CARIBBEAN COMPASS

MAY 2026 NO. 359

The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore

OVER THE HORIZON

SEE CALENDAR PAGE 27 —

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by Caribbean Compass *editors*

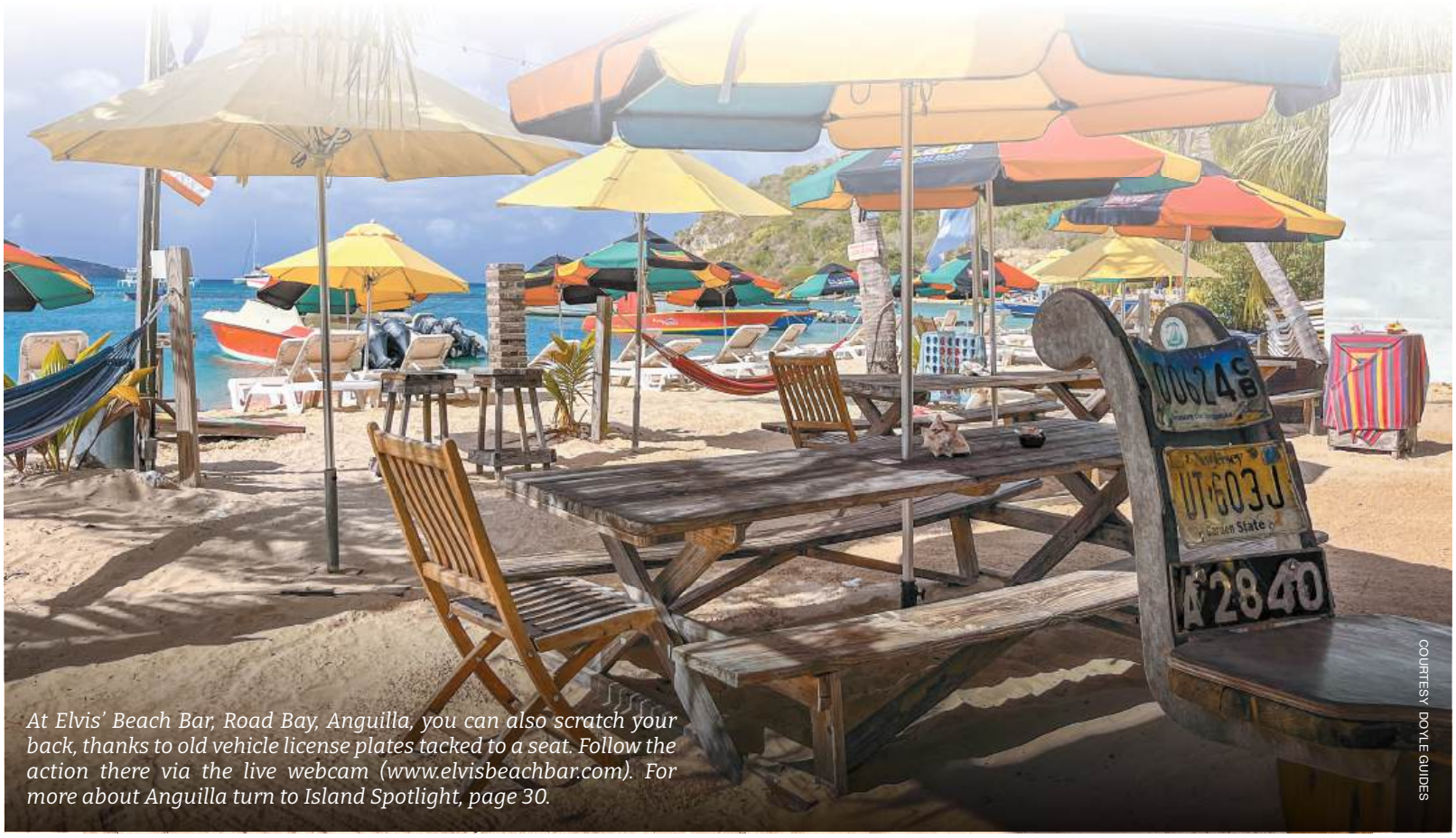
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At Elvis' Beach Bar, Road Bay, Anguilla, you can also scratch your back, thanks to old vehicle license plates tacked to a seat. Follow the action there via the live webcam (www.elvisbeachbar.com). For more about Anguilla turn to Island Spotlight, page 30.

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Find *Caribbean Compass* at caribbeancompass.com/pick-up

Find the 2026 Calendar at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar/

About the Cover *A May 9, 2026 run from St. Barts to Newport, R.I., is in store for Bryon Ehrhart's record-breaking Juan K Maxi 88* Lucky *in the debut of the 1,500-nautical-mile US Open – Offshore regatta. Ehrhart, also the event chair, views it as a vehicle for relocating yachts in a fun final race to end the Caribbean season and put competitors in position for summer events in the United States. Find more events herding sailors over the horizon in the May Calendar on page 27.*

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Caribbean Compass

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ISSN 1605 - 1998



COURTESY BILL WIARD

1977 — Captain Bill Wiard and wife, Diane, on Snow Goose

The Good Old Days

Dear *Compass*,

Enjoyed reading the article about Charles Tobias (April 2026, caribbeancompass.com/charles-s-tobias-founder-of-pussers-rum-ltd/) and fondly remembering my days living in Tortola, BVI, and working for The Moorings, and my friendship with *Compass* founders Sally Erdle and Tom Hopman.

After racing on Lake Pontchartrain against John Dane and Tommy Dreyfus I was hired by Peter Starr to join *Cyrano* as first mate and sailed with William F. Buckley and family on their annual Christmas cruise to the Bahamas. In 1976, I had my first mate job as a reference, so The Moorings hired my wife and me to run the company's first fully crewed yacht, a Gulfstar 50 operating out of Tortola.

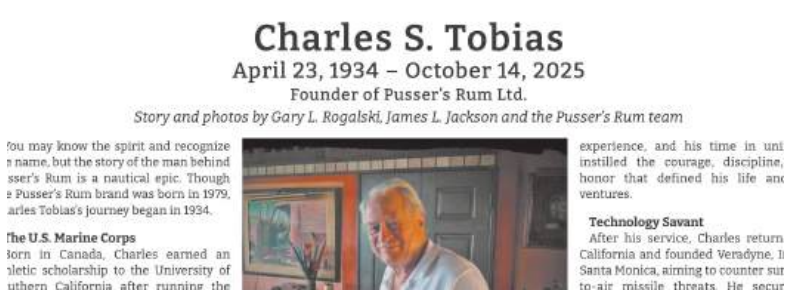
We completed 50 weeks of charter in two years and became close friends with Lowell and Vivian Wheatley, owners of Anegada Reef Hotel. Anegada was off limits to bareboat charters (it was redlined on the Moorings chart). My almost weekly trips introducing my charter guests helped open Anegada to the bareboat charter business.

My son was born in Tortola's Peebles Hospital (that's another story) in 1979, so I moved ashore and ran The Moorings base (charter operations, hotel and restaurant) as general manager until 1984. During that time, Charlie Cary, Jack Baratelli and I developed a relationship with Madame Roux, president of Beneteau. That relationship produced the first Beneteau charter yacht order of 120 Beneteau 38s to be delivered to Tortola and St. Lucia with Moorings charter yacht specifications.

Due to subpar primary education available in Tortola, my wife and I chose to leave Tortola in 1984 (my son turning five) to put him in school in the US. The Moorings wanted to move their headquarters in 1984 from New Orleans to Pinellas County, Florida, to be closer to yacht builders Morgan and Gulfstar. Cary asked me to move to Pinellas County and locate office space to house headquarters (administration, sales and marketing). I opened the first Moorings headquarters in Florida and became the vice president of yacht sales. My sales team sold approximately 1,135 charter yachts over the following 14 years and was instrumental in growing The Moorings from two destinations and 40 yachts to 24 destinations and 660 yachts in the charter fleet.

My best to Sally and Tom for memorializing the good old days in the Caribbean,

Bill Wiard



Charles S. Tobias

April 23, 1934 – October 14, 2025

Founder of Pusser's Rum Ltd.

Story and photos by Gary L. Rogalski, James L. Jackson and the Pusser's Rum team

You may know the spirit and recognize name, but the story of the man behind sser's Rum is a nautical epic. Though e Pusser's Rum brand was born in 1979, arles Tobias's journey began in 1934.

The U.S. Marine Corps

born in Canada, Charles earned an letic scholarship to the University of uthern California after running the

experience, and his time in uni instilled the courage, discipline, honor that defined his life an ventures.

Technology Savant

After his service, Charles return California and founded Veradyne, I Santa Monica, aiming to counter sur to-air missile threats. He secur

Remembering Tobias

Dear *Compass*:

The April edition of *Caribbean Compass* magazine includes the legacy tribute we all helped craft to honor our beloved Charles Tobias (April 2026).

Elaine Lembo — chief editor of the magazine and a close friend of David Curry, a close associate of Charles's — moved quickly to feature it after I brought the opportunity to her.

The magazine is widely read and well regarded by travelers from around the world who visit, or have a deep connection to, the Caribbean, especially the BVI. It's a fitting place for Charles's story to be told.

I want to extend our thanks to Elaine on behalf of both of us and the entire Pusser's Rum team.

With appreciation and warm regards,

Gary L. Rogalski
President & CEO
Pusser's Rum LTD Inc.
www.pussersrum.com

Pam Levy Remembered

Dear *Compass*,



Please pass on to Tad Richards my congratulations on his well-written review that neatly resolved the conundrum that is *Return to Blue Water*. The book is many different animals in one, and he gave each their due, but in particular, the credit Pam deserves for her work.

Many thanks to Elaine Lembo, first for editing the book, and then for publishing the review! I have a scout in Antigua who just might land a hard copy of the April issue for me.

Best,

John Burnham

Dorade crew and dorade.org editor



COURTESY BUDGET MARINE



Helga Marie Løvenskiold Kveseth will sail solo non-stop around the world via the five Great Capes in the 2026 Golden Globe Race that starts in September 2026.

Budget Marine Backs Mara Kveseth in Golden Globe Race

Budget Marine Group, together with its St. Maarten (Cole Bay) team and other partners on the island, are supporting Helga Marie ("Mara") Løvenskiold Kveseth in her preparation for the 2026 Golden Globe Race.

Originally from Norway, Mara is a passionate sailor who continues to challenge herself, building experience and confidence with each journey. After completing a 4,000-mile Atlantic crossing, Mara arrived in St. Maarten, where she has undertaken a key refit phase before continuing to France for the race start from Les Sables-d'Olonne, France, on September 6, 2026. For her, the Golden Globe Race represents the ultimate test of physical and mental endurance, and she is embracing this challenge with determination.

The Golden Globe Race is one of the most demanding sailing challenges in the world. Sailors compete solo, sailing approximately 30,000 miles non-stop around the globe without modern technology or outside assistance. Using only pre-1988 designed boats and traditional navigation methods, the race brings sailing back to its "Golden Age."

Budget Marine involvement during both this refit period and the race allows it to be part of an inspiring journey that reflects resilience, expertise, and passion for the sea.

Read more about Mara at the Golden Globe race website (goldengloberace.com/skippers/helga-marie-mara-lovenskiold-kveseth)

COURTESY PARTS & POWER



New sales supervisor Melissa Frett

Parts & Power Promotes Melissa Frett

Melissa Frett was promoted to sales supervisor of Parts & Power, Tortola, BVI. Frett, who joined the company in spring 2025 as sales administrator, will now be working with Tony Tuckett, Shawina Jacobs and Meckel Weste, coordinating sales travel, following up with sales leads, and assisting the sales staff.

Parts & Power sells marine and industrial diesel engines from Perkins, Volvo, Yanmar, Kubota and Northern Lights Lugger. It is a Caribbean distributor for Northern Lights marine generators, and Kubota engines and generators. Parts & Power has dealers in most Eastern Caribbean countries and the ABC islands.

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Grenada



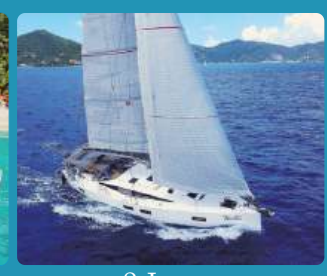
2016 Lagoon 380
$225,000 USD
Luperon, DR



2019 Leopard 50
$659,000 USD
Manuel Reef, BVI



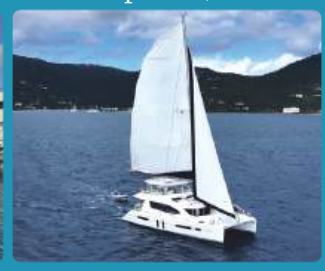
2018 Lagoon 630MY
$1,699,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



2018 Jeanneau Yachts 51
$449,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



2023 Jeanneau 65
$1,500,000 USD
Saint-Martin



2016 Leopard 58
$899,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



2020 Beneteau Oceanis 46.1
$336,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



2016 Jeanneau 519
$229,000 USD
Antigua & Barbuda



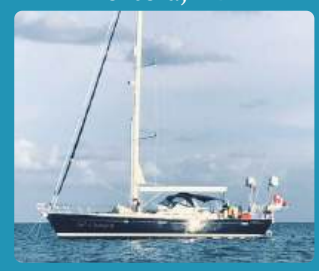
2021 Fountaine Pajot Tanna 47
$950,000 USD
Saint-Thomas, USVI



2016 Alibi 54
$1,290,000 USD
Nanny Cay, BVI



2023 Hanse 510
$899,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



2009 Beneteau 57
$299,000 USD
Virgin Gorda, BVI



2002 Bavaria Cruiser 50
$100,000 USD
Dominican Republic



2011 Beneteau Oceanis 43
$139,000 USD
Grenada

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Channel 16



MATTHEW JORDAN SMITH

Terry McMillan Presents

Stars Head for Nevis

Nevis will take a star turn this fall as the backdrop for *Terry McMillan Presents: Paradise with You*, a new romantic drama premiering on Lifetime as part of the network's Love of a Lifetime slate. Filmed entirely on location, the production showcases the island's beaches, historic estates, and volcanic landscapes, further strengthening Nevis' profile as a Caribbean filming destination.

The film stars SAG and NAACP winner Taye Diggs, Heather Hemmens — who also serves as executive producer — and Cynthia Bailey, with Troy Brookins and Q Stenline in supporting roles. Directed by Patricia Frontain from a script by Ejay Jamison, the movie follows an NFL star and an interior designer whose island romance is tested when they vie for the same historic estate.

The project was facilitated by the Nevis Film Commission with support from the Nevis Tourism Authority (NTA).

Recent productions on Nevis include *A Week in Paradise* and *Christmas in the Caribbean*, underscoring the island's growing appeal to global filmmakers.



MICHELLE BURROWS

Solutions: BESF presents first sustainability grants.

Caribbean Currents Newsletter

Caribbean Currents, a new newsletter published by the Nature Conservancy, debuted in March 2026, highlighting the organization's mission "to advance solutions that meet the urgent crises of diversity loss and climate change impacts while building a foundation for a thriving future."

The first issue contains stories on the new LinkedIn Caribbean Currents Masterclass series, Building Science Skills for Conservation Impact, Reporting Illegal Fishing in the Bahamas, the CoralCarib project's work building partnerships to innovate and strengthen coral reef restoration, and other subjects.

Subscribe to the Newsletter at https://www.nature.org/en-us/subscribe/.

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COURTESY DOMINICA HOTEL AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Dominica HikeFest

Dominica is inviting hikers, outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers to explore the island's most secluded landscapes in May as the Dominica Hotel and Tourism Association (DHTA) launches HikeFest 2026, "Beyond the Beaten Path."

The event offers guided access to hidden lakes, forest pools, ridgelines and waterfalls that fall well outside the usual visitor circuit. Organizers say the festival provides a structured way to experience Dominica's terrain, with options ranging from short, easy walks to full-day challenges.

The 2026 edition unfolds across five Saturdays in May, supported by additional mid-week hikes that allow visitors to build short breaks or longer stays around multiple trail experiences. This year's program includes early-morning climbs and a night-hiking option, expanding the range of ways participants can encounter Dominica's rainforest and volcanic interior.

Registration fees range from EC$60 to EC$75 per person, with discounts for groups and multi-hike participation. For details and registration, contact the DHTA at (767) 275-7454 or admin@dominicahta.org. For a full schedule of hikes, check the Caribbean Compass *calendar or the map on this page.*

Nevis Celebrates Successful 25th Anniversary of Cross Channel Swim

The Nevis to St. Kitts Cross Channel Swim in March 2026 welcomed 500 swimmers from 41 countries, plus one Olympic legend. Alice Dearing, who in 2021 became the first Black swimmer to represent Great Britain in the Olympics, led the field in her age group (20-29). Other finishers included 12-year olds Greyson Burrell and Saulo Sahely (St. Kitts and Nevis), and Skip Fear (St. Kitts and Nevis) and Richard Aikman (United States), the oldest finishers at age 80.

Dearing, noted as a global diversity advocate, is co-founder of the Black Swimming Association.

Overall winners of the 2.5-mile race were Craig Munden (Bermuda) – 56:14; Michel Heijnen (Netherlands) – 1:00:14; and Theo Estasse (France) – 1:01:01.

Record Visitors for USVI

The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism reports record visitor arrivals for the first quarter of 2026, underscoring continued growth in the territory's tourism sector. March alone saw 121,716 arrivals, up 23 percent year-over-year and 14 percent above the previous high set in 2024.

St. Thomas drove most of the gains with 98,284 March arrivals, a 24 percent increase over 2025, while St. Croix welcomed 23,432 visitors, up 20 percent year-over-year. For the full first quarter,
the territory recorded 303,388 arrivals, a 12 percent rise compared to 2025.

Tourism officials attribute the strong start to sustained U.S. demand and recent promotional efforts, including sports partnerships, media collaborations, and expanded Carnival marketing. The department continues to focus on airlift, partnerships, and visibility to maintain momentum through 2026.



COURTESY NEVIS TOURISM AUTHORITY/SKYSHUN DIGITAL

Alice Dearing, former British Olympic marathon swimmer at the Nevis to St. Kitts Cross Channel Swim

Study: Sewage Pollutes Nearly Three-Quarters of the World's Marine Protected Areas

A new study published in *Ocean & Coastal Management* by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the University of Queensland, Australia, has found that nearly three out of four of the world's marine protected areas (MPAs) are polluted by sewage. In regions most critical for coral reefs and tropical marine life, the situation is worse: 87–92 percent of MPAs are affected, with pollution levels inside protected zones averaging ten times higher than in nearby unprotected waters.



COURTESY WCS

Brown effluent flows directly from pipe into coastal waters.

Researchers evaluated more than 16,000 MPAs worldwide, mapping how nitrogen from wastewater reaches protected areas. Wastewater carries nutrients, pathogens, and chemicals that damage coral reefs and seagrass beds, fuel harmful algal blooms, and have been linked to Alzheimer's-like brain disease in dolphins. Human health impacts are severe as well, with polluted drinking water contributing to an estimated 1.4 million deaths annually and up to $12 billion in economic losses.

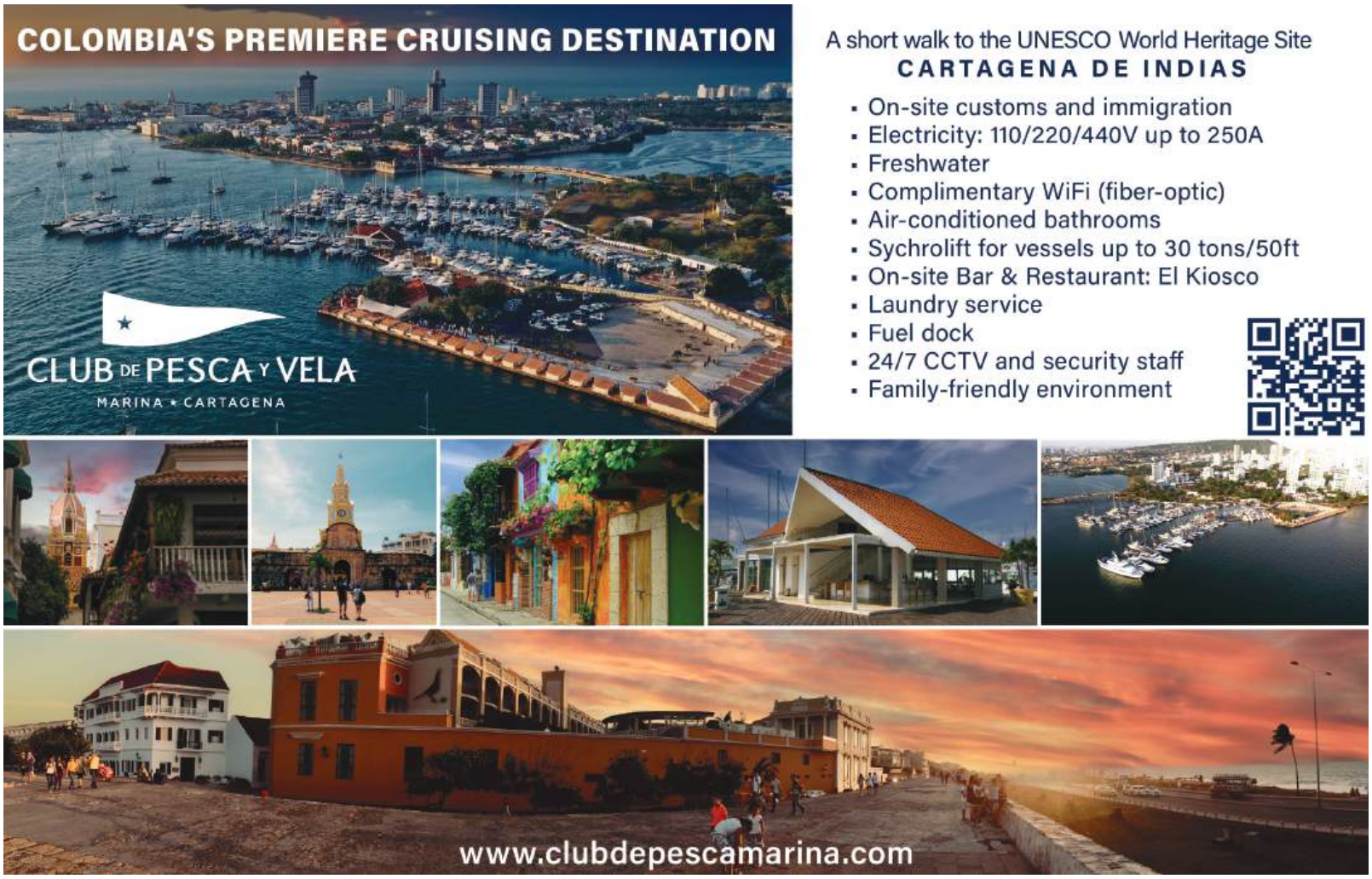
The findings raise concerns for the global "30 by 30" pledge to protect 30 percent of the ocean by 2030. "In region after region, the areas set aside for conservation were actually receiving more pollution than the areas with no protection at all," said lead author David E. Carrasco Rivera.

WCS Global Water Pollution Lead Dr. Amelia Wenger warned that even well-managed MPAs cannot succeed if pollution continues to flow in from land. The study urges governments to integrate wastewater management into ocean protection plans and to link area-based conservation targets with broader goals on land-use planning, restoration, and pollution reduction.

Youth Sailors Launch "Tide Turners – Stewards of the Sea" Initiative in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

The SVG Sailing Association has launched Tide Turners – Young Stewards of the Sea, a youth-led environmental initiative aimed at strengthening monitoring, awareness, and protection within the South Coast Marine Managed Area.

—Continued on the next page



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The official launch took place in March at the Vincy Sail Club, Coconut Grove, bringing together youth sailors, community members, partners, and supporters committed to safeguarding the St. Vincent and the Grenadines marine environment.

Tide Turners empowers youth sailors to become active stewards of the ocean through environmental education, biodiversity monitoring, shoreline cleanups, and community engagement. Participants will help record observations on marine wildlife, coastal changes, and pollution, contributing to valuable community-based environmental knowledge. Guests and participants at the launch were also invited to write pledges for the sea, committing to simple actions that help protect the marine environment.

Over the coming months, Tide Turners will continue to engage young sailors and local schools, collecting data that will be compiled into a community environmental report that will be shared with relevant government agencies and conservation partners.



COURTESY SVGSA

Tide Turners engages young sailors and local schools to create a Conservation Pledge Board.



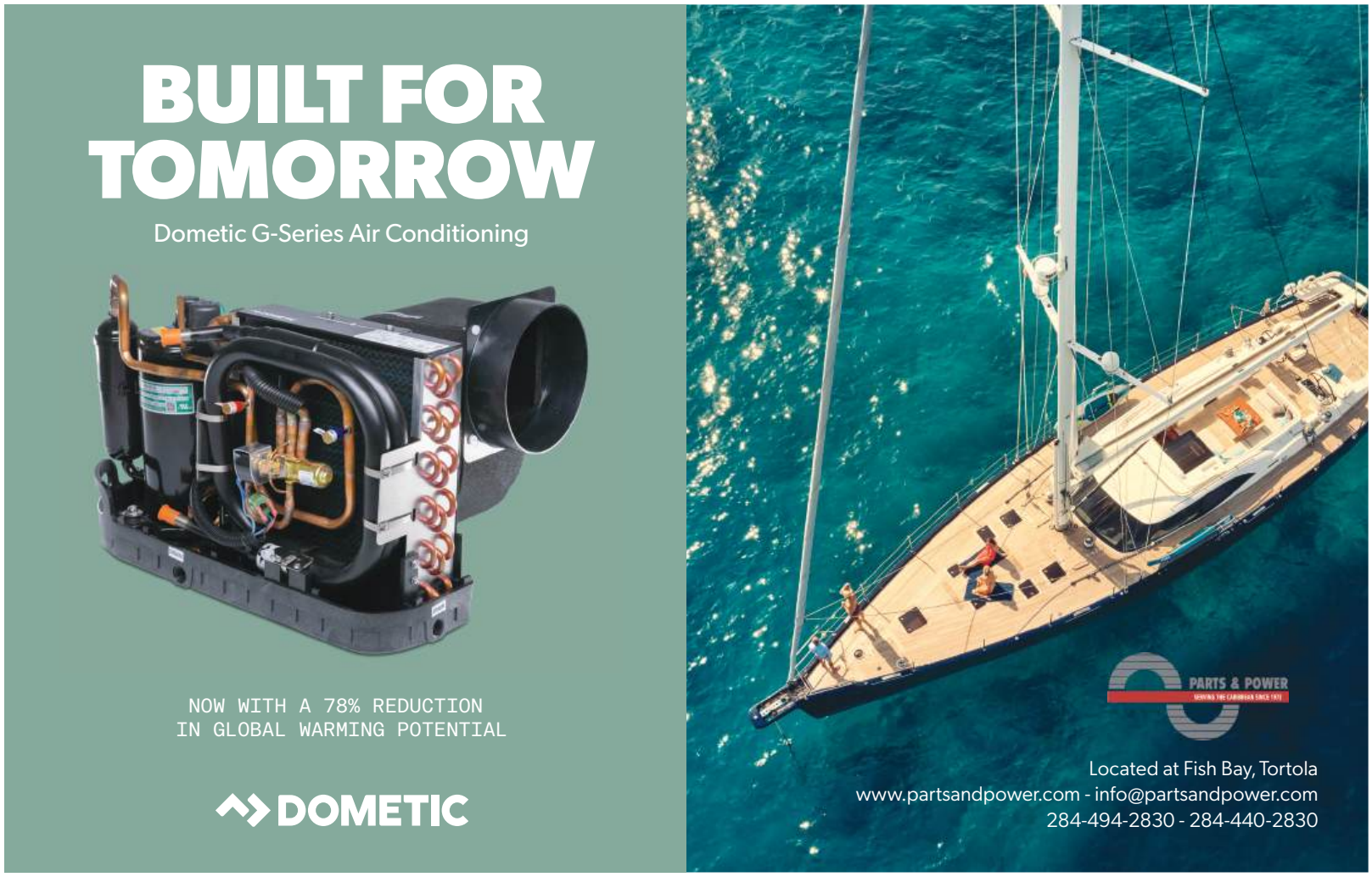
BONBERDE

Bonaire dam breaching. There is funding available to fix this and other dams, but the permit to conduct the work is not being issued due to lengthy and unpredictable permitting processes.

Climate Justice for Bonaire Starts with Local Voices

A recent Dutch court ruling in favor of Greenpeace and Bonaire residents found that the Dutch State has not done enough to protect the island from climate impacts, leaving Bonaire at disproportionate risk. The decision reinforces the need for climate policy shaped with input from those who work on the island and understand its challenges.

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Several resilience projects — including habitat restoration, erosion control, and water-management initiatives — remain stalled due to lengthy and unpredictable permitting processes. Local NGOs, working with residents, scientists, and international partners have secured funding and developed plans, but delays are slowing progress and discouraging applications for additional support.



COURTESY WCS

Colombia signed the Women Ocean Guardians Commitment in Geneva in March 2026.

As rising temperatures, drought, and coastal erosion intensify, faster permitting and stronger collaboration with local organizations will be essential to turn climate commitments into action. The Bonaire Nature Platform and its members say they are ready to work with local and kingdom governments to advance projects that can strengthen the island's resilience and protect its people, economy, and environment.

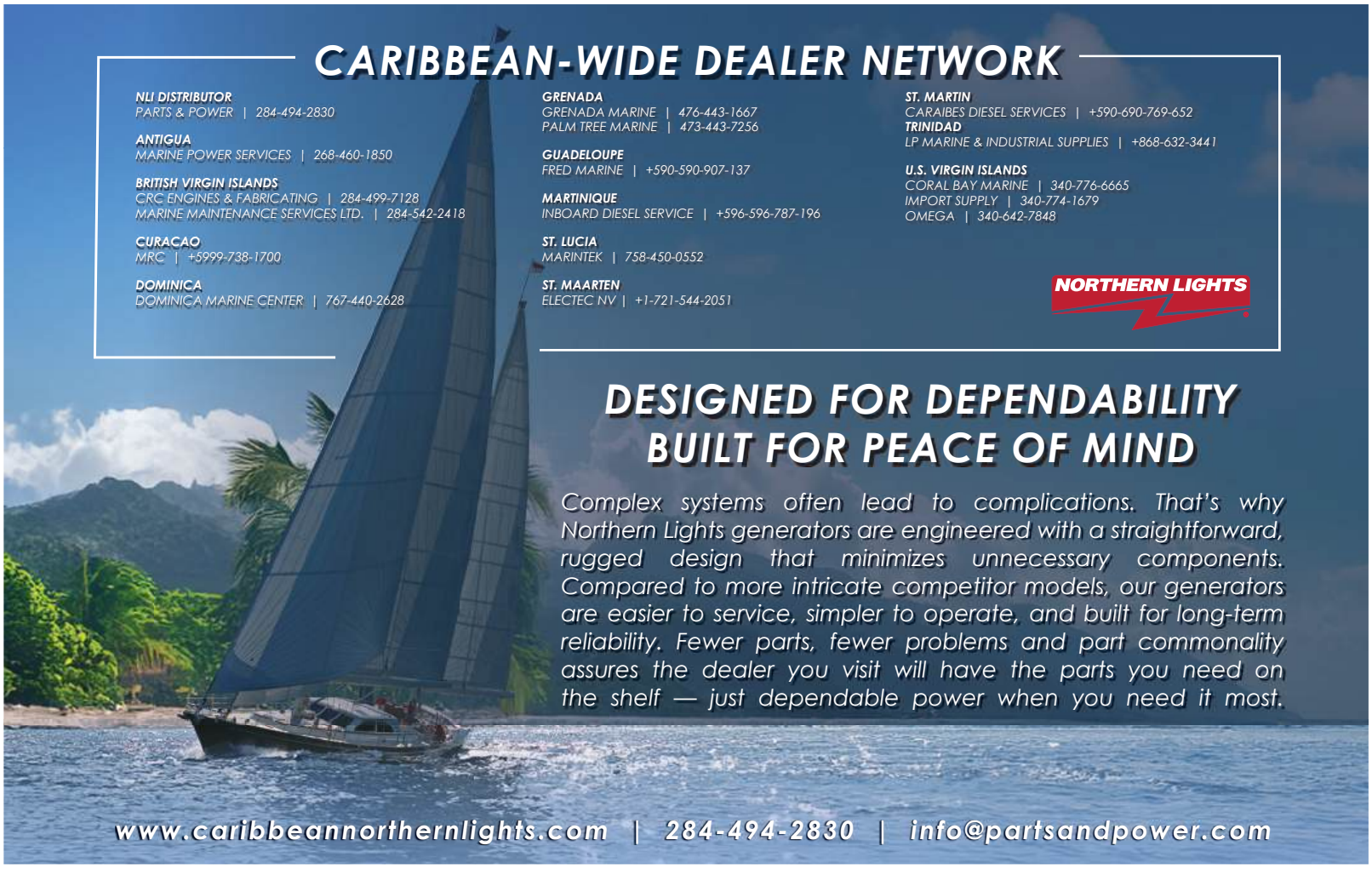
Colombia Pledges Action on Gender Equity in Ocean Governance

Colombia signed the Women Ocean Guardians Commitment in Geneva, becoming the eighth government to pledge action on gender equity in ocean governance. The signing marks a significant milestone for the initiative, which was launched at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference and has rapidly grown into a global movement to place women at the forefront of marine protection and sustainable ocean economies.

"Colombia's signing of the Voluntary Commitment pays tribute to the women who, from coastal territories, have historically protected the oceans," said Elizabeth Taylor Jay, ambassador for the oceans and coastal zones of Colombia. "Colombia highlighted the role of thousands of women guardians – fishers, scientists, mangrove restorers, Indigenous and community leaders – who care for the sea beyond traditional economic activities."

The Women Ocean Guardians Initiative has connected women leaders from 11 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean.

—*Continued on page 13*



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Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour

virgingordayachtharbour

— *Continued from page 11*

Island Resilience in Climate-Change Induced Hazards Is Focus

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with PREPARED International (PPI), establishing a new framework for collaboration on disaster risk management, climate resilience, and risk-informed development across member states.



COURTESY WCS

The solar PV system is designed to reduce dependence on the national electricity grid while ensuring uninterrupted operations during power outages, an essential feature during times of emergency and crisis response.

The agreement reinforces a shared commitment to advancing resilience in small island developing states at a time of increasing climate variability and economic vulnerability

Under the partnership, the OECS and PPI will jointly design and implement programs to strengthen preparedness and support sustainable development planning. The goal is to enhance the region's ability to anticipate, withstand, and recover from the growing impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

In related news, in March 2026 the OECS Commission hosted a handover ceremony for newly installed resilience upgrades at its headquarters in Castries, St. Lucia, including a solar photovoltaic system, solar-powered exterior lighting, and upgraded water and sewer systems.

The interventions are designed to reduce dependence on the national grid, ensure operational continuity during power outages, and strengthen water storage and sanitation capacity during emergencies.

Together, these upgrades support OECS efforts to build institutional resilience and safeguard essential services during severe weather events.



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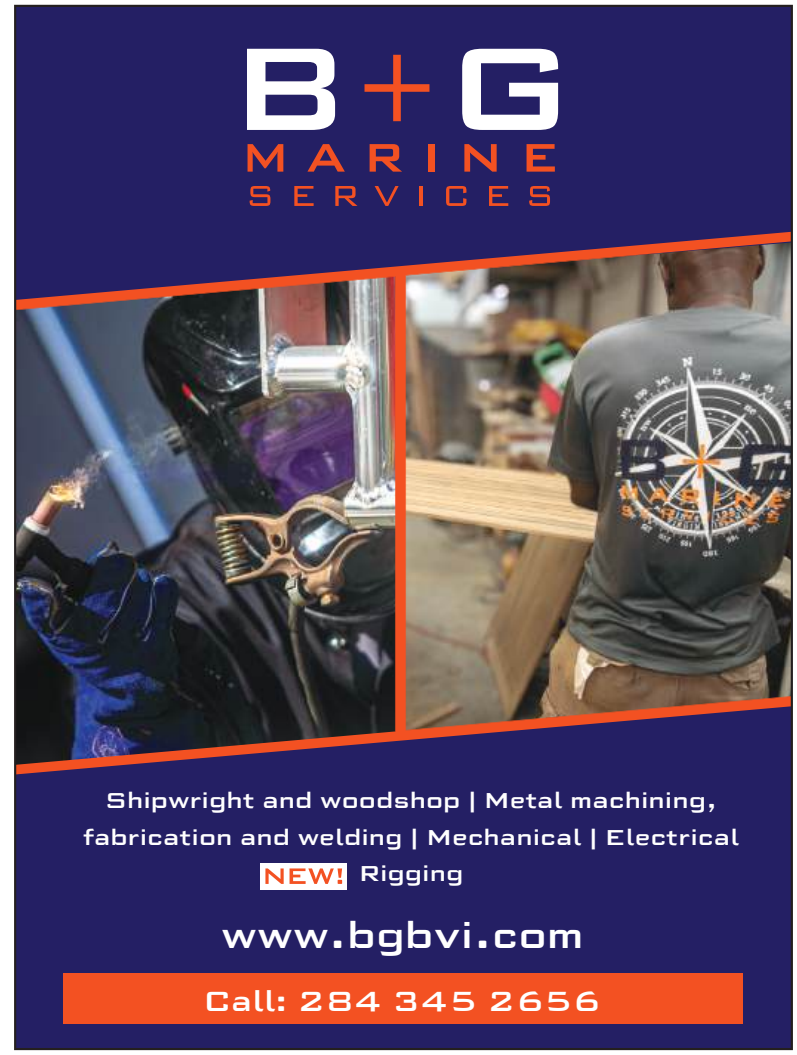
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SEA Is Keeping Eyes on Belize's Ocean for the Next Generation

By Chalsey Gill Anthony with photos courtesy Belize Fund

Elizabeth Avila Muschamp remembers the first time she saw a whale shark. Back in 2008, while she was floating in a boat near Silk Caye with friends, one swam right up beside them. "With its young," she says softly, still in awe. "It just surfaced next to us." For someone from landlocked Belmopan, Belize, it was shocking to catch a glimpse of the elusive giant that most people wait years to see.



At Laughing Bird Caye National Park, Belize, coral fragments are outplanted in an effort involving SEA to enhance biodiversity.

She had no idea how much that moment would impact her life.

"I had always been someone who loves the marine space, the environment, and conservation. And I fell in love with the work SEA was doing," recalls Muschamp, now executive director of the Southern Environmental Association (SEA). That transformative encounter sparked a career dedicated to protecting some of Belize's most precious marine ecosystems.

Today, SEA manages two of Belize's iconic marine protected areas: Gladden Spit & Silk Cayes Marine Reserve and Laughing Bird Caye National Park, the latter a UNESCO World Heritage site. With BZ$750,000 in funding from the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (Belize Fund), SEA has reinforced its marine conservation work in southern Belize, proving that financing is essential not just for nature, but livelihoods.

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A Force Behind the Frontlines of Conservation

For more than a decade, SEA has played a key role in guarding Belize's southern waters. Co-managing these ecosystems alongside government agencies, SEA has built a strong track record of enforcement, community engagement, and science-based conservation.

Through the Belize Fund's support, SEA installed solar energy systems at two remote ranger stations, greatly improving energy efficiency and enabling more effective patrols. "We were able to procure two long-range, night-vision surveillance cameras with 360-degree coverage," Muschamp explains. "These cameras give us a 15-kilometer, or about 9-mile view, allowing us to detect illegal activities from miles away." In places like Laughing Bird Caye National Park, a complete no-take zone, strong enforcement can lead to reduced illegal fishing and healthier fish populations over time, creating the potential for spillover benefits to local fishers.

SEA also conducts science-based monitoring. For over 20 years, the organization has tracked spawning aggregation sites like Gladden Spit, collecting fish otoliths (tiny ear bones) that reveal a fish's age and health. This long-term data can inform decisions that balance conservation and fisher livelihoods.

Most recently, SEA acquired an underwater drone, which allows the team to safely and efficiently survey sensitive reef habitats, expanding their monitoring capabilities while reducing risks for divers.

But technology alone doesn't save the ocean. People do.

SEA launched mangrove restoration efforts in coastal communities like Seine Bight, Independence, and Hopkins, essential buffer zones in the fight against erosion and storm surge. What began as a pilot project has grown into a grassroots movement. Local residents now



"Fishers felt their livelihoods were being taken away. We had to show them it wasn't 'us versus them,' but 'us trying to find solutions together.' "

serve as watchdog groups protecting their coastal ecosystems.

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PARTNER CONTENT



At first glance, it may appear to be a simple recreational stop. Roundabout Mini Golf reveals itself to be far more captivating; a family-friendly gathering place, a vibrant social hub, and a venue that truly offers a memorable local experience.

Roundabout Mini Golf has carved out its own lane by transforming a familiar pastime into a destination. Located in Upper Frith's, Salem, is a thoughtfully designed nine-hole miniature golf course on a manicured hillside surrounded by Montserrat's indigenous plants. The course is beginner-friendly yet engaging for experienced players. What makes the course especially meaningful is that each of the nine holes is named after locations destroyed by the Soufrière Hills Volcano.

For visitors and locals, this detail carries emotional weight. For those who remember Montserrat before the volcano altered the island's landscape, Roundabout Mini Golf offers a subtle but powerful sense of nostalgia. Its design stands as a creative and moving tribute that connects recreation with heritage. Montserrat's beach stones were hand-collected and used to create the platforms for each hole. Locally sourced mahogany was used to craft the unique wooden furniture at the entrance ramp, front desk counter, and benches on the greens.

By day, the course feels breezy and inviting. Families play at their own pace, friends turn it into friendly competition, and first-time visitors enjoy a warm, accessible, and community-centered outing.

After dark is when the venue truly comes alive.

Night mini golf is one of Roundabout's signature highlights. As the grounds light up, the entire space takes on a vibrant new identity. The illuminated setting shows its continued commitment to sustainability through colorful solar-powered lighting on the course. This detail complements the charm of the experience, allowing guests to enjoy a beautifully lit attraction with an environmentally conscious foundation.

That transformation is elevated even further by one of the most crowd-pleasing details: glow-in-the-dark golf balls. They bring a festive touch to the game, adding color, motion, and personality to each round. For date nights, celebrations, and social outings, that extra flair turns a simple activity into something far more memorable.

Time has shown that people rarely remember just the activity. They remember how a place made them feel. At Roundabout Mini Golf, guests can enjoy beverages, snacks, yard and board games, and merchandise that lets them take a piece of the experience home. Guests are encouraged to relax and take in the picturesque sunsets, mountain, and ocean views.

Roundabout Mini Golf offers a sense of occasion. It is a blend of joy and remembrance that gives this venue its unique identity, making room for casual fun, laughter, competition, and community. Whether experienced under the warmth of the sun or the glow of evening lights, it delivers a version of leisure that feels both timeless and freshly imagined. Roundabout Mini Golf is a place to play, gather, remember, celebrate, and to honor the beauty of Montserrat.

Contact Roundabout Mini Golf
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FB: Roundabout Mini Golf
IG/TikTok: @rmg_mni

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"The community changed the name from 'mangrove watchdog' to just 'watchdog,' " she says. "Because now, they're monitoring everything, from erosion, dredging, even wildlife. They've taken ownership."

SEA's approach is grounded in dialogue and participation.

"Give them their voice, give them their space, let them say what they need to say," she tells her outreach team.

This philosophy emerged after her first fisher forum, which she recalls as particularly contentious. "Fishers felt their livelihoods were being taken away. We had to show them it wasn't 'us versus them,' but 'us trying to find solutions together.' "

SEA launched mangrove restoration efforts in coastal communities like Seine Bight, Independence, and Hopkins, essential buffer zones in the fight against erosion and storm surge. What began as a pilot project has grown into a grassroots movement. Local residents now serve as watchdog groups protecting their coastal ecosystems.

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"Fishers felt their livelihoods were being taken away. We had to show them it wasn't 'us versus them,' but 'us finding solutions together.' "

Today, SEA acts as a bridge between policies and community needs. It also supports alternative livelihoods. Through the grant funding, SEA ran a small business challenge that received 59 proposals from coastal communities. The winning proposal, a butterfly farm in Monkey River, received BZ$10,000 in seed funding. The recipient even pledged to contribute a portion of profits toward coral restoration.

The initiative demonstrates how marine conservation can generate economic opportunities while reducing pressure on marine resources, a principle SEA is expanding through its restoration and community programs.

Sustainable Financing Supports a Vision for Tomorrow

Despite its successes, SEA highlighted a critical challenge facing marine conservation globally: short-term grants and shifting donor priorities.

"Conservation requires consistent long-term investment, especially for things like monitoring, enforcement and community programs," Muschamp emphasized.

SEA's income from visitor fees is seasonal and vulnerable to global and external events. The Belize Fund's support, she added, gave SEA the resources to maintain consistent enforcement patrols and build on science research and monitoring that spans decades.

Looking forward, SEA plans to launch training programs for regional conservation leaders, formalize its watchdog networks, and deepen national and regional partnerships.

But above all, the mission is to strengthen Belizeans' connection to the marine spaces that sustain them.

"Marine conservation is not just for foreign visitors," Muschamp says.

"This is for us. And when we all share that value, then it shifts from being a responsibility to something that we truly appreciate."

Chalsey Gill Anthony is the communications officer with the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future.





COURTESY ST. MAARTEN YACHT CLUB

Spending time with Sam is a reminder that the heart of St. Maarten is in characters like him who keep the island alive, one bridge lift at a time.

The Man Behind the Bridge: Sam Peterson

When entering Simpson Bay Lagoon in St. Maarten, you've likely depended on the smooth, timely opening of the Simpson Bay Bridge. And if you've passed through the bridge in the last two decades, chances are you've met, or at least waved to, Sam Michael Benjamin Peterson, the man who keeps it running smoothly.

Known for his quick wit, deep maritime roots, and decades of experience on the water, Sam is as much a fixture of the bridge as the steel and gears themselves.

Whether it be daily passages or the bustle of the Heineken Regatta, he ensures every vessel gets through safely and on time. His support for the Sint Maarten Yacht Club and the sailing community has made him a quiet hero, lifting not just the bridge, but the spirit of Simpson Bay.

When he's not guiding boats through the bridge, he has a lifetime of stories to share. We spoke with him about his roots, his passion for boat building, and how he became a trusted figure in Simpson Bay.

Here's what he shared:

A Life on the Water

Sam's maritime career started early. When asked how young he was, Sam responded with a grin, "I fell out of my mom and I was in a boat. Ever since then, I've never been out of one." Raised in a family of generations of boat builders, Sam learned the craft from his father, who learned it from his father before him. Over the years, Sam has hand-built six wooden boats, four of them sailboats, using techniques influenced by traditional Northern European designs.

Sam began operating the Simpson Bay Bridge in the early 2000s, before the causeway was built. He's not exactly sure how long it's been ("too long," he jokes), but estimates around 12-13 years. Before that, he worked on the water and was brought on as operations and maintenance man when the bridge needed someone who knew the rhythms of the lagoon.

A "typical" day for Sam isn't so typical. "It's sunny and hot, that's about the only thing that's the same," he laughs. But there is a rhythm: morning espresso at the St. Maarten Yacht Club, keeping the bridge moving, and making sure boats and their captains get where they need to go.

For many, the Heineken Regatta is the busiest, most chaotic time on the bridge. For Sam, it's the most efficient. "On a normal day, we do three mega yachts in 20 minutes. During regatta, we do 160 in 15 minutes." He says the energy is high, the pace is fast, and "people have places to go."

Bridge crashes? Yes, they've happened. "About 20 major ones in my time here, plus a bunch of rubs," Sam says with a grin. But the ones he remembers most are the unusual sights like the time someone reversed through the bridge in a baby-doll dress!

Sam has supported the St. Maarten Yacht Club and its races for years, especially the youth sailing events.

"That's the most important. Grownups can pay for whatever they want. Kids can't. So you make sure they get what they need."

When asked what he's most proud of, Sam doesn't mention the boats or the bridge. "The people I've touched. That's my most precious thing."

Sam worries that traditional skills like wooden boatbuilding are fading, and that young locals have fewer opportunities in maritime trades. His advice? Give them a start, even if it's small, and let them prove themselves.

For Sam, community is about connection and resilience; it's what you see after a hurricane, when neighbors help each other rebuild. And if you ask the many locals and visitors who know him, they'll tell you Sam isn't just part of the community, he is one of its anchors.

Interviewing Sam was as lively as watching the bridge on its busiest day. His quick wit, easy humor, and candid stories made the conversation fly by. Beneath the jokes is a man deeply proud of his craft, his community, and the people he's helped along the way.

Spending time with Sam is a reminder that the heart of St. Maarten isn't just in its beaches and boats, but in the characters like him who keep the island alive, one bridge lift at a time.

We tip our hats to Sam, whose work keeps both our bridge and community running strong.

This article, which first appeared in the St. Maarten Yacht Club newsletter, is reprinted with permission.



Simpson Bay Marina: The Heartbeat of St. Maarten's Nautical Lifestyle

Simpson Bay Marina, set against the vibrant backdrop of St. Maarten's southern coast, has long been a central hub for sailors, yacht owners, and travelers seeking the quintessential Caribbean experience. In recent years, the marina has undergone a remarkable transformation, marked most notably by the unveiling of its striking new guest reception building and the addition of a roof-top pool. These enhancements have not only elevated the marina's status as a premier yachting destination but have also redefined the sense of community and lifestyle that Simpson Bay offers to residents, visitors, and the broader St. Maarten community.

A New Era: The Marina's Modern Transformation

The new building at Simpson Bay Marina stands as a testament to the island's commitment to innovation and hospitality. Designed with both functionality and aesthetics in mind, the structure seamlessly blends contemporary architecture with Caribbean charm. Expansive glass facades invite natural light and offer panoramic views of the marina's bustling docks, while open-air walkways and shaded terraces encourage guests to linger and socialize.

Inside, the building houses a range of amenities tailored to the needs of modern boaters and travelers. The reception area is welcoming and efficient, staffed by a knowledgeable team ready to assist with everything from berth reservations to concierge services. Flexible meeting spaces and lounges provide venues for private gatherings, business meetings, or impromptu get-togethers among friends and fellow cruisers.

The Pool: A Social Oasis

Perhaps the most anticipated addition to Simpson Bay Marina is its new resort-style pool. More than just a place to cool off, the pool has quickly become the social heart of the marina. The pool area features comfortable loungers and a BBQ grill, creating an ideal space to unwind and connect. Whether unwinding after a day on the water or meeting friends for a sunset cocktail, guests find the pool to be a welcoming oasis.

The design of the pool area emphasizes inclusivity and interaction. Families gather for afternoon swims, yacht crews enjoy well-deserved downtime, and solo travelers strike up conversations with new acquaintances. Special touches, such as ambient lighting and curated music, transform the space into a lively venue for evening events and celebrations.

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Building Community Through Events and Lifestyle

What truly sets Simpson Bay Marina apart is its commitment to fostering a sense of community among its guests and residents. The marina's management team recognizes that a great marina is more than just docks and amenities—it is a place where people connect, share experiences, and create lasting memories.

Throughout the year, the marina hosts a diverse calendar of events designed to bring people together. Poolside gatherings, live music nights, and themed parties provide opportunities for socializing and entertainment. Seasonal celebrations, such as holiday barbecues and regatta after-parties, draw both locals and visitors, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.

The new building's flexible spaces further support this community ethos. Residents and guests can reserve spaces for private functions, club meetings, or educational seminars. The marina's staff are adept at facilitating everything from intimate dinners to large-scale celebrations, ensuring that every event is memorable and seamless.



The Destination: St. Maarten's Unique Allure

While Simpson Bay Marina is a destination in its own right, its location in St. Maarten amplifies its appeal. The island, shared by Dutch and French sovereignties, is renowned for its cosmopolitan culture, culinary diversity, and natural beauty. Simpson Bay itself is a lively district, home to some of the island's best restaurants, beach bars, and nightlife venues.

Visitors to the marina are perfectly positioned to explore all that St. Maarten has to offer. A short stroll from the docks leads to pristine beaches, bustling markets, and vibrant neighborhoods. Adventurous guests can embark on snorkeling excursions, island tours, or day trips to neighboring islands such as Anguilla and St. Barth. The marina's concierge team is always on hand to arrange activities, recommend dining spots, or share insider tips for discovering hidden gems.





St. Maarten's multicultural heritage is reflected in its festivals, music, and cuisine. Guests at Simpson Bay Marina can savor everything from French pastries and Dutch cheeses to spicy Creole dishes and fresh seafood. The island's friendly, welcoming spirit is evident in every interaction, making newcomers feel instantly at home.

A Lifestyle Destination for All

Simpson Bay Marina's transformation is more than a physical upgrade—it represents a renewed vision for what a marina can be. By prioritizing community, lifestyle, and guest experience, the marina has become a gathering place for people from all walks of life. Yacht owners, charter guests, liveaboards, and island residents alike find common ground in the marina's welcoming spaces and shared events.

The new building and pool are symbols of this evolution, providing both the backdrop and the catalyst for connection. Whether attending a lively event, relaxing by the pool, or simply enjoying the camaraderie of fellow boaters, guests at Simpson Bay Marina experience a sense of belonging that is rare and valuable.



Looking Ahead

As Simpson Bay Marina continues to grow and evolve, its commitment to excellence remains unwavering. Future plans include expanding event offerings, enhancing sustainability initiatives, and further integrating technology to streamline guest services. The marina's leadership is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards while preserving the warm, inclusive atmosphere that has become its hallmark.

In a world where travel and leisure are increasingly defined by meaningful experiences and authentic connections, Simpson Bay Marina stands out as a beacon of community and lifestyle in the Caribbean. For those seeking more than just a place to dock their boat, the marina offers a vibrant, welcoming home—one where every visit is an opportunity to make memories, forge friendships, and embrace the best of St. Maarten's nautical spirit.

RJ Portmann, Ringmaster

Story and images by David Kilmer

I've sailed with Capt. RJ Portmann on just a handful of trips, but every one has been unforgettable. He and his wife Jenna run Delana Mae*, a Lagoon 50 charter boat in the Caribbean. When RJ's leading the show, with his infectious grin and globe-spanning connections, the hospitality reaches an epic scale. For my latest book, The Way of the Captain, I asked Capt. RJ about his favorite itinerary, as well as practical advice for running a boat, and here's what he had to say:*



Captain RJ Portmann

RJ's Best of BVI Day

My perfect day on the water starts at Norman Island, in the Bight. The night before, we've usually tied up at the *Willy T*, and that always guarantees some fresh memories and good laughs floating around the crew the next morning. I like to anchor in the corner, back to the rocks, where the water glows that perfect turquoise blue. I get up early, cup of coffee in hand, and just soak in that calm before the day begins.

From there, we raise anchor and head toward the Indians. I always save the Indians for the morning. The light is better, the crowds haven't shown up yet, and the reef is waiting just for us. If I can grab my favorite mooring ball — the one right over the coral garden — I know we're in for something special. Breakfast is usually just a snack before we get in the water, because everyone's too excited. I've told them already that this is one of my top three snorkels in the world, and when they see it for themselves, they understand why.

It's even more perfect when Jenna gets in the water. She's a divemaster, and she loves the sea, but her sense of responsibility on the boat often keeps her in the galley when we're underway. On the days when she joins the snorkel, guests get to see her as I do: this graceful little mermaid under the surface, pointing out fish, bringing up sea urchins for kids to touch, moving through the water with ease and joy. I get just as much out of watching her as I do from the reef itself.

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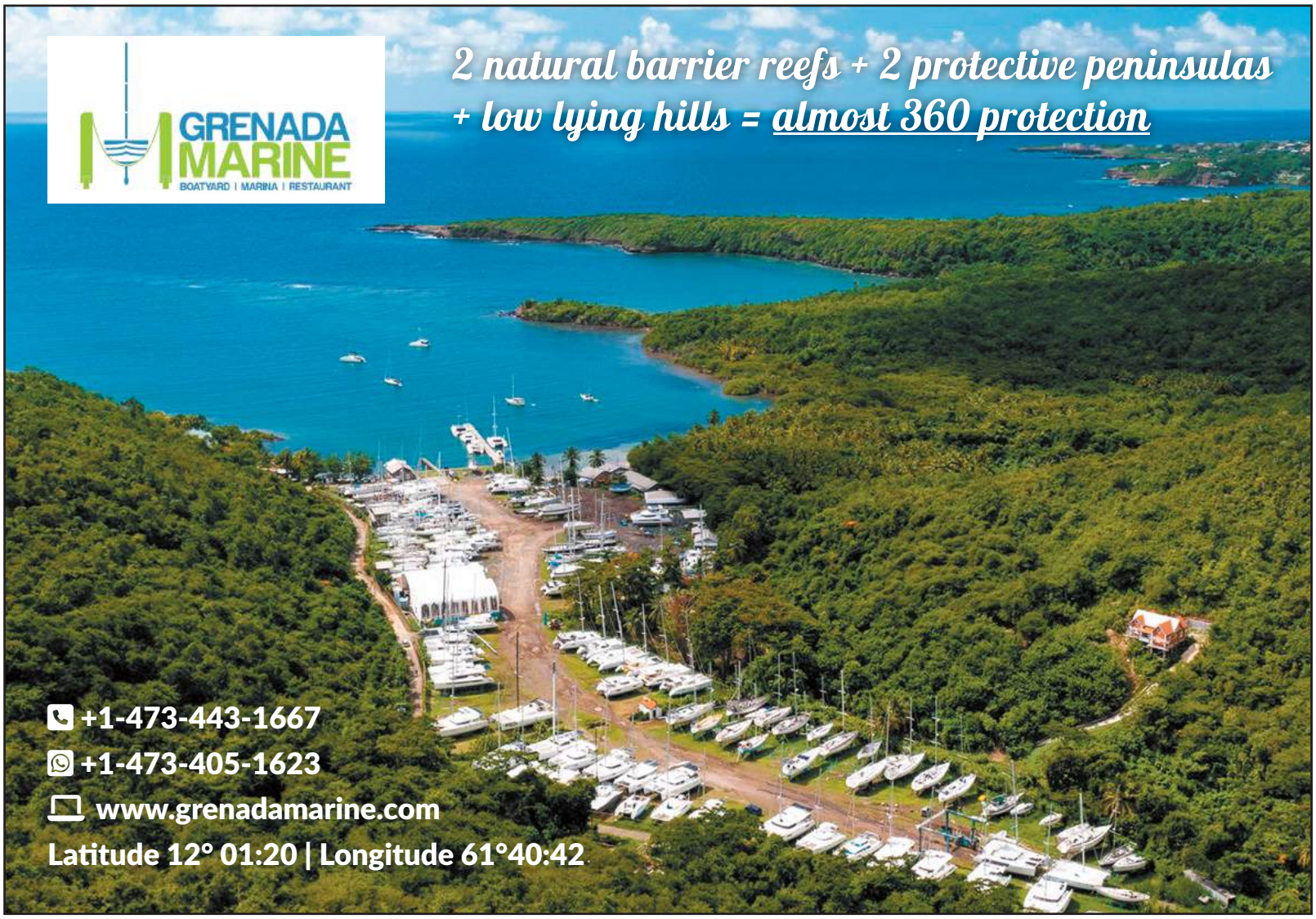


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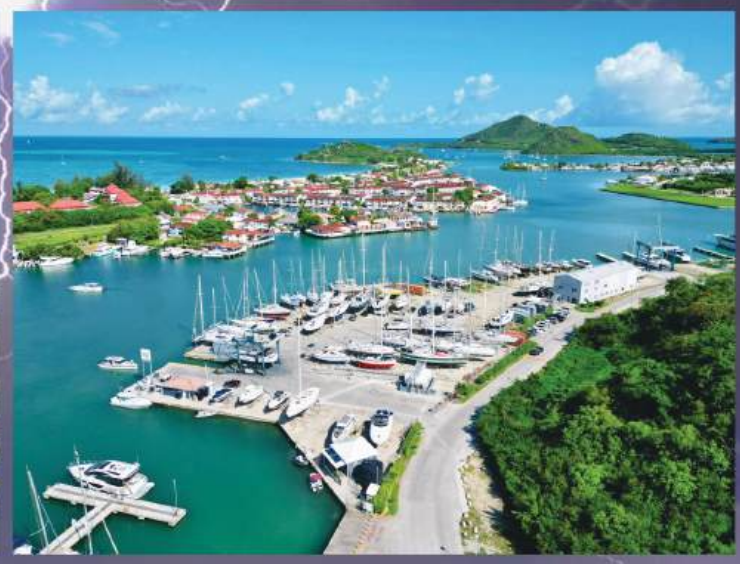
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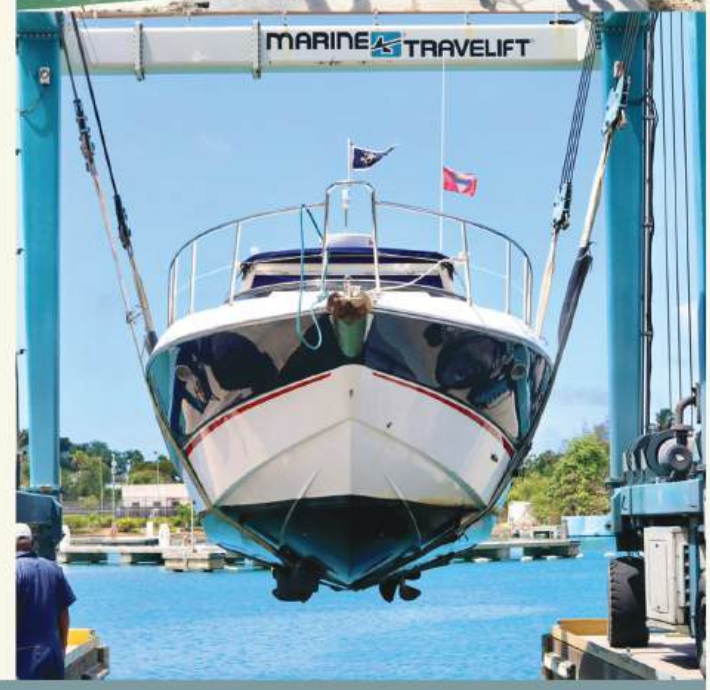
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RJ and Jenna wave from the deck of Delana Mae.

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After the Indians, we set sail. In winter — December through April — the winds are usually just right. *Delana Mae* needs a strong breeze — about 18 knots — to really stretch her legs, and when she's got it she sails beautifully. We head up Sir Francis Drake Channel, engines off, usually in a few long tacks. I love it when the course takes us past Peter Island, then almost into Road Town, where the cruise ships are docked, before we ping-pong back across the channel. That's real sailing, the kind that reminds you why you fell in love with this life.

We make it to Cooper Island for lunch. Cooper has that little beach club vibe — just bougie enough to feel fun, but still relaxed. We get a walk down the boardwalk, a good burger, a stretch of the legs ashore — a nice punctuation mark in the day.

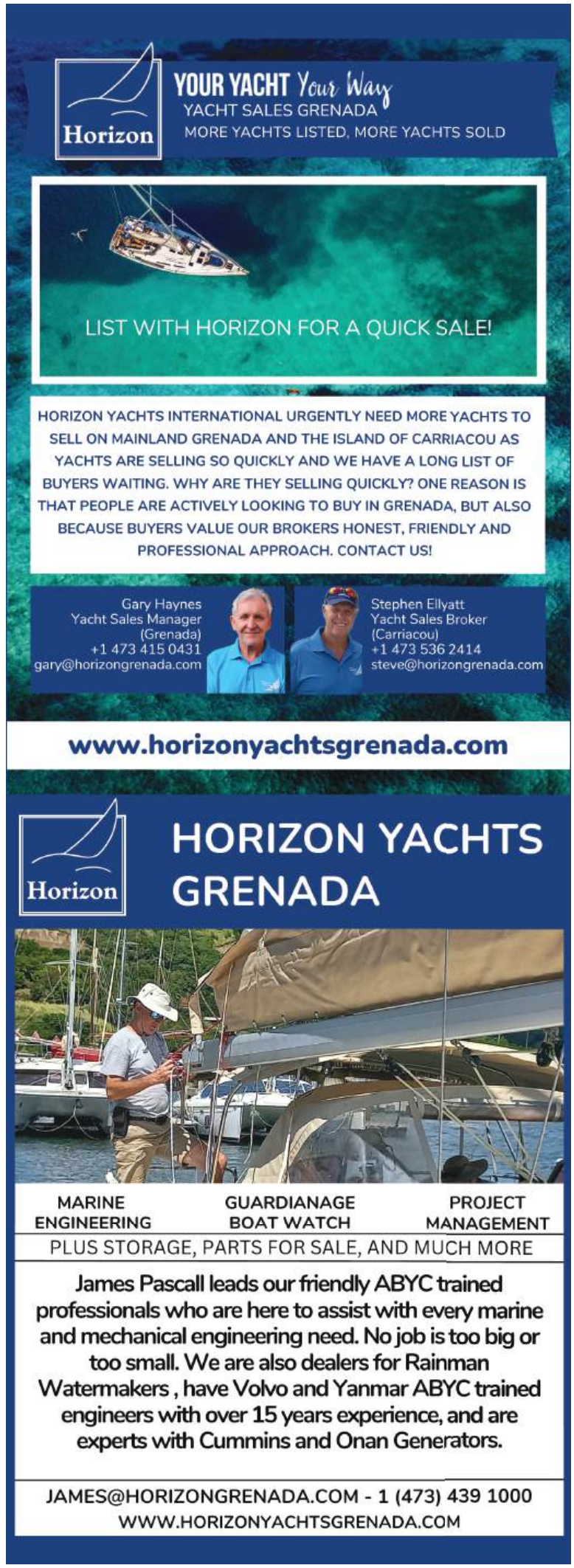
From there, we take another sail north to Virgin Gorda. We usually anchor in St. Thomas Bay, close enough to Coco Maya that you can almost hear the music from the deck. Often, we snorkel the coral heads nearby or just enjoy the view of The Baths with those giant granite boulders rising out of the sea. If the night ends with dinner ashore at Coco Maya, that's the cherry on top — the vibe there is unlike anywhere else in the islands. But even if we stay on the boat and serve dinner aboard, this is still one of the most picturesque spots to spend an evening.

That's my perfect day. It has everything: the fun of the night before, the quiet of the morning, a world-class snorkel, a full stretch of sails, good food, and a setting that never loses its magic. Best of all, it's a day where my guests see Jenna at her best, where I get to share not just the beauty of the islands, but the joy of the life we've built together.

RJ's Habits of the Helm

Tighten all screws. There are three kinds of skippers. The worst sees a loose screw, shrugs, and leaves it. A decent one grabs the screwdriver and tightens the loose screw. The best — the kind I strive to be — fixes the one that's loose and then finds every other screw that fits that driver and tightens those, too. I want the boat to be better than when I started.

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Keep it yachty. Our first rule on board. That means form and function. It's the way we flake lines with a cow hitch so they're ready to pull and throw and keep decks clear so guests don't trip. Keeping it yachty means minor problems never have a chance to grow into big ones.

Don't be a jerk. This rule is simple, and bears repeating: Don't be a jerk. You'll pull into an anchorage where someone swings a little too close, or you'll get boat boys yelling at you about something. It might be tempting to get hot, but what's the point? That person is about to be your neighbor, or maybe the guy you need help from tomorrow.

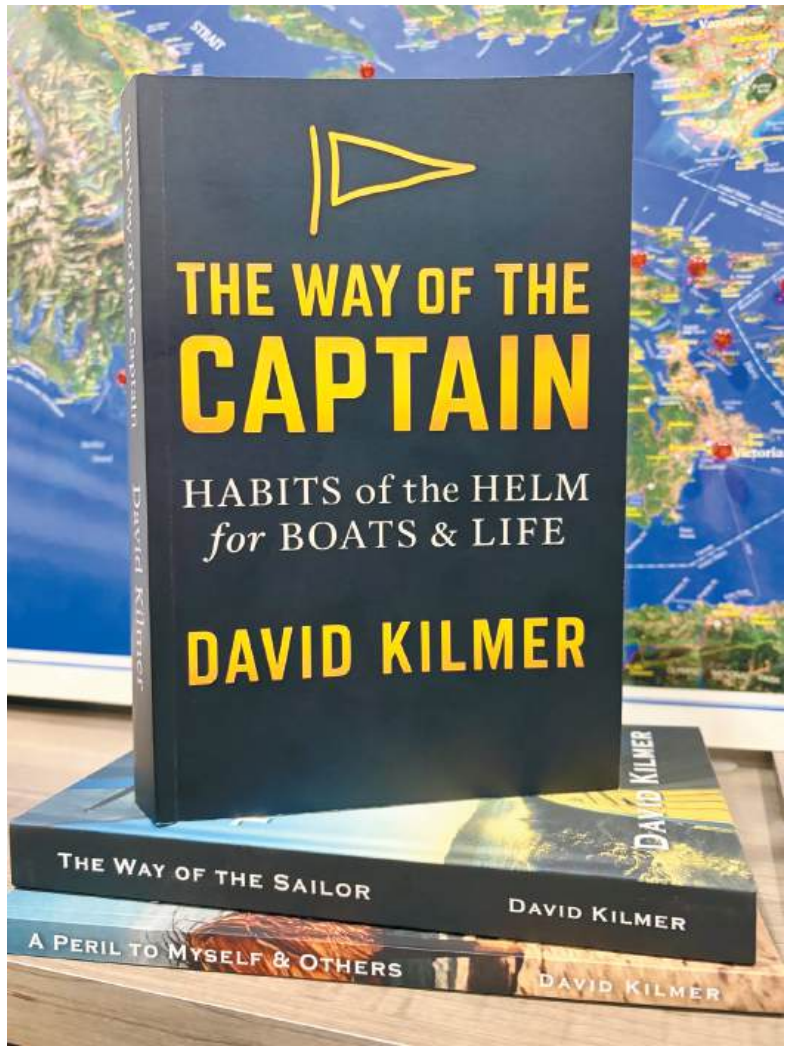
Safety above all. Our third rule covers everything else. From day one, I drill it into everyone: One hand for you, one hand for the boat. Always keep yourself between the fire and the exit. We can replace everything on board except you.

Respect the partnership. Not all captains work with their life partner, but I do, and it takes its own discipline. The habit that saves us is staying in our lanes. I respect her role, and I resist the urge to "fix" something that isn't mine to fix.

Guard your time. I'm usually the first one awake, but I safeguard my early time in the stateroom. I check the weather, review the route, answer emails, and plan the day. That preparation lets me give my full presence to the guests, which is what they came aboard for in the first place. Once I walk out that door, I'm on.

Captain David Kilmer is a longtime private yacht skipper with decades of experience on the water and a gift for translating real-world experiences into clear, actionable insights, both in fiction and nonfiction.

Captain RJ's story is excerpted from The Way of the Captain: Habits of the Helm for Boats & Life*, which profiles 25 captains of all types of command, and shares their protocols for management and leadership. It's available now on Amazon (free to Kindle Unlimited subscribers) or directly from the publisher at wayofthecaptainbook.com.*





CALENDAR

May 2026

1	Flower Moon (full moon)
1	Labor Day – Public holiday in many territories
1-3	Tobago Jazz Experience. tobagofestivalscommission.com
1-3	Zemi Music Festival, St. Lucia. Zemifestival.com/home
2	Dominica Hikefest, Boeri Lake (moderate), Trinity Lakes (challenging)
2-3	St Maarten National Dinghy Championship. smyc.com
2–8	Romerías de Mayo, Holguín, Cuba. rove.me/to/cuba/romerias-de-mayo
2-9	Cayman Carnival (Batabano). caymanresident.com/cayman-carnival-batabano
9	US Open — Offshore Regatta. www.ussailing.org/news
3	Jazz 'n Creole Festival, Fort Shirley, Dominica. discoverdominica.com
4	Salty Dawg Rally, USVI to US East Coast.saltydawgsailing.org
7	ARC Europe Rally Start, St. Maarten
8	Victory Day – public holiday in Saint-Barthélemy
9	Dominica Hikefest, Chemin Letang Trail (Moderate)
13-17	Anguilla Culinary Experience. anguillaculinaryexperience.com
14	Ascension Day – public holiday in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saint-Barthélemy & St. Maarten
14-16	Virgin Islands Boating Expo (VIBE), USVI. vibe.vi
15	Environmental Fridays: Asa Wright Nature Center
16	Dominica Hikefest, Jaco Flats (Challenging)
16-17	BVI Dinghy Championship, Tortola, BVI. royalbviyc.org/racing bvidinghychampionships.html
20	Discovery Day – public holiday in the Cayman Islands
20-22	Mikie Pigott Jr. Memorial Classic. antiguabarbudasportsfishing.com
20-25	Aruba Soul Beach Music Festival. Soulbeach.net
21-25	Festopia Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. festopia.com
22	Environmental Fridays: Creating an Indigenous Medicine Garde
22-25	Petite Martinique Whitsuntide Regatta. puregrenada.com product/petite-martinique-whitsuntide-regatta-festival/
22-27	Grenada Chocolate Festival, Grenada. grenadachocolatefest. gd 23-
23	Dominica Hikefest, Middleham Trail – Nature After Dark (Easy)
24	Antigua-Barbuda Sport Fishing Tournament antiguabarbudasportsfishing.com
23-24	Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke, BVI. foxysbar.com
24-26	Puerto Rico Cocktail Week, Humacao, Puerto Rico prcocktailweek.com
25	Memorial Day – public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI
29	Jump-Up, St. Croix, USVI. GotoStCroix.com
30	Indian Arrival Day – public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago
30	Anguilla Day – public holiday in Anguilla
30	Domino's Dinghy Regatta. smyc.com
30	Out of This World Music Festival, Grand Cayman. OOTWMusicFest.com
30	Dominica Hikefest, Boiling Lake (Challenging), Charles Warner Trail (Easy)
30-8 Jun	St. Barth Theatre Festival. festivaldetheatredesaintbarthelemy.com
31	Blue Moon (full moon)
TBA	Barbados Celtic Festival, Barbados

Environmental Fridays are live on Zoom at 9:30 EST, meeting ID 836 8866 0774, passcode 957246

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



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Chartering and Cruising in the 1970s

By Olivia Hackshaw
Photos courtesy Olivia Hackshaw, color restoration on vintage photos by Peter Jones

By no means am I a landlubber. I was born and raised on the island of St. Lucia in the Lesser Antilles. In the absence of air transport, visiting family and friends in our island neighborhood was a maritime affair. At the age of five months, my parents nonchalantly but carefully lashed my cot to the deck of a beautiful inter-island schooner and away we sailed to neighboring Martinique for Bastille Day celebrations. The animal and vegetable cargo were stowed below deck.

The *Columbia*, most likely Grenadines-built, was representative of the transportation system that moved goods and persons. As diesel augmented sail, those vessels became sooty, grimy, not so clean, but that aspect was overshadowed by the graceful beauty of wind-filled sails. They plied these waters well into the 1970s.



Chief stewardess Patty Young and assistant stewardess Olivia Hackshaw, with the Pitons in the background

Passenger services began to be provided by entrepreneurs via a plethora of "converted" craft. Among others, these included a minesweeper, a Norwegian fishing boat — and yes, the presidential yacht *Potomac*, once the hangout of Franklin D. Roosevelt. My sister and I used it one year on our school holiday trip to neighboring St. Vincent.

—Continued on the next page





—*Continued from the previous page*

My dad was a shipping agent and we often went down to the wharf with him. I knew every boat in Castries harbor and visited lots of them. Recreational activities with the cousins were on board another conversion, a World War II patrol boat, and later, a succession of speedboats — Bertram, Cigarette, etc. From time to time a cabin cruiser would come in and leave quietly without fuss. They were privately owned; guests from some movieland or other were hosted by the owner. Sir Winston Churchill passed through one afternoon on the famous Christina, owned by shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

Private sailing yachts, though, were still a rarity and the domain of intrepid adventurers from far-off lands. They went at their own pace, stopping to explore, rest or repair as needed. Cruising is as old as mankind, but the concept of chartering was not fully appreciated back then.



Olivia Hackshaw on the magnificent deck of the Janeen *circa 1973*

Our neighborhood

There were relatively few kids in our neighborhood. In the late 1950s a Canadian family rented the house next door. Captain Walter Boudreau was about to plant the seeds of a charter industry that would later take root.

They had five kids of various ages, about ten years to six months. The two older boys, Lou and Peter, mixed well, and we often wandered through each other's yards and verandahs. They spoke excitedly of Dad's three beautiful boats and on rare occasion would point them out in the harbor just below our houses. They soon left to begin their new life in Marigot Bay.

I chose a career in nursing and undertook training and studies in Britain for six years. I completed my specialty in psychiatric nursing at a prestigious, world-renowned hospital in London. Landing a job at our local hospital, I got a shock, and did not quite see it as a location for professional growth. My nearest and dearest thought I'd soon be settling down, but I was looking for my next adventure.

An advert in the mid-week edition of the local newspaper caught my eye. "Crew needed for a large charter yacht." The female answering asked if I had any sailing experience. "No," I said. But I had "other assets." She asked me to repeat it, so I did. I didn't clarify further, but they gave me an interview date and time.

Captain Boudreau, my old neighbor and the owner/skipper of the 110-foot schooner Janeen, was interviewing. Recognizing me at once, he smiled and inquired about my tertiary education. He told me that the job was that of stewardess, one of two. His description of the duties was evidently aimed at trying to make the job look tough. I assured him that British nurse training prepared one for the toughest of jobs. He seemed convinced. I was hired.



Olivia Hackshaw and deckhand Randy on the Janeen

At Sea

There were eight guests and 12 crew — a generous ratio. The latter represented Canada, US, Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia. Skipper ran a tight ship, yet the atmosphere was relaxed with undercurrents of fun and an unspoken camaraderie. The guests were expectedly well-heeled, both old and new money, but not demanding and easy to look after. Boundaries always observed, we enjoyed our guests, but we may well have looked after the boat more than them!

Out of sheer love, I think, we had paint sparkling, brass and walnut paneling shining. No modern appliances, everything manual and, as customary for an old boat built back in the day, nothing synthetic to ease the strain of some tasks.

As previously indicated, I did not know a sheet from a cleat, but my duties did not require me to learn how to sail. The Boudreau boys were no longer playmates but shipmates, now experienced mariners. They taught me all sorts of things about this new world. There were far fewer boats than now, giving us a chance to get more than a glimpse of the few others in our class. Soon words like "Alden" and "Herreshoff" design became familiar, and I learned that alongside of chartering, there was the growing activity of bare boating. The magic of mechanical roller-reefing was pointed out to me — a stark comparison to the traditional performance on our boat. The Boudreau family could give a history of just about everything afloat.

—*Continued on page 31*

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Olivia celebrated her 76th birthday on the Friendship Rose *in 2023.*

—Continued from page 29

There are two very nice hulls that stick out in my memory. We seemed to see them everywhere so that to my mind, they even had personalities of their own. The sleek, black hulled *Marie Pierre* spoke of sophistication and self-assuredness. *Fandango* was broader beamed, white hulled, and it exuded an open friendliness. I imagined that we looked content and confident — that was the atmosphere on board, anyway. (I spoke of them some 35 years later as I drove along in a Bequia taxi. The driver looked thoughtful and even distant. Finally, he admitted he'd known them when he was a young lad. "Those nice ones don't come here anymore," he wistfully declared.)

On Christmas Eve morning in 1973, I hopped up on deck to survey Port Elizabeth, Bequia. Those two were in port — we had company. Three of the most beautiful schooners in the Caribbean were in port together. What a sight! It was the Universe's gift to me.

The bad news came after breakfast. Our good-natured guests suggested we leave for St. Lucia so the crew could get some home time with family. Surrounded by those beauties, a teak deck beneath my feet, I was already home! For those two seasons I viewed my neighboring Caribbean isles from the best vantage point — the deck of a sailboat. We covered the Virgin Islands, the French territories, the Lesser Antilles as far south as Grenada.

Charter Life

On a regular basis, every charter boat operator will have to face some untoward incidents. We had our share. They can't be swept below deck (metaphorically) or the whole operation could sink (literally).

An after-midnight fire in the lazarette was hastily extinguished. At anchor in a remote bay in the Virgin Islands we all felt a bump in the dead of night. It was a sportfisher party of three who'd evidently lost their way. Informed that they were nowhere near St. Thomas, one of them asked "How the hell did we miss St. Thomas?!"

An unauthorized absence of some crew meant we leave for Martinique without them. It was all hands on deck, with me actually pulling a couple of ropes! And finally my clinical skills were put to use in executing some primitive surgery on a painful face abscess of a young St. Lucian crewman. It worked very well.

Half a century has flown by. It is now 2025, and a not-so-new millennium. There are so many more boats afloat on these waters, but it still does not feel overcrowded. They come in all sizes and all designs but one no longer tries to keep up with who might be on board. Perhaps the celebs like it so. Maybe 40 or so miles from my front porch in southern St. Lucia lies Bequia, that little gem. It makes a nice getaway. In Port Elizabeth the *Friendship Rose* sways gently at anchor. Fifty years ago she too was a pretty sight as she daily carried passengers and supplies between Bequia and St. Vincent. The nine-mile journey can sometimes be one of the roughest passages in the Caribbean, but faithfully, dutifully, she'd churn her way through, delivering the goods. She is the last survivor of her class, a gaff-rig, Bequia-built beauty, never retired. She ferries day trippers to the Tobago Cays.

In 2023 I did just that. It was my 76th birthday gift to myself. The roles were reversed now: Its crew waited on me and even produced a scrumptious chocolate cake! That birthday week the ultra-modern *Bayesian* seemed to follow me around the southern Grenadines. I am happy I did not follow her to the Mediterranean, where in just a few minutes a freak storm took her to a watery grave.

Now I am neither boat owner, cruiser nor charterer. In the autumn of my years the adventures take place down Memory Lane. I am really grateful to Captain Walter Boudreau for giving me that opportunity to have been part of the evolution (if not genesis) of Caribbean chartering.

In 2022, the Charter Yacht Brokers Association posthumously honored the skipper. The plaque described him as "Pioneer in Charter Yachting- Schoonerman." Like him, though possibly for different reasons, I simply adore those old schooners. It is comforting to know that Antigua continues to provide a niche where annually, originals and replicas strut their stuff. Every December, St. Lucia welcomes the ARC voyagers. They too come in all designs and sizes as well as all ages (boats and crew).

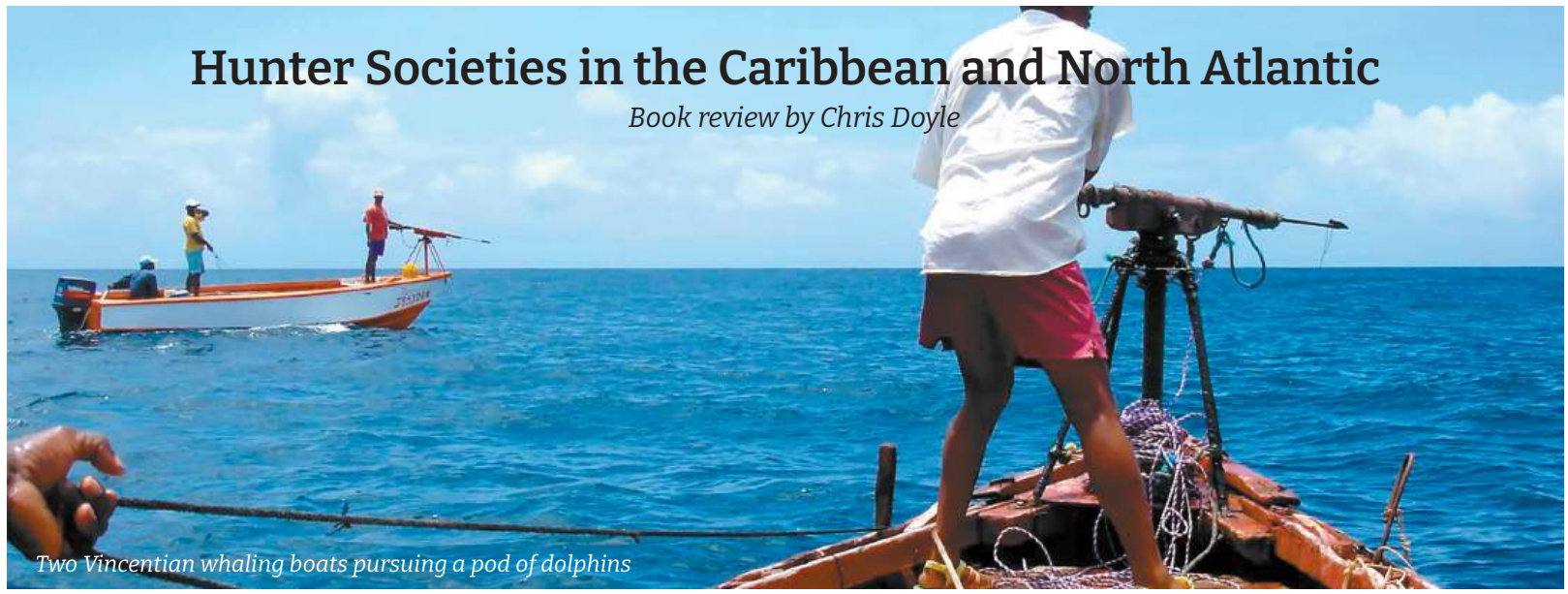
I personally want to welcome every mariner who ends up in my Caribbean for I know that in the hearts of every one of you is a burning desire for adventure. Whether cruising or chartering, may you find it here!

Olivia Hackshaw is a retired nurse living in St. Lucia.

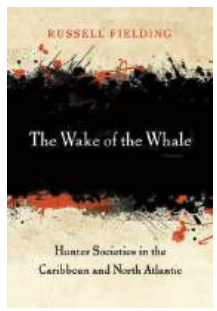
BOOK REVIEW

Hunter Societies in the Caribbean and North Atlantic

Book review by Chris Doyle



Two Vincentian whaling boats pursuing a pod of dolphins



I reviewed *Breadfruit* by Russell Fielding (*Compass* November 2025 — caribbeancompass.com/online/353-November-2025.pdf). His lucid and entertaining writing kept me delighted from beginning to end and made me wonder if he had written anything else. And he has. *Wake of the Whale* was published in 2018, but I had never heard of it, which I figured might be the case for others in the Caribbean.

Russell Fielding is an academic; his fields are geography and anthropology. This categorization may limit his readership, but he writes so well and engagingly that his books rival the very best of travel writing.

Wake of the Whale describes whale hunting near Barrouallie, in St. Vincent, and grindadráp (whale hunting) in the Faroe Islands. Whaling information from other places, including Bequia, is used as background. Reading this book was a delightful adventure. I read it on my computer, which enabled me to open Google Earth and follow some of the locations.

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These are family or community-sized whaling operations, hunting only the smaller whales (dolphins), particularly blackfish (pilot whales). I have often seen open whaleboats off the coast of St. Vincent, with their bow-mounted guns. You may have, too.

Industrial commercial whaling generally ends badly with depleted stocks, and it is conducted without sufficient consideration of the whales' place in nature or their value to the community. Artisanal whaling is different. (Artisanal is the right word, though in today's world it tends to bring up images of elegant bakeries, with staff running around in white coats and chef hats.)

In both these places, whaling is limited. In the Faroes, specially selected beaches are used for the grindadráp, and the Faroese wait till a pod is sighted (*grindaboð*) near enough to one of these beaches before heading out to try to drive them ashore. It is a non-commercial venture, as all the meat and blubber are shared according to local traditions. The Faroes are barren, and whaling greatly adds to their food supply. It has been going on for hundreds of years without damaging the whale population.

In St. Vincent, the range of the whaling boats is mainly limited to the west coast and the Bequia channel. It is commercial, in that the whales are sold to vendors who process and resell them to retailers. But it is small-scale and all the products are used locally.

Fielding throws himself fully into his research. He spent months as middleman on a Barroaullie whaleboat. In this book you will join him.

> *Eight o'clock in the morning on my first day of Vincentian whaling: in my roll-top drybag I had packed a peanut-butter-and-guava-jelly sandwich (a compromise between the Caribbean and my childhood), two liters of water, lots of sunscreen, a waterproof camera, and a GPS. We set out from the dock at Barrouallie, heading due west. Within half an hour we were surrounded by a pod of dolphins. Marine biologists advise their assistants on sighting surveys that a snapshot of surfacing dolphins usually shows 10 percent of the total pod. That is to say, 90 percent of a pod of dolphins is underwater at any given moment. Given that formula, there were easily five hundred dolphins surrounding the boat. "Skipjack papas," said Papas, in Creole. "Fraser's dolphins," Samuel translated, standing at the bow with a hand on the harpoon gun. He had been to fisheries colleges in Japan and Canada and could have told me the dolphins' scientific name (Lagenodelphis hosei) too, if I had asked. Samuel would explain to me later that the Fraser's dolphins we saw are part of a resident pod that stays near the west coast of St. Vincent and will actually lead his boat to other whales or dolphins.*

You will travel with him to the Faroes and learn of their history and natural history as well as the role of the grindadráp in their society.

> *When I arrived at Gøta the whales had already been killed — it was a small pod, only twenty-three whales. But you wouldn't have known it from the scene by the waterside. The quay was abuzz with activity: children tentatively poking the rubbery flesh of the steaming whale carcasses, the sýslumaður's assistants measuring and numbering the whales, people milling about in this impromptu cause for socializing. For centuries in the Faroe Islands, grindadráp were the most exciting thing going. The monotony of village life could be broken at a moment's notice with the arrival of a grindaboð. Our evening's plans could suddenly change from watching the peat fire and knitting to meeting a couple hundred friends and neighbors to procure meat for the next four months. It was a chance to fulfill both social and nutritional obligations. On many occasions the grindaboð came just in time, announcing the arrival of food during a period of extreme need.*

He finds that if he is to get close to whalers, he will have to eat whale meat.

> *The first time I was confronted with blubber as a statement of solidarity was aboard a family's boat tied up in the harbor of Nólsoy in the Faroe Islands in 2005. I wanted to talk with several of the family members about whaling. Soon after I came aboard and explained my intentions, the son — about my age — disappeared into boat's cabin briefly, only to return with a slab of blubber about the size of a loaf of bread. He pulled a grindaknívur from his belt and cut me a bigger-than-bite-sized portion. I stood on the deck of the boat, watching oil trickle down the knife blade as he extended the point toward my face and said, using the Faroese term for whale blubber, "Here, try some spik." Conversation halted and all eyes were on me. What else could I do? I plucked the morsel from his knife tip and ripped a piece away with my teeth. I had never tried blubber before and was unprepared for its consistency. I chewed, but the portion in my mouth remained whole. The family members resumed talking as I ground the blubber between my molars, trying to break it into smaller pieces. No luck. Oil was extruded, coating the inside of my mouth, but I couldn't break the blubber down. I started to panic: I can't swallow this and I can't chew it up! Fortunately, we were on a boat, floating on the water. I waited until I thought no one was looking, turned, and spat the blubber into the harbor. "He spit it out!" I heard the mother cry in English. "Give him another piece!" Which is exactly what the son did, this time bigger than the first. Slightly more prepared the second time, I gave up on chewing, ripped a smaller bite, and swallowed it whole. Satisfied that I was not fundamentally opposed to blubber-eating, the family opened up to me about whaling.*

Many of us on the waterfront love whales and hate the thought of them being killed. In this book the controversial nature of whaling is omnipresent. The sad conclusion is that these traditions will soon pass for the worst possible reason.

Whale hunting has become highly criticized, especially in the Faroes, where the bay runs red with blood and photos of the scene make excellent material for environmental organizations to use to engender outrage and raise funds.

Hunted whales in St. Vincent suffer more, as the buyers want them to be alive on arrival, but their operations are lower key. Whalers there raised a giant stir in 2017 when they happened to harpoon two orcas (killer whales) right in front of two boatloads of whale watchers from a cruise ship.

Slaughter is never pretty, and my preference would be for whales to be left alone. I suspect that Fielding has that preference too. If you are a vegetarian, I salute you. If not, being horrified at killing, while still eating flesh, shows we have become detached from being part of nature and the food chain.

When I was a charter skipper, I asked for food preferences from guests, and one asked for fresh fish. We caught a nice tuna and she was horrified and refused to eat it. "What I meant," she said, "was fish fresh from the supermarket."

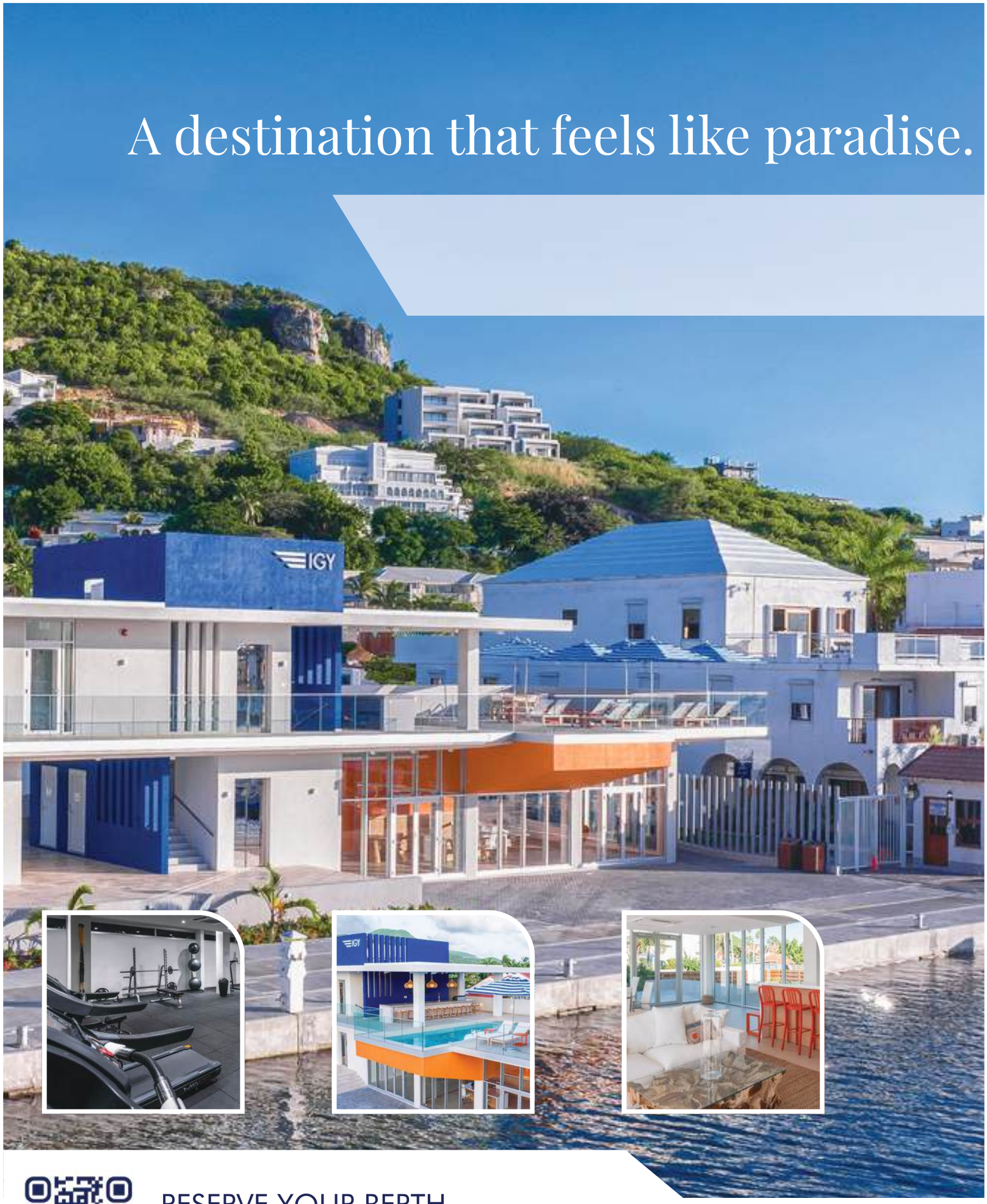
Fielding deals with whaling controversy sympathetically, but with full awareness of the history, culture and the larger picture. But there are different aspects to environmentalism. In terms of sustainability, both the St. Vincent and Faroes whale hunts seem sustainable. The detractors appeal to love of whales and the emotion created by the sight of slaughter.

The sad thing is that these whaling practices will end, not from sentiment, but because the industrial world, where most detractors live, has polluted the seas so terribly that the whales themselves are becoming dangerous to eat.

Today, whale flesh has very high levels of methyl mercury. This will be a pyrrhic victory because, not surprisingly, the mercury damages the whales themselves, as well as those who eat them. A sad reflection of where we are.

This book is a classic and a treasure and available. I bought my hard copy on Amazon. You can learn more about the author and his work at russellfielding.com.

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Anguilla 2026

Story and photos by Lexi Fisher and Chris Doyle



The beachfront community of Sandy Ground lines Road Bay's anchorage.

Anguilla sits at the northernmost range of our Cruising Guide series, at the top of the Northern Leewards chain, just above St. Martin/St. Maarten, a low island surrounded by soft, powdery, white sand beaches and banks of coral. It is visually stunning, in no small part due to the extensive marine protected areas that encompass most of the coastline and offshore islands. The fees for being in the MPA are some of the highest in the Eastern Caribbean, but that means that they are some of the least busy and offer unparalleled serenity.

For the most part, Anguilla has a wonderful sense of peace, and Anguillans are known for their strong community ties and welcoming attitude toward visitors. The population of 15,000 relies on tourism as the major industry, and the American University of Anguilla School of Medicine adds a rotating community of international students to the island's population.

The tourist boom has brought with it a rash of building, with styles varying from rectangular concrete boxes to the elaborately grandiose in many flavors. Here and there, but getting rarer, you come across a traditional old Anguillan house; they stand out as very pleasing to the eye in their simplicity and elegance.

The two main visitor activities in Anguilla are going to the beach and dining out. As a consequence, there are so many excellent restaurants that mentioning them all would take an entire book; I have stuck to those close to the anchorages.



Little Bay, on Anguilla's north coast, is reachable only by boat or a steep rope-assisted path.

In 1967, Britain grouped Anguilla with St. Kitts and Nevis into an autonomous state. This decision, made without meaningful Anguillan input, disregarded both the geographic separation of the islands and the distinct identity of their people. Anguillans were dead set against it and wanted to remain with England. They rebelled against the rule of St. Kitts' Premier Bradshaw, who told them he "would show them who was boss" and threatened to "turn Anguilla into a desert."

A remarkable and largely non-lethal resistance followed. The Anguillan rebels would open fire on the police station — manned from St. Kitts — at all hours of the night or day until the police were quite unnerved. A large armed crowd gave the police an ultimatum to leave the island and blocked the runway to stop reinforcements from arriving.



Doyle Guide chart of Anguilla and surrounding islands

Next, the Anguillans, fearing an armed invasion from St. Kitts, decided to take the offensive and invade St. Kitts themselves. A small boatload of men went there, aided by two American mercenaries. The invasion was a complete fiasco. A big hole got blown in the ground near the defense force headquarters and there was a shoot-out at a police station. There were no casualties. However, after that no one in St. Kitts really wanted to mess with the Anguillans.



Rendezvous Bay, on Anguilla's southwest coast, is another favorite spot for beachgoing and dining.

Several Americans thought up fancy schemes to help the Anguillans finance their island, and Britain, citing unfounded fears, including a widely mocked claim that organized crime had taken over the island, sent in troops in 1969. They were met not by the insurrection they expected but by goats and curious children; an episode that became emblematic of how thoroughly Anguillans had outmaneuvered the colonial bureaucracy. After the embarrassment died down, Anguilla separated from the St. Kitts-Nevis state and became a British Overseas Territory, which remains in place today.

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Road Bay, the main anchorage in Anguilla, is a charming village set on a lovely beach. The sail to and from St. Martin is usually a pleasant haul over turquoise water. From Road Bay you can visit other anchorages along Anguilla's south and north coasts, as well as making day stops offshore at Sandy Island, Dog Island, and Prickly Pear Cays. There are fees involved.

You must clear into Anguilla and the place to do this is Road Bay. From Road Bay you can get a cruising permit to explore other anchorages, some of which are in the marine park. If you use a yacht agent and arrange it in advance, the agent can check you in from any anchorage.

Of note, when visiting Anguilla, is that while government offices usually list prices in EC, almost everywhere else, especially restaurants, list prices in US.

The Anguilla Sailing Association organizes the Anguilla Youth Sailing Club, which teaches local kids to sail in a fleet of dinghies, some of which you are likely to see out on the water. The sailing program is open to everyone, with scholarships for those who cannot afford it. In this endeavor, they have had support from local businesses all over Anguilla, including those in Sandy Ground, the lively beachfront community that lines Road Bay's anchorage.

Local boat builder David Carty is chairman of the Anguilla Boat Racing Association, which hosts a series of races for local boats throughout the year, often on holidays or as part of local festivals. Check out the Facebook page for dates and locations.

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

Anguilla Entry and Exit Procedures

Ports of Entry

The only port of entry for Anguilla is Road Bay.

Advance Paperwork

No advanced paperwork is required. While SailClear has Anguilla listed, it is not currently used.

For visitors from many countries, a visa is not required. Stays of up to 90 days are typically granted.

Entry Process

On arrival, the captain should proceed to the customs and immigration offices with the exit zarpe, crew passports and boat paperwork.

Exit Process

Same as the entry process; clear out at Road Bay. If staying less than 24 hours, it is possible to clear in and out at the same time.

Rates

For double handed yachts up to 20 tons, fees are approximately $50US. Sailing outside of Road Bay (including in a tender) requires a costly cruising permit.

noonsite.com

Check noonsite.com/place/anguilla/view/clearance/ for more detailed information and updates (free log-in required). This information is provided by Noonsite.com, specialists in worldwide formalities for yachts, and was accurate at press time.



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View Our Current Listings

Paradise Beach Club
Carriacou



It's Not Just a Destination, It's An Experience

• Restaurant • Bar • Yacht Provisions •
Daily Hours 11 am - 9 pm

VHF channel 16
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