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COMPASS
JUNE 2026 NO. 360
The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore

RUMS OF THE ISLANDS

— SEE PAGE 13

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SHARON MATTHEWS-STEVENS

At Grenada's River Antoine Estate and Distillery, workers in the boiling room monitor the heating and cooling of sugar cane juice, a process that takes several days.

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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 *Truly the most treasured spirit among many served in bars across the islands is rum, and famously, Pusser's. It was the brainchild of entrepreneur Charles Tobias and bottled in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, for years. For an entertaining rundown of Caribbean rums as well as expert mixology, turn to page 13.*

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Caribbean Compass

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NORRIS HUNTER

Norrie and Joan, back in the day

Bequia Remembered

Dear *Compass*:

What an excellent Spotlight piece (April 2026) on one of our most memorable stopovers whilst on our way down island from the U.S. Virgin Islands to Grenada.

It was 25 years ago on our liveaboard Gulfstar 42 *Freelance* that we called into Admiralty Bay, Bequia, and we found it a magical and welcoming place. I believe we dined at Mac's Pizzeria, a small restaurant/bar on the southern shore of the bay between Frangipani (where we also dined) and the Sunny Caribbee Plantation House.

I had read in an earlier edition of *Compass* that the magazine was based in Bequia, and when we went ashore, my first objective was to source the magazine's editorial offices. It was down a little side street off the main port area and that's where I met the editor-in-chief, Sally Erdle.

I explained to her that I was a journalist and asked if she'd be interested in freelance articles. From that day on I wrote numerous feature pieces on a wide range of subjects based on our experiences — from banking in the Caribbean to the importance of fresh water collection and usage and of course as we had done, buying a liveaboard boat.

I was a regular freelance correspondent from 1999-2001, and I wrote one more article a few years after we returned to Scotland, on swapping sails for two wheels and touring on our Yamaha 900cc Diversion (***Editor's note***: *Read the republication of this article, "Returning to the Dream," on page 28.*) We still have great memories (and photographs) of our two-plus years and my feature articles for *Compass*. My interest in sailing has never diminished. Hence I've signed up for the magazine again.

No doubt, after a quarter of a century, much has changed on Bequia. Perhaps the Whaleboner Inn is no more and ownerships of many establishments may have changed. But one thing my wife and I are sure hasn't: that's the courtesy and friendship we experienced whilst on our brief stopover on the island ... this is, after all, the Caribbean!

To all on Bequia — it certainly deserves the accolade of being "a *laid-back Grenadine gem.*"

Best wishes,

Norrie & Joan Hunter
Ardrossan
North Ayrshire
Scotland

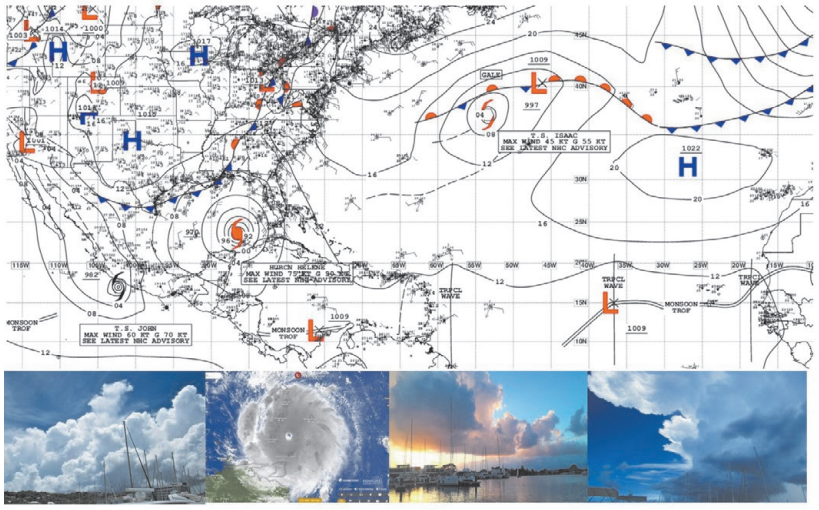
Norrie and Joan — the Whaleboner Inn is still in business, this quarter century later. And Sally and Tom still live on Bequia. So it's definitely time for a return visit!

Elaine and Tad



CARIBBEAN SINGLE SIDEBAND WEATHER NETS SUMMER 2026

By Bill Woodroffe



Sailors rely on good weather information every day. With today's communication technology there are multiple ways to gather this information. One of more traditional and reliable ways, worldwide, is via High Frequency (HF) Single Side Band radio (SSB). This updated station list reports weather in plain language.

TIMES: Atlantic Standard Time (AST) = -4 hours from UTC. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) = -4 hours from UTC. Central Daylight Time (CDT) = -5 hours from UTC. AST does not change to Daylight Time. AST covers Eastern Caribbean; EDT covers US East Coast, Bahamas, Colombia, Panama; CDT covers west of Florida, Western Caribbean.

EMERGENCIES: In case of maritime emergency, there is a 24/7 (24-hour) Maritime Mobile Net (emergency, weather and cruiser assistance) at 14300 kHz Upper Sideband (USB)/HAM. Anyone, licensed or not, may legally operate on any radio frequency (HAM or marine) in the event of life threatening or distress situations.

Chris Parker of Marine Weather Center (MWXC) in Florida always listens for emergency traffic at the very beginning of his weather net on 4045, 8137 and 12350 kHz USB.

Stations listed as HAM can be monitored but a HAM license is needed to broadcast (except in emergencies).

SPECIAL STORM NETS:

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

Tropical storm or hurricane activity information can be found continuously on the Hurricane Watch Net on 14325 kHz USB Ham and 3950 kHz LSB Ham

UTC/AST	STATION and DESCRIPTION	FREQ	MODE
0515/0115	USCG High Seas/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB
0930/0530	USCG Offshore/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB
1000/0600	Daily Caribbean Weather	6215	USB
1030/0630	Caribbean Emergency & Weather HAM	3815/7162	LSB
1000/0600	MWXC (C. Parker) East Carib	4045, 8137	USB
1030/0630	MWXC (C. Parker) Bahamas	4045, 8137	USB
1115/0715	USCG High Seas/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB

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2021 Hylas 48
$349,000 USD
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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



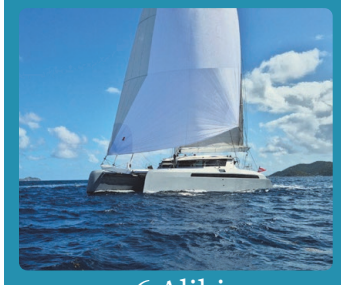
2020 Beneteau Oceanis 46.1
$336,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



2016 Jeanneau 519
$229,000 USD
Antigua & Barbuda



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



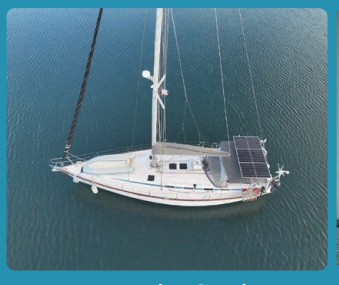
2016 Alibi 54
$1,290,000 USD
Nanny Cay, BVI



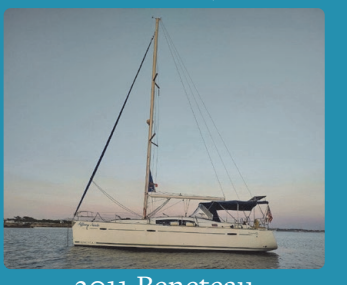
2023 Hanse 510
$899,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



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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—*Continued from page 5*

UTC/AST	STATION and DESCRIPTION	FREQ	MODE
1220/0820	Bahamas Weather	3696, 7096	LSB
1130/0730	MWXC US EC, W Atlantic	8137,12350	USB
1530/1130	USCG High Seas/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB
1200/0800	Coconut Telegraph, Eastern Caribbean	4048, 8170	USB
1230/0830	Cruzheimers Net	8152	USB
1245/0845	Waterway Cruising Club HAM	7268	LSB
1230/0830	MWXC (C. Parker) E Caribbean	8137,12350	USB
1300/0900	MWXC (C. Parker) W Caribbean	8137,12350	USB
1305/0905	MWXC (C. Parker) EC Atl traffic	8137,12350	USB
1330/0930	Panama Connection Net	8107, 8167	USB
1400/1000	Northwest Caribbean Net	6209	USB
1715/1315	USCG High Seas Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB
2100/1700	Doo-Dah Net, Bahamas, US EC	8152	USB
2130/1730	USCG Offshore/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB
2200/1800	MWXC (C. Parker) All areas **NOTE 3**	8137,12350	USB
2230/1830	Caribbean Weather	3815`	LSB
2315/1915	USCG High Seas/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB
2235/1835	Caribbean Emergency & Weather HAM	3815, 7162	LSB
2300/1900	Trans-Atlantic Cruisers (SSCA) **NOTE 2**	12350/6227	USB
0330/2330	USCG Offshore/Hurricane Forecast	**NOTE 1**	USB

NOTE 1: USCG broadcast NOAA forecasts from: NMN Chesapeake, 4426, 6501, 8764, 13089, 17314 and NMG New Orleans, 4316, 8502, 12788. Monitor all frequencies as not all frequencies are always used.

https://www.weather.gov/marine/uscg_broadcasts

NOTE 2: The Trans-Atlanta Cruisers Net is only live during migration periods when boats are coming or going between Europe and North America. That Net is always on 12.350 kHz at 1230 hrs UTC. KPK as net controller will be assisted by stations WCY, KNC and KJM.

NOTE 3: Please hail Marine Weather Center 15 minutes before the net so that Parker knows where to aim his antenna to reach you. This net is geared primarily to offshore Atlantic and Pacific passage makers. For schedule updates see www.mwxc.com.

Weather on the Internet.

Got Internet? There are many website that are free and provide a good source of local and worldwide weather information. This list is not exclusive and does not include paid weather sites that also provide good weather information and is tailored to the cruising sailor.

GENERAL WEATHER

Windy - World Wide Winds, Currents, Waves, Swell www.windy.com

NOAA Ocean Prediction Center Atlantic Basin ocean.weather.gov/Atl_tab.php

NOAA Surface Tropical synopsis ocean.weather.gov/UA/Atl_Tropics.gif

Mikes Weather Page spaghettimodels.com/default.htm

The Weather Channel weather.com

Bouy Weather www.buoyweather.com/#4.69/15.14/-61.86/SWELL

STORMS & HURRICANES

NOAA National Hurricane Center www.nhc.noaa.gov

NOAA Storm Outlook www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghaz/gth_full_TConly_ATL.png

—*Continued on page 9*

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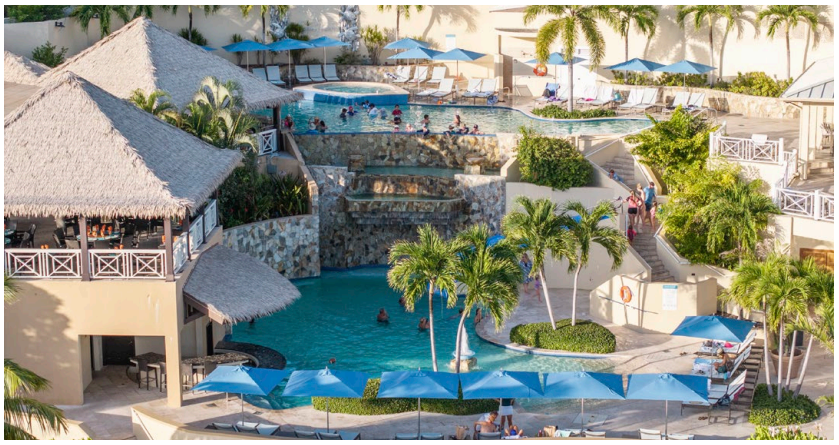
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The Island That Doesn't Close

Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina. Open all summer, in every sense.





The British Virgin Islands in the summer has a particular quality that regulars know well. The trades hold steady, the anchorages breathe, and the pace of the islands settles into something unhurried and genuinely restorative. For those who've spent time here across different seasons, it's often the one they come back to.

Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina is open for all of it.

Tucked into the eastern BVI just a short ferry ride from Tortola, Scrub Island is one of the few full-service Caribbean resorts to remain fully operational through the summer months without scaling back. The full property, the full team, and the full experience remain in place. What that means in practice is less about what's available and more about how a stay feels: attentive without being orchestrated, complete without being crowded.

A Season Worth Planning Around

With the resort's marina accommodating vessels up to 160 feet, summer arrivals by sea are seamless, with dock power, water, fuel, and full resort access available to transient guests. The concierge team remains on hand for charter coordination, provisioning assistance, and island-hopping itineraries that put the broader BVI within easy reach. Runs to The Baths at Virgin Gorda, a sail over to Marina Cay, a passage through Sir Francis Drake Channel on a morning when the water is the color of hammered glass.

For those traveling by air, Scrub Island is just a 10-minute ferry ride from Tortola's Trellis Bay Dock via our private launch.

North Beach

North Beach sits apart from the resort's main activity, tucked into a calm cove where the water is shallow, and the sand holds the warmth of the afternoon. It rewards guests who find their way there, and summer gives it room to breathe.

Three private cabanas line the shore, named Flip Flop Hideaway, Loafer Lagoon, and Lost Sole. Each accommodates two to four guests with plush loungers, chilled wine or beer, fresh fruit, and the unhurried atmosphere that makes an afternoon disappear. One Shoe Beach Bar & Grill is nearby, with a menu of island bites and cold drinks suited to the pace of the place.

On Wednesday evenings, the beach gathers for the weekly North Beach Festival. Music, open-air dining, and a bonfire along the waterline. The island absorbs the energy easily, the way it always does.

The Shape of Your Day

Mornings at Scrub Island invite you to enjoy coffee on a balcony as the light moves across the marina and the trades are already steady before the island fully wakes. The infinity-edge pool catches the Sir Francis Drake Channel below and Tortola beyond, and it is the kind of view that makes the morning feel larger than it is.

Ixora Spa sits above Marina Village, with the Caribbean Sea spread out below. There you can lose yourself in Ayurvedic treatments, ocean-view massages, and morning yoga. The spa sees lighter volume in summer, which means the pace is quieter and the day doesn't have to work around it.

Dining spans multiple venues on Scrub Island, with menus that follow the seasons. Local catch, regional produce, the kind of meals that feel less like a resort feature and more like a natural part of being here. Summer fishing in the BVI tends to be exceptional, and the kitchen knows it.

For guests who want to be on the water rather than beside it, guided snorkeling, paddleboard rentals, sailing excursions, and day trips across the channel are all available from the resort's dock. Some guests plan every hour. Others leave with a sense of direction and let the day fill in around it.

Your Own Corner of the Island

Scrub Island's private villas are spread across the island, each positioned to make the most of the views and the terrain around them. Two, three, four, and six-bedroom floor plans are available, each with a private pool, dedicated butler service, and terraces that make it genuinely difficult to go inside.

Summer has a way of bringing people together, and the villas are built for exactly that. The living, dining, and kitchen spaces flow into one another naturally, opening onto the terrace in a way that makes inside and outside feel like the same room. Gourmet kitchens, soaking tubs, walk-in rain showers, and in-unit washers and dryers mean a longer stay never feels like a logistical challenge. Large enough to give everyone space, intimate enough that the trip still feels like a shared experience.

For families and groups who want the full BVI experience without giving up privacy or comfort, the villas make a strong case for themselves. The island is right outside, and so is everything on it.

Here to Welcome You

Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina is fully open, fully staffed, and ready when you are. Guestrooms, suites, and private hillside villas are available throughout the summer, with offers worth considering before you book. The marina welcomes transient vessels.

The island keeps its own rhythm. It always has.

For reservations and marina inquiries, visit scrubisland.com.

—*Continued from page 7*

Google's AI storm lab deepmind.google.com/science/weatherlab

Colorado U Hurricane seasonal hurricane projection tropical.colostate.edu/forecasting.html

NOAA annual hurricane verification reports www.nhc.noaa.gov/verification/verify3.shtml

General Information

NOAA weather model descriptions www.nhc.noaa.gov/modelsummary.shtml

NOAA's use of AI for hurricanes www.weather.gov/news/261102-AI-Hurricane-Forecasting

Caribbean Beach Weather beach-weather.com/Caribbean

Swell Forecast www.swellinfo.com/surf-forecast

A more complete schedule of HF radio nets is available at

www.docksideradio.com/east_coast.htm

www.qsl.net/j69ds/ham-info-projects/caribbean-nets.html

Selected Cruisers VHF Nets (local time)

With the wide use of Cell/Sat (StarLink) phone service a notable drop in the use of VHF by cruisers is noted. Despite the fact that VHF communication is free, many cruisers rely on phone apps (Whatsapp, TXT, messenger, NFL, Sea People and other apps.) All those serve a purpose but are limited to their own users. Since everyone has a VHF (and should be monitored 24/7) you can use your VHF DSC feature for convenient and private real-time communication with other cruisers.

By convention, cruisers use VHF 68 as a hailing channel, except in the French Islands of St. Maarten, Guadeloupe, Martinique (use VHF 8). After contact, move to a working channel for your traffic. VHF 16 is always an emergency channel and can be used to hail the Coast Guard and commercial traffic. Always be mindful of others on the channel; they may have priority.

Local VHF nets are run mostly by volunteers and are subject to the availability of volunteers and may or may not operate at all times as indicated below.

Nassau, Bahamas, 0715 VHF 14

Luperón, 0900 VHF 72

St. Martin/Maarten 0730 VHF 10 Monday-Saturday

English Harbour, Antigua 0900 VHF 06 daily

Jolly Harbour, Antigua Monday-Sat 0800 VHF 74

Le Marin/St. Anne, Martinique 0830 VHF 08 Monday and Friday

Rodney Bay, St. Lucia 0830 VHF 68 Monday-Friday

Bequia, St. V & Grenadines 0800 VHF 68 Monday-Saturday

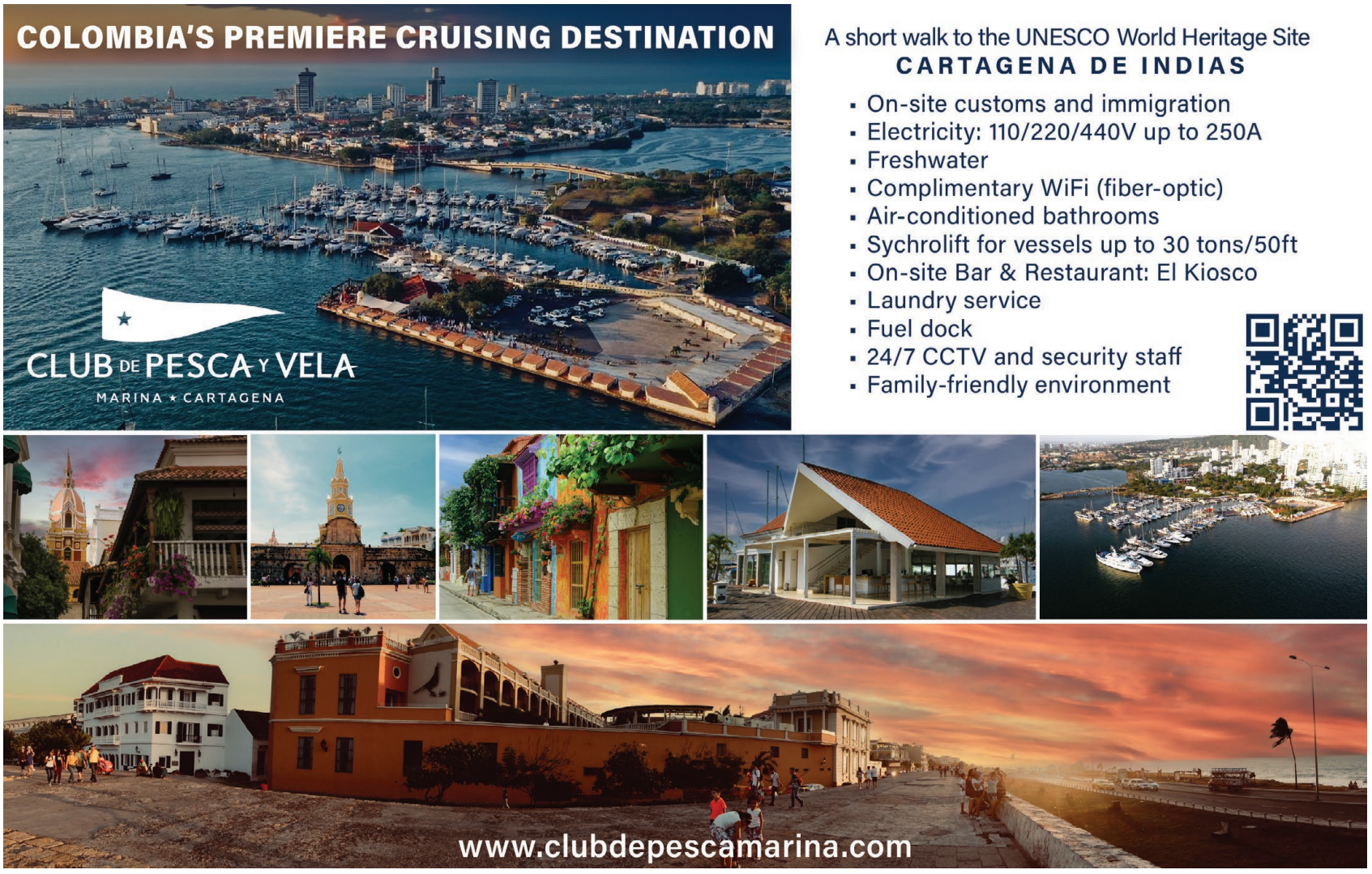
Grenada 0730 VHF 66 (International) Monday-Saturday

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

Chaguaramas, Trinidad 0800 VHF 68 daily

Curaçao 0745 VHF 72 Monday-Saturday

Bill Woodroffe holds a B.S. degree in meteorology from State University NY/Maritime College, sailed as a deck officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine and now sails with his wife aboard their 47' ketch SV Kalunamoo *throughout the islands of the Eastern Caribbean. He can be reached at whwsailboat@gmail.com*



Spending Hurricane Season in the Dominican Republic

By Denise Simpson

For those who choose — or need — to stay in the Dominican Republic through hurricane season, the north coast has consistently proven to be a relatively safe haven from direct hurricane hits, usually only experiencing tropical storms. Thankfully last year was a very calm and uneventful year all around the country, and we can only hope for the same this year.

Hurricane Irma came close in September 2017, passing about 50 miles north of Puerto Plata as a powerful Category 5 storm. Neither Irma, Maria (also 2017) nor Fiona (in 2022) caused significant damage along the northern coastline. Fiona crossed the tip of Samaná on the northeastern side as a Category 1-2 storm, then passed about 60 miles north of Puerto Plata as a Category 2-3, and again caused no serious harm along the northern coast.

Ocean World Marina and its boatyard in Cofresí near Puerto Plata proved a reliable refuge. The marina's massive sea wall and strong, fixed concrete docks — with very strong well-secured cleats — allowed long-term vessels, some tied spider-web-style, to ride out the storms successfully after the liveaboard community and staff ensured that unattended boats were well secured. At the boatyard on the Ocean World Marina and premises, boats that were hauled out and strapped down also had no damage.

Farther west, foreign commercial vessels, several Dominican boats, and the longterm liveaboards plus transient cruisers sought shelter in Luperón, a naturally protected bay. Some latecomers received permission from the armada (Navy) to run lines into the surrounding mangroves — a key hurricanehole feature that offers flexibility and protection as long as you study the wind pattern to avoid ending up stranded too high in the mangroves. In contrast, the lack of mangroves in the Samaná town anchorage — and even an unattended vessel in Marina Puerto Bahía that hit the dock and sank — contributed to multiple wrecks during Hurricane Fiona.

It is vital for owners in Luperón to remain with their vessels during the season. The harbor entrance can funnel the wind, which accelerates into the harbor during tropical storms. This can cause some boats to drag anchor in the soft mud bottom or — as has happened for many years — to break free from old unserviced moorings or the lines from the boats to them. In 2020, a Panamanian inter-island ferry dragged during 45-50-knot gusts, but thankfully the crew onboard avoided a collision with other smaller vessels.

Controversy erupted in April-May 2025 in Luperón when officials began removing unattended derelict vessels. Some owners claimed their boats were not derelict but stored for the season after many years of breaking free or dragging in the harbor. One owner shared that authorities asked him for proof of monthly harbor fee payments and a valid *Permiso de Navegación* (cruising permit) which applies world-wide, required here after 60 days as an extension of the local or overseas registered vessels stay in the country. Now it's been made much easier with overseas registered vessel owners being able to pay the overstay fee after 90 days to the Armada/Navy when leaving port instead of having to obtain the extension of stay, which is mainly for the local vessels and all in Spanish.

—Continued on the next page



—*Continued from the previous page*

Because Luperón is an environmentally protected area, all boaters must obtain permission from the armada/navy to perform work on their boats and avoid using toxic substances such as muriatic acid on the water or on land surrounding the bay.



COURTESY MARINA PUERTO BAHIA

Vessels returning to Marina Puerto Bahia Samana after hiding out in Los Haitises hurricane hole during Hurricane Fiona

Marine weather expert Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center has repeatedly cited the Puerto Plata Province as a favored hurricane refuge. He cited three main reasons, in a 2019 article in *Passagemaker* magazine:

1. Storm path & mountains: The coast backs up against the Cordillera Septentrional mountain range, with peaks like Diego de Ocampo (1,250 meters/4,100 feet).

2. Dominican alps: Farther inland is the Cordillera Central, with the Caribbean's four highest peaks, including Pico Duarte (3,098 meters/10,164 feet).

3. Left-front quadrant advantage: Harbors on the north coast often lie in the left-front quadrant of storms, which brings weaker winds and drier air.

"If a west-moving hurricane passes along or just north of the north coast of a mountainous landmass, then harbors along the north coast will experience the less-strong south side. If the storm passes over the landmass, dry air and tall mountains disrupt the hurricane's structure, causing rapid weakening."

NOAA's historical hurricane data confirm that the DR's north coast has never taken a direct hit from a hurricane — only occasional tropical storms. The data can be found at NOAA Historical Tracks: coast.noaa.gov/hurricanes, or the "Bums on a Boat" Facebook page: facebook.com/share/p/158uF3rk2y/?mibextid=wwXIfr.

In 2022, some boats in Marina Puerto Bahía (Samaná) weathered Fiona safely. Others took refuge in Los Haitises if their draft allowed. One vessel sank after hitting the dock, while others now haul out at Ocean World Marina & Boatyard, which has the only professional travel lifts for both monohulls and catamarans on the N/NE and SE coasts run by Maritima del Atlántico. Notable south coast hurricane refuges include:

- Marina Punta Cana with high buildings
- East side of the Ozama River, Santo Domingo at the government marina
- Marina Zar Par, Boca Chica (damaged in 2024 from surge but up and running again)
- Many take their vessels up rivers to avoid waves/surge.



COURTESY MARINA PUERTO BAHIA

Los Haitises National Park and small hurricane hole for the Samana vessels

Denise Simpson and her daughter Natasha Simpson, with their two boat cats, live aboard SV Fair Lady, *a Morgan Out Island 41 ketch. They've remained full-time in the Caribbean since sailing their catamaran from South Africa in 2010. They are based at Ocean World Marina & Boatyard in Puerto Plata on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. Denise is also a port officer for the Ocean Cruising Club OCC (UK) since 2010, a host for the Seven Seas Cruising Association SSCA (USA) since 2019 and liaison officer/host for the Cruising Association CA (UK). Reach her at deniswithane61@gmail.com*



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My Love Affair with Caribbean Rum

Story and photos by David H. Lyman

In 1979, I was on a two-week bareboat charter in the Virgin Islands. The boat, a Morgan Out Islander, was a floating Winnebago, but it came with a complimentary gallon jug of rum punch.

It's been rum for me ever since.



Rum is native to the Caribbean, made from West Indian sugar cane or molasses, a derivative of sugar cane — so rum tastes Caribbean. West Indian rum is available clear or in shades ranging from gold to amber to black. Mix the amber with pineapple and orange juice, add a splash of grenadine, and the drink takes on all the colors of a West Indian sunset.

Back in the '80s, when you could buy a 750 ml bottle of Mount Gay on St. Barts, duty free, for $2, the universal choice was Mount Gay and OJ. In more recent times, Cruzan Dark has supplied my daily ration — a reasonably priced amber rum distilled on the island of St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands. My daily ration starts with a 24-ounce insulated Yeti coffee mug — it keeps the morning coffee hot and the evening rum chilled, both for hours. Drop in four cubes of ice, four ounces of rum, and top it off with 18 ounces of tonic water — a squeeze of lime is optional and a dash of nutmeg is nice.

These are reasonably priced, but they're for mixing, not sipping. I also keep a few bottles of sipping rum in my locker, for those evenings of indulging my gourmet taste.

As you cruise the island chain, you'll get to sample a variety of rums, as each island has a distillery or two. Some of these island rums are excellent, most are good — and a few are better used as dinghy fuel. Here are a few I'd recommend.

There are two distilleries on Grenada — Clarks Court and River Antoine (see sidebar on page 22); both continue to produce their own rums. On Bequia, I found Sparrow's, a rum from St. Vincent, was just right for mixing my evening libation. Farther into the Atlantic, beyond the Caribbean, lies Bermuda, where Goslings makes a dark rum, which, when combined with ginger beer, becomes a Dark and Stormy. I mention it because it's quite popular in the islands. Both Guadeloupe and Martinique boast their own distilleries, producing robust French-style rums. There are two distilleries on St. Maarten: Guavaberry Rhum and all its relatives and Topper's Rhum, offering a dozen spiced and gussied-up varieties for the tourist trade. The Callwood Family distillery, in Cane Garden Bay on Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands, has been making rum for 200 years. Its 80-proof, cane-based rum, Panty Dropper, is as renowned for its label as for the rum.

—Continued on the next page



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—Continued from the previous page

English Harbour, a distillery on Antigua, offers a variety of sipping rums; the affordable Cavalier Gold is a fine choice for any West Indian rum punch.

If you find yourself there, try to get invited to the local Tot Club, the subject of an article on page 4 of the April 2025 issue of *Caribbean Compass* (https://caribbeancompass.com/the-royal-naval-tot-club-of-antigua-and-barbuda). It's a band of expats who assemble each evening at a local pub to listen to a reading of the Royal Navy's exploits from 200 years ago. This is followed by a toast to the king. The toast is not complete until a full tot of rum, measuring half a gill, is downed, in one gulp (everyone there is traditional enough to know what a tot and a gill are, so you'd better be too — it's about 2.4 ounces). This is usually followed immediately with a Heineken beer chaser. The Saturday toast is: "To our wives and sweethearts ... may they never meet."



Hemingway could drink a dozen daiquiris at El Floridita.

Years ago, as a writer on assignment in Cuba, I went in search of Ernest Hemingway's haunts, for this great writer was also a great rum drinker. I found one of his favorite bars a few blocks behind the Capitola in Central Havana. El Floridita is a pink, one-story restaurant and bar, on the corner of Obispo and Avenue Belgica. It's just eight blocks in a straight line down Obispo Street to the Hotel Ambos Mundos, where Hemingway lived before buying an estate outside Havana — so he could walk home, if not always in a straight line.

It was here, at El Floridita, that Hemingway would drink a dozen daiquiris in one sitting — all the while chatting with fellow writers who dropped in: Ezra Pound and John Dos Passos, Graham Greene, Jean-Paul Sartre, Gabriel García Márquez, and Tennessee Williams. The photographs on the walls tell a more complete story of El Floridita in the 1930s–50s.

—Continued on page 16



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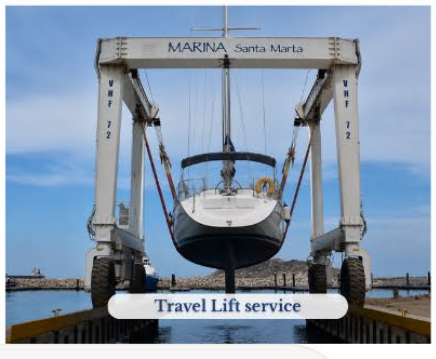
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—Continued from page 14

Tourists crowded the place when I dropped by in 1999. A long bar stretched along the back wall, three musicians were jamming in a corner; waiters were circling; a red-aproned bartender was lining up a dozen glasses on the bar, as another was keeping time to the rumba beat from the house band with a cocktail shaker over his shoulder. He stopped, tapped the shaker on the bar edge to loosen the top, and, with a strainer holding back the ice cubes, poured out the cocktail for which the Floridita is famous, the daiquiri.

According to William Grimes's book *Straight Up or On the Rocks: The Story of the American Cocktail*, you make this traditional cocktail with Bacardi white rum, fresh lime, grapefruit juice, and sugar syrup. Shaken, not stirred, with ice, and served in large goblets. You can add six drops of maraschino liqueur for more color. If you tell the bartender to skip the sugar, you have the "Hemingway Daiquiri."



Chillin' with rum at the Bamboo Bar in Bequia.

Bacardi rum is not available in Cuba now, yet the name is still there in Havana, carved into a granite facade on an art deco building just two blocks away — the family's former headquarters. The Bacardi family was kicked out when Castro and his ragtag army arrived to take over. Today, the rum in Cuba is Havana Club. The Bacardi family set up shop in nearby Puerto Rico and is doing just fine.

At the resorts that line the beaches of many Caribbean islands, a favorite is the Piña Colada — a concoction of white rum, coconut milk, lime juice, pineapple juice, and ice, all crammed into a blender and beaten into a frothy mass, poured into hourglass-shaped tumblers, and garnished with a miniature umbrella. Just the thing for the Caribbean resort crowd down to the islands for a week in the sun.

For sailors there's Navy Grog, made with Pusser's Rum, water and lime juice. This daily tot of rum was first doled out to British crews in 1655 and then stopped in 1970. The Royal New Zealand Navy continues the tradition.

In the BVI, it's the Pain Killer, a lethal concoction of pineapple juice, 85-proof Pusser's rum, freshly squeezed orange juice, and cream of coconut (in a 4, 2, 1 ratio) shaken vigorously in a cocktail shaker and served with a dash of nutmeg. No ice is needed.

The Soggy Dollar Bar on White Bay on the island of Jost van Dyke is where the Pain Killer originated. There's no dock here, and the beach is not ideal for landing dinghies, forcing sailors to swim ashore with dollar bills stuffed in their bathing trunks. When I frequented White Beach in the late '70s and '80s, there was no ice available as there was no electricity. This powerful rum drink goes down real easy, so watch your intake. They come in grades: one, two, three, and four; the fourth should be outlawed.

—Continued on page 18





St. Thomas: The Heart of Caribbean Yachting, Community, and Lifestyle



St. Thomas, a vibrant jewel in the U.S. Virgin Islands, is a place of turquoise waters and lush hills paired with world-class yachting. IGY Marinas has been instrumental in shaping this destination, with two flagship properties—American Yacht Harbor and Yacht Haven Grande—anchoring the island's reputation as a premier hub for boaters, residents, and visitors seeking adventure.

The Allure of St. Thomas

St. Thomas stands out in the Caribbean for its unique combination of natural beauty, cultural diversity, and accessibility. As a U.S. territory, it offers the convenience of American infrastructure and currency, while retaining the rich history and charm of the West Indies. The island's capital, Charlotte Amalie, is famous for its colonial architecture and bustling waterfront.

What truly sets St. Thomas apart is its central location in the Virgin Islands archipelago. Boaters can easily access the neighboring islands of St. John, Water Island, St. Croix, and the British Virgin Islands, making it a strategic base for island-hopping and exploring the wider Caribbean.

Yacht Haven Grande: Superyacht & Social Hub

Located in the heart of Charlotte Amalie, Yacht Haven Grande is recognized as one of the Caribbean's most prestigious superyacht marinas. The facility is designed to accommodate some of the world's largest and most luxurious vessels, with deep-water berths, wide fairways, and state-of-the-art floating docks.

Guests and crew enjoy a suite of premium amenities, including a resort-style pool, fitness center, private crew lounge, and a selection of fine dining restaurants open both day and night.

Yacht Haven Grande is also a major social and event hub for the island. Spacious event venues and waterfront terraces like Harbor360 provide the perfect setting for celebrations like weddings, corporate functions, and community festivals. Security and privacy are paramount, with 24/7 gated access, CCTV surveillance, and discreet guest services ensuring peace of mind for all visitors.

The sense of community at Yacht Haven Grande is strong, with dedicated crew facilities, wellness offerings, and social events that bring together yacht owners, guests, and marine professionals from around the globe. Whether relaxing by the pool, attending a community event, or enjoying a sunset dinner, guests can experience the best of Caribbean hospitality while staying at Yacht Haven Grande.

American Yacht Harbor: A Vibrant, Well-Connected Community

On the eastern end of the island in Red Hook, American Yacht Harbor offers a different yet equally compelling experience. With over 120 slips for vessels up to 110 feet, American Yacht Harbor is home to a diverse group of boaters, from full-time residents to part-time and seasonal visitors. Here, people find not just a place to dock their boats, but a welcoming community that makes St. Thomas feel like home.

One of the most appealing aspects of American Yacht Harbor is its affordability compared to other island living options. For those seeking to live in paradise without the high costs often associated with luxury real estate, this marina provides a practical and inviting solution. Residents can choose to live on their boats full-time, enjoying the convenience of modern amenities—electricity, water, Wi-Fi, and security—while being steps away from Red Hook's restaurants, bars, and shops.

The marina's lively social scene is fueled by regular events, fishing tournaments, and dockside gatherings. For many, it's the perfect blend of independence and community.

Harbor 360: The New Centerpiece for Events and Gatherings

Adding to the appeal of Yacht Haven Grande in St Thomas is the exciting development of Harbor 360, a state-of-the-art event venue set to become the island's premier location for celebrations, meetings, and community gatherings.

Harbor 360 is designed to be as versatile as it is stunning. The venue features expansive indoor and outdoor spaces, panoramic views of the marina and surrounding hills, and cutting-edge audiovisual technology. Its flexible layout can accommodate everything from intimate weddings and family reunions to large-scale corporate events, galas, and charity fundraisers.

Key features of Harbor 360 include:

A Grand Ballroom: With floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the water, the ballroom can host elegant banquets, conferences, and receptions.

Terraced Outdoor Spaces: Perfect for cocktail hours, sunset ceremonies, or open-air concerts, these areas provide a direct connection to the marina's vibrant atmosphere.

Meeting and Breakout Rooms: Equipped for business meetings, workshops, or private dining, these spaces offer flexibility for groups of all sizes.

Onsite Catering and Event Planning: A dedicated team ensures that every detail—from gourmet menus to décor and logistics—is handled with professionalism and creativity.

Harbor 360 is poised to become a focal point for both the boating community and the wider St. Thomas population, hosting everything from regatta after-parties to community festivals and cultural celebrations.

What Makes St. Thomas Unique

The island's natural beauty is matched by its vibrant culture. Annual festivals, such as Carnival, fill the streets with music, dance, and colorful parades. Local cuisine blends African, European, and Caribbean influences, with fresh seafood, tropical fruits, and bold spices taking center stage. Art galleries, craft markets, and historic sites offer endless opportunities for discovery.

For boaters and water lovers, St. Thomas is a paradise. World-class fishing, snorkeling, and diving are just minutes from the shore. The steady trade winds and protected anchorages make it a sailor's dream, while the proximity to other islands means new adventures are always within reach.

Looking Onward: A Destination for All

With IGY Marinas' ongoing investment in infrastructure, community, and lifestyle, St. Thomas is poised to remain at the forefront of Caribbean yachting and island living. Yacht Haven Grande and American Yacht Harbor, along with the new Harbor 360 venue, exemplify the island's welcoming spirit and commitment to quality of life—offering vibrant, connected spaces for residents, boaters, and visitors alike.

Whether you're seeking a full-time home on the water, a part-time escape from the ordinary, or a world-class venue for your next event, St. Thomas and IGY Marinas offer a unique blend of opportunity, beauty, and community. From sunrise to sunset, life at St. Thomas invites you to embrace the Caribbean's finest moments, every single day.

—Continued from page 16

Rum punch, on the other hand, is a rum drinker's drink. The recipe starts with ice in a tall glass, followed by the addition of white or amber rum, a mixture of various tropical fruit juices such as lime, lemon, papaya, mango, pomegranate, and even orange juice. I prefer pineapple and orange juice, with a splash of grenadine syrup for color and taste.

On the island of Bequia, a rum punch goes like this: one of sour, two of sweet, three of strong, and four of weak: lime juice, sugar syrup, rum, and tonic water in that order.

The mojito is Cuba's contribution to the rum drinker's delight, so while on my Hemingway Pub Crawl, I went searching for the bar that makes the best one. Heading down Obispo Street, I was on my way to the Ambos Mundos Hotel, another of Hemingway's bars and his Havana residence.



The Hotel Ambos Mundos, where Ernest Hemingway lived.

Walking the narrow streets of Old Havana I felt as if I had just stepped back into ancient Spain. Built in the 1500s and 1600s, Old Havana preserves much of its Spanish Baroque architecture, columns and arches, colonnades and ornate carvings. Government buildings are in fine shape, hotels have had a facelift, and churches are restored, even if the Catholic religion is not. There are abandoned and dilapidated buildings next to recently renovated ones.

Most of Old Havana looked a bit worn out when I was there. But the people I encountered were anything but worn out. The narrow streets were filled with people going about their lives, chatting, and shouting to each other across the alley. Commerce went on as I passed pastry and bread shops and ice cream stands. A tank truck parked on the curb, providing water for local residents whose apartments lack running water. An eighty-year-old woman struggled with a blue pail of sloshing water on her way to her third-floor walk-up. Three men were working on a Bicitaxi; two more bent over the engine compartment of a 1958 Chevy, the hood up, while others lingered nearby, offering free advice and criticism.

I arrived at the Ambos Mundos Hotel, where Hemingway wrote *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), about the Spanish bullfights. He started writing *The Green Hills of Africa* here, published in 1935, and worked on *To Have and Have Not*, published in 1937. The bar in the lobby makes a wicked mojito, so I seated myself among tourists and locals and ordered one. The bartender placed a tall, narrow glass in front of me, cramming in what appears to be a sprig of mint, complete with stalk, leaves and all (the locals refer to this as "grass"), along with a wedge of lime. With a well-worn wooden mallet, he smashed the lime and grass into a pulp to release their oils and essence. To this he added ice, simple syrup, a liberal helping of Havana Club white rum, and a splash of club soda, stuck in a straw, and with a smile, pushed the glass in my direction.

—Continued on the next page





Libby Nicholson, whipping up her famous rum punch for a soirée on the veranda of Pineapple House, overlooking Falmouth Harbour, Antigua. The Nicholson family is renowned as pioneers of the charter yacht business in the West Indies.

—Continued from the previous page

The mojito is a refreshing drink, the fiery taste of rum, now tamed with sugar, lime, and the grass. One usually leads to two.

Back on the Hemingway Pub Crawl, I went in search of the mojito's birthplace. A few blocks away, I found La Bodeguita del Medio on Empedrado Street. You can't miss it — the bar is practically on the street. When I arrived, people were out on the sidewalk, dancing in the street to a house trio inside. The blue walls inside were covered with people's names and expressions handwritten with sharpies; a mural of Ernest filled the wall behind the bar; framed photographs told a story. The graffiti-covered walls led to a cluster of small dining rooms deeper inside, then extended up the stairs to yet more of the rooms above.

I decided to return when it's not as busy.

As I sail among the islands this winter, I'll be looking forward to dropping the hook at the end of each day in some cove or harbor. After rigging the snubbing line, I'll go below, mix up my daily ration, and kick back in the cockpit, rum and tonic close at hand, observing the sun as it sinks into the Caribbean Sea — continuing my research into the rums of the Caribbean.

For over 20 years, author and photojournalist David H. Lyman has sailed the Eastern Caribbean islands. His Hemingway Pub Crawl is from a chapter in his forthcoming book, A Maine Yankee in Castro's Cuba*. Find his writing and photographs at DHLyman.com. A version of this story was originally published in* Cruising World *magazine.*

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A Ration of Grog Made the Old-fashioned Way

Story by Mark Stevens, photos by Sharon Matthews-Stevens

I am a sailor and I love the Caribbean, so naturally I also love rum. I may not boast the expertise of my fellow sailor, writer and rum drinker David Lyman, but my rum intake over the years proves that my passion for that potent potable is unparalleled.



In the boiling room a staffer ladles the mixture to stir it up and to remove impurities.

I'm also a history buff so the chance to visit Grenada's River Antoine Estate and Distillery is a no-brainer: sample some history, sample some rum.

What's not to like?

Think voluptuous emerald hills, fields of sugar cane swaying in a samba in time with omnipresent easterlies, the sweet aroma of fermented cane juice and the campfire smell of burning wood wafted by those selfsame breezes.

Then add the historical significance of this place and a rum-making process unique in the Caribbean, and a visit to River Antoine Estate and Distillery, snugged down in the northeast corner of the gorgeous island of Grenada, is a must-do.

Dating back to 1656, the estate was first owned by a French national. He sold the roughly 150-acre spread to an Englishman named Grant around 1763, and the distillery was founded in 1785. This doesn't make it the oldest Caribbean distillery (Barbados's Mount Gay dates to 1703), but it's still one of the most historic operations.

The Organization of American States has recognized River Antoine for a historical and cultural significance that makes it unique across the English-speaking Caribbean.

So what's so special about this place?

Other long-established distilleries have modernized through the years so that the relationship between production now and the way they used to make rum is almost unrecognizable. Not so in the case of River Antoine, where a visit is an up-close-and-personal experience of a process almost unchanged since the 17th century. Even today no electricity is used. It is both Grenada's oldest continuously running distillery and the Caribbean's oldest functioning water-powered distillery.

Cane was originally crushed with the help of oxen or wind power until they "modernized" things around 1840 with the construction of an aqueduct to bring water from the nearby river and the addition of a massive waterwheel to power the gears of the cane crusher.

The process is little changed since then.



Locally sourced hardwood provides fuel to heat the pot stills.



The addition of the waterwheel around 1840 "modernized" the distillation process.

At River Antoine you'll feel lost in time. Even the buildings — concrete blackened by the soot of two hundred years of burning, ballast brick structures — are the stuff of history.

But it's still mostly about the process.

On a sunny afternoon the water splashing from the massive wheel itself sparkles like diamonds. As that water turns the wheel it hisses and gurgles; the wheel itself groans and creaks like an arthritic octogenarian. A wooden ramp fitted with a conveyor belt rises from the floor inside a building capped with a weather-beaten corrugated tin roof. Workers continuously shovel great bundles of green and gold sugar cane stalks onto the belt

"The cane is grown on our estate," says Shermond Lewis, our guide. "It's hand-cut and carted here." She points at the conveyor belt, the massive press. "The cane is passed through the press twice to extract as much juice from it as possible."

—Continued on the next page

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At the other end of the press an open-air trough leads to another building. Overhead a sort of train track leads outside. A wooden cart on the track is piled high with crushed cane — called "bagasse" — then offloaded into great piles of the stuff to dry in the sun.

"Once it's dried," says Lewis, "we use it to heat the ovens under the boiling house. Then we use the ashes for fertilizer."

In the boiling house, steam rises like disembodied spirits above great vats laden with cane juice. For several days the liquid is transferred from vat to vat in a cycle of heating and cooling. Periodically a staffer uses a long-handled ladle to remove errant bits of cane.

Next is the fermentation room — great open cisterns, where another cool step in the process takes place. No "fake" yeast, just whatever's in the air.

Second last step is the distillation. Here employees feed the ovens with locally sourced hardwood as the pot stills make their magic.

Final step? The bottling — done onsite.

The best is yet to come: a sample.

In a separate building two bottles hold court side by side on a simple table. Shermond pours from the first bottle — Rivers Royal Grenadian Rum. I raise my glass.

"A bit strong," I gasp.

Shermond just grins.

This, incidentally, is the weak stuff: 138 proof — 69 percent alcohol. An early nickname for rum comes to mind: Killdevil.

I take another sip. Killdevil indeed.

But one more bottle awaits my pleasure. It's decorated with a drawing of a scarlet banner, and the words "Slightly overproof rum."



Keeping it simple, River Antoine limits production to just two products.

Biggest understatement. 75 percent alcohol, too potent for export. Writer Matt Pietrek once described Rivers Rum as one "capable of causing the faint-hearted to flee."

"This one's a bit smoother," says Shermond.

I run adjectives through my mind. "Smooth" doesn't make the list.

But I survive.

As the rum sears my gullet I reflect on the historical and cultural impact of this place, that feeling of having experienced history up close and personal. And I recall my commitment to you, the reader.

"Another ration of grog," I say.

A ration of grog made the old-fashioned way.

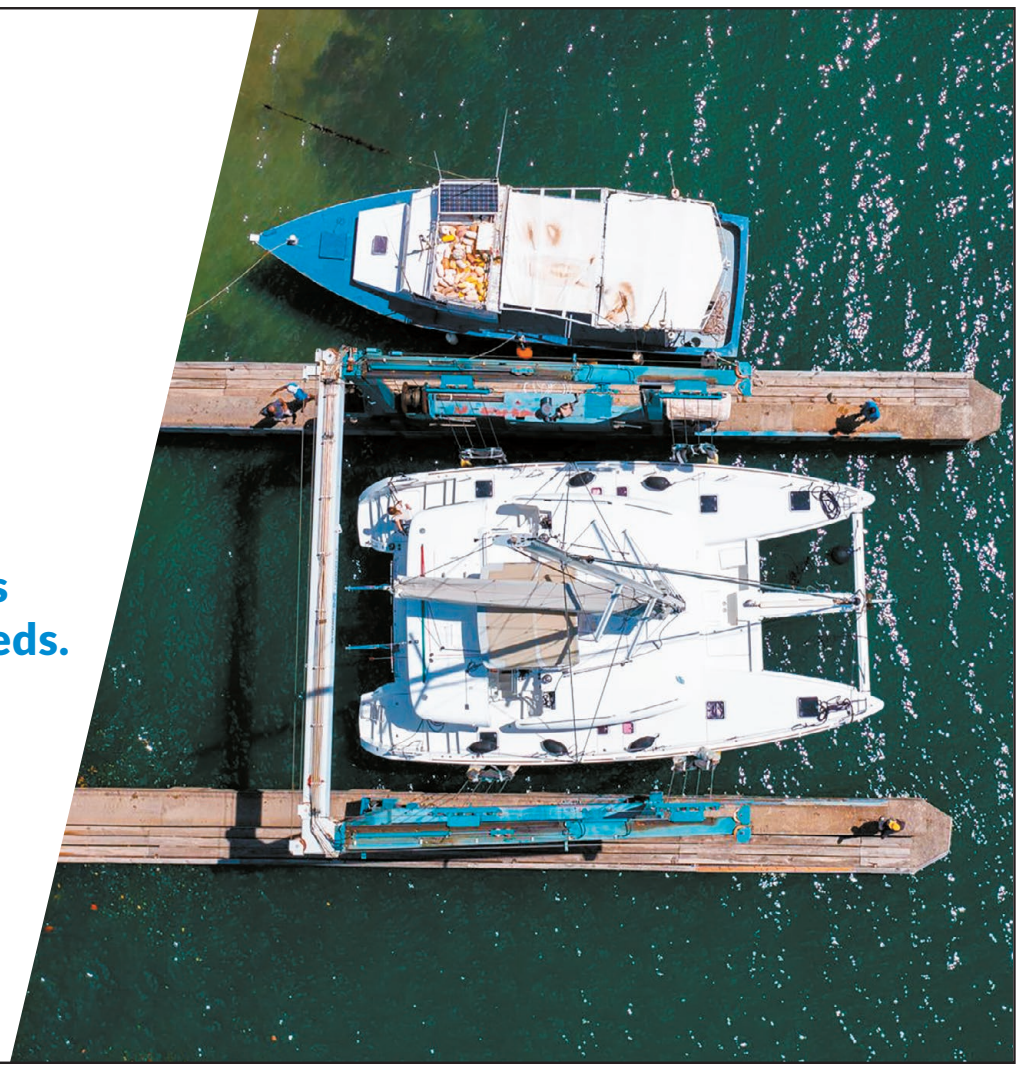
While Mark and his wife, Sharon, call their home cruising ground the waters of Lake Ontario, they sail the Caribbean whenever they get the chance. Check out more of their stories at www.travelwriteclick.com.

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Moskito Island, a luxury destination in the BVI.

BVI Earns Top Honors in Modern Luxury's 2026 Travel Awards

The British Virgin Islands earned recognition as Best Luxury Destination in the Caribbean in *Modern Luxury's* 2026 Travel Awards. The same publication had awarded the BVI Hottest Destination of the Year honors in 2025.

"We are proud to once again be recognized by *Modern Luxury*, this time as the Best Luxury Destination in the Caribbean," said Clive McCoy, director of tourism for the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission. "These awards speak to the consistency of our product and the authentic, high-quality experiences that define the BVI."

Other recent publications recognizing the destination in award rankings include *US News & World Report*, *Caribbean Journal* and *USA Today*.

Nevis Celebrates Mangoes

With more than 40 varieties of the fleshy tropical fruit calling the island home, Nevis celebrates its reputation as the Caribbean's mango capital with the 12th annual Nevis Mango Festival, July 2-5, billed as four days of food, culture, and island flair. This year's celebration is headlined by Chef Eric Adjepong, a Food Network star, Top Chef finalist, and culinary champion of West African cuisine.

Highlights include chef-led dinners at Four Seasons Resort Nevis, a cooking masterclass, beach bar crawl, and the signature "For the Love of Mangoes" event with tastings and live entertainment across the island.

For more information, check out nevismangofest.com.

Antiguan Quadriplegic Model Attends Met Gala

Antiguan-American Aariana Rose Philip made history as the first wheelchair user to attend the fashionable Met Gala in New York City in May, wearing a Collina Strada gown especially designed for her. Philip, a model and musician, has also been chosen as one of the real-body mannequins featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Costume Art" exhibit.

Philip, a disability inclusion advocate with quadriplegic cerebral palsy, expressed that her attendance was a crucial step toward validating disabled people in the fashion industry.



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CALENDAR

June 2026

1	World Reef Awareness Day
5	World Environment Day
5-6	St. Martin Book Fair, St. Martin. caribbeanstudiesassociation.org
6	Lowell Wheatley Anegada Pursuit Race, Anegada, BVI. royalbviyc.org
6-7	KLM Aruba Marathon, Aruba. arubainternationalmarathon.com/en
7	Keelboat Season Championship Finale, St. Maarten.smyc.com
8	World Oceans Day
12-14	Festival del Jíbaro Comerieño, Comerio, Puerto Rico. discoverpuertorico.com/event/festival-del-jibaro-comerieno/1405
13-14	Mango Festival, Hopkins, Belize. belizing.com/Hopkins-Mango-Fest
14-21	International Optimist Regatta, St. Thomas, USVI
17-21	Cabarete Kite Festival, Dominican Republic. bodyandsoulinternational.com/activities/3526-cabarete-kite-festival-2026
19	Labour Day – Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago; Corpus Christi in some territories
21	Summer Solstice / Summer Sailstice. summersailstice.com
21	Fête de la Musique –French West Indies and globally
21	Jamaica Ocho Rios Jazz Festival, Jamaica
21-27	BVI Wreck Week, British Virgin Islands. bviwreckweek.com
24-26	Aruba Summer Music Festival, Aruba
24-28	International Choral Festival for Peace, Costa Rica. choralfestcostarica.org
25-27	St. Kitts Music Festival, St. Kitts. stkittsmusicfestival.com/new-home/
26-5 Jul	Festival de las Flores de Aibonito, Puerto Rico
26-7 Jul	Vincy Mas (St. Vincent Carnival), St. Vincent & the Grenadines
27- 4 Jul	St. John Celebration Village Nights, St. John, USVI. visitusvi.com/events/st-john-celebration/
29	Fisherman's Birthday – Local boat racing in many coastal communities
29	Strawberry Moon (full moon)
TBA	Antigua Yacht Club mini-regatta. antiguayachtclub.com/calendar
	Bonaire Rum Week, Bonaire
	Goute Domnik, Dominica
	Lagoonie's Regatta, St. Maarten. smyc.com/lagoonies-regatta/
	St. Croix Sunfish Open, St. Croix, USVI



TAD RICHARDS

Mango Festival, Hopkins, Belize, June 13-14

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



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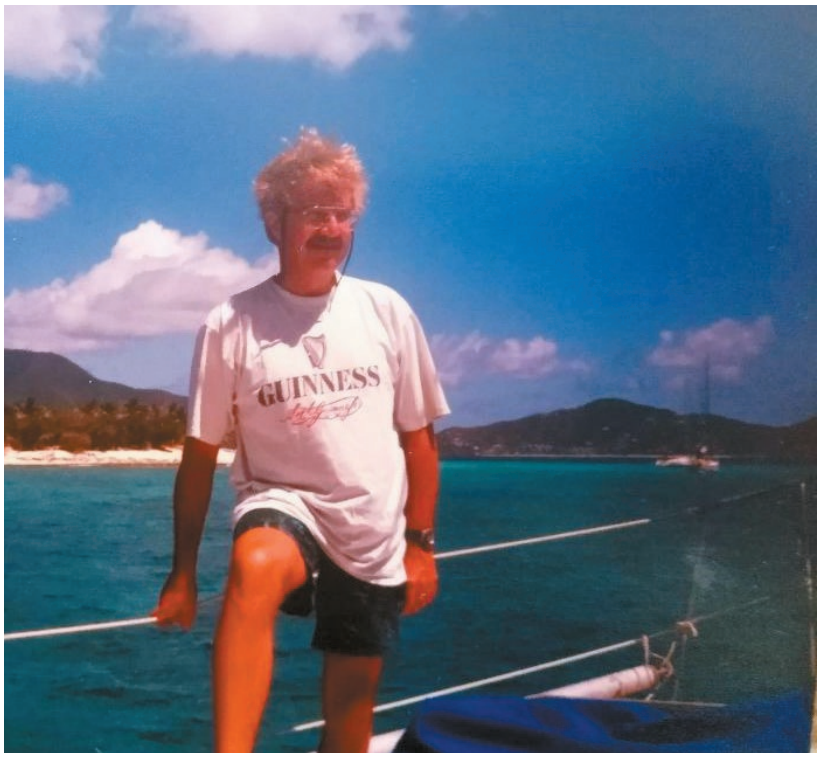
Returning to the Dream

Story and photos by Norrie Hunter

"Why did you ever come back from your idyllic life in the Caribbean to this lousy Scottish weather?" If we'd had an EC dollar for every time we've heard that one, well!

Although our departure from our cruising lifestyle (2000–2002) aboard our beloved *Freelance*, in which we covered over 3,000 nautical miles around God's cruising ground, was probably the saddest thing we've ever done, life this side of the "pond" hasn't been all that bad — despite the weather!

We never did quite settle down on our return to Scotland, despite calls from family to do so. No, our wanderlust was still to the fore, and the first thing on touchdown was to buy back our Yamaha motorbike from Joan's brother, then set off on tour around Scotland and southern Ireland.



Norrie strikes a pose on the deck of Freelance.

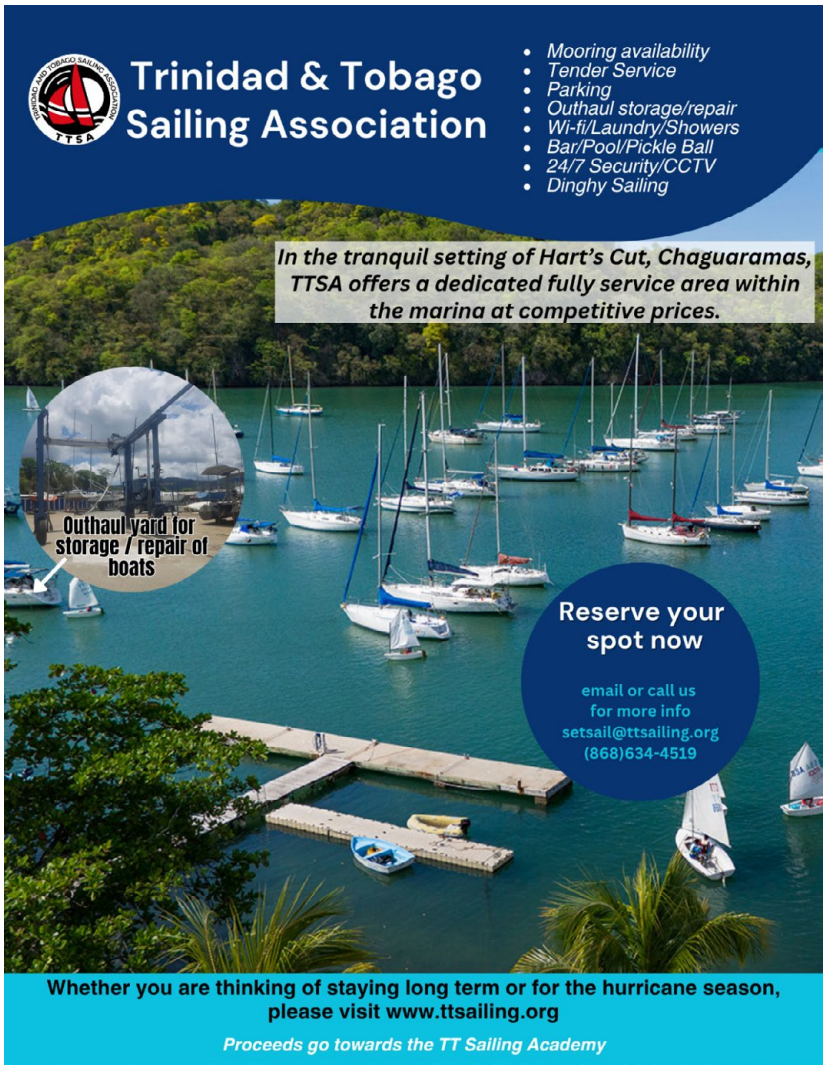
In late 2003 we decided to do something completely different. We bought ourselves a caravan and went to France, Spain, and Portugal, where we spent seven months.

All this landlubber lark was, however, a far (and sad) cry from the floating paradise we left behind.

As we sat enjoying the Mediterranean sun in the western Algarve area of southern Portugal, many a thought flew back to those exhilarating days sailing from the US Virgin Islands down the chain to Grenada, and of all the friends we made — some we still correspond with to this day. But where indeed have all our sailing buddies gone, what are they doing now; are they still afloat?

—Continued on the next page





—*Continued from the previous page*

Crescent Moon (Henry and Karen); *Westwind II* (Jane and Steve and their dog Thelma); *Coram Deo* (Chuck and Micky); *Dream Catcher* (Gerry and Sam); *Knotts Gypsy* (Trevor and Ann from Nottingham); *Tamarack II* (Brian and Debbie and their cats); Dave on *Antiquity*; *Elusive* (Gary and Sharon); *Nativa* (Brian and Ann); *Coleen* (Bruce MacCampbell and Elaine; and our bagpipe-playing American friend, Bill Seamen, then skipper of the motor-cruiser *Hand-the-Line*. These and many more make us just that little bit homesick for those glorious times spent on our 43-foot Gulfstar, *Freelance*.

"Would they ever remember us?" said Joan, as she too wondered if we'd had enough of boating on the other side of the world or whether the lure of those magical nights in American Yacht Harbor, St. Thomas, USVI, watching the sun go down after yet another cocktail session at Duffy's Love Shack, or snorkelling in St. Lucia, might just tempt us back?

"Hauling a caravan 2,000 miles round Europe is fun but somehow fails to spark the adventure buds in the same way, doesn't it?" I said as we sat back in our island home (Bute) in Scotland, glass of vino in hand, gazing longingly at the countless photo albums of our Caribbean adventures.

We'd even contemplated buying a boat as part of a consortium (of friends) on the cold, wet and windy west coast of Scotland where we live, but this somehow has again failed to ignite our imagination. No, the Caribbean experience, once sampled, is hard to beat.

And so the chat developed into: "Well, we could have a yacht charter holiday and relive the dream," I ventured, "and take along a couple of pals for company."

Freelance was (sadly) sold after our trip up from Grenada, through the U.S. and British Virgin Islands and the Bahamas to Florida, and so a charter boat would have to be the reality.

What would it be? Another well-earned lunch aboard that floating pillar to gastronomic exuberance, the *William Thornton* (or as it is affectionately known, the *Willy T*), anchored off Norman Island? Or perhaps down island to Marigot Bay in St. Lucia to dine where Dr. Doolittle's great Pink Sea Slug slid up on golden sands, or just out with the gang at Mount Hartman Bay in Grenada ... memories, oh the memories.



Now Freelance *sails the seas of memory.*



RETURNING TO THE DREAM

by Norrie Hunter

Journalist Norrie Hunter and his partner Joan Bennett's series of articles in Caribbean Compass *four years ago — "Living the Dream" — was about their first taste of cruising these waters... are the couple of adventurers now thinking of returning?*

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The sight of Gary on *Elusive* heading off solo to Venezuela to dodge an impending hurricane and return with countless bottles of the best tasting two-dollar rum this side of a classic cocktail (each individually wrapped in his old socks for safety) and skipper Revitt and his partner Shaun aboard their aptly named *Free at Last* — are they still? Yes, these were just some of the memories we'll forever cherish.

The everlasting memory for Joan is that of her pulling me out, feet first, from the bilges of *Freelance* after a small but vital engine component fell into the oily blackness and I got well and truly stuck trying to rescue it. I was extracted like the sound of a cork from a bottle and, covered in oil, I was ordered to stand on some old newspapers as she washed me down with that most magical of Caribbean washing-up liquids, Joy!

Yes, these are some of our memories, but does anyone out there remember us — the two good-time Scottish dreamers? Thoughts are already heading toward booking a charter sailing trip. Look out gang, we may just come sailing over the horizon, so get the rum and coke ready!

If any of these old-time cruisers read this, they can get in touch with Norrie and Joan by e-mail at norriehmedia@yahoo.com — and write us, too. We want to know. Of course, the same goes for new cruisers who want to let them know how much fun they're missing. Maybe, like the audience clapping for Tinker Bell to show her that they do believe in fairies, we'll bring that passion back to life, and one of these days our favorite island beach bar will be lighted up by the smiles of two older, but still lively Scots.

Us in a land-yacht 'anchorage' in southern Portugal

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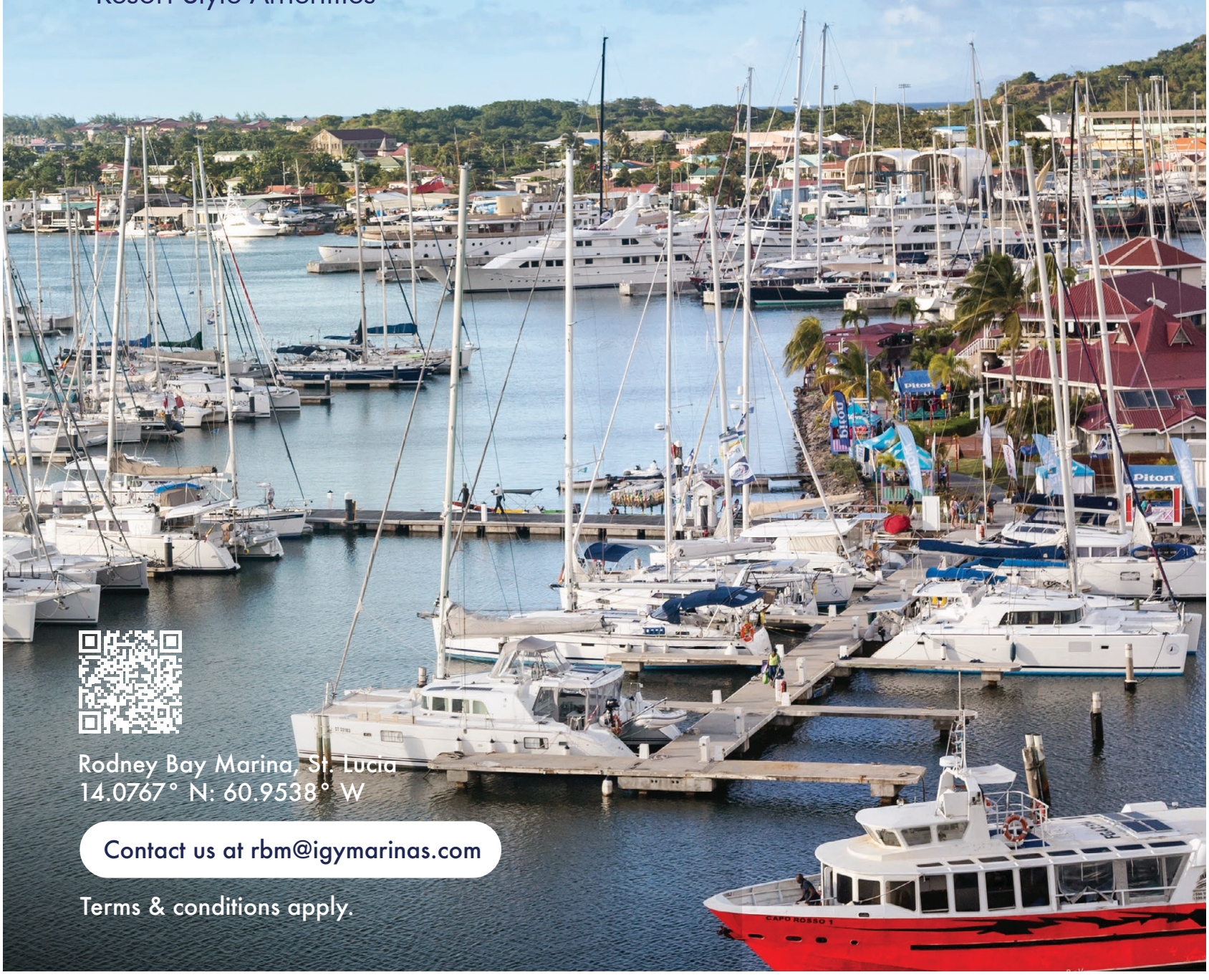
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COURTESY PARTS & POWER



Engineers from Vinlec joined Perkins dealers from Trinidad, Barbados, Dominica, the BVI and St. Vincent for instruction on troubleshooting, maintenance and repair on the Perkins 2506 and 4012 engines.

Parts & Power Hosts Perkins Training in St. Vincent

Perkins Engine Company conducted an intensive technical training program at St. Vincent Electricity (Vinlec) in March 2026, focusing on its widely used 2000 and 4000 series engines. Hosted by Parts & Power and led by Perkins training manager Jeremy Little, the course combined a fully equipped classroom with hands-on access to engines. Engineers from Vinlec joined Perkins dealers from Trinidad, Barbados, Dominica, the BVI and St. Vincent, all of whom had completed more than 40 online courses to qualify for the instructor-led sessions.

The program delivered two and a half days of classroom instruction followed by two full days of troubleshooting, maintenance and repair on the Perkins 2506 and 4012 engines. Participants were also introduced to the new 5000 series engine, expected to enter the Caribbean market within 12–18 months. Without specialized regional training, support for this model would likely have required technicians from the US or UK.

Perkins' decision to bring training directly to the Caribbean reflects the company's longstanding approach to customer support in a region made up of many small countries and even smaller islands. Nearly half of residential and commercial generators in the Caribbean are Perkins powered, a dominance built on understanding that local dealers cannot invest in parts and tooling at the scale of larger industrial markets. Perkins prioritizes customer care over profit center metrics — an uncommon stance in the diesel engine manufacturing sector. Parts & Power, the Perkins-appointed distributor for the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, extended thanks to trainer Jeremy Little and territory manager Meckel Weste for coordinating the event.

For more information, email info@partsandpower.com or visit www.partsandpower.com.

Wood vs. Plastic Sheet Products

Robbie Ferron of Budget Marine writes: The Caribbean has seen a great deal of plywood rot — often in large quantities and in surprisingly short periods of time. And yet some plywood boats, like the famous Spronk catamarans, were built to be light and efficient, and are still in excellent condition 50 years later.

Remarkable results can be achieved with wood. However, success depends on how well the wood is sealed and, in some cases, reinforced with epoxy. This process requires a level of skill that is typically limited to a small group of experienced artisans. It should also be noted that some types of wood are not suited to this kind of application and do not respond well to epoxy saturation.

In recent years, plastic boards like Supersede have become



available on the market. While they may not be suitable for every application due to their different properties compared to plywood, for many uses, such as floorboards, they perform very well — with one clear advantage: They will not rot.

These materials do not require painting, although you may still choose to do so for cosmetic reasons.

Looking ahead, further developments are likely. Even now, however, plastic sheets offer a practical alternative for certain applications, providing the reassurance of durability and freedom from rot over time.

Budget Marine is the sole Caribbean distributor for Supersede. For more information, please visit www.supersede.build.

COURTESY NORVOS



Norvos Insurance will attend the June Boat Show in Tampa.

Norvos Insurance Increases Marine Presence

Norvos Insurance, with increased interest from clients across the marine sector, is expanding its operations, taking on new staff to better support its growing client base.

Norvos Insurance is attending the June Boat Show in Tampa, Florida, where it expects to further connect with boat owners, brokers, and industry professionals. With expansion underway and a strong events calendar ahead, Norvos Insurance continues its investment in people and industry engagement, furthering its long-term vision ofcdelivering reliable, expert insurance services.

For more details consult the website (norvosinsurance.com).

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Turning Your Dream Catamaran into a Working Asset

What Smart Buyers Need to Know

by Dave Bennett

Catamaran buyers tell us they want to own these boats intelligently. Up-front costs are real and logistics aren't trivial, but according to Latitude Yacht Brokerage, the path from aspiring owner to working boat business is easier than most think.

Why Catamarans, and Why Now

The traditional monohull market has been flat for years; catamarans are a growing market segment. Cats have more living space, better solar and better energy storage — which is well suited to extended cruising for couples and families. A modern cat can carry water makers, lithium batteries, washer-dryers, and enough solar to stay off the dock for weeks.

Marina infrastructure was once a Northeast constraint, where older facilities weren't built for catamaran hauling requirements. That's changing. Florida, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Caribbean already accommodate cats, and Florida has become a major service hub — many Caribbean-based cats migrate north for hurricane-season refits. Florida's tax structure helps: sales tax are capped at $18,000 regardless of boat value. Rhode Island, Delaware, and New Hampshire have no boat sales tax; Maryland and Connecticut offer reduced rates.

The Business Case: New Boats and the Charter Model

For buyers who want a serious blue-water cat but can't carry the up-front costs alone, placing a new boat into a Caribbean charter fleet — structured properly — is the answer. There are two options.

A passive LLC is more common. The owner places the boat with a bareboat charter fleet, earns rental income, and deducts legitimate business expenses while retaining personal use — a balance of financial return and being able to use the boat.

An active LLC is more aggressive but potentially far more powerful. The owner must demonstrate genuine business intent — tracking working hours, maintaining a business website, showing a real plan for profitability. In exchange, the owner may qualify for bonus depreciation under IRS Section 179, writing off up to 100% of the asset's value in year one. For someone managing a significant tax event — a recent sale or buyout — this would be worth considering.

Timing is critical. Synching a new boat's delivery with a specific tax year requires advance planning — especially for pre-production boats with reserved slots — and the conversation must happen before contracts are signed. Latitude works with maritime attorneys and CPAs who specialize in this structure, and as buyer's representative for Lagoon Catamarans we have direct access to Lagoon's configuration resources.

Meeting Buyer Requirements

Some owners want maximum charter revenue and minimal personal use. Others break even in exchange for a well-maintained boat sitting in the Caribbean, ready when they want it. A third group plans years out: charter now, generate income while a professional team keeps the boat well maintained, then take it private when life allows. There's also owner-operated crewed charter, where partners live aboard and take paying guests — requiring the active LLC and more involvement but delivering both lifestyle and business return.

Charter fleet selection matters too. Not all Caribbean operators are equal, and the maintenance agreement determines what the boat looks like coming out of the program. Done right, a boat exiting a quality charter fleet can be in better condition than when it entered — every survey discrepancy is the operator's contractual responsibility to fix. Latitude works with multiple operators rather than being tied to one base, so recommendations are tailored to your cruising ground, business goals, and whether you're bringing in a new or late-model brokerage vessel.



Wide beams, open layouts. Catamarans offer large living spaces

The Brokerage Path: An Accessible Entry Point

The used catamaran market, particularly boats cycling out of quality charter programs, has become a compelling entry point for affordable cruising. The assumption that charter boats are beaten up is no longer true. Reputable operators maintain their fleets to a functional standard many private owners can't or won't match, because the boats have to run in great shape or they don't generate revenue. Buyers end up with a thoroughly sorted, well-equipped boat at a used price.

The brokerage process resembles any significant asset purchase: finding the right boat, managing the deposit, coordinating survey, finance, insurance, evaluating charter and maintenance records. Experience matters because mistakes are costly.

Try Before You Buy

One piece of advice we give consistently: charter one first. Spend a week on the type of boat you're considering, in the region you'd base it. You'll learn things about layout, brand, and onboard systems no brochure can tell you. If you charter through a fleet you might later place your boat with, you'll see firsthand how they operate. I grew up racing one-design sailboats; when I considered a cruising boat, my first move was a charter in St. Maarten. I came back and bought a Beneteau 35S5 because it checked every box on my post-charter list.

You can't sleep in a house before you buy it; cars get a five-minute test drive. Catamaran ownership offers a genuine try-before-you-buy experience that shapes what buyers actually purchase.

About Latitude Yacht Brokerage

Latitude was founded in 2009 around cruising powerboats and sailboats, building its reputation on the hard parts: qualifying buyers, managing deposits, coordinating surveys, finance, and insurance. A decade ago, Latitude pivoted toward catamarans, eventually becoming buyer's representative for Fountaine Pajot and Lagoon. Combined with brokerage experience across Leopard, Catana, and other brands, the team has a broad perspective of what's available at different price points.

Today Latitude works across new sales and late-model brokerage, with a network of Caribbean charter fleet operators, maritime attorneys, and marine-industry CPAs — essential when a boat purchase is also a business decision.

The Bottom Line

Serious catamaran ownership is a significant undertaking. The boats are capable and the Caribbean is spectacular, but the financial and legal architecture demands brokers, attorneys, CPAs, charter managers, and insurers all working together. Latitude provides that coordination — without being locked into any single charter base, lender, or manufacturer.

Latitude Yacht Brokerage can be reached at info@latitudeyacht.com.

Tax and legal information here is general; consult qualified professionals before any decisions on vessel ownership.

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ST. MAARTEN

Marie-Galante

Story and photos by Lexi Fisher and Chris Doyle



St. Louis is the yachting center of the island.



Church of the Immaculate Conception in Grand-Bourg

By the time Columbus sailed in to Marie-Galante, he had run out of saints, so he named this island after one of his boats. From afar, Marie-Galante looks as flat as a pancake, but when you get close you realize that, as pancakes go, it is quite substantial; over 300 feet in elevation in many places and over 600 feet at its highest point. The soil includes much clay, so the land retains the rain and is thickly wooded and green, with many palm trees along the coast. It is a relaxed, unhurried island, an ideal place to slow down, eat good Créole meals (Marie-Galante's Créole cooking is some of the best in the French Antilles), take quiet walks, and have a long stretch of beach largely to yourself.

Marie-Galante is one of Guadeloupe's many offshore islands, though one of only a few that are inhabited. Grand Bourg, on the southwest coast, is the capital, but St. Louis, in the north, is the yachting center of the island. The town faces a large bay, 15-20 feet deep, with good holding in sand and weed, which makes it a good base from which to explore the island. St. Louis is small, but you don't have to look too hard to find all the usual modern conveniences; an ATM, pharmacy, supermarkets, a launderette, boutiques, boulangeries, and lots of restaurants for a town of its size.

Marie-Galante has a population of about 10,000 and is great for touring by bike, car, or scooter. It is an island of dense dry forests, lots of fruit trees, and big areas of sugar cane. The traffic is light, so you do not fear for your life on a scooter, which you can rent for as little as €30 per day. These have the advantage of allowing you to amble along the tiny farm roads that would challenge a car.

—Continued on the next page

Guadeloupe/Marie Galante Entry and Exit Procedures

Advance Paperwork

Customs and Immigration clearance in the French Antilles can be completed online. This **Noonsite French Antilles Clearance Guide** explains the process. [www.noonsite.com/report/french-antilles-clearance-for-yachts]

For visitors from many countries, a visa is not required.

Entry Process

Yachts that complete online clearance are free to explore Guadeloupe, with no further steps required. For yachts unable to complete formalities online, in person clearance remains available at approved clearance computers.

Ports of Entry (POE)

The approved clearance computers for Marie Galante are in Boutique Chez Zeles, Saint Louis, and the customs offices in Grand Bourg. Full details on all Guadeloupe ports of entry can be found via the blue "Explore Country" button on Noonsite. [www.noonsite.com/place/guadeloupe]

Exit Process

The same options as entry apply. Yachts requiring a departure stamp should plan to visit an office with approved clearance computers for endorsement. Departments of France (St. Martin, St. Barts, Guadeloupe, and Martinique) all require yachts to clear out of one, before sailing to another.

Rates

There are no Customs and Immigration fees. There is a small admin fee (5 Euros) for use of approved clearance computers.

noonsite.com

This information is provided by Noonsite.com, specialists in worldwide formalities for yachts, and was accurate at press time. Check Guadeloupe Clearance on Noonsite [https://www.noonsite.com/place/guadeloupe/] for more detailed information and updates [free log-in required].

—Continued from the previous page



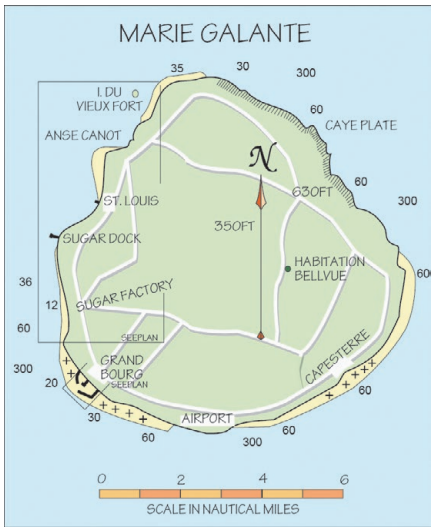
Ruins of Habitation Roussel-Trianon, a 17th century plantation later modernized into one of Marie-Galante's early industrial sugar factories.

Some 50 high-tech windmills on the east coast produce electricity for Marie-Galante. At one time, around 600 windmills ground sugar cane across the island, and it was once one of the most productive sugar islands in the Lesser Antilles, its economy built on the labor of enslaved people. Seventy-three old windmills survive in various states of repair. None are commercially used, though Le Moulin de Bezard has been fully restored to working order and is one of the few places in the islands to see an old-fashioned working windmill.



St. Louis is small, but it has all the modern conveniences.

Look out for an exceptional beach at Capesterre, and a couple more to its south. A barrier reef lies quite close to shore along these beaches, creating beautiful, turquoise, shallow lagoons with good snorkeling just a short swim away. If this makes you hungry, Capesterre has several restaurants for your midday meal.



Doyle Guide chart of Marie-Galante

In the northeast of the island, you can visit Gueule Grand Gouffre, a round sinkhole with a rim about 200 feet high, smooth sides, and an arch at the bottom open to the sea. There are majestic cliffs around the east coast, and a short walk in the area of Caye Plate will show you the best. Hikers will be pleased to know that hiking trails have been laid out all over the island. The tourist office sells a useful trail booklet with maps, and staff can usually assist even if your French is limited.

From a yachting perspective, the beach at Anse Canot and those to the south of St. Louis will be major attractions.

If you are approaching from the north, the cliffs and low-lying Îlet du Vieux Fort stand out as landmarks. If approaching from the west, you can make out the huge, renovated sugar dock and crane off Pte. Folie Anse and the town of St. Louis. If you are heading from St. Louis to Grand Bourg, note that it is quite shallow up to half a mile out.

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).

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