hundreds of boats move up and down the islands and anchor every day without problems. This is the reality against which to balance this recent disaster.

So much for the headline news. Now I am going to change tacks and write about security issues that are fortunately more mundane than murder, but do affect us every day.

The difference between risk perception and actual risk is interesting and has changed over time. Fifty years ago, there was no internet, overseas phone calls were prohibitively expensive, and we relied on the bush telegraph, which worked well for events in the immediate vicinity, less well for distant events, and not at all for a minor infraction such as a fuel line being stolen from a dinghy.

Enter the Caribbean Safety and Security net (CSSN), which started around 1996 and became a household name when it got a website around 2007. Not too long after that social media became popular and Facebook cruising sites added to the available information.

Nowadays, every cruiser in Grenada can read about unlocked flip flops or flashlights being stolen from dinghies anywhere in the Caribbean. This information is good, in that it provides a view of infractions and problems all over the Caribbean. But knowing all the bad things that are happening, however far away and however small, without them being balanced by a view of all thousands of people who are not having problems, tends to make one see the world as more dangerous than it is.

—Continued on page 6



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—Continued from page 4

When I have analyzed the data for an anchorage that gets a few incidents, I have always been surprised how safe cruisers have been. Nonetheless, people will post on Facebook, telling everyone to avoid the whole island because it is so dangerous.

Then there is the problem of lopsided reporting. CSSN relays complaints yachts have, so the view you get is that yachties are all wonderful people subject to injury at the hands of unscrupulous locals.

There is no corresponding site detailing the bad acts of yachties, but they happen. Some have been known to contract for work and leave without paying. I know of one who tried to blackmail a contractor under the threat of bad press. Shoplifting is so common that Island Water World in St. Lucia has had to put our Doyle cruising guides under locked glass.

Local people are not responsible for all violent deaths, either. Decades ago, five people were killed on three boats in transatlantic crew disputes. Fortunately, I never have heard of a similar occurrence before or after that fateful year. Bad actors are tiny minorities, and by and large yachts and locals interact harmoniously.

Comments on social media suggest that people expect more than they should from local law enforcement, and they get outraged too easily when they are victims of a crime that they could easily have prevented. Everyone should recognize that you do not put a purse on a towel on the beach, then swim half a mile away. If it were stolen, I would not blame the victim for the theft, but if they displayed huge outrage over it, I would think they had unrealistic expectations.

Many yachts people anchor and go to sleep with their main entrance hatch wide open so anyone could walk in at night. I did that for years with no problem, which says a lot about how safe cruising our islands is. But most people living ashore have locks and fences and often dogs. It is great that we can choose to accept the risk. But if it goes wrong, I don't think blaming the local authorities is always appropriate.



CHRIS DOYLE

Anchored off Sandy Island

It becomes especially unrealistic if you are anchored within easy swimming distance of the shore, as happened with a series of thefts last year in Soufriere, St. Lucia. For me, it was sailing with local people and their discomfort at the doors being wide open at night that motivated me to put in a robust alarm system – one which has not yet gone off.



CHRIS DOYLE

Stern to, Cumberland Bay

Anchored boats, especially alone in distant anchorages, are extremely hard for the local police to patrol. While yachts contribute a lot to the local economy, our contributions to the governments are relatively meagre. To protect us, they must have patrol boats, gas, and manpower, all of which are expensive. This is not to say there are not things the local police could do to help. CCTV cameras have been placed in both Cumberland Bay and Wallilabou. This is excellent in such anchorages where a bunch of yachts are tied up stern to the shore. However, since cameras were installed, there have been incidents in both places and no evidence from those cameras, which makes me think they have not been maintained or monitored.

While sailing in the Caribbean is relatively safe, it is, like life anywhere, not risk free.

While sailing in the Caribbean is relatively safe, it is, like life, not risk free. We gain protection from being at anchor and surrounded by water. At the same time, if our isolation gets invaded, it also renders us vulnerable. This can be minimized by anchoring among other boats so that we have neighbors. We have had a few unpleasant incidents recently involving boats that were anchored alone in spots on St. Lucia's west coast and St. Vincent's south coast. I would be cautious about anchoring overnight alone in these places.

Although it has not yet affected our safety, I am a little concerned that the Caribbean has been receiving illegal guns and ammunition from the U.S. In the islands, every gun owner needs a permit, and the police know who owns every legal gun. In the U.S. almost anyone can buy a gun and then sell it on with minimal or no paperwork.

Consequently, there is little barrier to guns being exported to South America and the Caribbean. This is not new; illegal guns have been in St. Lucia and St. Vincent for years. They now seem to have reached Grenada. In January 2024, four separate gun incidents left one dead and several wounded ashore. The world would be much safer if all guns and gun owners were registered and responsible for their weapons. The lack of gun control in the U.S. creates problems throughout the Caribbean region.

Chris Doyle is the founder of Doyle Cruising Guides.




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Channel 16

BVI Spring Regatta 2024, CMC 2025 Part of Multihull Series

The BVI Spring Regatta is now part of the inaugural Caribbean Maxi Multihull Series (CMMS). Event organizers expects several maxi multihulls to race in the 51st edition of the event April 1-7, 2024. Organized by the International Maxi Association (IMA), the Caribbean Maxi Multihull Series (CMMS) comprises a mix of inshore and offshore races at selected regattas.

The CMMS was created by the IMA following its successful series in the Mediterranean for maxi monohulls. The series is open to maxi multihulls 60+ft (18.29m). To qualify for the 2024 CMMS, teams must compete in a minimum of two events. Boats that sail more can discard the lowest result. Teams that compete in more events are rewarded at the end of series scoring, and the winner will have their name engraved on a silver perpetual trophy presented by the IMA.



©CARLO BORLENGHI/ROLEX

Allegra *(SUI) and Gunboat 68* Convexity² *(USA) will both compete in the BVI Spring Regatta 2024.*

Also, the International Maxi Association will kick off its 2025 Caribbean Maxi Multihull Series with the Caribbean Multihull Challenge VII January 30 to February 2, 2025. For the first time, the International Maxi Association in Europe will have an IMA Caribbean Maxi Multihull Series (CMMS) comprised of a mix of inshore and offshore races open to maxi-multis of 60+ feet (18.29m).

Find out more about the CMMS at the BVI Spring Regatta at www.bvispringregatta.org. For more about CMMS at the Caribbean Multihull Challenge Race and Rally 2025 log on to www.CaribbeanMultihullChallenge.com

First Annual Virgin Islands Boating Exhibition

The first annual Virgin Islands Boating Exhibition (VIBE) is May 10-12, 2024, at Yacht Haven Grande St. Thomas, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, organized by the Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA). The event promises a destination-style show with an opportunity for clients to test sail the latest model yachts, experience food & wine and cultural entertainment. Three Bali Catamarans will join the exhibiting fleet of yachts for sale, including a full range of Lagoons, a selection of Fountaine Pajots, Azumits, and Boston Whalers.

COURTESY VIBE



A Bali catamaran

Interested exhibitors should contact exhibit@vibe.vi. Those interested in attending may register at vibe.vi/attend.

Vanterpool Honored by Virgin Gorda Easter Festival

Rupert "Buck" Vanterpool has been named as the honouree of the 57th Virgin Gorda Easter Festival for his significant contributions to the success of the festival over the years. The Festival Committee noted that Buck's Food Market has been a steadfast supporters of the Virgin Gorda Easter Festival, "generously sponsoring village events, pageants, and Festival Troupes."

They further praised Rupert Vanterpool as "a beacon of warmth and hospitality, a man whose infectious smile and genuine warmth have endeared him to locals and visitors alike. He is not merely a purveyor of goods but a purveyor of goodwill."

COURTESY BVI TOURISM



Rupert "Buck" Vanterpool

Hope Fleet 2023 Report Shows Progress

Hope Fleet, founded in 2018 as a 501c3 organization for sailors to empower communities in The Caribbean to better care for children and families, launched its 2023 annual report in February 2024. The report highlights what can be accomplished when the international boating community comes together to serve the towns, villages, and harbors that cruisers have grown to love and call home.

Through Hope Fleet's Ocean Reach Division, cruisers are connected to humanitarian projects, transporting aid, and volunteering at children's homes, schools, and other organizations. With active partners in four countries, Hope Fleet is supporting local organizations to empower their people. Over 15,000 pounds of humanitarian supplies were delivered last year, without paying a dollar in customs or international shipping.

"Our success has only been made possible with the support of our partners, donors, and boaters, who are truly dedicated to making a tangible difference together," says Danny Moroney, Hope Fleet CEO. "We want to invite you to get involved so that we can have an even greater impact in 2024."

Download the Hope Fleet 2023 Annual Report (drive.google.com/file/d/1hfQ6THd7Gb18ViGKUtRU0FV49KTr3RbB/view?usp=drive_link)

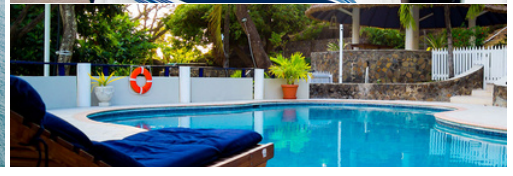
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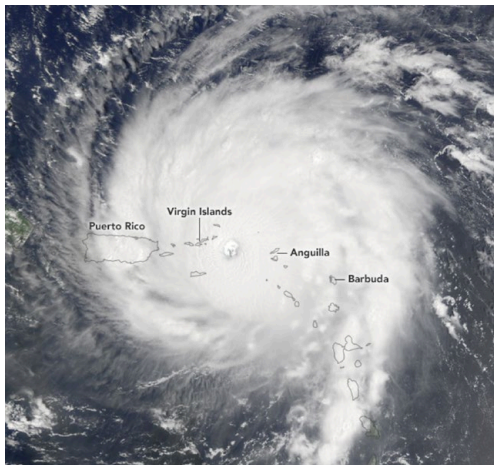
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Dear *Compass*,

I am sure covering the Caribbean Multihull Challenge was interesting and fun, and that all enjoyed the speeds the really good cats can achieve.

As I've always said, cats that are cats are exciting to sail but there's always the danger of capsize. And there are cats that are dogs, with fantastic accommodations and comfort, but little faster than a monohull and impossible to make to go to windward except with the two engines running hard.

That's my opinion — thank God we all have opinions — otherwise known as weird guy boredom.



POPULATIONDATA.NET

Category 5 Hurricane Irma was one of the most powerful storms on record.

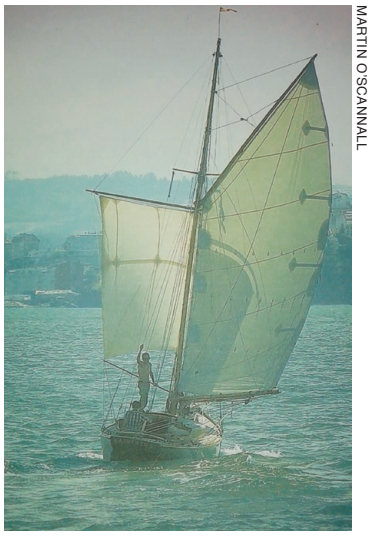
Starting in May when hurricane season approaches and preparations should certainly be made, you would be doing wholesalers, yard managers and insurance underwriters to check the hurricane section of my website (www.street-iolaire.com). If my advice is followed I am sure it will reduce the damage sustained by yachts and the damage to the underwriters' accounts!

The hurricane section of my website was written out of frustration watching the same mistakes being made by the yacht managers, marina managers and sailors looking for nonexistent hurricane holes.

Hurricane season 2017 was the most significant in terms of recent damage. Nothing has really happened since then, but don't be complacent.

Donald M. Street Jr.

CARRIACOU RAINS



MARTIN O'SCANNALL

They danced for them? Sacrificed for them? Or just knew. Reading the signs. In church no doubt they prayed. For the form. As they do in Africa, hedging their bets, God by all means, but the older and deeper beliefs prevail. Hidden from the inquisitive gaze. Those things we can only guess at. Totem for example. One man the fish. Another. Who knows?

In blazing, almost desperate heat, land parched beyond endurance, the lushness of Grenada tantalisingly on the horizon, the signs were there. Newly turned earth. Nutrients added. Straw. All under that light so fierce it hurts the eyes. On the minibus today, the old man talking, about, yes, the land. About fertiliser. About crops.

Waiting, waiting, waiting.

And then of a sudden, it came. A clap of thunder, a great gust. And torrent upon torrent of blessed rain. Some might shelter. Others rejoice. Arms outstretched, laughing, water streaming. Wet to the skin, but who cares? A party. Tanks will fill. Green will return. And with it a kind of plenty. Or at least survival. For the veneer of European is wafer thin. And strictly for the incomers. Or perhaps a few locals besides. No mains water. A desalination plant somewhere.

But for most.

The rhythm of life.

Renewed

Martin O'Scannall



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By Tad Richards

Lots of festivals, lots of food events, and some killer music. April starts off quietly, but hits its stride around mid-month, with a cornucopia of goodies in the second half.

April 1-5. Vujaday Music Festival, Barbados
This house and techno fest brings local and international DJs to the island for a five-day dance experience on "flawless palm-covered beaches." vujadaymusicfestival.com

April 3-9: Jamaica Carnival
You know what to expect from an island carnival. Lots of parades, costumes, music. April 7 is Jump Up Day (Parade of the Bands). It should be noted that in February the U.S. State Department issued a Level 3 travel advisory for Jamaica "due to crime and medical services."

April 14: Jesús Molina, San Juan, Puerto Rico
The popular jazz pianist-singer-saxophonist comes to the Coca-Cola Music Hall.

April 14-21: British Virgin Islands Food and Wine Festival.
A new event on the foodie calendar, featuring some marquee named chefs, including Michelin Star Chef **Francis Reynard**; former Bravo Top Chef competitor **Josie Smith-Malave**; 26-year-old culinary prodigy **Ariq Flax Clarke**, and many more. Also wine courses, Whiskey & Cigar Night, wine pairing dinners, a Grand Tasting Village, and a mixology contest. The multi-island event is in several locations – Tortola, Jost Van Dyke, and Virgin Gorda. bvifoodandwine.

April 16–May 5: St. Maarten Carnival
Of particular interest to music aficionados: **Jouvert Jump-Off International Soca Concert** April 26 (a Reddit post pegs the average age of Jouvert jumpers at mid-20s; another strongly suggests not wearing anything you care about keeping); **Nocha Latina International Festival** April 27; **Afro Riddims International Concert** May 3; **One Love Reggae Concert May 4**. visitstmaarten.com/get-ready-for-st-maarten-carnival-2024

April 20-21: Coffee & Chocolate Expo, Puerto Rico Convention Center, San Juan
Unlike some of the big-ticket, all star chef food extravaganzas in the Caribbean, this one is promoted as a family event, and with coffee and chocolate as the main attractions, why not? Lots of free samples and free admission for children under 12. coffeeandchocolateexpo.com/home-english

April 22-28: Ritmo Cuba, International Cuban Dance Festival, Havana
This is a must for serious dancers, teachers and students of dance, choreographers – a week of classes and workshops in all forms of Latin dance. The festival also features Rueda de Casino, which involves uniting with strangers in synchronized moves. dancefestivalincuba.com

April 23-26: Carriacou Maroon & String Band Music Festival
Traditional music and culture of the island. The festival celebrates the maroons, who escaped slavery and built their own communities while preserving African heritage and culture.

April 23-May 5: St. Thomas Carnival, USVI
Parades, pageants … www.visitusvi.com/st-thomas-carnival

April 25-28: NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
For a change of pace, try one of the Caribbean's premier literary events, a celebration of local books, writing, and writers. No announcement of this year's line, but last year's special guest was Ayanna Lloyd Banwo, whose award-winning novel When *We Were Birds* was reviewed by Caitlin Richards in the June 2023 *Compass* (caribbeancompass.com/online/327-June-July-2023.pdf). bocaslitfest.com

April 26-27: Aruba Food Truck Festival
Another family foodie event, as the islands best food trucks are gathered in one place for "cuminda di truck." My grandson, when he discovered healthy eating and that there was more to life than McDonalds, vowed never again to eat food that was served to him through a window. That's all changed these days, as food trucks offer amazing quality and variety, from healthy to sinful. Come and find out. caribbeanevents.com/event/aruba-food-truck-festival

April 27: Capella Music Festival, Grand Cayman
No lineup yet, but this relatively new festival (now in its third year) has in the past offered top names and a range of music styles from reggae to pop to electronic. capellamusicfestival.com

April 27-May 1: Barbados Reggae Festival
Schedule to be announced, but they promise "renowned local and international reggae artists. Caribbeanevents.com

April 28-30: International Blueseas Festival, Curaçao
The festival kicks off on April 28 with a performance by British soul singer/songwriter **Jo Harman**. Other headliners include Louisiana guitarist-singer **D. K. Harrell,** and Memphis-born Queen of Avant Soul **Candice Ivory**. curacaoblueseasfestival.com

—Continued on next page



—Continued from previous page

April 30-May 4: Vallenato Festival, Valledupar, Colombia

This UNESCO Cultural Heritage event, now over 50 years old, celebrates the folk music of the region. Traditionally created by wandering storytellers who set their tales to music, today it's carried by highly competitive musicians, and the competitions are an important part of the festival.

festivalnexus.com/vallenato-legend-festival-festival-de-la-leyenda-vallenata

TAD RICHARDS



Multiple Grammy winner Samara Joy performs at the 2024 St. Lucia Jazz Festival.

April 30-May 10: Cayman Islands Carnival (Batabano)

More music, more dance, more pageantry, with thousands of people dancing through the streets in costumes. caymancarnival.com.

April 30-May 12: St. Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival.

One of the major events on the Caribbean schedule, with something for everyone. Here, to give you a start in planning your festival, are the headliners for each night. Monday, opening night, it will be Trinidadian **Voice the Artiste**, three-time International Soca Monarch. May 7, Pure Jazz and Arts night, headlines four-time Grammy-winning bassist J**ohn Patitucci**. May 8 is Kingdom Night, and the keys to the kingdom are provided by gospel great **Donnie McClurkin**. Pure Jazz takes the stage again on May 9, with the pure voice of multiple Grammy winner **Samara Joy**. May 10 brings us the Caribbean Fusion of soca legend **Machel Montano**, Soul Train Music Award winner for Best International Performance. May 11 is devoted to World Beats, headed by Nigerian king of the Afrobeats **Davido**, riding his three 2024 Grammy nominations. And the festival winds up with the May 12 Ultimate Celebration — pop hitmakers **Air Supply**. stlucia.org/en/jazz/







BUSINESS BRIEFS



COURTESY B+G MARINE

Ted Reshelitoff

B+G Marine Services Strengthens Team

BVI-based B+G Marine Services has announced the promotion of Ted Reshelitoff to general manager, and the addition of Tim and Helen Paull as lead rigger and operations manager. Tim and Helen owned THL Superyachts for over ten years, specializing in the installation and maintenance of rigging for yachts over 100 feet. Tim has a Bsc (Hons) in Marine Studies and substantial experience in the yachting industry. Helen has been a shipwright for over 23 years with many years of experience working in the superyacht industry. She is also a qualified mechanic.



COURTESY B+G MARINE

Tim and Helen Paull

New Products from Budget Marine

Budget Marine announces some of the products they have added, in response to talking to customers and ascertaining a demand. They include special Teflon tape for propane fittings; valves for exotic dinghies not sold in the Caribbean; axes to comply with IMO safety regulations; helmets for sailors on high-speed boats and foils; magnets for picking dropped objects out of the water; pumps to pump out lubrication oil; batteries for jet skis; cleaner for isinglass, and much more.



COURTESY BUDGET MARINE

Some new products from Budget Marine

St. Lucia Tourism Authority Releases Calendar



COURTESY SAINT LUCIA TOURISM AUTHORITY

Vacationers enjoy Saint Lucia's coast via sailing catamaran

The St. Lucia Tourism Authority has issued a calendar of the major events scheduled to take place on the island this coming year. They cover a diverse arts and culture schedule from contemporary music to cultural heritage, from cricket to carnivals.

Apr 30–May 12: Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival
Jun 15 – 24: ICC Men's T20 World Cup
Jul 1-17: Lucian Carnival
Aug – Sep: Caribbean Premiere League
Oct 1-30: Creole Heritage Month
Nov 23 -30: Adventure Week

Visit stlucia.org for information.

First Virgin Islands Boating Exhibition (VIBE)

The Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA), will launch its boutique-style Virgin Islands Boating Exhibition (VIBE), from May 10-12, 2024, at Yacht Haven Grande St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Featured manufacturers will include Bali, Lagoon, Fountaine Pajot, Azimut, and Boston Whaler, among many others. Attendees can test sail the latest model yachts, enjoy a food & wine experience, discounts on preferred accommodations, and entertainment.



COURTESY MANGO MEDIA

Yacht Haven Grande St. Thomas

Manufacturers, dealers, and brokers are invited to exhibit their latest sailing yachts and powerboats for purchase or charter or to exhibit their marine vendor business that serves yachting enthusiasts.

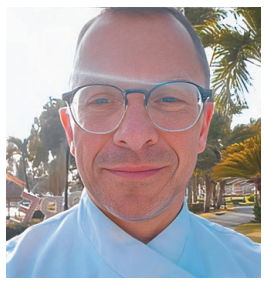
To exhibit or become a sponsor contact exhibit@vibe.vi. Or visit vibe.vi/exhibitors. *For information, visit www.vibe.vi.*

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Chef Lamonthe Joins Bequia Plantation Hotel

Chef Martin Lamonthe, known for his knack for blending local taste with traditional methods, has joined the kitchen of the Bequia Plantation Hotel, on the southern coast of Admiralty Bay. In an interview, Lamonthe said that what he loves best about his profession is "understanding my guests. I always try to know the person I am serving. It may require extensive efforts in the kitchen, but it is essential to constantly seek out unique flavors and experiences for my guests."



COURTESY BEQUIA PLANTATION HOTEL

Chef Martin Lamonthe

For starters, he recommends "our renowned Sunday BBQ special is our best suggestion. Nevertheless, as we progress, we aim to introduce innovative specials with a deeper connection with our patrons."

Multihull Company Broker Is CMC Champion

The Multihull Company is pleased to celebrate the remarkable achievement of senior broker Alexis de Boucaud, who was the victor in the fiercely contested 10-boat Diam 24 division at the sixth annual Caribbean Multihull Challenge in St. Maarten in February 2024.

Teamed up with racing sailors Benoit Champanhac and Ivan Skobtsov, de Boucaud navigated the waters with precision and finesse, exhibiting a masterful display of skill and strategic acumen. The victory not only reflects the company's commitment to excellence but also serves as a testament to the caliber of talent and expertise within its ranks.



COURTESY THE MULTIHULL COMPANY

Alexis De Boucaud won the Diam division at the 2024 Caribbean Multihull Challenge.

To show support for de Boucaud and team, the company sent nine brokers, four wives, and six children as spectators of the CMC rally aboard a Nautitech 40 catamaran. While the HH-66 Nemo was the undisputed winner of the nine-boat CSA 1 class, The Multihull Company took pride in continued participation and sponsorship of the event, underscoring unwavering support for the vibrant island of St. Maarten.

Awlgrip HDT Earns Sustainability Designation

AkzoNobel's Awlgrip® yacht coatings has been verified as a sustainable solution by the Water Revolution Foundation (WRF). WRF is a not-for-profit organization established in 2018 with the goal of driving sustainability initiatives in the superyacht industry.

Awlgrip HDT, which offers durability and color retention, has been added to the WRF's database to enable builders and applicators to find environmentally sound products for superyachts. The topcoat has reduced solvent in its formulation and has lower volatile organic compounds (VOC) when compared to a standard polyurethane topcoat.

Awlgrip HDT was given the stamp of approval by WRF after analysis into the product's life cycle, including the evaluation of the resources used in sourcing raw materials, manufacturing, and applying the product, alongside waste generation, airborne emissions and longevity.

Employing an internationally acknowledged LCA methodology, (ISO14040), the comparative study assessed the environmental impact of Awlgrip HDT, unveiling a significant reduction in various environmental impact categories. Specifically, the global warming potential improved in comparison to traditional product by almost 41 percent, water stress index by 51 percent, and NOx & SOx by 45 percent and 40 percent respectively.

For information, visit awlgrip.com.



COURTESY AKZO NOBEL

Awlgrip HDT yacht coating earns sustainability designation.

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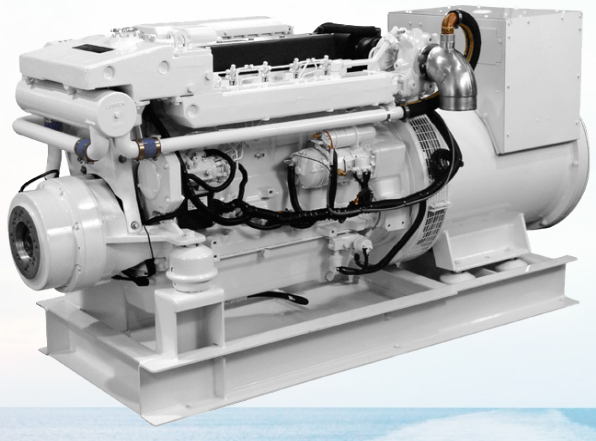
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TIM WRIGHT/PHOTOACTION.COM

Left: Niklas Zennstrom's Carkeek 52 Rán *(SWE)*
Right: Jason Carroll's MOD 70 Argo *(USA)*

Leopard Takes Caribbean 600

Overall winner of the 2024 RORC Caribbean 600 was the Farr 100 *Leopard 3* (MON) skippered by Joost Schuijff. Second was Niklas Zennstrom's Carkeek 52 *Rán* (SWE). Peter and David Askew's Botin 52 *Wizard* (USA) completed the overall podium.

A total of 64 boats took on the challenge, with 561 sailors from all over the world competing in the 600-mile race around 11 Caribbean islands. Prizegiving was held on the lawn at the Antigua Yacht Club.

Overall race winner *Leopard 3* was one of the RORC Caribbean 600 founding entries, setting the original monohull race record in 2009, and taking Monohull Line Honours again in 2013. This year was the first occasion in nine attempts that *Leopard 3* has won the race overall under IRC. *Leopard 3* is now 17 years old but is faster than ever due to a major refit by the new owners. Jason Carroll's MOD70 *Argo* (USA) took Multihull Line Honours in an elapsed time of 01 day 08 hrs 08 mins and 40 secs.



TIM WRIGHT/PHOTOACTION.COM

Leopard 3

Niklas Zennström's Carkeek 52 *Rán* (SWE) won a highly contested battle in the hi-tech IRC Zero class. Peter & David Askew's Botin 52 *Wizard* (USA) was second by just three minutes and 10 seconds after IRC time correction. Third was Frederic Puzin's Ker 46 *Daguet 3* (FRA), just seven minutes after IRC time correction ahead of Jon Desmond's Mills 41 *Final Final* (USA).

The 2024 RORC Caribbean 600 was preceded by the second Nelson's Cup Series with two days of inshore racing mid-February followed by the Antigua 360 Race February 16. The series saw 34 entries, including multihulls, racing under MOCRA, three IRC Classes, and the Class40 Division.

The best corrected time under IRC for the Antigua 360 was scored by *Rán* in IRC One. *Leopard 3* racing in IRC Zero was just a minute behind *Rán* after IRC time correction.

PRO Stefan Kunstmann staggered the starts with the multihulls last away. This produced an epic duel approaching the finish as Erik Maris' MOD70 *Zoulou* (FRA) ducked *Leopard 3*.



TIM WRIGHT/PHOTOACTION.COM

Governor General Sir Rodney Williams with Leopard 3 *crew*

Kiteboarder Tiger Tyson, who will be representing Antigua & Barbuda in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games started last, but finished first, setting a personal record time of 2 hours, 13 mins 42 secs for the 52-mile race around Antigua.

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Argo took Multihull Line Honours in an elapsed time of 3 Hours, 14 mins 23. *Zoulou* was second over the line, eight minutes behind *Argo*, with Alexia Barrier's MOD70 *Limosa* (FRA) third. *Leopard 3* took Monohull Line Honours in an elapsed time of 4 hours 22 mins 14 secs and won IRC Zero after time correction.

The 2025 Caribbean 600 will start from Fort Charlotte on February 17, preceded by the third edition of the RORC Nelson's Cup Series.

For more information log on to RORC Caribbean 600 (caribbean600.rorc.org).





COURTESY SMYC

Left: The start line consisted of a total of 43 ILCA boats, a first.
Right: SMYC competitors

32nd Sailing Week of Schoelcher in Martinique

Over a hundred boats competed in the 32nd sailing week of Schoelcher in mid February. The Sint Maarten Yacht Club was represented by Massimo Lapierre, Melina de Vries and Rio Stomp in the ILCA 4 class.

The event included four days and 13 races under good wind conditions. Out of 22 sailors in ILCA 4 Rio Stomp finished 5th overall, narrowly edged out for 4th place by Saint Martin neighbor Emilien le Normand. Massimo Lappiere finished 15th overall, with Melina de Vries 17th.

Nathan Wehrle from Martinique won the ILCA 4 class. Luk Moreau Dhallenne from Martinique got 2nd, and Lolie Osswald from St Barts got 3rd.



LUCY TULLOCH

Preparing for Antigua Classic

On the Horizon ...

Antigua Classics

The Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta (Classics), a celebration of the yachts of yesteryear, will be held in Nelson's Dockyard from April 17-22, in collaboration with the National Parks Authority (NPA). Park Fees will remain $US15 per person total for the duration of the event, allowing full use of the facilities. All other fees, garbage and environmental, will be covered by the Classic Regatta.

For more information, please visit antiguaclassics.com



TIM WRIGHT/PHOTOACTION.COM

GFA Caraïbes does a double at Grenada Sailing Week: After a trip from Martinique to Carriacou in strong conditions, including winds of more than 40 knots, team GFA won its class for the second consecutive year at Grenada Sailing Week. In the 2024 event, La Morrigane *led CSA Division Class 1 with skipper Tristan Marmousez and crewmates Dubois Laszlo, Bidault Mathieu, Le galliot Lou, Franche Benjamin and Petot Tiphaine*



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CMC Rock Star Sailors

by Herb McCormick

CLAUDETTE ALEXANDER



American Todd Slyngstad (holding prizes) and an all-star crew won the CSA 1 division aboard the HH66 Nemo.

St. Maarten's Caribbean Multihull Challenge Race and Rally continues to attract some of the "rock stars" of the regatta world.

Here are a few:

All-around multihull wizard Benoit Champanhac is the key member of Alexis du Boucaud's Diam 24, *Merlin*, which not only won the Diam 24 one-design class, it was also named the CMC's Most Worthy Performer for 2024.

Marc Guillemot's MG5 catamaran *Dazelad* had a trio of world-class talent aboard. Skipper Guillemot is perhaps best known, a veteran of multiple Route du Rhum and Jacques Vabre trans-oceanic contests. Joining him for the CMC were all-around pro sailor and journalist Nicolas Raynaud and Bruno Jourdren, a three-time Paralympic competitor who has a National Championship in the Melges 24 class to his credit.

Ricardo Pavoncelli's Gunboat 66, *Mana*, had a pair of rock stars aboard in Loick Peyron, a two-time America's Cup veteran who also set a stunning Route du Rhum record of 7 days, 15 hours in his maxi trimaran *Banque Populaire VII,* and Brian Thompson, victor in the 2006 Volvo Ocean Race aboard *ABN AMRO One*. Together, Peyron and Thompson teamed up to win the 2012 Jules Verne Trophy for their round-the-world passage aboard *Banque Populaire V*.

Finally, there was the all-star assemblage aboard American Todd Slyngstad's *Nemo*, the winner of the CSA 1 division: three-time Guinness World Record/ World Sailing Speed Record holder Ryan Breymaier; Californian sailmaker Mat Bryant; and Jan Majer, a navigator who guided the Volvo 70 Warrior to a record-setting win in the tricky Annapolis-Newport Race.

Journalist Herb McCormick is the press officer for the CMC.





MARION HAARSMA

Parrotfish, protected under the Annex III protocol

Increased Protection for Caribbean Wildlife

The Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol), an integral component of the Cartagena Convention, has extended extra protection to six species.

The Protocol classifies species into Annexes I, II, and III. Annexes I and II encompass endangered or threatened plant and animal species, mandating the highest level of protection, prohibiting commercial trade and the destruction or killing of these species, as well as the responsibility to adopt measures to ensure the recovery of these species. Annex III includes species requiring protective measures, albeit not as strict as the first two annexes. These species are subject to regulated measures. Four species were added to Annex II: the giant manta ray, the lesser Antillean iguana, the oceanic whitetip shark, and the whaleshark. New on Annex III are the Caribbean reef shark and the parrotfish.

The Cartagena Convention serves as a regional framework aimed at preserving biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean Region. Parties to the Convention, including Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, the Netherlands (as well as the Caribbean Netherlands islands of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba), are committed to upholding the SPAW Protocol, a pivotal regional legal agreement.

Flatworms Invade Bonaire

Stichting Nationale Parken Bonaire (STINAPA) and the Naturalis Biodiversity Center, conducting a major study of invertebrates on Bonaire, have made a disturbing discovery: the invasive New Guinean land flatworm was found in two places. That's bad news, because it has been listed among the top 100 of the world's worst invasive alien species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is an effective predator that can pose a serious threat to native snails.

The mission, dubbed Team Snail, under the guidance of Sylvia van Leeuwen, snail expert from Naturalis, identified 20 new species — and, as usual in the moist, dark habitats favored by snails, all kinds of other soil fauna.

Flatworms follow the slime trail of snails, slide over the shell and body and enter the snail through the breathing opening where they feast on the internal organs. They can work in packs to eat animals larger than themselves, and even go after snails on tree trunks.

The introduction of the New Guinean land flatworm could pose a serious risk to the conservation of Bonaire's land snail fauna, including several unique species. And these have also been found on several other Caribbean islands, quite probably brought in with imported potted plants.

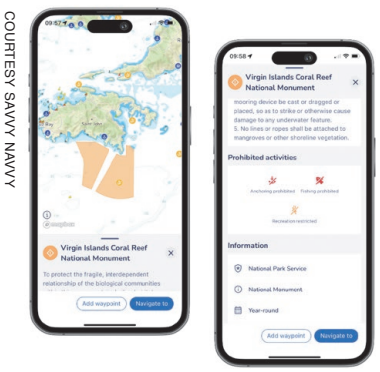
Naturalis strongly recommends taking more measures to prevent the introduction of exotic species via potted plants on Bonaire and are working to stamp out the flatworms already present. They warn against touching the flatworms with your bare hands. They can carry a rat lungworm (*Angiostrongylus cantonensis*) that can cause encephalitis or meningitis in humans.

Information provided by Sytske de Waart & Sylvia van Leeuwen, Naturalis Biodiversity Center.

Online Partnership Highlights Marine Protected Areas

ProtectedSeas, a data-driven and ocean-focused business headquartered in Silicon Valley, California, has partnered with boat navigation app savvy navvy (*Compass*, Oct-Nov 2023), often called "Google maps for boats," to provide boaters with access to information about 22,000 marine protected and managed areas in more than 220 countries across the world. This includes speed-limit zones to protect marine mammals, and fisheries management areas, among other protections.

To find out more about the sustainable data or to download the app visit http://www.savvy-navvy.com/preservation/protectedseas



COURTESY SAVVY NAVVY

savvy navvy screenshot: Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument



ROSTISLAV STACH-SHAPE-DCNA

*Antillean crested hummingbird (*Orthorhyncus cristatus)

Monitoring Birds in the Dutch Caribbean

A new Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) project, Monitoring for Bird Biodiversity Conservation in the Dutch Caribbean, has been launched to teach local nature management organizations ways of monitoring and protecting land bird populations and their environments across the Dutch Caribbean. The project will run through the first quarter of 2028.

Birds play a crucial role in island ecosystems, pollinating flowers and dispersing seeds. Some species are more vulnerable than others because of their restricted range, so real ecosystem management has to take into account protecting areas for vulnerable species. Since changes, or the absence thereof, in bird population sizes may indicate environmental change or stability in a region, monitoring bird population can indicate overall health, helping parks to evaluate conservation success and adapt management actions.

Bird surveys will be conducted twice a year, specifically in March/April (post rainy-season) and in October/November (pre-rainy-season) on all six Dutch Caribbean islands. These surveys will be executed by trained park rangers and other bird experts. All collected data will be accessible through the Dutch Caribbean Biodiversity Database (DCBD), Observation.org, and BirdsCaribbean.

No Waste Caribbean Vibes Recycles Plastic

No Waste Caribbean Vibes, founded and run by Charlotte and Lucky Luke of Bonaire, recycles waste plastic to make gift items. The process involves putting the plastic into a shredder and turning it into granulates that are separated by color for upcoming projects. Once the plastic is in granulates, heat and pressure are used with various machines and molds to produce items, which currently include clipboards, mirrors, decorative bowls, wall clocks, lampshades, magnets, keychains, and coasters.



COURTESY NO WASTE CARIBBEAN VIBES

In Bonaire, recycled plastic is turned into clipboards, bowls, clocks, lampshades, magnets, keychains, and coasters.

Products are sold at the Tera Cora market and out of the Luke Bonaire home.

This report by Tanya Deen was originally published in the Bonaire Insider. For more information, check out nowastecaribbeanvibes.com.

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Eastern Caribbean Greenpreneurs Announces Grant Recipients

The Eastern Caribbean Greenpreneurs Incubator Program, an initiative aimed at supporting and promoting sustainable business ventures in the Eastern Caribbean region, has awarded US $10,000 seed grants to 11 businesses who have demonstrated outstanding commitment and innovation in the field of sustainability.

The 11 green businesses to receive the US $10,000 seed grants are: **Down To Earth Vermicompost Farm**, a recycling facility in Antigua and Barbuda; **Eclat Nova Luxuries**, Dominica (organic, natural, plant-based handmade skincare and eco-living products); **Isle Bee Well** in Grenada, a honeybee agro-processing and wellness business; **Narrow Way Life** in St. Lucia for development of sustainable homesteads

In St. Kitts and Nevis: **Organico869** (a holistic approach to circular agricultural production); **Poultry Pro**, a solar-powered egg farm.

In St. Vincent & the Grenadines: **The Plant Doctor**, helping farmers with sustainability issues; **Grenadines Gold** (eco-friendly products from ethically grown sea moss); **SUS-Edibles** (solar panels for healthy local dried fruits, vegetables and herbs); **Arubana Retreat** (eco-friendly accommodation and activities); **Vermigold** (organic and eco-friendly fertilizers).

For more information on the Eastern Caribbean Greenpreneurs Initiative, and the awarded businesses, visit www.caribbeangreenpreneurs.com.



COURTESY OECS

A beach covered with sargassum

Solutions for Sargassum Influx Studied

A study has been commissioned by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) on the problem of sargassum algae plaguing beaches in the Caribbean in recent years, impacting sealife, tourism and livelihoods of those who work in the blue economy. The purpose of the study was to identify a baseline for research and technology, and help participants build support for projects aimed at effective management and use of sargassum algae. Participants had the opportunity to see some of the innovations in algae production and studied various methods to process each component of sargassum algae that can be adapted for different uses—pigments, proteins, lipids, minerals, microfibrillated cellulose, biofuels and bioplastics, and residue. They were also able to explore modern methods to collect sargassum algae and discussed possibilities for export for the OECS region.

Nature Based Solutions

A symposium at the University of Aruba organized by the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) focused on the "Nature-Based Solution for Ecosystem Restoration." Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), an innovative approach that leans on sustainable management of both natural and modified ecosystems, is drawing more and more interest as a strategy to mimimize environmental risks from flooding to landslides. The goals of the approach go beyond ecological stability to include economic growth and enhanced public health.

The symposium was co-organized by the Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba, and included Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands as an honored guest. The director of the DNCA, Arno Verhoeven, said: "Going for Nature-Based Solutions should be the priority when facing the many challenges that threaten our habitat. We believe that by ... facilitating knowledge, expertise, and resource exchange, we can take steps to further implement NBS to safeguard our valuable ecosystems."

MAR JAVIERTO



5,500 people and 500 vessels came out to support Beyond the Reef.

Xmas in July Donates $6,000 to Beyond the Reef

The organizers of an Xmas in July event donated $6,000 to Beyond the Reef, a nonprofit organization in the British Virgin Islands that focuses on marine environmental education and preservation efforts. The donation came from the sale of official reusable tumblers during their event. "This initiative reflects our desire to create awareness on the importance of protecting our beaches and to send the message that our event takes beach and ocean conservation very seriously," said Wally Castro, event organizer. "With this donation, we support a local organization that reflects our environmental protection beliefs."

The event, which drew over 5,500 people and 400 vessels to Pond Bay Beach, Virgin Gorda, BVI, in 2023, was organized by Wally Castro Marine, Marcos Rivera and the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission. The donation will help the Road Town-based nonprofit to continue carrying on its marine environmental education and preservation efforts.

Editor's note: *The photo credit © Alejandro Gutiérrez - Go-Bonaire.com was inadvertently omitted from images of hawksbill and loggerhead turtles in the Eco Focus column on page 8 of the March 2024 issue of* Caribbean Compass.

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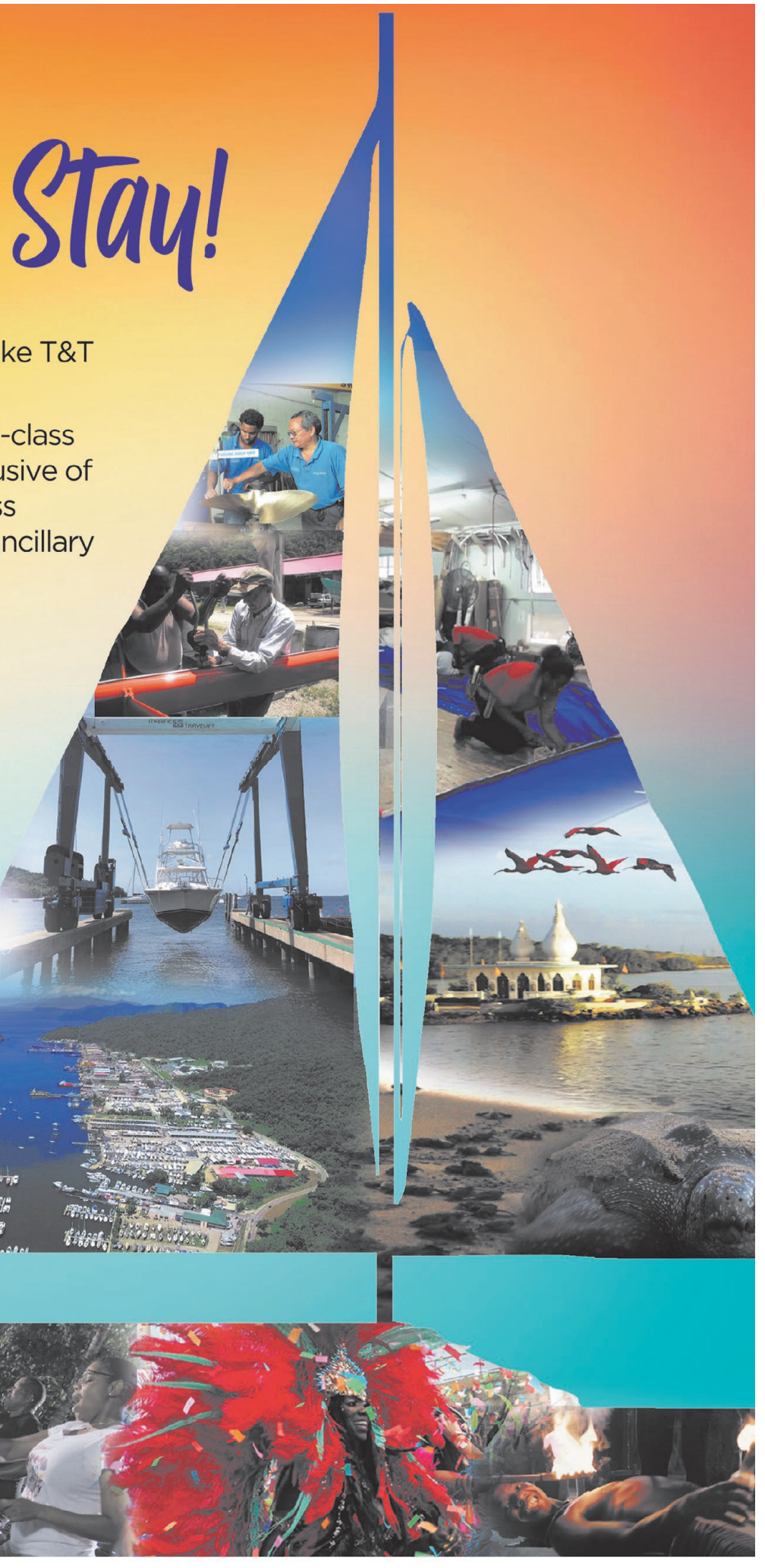
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Five Must-Do Antigua Anchorages

by Mark Stevens, photos by Sharon Matthews-Stevens



Deep Bay is still one of my favorite Caribbean anchorages. The steep path up to the ruins of Fort Barrington leads you to some of the best views of any Antigua anchorage.

Because I live in Canada, my Caribbean sailing is limited to one or two bareboat charters each winter.

The downside is that I can't gunkhole to my heart's content, that I can't drop the hook at my favorite anchorage for days at a time, that I can't follow the winds wherever they lead.

The upside is that I get to pick and choose my destination, I do a ton of research before devising a float plan, and I maximize my voyage to experience as many highlights as possible.

Also on the upside: I've raised sails in every popular Caribbean charter destination, most of them more than once.

Point of fact — up until now the only cruising ground I'd done more than Antigua is the British Virgin Islands. I'm just back from my fourth Antigua charter, so now it's a tie.

When I chose to sail to Antigua for the first time more than 20 years ago, part of my homework was the purchase of Chris Doyle's iconic 2002-2003 *Cruising Guide to the Leeward Islands*, which now is published in two tomes, north and south.

Even before we left Canada that first time I kept rereading his apt description.

"Antigua and Barbuda offers exceptional cruising, with more anchorages than any other country in the Leewards," he wrote. "You could cruise here for two weeks without stopping at the same anchorage twice, and you would enjoy great variety."

For this trip we chartered a 45-foot catamaran from Sunsail, taking on as crew our son Adam, my nephews Ryan and Scott, and Scott's wife Klaudia, along with longtime sailing friends Ed and Kim North from our home yacht club. Our seven-day trip started with our passage east to Green Island; then we retraced our route along Antigua's south coast to Jolly Harbour and an overnight mooring ball for provisions, then on to Deep Bay next, on the island's northwest coast before beating east to Great Bird Island off Antigua's northeast coast. Doubling back, we sailed west to Dickenson Bay for an overnight stop before heading south on a beam reach before turning east once more for Carlisle Bay off the south coast.

During this week I soon realized that trying to narrow down my choices was like visiting a Michelin restaurant and choosing a single entrée, but I was able to revisit some favorites and discover some new ones, and I'm equally sure I'll sail Antigua once more.

And maybe I'll bump into you at one of my five must-do Antigua anchorages.

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Rickett Harbour, Green Island

On our last trip here, we finished the Sunsail chart briefing at Nelson's Dockyard, a delightful slice of history on Antigua's south coast, before making for points east.



Avid snorkelers take to the waters of Rickett Harbour, Green Island.

This time, two things strike me almost immediately as we beat into 10-foot seas and 20 knots of wind.

First, Antigua is truly a sailor's paradise.

Second, these admittedly challenging conditions are the chief reason that, despite doing Green Island the first time around, I gave it a miss for charters number two and three.

But I have memories of great snorkel spots in Nonsuch Bay, home to Green Island, and this time around I'm shipping several die-hard snorkelers. Rickett Harbour off Green Island, a waypoint of sheer beauty, proves worth the trip.

We anchor a hundred yards off a beach fringed by palms and century plants and great stands of cactus. Two other boats are here. Behind us a hump-backed emerald hill climbs skyward, two excursion boats lounge on the beach. When they depart we have the beach to ourselves.

My wife, Sharon, and I lounge on the sand, paddle about in the water. My crew swim over to a reef jutting out from the shore just south of us, returning to the boat and enthusing about the quality of the snorkeling.

Twilight cocktails serenaded by a perfect sunset add to the appeal.

I've just added a new item to my list of Caribbean "top-tens," never mind Antigua "must-dos."

Great Bird Island

Because the reef-strewn waters off Antigua's east coast are a "no-go" zone for Sunsail charters, it's a few days before we achieve another of my favorites. That's because the anchorage at Great Bird shares much of that pristine quality that characterizes Rickett Harbour.

Tucked in behind a tiny island roughly maybe 50 yards south of Great Bird itself, we also share this anchorage with only two other boats.

Here's how much I like Great Bird: last time around, given a float plan comprising only seven nights, we decided to spend two of them anchored right here.



The beach on the north side of Great Bird Island, completely uninhabited but for my crew and me, nuzzled by gentle neon aquamarine waters

There are two things I love about this spot, even though some less appealing changes have taken place since our last visit eight years ago:

The beach on the north side is still gorgeous — completely uninhabited but for my crew and me — nuzzled by gentle neon aquamarine waters.

The other attraction here used to be a rugged path climbing to a height offering spectacular seascapes and views of surreal landforms.

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They've replaced the path with a set of wooden stairs and now you have to pay US$10 for the tour, but once the guides and tourists leave mid-afternoon, we have this piece of paradise completely to ourselves and the sunset's as appealing as the one that greeted us at the end of our first day on the water.

Still a perfect spot to drop the hook.

Deep Bay

With the passage of time things have also changed at Deep Bay, another of my favorite Antigua anchorages.

The beach is as appealing as I remember it, fringed by towering palms, decorated by rainbow-painted vendors' huts. The shipwreck lounging farther out from shore is still a big hit with the snorkelers among us and the steep path up to the ruins of Fort Barrington still leads you to some of the best views of any Antigua anchorage.

The very first time we anchored here we shared the beach with tourists from a couple of excursion boats but it was otherwise barely inhabited. Nowadays the south end plays host to a Royalton Resort.

You can't go back again — it is true, but here's another truth: Deep Bay is still one of my favorite Caribbean anchorages.

Dickenson Bay

Dickenson Bay is as different from Deep Bay as day is from night, home to the sprawling Sandals Resort occupying much of the beachfront. It's considered Antigua's most popular beach, an anchorage you share with tacking Hobie Cats and growling wave runners, so be forewarned.

But it's a gorgeous beach and offers — in addition to a hopping floating bar called Kon-Tiki just off the beach — great restaurants. We do a delightful lunch at an attractive eatery called Ana's on the Beach. And in spite of Sandals' domination, public access to all Antigua beaches is a given.

But first a caveat: In winter swells it can be an uncomfortable anchorage and there are no dinghy docks here, so you have to beach your dinghy when you go ashore.

I've given this anchorage a pass in the past, but this time I've added lunch ashore to my float plan and we do get lucky. We're able to tuck in to the lee of a dramatic cliff that shelters you from waves out of the east and we get a very comfortable sleep.



Dickenson Bay: a gorgeous beach with great restaurants

Nature, it seems, has rewarded us for our choice.

Early next morning, before we weigh anchor, we're treated to a spectacular double rainbow.

Dickenson's just earned a spot on next trip's float plan.

Carlisle Bay

On every one of my Antigua charters thus far we have spent our last night at sea at Carlisle.

It's a quick sail next morning over to the Sunsail base at Nelson's Dockyard; it's relatively sheltered; it's got a great reputation as a snorkel spot, and it's located off an unspoiled corner of Antigua.

And it's downright pretty.

An ivory-colored beach guards the north bay of this horseshoe-shaped bay, decorated by the low-lying roofs of a classy resort. Two sky-reaching hills protect the anchorage from those constant easterlies; one boasts a dramatic rock cliff.

High overhead a smattering of pastel-painted houses clings precariously to steep slopes, slopes otherwise unbroken expanses of emerald and olive.

Downright pretty.

Soon after we drop the hook some of my crew dinghy over to a tiny beach and proceed to snorkel. They prove Carlisle's reputation, returning to our catamaran full of enthusiasm. One morning on an earlier trip we'd gone ashore, tied up to a convenient dock, and strolled the beach, but that was it.

I always figured you were talking haute cuisine and haute money if you dined here, but Sunsail staffer Kishawn Harrigan had assured me at the chart briefing that dinner at one of the property's four restaurants was quite reasonable.

No matter, this time we choose to dine aboard al fresco, assigning galley duty to our son Adam and his cousin Ryan, entertained by one last sunset.

Perfect end to a perfect charter.



Carlisle Bay: downright pretty

An Anchor Cornucopia

In addition to Doyle's enthusiastic praise for Antigua, it's worth mentioning that the island reputedly hosts 360 beaches, though we haven't stopped at every single one.

Given that a fair number of them host great anchorages, narrowing your choices down to five may be nigh impossible.

I haven't included Ffryes Beach here despite the fact that it's one of my favorite lunch stops, since it could get uncomfortable, but during my last trip Harrigan assured me it was also an overnight possibility.

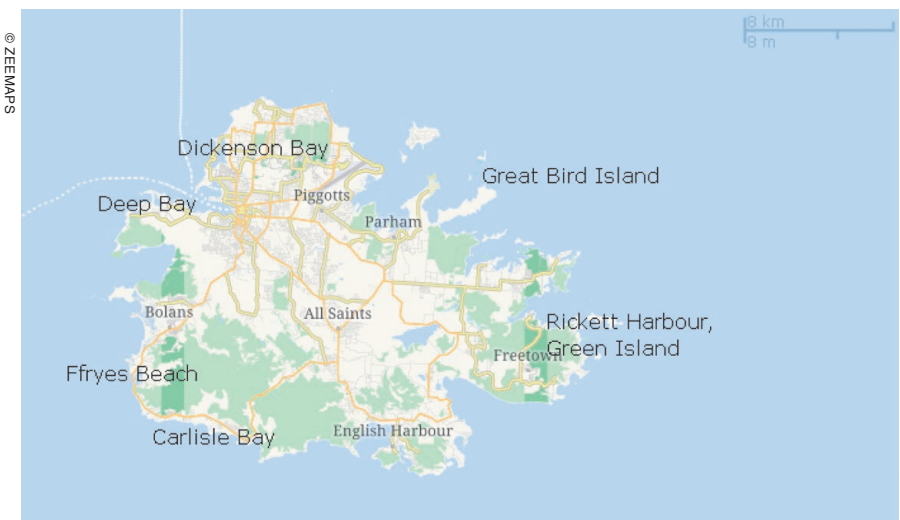
One day we nosed into Five Islands Harbour for a look. It's a gorgeous west coast bay, and we saw a couple of big boats on the hook in the lee of Maiden Island, but because it was breezy that day and it was close to Deep Bay, we gave it a miss.

That won't happen next time around. I'd just discovered another "must-do."



Ffryes Beach is an overnight possibility.

Last time around we had a great time just off Pigeon Point near the entrance to Falmouth Harbour. Very nice beach, lots of shade, great spot for watching the boats belonging to the haute monde and home to a couple of great restaurants.



The itinerary took us east to Green Island, then back along Antigua's south coast and on to Deep Bay on the northwest coast before beating east to Great Bird Island. Doubling back, we sailed west to Dickenson Bay for an overnight stop before heading south on a beam reach, then turning east to Carlisle Bay.

Nonsuch Bay alone hosts at least seven overnight spots, so maybe you're starting to get the point.

But don't take my word for it. Visit Antigua and discover the anchorages here and, according to Doyle, "enjoy great variety."

Then start your own list, your own list of "must-do" Antigua anchorages.

Freelance writers Mark and Sharon regularly ply Lake Ontario's waters on Rhumbline*, their Catalina 320. They've enjoyed a love affair with the Caribbean lasting nearly four decades and their work has been recognized numerous times by the Caribbean Tourism Organization. For more about Antigua turn to Island Spotlight, page 30.*

Nautical Paradise

Factor in the variety of Antigua's anchorages, the exhilarating passages between them, 360 beaches and a UNESCO Heritage Site (Nelson's Dockyard), plus a full slate of races and regattas, and you've got an appealing boating destination. Now factor in the efforts of the Antigua and Barbuda Yachting and Marine Association — "the private sector organization which is the unified voice of the yachting industry in Antigua and Barbuda" — and you've got a regular nautical paradise.

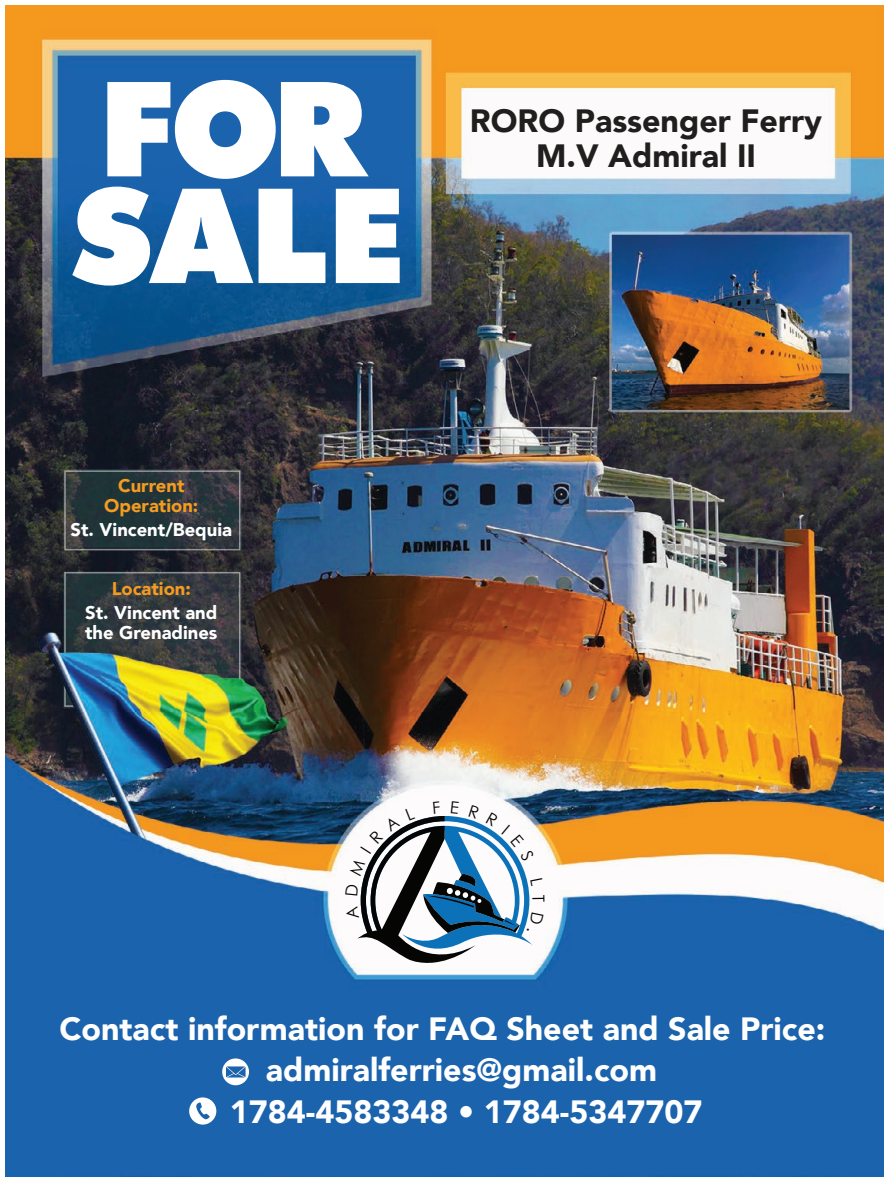


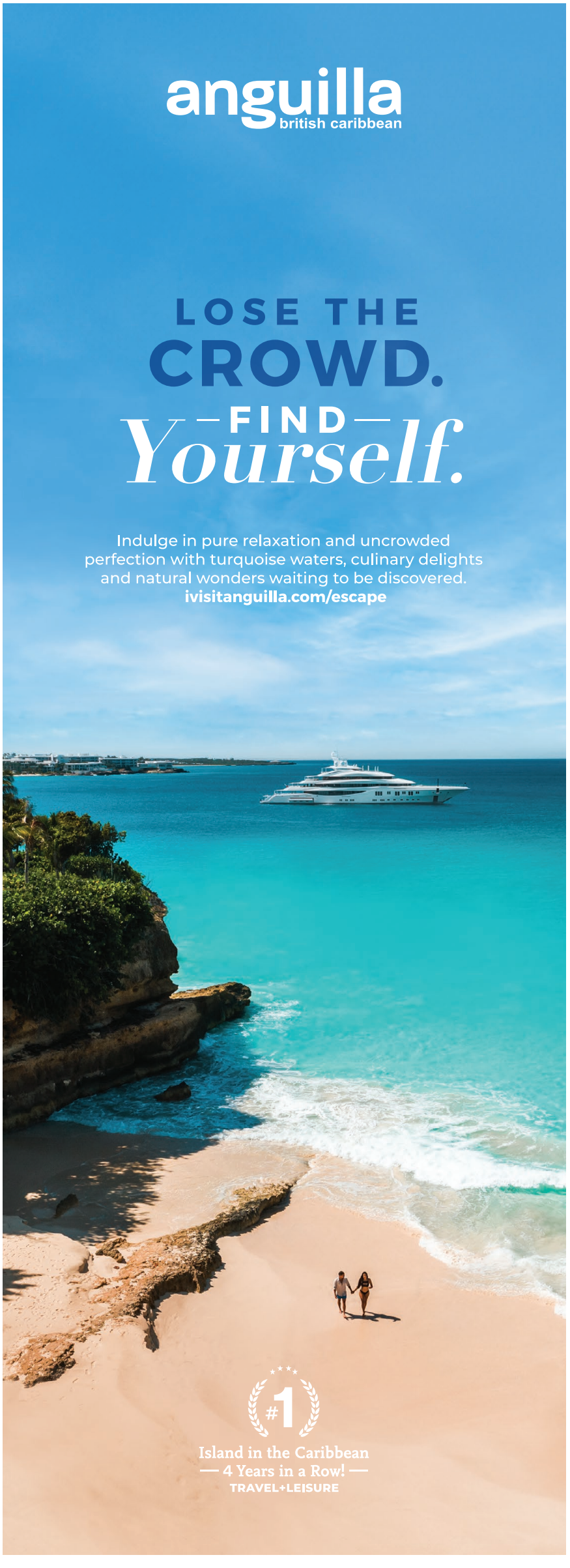
Its website — www.abyma.ag — is a wealth of information for visiting charterers, for serious cruisers, or for anyone who loves the water. Go there for a comprehensive list of anchorages with thumbnail descriptions. Every visiting boater will appreciate the directory of ports of entry and yacht entry and clearance procedures and the guide to marinas.

Want to build your skills or learn new ones? One partner — OnDeckOceanSailing (www.ondecksailing.com) — offers courses from beginner certifications to yachtmaster accreditation. 40 Knots (www.40knots.net), another partner, offers kiteboarding, windsurfing and SUP lessons. At 40 Knots you could even learn the newest thrill-seekers' pursuit: wingfoiling.

Just want to keep up with the latest news? Log in to www.abyma.ag and find the answers.

Antigua's allure is irresistible. Be sure to visit www.visitantiguaandbarbuda.com before you start your float plan. — M.S.





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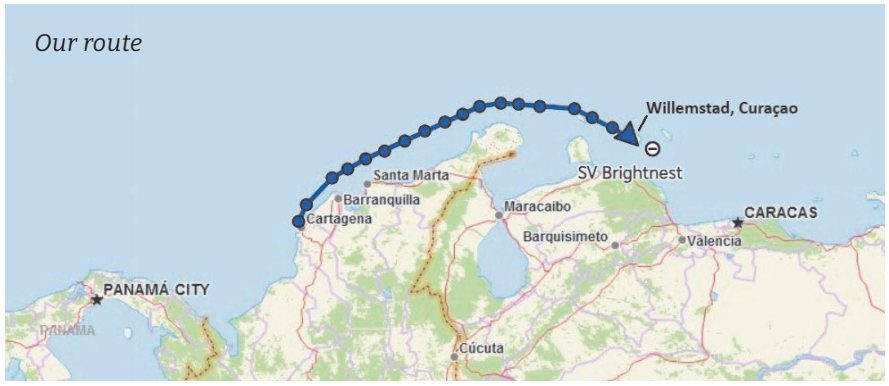
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MARINA Santa Marta an IGY destination

Going the "Wrong Way" the Right Way

By Michael C. Wade, photos by Jennifer Cheng Wade

Last April, my wife, Jen, and I made the 3.5-day passage from Cartagena, Colombia to Curaçao in our Island Packet 380, *Brightnest*. The nearly 500 nautical mile passage east from Colombia, against prevailing wind and waves, is a notorious one. However, with patience and timing, it is possible to complete it in relative comfort. With Curaçao turning out to be one of our highlights of the cruising season, and that hard-won easting beautifully positioning us for a passage north to Puerto Rico, the passage proved worth it!



Cartagena and Passage Prep

After transiting the Panama Canal (Pacific to Atlantic) in February, we spent a glorious month cruising the remote and unforgettable San Blas Islands of the Guna Yala region. We then completed a two-day upwind passage with winds mostly in the low-to-mid teens, crossing the Gulf of Darién from Snug Harbor, Panama to Cartagena, Colombia.

In Cartagena, we acquired a slip at Club de Pesca Marina, where we could walk directly to the historic Walled City. This incredibly easy access to top-notch wandering helped offset the often uncomfortable home setting, as the wakes from a steady stream of party and fishing boats left *Brightnest* rolling in her fixed dock berth. Do we even need to mention that it was humid and hot?

Cartagena walking highlights included strolling the walls overlooking the Caribbean Sea, the night food market at Plaza de la Trinidad where we indulged in such street food delicacies as arepas and meats-on-sticks, sipping scratch cocktails while listening to live music and admiring the vibrant murals in the bohemian Getsemaní neighborhood. We enjoyed probably the best cup of coffee we've had since leaving Seattle in 2021 (yep, topping Mexico, Costa Rica, and Panama).



Michael and Jennifer enjoying mojitos in Getsemaní, Cartagena

As we spent balmy days meandering the streets of old town Cartagena, we kept a sharp eye on our forecasting apps for developing weather windows. We also employed the weather routing services of Jamie and Behan Gifford of Sailing Totem (www.sailingtotem.com) for additional guidance. With few weather windows along this route, we had agreed that a Zen-like approach was best for us — don't get attached to any plans, enjoy the present moment, and stay attentive to a potential window. When one comes, be ready to roll.

Our end goal was reaching Puerto Rico, where we planned to put *Brightnest* on the hard for hurricane season at Puerto del Rey marina on the island's east coast. Originally, we were considering a direct passage from Cartagena aiming for the Dominican Republic, pointing as high up into the wind as possible. However, as an unusually long weather window appeared in the forecast, we shifted gears and decided to plan for a four-day motor to the Netherland Antilles, commonly known as the ABC islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao.

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The 18th-century walls of Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia

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The trade winds remain strong for passages east even after the Christmas winds let up in February, with windows generally occurring in April and May. Heading northeast from Cartagena, two potentially major challenges lie along the route. The first is getting past the katabatic winds that often blow down relentlessly from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range in northern Colombia. The second is rounding the Guajira peninsula at the Colombian-Venezuelan border. We planned to manage both by giving the shore a wide berth, between 30-50 nautical miles offshore.

After only two weeks in Cartagena, it looked as though we would get a very fortuitous window with wind speeds under ten knots for the better part of 72 hours. With our weather router Jamie's help, we soon realized that the three-day window would buy us enough time to get around the trickiest geographical features and make landfall in the Netherlands Antilles on day four or five, given our typical boat speed calculations of motoring an average of five knots per hour in most conditions.

The Passage

On the day of departure, we departed Cartagena through the narrow Boca Grande channel and headed out to sea with between five and seven knots of wind. With conditions so light, it was nearly impossible to sail, but we motored at good speed on calm, comfortable seas. We maintained our speed diligently, fully aware that conditions would likely roughen beyond the third day of passage.

We settled into passage mode and our watch schedule of four hours on, four hours off, occasionally remarking on our fantastic fortune of having such calm seas that allowed us to tick away the miles quickly and comfortably. This continued for over 300 nautical miles, well into our third day, when trouble struck.

Just enough wind had sprung up that we decided to give the engine (and us) a rest for a bit and sail upwind while conditions permitted. When the wind died down, and Jen tried to start the engine, it wouldn't turn over. I went down below to investigate, while Jen used our Starlink Internet connection to consult a trusted friend who had watched our boat when *Brightnest* was back in Mexico. While we troubleshot the problem, *Brightnest* continued to sail upwind at a crawl.



Brightnest *on passage off the Colombian-Venezuelan coast*

Tired, I gazed across the expanse of glassy sea, trying to banish the nagging thought that the Venezuelan coast was not a great place to have an engine break down. The engine starter battery was dead, and I suspected an underlying charging issue. Fortunately, *Brightnest* is equipped with a handy button next to the ignition that allows us to parallel the starter battery with the house battery bank. We gave it a try and the diesel engine fired up.

As so often is the case, we would be arriving at our new destination after passage with at least one urgent maintenance project on the list. This was no different, but our thoughts were centered around how grateful we were to be making good progress again. It looked possible to make Curaçao with a little daylight left the next day if we could maintain our speed.

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Playa Lagun, Curaçao, one of the many spectacular beaches along the northwest coast

Curaçao

Toward the end of passage day four, the sun was setting as we motored along the western coast of Curaçao. We were under the gun to anchor before nightfall, and the sea state was beginning to pick up. We had already decided to save the trickier navigation of the main Spaanse Water (Spanish Water) anchorage entrance for good light in the morning and headed into the neighboring anchorage of Fuikbaai.

In the morning, we felt a great relief to have made it to the ABCs, going "the wrong way" from Colombia. We were now well-positioned for a relatively straightforward three-day passage north toward Puerto Rico. We ended up staging from Bonaire, to gain further easting for the Caribbean crossing. Once our next weather window appeared, we set the sails on a close reach. We held that point of sail with winds in the mid-teens for three straight days until we reached the anchorage of Salinas, our days of relentless motoring now a distant memory.

Michael Wade and Jennifer Cheng Wade set sail from Seattle, Washington, in August 2021. Currently, they are sailing the Caribbean.



View from Fort Beekenburg, Curaçao. This 18th-century fort is within walking distance from the main cruisers' anchorage at Spaanse Water.





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Giving Souls, Giving Soles: A Step toward Better Lives

Story and photos by JoAnne and Bill Harris

In the enchanting landscapes of the Caribbean, where crystal-clear waters meet sandy shores and vibrant cultures converge, our modern-day *ULTRA* Cinderella story doesn't involve glass slippers, but rather the transformative power of donating used and new shoes to adults and children in need. It's a story that is creating ripples of positive change across the islands and beyond, proving that sometimes a simple pair of shoes can be the key to a brighter future. The types of shoes donated come in an array of sizes and colors that include flip flops, dress shoes, exercise shoes, and more, which are all extremely useful and much appreciated.

Cinderella Story in the Caribbean

As the sun paints the sky in hues of orange and pink, the Caribbean islands come alive with the rhythmic beat of life. However, amid paradise, many individuals face daily struggles, and a basic necessity like shoes often becomes a luxury. Our Cinderella story of donating shoes throughout the Caribbean revolves around the idea that many people strive for a chance to *step* into a better life, but sometimes fall short due to circumstances outside of their control. The recipients of the shoes walk to school or work, and the shoes protect their feet as well as give them the confidence of knowing that they are attending school and work in more proper attire. We understand it is sometimes fun to go barefoot; but it should be because they want to, not because they have to.



A Cinderella story – shoes that fit! And they'll never turn back into pumpkins.

Our Heroes: Generous Hearts that are Giving Soles

At the heart of this Cinderella story are the generous souls who recognize the transformative impact that a pair of shoes can have. These heroes range from individuals to local communities to international organizations. All have come together to help us by collecting and donating and then helping us to distribute shoes to adults and children across the Caribbean, igniting a wave of kindness that transcends borders.

Cruisers and locals have helped us to fuel this shoe project with a shared commitment to make a difference. From bustling cities to remote villages, we are truly grateful to everyone who has helped us organize shoe drives. These initiatives not only provide tangible support, but also strengthen the bonds of community and compassion. This project of collecting new and gently used shoes not only addresses the immediate need for footwear, but also promotes sustainability by repurposing shoes that would otherwise end up in landfills. It is a win-win: great for the shoe recipients and for the environment.

Empowering Lives: The Transformative Power of Shoes

Shoes are not just a practical accessory — they give confidence, empowerment, dignity, and hope. For the recipients of donated shoes in the Caribbean, each pair represents a step toward a better life. This Cinderella story unfolds in the smiles of children who can now attend school with the proper footwear. Moreover, for adults seeking employment opportunities, a pair of shoes can be the key to unlocking doors. Job interviews, daily commutes, and workplace expectations become manageable with proper footwear, breaking the cycle of poverty and opening avenues for personal and professional growth. All of this combined gives a renewed sense of pride for everyone to navigate their daily lives in comfort and happiness.



Generous donors mean a supply of needed shoes.

After 30+ years of giving back, including 15 years as full-time liveaboard cruisers, we — along with everyone who has helped — have had amazing adventures while always making it a priority to get involved in the communities we visit. From local initiatives that strengthen the bonds of neighborhoods to international organizations bridging continents, this collective effort to provide footwear to those in need is rewriting the narrative of hardship into one of hope.

Here where the sunsets are as vibrant as the cultures they illuminate, the act of shoe donations has become a beacon of light, guiding individuals toward a brighter future. Our modern-day fairy tale serves as a testament to the belief that, sometimes, the simplest acts of kindness—like providing a pair of shoes—can have a profound and lasting impact on the lives of those who need it most.



One of the beds our volunteers built

The families in need, as well as the two of us, are truly grateful to all of you who help us spread joy and improve lives as well as improve the environment we share. We always welcome everyone to be volunteers for the many wonderful projects through our *ULTRA* Community Projects. Please contact us for volunteer opportunities which include electricity with solar panel installation, running water, providing clean drinking water with water filter systems, spaying/neutering cats and dogs, building beds and providing bedding, repairing and building houses, painting houses and schools, building school and community playgrounds, planting community gardens, providing educational scholarships and reading programs, physical therapy, medications, building sinks and toilets for schools and homes, providing urgent humanitarian assistance for emergencies and natural disasters, and so much more.

We are honored to be Bay Islands Coastal Cleanup Team Leaders for Honduras and continue to organize epic community trash cleanups to limit disease and rodents throughout Honduras and beyond.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration in donating or volunteering and helping us to spread positive change throughout the Caribbean and beyond. Thank you.



ULTRA *sails into Honduras.*

JoAnne and Bill Harris have been cruising full time aboard their trimaran sailboat, ULTRA, *for 15 years now. They are Ocean Cruising Club port officers and the Seven Seas Cruising Association cruising hosts for Honduras, including the Bay Islands. Care packages are welcome at* ULTRA *Community Projects (donations); DIP Shipping; 13483 NW 19th LN; Miami, Florida 33182-1909. Monetary donations are possible through paypal (www.paypal.me/svultraharris).*

Island Spotlight: Antigua

by Chris Doyle and Lexi Fisher

Antigua has some great historical destinations, a plethora of yacht services, and some world-renowned sailing events. The annual Antigua Sailing Week regularly sees over 100 participating yachts, from 24-foot monohulls to spectacular 100+-foot Maxis. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people gather to watch participants hoist their sails for a week of racing and fun.



COURTESY DOYLE GUIDES

Chart of Antigua, showing the anchorages

From a yachting point of view, Antigua is inextricably linked with beautiful and historic English Harbour, perhaps the most famous yachting center in the Eastern Caribbean. Come the winter season, English Harbour, and the next-door Falmouth Harbour, attract a dazzling selection of the largest and fanciest sailing and power superyachts in the world. That leaves plenty of room for cruising yachts, and Antigua offers more beautiful, protected, and varied anchorages than most other islands. When you are in English, Falmouth or Jolly harbours or anywhere with a hotel, there are plenty of restaurants. Other anchorages offer seclusion away from the bustle. Come summer, most yachts leave and the island reverts to a quiet and peaceful place.

The Antigua coast guard gives weather forecasts out of St. John's on VHF channel 14 at 0100, 0900 and 1800. You should be able to receive broadcasts in most places on the west coast and maybe on passage to Barbuda.



DOYLE GUIDES

Approach to Jolly Harbour

Amid Antigua's highest hills are areas of mixed forest, mainly dry forest. Fig Tree Drive winds through this area and offers several attractions. Wallings Reservoir is along this road and many trails start here. If you hike up Signal Hill, you will find an open area of small ponds and great views or you can hike to Rendezvous Bay. Also in these southern hills is the Antigua Rainforest Canopy Tour. This is not a conventional canopy tour, but it is exciting, good exercise, and something to remember. Much of it has been built by Bernard Nichols and it includes walking on well-designed trails and steps, and ziplining back and forth across a gorge strapped to a harness on a series of wires. The longest of these rides is 300 feet over a drop of 350 feet. This takes you downhill and you walk back up some amazing steps to a bar with a great view of the forest.



DOYLE GUIDES

English Harbour

English & Falmouth Harbours

In the old days it was hard to find secure ports that were easily defensible, with immediate access to the trade winds, yet protected enough to careen a ship and be safe in a hurricane. Falmouth Harbour and English Harbour sit side by side, almost touching at the closest point, and they meet all these requirements. Their potential was recognized as early as 1745, when work was begun on the English Harbour Dockyard. It was completed much as it stands today in around 1789 and was Britain's main naval station in the Lesser Antilles. Lord Horatio Nelson was stationed here in 1784 under Sir Richard Hughes, who had recently blinded himself in one eye while chasing a cockroach with a fork. Later, Nelson took over as naval commander. He did not enjoy Antigua and did not get on well with Governor General William Shirley (after whom Shirley Heights is named) or the plantocracy, who resented the boring way in which Nelson insisted on enforcing the Navigation Act. This meant he kept the port closed to trade for all but British ships. Nonetheless, the dockyard is now generally known as Nelson's Dockyard in deference to Britain's favorite hero.

When former commander Vernon Nicholson sailed into English Harbour in 1947, the dockyard was in ruins. The arrival of Nicholson's Charter Company in 1949 and the restoration of the ruins into a beautiful yet functional monument gave momentum to the development of the yachting industry here. Today, these harbors are managed by Nelson's Dockyard National Park, part of the National Parks Authority. This is not only the yachting capital of Antigua, it is a major Caribbean yachting center and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

As the winter home of many gold-plated charter yachts of sail and power, both harbors have become the Caribbean's main base for sailing superyachts, and these make a grand spectacle on the docks. English Harbour is prettier; Falmouth Harbour is more convenient for most yacht services. Many businesses are set up to sell duty-free goods to those on yachts and yacht owners can order duty-free parts. A wide range of marine services and a convivial social scene are found here, complete with happy hours and jump up nights.



DOYLE GUIDES

Fort Berkeley

In the summer this area has a quiet village atmosphere and many businesses and restaurants close. Antigua is a good base for the hurricane season as it is uncrowded and has many secure hurricane holes. The haulout facilities all take special measures to ensure that boats do not fall over.

The whole of Nelson's Dockyard has been beautifully reconstructed to house hotels, restaurants, and businesses. The UNESCO World Heritage Site boundaries run to the ruins in the east of the area. It is an outstanding historic monument, all the better for being used. Falmouth Harbour is considerably larger and surrounded by hills.

Because the harbors are close together, most services, restaurants, and shops work for both. Most service providers are members of the Antigua and Barbuda Marine Association. You can view a copy of their cruisers directory on the website of the Antigua & Barbuda Yachting & Marine Association (ABYMA.ag).

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).

Stan “the Man” Pearson 1958 – 2024

Story and photos by John Burnie



Stan Pearson

Stan Pearson, the well-known Caribbean yachtsman and owner of Antigua Rigging, has died at the age of 66.

Originally from New Zealand and a somewhat private man, his early life was something of an enigma to those who knew him in later life. He first came to notice as a senior crew member on *Nirvana* in 1987. Richard Matthews from Oyster had chartered the yacht for the Fastnet and was deeply impressed with the capable New Zealander and his wife, Fliss. That year an Oyster 68 called *Thriller* had been commissioned, and Stan and his wife became the captain and crew, arriving on the yacht in Antigua in 1990. At the time it was one of the larger yachts based there.

It was also about that time I first met Stan. I was introduced to him by his well-known moniker “Stan the Man.” He was a mast/rigging expert and was dealing with the compression jacks on *Mari-Cha 2* (later *Bristolian*). By now he had moved ashore and was building his rigging business and reputation. He aligned with FKG, the well-known rig company in St Martin, and made many contacts and friends in Camden, Maine, during his association with Wayfarer Marine. There he met Steve Tofield (Lyman-Morse), who became a lifelong friend. Stan’s business, Antigua Rigging, became fully established at the Catamaran Club, and he was appointed as the service agent for both Oyster and Nautor Swan as well as becoming the representative of many marine parts suppliers.

During the many sailing events I attended in the Caribbean and Europe through the 90s, Stan was usually present. We sailed together on numerous occasions, including *Braveheart* (Truly Classic ’78), when Mark Stevens first became captain.

In 2000 I moved to the Caribbean full time, running a fleet of Swan charter yachts, and due to Stan’s agency connection, he and I worked together closely. He was an active member of the Antigua Yacht Club and through his encouragement and enthusiasm we both served on the various Antigua Race Week committees. Stan was also a hugely enthusiastic organiser (ably assisted by Tommy Patterson) of the Nelson Pursuit Race, an engaging re-enactment of Nelson’s pursuit of Admiral Pierre Jean Baptiste Silvestre de Villeneuve. Stan was a loyal supporter of many local events and activities. One of his great gifts was to encourage many others to join in and participate as well.

During his life in Antigua, Stan became very respected for his participation in numerous regattas. He was a class helm and took the wheel on many notable yachts including *Sagamore, Kalikobass, Rebecca* and *Adela*. His close friendship with “Sparky” Beardall ensured his regular presence, and he undoubtedly contributed to the remarkable run of successes on the magnificent ketch *Rebecca*.

In July 2008 Stan and I were enjoying lunch at Cloggy’s in English Harbour, mulling over ideas to re-introduce a Swan regatta in Antigua (there had been one in 1980). As the lunch progressed, we were struck by the paucity of offshore racing taking place in the Caribbean. Encouraged by a fine bottle of Minuty, we rang Eddie Warden Owen in London, who had just joined the RORC as CEO. Eddie was enthusiastic, so we immediately looked at plans of how we could create a Caribbean offshore race, starting and ending in Antigua.

When Stan had a project he was keen on, he was awesome. Through his supreme effort and planning, the RORC Caribbean 600 was born, the inaugural event taking place in February 2009. Stan will be long remembered for the wonderful course he designed (my contribution being the deletion of a circumnavigation around Les Saintes). Stan did so much for the race and event, laying marks, even building the start line mast.

One of Stan’s great qualities was his aim for inclusivity. Together with Hugh Bailey he encouraged many local people to participate in yachting, particularly those who worked with him. He was a champion of Antiguan incentive and a strong supporter of the Caribbean Sailing Association, which enabled that rating rule to lie alongside other handicap measurement rules. He created the short Nelson Trophy event by his persistence and enthusiasm which then created an additional short series before the RORC Caribbean 600.

More recently, together with Paul Deeth, Stan took on the running of the ailing Superyacht Regatta in Antigua. With a change of date and Stan’s enthusiasm the whole event again came alive. He shared his experiences with other regatta managers, which helped in the development of better rating systems and fairness, notably working with ORC on the ORCsy (superyacht) rating rules.

Although his health had been ailing, Stan’s passing was sudden and unexpected. He was a sporting/betting man and Richard Matthews (who had remained a close friend since they first met in 1987) thought it inappropriate that Stan should choose to exit when he still owed 14 bottles of champagne. Stan was blessed with many good friends in Antigua, a number of whom were able to be with him in his final period. Appropriately his ashes were scattered at the Superyacht Challenge in March.

John Burnie lived in the Caribbean for 10 years. He founded the RORC Caribbean 600 with Stan Pearson, the RORC and other members of the Antigua Yacht Club.

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Marine Sponges — Masters of Symbiosis

Story and photos by Darelle Snyman



Branching tube sponge covered in brittle stars

Marine sponges are fascinating creatures that have been around for over 600 million years. These ancient creatures are common Caribbean citizens, gracing the underwater world in a staggering array of colors and shapes. The most compelling aspects of the life of these unassuming filter feeders are the intricate relationships they have forged with an array of marine organisms. Their diverse community of symbiotic partners makes them important role players within the marine ecosystem. So let's dive into the world of marine sponge relationships.

The constant flow of water and abundant food in these porous critters makes them attractive real estate for a host of tenants. The giant barrel sponge (*Xestospongia muta*), with its large barrel-shaped body, is just the type of sponge that will attract tenants. It is for this reason that I love inspecting them for sponge dwellers when I encounter them. For a start, you might find small fish and shrimps inside them, scavenging for food particles. For shrimps, sponges not only offer shelter but also a banquet of delicacies. The nimble pincers of these tiny crustaceans pick away at parasites and debris clinging to the sponge surface, providing it with a dedicated cleaning service.

Some shrimp species set up permanent residence in their sponge hosts and certain sponges on coral reefs along the Western Atlantic house just such remarkable creatures. It is thanks to this article that I actually stumbled across the truly unique regal shrimp (*Synalpheus regalis*), a snapping shrimp species. It is not the fact that they associate exclusively with sponges that make them unique, but that they live in a society with a hierarchical setup that resembles that of bees and ants, making them one of the very few eusocial creatures in the marine world. A colony of these tiny shrimps that can number over 300 consists of a single breeding female, the queen. Her minions who take care of the colony forage for food and defend it. They do not cohabitate well and it is up to the larger individuals in the colony to fiercely defend their home, directing their wrath especially to other shrimp species.

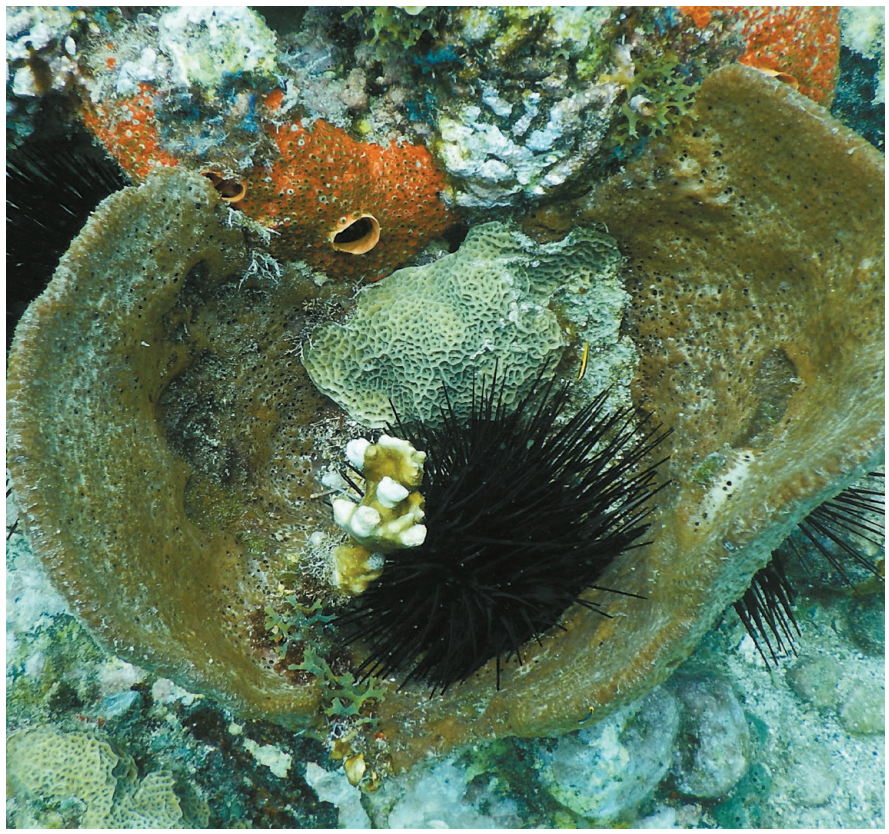
Finding these translucent orange critters will not be easy as they are so small and well hidden within their host. Their penchant to only associate with one or a few species of sponges means that when you are looking for these critters you are basically looking for a limited set of sponges. In Belize, for example, it was found that they mostly associate with three sponge species: *Neopetrosia proxima*, *N. Subtriangularis* and *Hyatella intestinal.*

Shrimps are not the only crustaceans attracted to this prime real estate with its smorgasbord of food; spider crabs and pea crabs can often be found in the nooks and crannies of sponges. Some crabs remove pieces of a living sponge, decorating their carapace to blend into its surroundings. A Caribbean resident that employs this technique is the spongy decorator crab (*Macrocoeloma trispinosum*). This industrious creature not only glues pieces of sponge to its shell but will add hydroids and algae, creating a living collage of camouflage. These picky gardeners prefer brightly colored sponges that closely match their environment and replace their carefully selected decorations with fresh ones when they become worn out. This relationship is mutually beneficial as the sponges continue to survive and feed wherever the crab takes them, although I think the crab has the better end of the deal.

A spiny echinoderm that has forged a very lucrative relationship with sponges when it comes to feeding is the brittle star. One such aptly named species is the sponge brittle star (*Ophiothrix suensoni*). These can often be seen draped across sponges, and if you ever dived or snorkeled in Bocas del Toro, Panama, a sponge encrusted with multiples of these curious creatures, feeding on a sponge-provided feast of plankton and detritus, is not such an uncommon sight. Brittle stars do not only graze on the sponge surface, but they are also in the unique position to access the morsels hidden inside. Their long, squiggly arms are perfectly designed to explore the labyrinth of canals that make up the sponge's body. The relationship between brittle stars and sponges is one of commensalism, where the one reaps all the benefits from the relationship and the other is not harmed.

—Continued on next page

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Netted branching tube with a coral and long-spined sea urchin residents

Another curious creature that takes advantage of the hospitality of sponges to form an unlikely partnership is the sponge zoanthid (*Umimayanthus parasiticus*), a member of the phylum Cnidaria, which includes corals and jellyfish. I encountered many a sponge in Bocas del Toro encrusted with the tiny polyps of these unique critters, creating a living tapestry across the surface of the sponge. Their fleshy polyps consist of a central oral disc surrounded by two rows of tentacles that can give the sponge a fuzzy appearance. The sponge zoanthid can be recognized by its pale central disc with a brown circle inside. This successful partnership provides the zoanthid with a safe and supportive haven to feed from, while the sponge gets rewarded by sharing in the food bounty grabbed by the multitude of little tentacles that dot their surface

Another common Caribbean zoanthid that frequents sponges is the golden zoanthid (*Parazoanthus swiftii*). I have seen them encrusting green finger sponges (*Iotrochota birotulata*), where their bright yellow or orange bodies contrast beautifully with the green of the sponge. Their vivid color advertises their toxicity and may deter predatory fish like the rock beauty (*Holocanthus tricolor*) from taking bites out of its sponge host.



Not all of these relationships are created equal and a sponge dweller that is not just a casual tenant but actually a parasite is the sponge threadworm (*Haplosyllis spongicola*). These tiny, white, segmented worms live parasitically on several sponge species around the world. In the Caribbean these tiny invaders are often associated with the touch-me-not sponge (*Neofibularia nolitangere*), where they appear as small white shapes embedded in the sponge tissue. They feed by burrowing into the sponge, sucking out the contents of individual cells. Despite their parasitic nature the worms do not kill their host, even though there can be tens of thousands of worms living in a single sponge. Their presence has enticed several species of small goby (*Elacatinus spp.*) to also set up residence inside the sponges where they feed almost exclusively on the worms.



Sponge encrusted with sponge zoanthids

The true nature of the relationship between a sponge and its squiggly residents is still not fully understood. Some scientists believe that the sponges do reap some benefit from the interaction; others believe that the worms are true parasites reaping all the benefit.

The most vital symbiotic associations in a sponge's life are those that happen unseen to the naked eye. Sponges have established intricate associations with a host of microbial allies, from bacteria and archaea to algae, which play a crucial role in the sponge's overall health. Of these, bacteria are the most common and can number in the trillions. Some break down organic matter into a form the sponge can absorb, others fix nitrogen, an essential but often scarce resource within many marine environments. Photosynthetic bacteria and algae in turn supplement the sponge's filter-feeding diet with vital nutrients. The benefits of these collaborations, however, extend beyond basic nutrition. Some of these microbial marvels produce potent chemicals that not only deter spongivorous specialists such as turtles and some nudibranchs, but also provide protection against disease, and even help the sponge to compete for space. The sponge, in turn, provides its microbial partners with a safe haven and a constant flow of food.

The complex web of partnerships sponges have established are clearly amazing, giving us a greater appreciation for the remarkable ways animals have adapted to survive and thrive. So the next time you encounter these seemingly simple creatures underwater, take a closer look. You might even be lucky enough to witness some of these captivating interactions.

April Sky

By Jim Ulik

Historically, eclipses and comet sightings were rare for any given location on Earth. Some ancient structures or sites were aligned according to specific astronomical events, but an eclipse or comet would not have factored into the ancients' designs. In fact, those occurrences would have been unsettling and sure to forecast trouble ahead. The Caguana Ceremonial Ball Courts Site in Puerto Rico is an example of a site with plazas aligned with reference to celestial events. How would the Taíno react to the sky darkening as the Sun dimmed or completely disappeared? The site is over 700 years old. It was built by the Taíno around 1270 AD and considered one of the most important archeological sites in the West Indies. The site functioned as a place to observe or predict astronomical events. There are symbolic representations of astronomical objects engraved on rock slabs.

Monday, April 01

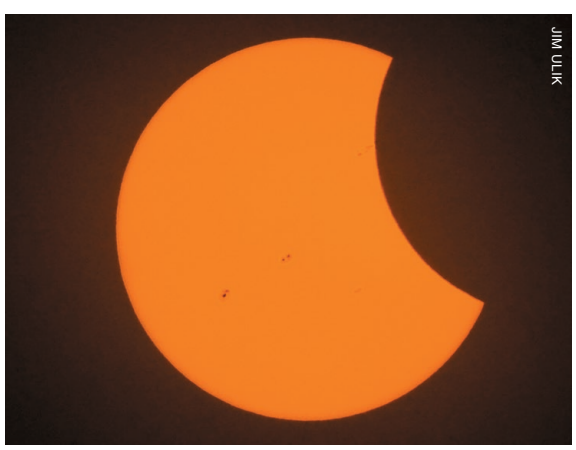
The Moon is approaching its Third Quarter phase as it rises in the eastern sky within the hour past midnight. That Third Quarter moment occurs just before noon as the Moon begins to set in the west. The orbital position of the Moon today in relation to the Earth and Sun provides for reasonably accurate north and south readings. Extend a line along the track that divides day and night on the Moon. That line will extend to either north or south. During this lunar phase the Sun is positioned 90 degrees from the Moon. The illuminated side of the Sun faces relative east based on the tilt of the Earth and its seasons. Today the Sun rises at 85 degrees and sets at 276 degrees.

Saturday, April 06

The Moon has slid past Mars over the last 24 hours to make a close approach with Saturn. The ringed planet is located toward the north of the crescent Moon. Mars, Saturn and the Moon can be seen low in the eastern sky for about an hour before sunrise.

Sunday, April 07

A fine sliver Moon makes a close approach to Venus this morning. Both objects will be visible for a few minutes above the eastern horizon until they get lost in the glare of the morning Sun. Venus is closing in on its disappearance below the horizon behind the Sun. Eventually it will reappear as an evening "star" in July.



The Sun during a partial eclipse

Monday, April 08

Numerous reports over the last few weeks have mentioned the total solar eclipse that occurs today. It is quite an experience to observe the disappearance of the Sun. However, the eclipse will only skim the Caribbean Basin. The partial eclipse will not appear south of a line between Aruba and Dominica. The lunar shadow will pass from Panama just before 1300h reaching Dominica around 1520h. More Sun will be blocked from view farther north.

Visible Solar Eclipse

Northern Dominica - less than one percent

Barranquilla, Colombia, Antigua and Barbuda - less than two percent

Saba - three percent

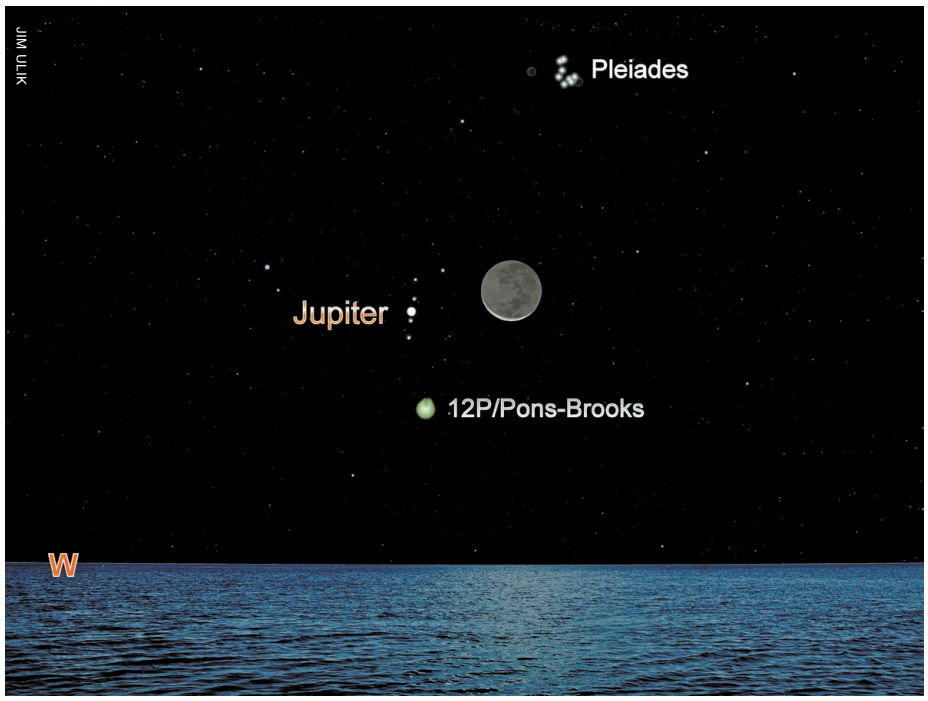
St. Martin to St. Croix - four percent

BVI - five percent

Puerto Rico - six percent

Dominican Republic - 10 to 15 percent

Do not use sunglasses. It is essential that you use adequate eye protection whenever you look directly at the sun to avoid causing permanent and irreparable damage to your retinas. Solar glasses must meet safety requirements of the ISO 12312-2 international standard.



Close approach between Jupiter and the Moon at 1900h on April 10

Wednesday, April 10

There is a close approach between Mars and Saturn this morning. Both objects will shine equally bright in the eastern sky. Red Mars will be positioned less than one degree above Saturn.

In the evening sky the fine crescent Moon moves in close to Jupiter. The pair can be found below the Seven Sisters (Pleiades). The period comet 12P/Pons-Brooks may be seen with binoculars a few degrees below Jupiter. The comet was first spotted in 1812 and again in 1883. With a 71-year orbit this periodic comet made its last close encounter with the Sun on May 22, 1954. The next close approach to the Sun occurs on April 21, 2024.

Thursday, April 11

The Moon left Jupiter behind and passed through the Seven Sisters over the past 24 hours. The Moon has settled above or east of Pleiades tonight. Both can be seen in the west northwestern sky for about an hour after sunset. The two stars closest to the Moon are Atlas and Pleione, the parents of the Seven Sisters. Atlas was the god who instructed mankind in the art of astronomy which was used by sailors in navigation and farmers in measuring the seasons. Pleione, an ocean nymph, is a female deity that protected sailors, fishermen and animals.

Monday, April 15

The Moon reaches First Quarter this afternoon. There is a close approach between Pollux, a star used in celestial navigation, and the Moon. In Greek culture Pollux sailed with Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. Moonrise occurs just before noon and setting time is tomorrow just after midnight. The Moon's declination is 25 degrees north, passing over the Bahamas.

The Sun is continuing to make its way north. Today its declination is 10 degrees north of the celestial equator directly over the northern coast of South America.

Sunday, April 21

Just a reminder that comet 12P/Pons-Brooks is at its brightest. Binoculars and a clear view of the western horizon after sunset are necessary to spot this horseshoe shaped comet. Its size is estimated to be 10.5 miles (17 km) in diameter. The comet will be located about eight degrees south or left of Jupiter. One fist held out at arm's length measures roughly 10 degrees.

Monday, April 22

After midnight a variable amount of meteors may arise from the April Lyrids meteor shower. They will radiate out of an area of night sky near Vega, the bright star in the constellation Lyra. The maximum total could reach 90 per hour; however, it is estimated to be less than 21 in the Caribbean. The shower is active April 12 – April 30.

Tuesday, April 23

A few meteors will radiate across the southern sky from April 13 – April 27. Tonight marks the peak of the Pi Puppid meteor shower. What is nice about this shower is it occurs at reasonable hours, between 1900 and 2200. Better viewing will be as the Full Moon is just beginning to rise and when the shower radiant is highest in the southwest sky.

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





Crossing 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.

April 2024	
DATE	**TIME**
1	0523
2	0622
3	0721
4	0818
5	0913
6	1005
7	1056
8	1147
9	1240
10	1334
11	1430
12	1529
13	1627
14	1724
15	1818
16	1908
17	1953
18	2036
19	2116
20	2155
21	2234
22	2314
23	2356
24	0000 FULL MOON
25	0041
26	0129
27	0222
28	0318
29	0416
30	0514

May 2024	
DATE	**TIME**
1	0611
2	0704
3	0756
4	0846
5	0935
6	1025
7	1118
8	1213
9	1311
10	1411
11	1511
12	1607
13	1700
14	1748
15	1832
16	1913
17	1953
18	2032
19	2111
20	2152
21	2236
22	2324
23	0000 FULL MOON
24	0016
25	0112
26	0210
27	0309
28	0406
29	0501
30	0552
31	0641

CALENDAR

April 2024

1	Easter Monday. Public holiday in some places.
1-5	Vujaday Music Festival, Barbados. vujadaymusicfestival.com
1-7	VBVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival. bvispringregatta.org
2	Round Tortola race for the Nanny Cay Cup. yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eid=16228
3	Scrub Island Invitational, Tortola, BVI. royalbviyc.org
3-9	Jamaica Carnival.www.socaislands.com
6	Panama Posse Belize Yacht Fest, Placencia Yacht Club, Belize. panamaposse.com/fleet-update-2024-01-24
10	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Eid ul-Fitr, end of Ramadan)
12-14	St. Croix International Regatta. stcroixyc.com
13	Dinghy Championship Hope Ross Series Day 1, St. Maarten. smyc.com/dinghy-season-championship
14-20	Les Voiles de St Barth. lesvoilesdestbarthrichardmille.com
14-21	British Virgin Islands Food and Wine Festival. bvifoodandwine.com
16	Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Birthday of José de Diego)
16-3 May	St. Maarten Carnival. fetebookit.com/st-maarten-carnival/2024/
17-22	Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. antiguaclassics.com
20	Island Water World's Seminar: Atlantic Crossing and Life Raft Demo. Cole Bay, St. Maarten. islandwaterworld.com
20-21	Coffee & Chocolate Expo, Puerto Rico Convention Center, San Juan
22	Earth Day
22	Governor's Cup Race, BVI. royalbviyc.org
22-28	Ritmo Cuba, International Cuban Dance Festival, Havana
23	FULL MOON (Full Pink Moon)
23-26	Carriacou Maroon & String Band Music Festival. ourcarriacou.com/maroon-string-band-music-festival/
23-30	St. Thomas Carnival
25	St. Barths Film Festival
25-28	NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
26-27	Aruba Food Truck Festival
27	Public holiday in St. Maarten and Bonaire (King's Day)
27	Capella Music Festival, Grand Cayman. capellamusicfestival.com
26-1 May	Barbados Reggae Festival
27–3 May	Antigua Sailing Week. www.sailingweek.com
27-3 May	Mayreau Regatta, Mayreau Island, Grenadines. discoversvg.com
27	Peters and May Round Antigua Race. sailingweek.com
28	Public holiday in Barbados (National Heroes' Day)
30	Public holiday in Bonaire (Rincon Day)
30	St. Maarten-St. Martin Carnival
30-4 May	Vallenato Festival, Valledupar, Colombia. /festivalnexus.com/vallenato-legend-festival-festival-de-la-leyenda-vallenata/
30-10 May	Cayman Islands Carnival (Batabano)
30-12 May	St. Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival. stlucia.org/en/jazz/

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

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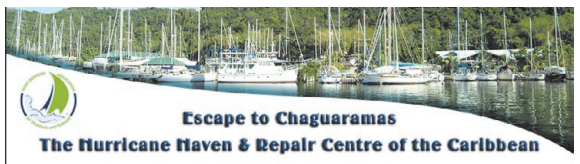
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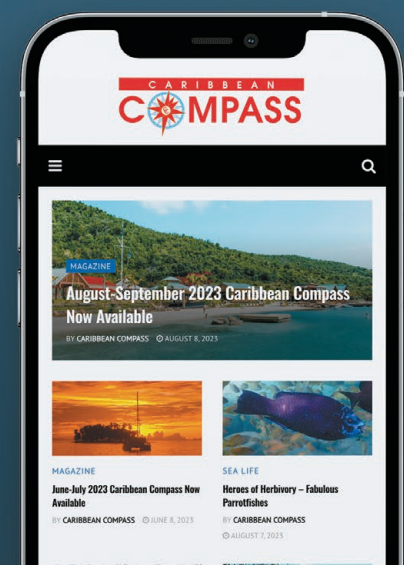
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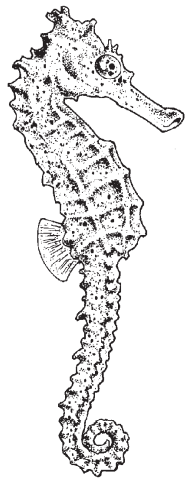


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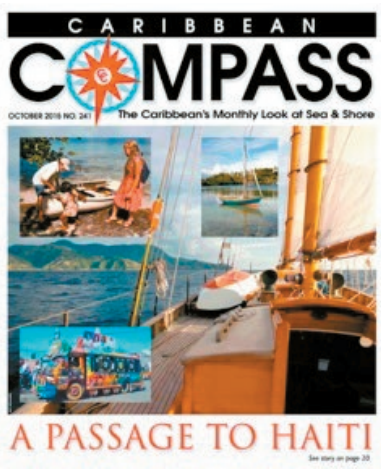
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ADVERTISERS INDEX

ADVERTISER	LOCATION	PG#
Admiral Ferrries	SVG	23
Anguilla Tourist Board	Anguilla	23
Antigua and Barbuda Tourism	Antigua	14
Art Fabrik	Grenada	MP
B+G Marine Services	BVI	32
Bequia ThreadWorks	SVG	MP
Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina	SVG	8
Boat Paint & Composites	St. Maarten	25
Budget Marine	St. Maarten	2
Budget Marine St. Kitts	St. Kitts	MP
CalvinAir Helicopters	Antigua	11
Centenario & Co	Panama	34
Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina	Grenada	9
Club De Pesca Marina	Colombia	6
Douglas Yacht Services	Martinique	18
Doyle Offshore Sails	Barbados	12
Doyle's Guides	USA	25
Fostools Sales and Services	Trinidad	32
Grenada Marine	Grenada	20
Happy Kite	SVG	MP
Horizon Yacht Charters	Grenada	21
Hutch's E-book	C/W	38
Hydrovane International Marine	C/W	MP
Island Water World	St. Maarten	40
LAC Services	SVG	MP
Mac's Pizzeria	SVG	MP
Marina Santa Marta	Colombia	24
McIntyre Bros	Grenada	38
Mid Atlantic Yacht Services	Azores	MP
Ministry of Trade & Industry	Trinidad	19
Multihull Company	C/W	5
Neil Pryde Sails	Grenada	MP
Northern Lights- Parts & Power	Tortola	13
Off Shore Risk Management	Tortola	26
Offshore Passage Opportunities	C/W	MP
Peake Yacht Services	Trinidad	28
Power Boats	Trinidad	15/ MP
Rodney Bay Marina/ IGY	St. Lucia	32
Sailors for the Sea	C/W	36
St. Lucia Tourism	St. Lucia	7
Tobago Cays	SVG	MP
Turbulence Sails	Grenada	26/ MP
Umbrellas Beach Bar	Grenada	12
VIPCA/ VIBE	St. Thomas	16
Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour	Virgin Gorda	27
Westerhall Rum	Grenada	16
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