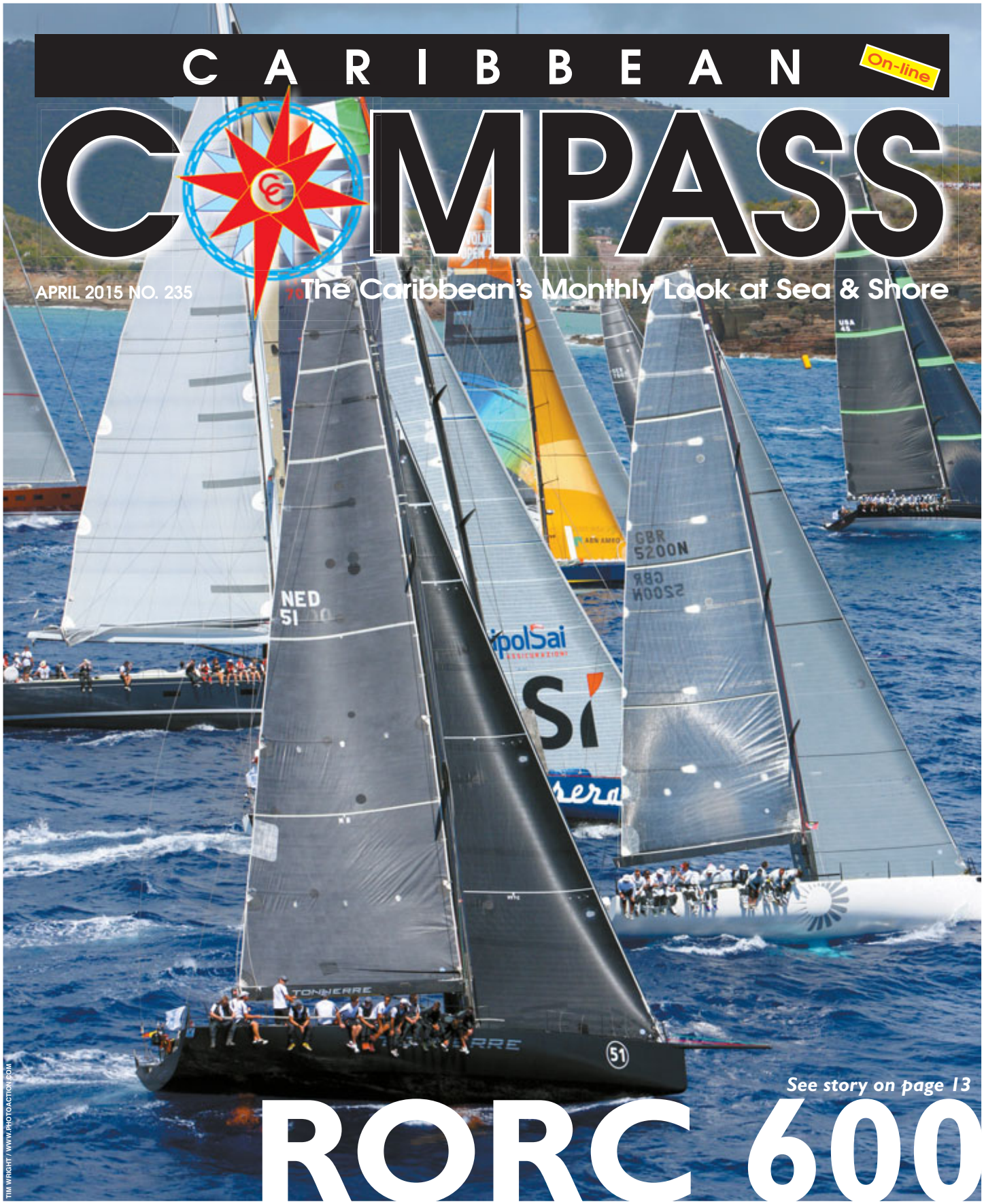
CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
APRIL 2015 NO. 235
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM

See story on page 13

RORC 600



TO DO.

Heading Out

- ☑ Change all filters
- ☑ Change engine oil
- ☑ Check transmission oil
- ☑ Check all belts
- ☑ Purchase belt replacements
- ☑ Check water pump
- ☑ Replacement seals/impeller
- ☑ Check propeller shaft seal
- ☑ Check rudder shaft seal
- ☑ Check and lubricate steering cables/chain
- ☑ Diesel tank inspection (clean, no leaks)

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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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APRIL 2015 • NUMBER 235



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WILFRED DEDERER

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ISSN 1605 - 1998

Cover Photo: Launched just six years ago, the RORC Caribbean 600 race has become a world-class offshore favorite. And of course, ace yacht photographer Tim Wright was there to snap the action!



Compass covers the Caribbean! From Cuba to Trinidad, from Panama to Barbuda, we've got the news and views that sailors can use. We're the Caribbean's monthly look at sea and shore.

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Info & Updates

New Port of Entry in St. Vincent

Blue Lagoon Hotel and Marina at 13˚ 07.4′ N, 61˚ 11.4′ W on the south coast of the island of St. Vincent is now a Port of Entry for St. Vincent & the Grenadines. The



Customs & Immigration Office is open from 1:00PM to 4:00PM daily for visiting yachts to clear in and/or out. Currently boats with a draft of 6.5 feet or more cannot enter the marked channel at low tide. Moorings and anchoring space are available, and there is a dinghy dock.

For dockage and marina information contact bluelagoon@k-group.vc or tel (784) 458-4308.

Easier Yacht Rules in St. Kitts & Nevis

Chris Doyle reports: The country of St. Kitts & Nevis has been reworking its attitude towards yachts and has come up with a much more yacht-friendly set of procedures. The old system of treating the two islands like two separate countries, requiring a coastwise clearance, has gone. You can now clear into either island, go wherever you want in both islands, and clear out of either. When clearing in, tell the officer which ports you want to visit, as they will mark it on the form.

Moreover, if your stay is a week or less, you can now, at the discretion of the officer, get inward and outward clearance at the same time from either island, with permission to visit the other.

This news coincides with the opening of two good new marina facilities. At the fancy end there is Christophe Harbour on St. Kitts' southern peninsula, now officially open. At the more basic level, Reg Francis has opened the first few slips of Marina Telca (part of St. Kitts Marine Works) under Brimstone Hill. Both are now ports of clearance. Marina Telca has a Customs agent stationed there, replacing the old Sandy Bay station. Christophe Harbour does not yet have one, but they plan to. In the meantime the yacht agents can arrange clearance for you anywhere in St. Kitts & Nevis.

US Citizens Now Need Visas for Venezuela

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has announced the enforcement of a mandatory visa policy for all United States citizens seeking to visit the country. Visas must be obtained prior to entry. You can apply for a visa at Venezuelan Embassies, including the one in Grenada: Netherlands Building, 2nd floor, Upper Lucas Street, St. George's.

Contact embavenez.grenada@gmail.com or tel (473) 440-1721 / 2.

Mayreau Patrol Boat Returns

Nancy Saul Demers reports: "The patrol boat is now back in action, providing timely transportation to emergency medical care, safety in our bays for visiting yacht and cruise ship passengers, regular patrols in the Tobago Cays Marine Park and much more," says Mayreau's Constable Owen Isaacs.



"When we previously had the patrol boat up and running for five years, there were absolutely no yacht break-ins here in Mayreau waters," says Isaacs. "And, as we're the closest island to the Tobago Cays, we expect we'll continue to be called upon to respond to incidents there."

—Continued on next page

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Puerto Rico
Atlantic Canvas & Sail
Fajardo, Puerto Rico

St Lucia
Rodney Bay Sails
Rodney Bay

St. Vincent
Barefoot Yacht Charters
Blue Lagoon

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Christiansted

Jamaica NEW
PJG
Kingston

Bonaire NEW
IBS b/v
Kaya Atom Z

www.doylecaribbean.com

—*Continued from previous page*

"We're grateful to all those who helped us get our patrol boat repaired so we could relaunch it," he says. "This accomplishment simply wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of the Marine Park. In addition to the expert recommendations on repairs and materials from Albert Hanson, we also very much appreciate the donated fiberglass liquid, plywood, sandpaper, paint brushes and fuel, not to mention the engine the Marine Park provided."

Mayreau residents also played important parts in the project. Local businessmen Dennis Forde and Evlyn (Bonnie) Forde paid for the electricity used during the repairs; Glenroy Forde donated the spotlights; and Aaron Alexander, James Alexander, Victor (Bertam) Hazell and Owen Isaacs volunteered to overhaul the engines as well as complete the repairs and the repainting of the boat. Restaurateur Alexander (Zannie) Adams fed the volunteers. "The coastguard donated an engine as well as fiberglass liquid for repairs, while the Marine Park and Canadian businessman Chris MacLean contributed the second engine. In addition, a visiting yachtsman provided the antifouling we needed," Isaacs adds.

For more information contact Owen Isaacs, Mayreau Constable, at (784) 530-2752.

Turks & Caicos Goes to AST

When the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) moved its clocks forward an hour on March 8th, it was for the last time: from now on the territory will observe Atlantic Standard Time (AST) rather than switching to Eastern Standard Time (EST) for part of the year. When the TCI traditionally moved to EST every November it got dark at about 5:00PM in the winter. Now it will stay light until around 6:00PM year-round.

The decision was made to abandon the twice-annual clock changes associated with "daylight saving time" and move permanently to AST in 2014, but only implemented now to allow proper notification of the relevant international authorities, including airlines and shipping companies.

Keep the Cays Clean!

The Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association reports: In the absence of an organized garbage collection system within the Tobago Cays Marine Park, garbage collection has been done in a very informal way, where untrained boat operators collected garbage from yachters with a promise to dispose of it on Union Island. However, in many cases the operators collected the garbage and threw it in the mangroves, sea or beaches along the way. As a result, the Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association saw the need to develop and implement a proper garbage disposal and collection system within the Tobago Cays Marine Park.

With a clear objective of reducing the amount of litter entering the marine environment in and around the Tobago Cays Marine Park, the leadership of the water taxi association held talks with stakeholders involved and gained their support to address the problem by putting a formal collection and disposal system in place. Nine persons have been trained in Sustainable Solid Waste Management. Funding for this project was provided by the United Nations Development Programme, through their Global Environmental Facility – Small Grants Programme.

The Southern Grenadines Water Taxi Association now boasts the right to be the sole authorized garbage collector in the Tobago Cays Marine Park.

Eight Bells

Robert "Rocky" Sargent was born in 1957 in Watsonville, California. After finishing high school, he told his parents he was taking his surfboard to Hawaii to "live like he was going to die young". His parents thought he'd be home in a couple of weeks, but he was actually starting a life as a professional sailor — and despite that not being a job by any sensible definition, he was able to live comfortably and responsibly with that career his entire life by being honest, being fair and (though he would never admit this to anyone else) being better at it than anyone else. Rocky sailed around the world before he met his wife, Laura Barr, in 1985 when he hired her to work aboard the yacht he captained. They married in Newport, Rhode Island in 1987 and raised their sons, Josh and Skylar, aboard their C&C 39, *Malolo,* sailing their way through the Caribbean, New England and South America. Rocky also captained his family through a successful racing career, carving the name of their boat (Hawaiian for flying fish) into numerous regatta trophies. In recent years, *Malolo* was often anchored in Britannia Bay, Mustique, where Rocky assisted in home management and Laura, a reading specialist, worked with schoolchildren.

Rocky died of complications from pancreatic cancer on February 20th. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Pacific Puddle Jumpers Congregate

Frank Nitte reports: Every year the crews of upwards of 800 cruising yachts gather in Panama to prepare to sail over 3,000 miles to French Polynesia and beyond. This annual migration has been dubbed the "Pacific Puddle Jump" by Andy Turpin of *Latitude 38* magazine. (This term is in contrast to yachts' "crossing of the pond", i.e. the Atlantic Ocean.) Both the Balboa Yacht Club (BYC) on the Pacific side of the Canal, and the Shelter Bay Marina (SHBM, see photo) on the Caribbean side hosted the sixth annual Panama Pacific Puddle Jump Party. Co-Sponsored by *Latitude 38* magazine and Tahiti Tourisme, the events took place on March 4th at BYC and March 7th at Shelter Bay. Crews of upwards of 80 vessels attended these events. Andy Turpin and Stephanie Betz of Tahiti Tourisme presented a video and slideshow presentation of the islands of French Polynesia. Many questions were answered, especially the important visa requirements for entry into Polynesia. Plans are already in the works for next year's events.



Visit www.pacificpuddlejump.com for more information.

PCYC hosts 'Street Talk' in Grenada

CJ Martin reports: Members of the cruising community gathered at Prickly Bay Marina on March 5th to hear sailing legend Donald Street talk about his more than 70 years of adventures and misadventures at sea. The event was hosted by the Petite Calivigny Yacht Club.

—*Continued on next page*



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Don Street has spent more than half a century cruising, contributing to charts and writing guides that were instrumental in opening up the Caribbean to the cruising yachtsman. His presentation included highlights of his experiences over all those years (most of which were while living onboard his 1905-built, 46-foot engineless yawl, *lolaire*), which he often illustrated with anecdotes that ranged from humorous to hair-raising. Street also talked about his favorite islands and anchorages, many of which aren't included in other guidebooks, and provided his formula for sailing with the most favorable currents during inter-island passages, which is delineated on the back of each Imray-Iolaire chart and is supported by the *Caribbean Compass*, which publishes the Meridian Passage of the Moon each month (see page 28).



Street and Royce

Following the talk, PCYC's newly appointed Commodore, Dave Royce, thanked Don for sharing his lifetime of sailing adventures with the group, and presented him with a club burgee.

Visit www.pcycgrenada.com for more information on PCYC events and membership.

Cruisers' Site-ings

• Noonsite, at ***www.noonsite.com***, is a directory of essential information on all matters of interest to sailors planning an offshore voyage anywhere in the world, whether already underway or still in the preparatory stages. You can access country specific information such as immigration and clearance details; find ports, marinas and docking facilities; check the location of businesses and services you need as a cruising sailor; read reports and comments from other cruisers; explore the general cruising pages with information about security, cruising information, cruiser networks, equipment, weather links, books and charts and much more. Login to add your own comments directly to pages and share your feedback and cruising experiences.

• Bruce Leeming of Friends of Ile-à-Vache, Haiti reports: I re-did our website, ***www.friendsofileavachehaiti.com***. Have a look under "donors" for some photos and video. I will be updating it monthly with new photos and video. There is also a blog to keep people informed what is happening during the month.

• Although months of work remain before the upcoming book about the Wildlife of Statia is completed, wildlife lovers can enjoy some of the fruits of this project today. Les Fruits de Mer has launched an online image gallery and a curated set of wildlife images designed to be used as desktop wallpapers and screen savers. Both are free to access and can be found at the project's website: ***www.statiawildlife.com***. The desktop wallpaper and screen saver image collection is available for free download in the Extras section of the site (http://www.statiawildlife.com/extras/). The images are available in three different sizes, optimized for different computer screens.

• The Caribbean Security Index (CSI) at ***www.freecruisingguides.com*** helps cruisers assess risk of crime at ports of call in the Caribbean. It provides a straightforward means of assessing the odds in a given area and tracking changes in probability.

CSI ratings are developed from the examination of the relationship between crime and socio-demographic factors such as unemployment, education levels and literacy, as well as the presence (or absence) of security, infrastructure and history of crime in a country/island. The CSI is not simply a list of crimes in an area; it helps identify the odds of being a victim of, or being free of, crimes against yachts. Responsible skippers play close attention to weather forecasts and take advantage of weather windows; the CSI allows skippers to assess "crime windows".

• The Caribbean Safety and Security Net (CSSN) announces new Social Media Features building on the highly successful CSSN E-Mail Alert system: Now you can Follow Us/Like Us on Facebook, Twitter and RSS Feed to get all CSSN News and Incident Reports delivered to your social media accounts as we post them. From the CSSN website you can now share any page or post with anyone on all social media and e-mail. Additionally, Facebook Cruisers Groups administrators can get automatic CSSN News and Incident Reports posted or pushed to their group's timeline. Visit ***www.safetyandsecuritynet.com*** for details on Alerts and our social media capabilities. Remember, Follow Us and Share so cruisers can "Know before You Go!"

SVG to Host Eastern Caribbean Yachting Conference

The first Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference will be held on April 28th and 29th in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. This new event aims to expand the appeal of the region, which encompasses some of the best sailing waters in the world. Planned as an annual event, it seeks to project the region's attractiveness to the industry while providing a platform for efforts aimed at marketing and harmonizing the "Many Islands, One Sea" concept that can generate increased economic activity through investments in the yachting sector.

This initiative, launched by the joint Embassy and Mission of the Eastern Caribbean States in Brussels (representing St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines) in partnership with Quaynote Communications, hopes to dramatically increase the flow of both megayachts and cruising yachts to the region and, in the process, attract international high-net-worth individuals and groups with the ability to invest significantly in yachting services and infrastructure.

Additionally, a major study is underway that will seek to capture the current inventory of yachting services and infrastructure available throughout the Eastern Caribbean and will simultaneously present investment opportunities for those seeking to do business in the region. The results will be presented for the first time at the Conference. This event will therefore be an ideal platform to assess the state of the region's industry while discussing investments in areas such as dockside services and maintenance, administrative services, port management, shipping registries, insurance and regulation and other corporate and ancillary services.

The Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference is a must-attend event for senior-level yachting executives, captains, insurers, service providers and investors as well as yachting enthusiasts interested in learning more about the growth potential of this region. With plenty of time allowed for networking and debate with senior government officials and industry insiders, the conference will offer a unique meeting place for all stakeholders away from the usual round of industry events and with emphasis firmly on new business development opportunities.

The event is jointly sponsored by the Tourism Authorities of Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines as well as corporate sponsors.

Visit www.quaynote.com for more information.

Welcome Aboard!

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we welcome new advertiser Sparrow's Beach Club of Union Island, on page 38. Good to have you with us!



Hurricane History 1851 to 2013 - Source: NOAA



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AND BOATYARD, ST. LUCIA

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- Duty free concessions for all visiting vessels
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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Puerto Rico's Sunbay Marina is an SSCA Host

Olga Díaz de Pérez reports: Sunbay Marina in Puerto Rico is a Seven Seas Cruising Association Host!

Located in Fajardo (18° 20'.289N, 65° 37'.879W) on the east coast of the island, Sunbay Marina offers 282 berths on finger pontoons for motor and sailing yachts up to 60 feet. Each berth has 110- and 220-volt electricity, water, free cable TV and free WiFi connection. An easily accessed fuel dock is located at the marina's entrance. Also, diesel is available at the slips of Docks B to E.

Safety is a primary concern of our marina. The whole area is patrolled by security 24/7 and by camera surveillance.

Although designed for long-term mooring, the marina welcomes transient sailing or motor yachts. Our friendly staff is trained to assist yachters and to provide any information that might be needed. Although they are not at Sunbay Marina, we welcome boaters and sailors that are anchored at Isleta Marina and are more than pleased to help in their needs.

Fajardo is a US Port of Entry and US Customs and Immigration is located half a mile away by dinghy.

In Fajardo, our guests can find all sorts of stores and businesses that are of interest to the yachting community — a perfect place to re-supply a yacht. A West Marine store and other chandlers, Walmart, Kmart, Sears and major supermarkets are located within a few minutes' drive. The Marina has a local car rental. Dining ranges from local fare and small eateries on the beach to upscale elegant restaurants at the Conquistador Hotel, nearby the Marina. A variety of fast food is also available.

Sunbay Marina is the perfect location to leave your boat and visit beautiful Puerto Rico or as a pick-up or dropping point for guests on board. Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport is a mere 45 minutes away by car.

When reaching the Marina, our employees always help berth your vessel.

Free maps of Puerto Rico and information pamphlets are available. We have an info sheet with a list and a map of nearby important locations. We have a list of medical specialists, dentists and veterinarians.

We have made arrangements with local businesses so that marina clients can get a discount if referred by us, especially on car rentals.

Sunbay Marina's employees can make arrangements for transportation for shopping.

At Sunbay Marina we believe that service, security, cleanliness and respect are the foundation for all of our employees' work.

It is our commitment to preserve the aquatic heritage and enhance our environment through proper management of all activities that occur at the Marina. Given this commitment, and with the expectation that we will have the cooperation and support of all of our clients and friends, we will ensure the safekeeping of our harbor and marine environment.

It is our mission to maintain the highest standards of service and security, so all current and future guests can enjoy our facilities.

For more information contact Olga Díaz Pérez at (787) 863-0313, sunbaymarina@aol.com or see ad on page 35.

St. Vincent's Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina

The totally refurbished and newly reopened Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina on the south coast of St. Vincent has been listed as the number one hotel in St. Vincent on TripAdvisor, after only being open a few months. Blue Lagoon (previously known as Sunsail) was taken over in November 2013, and shortly thereafter, major renovations began.

Blue Lagoon was recently declared an official Port of Entry for St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Skippers can clear in or out with Customs and Immigration daily between 1:00PM and 4:00PM (see related item in Info & Updates, page 4).

At Blue Lagoon's full-service marina, vessels can fuel up dockside, refill their water



tanks and plug in to shore power as well as take advantage of all the hotel services and facilities including 19 modern hotel rooms (eight with kitchenettes), 24-hour security, free WiFi, laundry service, grocery store with chandlery section and provisioning service.

With three dining options — Flowt Beach Bar, Calm Waters Restaurant & Bar and Café Soleil & Bakery — there is something for everyone. Plus, all marina guests receive a free welcome Vincy rum punch from Dexter the Dockmaster.

The reconstruction of the swimming pool will soon be finished and once the final landscaping work is complete, Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina will certainly tick all the boxes when it comes to facilities and services offered — also including Indigo Dive Shop & Watersports and Horizon Yacht Charters, who now offer one-way charters either from Grenada or St. Vincent.

For more information call (784) 458-4308, visit www.bluelagoonsvg.com or see ad on page 11.

Rodney Bay Marina's Mega-Yacht Special

Stay at IGY Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia this season! Check out the discounts for vessels over 80 feet:

- Slips as low as US$2.95 per foot.
- Low season rates (April – November) as low as US$1.95 per foot
- Maximum length: 285 feet / 87 meters
- Maximum draft: 14 feet / 4.2 meters

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

• Fuel: high speed in-slip fueling; special price for bulk fueling
Valid until November 2015. Discount on dockage only. Other terms and conditions apply.



Book your berth now. Contact General Manager Simon Bryan at sbryan@igymarinas.com or call (758) 572-7200.
For more information on Rodney Bay Marina see ad on page 8.

Ongoing Improvements at Grenada Marine

As Grenada Marine prepares for the busy summer season they have been working hard on new renovations and facility improvements throughout the yard. Customers can expect new restrooms and road surface improvements for 2015!



For more information on Grenada Marine see ad on page 18.

New: Sparrow's Beach Club on Union Island

Anybody who hasn't been to Union Island's Big Sand Beach in the past year will be in for a wonderful surprise. Tucked into the beautiful sandy beaches of Union Island's north coast is the island's latest attraction, Sparrow's Beach Club.

Sparrow's has transformed the beach experience on Union Island. First-class cuisine, a wide selection of fine wines and drinks, luxury beach chairs, private beach lounges, VIP beach services and newly thatched shade structures characterize the new Big Sand Beach.



Owner Bertrand Sailly, a long-time Union Islander, has brought imagination, enthusiasm and a keen eye for detail to the Sparrow's undertaking, to the delight of Unionites, visitors and yachtspeople alike.

Foremost among the many attractions *chez* Sparrow's is the food. Prepared by chefs, Sparrow's offers a wide selection of freshly caught fish and lobster prepared on the grill or in the pan, presented in French-Caribbean style.

A particular favourite of Sparrow's guests this past year has been Bertrand's home-smoked, thinly-sliced marlin; TripAdvisor ranks that as the single most memorable dish (and ranks Sparrow's as the best restaurant in the entire area). Go for the food and the smoked marlin, stay for the beach, the sun and the seaside VIP service.

Feel like a deeply chilled bottle of *Rosé de Provence*? The attentive Sparrow's staff will make sure your wine is delivered beachside in its own ice-water bath. Rather have a crisply cold Hairoun? Raise your hand (or your glass!), *et voilà*!

Sparrow's changes its character as the sun sets over Union's Mount Olympus, and the newest addition to Sparrow's Beach Club, Sparrow's Bar, opens and the music begins to play. Visiting sailors and Union Islanders unite in dance under the stars — and, if they are so inclined, mount the stairs to Union Island's only dance pole!

All that dancing, of course, may lead to stiff muscles the next day. Why not treat yourself to a full body massage at Union Island's leading spa? Yes, Sparrow's Beach Club has its own spa where you can have your nails done and your lashes trimmed as well!

And finally, should you need a new shirt, new sandals or a present for home, Sparrow's Boutique is there to serve you.

See you at Sparrow's soon; there's a free shuttle service to and from Union's market square.

For more information see ad on page 38.

A 'Pop Up' Restaurant in Barbuda

Chris Doyle reports: Apparently "pop up" restaurants are all the rage now in the UK — lovely meals done to order in various places that are not normally restaurants.

Claire Frank, originally English, is a photographer, artist and chef. She also runs the Barbuda community website www.barbudaful.net. Her restaurant may be as close as you will get to fine food in Barbuda. She is married to Mackenzie Frank, who is very active in local politics. Together they own the Art Café.

—*Continued on page 46*



REGATTA NEWS

J/24s at IWW Grenada Sailing Week 2015

Ruth Lund reports: The Island Water World Grenada Sailing Week (GSW) provided for J/24 participation in 2013 and 2014, but it was only in 2015, from January 29th through February 3rd, that a one-design class was achieved with boats competing from Barbados, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada. This was mainly due to the efforts of committed J/24 sailor Robbie Yearwood and his *Island Water World Die Hard* crew.



TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM

Robbie comments: "It was very satisfying to see J/24s racing in Grenada again. We are all friends, so we all had an amazing time, both on and off the water. There were seven teams, and all the Southern Caribbean islands were represented. We could not have been better looked after. We all enjoyed the convenience of being able to dock, and even better, we were given 16 short races, so with seven crews, it was always close-quarters racing. This put a premium on tactics, boat-handling skills, and fun. One-design heaven! As if this was not enough, there was also a good variety of conditions, with half the races in the flat and shifting conditions of Grand Anse, and the other half in the south coast where the conditions of more wind, more current, and big seas provided challenging but exhilarating racing, especially down wind. This was by far the best one-design regatta in the Caribbean, and has all the elements to remain so. For J/24 sailors, it's well worth the effort to come to GSW. The J/24 sailors want to thank True Blue Resort Hotel and Horizon Charters for providing free accommodation for many of the crews, as well as free dockage where necessary."

Although the J/24s had their own courses with a leeward gate to make things interesting, they were still interacting with the rest of the fleet, who enjoyed watching these lively crews jostling for position. In 2015 *Island Water World Die Hard* (Grenada), *Ambushe* (Trinidad) and *Attitude* (St. Lucia) were first, second and third overall, with the Bajans not far behind. GSW race organizers have embraced the challenge of meeting J/24 racing requirements with enthusiasm and any feedback sent to info@grenadasailingweek.com will be welcome to ensure that the GSW 2016 edition is even better for the J/24s, arguably the world's most popular one design keelboat.

Visit www.grenadasailingweek.com for more information on Grenada Sailing Week.

Shockwave Tops Pineapple Cup – Montego Bay Race

Shockwave claimed victory as testing conditions prevailed for the 32nd edition of the Pineapple Cup – Montego Bay Race, a biennial 811-nautical-mile race from Port Everglades, Florida, to Montego Bay, Jamaica. With speeds that were furiously fast at the start but frustratingly slow at the end, George Sakellaris's defending 72-foot *Shockwave* took line honors plus overall victory. (Plans for an IRC division were, by consensus, scratched before the start, and the 12-boat fleet sailed under PHRF handicap for the purpose of overall scoring.)



NIGEL LORD

Organizers called the February 6th start a "raucous affair," with one competitor over the line early, two others pushing port/starboard boundaries, and every boat carrying shortened sail on the first leg that would take them to the Bahamas. A tough slog across the Gulf Stream got everyone into race mode right off the bat. *Shockwave* looked on course to break the record set in 2005 by *Titan 12* but in the end fell 40 minutes short of it, finishing with an elapsed time of 2:11:05:03.

Also dialed in to win was MacKenzie Davis and Brian Harris's Class 40 *AMHAS*, which claimed the one-design Class 40 class of four boats with an elapsed time of 4:05:56:40 and finished second in fleet based on corrected time.

Oakcliff Racing/Bodacious Dream finished about four and a half hours later — the first double-handed boat to finish. Canadian Liz Shaw, co-skipper with New Jersey's Jeffrey MacFarland, described the race as a "challenging experience through ten degrees of latitudes, eight of which were sailed on the same port tack, in heavy air and seas."

Undoubtedly the most anticipated arrival was that of the J/120 *Miss Jamaica*; its mostly local crew included Montego Bay Yacht Club Commodore Nigel Knowles and his 16-year-old daughter Zoe, who is Youth Commodore for the club. The hometown Team Easy Skanking crossed the finish line to close out the finishers and join the jubilant celebrations with family, friends and local hosts at Montego Bay Yacht Club.

The Pineapple Cup – Montego Bay Race is endorsed by the Jamaican Tourist Board and managed by the SORC.

Visit www.montegobayrace.com for more information.

RBVIYC Youth Enjoy Wagner Rally

On February 8th, youth sailors from the Royal BVI Yacht Club participated in the second Wagner Rally in Trellis Bay, Tortola, BVI. The Wagner Rally celebrates a famous Polish sailor, Wladek Wagner, who settled in Trellis Bay. The WSR 2015 host was the Polish Yachting Association of North America under the patronage of the Government of the British Virgin Islands.

Wagner was the first Pole to circumnavigate the world and was just 20 years old when he started. It took him six years — between 1932 and 1939 — and three boats to finish the journey. World War Two prevented him from returning to Poland and he settled in Trellis Bay, where he became friends with Obel Penn and many others from the East End/Long Look community. From 1949 to 1958, Wagner and Penn worked together to develop Trellis Bay and Bellamy Cay, and build the first airport runway at Beef Island.

The Yacht Parade included the indigenous Tortola Sloops, and RBVI youth sailors Samuel Allen, Noah George, Stephen Ganga, Stephon Ganga, Dawson Van Zoost and Jerome Parkins were invited to join as crew. The Parade went around Trellis Bay and Bellamy Cay, ending at Bellamy Cay. The Opti race team also entered the Yacht Parade, following the Tortola Sloops.

The BVIYC Opti race team included Max Reshetiloff, Anya Reshetiloff, Kyle Roose, Nathan Haycraft, Thad Letsome, Rayne Duff and Ryan Letsome. Trellis Bay was extremely full of boats, which made the team racing even more tactical and challenging.

Visit http://wladekwagner.posthaven.com for more information on the Wagner Rally.

Visit www.royalbviyc.org for more information on the Royal BVI Yacht Club.

31 for Jolly Harbour Yacht Club Valentine's Regatta

At the Jolly Harbour Antigua Valentine's Regatta 2015,

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

…held February 14th and 15th, international and local participants in 31 boats enjoyed a very tactical regatta with wind shifting in both speed and direction. Five of the yachts used the event to warm up for the Caribbean 600 race. Race Officer Paul Miller of Regattaguru said he considered the waters off Jolly Harbour to be "one of the top places in the world to sail", while Andy Middleton of Global Yacht Racing said "this event is special; the sailing here is as good as it gets".

Seven races in four classes — CSA 1, 2 and 3 and multihull — together with dinghy sailing in the marina ultimately showed local knowledge won the weekend, as six out of a possible nine podium places went to locally based boats.

Shoreside entertainment kept the crowds busy with paddleboard, canoe and dinghy racing. The yacht club also raised a total of EC$3,200 for Sailability, a charity which provides sailing for the disabled. This was in addition to dinghy racing in the marina in conjunction with the National Sailing Academy, encouraging local young people to sail. Winners in this category were first place, Benjamin Green (age 9); second place, Jayden Hector (8); closely followed by third place, Noemie Hector (9).

Class winners were:

CSA 1
1) *Zarafa*, HOD 35, Paul Schofield (GBR)
2) *Southern Child*, Beneteau First 40, Lucy Reynolds (GBR)
3) *TAZ*, Reichel Pugh 37, Bernie Wong (ANT)

CSA 2
1) *Biwi Magic*, six meter, Geoffrey Pidduck (ANT)
2) *Tango Mike*, Dehler 34, Tony Maidment (ANT)
3) *Blue Peter*, J/30, Tanner Jones (ANT)

CSA 3
1) *Cricket*, Beneteau First 35, Sandy Mair (ANT)
2) *Volare*, Grand Soleil 343, Terry Allan (GBR)
3) *Ocean Harmony*, Sweden 42, John Wills (CAN)

Multihull
1) *Bobby Dazzler*, Dragonfly 28 S, Anthony McVeigh (GBR)
2) *Rebel*, Contour 34, Canter de Jager (ANT)

High Winds for Curaçao Youth Championship

On February 14th and 15th, Youth Sailing Curaçao organized the international Curacao Youth Championship in Caracas Bay. This time of year the island usually experiences strong winds and this was the case during the event. The parts of the course outside the bay, in open sea, proved to be a challenge. Four days of clinics and training by, among others, Swiss Optimist Academy coach Cyrill Auer and former Argentinian National Opti coach Martin Manrique, preceded the championship. A total of 40 competitors sailed 12 races over three days. The sailors from 15 to 17 years of age sailed in the Laser Radial and the younger participants in the Optimist.

In the Laser Radial class, Derek Bongaertz was the champion, finishing in first place every day. Tijn van der Gulik ended in second place, with Jorden van Rooijen third. Mariangela Fray won the prize for Best Girl in the Laser Radial class.

The Optimist class was divided into three fleets. Optimist Club consisted of the youngest sailors and was won by Santiago van Werhoven. In Optimist B, the intermediate group, Roos Wind was completely in control. Most international sailors and the top Curaçao sailors sailed in Optimist A fleet, and foreign sailors dominated: Nathan Smith from Virginia, USA ended on top. Jannik Brunner and Alexander Hubmann, both from Switzerland, were second and third respectively. Darius Bérénos, with a fifth place, was the best-placed local sailor.

Sportsmanship Awards were presented by Race Director Hans van der Gulik to Noortje Thomas and Jason Montesant. Because of great sportsmanship during the competition, chairman of the jury, Cor van Aanholt, had almost no protests to attend to. In his speech during the closing ceremony, the President of Youth Sailing Curaçao, Wybe Bruinsma, thanked the many volunteers and contributors, stressing that the organization of such a big event is not possible without their contribution.



PERCY WERNERS

Next year the event will take from February 7th through 14th. Visit http://ysco.org/ for more information.



There's fun on the water and ashore at Nevis's Booby Island Sailing Festival

ON THE HORIZON…

Island Water World Mahi Mahi Tournament

The Island Water World Mahi Mahi Tournament will take place on April 19th in St. Maarten. Female and Junior Anglers are encouraged to join in. Lee Halley and crew caught both the largest and second largest Mahi Mahi last year. Who will make it this year?

Registration is in all of Island Water World's St. Maarten stores, Cole Bay and at Bobby's Marina, Philipsburg. The Captain's Briefing and last chance to register is April 18th at Lee's Roadside Grill, Simpson Bay, from 6:00 to 7:30PM. Fishing Day is Sunday April 19th: lines in at 4:00AM, lines out at 2:59PM

Weighing and party with Fish Fry is at the Island Water World Marina, Cole Bay. Qualifying Fish for this event is Mahi Mahi — minimum weight 20 pounds. Tournament prizes will be presented for Largest Mahi Mahi (Mahi King or Queen of 2015), second and third largest Mahi Mahi, Best Female Angler and Best Junior Angler.

For more information on Island Water World see ad on page 48.

April Regatta Highlights

Some of the Eastern Caribbean's best-loved regattas take place this month, including the Bequia Easter Regatta (April 2nd through 6th, www.begos.com/eastregatta), the BVI Spring Regatta (April 3rd through 5th, www.bvispringregatta.org), Les Voiles de St. Barth (April 13th through 18th, www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com), the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta (April 15th through 20th, www.antiguaclassics.com), Antigua Sailing Week (April 26th through May 1st, www.sailingweek.com) and the West Indies Regatta (April 30th through May 3rd). Watch for reports in future issues of *Compass*!

Booby Island Sailing Festival in May

The Booby Island Sailing Festival, like so many, was conceived one evening by a few sailors enjoying a local beer. It has been held from Nevis the past seven years, and is the major contributor to the Nevis Yacht Club and youth sailing program. The concept is to bring people together to enjoy the water, as well as to enjoy the tastes and sounds of life ashore. This year, the formerly one-day event will expand to three days — May 8th to 10th — with more sailing, larger parties and amazing prizes on offer.

The Booby Island Sailing Festival hopes to be a little different from the rest, starting on Friday May 8th with "Chase the Monkey", a classic pursuit race from St. Kitts to Nevis via Monkey Shoals. The Saturday is "Round de Rock", a circumnavigation of Nevis for the more serious racers. On the Sunday is the Booby Island Cup, a race around the famous rock between Nevis and St. Kitts. At the after-race parties, enjoy great Nevis hospitality.

The Booby Island Sailing Festival is an end of season wind-down for sailors looking to have a little informal rivalry before heading across the pond or to another island.

For more information visit www.boobyislandregatta.com or call Brett at (869) 469-6545.



Gouyave Storms Back to Take Championship Title

After two years in second place, skipper Kwesi Paul sailed one of the Grenada Sailing Festival's 16-foot one-design open sailboats across the finish line to bring the title of Champion of Champions and a cheque for US$1,000 back to the town of Gouyave. Aboard *Gybe Talk* were talented young crew Justin James, Kiron Benjamin and Kimo Sampson, who have come up through the Grenada Sailing Association's Junior Sailing Programme and now all sail with Gouyave Sailing School. Gouyave crews entered the GSF16 Match Race Finals determined to win, and also took command in the National Team Sailing, with first place in the Senior Final race, sponsored by Carib, and second place in the Junior Final race, sponsored by Budget Marine.



The 22nd annual Grenada Sailing Festival Workboat Regatta took place on the weekend of January 31st and February 1st, based at Grand Anse Beach. Twenty-eight local open boats came from Grenada's coastal communities of Gouyave, Sauteurs and Woburn, and the neighboring islands of Carriacou, Petite Martinique and Mayreau. This year, for the first time, two boats from Bequia competed in the Regatta, and a crew from Guadeloupe sailed to Grenada especially to take part, racing in *Swift*, a boat prepared for them by sailors from the village of Grand Mal.

The racing was as close in the Community Classes, raced in each locale's unique type of boats, with every skipper and crew sailing hard to win first place and the chance to go through to the match races. At the end of the first day positions were close, leaving everything to race for on Sunday. After another two races in the Community Class Series on the Sunday morning, the scene was set for an afternoon of Match Race Finals. Growing crowds on Grand Anse Beach waited for the boats and teams to be picked for the National Team Sailing Match Races in the Festival's fleet of five GSF16s.

In the Budget Marine Junior Final, Team Carriacou, sailing in *Pink Gin*, took first place in front of Gouyave in *Gybe Talk*, with Team Sauteurs in *Homer* gaining an admirable third place. The crowds were treated to more high-octane racing in the Senior National Team Sailing Final sponsored by Carib, with Team Gouyave and *Gybe Talk* crossing the finish line first in front of Woburn in *Tomorrow's Worry*, with Petite Martinique sailing *Mr X* to third place.

The afternoon climaxed when the winning skippers and crews from the Community Class Race Series battled for the title of Champion of Champions. A combined crew from the Gouyave Canoe and Sloop Classes took *Gybe Talk* straight into the lead and proved unstoppable. The crew were already celebrating their victory before even reaching the finish line.

There was a great atmosphere on the beach as well, with DJ Blackstorm making it a party all the time. The crowds were treated to a wide selection of local foods, traditional dishes and drinks from Community Kitchen food stalls, arts and crafts were on sale and OK Fun Spot from St. David's ran a fun Kiddies Korner in Camerhogne Park with games and a bouncy castle. GIZ Consultants ran a very informative booth on climate change, which proved very popular with visitors and their families on the beach, and Century21 were also present providing an opportunity to get a wide range of information on real estate.

On Saturday the crowds were also treated to live entertainment with a colourful performance from the dancers and drummers from Conception Dance Theatre, followed by live music from local bands The Edge from Calliste, and Love Vibes from St. David's. The event was rounded off with a special surprise when the sky over Grand Anse Beach was lit up by a wonderful firework display courtesy of Spice Island Fireworks, Dodgy Dock and True Blue Bay Resort — a true high spot to start the week of Independence celebrations.

The regatta organizers welcomed Westerhall Rums as the new Title Sponsor for 2015, and thank all additional sponsors and supporters.

Thanks to Sarah Baker for information in this report.
Visit www.grenadasailingfestival.com for more details.

Grenada Sailing Festival 2015 Winners

COMMUNITY CLASS RACING

Carriacou
1) *Wet*, skipper Carl, Carriacou
2) *Ark Royal*, skipper Vemel (boat from Bequia)
3) *Liberty*, skipper Shaian (boat from Bequia)

Gouyave Canoe
1) *Etieron*, skipper Carlyle Joseph
2) *Sky Red*, skipper Edmund Sanderson
3) *Want Ah Ride*, skipper Cecil Commissiong

Gouyave Sloop
1) *Reborn*, skipper Kwesi Paul
2) *Endeavour*, skipper Alfred Grant
3) *Classic*, skipper Ted Richards

Petite Martinique
1) *Purple Blast*, skipper Hardiol Rock
2) *Solo*
3) *D Rage*, skipper Andy De Roche

Sauteurs
1) *No Retreat No Surrender*, skipper Jason Charles
2) *Cool Runnings*, skipper Ryan Olive
3) *Eoy I'm Watching You*, skipper Bertrand Noel

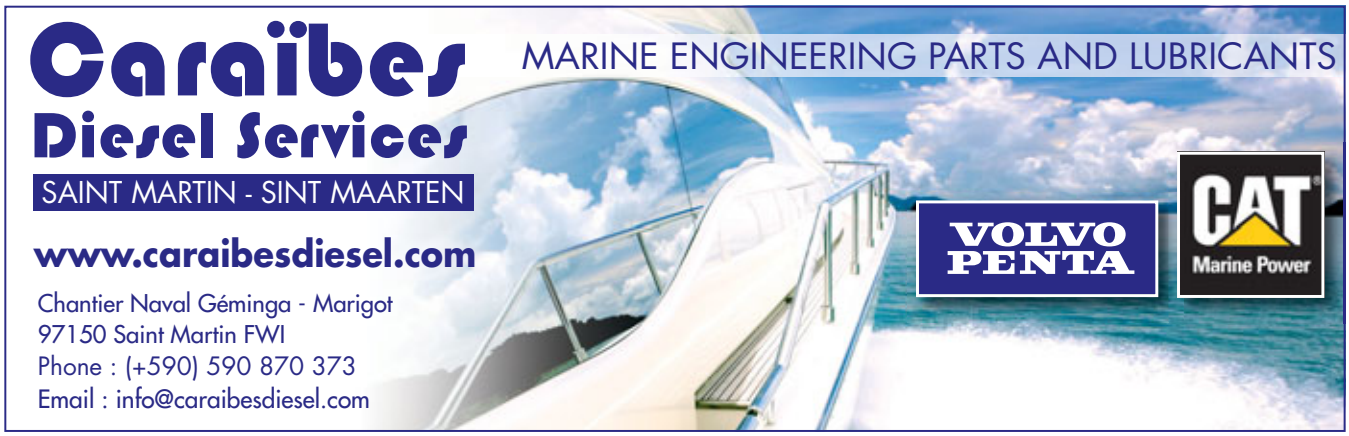
Woburn
1) *Local*, skipper Clinton Brathwaite
2) *Unity*, skipper Rodney Forsyth
3) *El Tigre*, skipper Shakeem Nimrod



MATCH RACE FINALS

Junior National Team Sailing
1) Team Carriacou, skipper Shaian sailing in *Pink Gin*
2) Team Gouyave, skipper Karzim James sailing *Gybe Talk*
3) Team Sauteurs, skipper Enrique John sailing in *Homer*

Senior National Team Sailing
1) Team Gouyave, skipper Ted Richards sailing in *Gybe Talk*
2) Team Woburn, skipper Clinton Brathwaite sailing in *Tomorrow's Worry*
3) Team Petite Martinique, sailing in *Mr X*



Ocean Racing on the Caribbean Map!

The RORC Caribbean 600 — a 605-nautical-mile non-stop race around 11 of the Leeward Islands — was the idea of a group of Royal Ocean Racing Club (UK) members based in the Caribbean. The inaugural edition, in 2009, attracted close to 30 boats. On February 23rd, 66 yachts from 14 countries started the 2015 RORC Caribbean 600.

Don Street has called this, the Caribbean's first established long-distance offshore race, "more fun than the Fastnet," another endurance contest organized by the RORC. Sailing in the Caribbean's warm tradewind weather is certainly more enjoyable than combating the Fastnet's cold, often gale-force and sometimes life-threatening conditions off the English and Irish coasts. As Paul Nelson aboard the 63-foot trimaran *Paradox* says of the Caribbean 600, "Your primary foul weather gear is your board shorts and some sunscreen… This is the good stuff; this is why you are sailing."



JOUANY CHRISTOPHE

Wet — check. Wild — check. Winning — check. Having set the new Caribbean 600 record, the MOD 70 trimaran Phaedo3 *(formerly* Foncia, *launched in 2011) will take on Les Voiles de St. Barth this month. She set the Round St. Barth record in 2012*

But make no mistake: the RORC Caribbean 600 is not just broad reaching through paradise, even if the barometer is pegged on Fair.

This was the seventh edition of the event that has expanded the concept of Caribbean racing well beyond the popular regatta formats of round-the-buoys or round-an-island with daily rum-fuelled parties. And racing over 600 miles non-stop is not for casual racers, anywhere. John Burnie, racing on then multihull record holder *Region Guadeloupe*, once told *Compass*, "At the end of a windy RORC Caribbean 600, cold, exhausted and wringing wet, the famous Sir Steve Redgrave expression definitely entered my mind: 'If anyone sees me get on this boat again they have my permission to shoot me!'"

So, why has this race become so popular since its inception in 2009, attracting professional sailors from around the world and an ever-growing fleet ranging from Mumm 36s to 200-plus-foot superyachts?

As Burnie says, "It is quite unlike any offshore race anywhere else in the world. Unlike many of the established offshore classics [such as the Sydney-Hobart or Bermuda races] this race starts and ends in the same place. In addition to that, if the wind is in one particular direction the fetch, reach and upwind legs are unlikely to be prejudicial — in normal tradewind conditions the 13 different legs on the course will ultimately balance out — so a 'downwind yacht' or 'upwind yacht' will normally not necessarily be favoured. It is possible for almost any size of yacht to win the race on handicap."

RORC Rating Office Technical Manager Jenny Howells has noted that this year's RORC Caribbean 600 is a good example of the diversity of boats enjoying racing under IRC. It illustrates how IRC allows designs like the Volvo Open 70 to continue racing competitively, and gives a new lease of life to older racers such as Volvo 60s and classics, even as superyachts add a different dimension to the fleet.

Don Street, who raced with Burnie aboard the 115-foot ketch *Sojana* in 2012, says, "The course provides sailing on all points of sail and in weather conditions ranging from the standard tradewinds to light and varied conditions under the lees of the islands where, if you are unlucky, you can get firmly stuck in one place for hours in a flat calm. The race has some 150 miles of windward work, broken up into five separate legs varying from ten to 43 miles. Each windward leg is followed by a glorious hull-speed, off-the-wind leg. The course gives both the foredeck crew and the trimmers plenty of work."

Starting off from English Harbour, Antigua and sailing a course going north as far as St. Maarten and as far south as Guadeloupe, Lloyd Thornburg's MOD 70, *Phaedo3*, crossed this year's finish line in a phenomenal elapsed time of 1 day, 9 hours, 35 minutes and 30 seconds. This feat exploded the multihull race record set in the very first edition of the race by Claude Thelier and John Burnie's ORMA 60, *Region Guadeloupe*, by 6 hours, 35 minutes and 35 seconds.

Phaedo helmsman Lloyd Thornburg says, "Having Michel [Desjoyeaux, an ocean-racing champion] coaching me was a terrifyingly fun experience…" As Michel instructed the crew to trim the sails, Thornburg says it was "like driving a fast motorcycle with somebody else's hand on the throttle.… Surfing at over 30 knots for hours is just an incredible experience!"

Hap Fauth's JV72, *Bella Mente*, was the overall winner, becoming the third Maxi 72 to win the race overall. It was third time lucky for *Bella Mente*, having finished second overall for the past two years. *Bella Mente* also won the highly competitive IRC Zero Class and retained the Bella Mente Trophy as the first IRC Yacht to finish that is wholly manually powered, without either variable or moveable ballast.

George David's Juan K-designed *Rambler 88* took Monohull Line Honours, albeit approximately four hours short of the monohull race record, set by his previous yacht, *Rambler 100*, in 2011.

Ross Applebey's Oyster 48, *Scarlet Oyster*, won IRC Two for the third time and enjoyed a battle with Andy Middleton's First 47.7, *EH01*, and Lucy Reynolds' Swan 51, *Northern Child*. *Scarlet Oyster* crossed the finish line just 81 seconds in front of *EH01*. *EH01* came second and *Northern Child* third, by just under one minute on corrected time, after three and a half days of hard racing.

IRC Three produced the closest contest of any class with four yachts taking the lead at various stages of the race. By the Thursday night, the wind had picked up to 20 knots, gusting 30. The beat to the finish from Redonda was exceptionally hard. Yuri Fadeev's Russian crew on the First 40.7 *Intuition* led the fleet on the water at Redonda but lost a sail over the side which cost them an hour to retrieve in the rough seas. Louis-Marie Dussere's JPK 10.10, *Raging Bee*, finished third in class. After the race, the skipper exclaimed. "The standard of the competition and conditions were more difficult than any Fastnet." Peter Scholfield's HOD 35, *Zarafa*, was very much in contention, but Ed Fishwick's Sunfast 36, *Redshift*, pulled away in the wind shadow of Guadeloupe to take the class title.

With the RORC Caribbean 600 firmly established as the Caribbean's premier offshore event, the Club decided a feeder race was required. The inaugural RORC Transatlantic Race from the Canary Islands to Camper & Nicholsons' Port Louis Marina, Grenada was held last year.

Ocean racing aficionados take note: as Don Street says, "I have sailed in one Bermuda race and six Fastnet races. I feel the Caribbean 600 is a much more interesting race for the crew than either of the above races — and being warm and wet is much more fun than being cold and wet!"

Thanks to Louay Habib and others for information used in this report.
For full results and more information visit http://caribbean600.rorc.org.

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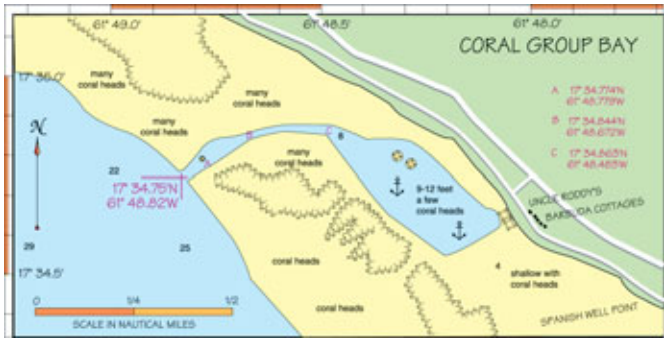
by Chris Doyle

DESTINATIONS

Every time I visit Barbuda I end up at Uncle Roddy's beach bar — it is entertaining, local and fun. But usually I have to get there from somewhere else, which means a hot walk, bike ride, hitchhike or taxi from whatever anchorage I am in. For years, each time I arrived at Uncle Roddy's I walked along the calm beach, admiring what looked like a huge anchoring area inside the reef. I always thought, "This would be such a cool anchorage. There has to be a way in."

Luckily I was there with George Jeffery and Uncle Roddy when I recently expressed this out loud. Next thing, these guys are talking about buoying an entrance, and not only that, it seems that Coco Point Lodge has offered to help pay for the project in the hopes it would disperse a few yachts from their end. Roddy even had some red buoys out back.

"Well, George," I said, "If you are serious about this, let's sail *Ti Kanot* down tomorrow and take a look." That night I managed to get an internet connection and downloaded the area on Google Earth and made a print. If there was much of an entrance it seemed fairly clear where it was.



The wind was up in the morning, whistling over the flat land, but the water is all fairly protected so we did not put a reef in the cat's mainsail. I had with me my partner, Ginny, and George, who as a local fisherman knows every reef and has long been my Barbuda reef guru. We screamed down to Palmetto Point from Low Bay and then beat our way up towards the reef.

It is quite easy to identify Coral Group Bay because of the very pleasant Barbuda Cottages that are next to Uncle Roddy's and owned by his daughter. The entrance is well north of these, about three quarters of a nautical mile southeast of the entrance to the small boat harbor.

It was blowing about 20 knots, and pretty choppy at the entrance. As this was all new territory, we lowered sail and used the engine when we reached the reef. The entrance was both trickier and longer than I thought it would be looking at the satellite image. We had to dodge quite a few reefs, sometimes passing between two that were only a few hundred feet apart. For the most part we had at least ten to 14 feet of water on the way in, but there appeared to be one shallower spot about eight feet deep. Once past this, the big anchorage opened up between the beach and the outer reef and we had a good nine to 12 feet of water. There are a few isolated coral heads to be avoided in the anchorage; they are generally easily seen.

If George and Roddy really do buoy the entrance, it should be reasonably straightforward to get into this anchorage, which is much more protected than Cocoa Point, and very much easier to get ashore from in the dinghy. Until then, it is best left to those who are really experienced in eyeball reef navigation, and it should only be approached in good light (midday winter was fine) and in moderate conditions. If you want a guide, George would take you in. (Call [268] 788-7067.)

We ate lunch, dropped George ashore, and got ready to leave Coral Group Bay. Then I saw ahead of us a glimpse of what seemed like a giant fish. As we backtracked through the reef to the open sea, what I had seen became clear: two dolphins came and escorted us out.

Postscript to Don Street:

Don, in March's issue of *Compass* you wrote: "I once said, 'If anyone can come up with an anchorage in the Lesser Antilles safe for a boat drawing seven feet that I have not mentioned in my guides, I will buy the drinks.' Thirty-five years later I still have not had to buy drinks."

Well Don, take a look and see if Coral Group Bay is marked as an anchorage in your guides. I very much doubt it is, as I have never seen a yacht in there before we went in. If it is not in your guide, it meets these criteria and after 35 years it is time you bought those drinks. I am looking forward to it!

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CONVENIENT CURAÇAO

by Candy Colley

Having had a good break in Bonaire (see last month's issue of *Compass*) and now ready to face some boat projects on our ferro-cement Endurance 40, my husband, Barry, and I sail 45 miles west to the next island of the ABC's — Curaçao, for us on *Syrius*, is our boating base. Why? Well, first there's Spanish Water, the large, enclosed and safe, anchorage with good holding where you can really get down to things such as steering, engine or rigging problems. And second, with all this good intent, Curaçao, being bigger and more industrialized than Bonaire, offers more availability of boat services and facilities, so it's easier to get things done. Come with us:

CURAÇAO MARINE



Willemstad, the capital city of Curaçao, with Punda below the bay's narrow entrance in this photo, and Otrobanda above it. Curaçao Marine is in the foreground

On arrival from Bonaire and having passed the red and green buoys to the entrance of Fuik Baai, close the coast (all deep) and come in at the narrow but safe Barbara Beach entrance to Spanish Water. There's a golf course and big hotel on the corner; you can't miss it.

Once you enter, the water clarity goes but depth remains: just stay in the middle and wind around to the entrance of the bay itself. Take a left (to the west), pass the yacht club to your starboard, follow down past the little islands and drop a hook in one of the obvious areas. No fear of needing a hasty exit here. When Chris Parker tells you the weather is suspect, just smirk to yourself and carry on planning your boat work. A wind reversal just means that the view changes for a day or two; nothing wrong with that. After a while here, you'll get a sort of settled-in feeling, like a chicken on a nest.

To clear in, take the dinghy west to the end of the bay, turn south at the fishermen's dock (or Norman's, as it's known), tie up, walk out of the gate, turn right for about a hundred yards to the roundabout, and hop an almost hourly bus to Willemstad.

A word about public transport here. It's really good. A network of smaller panel-vans covers the island, branching out from here in all directions. They're helpful and plentiful, and when you know how and where they crisscross the island you can get a lot done in a day. The cost, around a dollar fifty a ride, changes with the fuel price and sometimes even goes down. I haven't been ripped off in ten years. Kids, grannies, housewives, everyone is aboard and all friendly. Netherlands Antilles guilders (also called Netherlands florins, or NAFl) and dollars are the currency here, 1.75 NAFl to the dollar on the street, 1.78 at the bank. It's very stable.

Once in Punda (the part of Willemstad on this side of the bridge), make your way to the Customs just past the Venezuelan floating fruit and vegetable market and announce your arrival. This shouldn't take too long and is usually pain-free. You should get six months for the boat.

Immigration is unfortunately, a ways away. Cross the Queen Emma pontoon bridge, which is worth seeing anyway. It's driven by two diesel engines and was built in 1888, renovated in 1939 and 2006. When it's open, two ferries operate very efficiently. On the other side of the bridge, called Otrobanda, turn right, walk about five minutes, check in at the security booth to get into the dock area, walk another five or more minutes to the Immigration Office. They'll stamp you in. Time of stay depends on the rule of the moment; as of now things seem to be six months a year if your country of origin is on the A List. This can change.

After that, go back outside, up the stairs to the Port Captain's office and pay US$10 for an anchoring permit; this is good for 90 days. They close from 11:45AM to 1:30PM, so try to plan accordingly. If you need to wait for the office to reopen, there's a Digicel office back by the bridge for anything phone and internet contract related, and a Pizza Hut that makes a mean Super Supreme.

Punda and Otrobanda have many shops, and I mean many. There are always lots of cruise ships through here and the locals aren't short of things to sell. Hang out in town, have lunch at Wilhemina Square, feel the island... it's nice, busy but relaxed. There's an internet shop off the square next to Subway. A town tour will take you to the fort, an old synagogue and other historical buildings of interest. On the lighter side, there are beaches, restaurants, caves, the Sea Aquarium, an ostrich farm and art galleries. Peruse the Curaçao Tourist Bureau website at www.curacao.com, it'll tell you. This article concentrates more on things needed for the boat and ourselves.

Putting ourselves before the boat for a change, here's some human info. For starters, there's a free daily shuttle at ten every morning from Norman's that goes along Caracasbaaiweg (a main artery to Punda) to Vreugdenhil Supermarket. You can get it all here, from beer to engine oil. They're pretty well stocked, but if you see something you use a lot, get three — it's an island, remember. Grab a grilled chicken; they're good. A free cup of coffee in the restaurant will get you up and going back for about six things you didn't really need.

Opposite Vreugdenhil is a Budget Marine, and nearby are a Napa, Island Water World, doctors, pharmacies and a pretty busy ophthamolgist, Dr. Davelaar, ([5999] 465-2502. Toothache? Dr. Wong: 461-6665.

There's a Gasora, the service station that will exchange your now empty propane bottle (remember Bonaire?) on Thursdays if the refinery is up to date. If they're on the blink, the service station on the Santa Rosaweg will fill the 20-pound bottle any day for about 25 NAFl.

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We do both, depending on what's going on at the time. Caribbean Nautical (465-1628) are opposite Budget. They are Mercury agents, plus sell all things marine, have mechanics for outboards, and sell and store motorboats. Sick computer? Better Deals (465-0155). There's a drop-off laundry service and a pet store, too. All on one road; all walkable.



CONNELLY-LYNN

The Willemstad waterfront is picturesque, and there's plenty to see and do here

In town, using a Rond bus you can ask to get off at FedEx (737-3000) and visit Bloempot, a small mall, where my very cool hairdresser, Gabriel, works (747-4088). He's closed on Mondays. (We might be working hard but there's no reason to look shabby.) Opposite is another computer store, Educat, in Promenade Mall (736-4313). They'll bail you out of cyber-trouble for very reasonable cost. There's a DHL a few bus stops further down (737-0122).

If you need medical care, there are clinics in the same area: Advent Antillian Hospital (737-0611) and Taams (736-5466) do cataract ops, colonoscopies, scans, mammograms and I'm sure more. Dr. Landaete is a wonderful dermatologist, but you have to book (736-7038). A big new government hospital is being built but it will be some years before completion. The current and only government hospital is St. Elizabeth's. I have never been sick enough, but a friend had a prostate op and lived to tell the tale.

Having kept ourselves alive, now it's *her* turn. *Syrius* is happily anchored but needs attention.



CANDY COLLEY

The fascinating 19th-century pontoon bridge hinges open to let ships into the harbor

Marinas? There's Seru Boca at the eastern end of Spanish Water. It's protected, peaceful and has good security and TV. Just slips (no haulout) and they're busy in the hurricane season with boats from the north. Deep drafts no problem. Phone 840-0080 or check out their website at www.santabarbararesort.com/marina.html.

Then there's Royal Marine Services. Here you can haul out; they have a big cradle. Easy entrance at Piscadera Bay, just west of Willemstad. No working website. Call Juan Carlos, 461-2028 or 697-0279.

Curaçao Marine is another facility. Enter through the Queen Emma Bridge. Here you can store out of the water if needs be and they have a boatyard with various services. See their website at www.curacaomarine.com or the see the ad on page 6 of this issue of *Compass*.

Welding? Try Ido (666-5729). Jan Tak at Boat Detail Services is the Yamaha agent, with parts and after-sales service (567-5799, office 737-7261). He's also the agent for Westerbeke generators and Power Tech Propellers. Joe from Joe's Boatworx is good for all things mechanical and lives on the bay (529-6493). His wife, Brigette, will deliver water to your boat (a total treat) on Wednesdays. Spike, her black dog, assists. He's adept at line handling, if you can get it out of his mouth. You can get water (although it costs more than Brigette's, without delivery), gasoline and diesel at the Curacao Yacht Club (near where you came in) Mondays through Fridays, noon to 6:00PM, Saturdays and Sundays 10:00AM to 6:00PM. Fuel prices go up and down depending on oil prices. Loosely speaking, diesel is around a dollar a litre, gasoline a little more.

Canvas work? Call Thomas Canvas: Brad (516-1263) and Jody (668-2025), wwwthomascanvas.com.

Need a car? Try Curaçao Rent for Less, www.curacaorent4less.com. Call Sergio or Terence, 521-5159. Not expensive.

If you get a sudden call from those who miss you and want to come visit ("What, now? Boat's a mess! We're doing all this boat work!") There are cute rental apartments called Limestone. Not expensive and really convenient. Call Sylvia, 767-3007. You can feed your visitors on the bay, too. Happy hour at the west end at The Pier from five to seven on Thursdays plus an inexpensive dinner. Take a torch; the bay is pretty civilized but it doesn't hurt to be prudent.

And just behind The Pier is another marina, Die Kleine Wereld, with easy access by foot or dinghy.

As I write this I'm snug in our spot in Spanish Water, making noises about varnishing the saloon. Have to discuss this with Barry so we won't fall over each other as he works on the engine. But let the games begin. Being able to do it here works for me.

And when we're done it's back to Bonaire to play — or maybe even Aruba. There are things going on there, too, but that's another story.







Panamania Part 2:

More Satisfaction in the San Blas Islands

by Bill and JoAnne Harris

In last month's Compass, *Bill and JoAnne told of their arrival in the San Blas islands, outlined some of the traditions of the Kuna people, and shared some tips for other cruisers.*

Things That Go Bump in the Night

We heard a bumping sound in the middle of the night. It sounded just like an *ulu* hitting the side of the boat. There would be a break, then what sounded like a series of small splashes. We are accustomed to small fish bumping the boat while eating bottom growth, and then larger fish bumping the bottom while charging to eat them, but usually it is not quite this loud and persistent.

WIKIPEDIA / HAAKON KROHN



Above: The natural allure of Kuna Yala: turquoise water, white sand, beckoning palms and tranquility

BILL HARRIS



Right: JoAnne and starfish (which we hope went back in the sea!)

None of *Ultra's* big security lights were turning on from this action. The first time JoAnne heard it, she told Bill and we turned all the security lights to light up all of the decks and the surrounding waters. We still did not see anything. Okay, the drill is over, now back to sleep. About 20 minutes later, the same noise again. Bump, bump, bump, bump — and then splashy sounds.

To our pleasant surprise, we learned that a sea turtle was the suspect! He is extremely friendly and comfortable with boats in the anchorage. He makes his rounds and visits all of the boats.

Our 'Sea World Experience'

We moved to another one of these amazing islands, Green Island, and stayed for two weeks.

The weather in the San Blas is like Texas weather: it can be stormy and rainy one minute, but if you wait five minutes it will be super-bright and sunny. One day, the water was smooth as glass and we decided to go snorkel the spectacular outer reef after our boat chores. We had seen a pair of dolphins in the water earlier in the morning, and as JoAnne swam over to another boat to invite them to snorkel with us, to her surprise the pair of dolphins appeared once again, swimming and squeaking all around her! JoAnne put her head under the water as she swam back to *Ultra* and watched the small dolphins swimming all around, about ten feet away. The dolphin pair was playfully curious about the swimmer they had found. Dolphins like to play and this was time to play!

Waterfalls and Cemeteries

We did a spectacular tour with Lisa, who is a transvestite and well-known mola maker. We purchased mola beer koozies from her, and signed up to do a tour of the Rio Sidra, hiking, swimming and jumping into waterfalls and visiting Kuna cemeteries.

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The day we went there were three funerals going on. We were asked by Lisa to pass quickly and quietly through the cemeteries to show our respect for the families. As we made our way up the river, several *cayucas* showed up with mourners dressed in their brilliantly colored Kuna dress and gold jewelry.

The Kunas carry their deceased up the hills to the gravesite, which is a hole about six feet square and six feet deep. A sleeping area is provided in the hole — sometimes it is an earthen bed, sometimes it is a hammock — and this is where the body is laid to rest. The family places the dead loved one's belongings and objects of their trade around them. A wooden lid is fashioned over the hole, covered with thatch and then earth. A mound of earth is then piled up about the length of the deceased, and atop this mound favorite items of the deceased are placed, such as shoes, hats, coffee cups, toys, etcetera. These items, along with the items placed inside the hole, are to be used by the deceased spirit in the afterlife. We inquired about the Kuna afterlife, but they cherish their beliefs, customs and religious practices and keep them a secret. Christianity has spread throughout the nation, however some still believe the original theory that the Kuna people came from outer space. They also believe in the gods of crocodiles, birds, sharks and other creatures.

Arts and Crafts with the Chief

In the western Holandes cays, we were invited to a wonderful sundowner and beach barbecue by fellow cruisers Roger and Sasha, whom we had not seen since we were anchored in Grand Cayman. They prepared delectable packets of crab, lobster and coconut rice and piled them high on the fire.

While there, we met the local area chief and his lovely family. He invited us to come and visit his island. We arrived a day or so later and walked the beaches, collecting sea beans and other items to satisfy our creative sides by making artwork out of them. The children were intrigued by our fascination with the sea beans we were collecting. They began to help us collect them, and took joy in our delight. They have



WIKIPEDIA / ALEX PROIMOS

Local sailing craft plying between the islands are a frequent sight

seen these big seeds washed up on the beach all their lives, but never understood the fun that could be had with them. They noticed the sea bean pendant that JoAnne was wearing. We explained that we had made it, along with countless more. We asked if they wanted to participate in making pendants. They were elated and we rushed back to the boat to collect our supplies.

Bill showed the chief, Victor, and his brother how to drill the sea beans with his cordless Ryobi drill. They were having a blast and drilled away! Meanwhile, JoAnne was showing the children and women how to decorate the beans with wire and cord. By the end, everyone was adorned with *Ultra* sea bean jewelry. A great time was had by all!

A Class Act

While working, we noticed the chief spoke Kuna and a little Spanish, as did the other elders; however, the children spoke Spanish but not too much Kuna. Victor explained that the family could not afford the US$10 to take the children to Nargana to go to school by outboard-powered cayuca. The children's school schedule is to travel on Mondays to Nargana where they stay with relatives, and travel back home on Thursday. This trip to and from school can take an entire day, depending on how far the child's home island is from the school, and how many stops the Kuna canoe "school bus" must make to pick up or drop off additional children. If the child's family or the island's village does not have the necessary fare, then the cayuca continues on towards the school without them. This was Victor's problem.

Chief Victor's island had about eight school-aged kids who didn't have the fare to go to school that week. He asked if we could teach them some English and Spanish. We said "absolutely!", collected our supplies and gave each child a pencil and paper. We found that there was a need for two pairs of reading glasses, and fortunately we had arrived with plenty of this type of glasses that were either Bill's or had been donated by our friends. We proceeded to teach the students words in both English and Spanish from our books, and then put a twist on it and asked them what the word was in Kuna. We then opened up the floor to questions. Everybody was raising their hand to be recognized to ask questions, even the adults. They were so eager to learn that the class lasted for five hours. We kindly explained the significance of preserving their Kuna culture and not to think of only learning Spanish and leaving their native language behind. That is their culture and they must cherish it and never think the grass is greener on the other side.

We hope that you have this amazing place on your cruising bucket list. You will not regret it. It is like being lost in time and life becomes even simpler. Your days will be filled with snorkeling, fishing, beach barbecues, sundowners, beautiful sunsets, exploring uninhabited islands and witnessing a culture that has remained little changed for generations.

The chief, Victor, looked like he could be Mick Jagger's brother and, although we didn't tell him this since he might not know anything about that amazing rock star, we were often ready to break into song, but change the words a bit: "I can get the satisfaction!"

Captains Bill and JoAnne Harris are from Kemah, Texas and are on their sixth year of cruising aboard their trimaran, Ultra. *They are currently exploring Panama and Colombia, soaking up the intoxicating Latin culture and working on their Spanish. Their blog is at www.jandbyachtultraadventure.blogspot.com*



A Launching at Windward

by Max Liberson

I have always wanted to attend a proper Windward launching; I heard it was a lot of fun. I finally got my chance on February 15th. Bruce and Jan were sailing their wonderful self-built ketch, *Woodwind*, around from our Carriacou anchorage at Tyrell Bay. I arranged with them to meet off Gun Point. The wind, as often is the case, was blowing out of the east with a touch of north in it. My Trapper 500, *Sarah*, has a two-bladed folding prop and is hard work motoring to windward. She does, however, like to sail on the wind, which makes up for this.

At 0750 I broke out my hook in Tyrell Bay. *Sarah* fell nicely onto the port tack, I walked back to the cockpit and steered her to gybe. One little fly in what otherwise had been a faultless getting-underway manoeuvre was that some fishing line was wrapped on my anchor chain. Quite a lot in fact, and I was unknowingly towing it behind us at that point. Another yachtsman pointed it out to me as I went past, and I pulled it in. I was glad I has sailed out otherwise I think the fishing line would have been in my prop.

Woodwind had moved during the night on account of a ground swell that had started up and caused all kinds of havoc ashore. I found them a bit farther out and exchanged pleasantries. Then I left for what was to be a lovely sail. Once around Jack Iron Point I hardened up on the reefed genoa and put *Sarah* on the wind. The mainsail was also reefed right down and she flew along sweetly. I never get over the joy of sailing in the Caribbean, where even the spray is warm and friendly. The sun beat down benevolently and lit up the stunning island of Carriacou, where lazy palm trees swayed to the tradewinds' tune.

One long tack took me to Frigate Island off Union, and then I put *Sarah* about and made towards Gun Point. I soon spotted *Woodwind* and closed with her, sailing at about the same speed while the fish finder showed a rapidly descending depth. I could not help to notice wrecks on a few of the reefs. Later Bruce told me they were "West Indian navigational aids". As we came into Watering Bay we had to be close to a reef on the starboard side, the yellow and brown patch was marked by a broken stick.

I rolled away my genoa and made ready to anchor. Bruce dropped his pick, a massive contraption that would ensure he slept well. My puny CQR did not dig in, so I deployed my 30-pound fisherman as well, by motoring 45 degrees to the anchor I had already set. My pick was still not holding though, so I used my 30-pound Danforth as an "angel" and lowered it down the fisherman's rode on a big stainless shackle. That brought us up.

I launched my dinghy and went ashore with Bruce and Jan. We wandered around looking at the boats being built and talking to the locals. Later on we went to a pizza shop and fed. It was good fun and I was glad to escape the noise that was likely to be blasting out of Tyrell Bay on a carnival night.

A good night's sleep led to the happy discovery in the morning that *Sarah* was still in the same place I anchored. After a swim and breakfast I went ashore to suss out where the boat to be launched lay. I found it in a back garden. Seemed like a long way from the sea. It was a 24-foot motorboat with Chris Craft styling and was varnished rather than painted. Two big 85-horsepower Yamaha outboards and deep V sections on the bow looked like they meant business.

I was offered a beer, more and more people arrived and the party started. The stem and the props of the soon-to-be-launched boat had already been anointed in blood, at various times people dripped beer and rum on her, too. At about noon, the master of ceremonies made himself known and told us what we would be doing. In short order he had us pushing and pulling the new boat towards a hole in the fence. She made the turn and was in the alley without incident. A beer break was called. Suitably refreshed we started hauling again. I was joined on the tow rope by a nice young lady from the village. She had bare feet and a bandaged bloody toe, and as she leaned onto the rope she called out, "Ayeee, haul da f...ing boat!" The crowd responded to her chant and the boat shot forward — smoke could be smelt from her keel. We stopped so a child could be put in the driving seat to "steer" as we had got a little close to the fence. Then we were off again, stopping from time to time so the wooden "rollers" (they were flat) could be moved from astern to forward.

We were pretty quickly outside of Bernard's bar, and as he had built the boat, this seemed a fitting place to stop for more refreshments and a blessing from the church. Once the boat's spiritual needs had been attended to, we hauled her into the sea. I managed to scramble aboard for the maiden voyage. Once the engines were smoothly running and I had a quick check for leaks, we were off! And what a beauty she was, fast and smooth.

I came ashore to party the rest of the day and night away with the people on the shore. Bruce had set up his steel drum and played for us.

The next morning I did not feel so very well, but the wind was light and begged to be used. So I weighed the fisherman first, stowing it all away, hoisted the main, then broke out the CQR. *Sarah* again fell off nicely on the preferred tack and I passed close to *Woodwind* to say good morning, but received no reply. So I tacked under just the main, sailed past her bow, unrolled the genoa and put *Sarah* on the wind. We glided serenely past the reefs into open water and I could relax. I handed the main and we travelled under just the genoa back to Tyrell Bay.

ALL PHOTOS: JAN HEIN





Above: Yo heave ho! Everybody gets into the act when it's time to get the boat to the water

Below: 'I managed to scramble aboard for the maiden voyage'

Inset: 'My Trapper 500, Sarah, *likes to sail...'*



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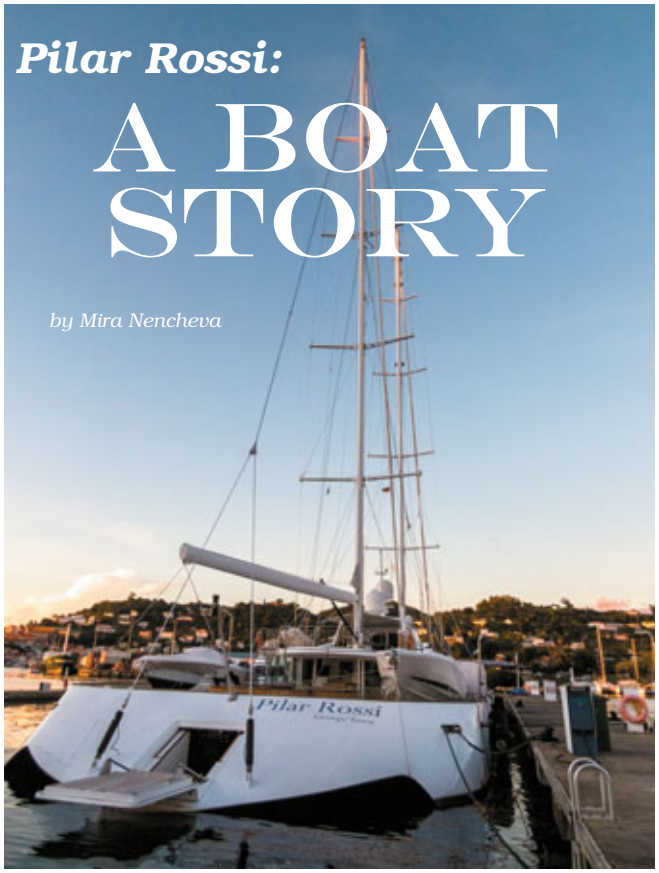
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Pilar Rossi: A BOAT STORY

by Mira Nencheva



The unusual mega-multihull configuration can be seen at the yacht's wide stern

Some stories begin with a dream. Such is this story.

Our family arrived in Grenada in mid-October 2014, after spending almost the entire hurricane season sailing slowly down the Eastern Caribbean island chain. It was our first year of cruising, our first time visiting the region. Every place was new and unfamiliar to my husband, our daughter and me and everything seemed wonderful and magical. Yet, I remember one particular moment when we were so amazed that our jaws literally dropped like in the old animation films and we went:

"Woooow! Look! Have you ever imagined, have you ever dreamed about anything like *this*?!"

And it wasn't the crater of a bubbling volcano beneath our feet, or a family of green monkeys watching us from the trees in the late afternoon, or an infinite pink beach where the only footsteps were those of sea turtles crawling out of the ocean to lay eggs at night, or an old fort built up on top of a hill facing the sunset; not even a waterfall booming amidst insane tropical vegetation.

It was a boat. A most extraordinary boat.

We dropped *Fata Morgana's* anchor in the wide anchorage outside of St. George's Lagoon and in our orange kayak started for the Port Louis Marina. As we paddled past the channel, keeping near to the south shore, we saw two masts sticking high above the hills, reaching for the clouds. Slowly, we turned the corner.

And there she was looming above us like a giant white bird from a different world — *Pilar Rossi*, one of the most unusual megayachts in the world.

Pilar Rossi is a 211-foot steel luxury megayacht with an aluminum superstructure, a beam of 46 feet, and draft of only seven feet. With such glorious proportions and a unique design, there isn't a single person who remains calm at the first sight of the ship. A magnificent enchantress.

But even more amazing and unbelievable is her story.

You see, *Pilar Rossi* wasn't always as big and impressive as she is today. Like in the story of the ugly little duckling who transformed as he grew older into a beautiful white swan, so did *Pilar Rossi* change with time.

In the 1980s one person who believed in himself, a daring man for whom limits do not exist, or if they do, he goes beyond them, and dreams are a matter of passion and dedication, decided to build a boat.

Pilar Rossi began her life at sea in Turkey in 1989, as a 112-foot Alucraft motor-yacht with one hull and no masts. But some years later, her owner, the legendary three-time Formula One World Champion Nelson Piquet from Brazil, together with his uncle Mauricio Piquet, a naval architect, drew up a new design. Another 100 feet of length was added in the stern, thus doubling her size. As well, two massive outriggers were built with the semi-SWATH (Small Waterplane Area Twin Hull) concept which was at that time among the best options for multihulls, minimizing the ship's volume near the surface of the sea, where wave energy is located, thus maximizing the vessel's stability, even in high seas and at high speeds. Two new masts, one 148 feet and another 138 feet high, made by Formula Yacht Spars in Lymington, England, gave the boat her new sailing soul and transformed her into a mega-schooner-trimaran. With hydraulically operated genoa, fisherman staysail and mainsail, she now has 2,200 square metres of sail area, and is capable of eight knots under sail and up to 15 knots when motor-sailing. The main engines are two 1360-horsepower, 530-kilowatt MANs, and there are two John Deere engines of 90 kilowatts each as generators. One of *Pilar Rossi's* advantages is that the new hull is built on top of the old one, creating an air cushion and thus making her virtually unsinkable.

We walked around the pier at the marina admiring *Pilar Rossi* for some time and there we meet Tomaz A. Christovao, one of the boat's crew. A tall young guy from Brazil, born in Ila Bella, Tomaz is a licensed yachtmaster with extensive sailing experience and a great passion for the sea. He invited us for a tour aboard *Pilar Rossi* and revealed some of her many secrets to us.

Inside, the boat looked even bigger, especially compared to our 38-foot Leopard catamaran. We walked around the teak decks. Everything seemed enormous: the winches, the cleats, the blocks, the shrouds. Looking up at the massive masts gave us vertigo.

Besides the private cabins, which can accommodate up to 18 guests, and the luxurious saloon, the boat is equipped with a helicopter landing pad, a cinema room, an outdoor Jacuzzi and an enormous gym occupying a big portion of the lower deck. A Cigarette racing boat of 39 feet (bigger than our catamaran) used as tender, and a 34-foot Contender were stationed on either side of the main deck.

Even though Mr. Piquet spends only a few weeks per year aboard with family and friends, *Pilar Rossi* is the home of seven permanent crewmembers who maintain the boat and all of her systems, both at the dock in Grenada and when at sea. Mechanics, electricians, welders, carpenters, fiberglass-workers and sailors, they are all from Brazil: Tomaz A. Christovao, Francisco Soares, Marcos Dutra, Adao Pereira, Genivaldo Silva, Franciele Bastos "The Warrior", chef Maria do Carmo, and Captain Ricardo de Fretas.

One of them, Marcus Dutra, has been the chief mechanic aboard *Pilar Rossi* for 14



The addition of masts made the stretched Alucraft into a schooner
Inset: Pilar Rossi's *saloon. She can elegantly accommodate her owner, his family and their guests*

years. He showed us the engine rooms deep inside the belly of the boat, a dark labyrinth populated by huge pipes, cables and instruments, some very old and surely impossible to be operated or fixed by anyone else but Marcus. He explains how the systems have been adapted to fit the new design, and what things have been added after the boat has been remodeled so drastically.

"But why did Mr. Piquet do this? Why did he have to go through all the trouble of adding and changing things on the boat, instead of selling the old one and getting a new one?" I ask the captain Ricardo de Fretas, a member of the Rio de Janeiro Sailing Club, a club with four Olympic sailing medals.

"Because he loves the boat. And he is a loyal guy. Maybe he even made a promise to her, and he is the kind of man who keeps his promises. But also, he wanted to create the perfect boat for him and his family and friends to enjoy. The boat is his creation. He is always focused on even the smallest of details. It is incredible how much he cares for *Pilar Rossi*. Sometimes he calls me from the other side of the world and wants to know if a specific battery in one of the bathrooms works. When Mr. Piquet is aboard *Pilar Rossi*, he spends much of his time sitting on the large main deck table thinking what will be the next improvement, the next project."

Yes, it is a love story between a racecar driver and a boat.



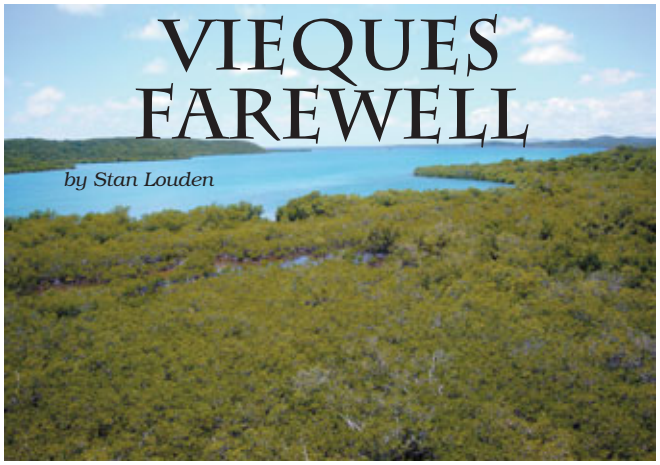
The crew, all Brazilians, kindly gave us a tour of this unusual labor of love

This article was only possible with the help and information provided by Tomaz A. Christovao, licensed yachtmaster and crew aboard Pilar Rossi. *Thank you! All yacht specifications and information are displayed in good faith and* Caribbean Compass *does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the current accuracy, completeness, validity, or usefulness of the superyacht* Pilar Rossi *information and/or images displayed. All boat information is subject to change without prior notice and may not be current.*

Mira Nencheva, her husband, Ivo, and their 11-year-old daughter, Maya, have been sailing around the world and living full-time aboard their 38-foot Leopard catamaran, Fata Morgana, *since July 2013. Their journey is documented in a travel-adventure blog www.thelifenomadik.com and in their Facebook page Facebook/TheLifeNomadik.*

VIEQUES FAREWELL

by Stan Louden



A photo taken from my masthead, while in the Pond. The view — southwest across deserted Bahía Honda and out into an empty Caribbean — emphasizes the uninhabited nature of the east end of Vieques

Vieques is a large island to the southeast of Puerto Rico. Since it is part of Puerto Rico, it is therefore United States territory. Until 2003, this island was once the US Navy Atlantic Fleet's target range, and is covered with exploded, dud and perhaps not-so-dud ammo.

For 60 years Vieques was part of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility. The biggest ships tested their guns here, and on several occasions I have arrived at Vieques to seek sanctuary from an approaching hurricane as the US Navy was shooting at targets on the island. The Navy Range Controller on VHF channel 16 assured me that I would be perfectly safe if I stayed within one mile of the shore, since the naval vessels were 20 miles away, and were shooting over my mast!

In September of 2011 Hurricane Ophelia was galloping towards me. The Vieques Navy Range Controller's advice turned out to be correct, and once again I safely arrived in Ensenada Honda. But still, even today, the bomb disposal guys are letting off unexploded buried ammo.

When the weather passed I planned to leave Vieques on a Saturday at the first light of dawn, to return to St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. So, on the Friday I moved my boat out of the mangrove pond and into Ensenada Honda where I anchored in about 30 feet of peculiar green water. The bright sunlight only penetrated a few feet. I then had to go back into the pond, in my dinghy, in order to recover my many hurricane lines that were tied into the mangroves. This is no easy task. I pushed the bow of the dinghy into the overhanging mangrove branches as far as possible, and then reached over to untie the heavy rope, and remove the canvas chafing wrapping. Angry squadrons of mosquitoes took flight at this intrusion. Sometimes I actually had to scramble out onto a thick mangrove branch in order to reach a knot. In the dim dappled light, I could see that there were many strange creatures eyeing me as I entered their world. One of these creatures looked like a large crab that had evolved into a giant hairy tarantula spider. Its red eyes, protruding on stalks, followed my every move, and it seemed that it was on the verge of springing at my unprotected throat. My imagination was working overtime. I was immersed in a strange, hostile world, and I conjured up the theory that the evolution of these alien creatures was enhanced by the definite presence of plutonium sprinkled around this island, and now leaching into the mangrove creeks and being soaked up by the sea life.

The water in Ensenada Honda is a thick opaque green colour. Strange stuff flowing out of the mangrove creeks makes the main body of water very murky. And I had to jump into it that day. The strange murk is very, very rich in nutrients, and so the bottom of my boat was coated with oysters, barnacles and strange white waving things. I couldn't sail that way, so, courage pumped up, in I went with my flexible stainless steel lather's scraper, fins and mask. I began scraping from the waterline down as far as I my arm could reach, until I arrived at the bow, and then moved over to the other side. I had been concentrating on my work on this side for a while, when I caught a glimpse, out of the corner of my mask, of a huge dark shadow sliding towards me in the green murky water.

I could have easily panicked, but somehow I stoically thought through the situation. I was on the wrong side of the boat to scramble up the ladder. So I calmly started to work my way towards the bow, on the assumption that a squirt of adrenalin could give me the necessary supercharge to climb the anchor chain. I quietly reached up as far as I could to grasp the chain, and I raised myself up, chest high out of the water. I noticed then that the boat had slowly swung more to the east, and the lowering afternoon sun had cast a huge black shadow on the vaguely discernible green muddy bottom... whew... jeeze....

I almost fainted with relief!

Well, I still had to finish this scraping job, and the nightmarish fantasy of huge be-toothed, plutonium-altered sea monsters, gathering silently behind me in the green depths, would not go away.

Yet, I managed to finish this essential seaman's job, and finally scramble out into the safety of my cockpit, where a disinfecting mixture of sunshine-warmed fresh water plus ten percent chlorine bleach washed away the paranoia that I had soaked up some weird plague during my few hours in the water. A frosty glass of grapefruit juice, stiffened with a little more than the usual amount of gin, completed the day.

As I prepared my sailboat for sea, my departure preparations were announced by three incredible "karrumps" that shook the air as though someone had bashed a 55-gallon drum with a sledge hammer, right beside my boat. It was the indefatigable bomb disposal team doing their dangerous job.

So, back to the Saturday dawn departure.

Actually, I would have been content to stay for many more weeks in Vieques. The east end, where I was anchored, is of course uninhabited — perhaps uninhabitable



— and the solitude is a great inducement to cogitating and actually scribbling down thoughts. But Hurricane Ophelia had glanced by and was now about 500 miles to my north. This Category 4 hurricane was sucking the air out of the Caribbean and producing a very rare south wind. This was ideal for a fast, comfortable and stress-free sail back to St. Thomas. I took the opportunity and planned my return to the "civilization" of St. Thomas USVI.

On the Saturday morn, the sky had just barely lightened to the east when I hefted up my muddy anchor, hoisted the mainsail, and glided out through the reef-strewn exit from Vieques' Ensenada Honda. My hand-held Garmin GPS was clutched tightly in my left hand and my white-knuckled right hand gripped the stainless steel wheel. There would be no navigational errors on this departure, and no scary thrill, such as bumping over coral reefs.

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A mile outside of Ensenada Honda and my safe GPS waypoint reached, I glanced left, 90 degrees to the east —— my route home. I had relaxed far too soon. Spread out ahead of me, streaming from south to north, was a tropical weather front. Its raptor-like teeth flashed as intermittent lightning bolts made the huge anvil-shaped cumulus clouds incandescent.



Nosed into the mangroves in expectation of Hurricane Ophelia

There were no choices here: I had to sail through this possibly dangerous weather system. There is usually a lot of wind in these weather fronts, and this one seemed to be moving north-ish, towards Ophelia. But it extended all the way past the southern horizon, so I could not expect to sail around it.

So much for a comfortable, easy sail home!

As I got to within maybe three miles of the north end of this system, the air temperature quite suddenly dropped from the tropical morning temp of about 80°F to below 70. This is cold, very cold, when you are wearing a thin, damp T-shirt, and worn-out old shorts.

This might be good news, and it might be bad news. It could be the advancing frontal edge of really strong winds, or it might be a change in the storm's direction.

It was neither.

Well, actually I never did find out which one it was, because the rising sun suddenly burst through the cumulus clouds and showed me a big gap between the first two cells of the weather system. The south wind made it possible to bore straight eastward into this wormhole of an escape route, and rapidly slip through.

It was a different world on the other side. The rising sun was just floating upward and St. Thomas was a lumpy bluish line stretched along the northeast horizon.

My wind steering vane made all the big decisions from then onward, and I dozed and considered my incredibly good fortune to be here, and now.

Six hours later, securely attached to my mooring, condensation-dripping glass of gin and grapefruit juice near my lips:

And all shall be well and,
All manner of things shall be well,
When the tongues of flame are in-folded,
Into the crowned knot of fire,
And the fire and the rose are one.
(apologies to T.S.Eliot)

AN UNANTICIPATED VISITOR

by Stan Louden

Vieques is a large island, and the eastern half is entirely unpopulated. But even so, the Puerto Rican government provides a few amenities. Most important of these is a garbage dumpster, located at the far western end of Bahia Honda, at the end of the only public road. This dumpster is about two miles from the Pond's entrance, and since the Bahia Honda area is completely deserted, a two-mile trip in a dinghy, all alone, is a tiny bit risky. Yet, I made the trip twice during my stay in Vieques, properly equipped with anchor, oars, flares, fresh water, handheld VHF (even though there was no other station within range) and spare gas. Ya know, this is a major voyage — to go dump garbage.

Well anyway, on the return, as my sailboat came into view, and I could distantly make out my sailing dinghy tied to the stern of my boat. I thought that I could see someone in the dinghy!

I decided to veer off a little, and approach from the side. And then I realized that this was not a person in my dinghy, but a HUGE bird, a gigantic bird, with appropriately gargantuan talons curled over the gunwale of the boat.

One of the many pieces of equipment I had packed for my garbage run was my camera, so I quietly unpacked it, and aimed it at this great bird. I got a few photos, the last one as this great predatory creature spread a four- or five-foot wingspan as it took to the air in elegant slow motion.



I later found out that this bird was an osprey, and I am sure he had great hunting success on all the small game in Vieques.

So I had not been alone in Bahia Honda at all.



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ALL ASHORE...

Tayrona: A Caribbean Seacoast Park

by Sally Erdle

"Nature is never disappointing." A friend said this years ago, and I've always found it to be true. So when at Marina Santa Marta the opportunity came to visit Colombia's premier coastal park, only 20 miles away, I slathered on some sunblock, grabbed a water bottle and comfy walking shoes, and said, "I'm in!"

Tayrona National Park (Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona) runs westward almost 22 miles (35 kilometres) along Colombia's Caribbean coast from Rio Piedras to Taganga. Many cruisers know it as the home of the "Five Bays", anchorages often used by cruisers in years past as stops en route from Aruba to Cartagena. Covering approximately 12 square miles (30 square kilometers) of maritime area and 58 square miles (150 square kilometers) of land, the park is home to some 800 species of plants, over a hundred species of mammals, 30 species of reptiles, 400 species of fish and 300 species of birds, all enjoying a variety of natural habitats ranging from arid hills to tropical rainforest.

The hour-long ride from Santa Marta passed quickly, and we were struck along the way by the sudden contrast between the human settlements and the pristine approach to the park. Our goal was Cañaveral Beach, located near the eastern edge of the park. Just outside the park's gate we stopped for refreshments — and insect repellent, we were seriously advised — at a little restaurant-cum-shop. Prices rise significantly inside the park.

At the entrance gate, you'll pay a fee and be given an introduction to the rules and regulations of the park. Do be aware that the fee for Colombian nationals is less than the fee for visitors. I was a bit taken aback by the number of other people entering the park along with us, but although this is one of Colombia's most-visited national parks, it's big enough, especially on non-holiday weekdays, that you can soon find yourself on your own with nature.

We walked past some horses available for hire and through a spacious campsite, and then hiked on a well-kept trail through dry tropical forest until we reached an exquisite sandy beach decorated with artistic piles of huge, ocean-sculpted boulders reminiscent of The Baths in Virgin Gorda. The big difference was that not another soul was here. Other beaches are more popular, but there are so many of these undeveloped "boulder beaches" along the coast you can surely find one to call your own. Unfortunately, many of them are not suitable for swimming or snorkeling: the same conditions that make sailing along this coast so intense also create riptides and dangerously powerful waves along exposed parts of the coast. Beware — hundreds of swimmers have drowned here.

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JANVIER LADINO / PROCOLOMBIA

Tayrona Park boasts mile after mile of beaches adorned with sea-sculpted rock formations



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—*Continued from previous page*

Carefully skirting a salt-water lagoon — a sign warns you to beware of the caymans, eliciting jokes that we should have bought cayman repellent as well as insect repellent — we ascended a long flight of wooden stairs to a clifftop gazebo to take in magnificent views far up and down the coast, and of the mountains behind.

We walked onward, checking out the "eco-habs" scattered on a hillside. These are small wooden rental accommodation units designed with thatched roofs similar to those of the traditional dwellings of the indigenous Tayrona Indians. Descendents of these original inhabitants are the only people allowed to live within the park today.

Nearby is a little oasis of a beach where you can take at least a dip in the sea (there are lifeguards, and red flags indicating the unsafe areas) and enjoy a cold drink at a wooden table under an umbrella while watching the birds wheel and spin in the wind, the waves roll in creating a constant mist, and the stunning shoreline march toward the horizon. Having been seduced by such "civilization" for the moment, we took the next step: lunch at the open-air Tayrona Ecohabs restaurant was a gourmet treat featuring the best ceviche I've ever had anywhere.

—*Continued on page 44*


SALLY ERDLE

Left: A little oasis of civilization with a barefoot bistro atmosphere





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'WINDWARD OR MONA PASSAGE?'

A Review and Assessment

by Frank Virgintino

In the March edition of *Caribbean Compass*, in an article entitled "Windward Passage or Mona Passage?" Tito Burrell outlined his opinion(s) on the best way for sailors to access the Caribbean Sea from North America. He feels that sailing eastward along the north coast of the Dominican Republic and then into the Caribbean via the Mona Passage is preferable to sailing through the Windward Passage and then along the south coast of the DR.

Tito Borell is an excellent sailor and has promoted a race in the Dominican Republic — the Hispaniola 360 Challenge — that began in 2007 as a non-stop race around the island of Hispaniola (the Dominican Republic and Haiti). He has worked hard and the race is, to his credit, a great success.

However, racing is not cruising and the criteria of each activity are very different. Moreover, while everyone is entitled to their own opinion, everyone is not entitled to their own facts. There are statements in the article, put forth as facts to make a point, that are either entirely untrue or are without proof.

The article states that many of the cruisers who come from North America are 50 years old or older, and are looking for comfort and support in the form of anchorages, repairs and supplies. This is an accurate statement. Beyond this point, the article begins to run afoul of errors of fact.



Airport Access

Sr. Borrell states, "In the navigation zone from Montecristi to Cabo Engaño (250 nautical miles) on the northeast coast of the Dominican Republic, there are three international airports: Santiago, Puerto Plata, and Punta Cana..." Calling this entire area "the northeast coast" is highly misleading: northeast is regarded as Luperón to Cabo Cabron; Montechristi is on the west end of the north coast and Cabo Engaño is on the east coast, south of Samaná. The article leaves the reader with the mistaken idea that there are three airports on the north coast route. In fact, there is only one airport on the north coast, and that is at Puerto Plata. Santiago is inland, hours away from coastal towns. Punta Cana is at the midpoint of the east coast, nowhere near the north coast.

The article also indicates that the south coast of the Dominican Republic has only two airports, Santo Domingo (Las Americas) and La Romana (Casa de Campo). He overlooks the international airport at Barahona (Maria Montez). Thus, the south coast has three international airports (west, central and east on the coast).

Upwind via Lee Shore or Lee?

The article states that the Hispaniola 360 Challenge race provides first-hand proof of the benefit of using the Mona Passage, as the passage eastward on the south side of the island is hated by Hispaniola 360 Challenge participants because they are headed into the wind and sometimes sustain damage.

This statement is a perfect example of making an example fit the need. The route the racers follow is westward along the north coast of the DR *with the wind at their backs*. However, cruisers who come from North America go eastward along the north coast of the DR — *into the wind*. The north coast of the DR is a dangerous coast, buffeted by strong Northeast Trades and, contrary to what the author states, there are no stops outside of Luperón and Puerto Plata. The other "stops", such as Rio San Juan and Sosua, are normally not tenable owing to the tradewinds and only usable in very settled weather — a rare event on the north coast.

Moreover, the north coast of the DR is a lee shore for its entire distance. Sailing a lee shore in the Trades is always risky when going to windward. The wind is against you as are the seas, often quite large. To pass Cabo Frances Viejo is what seems like a never-ending chore.

However, the south shore of the DR is not a lee shore. The tradewinds are normally from the northeast and the island can serve as protection from the easterly winds at its west end. From Ile-à-Vache to Cabo Beata, if one stays close to the coast, you can route for Bahia Las Aguillas and keep the wind at moderate. Racing boats are racing and do not employ this strategy, but for a cruising boat, the strategy makes perfect sense. Inshore the winds are 15 knots and below; head out a few miles and the apparent wind can jump to 25 knots.

Once at Cabo Beata, one can head north to Barahona and then, once up bay, use the katabatic winds to sail to Salinas. From Salinas to Boca Chica, a nighttime sail on a port tack, again using the katabatic winds, is an easy undertaking. From Boca Chica to Isla Saona (at the southeast end of the DR), the katabatic winds after sundown provide nice sailing in light offshore winds.

Support Facilities

As for facilities, the author states there is a shortage of support on the south shore. In fact, on the north coast from Luperón to Samaná (Samaná is on the north coast at the east end of the DR) there is nowhere to get assistance or head in case of emergency. From Samaná, cruisers must transit the Mona Passage to head for the south coast of Puerto Rico. The marinas the author refers to at Cap Cana are on the mid east coast of the DR and in heavy tradewinds are difficult to enter.

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On the south coast, there is excellent service at Barahona, a very active town with an international airport. There is a small marina and an excellent coast guard station. (See the entry at www.noonsite.com for January — Dominican Republic homepage, related reports — about a cruising boat that lost its rudder and got in touch with the Coast Guard at Barahona, who dispatched a coast guard boat 40 miles to render assistance.) From Barahona, Salinas has an excellent marina and restaurant, where fuel and service can be obtained. The marina at Rio Ozama in the river at the entrance to Santo Domingo can provide assistance and service. At Boca Chica, the full-service Marina ZarPar with mechanics and 70-ton travel lift are available. Farther east, at Casa de Campo, is another full service marina with a big travelift as well as the full spectrum of mechanical repair services.

Study the free guide to the Dominican Republic, which can be obtained at www.freecruisingguide.com. The comparison of facilities on the south shore versus the north shore of the Dominican Republic is at once apparent.

Haiti is Not 'Unthinkable'

The author makes two additional statements that should be examined.

The first is that stopping in Haiti is "still unthinkable to most cruisers". I have cruised Haiti for over two decades. Where you stop in Haiti makes all the difference (see www.noonsite.com, Haiti homepage, related reports and also comments at bottom of page). Read the new second edition of the *Guide to Haiti* offered free at www.freecruisingguide.com to see the possibilities. From Cap Mole and Bombardopolis in the north, to Cape Sable and Ile-à-Vache and Jacmel in the south, each of these stops is as safe and often much safer than most places in the Caribbean. If you stop at the fishing villages listed in the *Guide to Haiti*, you will find the people welcoming and happy that you chose to come visit. To be sure, no place is perfect and petty theft can take place anywhere, but to my frame of mind, stopping in Haiti is very thinkable. Some may not want to stop because their insurance policy does not cover the boat in Haiti and if this is the case, such boats should continue through the Windward Passage and on to Cabo Beata without stopping. However, for those that want to cruise and see the Caribbean as it was decades ago, Haiti is what the Lesser Antilles were in 1960.

'Drug Trafficking' is Not an Issue

The author also states that "drug trafficking adds insecurity" to a passage on the south coast, where he states it is more prevalent. There is no basis in fact for this comment, no proof of any type whatsoever. The comment is made to inspire fear.

Drug trafficking is rampant throughout the Caribbean. In all the years I have cruised in the Caribbean (almost four decades), I have never seen or had an incident with a "drug trafficker." Drug traffickers are interested in their cargo and in not getting caught by the authorities. Getting involved with cruisers on a slow-moving sailboat is bad business — in fact, none of their business.

As you cruise through the Caribbean, be more concerned about pirating off the coast of Venezuela, as cruising boats are their target. Also, be concerned that at any given anchorage where people live throughout the Caribbean, there can be theft and even theft with violence. The Caribbean Safety and Security Net at www.caribbeansafetyandsecuritynet.com and the Caribbean Security Index offered free at www.freecruisingguide.com can show you what happens and where it happens. It is up to you to avoid problems and high-crime areas as best you can. If you are sailing at night and see two boats that appear to be together offshore, change your course to avoid them as they can be two fishing boats or two of anything else.



What is Your Goal?

For cruisers coming from the East Coast of North America to the Caribbean Sea, there is only one logical entry and that is the Windward Passage. That it is the quickest and safest way into the Caribbean is obvious from a look at the charts and a study of anchorages and facilities.

What has happened in the past that caused cruisers to use the DR's north shore route heading eastward was not a desire to get into the Caribbean Sea per se, but a desire to get to the Lesser Antilles, the chain of islands at the east side of the Caribbean Sea.

The Lesser Antilles is part of the Caribbean but not the entire Caribbean. It was favored because the chain runs north and south and sailing in the easterly Trades is a matter of sailing close reaches to broad reaches. In fact, it is where the entire concept of "I want to go sailing in the Caribbean" started. However, to arrive in the Lesser Antilles from North America is to pay the piper — especially in the Atlantic, because what many call a trip south is really a trip east.

If you choose the north coast DR route, I suggest you read Bruce Van Sant's book *The Gentleman's Guide to Passages South: The Thornless Path to Windward.* He did it many times and his methods raised to an art form ways to transit what is an inhospitable coast. His strategies make a harsh route possible, albeit still difficult.

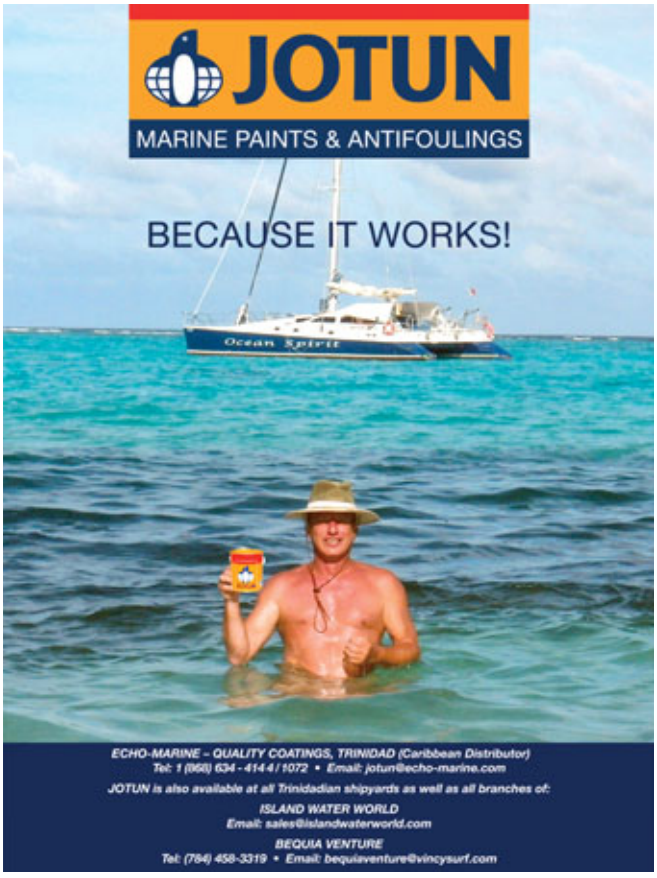
I recommend that you choose the south route through the Windward Passage to arrive in the Caribbean Sea. To reach the Lesser Antilles, if that is your goal, you still have to go east against the tradewinds, but not on a lee shore. Rather you are on a shore with many facilities and anchorages and all forms of services and provisioning.

The map of the Caribbean clearly shows the Caribbean Sea. Look at the north route above the DR; it is a route eastward in the Atlantic Ocean. The prevailing tradewind is from the northeast. The route on the south shore protects you from the tradewind inshore to Cabo Beata, the prominent cape halfway east. From there on, one can use the nighttime katabatic winds to proceed east on a port tack.

In summary, the south shore of the DR is in the Caribbean Sea; the north shore is in the Atlantic Ocean. The north coast is a lee shore with only two major stops. The south shore is not a lee shore and has many stops and a great deal of support in the form of repairs and access to provisions.

Notwithstanding that it is over 200 nautical miles longer to sail the southern route via the Windward Passage, cruisers should most often choose safety and comfort over speed.





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MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

APRIL - MAY 2015

Crossing the channels between Caribbean islands with a favorable tide will make your passage faster and more comfortable. The table below, courtesy Don Street, author of Street's Guides and compiler of Imray-Iolaire charts, which shows the time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this AND next month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water, Don explains, generally tries to run toward the moon. The tide starts running to the east soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then runs westward. From just after the moon's setting to just after its nadir, the tide runs eastward; and from just after its nadir to soon after its rising, the tide runs westward; i.e. the tide floods from west to east. Times given are local.

Note: the maximum tide is 3 or 4 days after the new and full moons.

For more information, see "Tides and Currents" on the back of all Imray Iolaire charts. Fair tides!

April 2015					
DATE	TIME	21	1434	11	0631
1	2217	22	1529	12	0654
2	2259	23	1622	13	0747
3	2342	24	1712	14	0839
4	0000 (full moon)	25	1801	15	0933
5	0026	26	1847	16	1027
6	0110	27	1931	17	1122
7	0157	28	2014	18	1218
8	0246	29	2056	19	1314
9	0336	30	2139	20	1409
10	0428	**May 2015**		21	1502
11	0522	1	2202	22	1552
12	0617	2	2307	23	1640
13	0712	3	2353	24	1726
14	0808	4	0000 (full moon)	25	1810
15	0901	5	0042	26	1852
16	0955	6	0132	27	1953
17	1050	7	0225	28	2017
18	1156	8	0319	29	2101
19	1242	9	0413	30	2147
20	1338	10	0502	31	2235

SEAWISE WITH DON STREET

This article is a result of information personally gathered during 12 transatlantic passages: five from the Caribbean to Europe, and almost 40 trips from the Caribbean to the US East Coast or the reverse. Added to this is information gathered over the last 60 years from sailors who have done these passages and from reading about passages on these routes.

Be Ready for Cold

When heading to the States in the spring, be prepared for a northwest cold front that brings cold weather and occasionally snow and sleet.

Check Imray passage chart 100 to see that when sailing the Great Circle route from Bermuda to Ireland or England you will spend a couple of days in the iceberg area. On the chart, you will note diamonds with dates on them. They are the locations of icebergs that have floated well beyond the expected area. One diamond is only 120 miles northwest of Bermuda; almost a dozen icebergs have been spotted south of the Azores.

So, before leaving the Caribbean make sure you have enough sleeping bags or blankets to keep the crew warm, and insist that every crewmember has plenty of really warm clothing (not just jeans and sweatshirts), hats and good foul weather gear including seaboots.

Being cold is fatiguing, and as the late Jim Crawford, a seaman par excellence, stated, "Fatigue is the rust that destroys boats." Every time in my 72-year sailing career I have gotten my tail in a wringer, it has been because I allowed myself to get too tired and made poor decisions. A cold, wet, tired crew is a crew that makes mistakes. Keep your crew dry, warm, well rested and well fed, and the chances of them making mistakes is minimized.

ARE YOU READY TO GO?

Be Ready for Leaks

Steel, aluminum and fiberglass boats seldom leak, but when they do it is usually serious, and all too often the pumps are inadequate or do not work — which in mid-ocean can be fatal.

To prove how inadequate the standard pumps supplied by the builder are, if you have a heavy or moderate displacement boat, pull a seacock, let the bilge fill to the floorboards and see how many hours it takes you to manually pump the bilge dry (you can't depend on an electric pump). If you have a modern, shoal-bodied fin keeler, fill the bilge to two or three inches above the floorboards and see how many hours it takes you to manually pump your bilge dry. Now imagine doing this in rough seas!

If you want a pump that really moves water, see my letter to the editor at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/december09compass_online.pdf.regarding the virtues of the Edson 30-gallon-per-minute manual pump. Also watch this demonstration: https://vimeo.com/sailflix/review/111938497/e5e07cd56d

Is Your Safety Gear Ready?

If your life raft certification hasn't expired yet, it is probably best to wait until you arrive in the States or Europe and have the raft re-certified by the manufacturer. If the re-certification date is long overdue, have it re-certified in the Caribbean, but only by someone certified to check and repack your type of raft.

Inflate all of your life jackets, leave them inflated for 24 hours, deflate, take out the CO2 cylinder and replace it. This operation may be a shocker: life jackets might not stay inflated or the cylinder might be rusted in place. Take any life jackets with problems to the life raft repacking facility and have them repaired or replaced. If you have automatically inflating life jackets, make sure the cylinders can easily be replaced, and purchase a good supply of spare cylinders. This is necessary, as sometimes in heavy weather on deck crew will suddenly discover their life jacket inflating by accident.

Make sure that your EPIRB information is correctly entered so if you activate the unit, the correct information will show up and a search can be started immediately. When *Rambler* lost her keel and capsized in the Fastnet race, she turned turtle so fast that her EPIRBs were underwater and unreachable. One personal EPIRB was activated, but because it was not properly registered it was almost two hours before a search could begin.

Are Your Sails Ready?

Your chance of getting to the States or Europe without running into a spell of heavy weather, say 25 to 30 knots, is minimal. If you are unlucky you may be hit by a full gale of 50 knots. Be prepared!

Check your sails carefully and, if not quite new, take them to the sailmaker and have him or her stitch a line up the leach and three feet in on each seam. Then if a seam opens up, the sail will only split to the re-stitched portion. The sail can then be dropped and re-sewn underway. (If this precaution is not taken, if a seam opens up the sail usually splits luff to leach. By the time the sail is taken down, it is a repair for the sail loft.)

Go out in ten to 12 knots of wind and check your reefing procedures; pull up from *Compass* my article on reefing from the December 2014 issue (www.caribbeancompass.com/online/december14compass_online.pdf, page 28).

If you have a storm trysail, you may need it, so pull it out, hoist it and check the gear and leads. If you have a single-headsail boat with a removable staysail stay and a heavy-weather staysail, set this up and hoist the staysail. Make sure the hanks and snap shackles are well oiled and work freely.

Be Ready to Bleed!

If you have been sailing the Caribbean all winter and the engine has not been used much, check your fuel filters and buy a dozen spares. This sounds excessive, but space does not permit me to tell the stories of boats that have left the Caribbean, run into heavy weather, had all the sludge in the bottom of the fuel tank stirred up, and run out of fuel filters. Voila — no engine.

If your engine is self-bleeding, fine. If not, get out the engine manual, photocopy the instructions on how to bleed the engine, blow up the print so it can be read in poor light without reading glasses, and have it laminated. Then bleed the engine, marking every nut, bolt and connector that must be opened and closed with red nail polish. Then bleed the engine again to make sure you understand the procedure. Then take the wrenches you used and the laminated directions, put them in a plastic bag and hope you never have to open it!

For more tips on passages out of the Caribbean, see "Leaving the Caribbean: The Basics" at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/april09compass_online.pdf, page 26; and "Leaving the Eastern Caribbean for Europe" at www.caribbeancompass.com/online/april14compass_online.pdf, page 27.

Visit Don Street's website at www.street-iolaire.com

A Weighty Wooing — The Humpback Facts of Life

by Nathalie Ward

Have you seen a baby whale? Humpback whale calves might be spotted in various locations in the Lesser Antilles, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic from January to May.

Courtship and Mating

The love life of humpback whales is an unlikely combination of disproportionate size and consummate poise. Their weighty wooing sends up clouds of spray. Courtship is a playful, boisterous activity punctuated by thrashing about, breaching, lobtailing, smacking of flukes against the water, and gentle love taps with both flippers.

Most baleen whales, like the humpback whale, mate in the dead of winter or in early spring, when they are in tropical waters such as the Caribbean. During the breeding period, the females tend to be widely distributed and males must usually compete for single females rather than attract females in groups.

The reproductive cycle of humpback whales is divided into two phases: a resting phase, during which reproductive activity ceases, and a much shorter phase of sexual activity, which includes courtship and mating followed by gestation (pregnancy), birth, and lactation (production of milk). When the calf is weaned and lactation ceases, the animal returns to its resting stage (except in those individuals that become pregnant while lactating). Female humpbacks invest more heavily in parenting; in effect, male parental care is not required for the successful rearing of offspring.

Humpback whales are *polygynous* — the most common mating system among cetaceans — in which successful males mate with more than one female. True monogamy is virtually unknown in cetaceans. In other animals, such as birds, monogamy tends to occur in cases when partner bonding and parental care by both parents greatly improve the chance of offspring survival.

Male-mating strategies include visual and acoustic displays to attract the female; the best-known example of this is probably the complex song sung by the male humpback whale. Some scientists speculate, however, that the songs are probably not attracting females but may function as a way for males to assert their "fitness" without fighting.

Just because a female has been chosen by a male it does not necessarily mean she is receptive. When she is not in the mood, she rolls over onto her back, thereby exposing her belly at the surface and making it impossible for males to get into the proper position for mating. But aroused males are not easily deterred. They patiently wait for the female to roll back onto her belly to breathe and immediately press their advantage. But females have been known to outwit males frequently. Mating occurs belly to belly and takes place on the move. Intromission may last from seconds to minutes.

Pregnancy

Like other large animals, humpback whales generally produce single offspring and invest heavily in each one. They are *uniparous*, in other words they give birth to just one baby at a time — twins are very rare, less than one percent of births.

Relative to their size, the gestation period of humpback whales is surprisingly short. As a rule, the bigger the mammal, the longer the term of pregnancy: nine months for humans, 11 for horses, 18 for rhinoceroses, and 22 for elephants. Due to their size then, one would expect the great whales to have a gestation period of 30 or more months; in fact, for baleen whales (i.e. humpbacks) it only takes about a year from conception to birth. Breeding is a slow and energetically expensive process as a female can only produce a calf every two or three years.

Birth

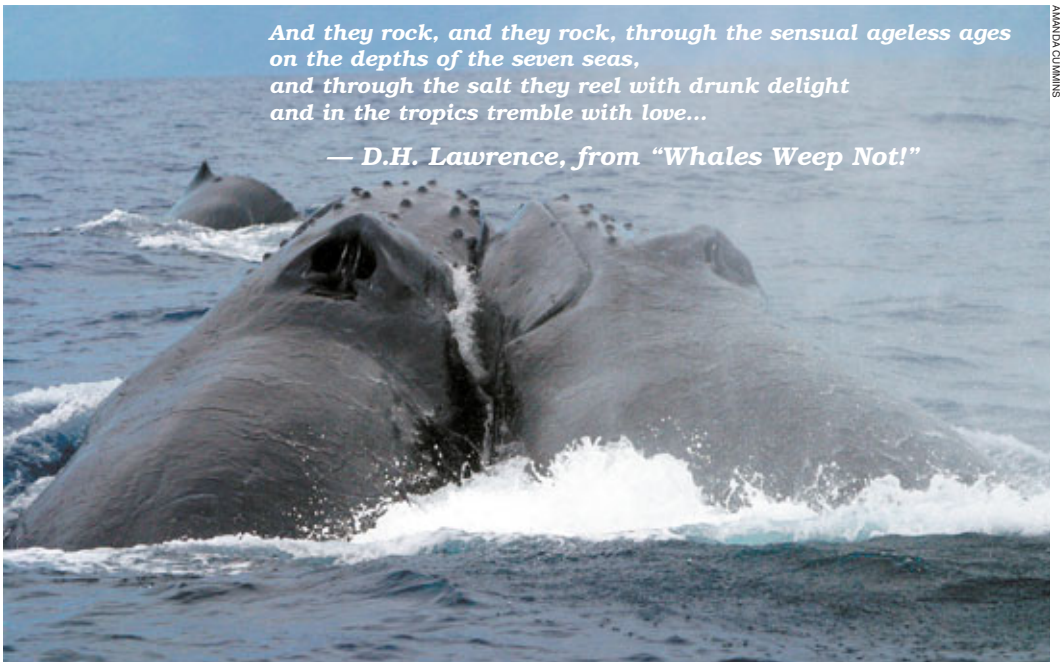
Like all cetaceans, humpbacks invariably give birth tail first — a reversal of what is considered "normal" procedure for mammals but a crucial advantage for a newborn suddenly thrust into an airless environment. A mother whale's rearing chores begin immediately upon birth. Because the infant's lungs are not inflated, the newborn will tend to sink until its mother nudges it up to the surface for its first gasp of air. The baby takes its first breath less than ten seconds after it has emerged from the womb, and within a half-hour it is capable of swimming and shallow diving.

Do whales have belly buttons? Indeed they do! The umbilical cord, which measures approximately 45 percent of the baby's total length, detaches by rupturing at the umbilicus (belly button). The dorsal fin and flukes are immediately pumped up by blood pressure, for when the umbilical cord breaks, the calf no longer has a supply of oxygen and must use its fins and flippers to reach the surface to fill its lungs with air.

At birth, humpback calves are around 30 percent of their mother's length, if just a fraction of their weight. Newborn calves seen in the Grenadines are a very pale, soft gray in color, darkening up within days as the melanin develops in their skin. Calves of all cetacean species are born with a series of light vertical bands called foetal folds that run up and down either flank. Thought to be from the skin creases that occur in the mother's womb, they clearly distinguish a calf from juveniles and remain for the first three months after birth.

A Mother's Milk: Nursing

Humpback calves are suckled from a pair of teats concealed in skin folds on either side of the genital slit of the female. Suckling takes place while the female is either stationary or on the move, in bouts that only takes a few seconds. Milk is squirted directly into the calf's mouth; the tongue has a frilled margin that helps make a watertight seal. Calves do not "latch on" and suckle in the human sense but some do show wear in the rostrum (nose) areas from positioning on their mother where milk is squirted in by compressor muscles in the mammary glands.



AMANDA CUMMINS

Head to head — two male humpbacks compete for female attention by thrashing their tails, blowing bubbles and engaging in other posturing displays. They sometimes even clash physically

With 40-percent fat content, a whale's yogurt-like milk is incredibly calorie rich, five times more than human breast milk. It has up to ten times the proteins of the milk of land mammals. This super-rich milk allows calves to grow at phenomenal rates.

The growth of a humpback whale calf is impressive. Newborns are about five metres (16.5 feet) long; when weaned at ten months, they average ten metres (33 feet). During the ten months that the humpback whale suckles her young, the calf consumes nearly 50 gallons of milk a day! It will have ingested up to nine tonnes of milk before it is weaned. Daily it grows almost three centimetres (one inch) and gains on average nearly 40 kilograms (90 pounds). That comes to more than 1.4 kilograms (three pounds) an hour!

Weaning and Infancy: Bringing Up Baby

The basic unit of humpback society is the bond between the mother and calf — or matrilineal group — rather than the bond between a mated female and male.

At about four or five months of age, the calf makes its first migration with its mother from our warmer climes to one of five feeding grounds in the North Atlantic Ocean. Weaning is a ten-month process, wherein a calf's diet of mother's milk is gradually replaced with a solid diet of fish and krill.

As temperatures get colder up north, the calf travels with its mother some 1,500 miles back to the Caribbean.

Despite the close ties between mother and calf, a time comes when the calf must go its own way. For the now-independent juvenile, growing up must happen as fast as possible to avoid predation and starvation. For the mother, separation may be necessary because she has a new calf on the way.

Dr. Nathalie Ward is a marine biologist, conservation educator and marine mammal policy consultant. She is the Founder and former Director of the Eastern Caribbean Cetacean Network (ECCN) and has conducted research on humpback whales in the Caribbean since 1978. She is the Sister Sanctuary Program Director for the United States' Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Program and the marine policy consultant for United Nations Caribbean Environment Programme. Dr. Ward has developed marine protected areas educational materials and programs in the Eastern Caribbean since 1984. She has authored numerous scientific publications and marine mammal field guides as well as children's books on whales, dolphins, sharks and coral reefs. She resides in Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

COMPASS COMICS



"We shouldn't have left our boat out in this hot temperature. It melted."



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CONSERVATION: SALTY'S BEAT BY NATHALIE WARD

Why Are There 'Slicks' on the Sea?



Salty is a humpback whale who loves to sing. Every winter he swims throughout the Caribbean Sea. He doesn't need a passport because he's an international citizen! This month, he asks us a question:

You might see something like the photo at right on the sea while you're sailing. What is the slick circular patch of water made from?

Answer

This circular patch of water — known as a whale's "footprint" — is the result of the movement of the whale's tail fluke under the surface of the water.

The slick water of the footprint was once thought to have been created by a whale's oil seeping out of its body and floating on the surface. Scientists have since discovered that a whale's footprint is merely a consequence of the whale's forward motion propelled by its tail flukes.



How does it work?

When a whale dives, it makes mighty up and down thrusts with its tail flukes. This motion causes the water pushed by the tail to well up to the surface forming slick spots or "footprints".

Do it!

You can do this yourself in the water with your feet, but your footprints will not last as long as those made by a whale. Try it with fins — it works even better!

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Your contributions of tail fluke photographs of humpback whales from the Caribbean region are critical for conservation efforts.

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LOOK OUT FOR...

Brilliant Bougainvillea!

by Lynn Kaak

As you travel through the Caribbean, every month there's something special to look out for.

As you walk or drive Caribbean roads and spot some brightly coloured shrubs, chances are it's bougainvillea. This native of South America has flourished in the tropics and sub-tropics wherever it's planted. It shows a burst of vibrant colour ranging from white through various shades of pink and purple, or startling red, with seemingly infinite tints and variations.

By itself, the plant's flower seems quite unremarkable — a small yellowish flower that doesn't really stand out. However, these tiny flowers are surrounded by exuberantly coloured, paper-like "bracts". These are really just specialized leaves, and in the case of bougainvillea, they complement the flower. This plant is a climbing vine, with prickles or spines to help them cling, but can be "worked" to appear more like a shrub. They are very popular for use as a covering for fences, for when they grow in density, privacy is assured. In some areas, they may also provide borders for fields.

There are about 300 varieties of bougainvillea to be found, and they crossbreed quite readily, allowing for a great profusion of colour possibilities. The three major ornamental species are *Bougainvillea glabra* and *B. spectabilis*, both natives of Brazil, and *B. peruviana*, native of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia.



The vines and shrubs of bougainvillea love sunlight, and flourish as long as they are afforded at least a semi-shady spot with good access to light. They like water, but don't like having their feet wet, so while rainfall is beneficial, you won't find them growing in swampy areas that don't have adequate drainage. They are tolerant of salt, making them perfect for coastal gardens. Flourishing particularly well in the drier seasons, their ability to survive with very little water once well established makes them the almost perfect ornamental plant for much of the Caribbean. One just has to be a little careful of the thorns and the sap, which can cause quite serious skin rashes.

The bougainvillea, which is the national flower of Grenada, was named for the French Admiral Louis Antoine de Bougainville. However it was officially discovered by the botanist Philibert Commerson, who was travelling with de Bougainville on his world circumnavigation. It wasn't just the explorers who circumnavigated the globe: the vibrant bougainvillea has achieved this as well.

Island Poets

THE VISITORS

Martinique astern,
St. Lucia off the bow,
Both shadows on the horizon.
A close reach into eighteen knots
With an eight-foot chop
Quartered off the port bow,
The corkscrew motion relentless.
Hardly the forecast weather…

The first surfaced to the starboard side.
An arching jump to announce his presence.
The rest arrived in twos and threes,
Numbering more than twenty in all,
Eager to showcase their skills.
In the eye-level waves quartering to port
Sleek grey shapes appeared then dove
Then reappeared on the starboard side.
There were somersaults and back flips,
Tail walks and grand arching jumps,
Swimming upside down with
Bellies rubbing the bow,
And all the while a silly grin.
For half an hour, to our delight,
Our fellow mariners entertained.

Abruptly, by some unseen signal,
They gathered at the stern
And vanished into the depths.

We were alone again on the open sea,
Grinning like our visitors.

— by John Rowland

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The Sky from Mid-April to Mid-May

by Jim Ulik

"You get to say the world is flat because we live in a country that guarantees free speech, but it's not a country that guarantees that anything you say is correct," says astrophysicist Neil Degrasse Tyson. He adds, "Once science has been established, once a scientific truth emerges from a consensus of experiments and observations, it is the way of the world. What I'm saying is, when different experiments give you the same result, it is no longer subject to your opinion. That's the good thing about science: It's true whether or not you believe in it. That's why it works."

The *Game of Thrones* author, George R.R. Martin, is quoted as saying, "When I was 12 or 13, I had teachers take away science fiction books by [Robert A.] Heinlein and [Isaac] Asimov and say: 'You're a smart kid, you get good grades. Why are you reading this trash? They rot your mind. You should be reading *Silas Marner*.'"

These quotes were made by two very successful individuals. The first quote referred in part to climate change. Obviously it is about acquiring knowledge. The second relates to inspiration and following a passion. Science and science fiction do play a large role in inspiring young people to help shape the future. There is a need for more exposure to science and space to inspire children's curiosity. That sets the stage for individuals to generate new ideas or advanced technologies. The Apollo 11 mission in 1969 captivated and inspired a majority of the people on Earth. What will be the next mission to do so? It could be the manned mission to Mars. Or will it be the mission to send a submarine to Saturn's moon Titan?

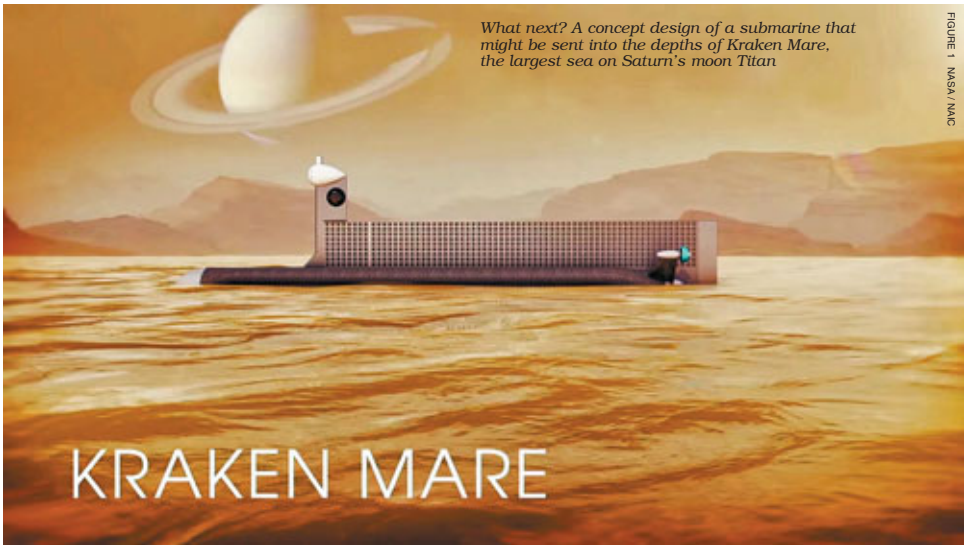
Thursday, April 16th

On its progression north, the Sun will be positioned over 10 degrees north latitude, gradually advancing to 19 degrees north by May 15th.

The Moon will rise at 0400 hours and set at 1625. It will reach perigee (the closest point to Earth) at 2353. At that moment the Moon will be over the South Pacific.

Saturday, April 18th

Look for Venus in the west after sunset. Venus will be at its closest point to the Sun today. Check its location on Figure 2. It will be very bright and 72 percent illuminated.



What next? A concept design of a submarine that might be sent into the depths of Kraken Mare, the largest sea on Saturn's moon Titan

FIGURE 1 NASA / NAIC

The Moon will be directly between the Earth and the Sun and will not be visible. The New Moon moment occurs at 1457 this afternoon. The new moon period is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

Sunday, April 19th

Venus is now positioned seven degrees north of Aldebaran, the eye of Taurus the bull. Mercury has reached its closest orbital point to the Sun.

Tuesday, April 21st

Aldebaran can be found less than one degree south of the sliver Moon at 1235. By the time you see them setting in the west, the separation will have increased to two degrees, with Venus remaining nearby. Aldebaran sets at 2100 and the Moon sets at 2120.

Wednesday, April 22nd

At dusk in the west you will begin to see a bright Mars. As it becomes darker look slightly towards the north and you might see Mercury. You will have a half hour to find it before both planets set for the night.

Thursday, April 23rd

The meteor showers are beginning to return. The Lyrid meteor shower can be visible from April 16th through 25th. However the shower will reach its maximum rate of activity tonight. Wait until the Moon sets at 2306 and look for the meteors to appear from the northeast in the constellation Hercules. Watch carefully, these meteors are traveling about 108,000 mph (172,500 km/h).

Sunday, April 26th

Jupiter will be just over five degrees north of the Moon around 1900. It is an early prediction, but the International Space Station might pass from the north-northwest to the east-northeast around this time.

—Continued on next page

Street's Caribbean Cruising Guides



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—Continued from previous page

Monday, April 27th

Regulus, the heart of Leo the lion, will be four degrees north of the Moon.

Tuesday, April 28th

The Moon reaches its furthest orbital point today. It will reach that point at 2355 when it is over the South Pacific.

The alpha–Scorpiid meteor shower will reach its maximum rate of activity. Unfortunately you will have to wait until after the Moon sets at 0203. An occasional meteor may be seen between April 20th and May 19th originating from the constellation Scorpius near the star Antares.

Thursday, April 30th

Mercury is speeding through space at 107,700 mph (173,326 km/h). Look low in the west for Mercury around 1900. It will be just over one degree south of the Seven Sisters (Pleiades). Mars will be on the horizon and Venus will be 21 degrees above Pleiades.

Saturday, May 2nd

Spica is the brightest star in Virgo and marks the "Ear of Wheat" in the Virgin's left hand. The Moon will be in the Constellation Virgo three and one half degrees away from Spica.

Sunday, May 3rd

Tonight the Full Moon occurs at 2342. The Moon will be right between the constellations Virgo and Libra. The Moon will rise at 1808 and set tomorrow at 0607. The Moon is about as reflective as tire-rubber but still very bright in the night sky.

Tuesday, May 5th

Tonight is the peak Eta-Aquarid Meteor Shower radiating from the direction of Aquarius. The maximum rate of meteors expected to be visible from a dark location is around 40 per hour. The velocity of these meteors is an amazing 149,487 mph (240,480 km/h).

Sunday, May 10th through Saturday, May 16th

The Third Caribbean Symposium on Cosmology, Gravitation, Nuclear and Astroparticle Physics (STARS2015) is taking place in Havana, Cuba. This is worth a mention because it is happening right in our "backyard". Science at work.

Wednesday, May 13th

The alpha–Scorpiid meteor shower will reach a second peak tonight. The viewing of any meteors will be best before midnight because the Moon will not rise until 0242 tomorrow.

In the News

The first of The Planetary Society's two LightSail spacecraft will ride to space aboard an Atlas V rocket this May. Two small spacecraft are to be launched into Earth orbit carrying large, reflective sails measuring 32 square metres (344 square feet). Solar sails use the Sun's energy as a method of propulsion. Light is made of packets of energy called photons. While photons have no mass, a photon traveling as a packet of light has energy and momentum. As light reflects off a sail, most of its momentum is transferred, pushing on the sail. The advantage of solar sails is that the spacecraft will be propellant-free.

**All times are given as Atlantic Standard Time (AST) unless otherwise noted. The times are based on the viewing position in Grenada and may vary by only a few minutes in different Caribbean locations.*

Jim Ulik is a photographer and cruiser currently based in Grenada.



FIGURE 2

Top right: The positions of the New Moon and planets at 1817 hours on April 18th

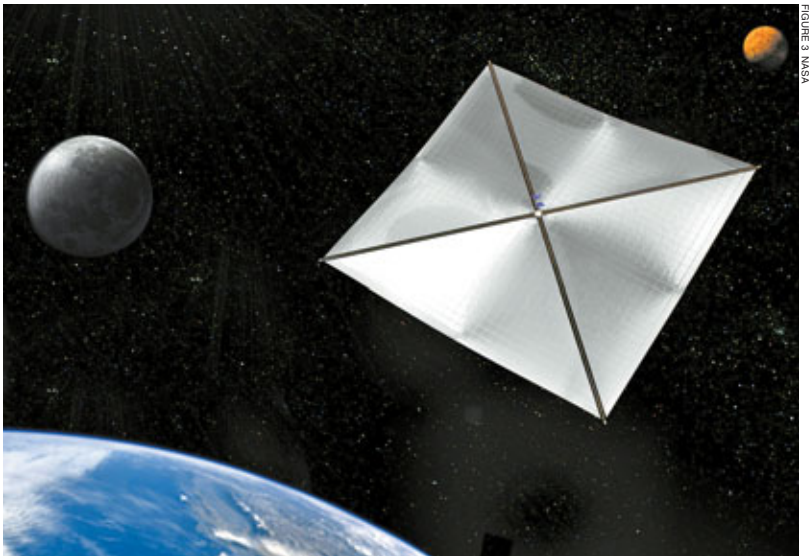
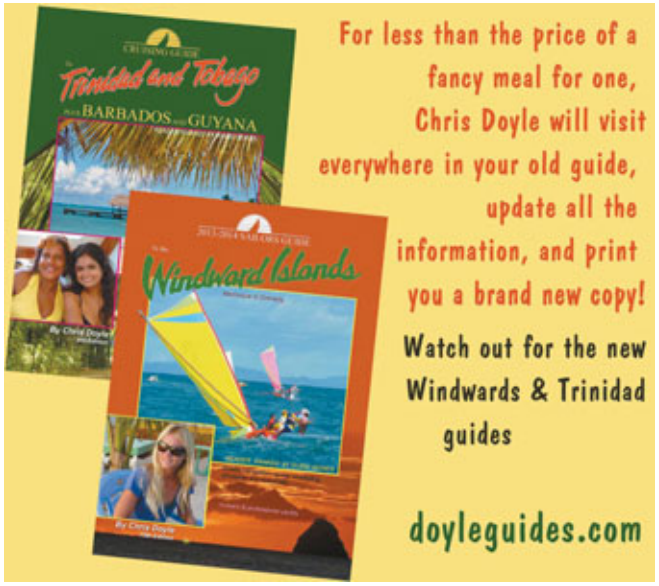


FIGURE 3: NASA

Bottom right: Sailing through space...





Pearls Were the Signature of This Captain's Kit

by Elaine Lembo

Captain Virginia A. Wagner spent much of her 28-year career in command of traditional sailing vessels, and also captained private and charter yachts, often in the Caribbean. Holding both a 3,000-ton USCG license and an MCA Ocean Master license, Virginia logged over 400,000 nautical miles. She passed away on January 30th.


ELAINE LEMBO

Though I met Virginia Wagner at sea, it was on land that this accomplished captain cast a pivotal influence on my life.

Over the years, Virginia and her gentle, talented and charming partner, Jamie Stark, hosted myself and other *Cruising World* magazine staff aboard the various luxury charter sailboats they ran during the annual US Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland.

These boats, whether monohull or multihull, were top-of-the-line beasts built to pamper big-paying charter guests. Virginia and Jamie, and usually two or three or more extra crew, were the crack team employed to keep them running seamlessly and flawlessly while delivering smooth sailing and sumptuous meals on trips mainly in the Caribbean and the Med. The Annapolis pit stop was a way to raise the profile of these boats; their owners and charter vacation brokers eager to attract potential clients saw potential booty in the boat show foot traffic.

For its part, *Cruising World* saw value in having such a high-profile platform to entertain clients and its readership, and chartered whatever boat broker Ann Wallis White could find, which usually meant Virginia and Jamie would be our crew.

They knew the drill, they loved being a part of the show, and they convinced their owners that there was value in making the appearance. Instead of spending their days sailing and anchoring while catering to one group of clients, the boat show gig meant Virginia and Jamie spent their time herding the crowds of admirers who wanted to climb aboard and get a peek, while ensuring that the magazine staff could conduct its business of hosting breakfast, lunch and dinner meetings.

The part of this arrangement that I enjoyed was that I got to sleep aboard the boat and always had a beautiful cabin all to myself. Because I'd worked as charter crew in the Caribbean for years before joining the *CW* staff, and my partner, Captain Rick Martell, already knew Virginia from her days aboard salty schooners like the 158-foot *Galaxy*, I was trusted to keep the cabin neat as a pin.

It also meant I got to hang out with Virginia and Jamie, which was always fun. We saw a few midnights together, nursing nightcaps in spacious cockpits while chattering away about the charter business and Caribbean high jinks. When one client dinner that I wasn't a part of ran late one night, Jamie got me into my cabin by locking my arms into his and lowering me through a deck hatch.

Eventually, I sailed with them aboard one of the luxurious beasts, *Matau*, a 75-foot Privilege cat, during a charter in the Grenadines arranged by Ann and Nicholson Yachts Worldwide owner Karen Kelly. That's when I really came to appreciate the breadth of Virginia's skills and got to know her even more. As the days ticked by, I marveled over her freshly pressed white blouses and pearl necklaces and earrings as much as I was humbled by her tutorials on the heavenly bodies (Virginia was renowned for her celestial navigation skills). She was a no-nonsense chick and her demeanor of quiet authority cast a dignified, comfortable air of onboard safety and decorum all around.

Yet her professional manner didn't mean fun and creativity were excluded. When Virginia pulled out her guest books and scrapbooks, she was in her glory. She loved creative projects, a good party, and great surprises. When I disembarked *Matau* after an incredible week of island hopping and delivering books to school children in the Windward Islands, Virginia presented me with a personal scrap book of our trip, complete with photos she'd taken of me at various highpoints of the charter, signed by the crew. I have it by my side as I write this.

Ironically, what further cemented our friendship was Virginia's decision that it was time to get off boats. She e-mailed this announcement in mid-summer of 2012 from her and Jamie's property in Boothbay, Maine. It just so happened Rick and I were cruising aboard our ketch, *Land's End*, and about to make landfall there. We got in touch with them and threw a memorable reunion bash on their land, boiling lobsters over an open fire and gobbling up Virginia's delectable homemade ice cream. It was one of the most amazing evenings of an extended summer cruise before heading back home to Newport, Rhode Island, by Labor Day that year.

The next thing I knew, Virginia and Jamie were in Newport. Virginia had accepted a job as a charter consultant with Nicholson Yachts Worldwide and so was back in action in the charter yacht industry, this time from a completely different angle. Karen loved having her around and they plotted and schemed incessantly over ways to make the business grow. Jamie for his part found work at a marina and continued his passion of building guitars. Again, Rick and I hung out with them often — not often enough, in retrospect.

What I will always value about Virginia was her bold self-esteem and her inherent captain's understanding of when it was time to take a course of action, to reef, so to speak, before it was too late. It was a life lesson she so very clearly understood and shared with me on many occasions.

In other words, it was a sentient intelligence that led her to put one profession aside when she knew it was high time to embark on another, the instinctive understanding of when to close one door so that another can open.

Not everyone possesses that innate sense of the approach of life's crossroads. It was among Virginia's many gifts, and she preached it constantly and abided by it daily. When it came time for me to embark on a new career that would in return grant a better life for Rick and me, it was Virginia who stood firm in her admonishment to go for it. And when I e-mailed the news that I'd made the big change, it was Virginia who e-mailed me right back, from her deathbed, with her robust congratulations.

Every minute of every day, when I think of *Land's End* and of my life partner, Rick, and the bright future that lies ahead of us, I think of Virginia and count my lucky stars that I was privileged to know her.

Elaine Lembo is the seminar manager for IBEX, the International Boatbuilders' Exhibition and Conference. She is also a Cruising World *editor at large and writes a column about bareboat and crewed chartering. Reach her at elainemlembo@gmail.com.*

A Legacy of Fair Results



Margaret and Al Rapier. Al was the founder of the CSA Rating Rule

On February 3rd 2015, Alfred Cyril Rapier, aged 85, passed away peacefully, quietly slipping his mooring lines and sailing single-handed to the big regatta in the sky. Al is survived by his daughter Natalie, stepsons Nigel and Jan, stepdaughter Joanna, and son-in-law Ashley.

Al, as he was widely known, was the founder and architect of what is known today as the Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) Rating Rule. Back in the mid- to late-1960s, when Al first developed an indigenous handicap rule for the Caribbean, it was known as the West Indies Yachting Association Rule. The name went through several changes over the years.

Al was born on October 12th 1929 in Grenada and grew up on the Hampstead Estate on the southeast coast of the island. But it was his love of the sea that drove his passion for sailing. He started sailing at age ten, and two years later built his first sailing dinghy, starting to develop his understanding of the science of sailing, which would lay the foundation for the development, ultimately, of the CSA Rating Rule.

In the early 1950s he moved to England to study Civil Engineering at the University of London. After graduating, his first job in 1958 was in the oil industry in Venezuela. In 1960 he moved to Trinidad as a field engineer working on the construction of the "upside-down" Trinidad Hilton Hotel.

He joined Texaco (Trinidad) in 1963 where he worked his way up to become Head of the Engineering Department, handling all major projects throughout the Eastern Caribbean, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. Finally, on the closure of Texaco in Trinidad in 1985, he was transferred to Texaco Eastern Caribbean in Barbados until his retirement in 1990.

He married Margaret Rose Attale in 1973, and in January 1978 their daughter Natalie was born. Margaret was an outstanding cook, and visiting measurers have many happy memories of amazing hospitality in the Rapier household. Margaret Rapier died in August 2013.

Al's love of sailing was the cornerstone of his life. In the early 1970s he was one of the founding members of the Trinidad Yachting Association (TYA), which later became Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Association, as it is known today.

In the early 1960s, Al, Sidney Knox, and Rawle Barrow from Trinidad, and others from Grenada and Barbados, were instrumental in the initial establishment of the West Indies Yachting Association (WIYA), which evolved into the Caribbean Yachting Association (CYA) now known as the Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA), based in Antigua.

The West Indies Rule was conceived by Al for the WIYA, to provide a handicapping system applicable to everything from serious racing yachts including state-of-the-art, high-tech racing machines, to both performance and live-aboard cruising boats, in all shapes and sizes, built to all sorts of rating rules. The objective of the Rule was to make it possible for yachts to come to the Caribbean and race together under a simple common handicap system, at events like Antigua Week.

Al was a brilliant mathematician, engineer and yacht designer, and combined these skills with a focused determination that got things done. Working from first principles, he methodically conceived and developed the sailing handicap system based on a number of simple measurements of the hull and sail plan, that could be completed in a couple of hours.

During his travels through the islands he was able to cultivate support and train measurers to ensure that all territories that were interested in the Rule could benefit.

The original WIYA Rule worked well with the heavier-displacement boats prevalent at that time it was conceived. However, in the 1980s, yacht design underwent some radical changes, with the introduction of light-displacement designs like the J/24 and the Beneteau "Firsts", capable of achieving planing speeds when sailing off the wind, and raising some controversy at events where they were competing with more traditional designs.

Al rose to this challenge, and pulled together a small team of measurers who spent many weekends closeted away, working successfully to develop his original simple algebraic formula to encompass a wider range of boats from lightweight skimmers to heavy maxi-racers.

There could not be a more fitting tribute to Al than knowing that his legacy will continue to provide racing sailors of all ages, all nationalities, sailing in all manner of boats, handicap results that are both fair and consistent. He was very committed to have a rule refined enough in order to have fair and competitive racing between the various new and aged boats, and to have skippers' abilities tested and not the boat.

Al was also a very talented yacht designer with a clear idea of what made a yacht perform, as exemplified by his old boat *Maxixe*, a simple hard-chine plywood 26-footer that he designed and built in the 1960s and which continued to perform competitively in races in Trinidad for at least 30 years. More recently he designed a larger successor, the 41-foot *Tierce*, on similar lines to *Maxixe*, although to date, a boat has not yet been built to this design.

Al's reputation and standing as the founder of the CSA rule did not necessarily prepare you to meet him in person. He was tall and slim, with a sharp wit and the most intense gaze that he would fix upon you from behind the thickest pair of spectacle lenses. It was like being under the scrutiny of a microscope. He could converse on virtually any topic but ultimately it would always come back to boats and handicaps.

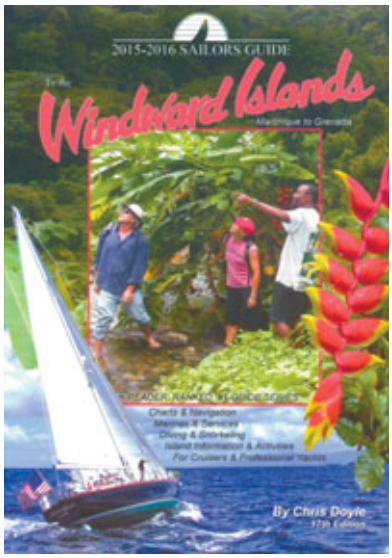
He applied himself to the Caribbean Rating Rule from the 1960s to the 1990s and had a major influence on the Caribbean yachting community, which owes him a tremendous debt for selflessly developing what was to become the basis for almost all regional keelboat racing.

Al Rapier was recognized with the Caribbean Sailing Association's highest award, Honorary Lifetime Membership, in 2002.

These notes have been prepared by a small group of measurers who worked with Al over the years.

New Books: Guides and Gurus

The Caribbean sailor is blessed to have had a number of excellent authors focus their attention on this



region. Awareness of cruising here began with Frederick "Fritz" Fenger, who wrote about a 1911 cruise aboard the 17-foot sailing canoe *Yakaboo* in *Alone in the Caribbean*, and was greatly heightened by Carleton Mitchell, who sailed up the Lesser Antilles in the 46-foot ketch *Finisterre* and wrote a chronicle of his trip, *Islands to Windward,* in 1947. Sailors have always shared their stories.

But some authors, such as Steve Pavlidis, Nancy and Tom Zydler, Les Weatheritt, Eric Bauhaus, Nigel Calder, Jerome Noel, Jerrems Hart & William Stone, and the legendary Don Street — who wrote the first "Caribbean cruising guide" as we know the genre today — have gone further than recounting a Caribbean cruise and sought to write informative books containing sailing directions, information about regulations, shoreside tips and much more for the benefit of those following in their wakes.

Two writers who are currently actively cruising with the purpose of collecting information to share are Chris Doyle aboard the Trinidad-built cat *Ti Kanot* and Frank Virgintino aboard the 65-foot ketch *Raffles Light* — and their most recent publications are epitomes of their work.

Doyle's latest edition of his iconic *Sailor's Guide to the Windward Islands* — the 17th since 1980, with 432 pages in full color — is everything you've come to expect, and more. After more than three decades in print, this remains the best-selling guide to the Windwards, and for good reason. Doyle's got this, his original guide, down to a fine art, but sparkling new photos (his own, not stock) and up-to-date, personally researched info keep it fresh. The spiral-bound six-by-nine-inch format is handy and the rugged covers will stand cockpit abuse. At US$33.95 (about EC$90), the cost of a decent island restaurant meal for two, you'll have a wealth of excellent information in your salty hands.

Sailor's Guide to the Windward Islands is available at retail outlets and from www.cruisingguides.com.

Meanwhile, one of the newer guide writers, Frank Virgintino, has been busy compiling an anthology of his work, entitled *The Spirit of Caribbean Cruising: Thoughts and Reflections*. Virgintino, the author of Free Cruising Guides, has respectfully dedicated this book to the work that Donald Street has done to encourage cruising tourism in the Caribbean. *The Spirit of Caribbean Cruising* is a rich compilation of articles that includes plenty of solid cruising directions (detailing both routing and destinations) for the entire Caribbean Sea, but also expands into tips on practical matters such as having boat work done, and ventures beyond into thought-provoking ruminations on Caribbean culture, crime prevention, "time of your life" management and the very cruising lifestyle itself.

In the introduction, Virgintino sums up how he means this book to be of assistance to his fellow Caribbean cruisers:



It is my hope that in some small way, the articles contained in this anthology will be of some help to you to give you some insight into facets of cruising that I have had experience with. By no means are these articles intended to be the only understanding of the subjects that are covered. Because your own cruising experiences will become the focal point of your own cruising compendium, I would suggest that you read the articles that are of interest to you and take the insights offered so as to create a ladder for you to climb up on to get a better view of our chosen avocation. After you have attained that view, then dismiss what I have said and replace it with a more relevant and more valid view: your own!

The Spirit of Caribbean Cruising is available at your favorite e-book store; the cost is US$3.99 at amazon.com



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY! THE MARCH ISSUE

Dear *Compass*,
Congratulations on your big anniversary — and for the great front page!
Lynn Fletcher
Grenada

Dear *Compass*,
Great "20th Birthday" edition — really good work. Congratulations! Loved the photos of Don Street and Chris Doyle (still drinking away…).
I miss Carriacou, especially when it's –20°C in Toronto.
John Lupien
Toronto, Canada

Dear Compass,
Wow! 20 years is a landmark! Congrats!
Jill Bobrow
Vermont, USA

Dear *Compass*,
Congratulations! Twenty years of *Compass*! Thank you for all the information, inspiration and opportunity to share with other Caribbean cruisers our stories and opinions! Great Anniversary issue!
Mira Nencheva
S/Y Fata Morgana

Dear *Compass*,
Wow… Congrats to all the Crew!
Twenty years is a long time. Here's to another 20 years of success.
John Emmanuel, Public Relations Manager
Saint Lucia Tourist Board

Dear *Compass*,
Happy Birthday! I hope you and your staff will be celebrating with a nip of Three Dagger (151 proof!). Hee, hee….
Lee Woods
Florida, USA

Dear *Compass*,
Thanks for including my piece. I lost more laundry today reading this GRAND issue! Nice job! Congratulations!
Tina Dreffin
St. Thomas, USVI

Dear *Compass*,
Congratulations on your 20th anniversary and thank you for the link to the March issue of *Caribbean Compass*. Reading it is a great way to stay in touch with what's going on "down there".
Wendy Beaupre
Tennessee, USA

Dear *Compass*,
You are just very slightly younger than the *Antigua Marine Guide*, which will be 21 this year when it comes out in November!
John Duffy
Antigua

Dear *Compass*,
Had a good hour or so enjoying the 20th edition of *Compass*. What changes in the presentation! All we can say is — well done. Quite an achievement, not only in keeping up with technology of modern production, but also for so long!
We'll be regular readers now, as and when we have good internet access.
Rosemarie and Alfred Alecio
S/Y Ironhorse

Hi *Compass*,
Congratulations from everyone at the Petite Calivigny Yacht Club! Twenty years of publishing a monthly magazine here in the Caribbean is truly an accomplishment to be very proud of. Here's wishing you another 20 great years!
Connie Martin
Grenada

Dear Tom and Sally,
Let me join the others who congratulate you on your 20 years service to the yachting world in the Caribbean with your *Compass* magazine.
I know you had to overcome serious challenges over the years, as among other things you faced increased postal charges and adapted to the internet opportunity. That this survival took place right here in Bequia is a tribute to your skill.
Compass has done a great job in revealing the battles with the increasing bureaucracy in the islands faced by yachtsman seeking a casual life on the sea as a respite from the tangles of the city. Certainly you have produced guidance, highlighting both deteriorating and improved standards of service in Immigration, Customs and security.
I note in your anniversary correspondence in the March issue, reference is made to the sad Jolly Joseph affair. [*Editor's note: A cruising couple from the US were charged with murder in the 1996 shooting death of a water taxi operator in Bequia. A judge directed the jury to return a verdict of "not guilty".*] Let me remind your readers that, as revealed in my autobiography, *Beyond the Islands*, Mrs. Fletcher had confessed to the Catholic priest that she had shot Jolly Joseph. I did not disclose this before the trial, even to the US media.
The success of *Compass* must surely have come from your wide experience sailing around the world. Remember, too, the long-lost days when you and other yacht folk doing their world cruises landed in Bequia to see Norma Peters at the Frangipani Yacht Services and collect their mail from all corners of the earth.
Best Wishes,
Sir James Mitchell
Former Prime Minister
of St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Bequia

VISITING THE FRIGATE BIRDS

Dear *Compass* Readers,
After reading the article about Barbuda in the November 2014 issue, I checked about using your dinghy or kayak to visit the frigate bird sanctuary on your own. It's definitely not allowed; a guide must accompany all visitors.
Chris Doyle
www.doyleguides.com

MORE ON MANGROVES

Dear *Compass*,
I think there may have been some confusion of species in your February story about mangroves. Fortunately, the three common ones each have their own little traits that can help tell them apart.
The red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) is probably the most often seen as it's mostly likely to be at the water's edge. That's the one with the strange and beautiful long prop roots.
Black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*) doesn't have prop roots. Instead it has pneumatophores, structures that stick up out of the mud all around the trees and that allow for air exchange. It's usually a bit inland from the red mangrove and a bit seaward of the white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*). White mangrove leaves are rounded at both ends and they have little bumps near the base of the leaves, called extra-floral nectaries. These glands excrete sugars that may recruit ants to protect the plants from insect predators. White mangroves don't usually have prop roots or pneumatophores.
There's also the buttonwood mangrove (*Conocarpus erectus*) that grows yet farther inland — so far inland that some people don't consider it to be a "true" mangrove. Its seeds are enclosed in little round bumpy capsules that don't look like most of today's buttons, but they do look like old ones — or maybe expensive nowadays ones.
Virginia Barlow, author
The Nature of the Islands

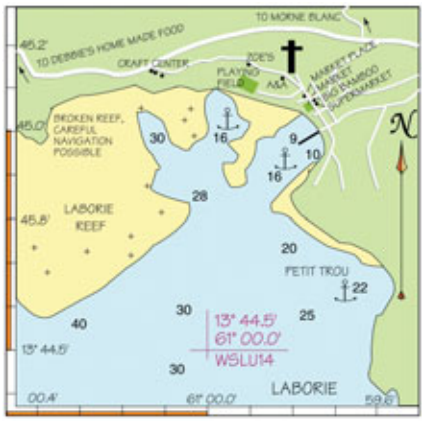
LABORIE GROUNDING

Dear *Compass*,
My condolences to Jeremy Hobday for the loss of *Tchin* [see Letter of the Month in the March issue]. The navigator today has a lot of tools to work with; unfortunately some are not as good as others. Jeremy is not the first and will probably not be the last to go aground on the center reef in Laborie, St. Lucia, which is missing from some charts. To make it worse, these charts drive you onto the reef by making the eastern reef way larger than it is.
The little charts that you buy to go with your GPS chart plotter work really well as long as you stick to the well-known and used harbors. But go anywhere away from these and they can be dreadfully misleading. I know: I have two separate chart readers on board.

—Continued on next page

—*Continued from previous page*

This year, while up in the Leewards I was approaching Ile Fourchue and had not yet seen the awash rock at the entrance. I glanced at both my chart plotters to locate it more precisely and to my amazement this rock, which has been there since time immemorial, was missing



Sketch chart of Laborie from Doyle's latest Windwards guide

from both! Luckily I took a quick glance at my own guide and I saw it at once. The advantage of having one of our cruising guides to the Windwards and Leewards is that it I have been there within the last couple of years. Working with charter companies I believe we have cut back on reef groundings significantly by giving clear and simple advice, and figuring out what people were doing when they had an accident.

A cruising guide is a lot cheaper than a boat. So I would say Jeremy's advice "go carefully and be sure to take a recently updated guide!" is excellent.

Chris Doyle
Ti Kanot
www.doyleguides.com

ANOTHER BLOG HEARD FROM

Hello friends at the *Caribbean Compass*,

As usual, it was a delight to read through your very excellent mag online. The *CC* covers so many aspects of the Caribbean experience. I was also thrilled to see the piece by Laura Albritton ("Blogging The Caribbean", in the March issue). As I read through it I was a bit shocked to see that our online blog was not mentioned. www.oceantrader.co is a Caribbean blog in every sense. It is an active online publication with a growing readership. We encourage everyone to explore the Caribbean through travel and cultural immersion. We do not advocate any excess with the exception of making good times, and good friends. Please let Ms. Albritton know about www.oceantrader.co. We are actually from the Caribbean, and live there as well. Cheers!

Al Harvey
OceanTrader.Co

CANOUAN COMMENTS

Dear *Compass*,

In 1985, *Iolaire* spent a night happily anchored in Canouan's South Glossy Bay. We had dinner ashore at the French restaurant, which finally seemed to be off the ground, having been operating in fits and starts since 1981. Rental cottages were under construction, a dredge was standing by and there were big piles of dredge pipes ashore. They were about to start dredging a basin for a marina, but when I visited again in 1991 I noted that nothing had happened.

In 2007, when the airport runway was extended and a large portion of the north side of Glossy Hill knocked down, I pointed out in a letter to the editor in *Compass* that if the rock were piled on the shoal on the north side of Nens Bay it would create a superb harbor 800 yards long, completely sheltered from the northwest ground swell. The suggestion was not taken up. A bareboat fleet tried to operate out of Charlestown Bay but was defeated by the swell.

In early February this year, en route to the anchorage on the windward side of Canouan aboard my friend Jeff Curtin's *Ariel*, we passed two breakwaters leading to an as yet undredged basin, presumably part of a stalled marina project. We continued on, threaded our way through the coral heads in and east of Riley Bay to the clear area to the north of Riley Bay where we anchored. We were "tide rode", as the water comes in over the top of the reef then exits through the south. There is a continual strong southerly current, leaving you beam to the wind and small chop. The solution for ketches and yawls is to leave the mizzen set; sloops should moor bow and stern.

Once secured, we explored the area north of Riley Bay in the RIB, using a sounding pole. We discovered that all the charts — including the Imray Iolaire charts B31 and B311, and the electronic charts derived from Imray iolaire charts (e.g. Navionics, Garmin, Jeppensen/C-Map and Map Media) — are wrong. This is because all charts of the formerly British islands the Lesser Antilles are based on British Admiralty surveys done between 1840 and 1870. Many areas have been resurveyed by the British Admiralty since 1980, but not the southeast and east coasts of Grenada, and not the Grenadines.

North of Riley Bay there are very few coral heads; the depth all the way to and into Careenage Bay is eight feet. The rock that is shown in Careenage Bay on the chart is not there. Here is a lagoon one mile long, perfectly sheltered, that we shared with just one other boat.

Don Street
Currently in Grenada

PRAISE FOR PAYS

Hi *Compass* Readers,

Just wanted to report to you a very positive experience we had a few weeks ago while in Portsmouth, Dominica.

In our many years of cruising the Lesser Antilles, we had never seen a boat drag through the anchorage… until a few weeks ago, when we were in Portsmouth, Dominica, on Day One we watched an unattended Amel ketch do so. A cruiser in a dinghy tried to rescue it, but he was soon aided by two of the PAYS (Portsmouth Association of Yacht Services) boat boys who jumped aboard and got the boat under control and secured, for an unknowing owner. On Day Two a smaller boat, also unattended, that was anchored with very little scope, dragged through the anchorage. Several cruisers fended off as best they could, until two more PAYS boat boys came to the rescue, jumped aboard and took control, securing the boat for another unknowing owner.

These rescue efforts in some countries would be considered as salvage activity, which would be quite costly to a boat owner, something like a third of the value of the vessel. But the PAYS boat boys simply do this, gratis, out of a sense of duty and respect.

Those of us from developed countries are accustomed to calling for public responders when we are in need, whether they be police or fire department or coast guard. In lesser-developed countries these assurances, which we sometimes take for granted, don't exist. PAYS takes care of us cruisers. We support them, whether through their Sunday barbecue or the locked charity box (CALLS for children's education) that some of the PAYS boat boys have on their boats. We hope that our fellow cruisers share the same appreciation.

Chick & Alexis Pyle
S/V Rigolé

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

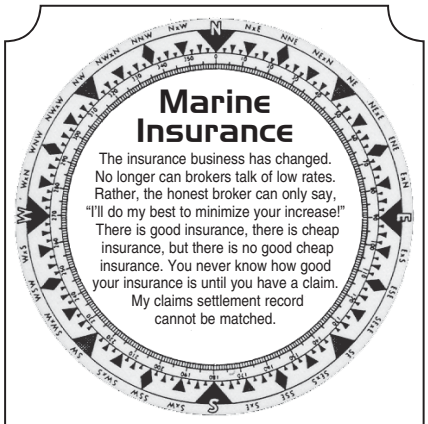
Dear* Compass *Readers,

We want to hear from YOU!

Be sure to include your name, boat name or shoreside address, and a way we can contact you (preferably by e-mail) if clarification is required.

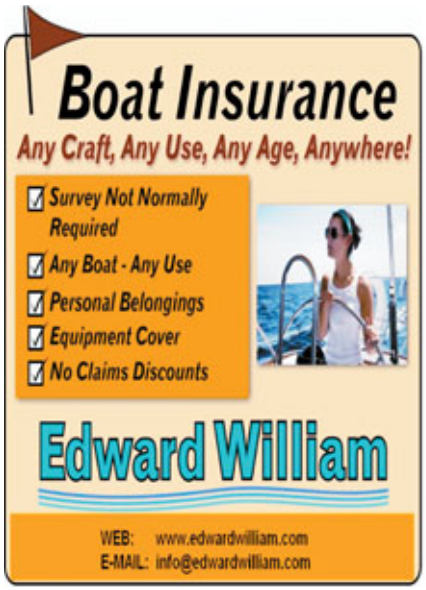
We do not publish individual consumer complaints or individual regatta results complaints. (Kudos are okay!) We do not publish anonymous letters; however, your name may be withheld from print at your request. Please keep letters shorter than 600 words. Letters may be edited for length, clarity and fair play.

Send your letters to sally@caribbeancompass.com.



I have been connected with the marine insurance business for 47 years. I have developed a rapport with brokers and underwriters at Lloyds and am able to introduce boat owners to specialist brokers in the Lloyds market.

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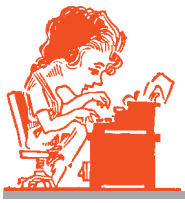
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Letter of the Month

17 YEARS OF *COMPASS* EXPERIENCES

Dear *Compass* Readers,

Upon retiring in 1998, my late wife Frankie and I "crossed the pond" to Trinidad where we viewed and considered purchasing the sailing vessel *Infinity*. This is when and where we discovered the *Caribbean Compass*. Reading about the first-hand experiences of cruisers in the area helped us decide to buy *Infinity* and remain in the Caribbean, as our initial intention had been to cruise in the Mediterranean. We had purchased a home attached to a marina in Spain where we intended to base ourselves and cruise the Mediterranean in the summer months.

Having fallen in love with *Infinity* and the Caribbean, and thanks to the insights we derived from the *Compass* and new friends, we decided to commence our cruising life in the Caribbean. For several years our home base was Trinidad, although we cruised the southern island chain and enjoyed the variety of people and cultures, always assisted by our friend and informant, the *Compass*.

The years passed and we grew to love the Caribbean more and more, and always enjoyed our monthly issue of the *Compass*. In fact we never made it to the Med by boat and rarely visited our apartment as we were having too much fun in the Caribbean. The months passed by and after enjoying one experience after another, we decided to share some of the more newsworthy ones with our fellow cruisers. We submitted an article on Venezuela to the *Compass*, which was very well received, resulting in my getting many enquiries about conditions in that beautiful country. The year was 2002 and circumstances were still tolerable, despite the political situation indicating signs of a dictatorship forming, which would eventually affect everyone living and visiting there, creating a more difficult life.

> *'We never made it to the Med... we were having too much fun in the Caribbean'*

We cruised in the Venezuelan waters around Puerto La Cruz for several years and grew to love the country, where to this day I have very good friends. We subsequently wrote several more articles for the *Compass* and all seemed to spark the interest of readers and invoke dialogue with many on a number of issues. We shared our experiences visiting the Mérida area in the Andes with a trip up Pico Espejo on the then highest cable car in the world, the Gulf of Cariaco and the quaint Medregal Village anchorage. An exhilarating motorized dugout ride up the rapids to the Angel Falls was the highlight.

In 2006 we left Venezuela and headed for the ABC islands via Tortuga, the Los Roques islands and the stunning Las Aves islands with their unparalleled tranquility and exquisite bird and marine life. The *Compass* was our constant link with the rest of the cruising community and particularly those in the Eastern Caribbean island chain.

Our stay in Bonaire, with its exceptional diving and multicultural cuisine, stands out as one of the highlights of our cruising life. Curaçao was another favorite, where we visited with our friends Wayne and Bibi of the sailing vessel *Discovery*. We then set sail for Cartagena, Colombia, an interesting old city in a beautiful country. Again the *Compass* was our companion and kept us informed of events and trends in other parts of the Caribbean. We stayed three months in Colombia and in January 2007 we set sail from Cartagena to the Colombian offshore islands of Los Rosarios. From there we sailed straight to Panama's San Blas islands, arriving at Isla Piños in the eastern and more remote part of the archipelago. Our contact with the *Compass* was interrupted because of the remoteness of the San Blas islands.

We sailed west until we reached the island of Porvenir, where we checked into Panama. From there we travelled to Colón, on the mainland, where we only intended staying for a few weeks before heading north. Contact with the *Compass* was restored in Colón enabling us to catch up on events in the region. We stayed longer in Colón than planned, even though the town itself left much to be desired. Enjoying the social life at the Panama Canal Yacht Club in Colón so much prompted us to stay, bidding farewell to our cruising buddies who left for the US.

Having heard a lot about the Bocas del Toro archipelago, we set sail for it that August, but after eight hours of beating we could still see the breakwater of Colón so we aborted the trip and returned. In September we tried again with the same result.

In November of 2008 we eventually made it to Bocas. We planned to leave Bocas for northern destinations in the company of David and Terri of the catamaran *Sylvester* in January of 2010. My wife Frankie had to have some medical attention so we bid farewell to *Sylvester*, intending on catching up with them when Frankie recovered. Sadly that didn't happen; in November of 2012 Frankie passed away. It was a very sad time for me and for *Infinity*.

In 2014 I met Marilyn, a Canadian with a passion for sailing and several Antigua Sailing Week wins to her credit. Our love of the sea and yachts soon turned to love in its fullest sense, culminating in our getting married last week in Bocas del Toro. Friends Mike and Barbara Dallas of the *S/V Evening Star* were in attendance also, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

I've introduced Marilyn to *Compass* and hope she may be tempted to contribute future articles utilizing her photography, advertising, radio and television writing expertise to good advantage. We look forward to sharing our new adventures with the readers of *Compass* in the coming years.

Roger Marshall
S/V Infinity
Bocas del Toro, Panama

CALMER WATERS

by Oenone Baillie

January 2015 — what a contrast to my first taste of cruising seven years ago. No howling gales or mountainous seas, just zephyr-like breezes and gentle swimming among friends. This year we sailed with a comfortable and forgiving southeasterly wind from Chatham Bay on Union Island to Bequia, whereas in 2008 we had to abandon our first attempt after a fruitless hour, engine running, butting into huge waves off Canouan.

Seven Januaries ago I arrived in the Caribbean, new to cruising and new to marriage, a 50-year-old neophyte with almost total ignorance of everything nautical. When asked by my husband whether I would help with the antifouling I readily agreed, not realizing that this was not a normal honeymoon activity. We rode our wedding-present folding bicycles to the boatyard each morning (the most use they ever got), collecting punctures every few hundred yards on what passed for a surfaced road from True Blue Bay Resort, and spent hours slapping on the copper-laden paint.

Soon we "splashed" and headed for our mooring by Hog Island. There I waited for something, anything, to happen. Used to tightly rationed weeks of precious holiday from an office life, I could not get to grips with open-ended idling.

As a lawyer I had measured and recorded my days in six-minute units, so days and weeks spent lolling about without a plan seemed frighteningly aimless — why were we not rushing from bay to bay and island to island?

When told that I would have a three-month honeymoon sailing in the West Indies I had had visions of non-stop tacking to shouts of "lee-oh" (shades of *Swallows and Amazons*). This could not have been further from the truth, moored or anchored in the same spot for days and weeks at a time we waited on the weather.

Eventually we headed up island, motor-sailing to Carriacou, then across to Union (evening rum punch on Happy Island watching the small planes fly in as the sun set on the reef). En route to Bequia we overnighted at the Tobago Cays. After phenomenal snorkelling among Captain Nemo-coloured fish, I showed the depths of my ignorance by asking, in all innocence, whether the anchor needed sharpening after we had dragged at night.

The three months passed — the wind not dropping below 30 knots for six weeks and gusting up to 48 knots on occasion. What I regarded as alarums and excursions were, I was told, just part and parcel of normal sailing life and of no consequence.

The turbulence of the weather mirrored my state of mind. No longer a single solicitor living a predictable life, no longer sure of what the next day would bring, while glad to be free of client demands I could not rid myself of massive guilt for letting hours slip by with nothing much to show for them but a deepening tan.

Having left my flat (my London home of over 20 years) for married life in rural Scotland just a matter of weeks ago, I was now pitched into a new and bewildering world with all the constraints of live-aboard life. Calls home, longing for a familiar voice, were met with a crisp "I know it's expensive so I won't chat — bye". When we finally booked flights home, arriving on an Easter morning, I was truly relieved.

Since then, life has moved on and there have been many changes in terms of the boat, the islands we visit each year and my attitude to cruising.

The boat has been transformed: its old, thin and leaky teak deck has been replaced with pale Treadmaster and new and very comfortable cockpit cushions have been obtained.

In Grenada, Le Phare Bleu marina has been built and Whisper Cove has wonderful Thursday Chicken Nights and Sunday Brunches. Huge chunks of the hillside have been removed at Clarkes Court Bay in preparation for a new marina with haulout facilities.

It is no longer necessary to dice with almost certain death at Hillsborough pier when checking in or out at Carriacou in a heavy swell, as a civilized check in or out can be achieved at Tyrell Bay. At Tyrell Bay there is a Marine Protected Area around the mangroves and oyster beds, and you can now refuel and get water and ice near the excellent Slipway Restaurant. Mooring buoys have been put down (and abandoned for lack of maintenance) at Sandy Island, but Carriacou's marina is no nearer completion than it was when I first came out.

At Clifton Bay on Union Island, Erika's yacht service has moved and you no longer have to trek out to the airport for Customs and Immigration. Kite surfers leap and twirl along the reef, providing endless hours of amazing spectacle.

There is a fast ferry from Union to Bequia and at Bequia it is again possible to walk to Princess Margaret Beach without following the road over the point, thanks to a new path connecting to the Belmont Walkway.

Vast quantities of fruit and rum punch have been consumed over the last seven years and gallons of suntan lotion applied. My suitcase no longer strains at the seams with unnecessary clothes and months' worth of books — swimming gear and a Kindle are just about all I need.

In Grenada (our base) I have become a regular on Survival Anchorage's shopping bus, packed in cheek by jowl with the transient yachties of Hog Island and Secret Harbour, intent on raiding the restocked shelves of the IGA supermarket each Friday. I can swap stories of broken alternators and engine troubles with the best of them.

> *'I have learnt that cruising is all about living in the moment. It is about where you are, not where you might be going'*

Friends have been made among the regular cruisers moored or anchored at Hog Island each year — a tighter community it would be hard to find on dry land — and annual reunions and frequent sundowners shared in cockpits around the anchorage have allowed me to put down roots in this most peripatetic of lives.

A constant blessing for the last seven years has been the crew of the yacht *Richard Cory* — Don, the generous sharer of an encyclopaedic knowledge of all things yacht-based, and Olga, the tireless and equally generous gatherer of good company and fount of knowledge of all things social. A nervous and, initially, reluctant "mate" could not have wished for better friends. When the *Richard Cory* puts down her anchor we know that the new sailing season is definitely underway.

Bruce — my husband, captain and *Baraka Lady*'s soul — has watched my progress with wry amusement, gently laughing at my groundless fears, refusing to be rattled by early threats of jumping ship and ignoring tantrums worthy of an adolescent.

I have learnt that cruising is all about living in the moment. It is about where you are, not where you might be going. It is about being still, not endlessly moving on. It is about relishing the sun's heat or the cool of the evening, listening to the chuckle of the dinghy or the cry of the birds, letting go of the world and detaching from the demands of text, phone and e-mail.

Now I can enjoy the pleasure of life onboard each year — two or three months of warm seas and the intense green of the mangroves as the sun goes down, the day's salt showered off and gin and tonic to hand. I relish the timelessness of life afloat, the ability to lose myself in the present, just to "be". Whereas, at first, I was longing to move on to the next place as soon as I arrived, now I love to sit on deck or idle in the water without a care or a plan in the world. It is Bruce who decides when it is time to head for pastures (or anchorages) new.

Waters are, indeed, calmer now.

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CALENDAR

APRIL

2 – 6	Bequia Easter Regatta. www.begos.com/easterregatta
3 – 5	BVI Spring Regatta. www.bvispringregatta.org
3	Public holiday in many places (Good Friday)
4	FULL MOON
6	Public holiday in many places (Easter Monday)
7	Goat Races, Buccoo, Tobago
13 –18	Les Voiles de Saint-Barth. www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com
13 –18	Oyster Regatta BVI. www.oysteryachts.com/events/
13 – 19	Rincón International Film Festival, Puerto Rico. www.rinconfilm.com
15 – 20	Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. www.antiguaclassics.com
18 - 26	Tobago Jazz Experience. www.tobagojazzexperience.com
19	Massy Stores Dinghy Regatta, Barbados. www.barbadosyachtclub.com
19	Public holiday in Venezuela (Signing of the Act of Venezuelan Independence)
19 – 21	Marina ZarPar Regatta, Boca Chica, Dominican Republic. http://marinazarpar.com
22	International Earth Day
24	Guadeloupe to Antigua Race. www.sailingweek.com
24 - 26	Carriacou Maroon & String Band Music Festival. www.carriacoumaroon.com
25	Yachting World magazine Round Antigua Race. www.sailingweek.com
25 – 30	St. Barth Film Festival. www.stbarthff.org
26 – 1 May	Antigua Sailing Week. www.sailingweek.com
27	Public holiday in Curaçao (King's Birthday)
28	Public holiday in Barbados (National Heroes' Day)
28 – 29	Eastern Caribbean International Yachting Conference, St. Vincent. http://www.quaynote.com/ankiti/www/?code=EC15&f=home
30 – 3 May	West Indies Regatta, St. Barth. westindiesregatta.com
30 – 10 May	24th St. Lucia Jazz Festival. www.stluciajazz.org

MAY

1	Public holiday in many places (Labor Day)
1 – 3	Sail Aruba. www.sailaruba.com
2	Dockyard Day, Antigua. www.sailingweek.com
3	FULL MOON
4	Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (Labour Day)
4 – 8	Triskell Round Guadeloupe & Dominica Race. http://triskellcup.com
5	Public holiday in Guyana (Indian Arrival Day)
8	Public holiday in St. Barts (Victory Day)
8 – 10	Anguilla Regatta. www.anguillaregatta.com
8 – 10	Booby Island Regatta, Nevis. www.boobyislandregatta.com
8 – 17	Grenada Chocolate Festival. www.chocolate.truebluebay.com
9	Start of ARC USA rally from Tortola, BVI to Virginia via Bermuda or to Florida via Old Bahama Channel. www.worldcruising.com
9	Start of ARC Europe rally from Tortola, BVI to Portugal via Bermuda and Azores. www.worldcruising.com
13	Combat de Coques Regatta, Ste. Anne, Martinique. CNM
14	Public holiday in some places (Ascension Day)
14	Martinique Yole Festival, Ste. Anne, Martinique. http://yoles-rondes.net
16	Start of Salty Dawg Rally from Tortola to East Coast US. www.saltydawgrally.org
16 – 17	BVI Dinghy Championships. RBVIYC
18	Public holiday in Haiti (Flag Day) and the Cayman Islands (Discovery Day)
22 – 25	Barbuda Caribana. www.antiguanice.com
23 – 25	Foxy's Wooden Boat Regatta, Jost Van Dyke. www.foxysbar.com/woodenboatregatta
23 - 25	Transcanal Beach Cat Race, Martinique to St. Lucia. www.clubnautiquedumarin.com
25	Public holiday in some places (Whit Monday)
26	Public holiday in Guyana (Independence Day) and Belize (Sovereign's Day celebrated)
29 – 31	Puerto Rico Heineken Int'l Regatta. www.heinekenregattapr.com
30	Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Indian Arrival Day), Anguilla (Anguilla Day), Haiti (Mothers' Day), and many other places (Corpus Christi)
TBA	St. Barts Salsa Festival, St. Barts Theatre Festival

All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of Compass *went to press — but plans change, so please contact event organizers directly for confirmation.*
If you would like a nautical or tourism event listed FREE in our monthly calendar, please send the name and date(s) of the event and the name and contact information of the organizing body to sally@caribbeancompass.com

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—*Continued from page 25* ...*Tayrona*

While walking, we saw numerous birds, lizards and crabs, but mammals were elusive, presumably staying hidden in the thick woods away from the trails.

West of Cañaveral Beach along a rocky part of the coast, and still inside Tayrona National Park, are the famous "Five Bays" — Cinto, Neguanje, Guayraca (Guairaca), Chengue and Concha. Neguanje has one of the longest beaches in the park — two stretches of white sand divided by a rocky outcrop. The diving is said to be good here. Bahía Concha is great for swimming.

Currently, some westbound cruisers report having stopped in one or more of the Five Bays with the Q flag up and not being disturbed by officials, but legally when coming from Aruba you should proceed directly to a port of entry, such as Santa Marta. The prevailing wind and current make a sail from Santa Marta back to the Five Bays a challenge, although you might sometimes find a helpful counter-current along the coast. While Colombia generally has an excellent security record in recent years, there have been occasional reports of robberies aboard yachts in these remote bays.

However, you can leave your boat safely ensconced at Marina Santa Marta and visit the park by taxi, rental car, tour or public bus. Buses leave the city regularly; ask the driver to drop you at the park entrance, but you'll have to walk, hitch-hike or catch a van quite a bit farther to where you actually pay to get in. Although a visit to the park can be done as a day trip, to make the most of it, spend a night or more camping (bringing your own gear is advised), or extravagantly splurge on an eco-hab. As we prepared to drive back to Santa Marta after a day in the park, my mind saturated with images of some of the most spectacular coastline in the Caribbean, I was sorry we couldn't stay longer.



Above: We made a pit stop just outside Tayrona Park's Cañaveral gate to grab refreshments and insect repellant; prices rise steeply within the park



JANVIER LADINO / PROCOLOMBIA

Right: Eco-habs thatched in the traditional indigenous style dot the hillside at Cañaveral

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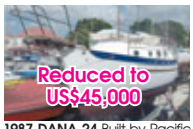


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—Continued from page 9 ...Business Briefs

Right now this is in Codrington and marked on my guide`s sketch charts. But in the next couple of months it will move to its new location on the right hand side of the main road, about three quarters of a mile toward Two-Foot Bay from Madison Square. Claire is now doing meals to order in her art gallery (either in the new or old location).

She creates a whole meal from local ingredients, making traditional Barbudan items like johnnycakes. All is beautifully served. Meal price is around EC$100; they have cocktails, but bring your own wine or beer. It is strictly by reservation (maximum group size around 12) and she will happily serve either lunch or dinner. As a cafe they also serve coffee, tea, and sandwiches for a light lunch. Call (268) 460-0434/717-4451.

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Visit www.seaborneairlines.com for more information.

Full House for ARC Europe/ARC USA

The 2015 edition of World Cruising Club's twin rallies, ARC Europe and ARC USA, will be the biggest yet, with 60 boats set to sail with the rallies from start ports at Nanny Cay, Tortola; Portsmouth, Virginia; and Bermuda, to destinations in the USA and Europe. The rallies are popular with North American cruisers heading to Europe and with cruisers returning home from the Caribbean to the USA or to Europe via Bermuda and the Azores. ARC Europe and ARC USA will depart Tortola on May 9th.

Registration is open for 2016, so request an information pack and sign up now to ensure your place for next year.

Visit www.worldcruising.com for more information.

The Islands Odyssey: Across the Pond in Easy Stages

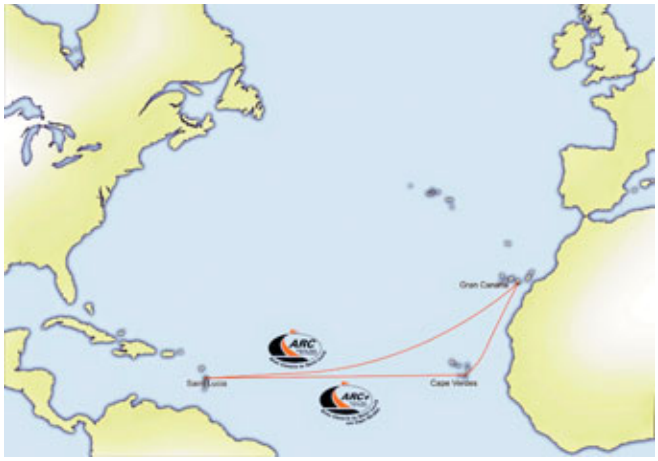
Jimmy Cornell has launched this new rally for sailors who prefer to cross the Atlantic at a relaxed pace. Starting in Lanzarote on October 1st, the Islands Odyssey will call at all the Canary Islands before sailing to the Cape Verdes. From there they will pick up the tradewind route to Barbados. After a short stop, they will continue to Martinique in time for a Caribbean Christmas. The Islands Odyssey is open to sailing monohulled and multihulled vessels with a minimum LOA of 27 feet (8.22 metres).

The Islands Odyssey builds on the success of the Odyssey events, launched by Jimmy Cornell in 2012, with the emphasis on safety and enjoyment as well as the opportunity to participate in scientific and environmental projects. Islands Odyssey participants benefit from a wealth of incentives, including free docking in all the ports visited and support during the voyage, online tracking via the Cornell Sailing website and advice from the experienced Cornell Sailing team. Welcome parties and tourist activities are organized in all the stopovers.

Visit http://cornellsailing.com/sail-the-odyssey/islands-odyssey for more information.

30th Annual ARC and ARC+Cape Verdes

The 30th edition of the annual Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) is filling up fast, with more than 200 boats now registered for the November departures from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria to Rodney Bay, St. Lucia. The option of a stopover in the Cape Verde islands has again proved popular with the ARC+Cape Verdes route nearly fully booked.



The organizers, World Cruising Club, will welcome back some "old-timers" who sailed in the very first ARC: Chris Tibbs, the ARC weatherman, will be sailing in the rally with his wife Helen on their Wauquiez 40 *Taistealai*; and Pekka and Barbro Karlsson will be sailing their yacht *Corona AQ* again. Pekka sailed the same boat in the 1986 ARC, which is quite a special achievement. ARC regular Manfred Kerstan will be back again with *Albatros*, making it 20 of 30 rallies!

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