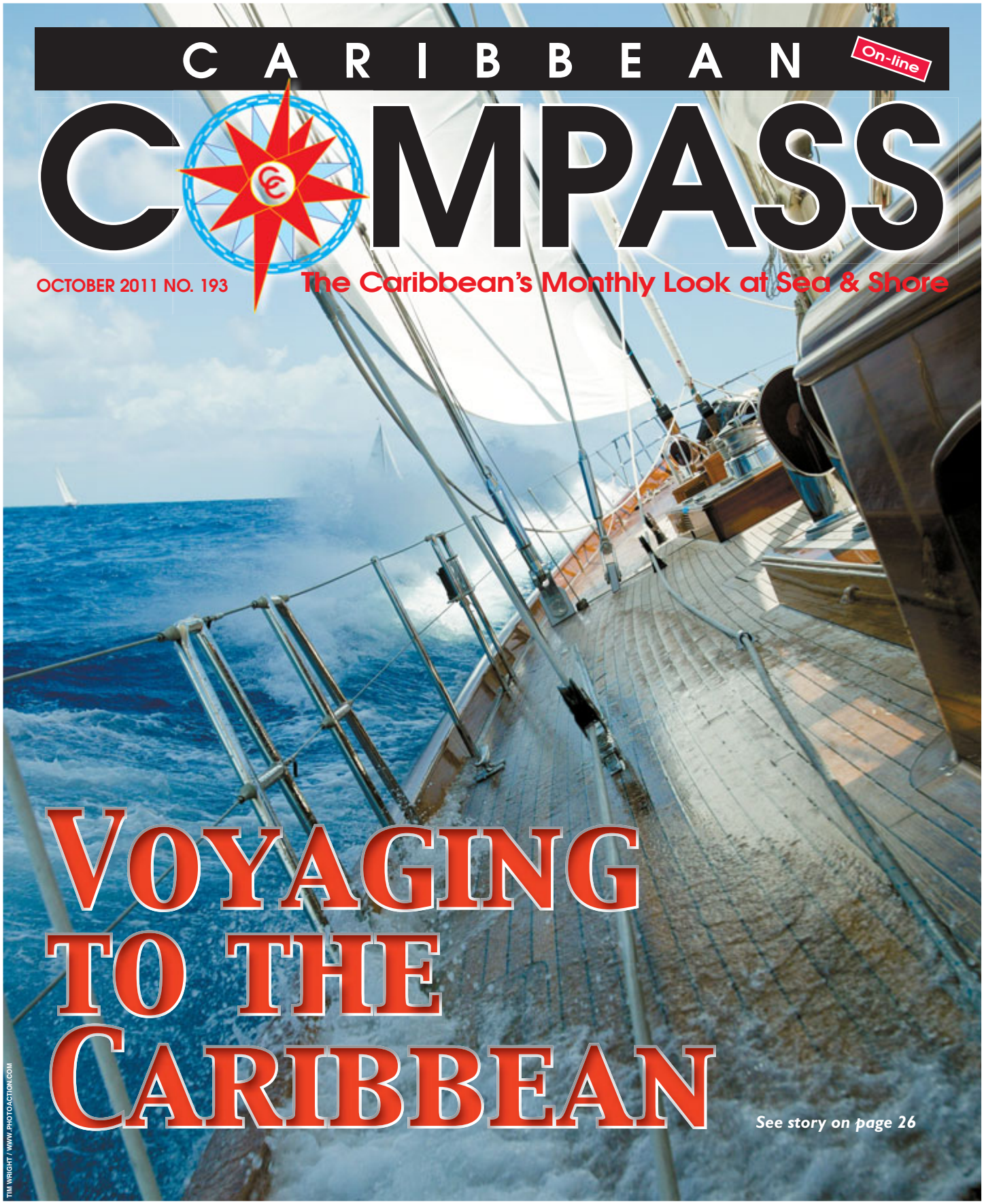
CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
OCTOBER 2011 NO. 193
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore



VOYAGING TO THE CARIBBEAN

See story on page 26

TIM WRIGHT / WWW.PHOTOACTION.COM



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GHFC Wahoo Tournament
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TTGFA Wahoo
January/February2012
Grenada - Budget Marine
Spice Island Billfish Tournament
Bonaire, International Fishing Tournament
GHFC Marlin Tournament
TTGFA Marlin Madness
March 2012
GHFC Dolphin Tournament
TIGFT (Tobago International Game Fishing Tournament) Tobago
April 2012
Freedive Spearfishing Challenge in Castara Tobago
May 2012
TTGFA King Fish Tournament
June/July2012
GHFC Jungle Rules Sport Fish
Tobago House of Assembly Commercial Fishing Tournament
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Trinidad Annual International Trinidad Tarpon Thunder Tournament
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GHFC Guy/Gal Reel Challenge
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Cover photo: Think tradewinds! It's time to start planning your next Caribbean voyage. Photo Tim Wright/www.photoaction.com



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Info & Updates

Cruisers Advised of Coastal Zone Curfew in Trinidad

On August 21st, Trinidad & Tobago was placed under a "limited State of Emergency" (SOE) by Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar in order to deal with gang-related crime in some areas of Trinidad. The SOE, which has been extended until November, has had little impact on visiting yachts in Chaguaramas except that a curfew is in place from 11:00PM to 4:00AM.



STRICKLAND

The anchorage at Tobago's Store Bay in August. The current curfew in Trinidad does not extend to Tobago

Since September 14th, the curfew extends three nautical miles seaward from the coastlines of the islands of Trinidad, Monos, Huevos, Chacachacare, Gaspar Grande, Carrera, Crondstadt and the Five islands. Tobago is not subject to any curfew restrictions at this time.

A media release from Captain A. Alexander of the Trinidad & Tobago Defence Force states:

No person shall pilot a vessel between 11:00PM and 4:00AM within this three-mile coastal zone unless that person has received a signed permit or exemption from the Chief of Defence Staff.

The coastal zone restriction does not apply to the following vessels:

1. Vessels of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (Coast Guard), the Police Service, the Customs and Excise Division and any other vessels in the official service of the State.

2. Vessels anchored within the three-mile coastal zone between 11:00PM and 4:00AM.

3. Vessels exempted by the Chief of Defence Staff.

The Chief of Defence Staff, regarding 3 above, has determined that vessels on international passages either terminating in or originating from Trinidad and Tobago are allowed to transit the coastal zone during curfew hours. Nevertheless, pleasure craft and fishing vessels on international passages are advised to comply with the coastal zone curfew — this will make life easier for everyone.

David Bovell of Boaters Enterprise adds: "In my conversation with seniors at the Coast Guard, it was established that they have recognized that not all arriving sailing vessels will be aware of the restrictions and will be guided to port or anchor in designated anchorages. I was told that good sense would prevail, even if for example a vessel's anchor is dragging and the master may have to move his vessel (during curfew hours)." Lieutenant-Commander R. Alfred of the T&T Coast Guard emphasizes, "The measures in place are designed to deny the movement of criminal elements and not to hamper international shipping or offshore economic activities of the country."

David says that the measures by the Government are being greeted with "wide support and a sense of relief by businesses and cruisers". Cruisers who had to go to the airport during curfew hours reported getting easily available curfew permits to get back and forth without incident.

John Stickland of Store Bay Marine Services in Tobago adds, "Tobago is open for business as usual. We are under no curfew, and cruisers can enjoy their visit as normal." Since the burglary aboard two visiting yachts at Plymouth in August, and an armed robbery aboard another yacht at Englishman's Bay in September, the head of the Tobago Police Service, Assistant Commissioner Edwards, has announced that he is in discussions with the Tobago Coastguard to increase protection and support for visiting yachts to the island. An arrest has been reported in the case of the armed robbery. John notes, "Moves by the Government to tackle crime are welcomed and will ultimately enhance the cruiser experience."

Thanks to Captain A. Alexander of the Trinidad & Tobago Defence Force, John Stickland of Store Bay Marine Services, and David Bovell of Boaters Enterprise for information in this report.

The T&T Defence Force has established the following hotline numbers for any queries or concerns relating to the coastal zone restriction: (868) 634-3138, 634-1476 or 623-0933.

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Antigua Barbados British Virgin Islands Curacao Dominica Grenada Martinique Panama Puerto Rico St.Croix St.Lucia St.Vincent Trinidad and Tobago

—Continued from previous page

For more information contact John Stickland in Tobago at john@sbms.co.tt or (868) 390-5408, or David Bovell in Trinidad at david.bovell@boatersenterprise.com or (868) 620-0978.

Moliniere Marine Park Fees, Grenada

All divers and snorkelers are now asked to pay a nominal user fee at the Moliniere Marine Park in Grenada. This is the site of the famous underwater sculpture park. Snorkelers pay US$1 and divers US$2 per day, and divers also pay a US$10 annual fee. Receipts are issued. Scuba diving in the MPA is now allowed only with a Grenadian dive operator; snorkeling can be done independently.

For more information contact mbmpa@hotmail.com.

New Phone Code for St. Maarten

St. Maarten's new dialling code — 1-721 — commenced on September 30th. Calls to St. Maarten using either 00-599 or 1-721 will be processed regularly during a "permissive dialling period" which will run until September 30th, 2012.

Caribbean Marine Association Identifies Priorities

The Caribbean Marine Association (CMA) recognizes its role in the development of the marine industry throughout the Caribbean. CMA currently represents the interests of eight national marine associations in the Caribbean and, by extension, over 3,000 marine-related businesses, yachts and partner agencies. The CMA has identified priorities for the enhancement of its Secretariat as well as that of the regional industry:

• The CMA Secretariat is currently hosted by the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association. The Board of Directors of the CMA recognize the need for continued institutional capacity building and sustainability of the Secretariat through recruitment of a full-time administrator and appointment of a permanent secretariat; membership drive to strengthen the voice and budget of the CMA; expansion of the CMA representation to incorporate the entire maritime Caribbean; and development of an annual fundraising event.

• The CMA recognizes that the marine industry spans sectors and contributes to the economies of all of its member countries. The CMA seeks to ensure that there are increased employment opportunities for Caribbean nationals in this area. Through strategic partnerships with key marine training institutions in the Caribbean, the CMA will seek to identify specific and relevant areas of training for the industry such as crew training, engine repair and safety courses.

• The CMA endorses that the marine environment is to be protected and preserved, and will develop programmes regarding placement of moorings in sensitive marine areas and education for the protection of mangroves. Environmental lobbying and advocacy will focus on the banning of Tributyltin (TBT) antifouling and advocacy for the sale and use of alternate products in chandleries, boatyards and marinas; and ecologically responsible utilization of holding tanks and provision of bilge pump-out facilities for yachts.

• As the voice of the marine industry, the CMA needs to increase its visibility and develop strategic partnerships with key agencies in the region. By aligning the objectives of the CMA with the existing priorities of regional governmental organizations and tourism authorities, and in line with proposals contained within the OECS Common Tourism Policy, the CMA will ensure its role in the planning and development of the regional marine industry. The CMA will seek to undertake the implementation of eSeaClear (www.eseaclear.com) and facilitation of the easy movement of yachts between member states in the region; participation in core marketing events to benefit the industry; development of policy through alliances with key strategic partners; and lobbying and advocacy to regional decision makers in favour of the development of the marine industry.

For more information visit www.caribbeanmarineassociation.com or contact CMA President John Duffy at info@caribbeanmarineassociation.com.

BVI Has 'Best Quality of Life' in the Caribbean

Known as the "bareboat capital of the world", the British Virgin Islands have been named the country with the best quality of life in the Caribbean and Central American region by fDi Intelligence, the division of The Financial Times Group that provides industry research. The Financial Times' specialist division gave the BVI top honors thanks to the islands' high life expectancy, employment, secondary school enrolment and GDP PPP (purchasing power) per capita, and their low rate of crime and infant mortality.



WWW.MOORINGS.COM

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E. Tomás Dardet of BVI Tourism says, "The islands remain an unspoiled haven of natural treasures with no high-rise hotels, casinos or crowds… (yet) sailing enthusiasts will find a large selection of crewed and bareboat charters available, which makes it easy for them to discover the islands at their own pace. The islands also boast a rich and diverse marine life living in crystal-clear waters that are a paradise for divers and snorkelers." And of course there's Foxy's.

In the fDi Intelligence "best quality of life" rankings for the region, Bermuda placed second and the Cayman Islands third.

Cruisers' Site-ings

• Lynn Kaak reports: Four new Facebook Groups have mushroomed to help cruisers communicate and keep in touch:

Trinidad Cruisers - ***www.facebook.com/groups/138065706283722***
Grenada Cruisers - ***www.facebook.com/groups/132087906871838***
Tobago Cruisers - ***www.facebook.com/groups/129897313763488***
and Coconut Telegraph - ***www.facebook.com/groups/182779075116058***.

The cruisers' groups are for local info, with FAQs, phone numbers and events, while the Coconut Telegraph is an FB extension of the great Coconut Telegraph SSB net, plus some very good weather updates. Within two months the Grenada group attracted close to 200 members, and within 24 hours the Trinidad group had over 50 members.

• The Puerto La Cruz Boater's Directory is available via the Bahia Redonda Marina website, ***www.bahiaredonda.com***. The Puerto La Cruz Boater's Directory guide is a listing — compiled by cruisers for cruisers — of companies and services in the Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela area.

• There's a crisp look at Bocas del Toro and Colon, Panama at ***http://galivantstravels.blogspot.com***.

• In last month's Eco-News we asked, "What's Up With All the Seaweed?" See more in the August 27th entry at ***www.antiguaisland.blogspot.com.***



CHRIS DOYLE ©

Spotlight on 'Marine Capital' St. Maarten

The St. Maarten Marine Trades Association (SMMTA) announces Spotlight St. Maarten, a month-long event focusing on education, recreation and discounts for boaters, tourists, and locals. The event kicks off with live entertainment and fireworks on St. Maarten's Day, November 11th, and runs through December 18th, when the final weekend will be celebrated with free concerts.

The SMMTA has designed Spotlight St. Maarten to highlight attributes that have made St. Maarten the marine capital of the Caribbean, to provide a learning opportunity for boaters of all levels through training seminars hosted by internationally recognized experts, to set the stage for fun to be had by all, and to encourage local St. Maarten residents to get more involved in the marine community.



Leisure events, sporting activities, and training seminars will be scheduled between November 11th and December 17th. The Spotlight St. Maarten calendar will soon be available on the event's website, where you will also find a complete list of discounts that will be offered throughout the event, including discounts at marinas, chandleries, service centers, hotels, restaurants, bars, shops, and more.

Sporting activities during the month will include a sailing regatta, fishing tournament, tennis tournament, golf tournament, and paddleboard races. Events will take place mostly on St. Maarten but the SMMTA will also be spotlighting French St. Martin and the surrounding islands of St. Barths, Anguilla and Saba as the beauty and diversity of these destinations is a major part of what makes St. Maarten a truly unique yachting destination.

For more information visit www.spotlightstmaarten.com or contact info@smmta.com.

New Flights NY to Antigua this Season

American Airlines, which currently serves Antigua with one daily flight between Antigua and Miami, has announced that it will launch service between New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport and VC Bird International Airport in Antigua four times a week beginning November 17th. The new service will be operated every Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday by a 148-seater Boeing 737 aircraft.

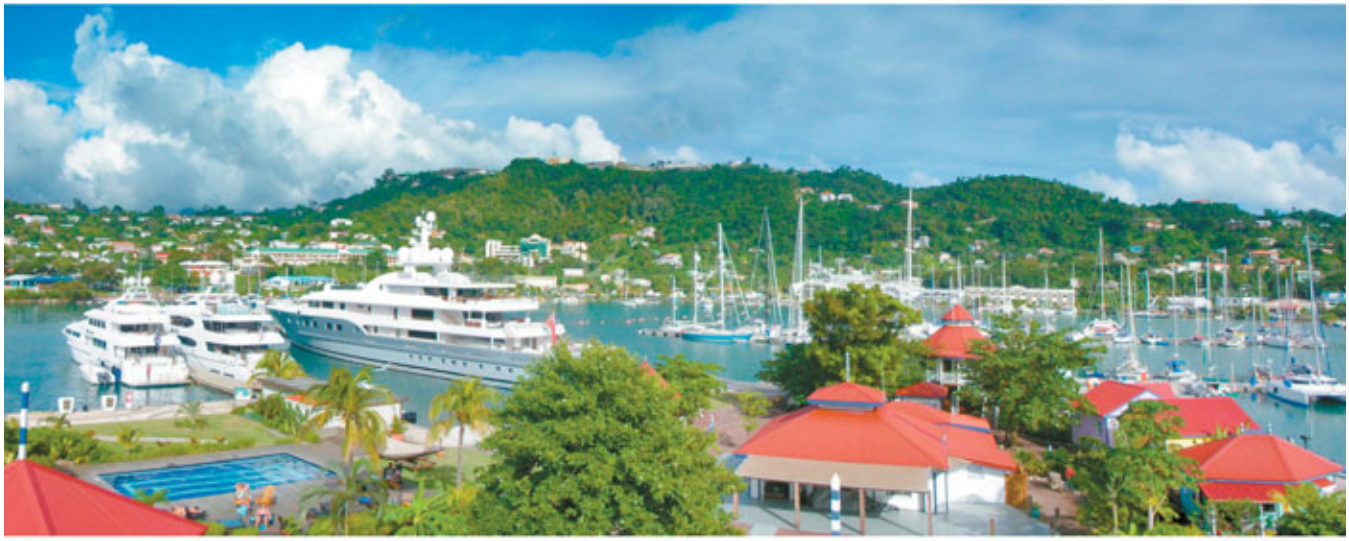
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Port Louis Marina is justifiably known as one of the best appointed, full-service marinas in the Caribbean. With its spectacular location adjacent to the island's capital, it's the perfect base for cruising the Grenadines, all year round.

Now, with our rates for the coming winter season, a berth at Port Louis Marina is even more affordable.

You'll enjoy all the convenience and luxury the marina has to offer, including exemplary dockside facilities, 24-hour security, marina-wide broadband and more. Technical services, chandleries and haul-out facilities are also available, either on-site or close by.

In addition to its welcoming atmosphere and stunning natural beauty, Grenada is close to 12°N and therefore outside the hurricane belt, which means yachts can remain safely afloat throughout the year. The island also benefits from its own international airport, with direct flights to Miami, New York and London.

Port Louis Marina is owned and operated by Camper & Nicholsons Marinas, and our friendly and knowledgeable staff are on hand 24 hours a day to welcome you.

For more information about securing a berth at Port Louis Marina, please contact Danny Donelan on +1 (473) 435 7431 or email danny@cnportlouismarina.com

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

IWW Grenada Means Dinghy Delight

Newlywed cruisers Britanny and Scott of the yacht *Rasmus* report: We thought we were doomed to a life of dinghy dodginess until Island Water World came along and came to our rescue.

They made us a deal we couldn't refuse on a new eight-foot Caribe Light and a new two-stroke eight-horsepower Mercury engine. We are so thankful, and we



Britanny and Scott with sales rep Laurien Antoine of IWW Grenada and their new ride

couldn't be more pleased. The staff here in Grenada (and St. Maarten and St. Lucia — we've actually shopped at all three) are fantastic and so helpful. They were just as excited as we were about our new ride and made us feel right at home. We even got Island Water World shirts and hats!

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

Art Fabrik of Grenada Celebrates 25 Years

Chris and Lilo report: For 1,300 weeks (do the math) Art Fabrik Batik has been a landmark on Grenada's Young Street — it's a boutique and workshop under one roof. The Art Fabrik building has a new glamorous "outfit" in vivid colour, glowing orange with blue awnings and windowsills. You can't miss it. We love to delight you with the new "seldom-seen collections" in our boutique: handmade batik artistry, jewellery, accessories, home décor, wearable art and Caribbean craft-art. Over the years we have developed a unique style loved by customers from all over the globe. We invite you to visit our workshop, and take a little tour that will open the door to the mystery of batik.



We love to celebrate with you. To the yachting community and all who have been with us through these 25 years, a warm thank-you.

For more information see ad in the Market Place section, pages 43 through 45.

Aluminum Anodes: A Better Alternative

Robert Buller reports: Fall months mean making final preparations for the boating season in the Caribbean. You've repainted the bottom, installed some new gear, caught up on routine maintenance and acquired the latest cruising guides and charts.

Did you remember to install new anodes?

We need anodes to protect the expensive boat and motor metal parts that are underwater. We've known since the 1700s that different metals under water, particularly in highly conductive salt water, will actually create a small electrical current that corrodes one metal type. A bronze prop at the end of a steel shaft makes an open current that will destroy the bronze prop.

There have been steady improvements to bottom paint in recent years to make them less toxic to the living environment. Your choice of anodes should be reviewed, too, as there have been new developments — aluminum is becoming the preferred choice over more common zinc.

Any two different metals will cause this corrosion: a steel prop on an aluminum outboard housing, for example, or copper plumbing and steel fittings. One part of these metal pairings will eventually corrode away. And any stray electrical current in a marina will accelerate the damage to expensive metal components.

To combat this corrosion, we've introduced a new and inexpensive metal component to become the sacrificial anode. Until now, anodes were most commonly made of zinc, a readily available and inexpensive metal. In fact the term "zincs" became the common term for anodes because they were so prevalent.

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But recent research has shown that aluminum is a better choice for anodes. Aluminum anodes contain nothing environmentally threatening, whereas zincs all contain small amounts of cadmium, a heavy metal known to be toxic. Sacrificial anode metals are designed to be "eaten away" to protect other metal parts. But the zinc and cadmium bits end up in small particles on ocean bottoms under harbors and marinas and keep adding poisons to our oceans and rivers.

New aluminum alloys contain nothing toxic and they actually perform better as anodes, too. They have better electro-chemical properties and are lighter. And aluminum anodes are now competitively priced so there is no reason not to change.

In summary, we need to protect our boats and their metal components. Sacrificial anodes are always needed, but aluminum is now a better choice for performance and for our environment.

Aluminum anodes are available from Canada Metals, a global supplier of non-ferrous metal products, engineered and machined die castings, and subassemblies for a variety of industries; a world-leading producer of Martyr brand die cast marine anodes, the Octopus line of marine autopilot drive systems, and the Intellisteer line of remote steering systems.

For more information on Canada Metals see ad on page 14.

Caribbean Focus for World Cruising Club

For over 20 years World Cruising Club has supported the Caribbean marine industry by bringing more than 300 boats annually to the region, and promoting Caribbean sailing to hundreds more.



St. Lucia has been the destination for the granddaddy of ocean sailing rallies, the ARC, since 1990. Around 230 boats and over 1,300 sailors, plus another 400 relatives, arrive in St. Lucia from the Canary Islands every December, many staying on for Christmas and extended cruising. St. Lucia is also the start and finish for World ARC, the 15-month round-the-world rally. IGY Rodney Bay Marina hosts the ARC and World ARC, and the World ARC boats also spend time in Marigot Bay and the Grenadines after making a return Caribbean landfall in St George's, Grenada.

Tortola, BVI is the host for other World Cruising Club rallies. The Caribbean 1500 is the largest and longest-running sailboat rally in the Americas, bringing around 80 boats and around 500 people from Hampton, Virginia to Nanny Cay every November for the last 22 years. Nanny Cay Marina is also the start port for two World Cruising Club rallies — ARC Europe and Atlantic Cup — which take boats back to Europe and North America at the end of the Caribbean season.

Demand for cruising rallies has never been higher, despite economic uncertainties. Sailors from Russia and eastern European countries, Turkey and Asia are joining World Cruising Club rallies in increasing numbers. The ARC 2011 fleet is likely to be the largest ever and will include a record-breaking number of catamarans, and Caribbean 1500 continues to attract new participants while retaining a core of regular "veterans" returning every year.

The next edition of World ARC starts from St. Lucia in January 2012, with over 30 boats taking the start line, and 40-plus taking part over the 15 months of the circumnavigation. Customer demand to join the rally in the "off" years has resulted in World ARC becoming an annual event from 2014.

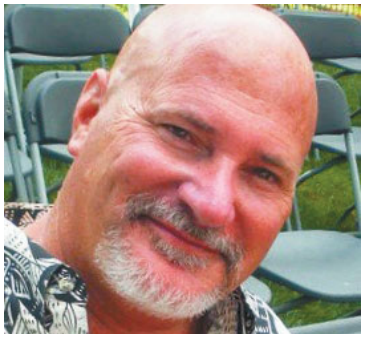
For more information visit www.worldcruising.com.

New Addresses for St. Lucia's Marina at Marigot Bay

The Marina at Marigot Bay, St. Lucia is changing its e-mail addresses and website. The main contact e-mail for the Marina at Marigot Bay is now manager@marigotbaymarina.com, and the website URL is now www.marigotbaymarina.com.

But the marina itself hasn't moved! The entrance channel waypoint is at 13° 58.05'N, 61° 01 90'W approximately four miles south of Castries Harbour or eight miles North of Soufriere. The entrance is marked by a large starboard-hand light buoy and the entrance channel through the outer bay is marked with IALA B channel markers.

For more information visit www.marigotbaymarina.com.



New Yacht Sales Manager for TMM Tortola

TMM Yacht Charters announces the addition of Don Pietrykowski as their new Yacht Sales Manager. Don will be working out of TMM's Tortola base and concentrating on selling new sailing yachts into their charter fleets located in the British Virgin Islands, St. Vincent, and Belize. TMM currently represents Beneteau, Jeanneau, Fountaine Pajot, Privilege, and Hunter yachts.

For the past 15 years Don held a yacht sales position at McMachen Marine, a yacht sales company located near Detroit, Michigan.

For more information visit sailtmm.com.



CARIBBEAN ECO-NEWS

NOAA and French Islands Partner to Protect Humpbacks

NOAA and France's Protected Areas Agency have signed a "sister sanctuary" agreement to support the protection of endangered humpback whales that migrate annually more than 3,000 miles between NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary off the Massachusetts coast and Agoa Marine Mammal Sanctuary in the French Antilles.

The agreement will help improve humpback whale recovery in the North Atlantic by enhancing management coordination efforts between the two sanctuaries. Both sanctuaries provide critical support for the same population of whales, which spend spring and summer in the rich feeding grounds of Stellwagen Bank before heading south to the warmer waters of the Caribbean Sea in late fall to mate and give birth to their young.

As sister sanctuaries, the two sites will explore new avenues for collaborative education, scientific and management efforts, including joint research and monitoring programs. NOAA anticipates the relationship will be crucial to the long-term conservation of the North Atlantic humpback whale population, as well as to the development of future cooperative agreements with other countries. The partnership contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Environment Programme's Marine Mammal Action Plan for the Caribbean region, which recognizes the importance of protecting critical humpback whale habitats as part of a regional corridor.

This new agreement builds on an effort begun in 2006 when the world's first sister sanctuary initiative focused on trans-boundary humpback whales and their critical habitats was launched between the Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary and the Dominican Republic. Another agreement, signed in July between Stellwagen Bank and the government of Bermuda, also strives to help protect the species along its migration route.

Bacteria in Human Sewage Shown to Kill Coral

In the first documented case of a human pathogen infecting a marine species, US scientists say a bacterium in untreated human sewage is killing elkhorn coral in the Caribbean Sea.



Diseased coral showing the effect of contamination by untreated human sewage

JAMES W. PORTER/UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

"It is the first time ever that a human disease has been shown to kill an invertebrate," said University of Georgia professor James Porter. "This is a very rare and unusual evolutionary triple jump," he said, adding that the bacterium "went from humans to the lower invertebrates — coral. It went from the terrestrial environment to the marine environment. And then it went from the anaerobic [low oxygen] conditions of our stomach to the fully oxygenated conditions on the reef."

In humans, the pathogen *Serratia marcescens* is opportunistic, causing respiratory, wound and urinary tract infections. In coral, it causes a disease Porter and colleagues have dubbed "white pox" for the white scars that appear on infected elkhorn coral. These scars appear where the coral's living tissue has disappeared, leaving only its skeleton.

The coral cover in the Caribbean has declined 50 percent over the past 15 years, and elkhorn coral has declined by almost 90 percent during the same time period, according to Porter.

Previous work by Porter and colleague Kathryn Patterson Sutherland, of Rollins College in Florida, identified *Serratia marcescens* as the cause of white pox and pointed to sewage, not wildlife, as the source of the strain that infected corals. The most recent paper, published on August 17th in the journal *PLoS ONE*, provides conclusive evidence that this strain causes white pox. The duo and colleagues spent years collecting *Serratia* samples from healthy and diseased corals, from humans via a wastewater treatment facility in Key West, and from other animals. To obtain each sample's genetic fingerprint, they added an enzyme that breaks up the bacterium's genome wherever a specific gene sequence is found. Because every strain's genome differs slightly, each one yields a unique pattern of breaks. Comparing the patterns among all their samples, the team found only two that matched each other exactly: the *Serratia* strain found in white pox-afflicted coral and the one drawn from human waste.

Sutherland and Porter hope their new evidence will encourage communities throughout the Caribbean to upgrade their waste management facilities, replacing septic tanks ill-suited for the region's geography and geology with wastewater treatment plants.

Creating Marine-Aware Careers in SVG

On September 3rd, Camp Off The Grid concluded a career-creating project directed at helping sustain the environment of St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Organizer Chester Connell says that, thanks to Sunsail St. Vincent, Moorings Canouan, Digicel and Hot 97 FM, ten children were taught the rudiments of sailing a yacht and were also taught to scuba dive by operators Dive Bequia and Dive Canouan.



POLLY PHILIPSON

Campers learning to scuba dive in Bequia

Polly Philipson of Dive Bequia says, "The culmination of this career-creating project was for the ten young people to achieve the PADI Open Water Diver Certification. Kevin Richards and Tavia Richards both successfully sat the final written examinations and we eagerly await the outcome from the rest of the group." Vaughn Martin from Dive Canouan said, "They were very comfortable in the water and I hope they keep diving to build up confidence and experience."

In addition, instructor Shirnan Samuel taught the students to swim and Sailors Wilderness Tours led a hike to the rainforests of St. Vincent. Chester says hiking, sailing and scuba diving gave participants a hands-on grasp of the natural environment of St. Vincent & the Grenadines. He says that Vincentians must learn how to better sustainably manage the marine resources of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and this cannot be accomplished, he says, if young Vincentians do not know how to swim in the sea, sail on the sea or go under the sea to explore and take care of it. "This country needs many more marine biologists and professionals in marine-research related careers. This is one of the reasons Camp Off the Grid teaches Vincentian children real-life skills that connect them to the marine environment. These are skills that can be built on as career options."

For more information visit http://chesterconnell.com.

'CBC at Sea' Calls on Boaters to Log Seabird Sightings

Every December, thousands of people lift their binoculars and submit their bird sightings in the longest-running citizen-science project in the world: the Christmas Bird Count or "CBC".

But 70 percent of the world is ocean, and pelagic birds — those that spend their lives at sea — are sparsely documented. Ocean birding has been described as "the last frontier of bird knowledge." For example, when the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred, so little was known about seabirds on the Gulf of Mexico that early spill data had to function as baseline information.

Yet there is a huge untapped resource of watchkeepers already at sea. Long-distance boaters number in the thousands.

CBC at Sea is a call to those who spend time at sea to establish a worldwide annual bird count and contribute their ocean sightings to a citizen-science database for the study and conservation of pelagic species. This first event, scheduled for December 2011, is being organized by a group of long-distance mariners from around the world who are also avid birdwatchers.

"If you're on the water and interested in nature, then you can help," says organizer Diana Doyle. "The cruising community is a huge untapped resource for citizen science. We're tuned into the environment, interested in the marine world, and explore less-traveled areas. And there are literally thousands of us out there."

"Research and conservation databases need reports from those of us who spend time on the water," says Doyle. The central clearinghouse for the data will be Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird website, www.ebird.com, which has easy online global lat/long reporting and is available in English, French and Spanish.

—Continued on page 45

HEAR YE, HEAR YE!

A THINKING MAN'S GUIDE TO VOYAGES SOUTH

— The many facets of Caribbean cruising by Frank Virgintino has been released.

It is available **FREE** at:
www.freecruisingguide.com

From Sue Richards, Editor, Noonsite
This is a worthy read and useful reference for all Caribbean cruisers, not just those hailing from N America. A welcome update to "A Gentleman's Guide to Passages South", by Bruce Van Sant.

From Gary E. Brown, Editor, All At Sea
At last here's an up to date in-depth guide for those making a voyageto the Caribbean. Rich in detail and packed with drawings and maps, not only will this book help you get to one of the world's most beautiful cruising grounds, Virgintino will keep you entertained while doing it.

From Sally Erdle, Editor, Caribbean Compass
Like respected authors before him, Frank Virgintino presents comprehensive advice on just about everything North American sailors will need to know to get to the Caribbean safely and enjoy a cruise here. The big difference is that Virgintino takes a wide-angled look at sailing to and cruising in the Caribbean — the WHOLE Caribbean. This was last done by Hart and Stone in 1976 (revised in 1991), and Virgintino's fresh perspective on the big picture is a gift.

Virgintino urges cruisers to get off "the beaten paths" (thorny or not) and consider a number of viable routes from various jumping-off points on the East Coast to various "entrances" into, and landfalls in, the Caribbean. His division of the Caribbean into four quadrants is a neat and functional way of comprehending this vast cruising area, and of getting over the idea that the Lesser Antilles alone are "the Caribbean".
Kudos to "A Thinking Man's Guide" for its wide embrace of the entire Caribbean!

THIS BOOK BROUGHT TO YOU COMPLIMENTS OF MARINA ZARPAR, BOCA CHICA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
www.marinazarpar.com

REGATTA NEWS

Team Antigua Wins 2011 Caribbean Dinghy Championships

Seven nations originally entered the Caribbean Dinghy Championships held in Antigua August 19th through 21st, but owing to Hurricane Irene and other factors, only five actually competed. These were Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, BVI, St. Maarten, and Trinidad & Tobago, each with six sailors per team.

Because of the weather forecast, racing was re-scheduled to the Friday and Saturday only, and the organizers at the Antigua Yacht Club, led by Karl James, worked extra hard to accommodate the changes.



Team St. Maarten prepares to take their first-ever CDC podium place

There were five sailing classes: Optimist for 11 years and under; Zoom 8 for 12 to 16 years, and open classes for Laser Radials, Laser Standard and Sport 16. All the boats are one-person sailing dinghies except for the Sport 16, which carries a two-man crew.

On a low-points scoring system, Antigua came first with 84 points, Trinidad & Tobago (the previous title holder) second with 93 points and St. Maarten third with 120 points. Antigua placed first in only one class, but their combined points were the lowest, giving them the overall best score. It is the first time ever that a team from St. Maarten secured a place on the CDC podium.

The outstanding sailor in the competition was Andrew Lewis of Trinidad, who won all the Laser Standard races. Lewis is on track to qualify for the Olympics and recently took 32nd place in that very competitive class in the pre-Olympics in the UK, the stage for the next sailing Olympics.

Alec Scarabelli of St. Maarten won the Optimist Class over Antigua's Rocco Falcone. Jason Tindale, Barbados, just edged past Antigua's Omari Schot in the Laser Radial Class. Hosea Williams of Antigua held off Kelly Arrindell of Trinidad in the Zoom Class, and Stephane Ferron scraped home in the Sport 16 Class ahead of Andy Morrell of the BVI.

Thanks to the Antigua Yacht Club and the St. Maarten Yacht Club for information in this report. For full results visit www.antiguayachtclub.com.

What's 'Real Different' in November? Curaçao!

Start your season here. The organization of the fourth edition of the Heineken Regatta Curaçao is in full swing, planning three days of racing for the Racing Class and two days for the other yacht classes (Racing-Cruising, Cruising, Open Fun and Multihull). Sailboards and beach cats will compete in separate organized races.



The organizing authority is the Curaçao Sailing Festival Foundation. The event, to be held November 11th through 13th, will be governed by the rules as defined in the ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing (2009-2012). Registration will be at the Regatta Office (Maritiem Museum) on November 10th.

What's different about this regatta? It's based right in the center of town! The Heineken Regatta Village is located at the Kleine Werf (circled on the map) in historic and picturesque Willemstad. The village boasts a great opportunity for non-racers to relax, enjoy food and drinks, have fun with family and friends, and watch the sailing!

For more information see ad on page 12.

Hark — Here Comes the ARC!

Lots of European yachts are now making their way south and west towards the Canary Islands, preparing for the 2011 Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC), which starts on November 20th. This annual transatlantic rally starting in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has become the largest transocean sailing event in the world, bringing more than 200 yachts per year on a 2,700-nautical-mile passage to Rodney Bay, St. Lucia.

For more information visit www.worldcruising.com/arc.

8th Edition of la Course de L'Alliance

To be held from November 25th through 27th this year, la Course de l'Alliance is an initiative of Marina Fort Louis and Yacht Club Fort Louis in St. Martin to cement the alliance between St. Martin, St. Maarten, St. Barths and Anguilla. For the eighth consecutive year, the yacht clubs of these four destinations are organizing a regatta that will start and/or finish at each place.

After each race day, participants are able to relax on a beautiful island and plan their strategies for the next day's race. One of the great things about this regatta is the camaraderie and fun that takes place at each location, and the committee looks forward to seeing all participants on shore after the races. Prizegiving will take place on November 27th at the newly completed Marina Fort Louis Waterfront Restaurant.

For more information visit www.coursedelalliance.com.





Starting Sequence! Preview of Selected Regattas for 2012

January: Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race

For 2012 the organizers are bringing this unique yachting spectacle right into the heart of the island's capital, Bridgetown, recently listed by UNESCO as a World



Heritage Site. Independence Square will be the site of the 2012 Regatta Village, with yachts moored within the historic inner basin of the Bridgetown Careenage, once used by trading schooners to load and unload their wares.

The Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race 2012 program begins on January 19th and will feature an extended social program with the signature Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race, organized by the Barbados Cruising Club in association with Mount Gay Rum and The Barbados Tourism Authority, starting on the morning of Errol Barrow Day — January 21st — a national holiday honouring Barbados' first Prime Minister.

With opportunities for yachts to win their skipper's weight in Mount Gay Rum Extra Old by breaking existing class records, is it time to fatten up your skipper in preparation?

See a video of the 2011 event at http://youtu.be/j2sy369sVOc.

For more information visit www.mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com.

January: Grenada Sailing Festival

You can save money by registering now for Grenada Sailing Festival 2012, running January 27th through 31st and based at Port Louis Marina. You can enter the 2012 Grenada Sailing Festival Camper & Nicholsons Racing Series online at www.yachtscoring.com/event_registration_email.cfm?eID=540.

Boats may pre-register by November 31st, 2011 at a fee of US$150 (US$100 if they sailed GSF 2011). Boats not pre-registered by that date will be charged a fee of US$200 (US$150 if they sailed GSF 2011). Eligible yachts may be entered by sending a completed entry form, by e-mail, post, or by hand, together with the appropriate fee, and a copy of a valid 2011 CSA, IRC, One Design Certificate or J/24 Class Declaration and Amendment that is available on the website. If an entry is e-mailed, it will be accepted on the condition that the original documentation and entry fees are received by the final entry deadline.

But wait — there's more! Camper & Nicholsons Port Louis Marina is offering a 50-percent discount on dockage for up to ten days for yachts taking part in the 2012 Grenada Sailing Festival, provided the berth is pre-booked.



TIM WRIGHT

For more information on Port Louis Marina see ad on page 7.

For more information on the Grenada Sailing Festival visit www.grenadasailingfestival.com.

February: South Grenada Regatta

The fourth Annual South Grenada Regatta will take place February 23rd to 26th, 2012. The South Grenada Regatta is known as an event with lots of character and its own unique style where catamarans meet racing and classic yachts, and veterans, first timers, locals and visitors, young and old, all mingle in an environment of keen



ROBERT DUNKLEY

competition and friendly fun. Non-racers enjoy a multitude of activities ashore and on the water (the "15-horsepower dinghy race" is the favorite for grown-up boys), and the after-race parties rock.

For more information see ad on page 11.

—Continued on next page



—Continued from previous page

February: Club Náutico de San Juan's International Regatta

San Juan, Puerto Rico. Hot competition. Warm, steady breezes. The 11th Club Náutico de San Juan's International Regatta (CNSJIR), set for February 3rd through 5th, 2012 is one of the Caribbean's largest and most competitive dinghy regattas and one not to be missed!

"We expect over a hundred competitors from around the Caribbean and the world," says regatta director, José "Yoyo" Berríos. Classes offered include Optimists (Red, Blue, White and Green Fleets), Lasers (4.7, Radial and Standard), Sunfish, Snipes and 2.4 Meter.

The caliber of racing in San Juan Bay is always top notch, and social activities are part of the fun. Hotels, restaurants, shops, sights and an international airport with direct flights to the Caribbean, US and Europe are all near the Club Náutico de San Juan Yacht Club.

The CNSJIR is an outgrowth of the Club's junior sailing program, launched in the 1970s by Andres Nevares and strengthened in the late 1990s by then-Commodore Richard Christiansen and Ricky Adsuar. The program, directed by Berríos, combines technical knowledge with practical hands-on sailing experience. It is a combination that definitely works: graduates of the program won fleet and team racing awards at the 2008 Optimist World Championships and gold and bronze medals at the 2010 Central American and Caribbean Games in Mayagüez.

For more information visit www.nauticodesanjuan.com/sailingprogram/regatta_int.htm.

March: St. Maarten Heineken Regatta

'St. Maarten's Idol'? Last year the premier cable television sports channel ESPN made a 30-minute special on the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, which was aired in the Caribbean, Australia and the Middle East. ESPN and the Regatta Organization are exploring the possibilities of making this a long-term partnership, which would be a great opportunity for St. Maarten, the Regatta and Caribbean sailing in general.

The 32nd St. Maarten Heineken Regatta will take place March 1st through 4th, 2012 for some 'Serious Fun'! The Race Committee is preparing competitive courses that will suit all the different classes.

For more information visit www.heinekenregatta.com.

March: St. Croix Yacht Club Hospice Regatta

The St. Croix Yacht Club is pleased to announce an expanded format and new dates for the 2012 St. Croix Yacht Club Hospice Regatta. The regatta, which has been the first leg of the four-regatta Cape Air Caribbean Ocean Racing Triangle (CORT) Series, will return to a three-day format and will be moved to the second weekend in March: the 9th through the 11th.

For more information visit www.stcroixyc.com.

March: BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival

Seven days of racing, five separate events, and loads of fun. According to event director, Judy Petz, "Somehow each year we squeeze in just a little more. This year we will expand the International Yacht Club Challenge raced with Sunsail's fleet and include intercollegiate sailing teams among the yacht club teams from around the world" in the 2012 BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival, March 26th through April 1st.

Held annually on the first weekend of April, the BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival will be celebrating its 41st anniversary. The BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival is now one of the top three Caribbean sailing events, with an average of 125 yachts per year with 80 percent of the competitors from overseas. The week features The Sailing Festival, comprised of The Bitter End Cup, the Nations Challenge and The Nanny Cay Cup; plus the Gill BVI International Match Racing Championship and the BVI Spring Regatta.

For more information visit www.bvispringregatta.org.

April: Bequia Heineken Easter Regatta

An early-April date for Easter always means a great turn-out for the Bequia Heineken Easter Regatta, and the 31st annual edition will be held from April 6th through 9th, 2012, with registration and skippers' briefing on the 5th. This ever-popular event attracts top racers (including those vying for the title of Southern



WILFRED DEDERER

Caribbean J/24 Champion), laid-back cruisers, singlehanders, and local sailing craft aficionados from far and near — all converging on "the big little island" for a rousing holiday weekend of fun, both on and off the water.

For more information visit www.begos.com/easterregatta.

April: Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta

Advertisers and sponsors are already committing their support for the 25th Annual Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, which runs from April 19th to 24th, 2012. Many classic yachts from Europe, the US, Australia and the Caribbean islands have indicated their intention to participate in what is expected to be the most magnificent classic regatta in the Western Atlantic. Shoreside fun during the 25th Regatta will be enhanced with new activities.

The ACYR Planning Committee has announced that it will publish an enlarged 64-page commemorative edition programme in honor of the "silver anniversary", with abundant color photographs from previous regattas as well as dockside images of participating yachts. The Regatta is sponsored by the Italian timepiece company, Panerai, and will serve as the springboard for the other nine classic yachts regattas sponsored by Panerai in North America and Europe.

For more information visit www.antiguaclassics.com.

April: *Yachting World* Round Antigua Race

Organizers are delighted to announce the return of the *Yachting World* Round Antigua Race for Antigua Sailing Week 2012. Different for 2012, however, is that it will be an optional race to take place on April 28th, the day before Antigua Sailing Week officially starts. As an optional race, it will be open to all yachts, whether or not entered in Antigua Sailing Week, and will be scored separately from the other Antigua Sailing Week races.


LUCY TULLOCH

Classes for the race will include Maxi and Racing, Sport Boat, Cruising, Multihull, Bareboat and Classic. To be held only a few days after Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta finishes, it will be an ideal way for many classics to complete their Caribbean racing season and it will provide an excellent day of practice for boats preparing to compete in Antigua Sailing Week's full week of racing.

Yachting World Magazine is once again proud to be the sponsor of Antigua Sailing Week's Round Antigua Race and encourages yachtsmen to take on the challenge of breaking the existing Round Antigua Race elapsed time record, currently held by the Farr-designed 115-foot *Sojana,* which completed the race in 4 hours, 37 minutes and 43 seconds in 2009.

For more information about the Yachting World *Round Antigua Race, Antigua Sailing Week, or the Guadeloupe to Antigua Race, visit www.sailingweek.com.*

May: West Indies Regatta, St. Barths

Promoting and encouraging traditional boatbuilding in the Caribbean, the West Indies Regatta is a three-day event held annually over the May Day weekend. The 2012 celebration of traditional West Indian sailing craft will take place May 4th through 7th, out of the port of Gustavia, St. Barths.

For more information visit www.westindiesregatta.com.

July: Carriacou Regatta Festival

This is a genuine Caribbean workboat regatta, but it's one that yachts are more than welcome to join!

Carriacou Regatta Festival started in 1965 as a mere boat-racing event in Hillsborough Bay. It has now grown to become the biggest summer festival in the region. Held over the Emancipation ("August Bank Holiday") weekend each year, it now includes a large number of sporting and cultural activities, ranging from donkey races to beauty pageants. The sailing events focus mainly on the locally built workboats with some 12 different classes of boats and participation from Tobago, Grenada, Canouan, Mayreau, Bequia, Petite Martinique, Antigua and Carriacou. The expertly run yacht races are excellent, too, with the Friday's Double-Handed Round the Island Race a cruisers' favorite.


DAVON BAKER

Carriacou Regatta Festival 2012 events will run from July 29th through August 6th.

For more information visit www.carriacouregatta.com.

December: The Classic Transat to Barbados

Barbados has replaced St. Barths as host for the finish of The Classic Transat. The 2012 event is expected to attract approximately 30 classic yachts sailing from Lisbon to Barbados in December 2012, with a finish in Barbados in mid-January 2013. The intention is that all of these classic yachts will arrive in Barbados in time to take part in the Barbados Round The Island Race 2013.

For more information visit www.transatclassic.com.

This is just a sample of upcoming Caribbean regattas. Stay tuned to Compass *for monthly Regatta News and Calendars of Events!*

DESTINATIONS

SAILING THE CARIBBEAN COAST OF COLOMBIA

Part One: Islas Monjes to Cartagena

by Constance Elson

As a cruising ground, Colombia gets a bad rap. Insurance companies impose a surcharge if you wish to sail in Colombian waters, and blanket warnings persist (e.g. *The Panama Cruising Guide*, fourth edition 2010, page 398: "…most cruisers prefer to give Colombia a wide berth"). In the 1980s and '90s Colombia definitely had major problems with guerrilla groups on the left and the right that kept prudent sailors far from its shores. But after a decade of serious effort, with US support, Colombia is presently very stable and *la violenza* has been reduced to levels typical of other South American countries. Criminal problems with narco spin-off gangs of former *guerrilleros* do continue but only in very specific regions; for Caribbean cruisers the one area that warrants caution is the bottom of the Gulf of Uraba.

Twenty-first century Colombia is a fascinating, dynamic and incredibly beautiful country, with reasonable aspirations of soon joining Latin America's small club of First World nations. The benefits of its robust economic growth are relatively widely (by Latin American standards) enjoyed. Colombia offers unusual cruising destinations and experiences, and its coastal inhabitants who proudly call themselves *costeños* are warm, helpful, friendly and gracious. A little-appreciated fact is that modern Colombians are enthusiastic tourists in their own country, in the mountains and along the coast. A consequence of this is that all its cruising waters also have small hotels, hostels, and resorts catering not to wealthy North Americans and Europeans, but to middle-class and affluent Colombians and to adventurous young backpackers from many countries.

Between November 2010 and May 2011, my sailing partner and I sailed almost the entire length of the Colombian Caribbean coast from the Guajira Peninsula in the northeast to Sapzurro on the Panamanian border. The places we stopped at are all well known to the set of cruisers who sail Panama and Colombia routinely. Good sets of notes exist for separate portions and are listed in the sidebar on page 16, but there is not yet a really comprehensive cruising guide for the entire Colombian coast.

At the risk of seeming presumptuous in writing this based on quite limited experience, I will describe our trip and provide descriptions and anchoring details. Our information is current and I will also point the reader to sources of information for harbors and anchorages we missed. I will also say a little about governmental regulations, which seem to be in a permanently transitional state. I offer this as a travel *aperitif* — with the hope that someone will write a complete travel guide to Colombian waters soon.

Our travels north of Santa Marta took place in November; travels south of Santa Marta took place in April and into May. These "between-season" times may be optimal traveling times; they were certainly good for us. In a month traveling south from Cartagena to Sapzurro, we saw exactly one other sailboat other than at Cholon. I felt I was seeing a glimpse of what cruising in the Caribbean was like 30 years ago: unspoiled, un-*gringo*ed, requiring enterprise and an openness to the unknown, and entirely blissful. So I write this article with mixed feelings. The desire to see others enjoy an overlooked cruising ground and become acquainted with a gracious hospitable people is tempered by the recognition that many of the anchorages I have listed for these waters are fairly small and will not accommodate large numbers of boats.

General Comments

• WEATHER AND WIND. Yes, it can blow really hard, especially along the northern half of the coast and especially during January into April. It is a very bad idea to try to travel these waters on a tight schedule. But all year long, at least once every ten or 12 days, the near-shore winds let up for two to four days at a time, producing manageable, in fact enjoyable, sailing. From May to September almost the entire southwest Caribbean Basin has long periods with much convection and little or no near-shore wind and you can motorsail in almost any direction you choose. Early fall can provide occasional strong westerlies interspersed with calm periods. In the event of a really strong westerly wind, get into a protected anchorage or get offshore. As a general rule, winds and waves are lower very close (less than five miles) to shore. With a relaxed schedule and the assistance of custom weather information, such as provided by Chris Parker, it is quite reasonable to expect to be able to be entirely non-heroic while cruising along the entire Colombian coast.



Fun and funky Taganga Beach near Santa Marta makes a good day-trip destination by boat or by bus. This area is north of the main beach; it's a nice walk over the ridge to get there

• LANGUAGE: The political problems of the 1980s and '90s left Colombia isolated. For a fairly well educated people, surprisingly little English is spoken. Your trip will be much easier and more rewarding if you are willing to speak some rudimentary Spanish; *costeños* cheerfully will speak slowly if you remind them to. "*Hable despacio por favor*" is a useful phrase to learn.

• NAVIGATION: When I give coordinates as four digits, dd°mm' representing degrees and minutes, the purpose is only so you can locate the general area on a map.

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Coordinates given as six digits, dd°mm.mm', with precision to hundredths of a minute, represent accurate positions for navigation. A warning about chart software: south of Cartagena many popular electronic charts are extremely inaccurate. According to our Navionics Gold charts, on several occasions we were anchored a quarter mile inland — disconcerting until we learned to turn the thing off.

• PROVISIONS: The only places where you can get fuel and water dockside are at the marina in Santa Marta and at Club de Pesca in Cartagena, but you can jerry jug diesel and water everywhere. On the southern offshore islands water might be unavailable in dry season. Big cities have big supermarkets and in even the tiniest communities, small *tiendas* sell potatoes, carrots, cabbage, local fresh food in season, tinned food, often good bread and — of course — beer. Cell phone minutes are universally available and if you have a cellphone or 3G modem, you can enjoy WiFi everywhere in Colombia. ATM machines (*cajeros*) that accept international credit cards are available in the cities but are uncommon elsewhere. Banks and a few *tiendas* in smaller communities will sell you Colombian pesos for US dollars.

Los Monjes: The Islas Monjes are Venezuelan, but we include them because they are so often used as a stepping-stone to Colombia from the ABCs. The anchorage (12°21.45'N, 70°54.18'W) is on the southwest side of Isla Monje del Sur. You moor to a two-inch polyester line attached to the sides of an artificially created bay with room for five or six boats. Unless you are absolutely certain the wind will stay north or east, it is wise to drop a stern anchor in 50 feet of water to prevent your boat winding up on the shore side of the big polyester line (as happened to us). The young Venezuelan soldiers who come to your boat to write down your information are stationed there for three-week stints, are polite and will gratefully accept an offer of cold juice or soda. There is no charge for the mooring. An easy hike to the top of the rock provides a great view.

Guajira Peninsula: It is a good idea to get a reliable weather forecast before rounding this cape. We stayed six to 12 miles offshore in eight-foot regular seas and 17 to 25 knots of wind, diminishing to ten knots later, and sailed the 78 miles directly to Cabo de Vela, arriving at the reliable *Pizazz* waypoint (see Cabo de Vela) after dark. We have no first-hand knowledge of the two possible anchorages along the peninsula at Bahia Honda (12°22'N, 71°47'W) and Puerto Bolivar (12°15'N, 71°47'W) but we know sailors who stopped at Bahia Honda for the night and found it adequate. Heading north it would be a very convenient stop. Puerto Bolívar is Colombia's largest coal-shipping port and cruisers are not encouraged to stop there but friends who entered because of engine problems received assistance and were cordially treated. It is well lit at night, with channel markers.

Cabo de Vela: Go inside or outside the small island Cayo del Morro to reach the *Pizazz* waypoint (12°12.25'N, 72°10.69'W) for an anchorage that normally gets you out of the swells. For really bad weather or a longer stay, move in toward the beach keeping well away from the many small plastic bottles which we later learned mark a complete maze of fishing nets and traps of the local Wayu fishermen. We anchored for three days in nine feet of water at (12°12.00'N, 72°09.38'W) during an offshore trough. There was no protection from the northeast wind but the water was completely calm and the holding good. The local fishermen were friendly and curious and the dark huts along the north shore turned out to be mostly *posadas* for adventurous eco-tourists. Check out the surprising Posada Jareena. We had no pesos but bought some from Colombian tourists to buy beer with. The desert landscape invites cross-country hiking. This bay offers no protection in southwest or west winds.

Cabo de Vela to Santa Marta: The rhumb line is a 124-mile passage that puts you 25 miles offshore at times. It is possible to anchor at the town of Rio Hacha, the tourist gateway to the Guajira, but it is an open roadstead and only suitable in light or moderate conditions. Hot tip: if you time your trip so that in the hour before dawn you are about ten miles offshore sailing along 73°40'N, 73°50'W, you may get to see the 18,000-foot snow-covered peaks of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Once the sun rises, these peaks usually disappear into mist. It is an amazing sight.



A Wayu fisherman tends a net from his dugout canoe at Cabo de Vela. There is an eco-hotel ashore

The Five Bays: From east (11°20'N, 74°04'W) to west (11°19'N, 74°10'W) these are Cinto, Nenguage, Guayraca, Chengue and Concha. These steep-sided bays are part of Tayrona National Park and are now (somewhat) regularly visited by the increasingly professional Coast Guard boats from Santa Marta. If your *zarpe* says Santa Marta you will be asked to clear in at Santa Marta before you can return upwind and upcurrent to stay here. If your *zarpe* says Cartagena you will be probably be allowed a one-night yellow-flag stop. In either case you will be permitted to stay if you can realistically plead really bad wind and seas.

International visitors to the park must each pay US$17 at park entrances on land, so don't be outraged if you are asked to pay that. Apparently it is now possible to reach all of these bays by four-wheel-drive vehicle, so if you see a few folks along the shore, they are either indigenous people (usually dressed in traditional white clothing) visiting ancestral holdings or they are tourists who paid an eco-tour operator a lot of money to get there.

Santa Marta: The new Marina Santa Marta is physically beautiful and gives excellent access to the very likeable city of Santa Marta. Entry is at the north side of the extensive breakwater (11°15.00'N, 74°13.01'W) and it is advisable to e-mail the office your arrival plans (info@marinaSantaMarta.com.co) in advance. The marina monitors VHF 68; if no one answers, tie up at the fuel dock at port side of the entry channel and await instructions.

A great deal of money has been spent on docks, plaza, bathhouse and security, all of which are superb. All the staff who work directly with cruisers are welcoming and eager to please. However an ongoing problem is that no one presently associated with the marina has any cruising knowledge and experience; indeed, it is not clear what role serving the cruising community will play in the long-term plans for the marina. We stayed in the marina four months, from December to April (see article in the February 2011 issue of *Compass*). At times the winds blew 40 knots in the marina, placing real strain on the docks. We were glad to be in safe harbor.

Depending on the wind direction, it is possible for a few boats to anchor outside the marina, staying clear of the shipping lanes used by the commercial port. Boaters who choose to anchor out should contact the marina to see whether use of a marina dinghy dock will be permitted; government regulations make this simple courtesy complicated.

Currently there are only two marinas open to transient cruisers along the entire Caribbean coast of Colombia: Club Náutico in Cartagena and Marina Santa Marta. Santa Marta is by far the nicer of the two. Its excellent security makes it the ideal base for land and air travel and Avianca has several daily flights to Bogotá from the local airport. However for extensive boat repairs or haulout, you should go to Cartagena with its better-developed recreational marine industry.

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For an informal cruiser's guide to the town and environs of Santa Marta see www.sailblogs.com/member/tashtego "Guide to Santa Marta".

Taganga and Rodadero: These two bays on either side of Santa Marta are popular beach resorts. They make a very nice day outing from Santa Marta by boat (a *zarpe* may be involved) or by land (a ten-minute bus ride costing 60 cents). Taganga (11°15.94'N, 74°11.60'W) is fun and funky, well advertised in *Lonely Planet* but still very low-key. There is an active scuba shop there. Rodadero, also known as Gaira, (*Pizazz* waypoint 11°12.10'N, 74°13.75'W) is Colombia's version of Copacabana Beach. By day both anchorages require firm discouragement of youthful swimmers or paddle-boaters. By night only Rodadero is a "secure" anchorage. While Santa Marta is now the main northern entry port for clearing in to Colombia it is apparently possible to do so at Rodadero at somewhat lower cost — contact romovela_ltda@hotmail.com.



Above: Statue of Simón Bolivar at Santa Marta

Below: Taganga sunset



Magdalena River: This river is 950 miles long and drains a quarter of the landmass of Colombia; 66 percent of Colombians live in its drainage basin. Offshore an abrupt color change tells you when you have entered its outflow. Some boats cross its mouth (74°51'N, 11°06'W) only two or three miles offshore, keeping close watch for floating debris, cows, etcetera. We remained about nine miles out. We attributed the increasing seas to the river but they turned out to be the beginning of a bad blow that we would have avoided had we remained flexible about our departure date from Santa Marta. (Re-read my weather advice above.) Various entrepreneurs speak about developing facilities for cruisers in Barranquilla but the formidable Magdalena doesn't make that seem very realistic.

Punta Hermosa: This quiet bay behind a long sand bar is conveniently located 16 miles southwest of Barranquilla. Coming from the north the safe waypoint for turning to enter the bay is 10°56.07'N, 75°03.22'W. This is almost a mile west of the waypoint given in the *Pizazz* notes; the sand bar appears to have swallowed up an entire island. Once inside you can proceed north almost to the top of the bay in nine to 12 feet of water. We anchored at 10°56.66'N, 75°02.12'W. There is almost no wind protection but the water is calm and the holding good. It is wonderfully empty, with only a few kite-surfers, weekend sightseers, and a couple of intermittent beach bars.

Next month, Part Two: Cartagena and the offshore islands.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Sailing the coast of Colombia is not a trip that you lay out in detail months before you do it. In the absence of a comprehensive guide, it works better to let your plans evolve as you travel, using information gained from various sources, especially other cruisers who have sailed these waters. Here are the resources we used for our trip.

- *Pizazz* Cruising Guide for Coast of Colombia. For their latest edition contact Lourae and Randy Kenoffel, sy_pizazz@yahoo.com.
- Log of *Jarandeb*, 1994-95 circumnavigation of Caribbean. Contact Dick and Jane Rogavin, jarandeb2@yahoo.com.
- In 2006-7, cruisers based in Curaçao put together extensive information for Cartagena, Curaçao and San Blas. It was assembled and written up by Rija on *S/V Queen of Hearts*, qoh06@hetnet.nl.

There are many good sources of information and trip descriptions on the web:

- Cruisers_Network_Online, www.yahooGroups.com is a great resource with up-to-date firsthand information from a variety of perspectives.
- The Bernon essays, especially Logs 16 and 17, are thoughtful and relevant: www.BoatUS.com/cruising.
- I have written more informal commentary about portions of our trip: www.sailblogs.com/member/tashtego.

Finally I thank the many, many cruisers from Trinidad to Panama who freely shared information and advice based on their experiences in southwestern Caribbean waters.



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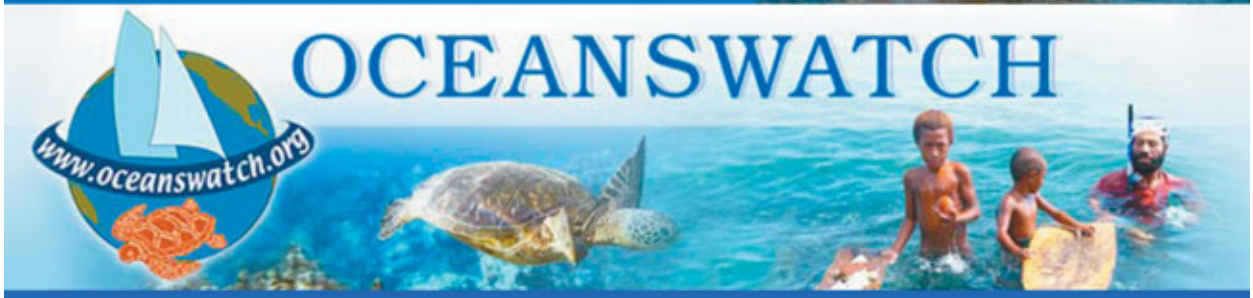
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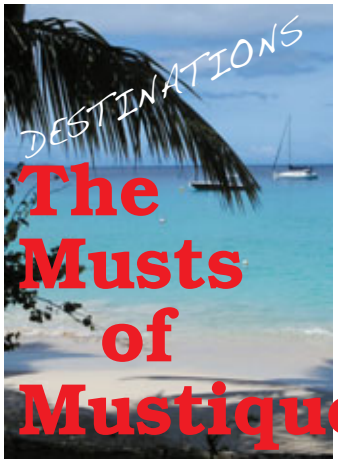
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The Musts of Mustique



by Lena Padukova

Our plan was to sail the Caribbean on a strict budget. You know the drill — no beer except at happy hours, no eating out, no expensive shopping, no costly anchorages. We really tried, making callaloo soup instead of going to fancy restaurants, baking our own bread and learning how to do all repairs onboard to eliminate the need for expensive mechanics and contractors. We chased bargains at the local stores, and argued lovingly with fruit ladies about the prices, which in itself can be a wonderfully charming experience.

So when the island of Mustique came within our cruising limits, we looked at each other, shook our heads, and said "No". The mooring fee was too high, starting at EC$75 for three days, and there was no alternative of anchoring. The restaurants on the island had a reputation of being extraordinarily luxurious, and the low frequency of supermarkets would most probably result in non-existent competition and prices that are higher than anything we've seen. So no — we would just not go there.

We'd sailed down to Bequia, and anchored in Admiralty Bay for the night. During the evening, we took a stroll to the deli store, and motored off in the morning to fill our diesel tank. The stay left us with the following questions: how can the diesel dock on land be more expensive than the diesel boat in the middle of the bay? And how can there be a thing such as expensive cheap red wine? After completing our chores, we weighed anchor for Canouan and Tobago Cays, setting a course of 270 degrees and rounding West Cay before heading south, soon realizing that we would have a good breeze on our nose and would have to motor all the way. That's when we glimpsed Mustique on the horizon.

Despite our intentions of not going there, we had read a lot about the island in our guidebook (Chris Doyle, what would we do without you?). We had read about the celebrities living on the island, and that the island is a nature reserve (which explains the high mooring fees and the flawless beaches), that the island is privately owned, and the services are above any expectations. Still, it didn't matter that we could bump into Mick Jagger in the supermarket, or risk an after-dinner chat with David Bowie, or have any of the movie stars, singers and models over to our boat just to show around and have a drink (of course they would come; they must think sailing is the most exciting thing in the world, right?). But hold your horses! Our budget, already strained by the newly purchased boat equipment and the numerous happy hours of Sint Maarten, could not handle it. We were definitely not going.

Or were we? We looked at each other, the silhouette of Mustique, now clearly visible to our port side, within just a few miles. "Should we?" we asked each other, and the answer was never spoken, but it hung in the air like a glamorous neon sign. I firmly turned the helm to port, and off we went, through the passage between Pigeon Island and Isle de Quatre.

We knew anchoring is forbidden in Mustique, and there were only a few moorings, so we hoped that all of them wouldn't be taken, which would have forced us to turn around. The mooring fee is good for three days' stay, which boils down to a decent rate per day after all, especially considering that the moorings here are in a very good state, something quite unusual here in the Windwards. Often, moorings can be highly unprofessionally installed (common in Bequia among other islands), or chafed (like in Statia and Saba, many missing the pendant to catch with the boat hook), and it's imperative to snorkel or dive down to check the condition of the anchoring and the rode.

Not only the moorings were different here. After sailing around in the Windwards, the complete absence of "boat boys" is a true blessing. When we were finally approached by a boat, I put on my harshest facial expression, ready to chase away whoever was going to offer me oysters – fresh fish – fruits – ice – hiking tours – lobster or whatever. But the gentleman from the boat had nothing to offer except a charming smile, some advice about the island, including the evening dress code for the restaurants (long pants/dress), and — unexpectedly — an invitation to a local village barbecue on the beach. It was the harbour captain, dressed in an immaculate white shirt, and he promptly arranged all the papers and receipts needed to settle the mooring fee. I felt that I already liked the island...

Since all aboard *S/Y Space* very much enjoy gourmet food, we decided that since we were already here then we might as well visit the restaurants and see whether they really have as much luxury to offer as we had hoped. As the harbour master informed us, there were four restaurants on shore: one "local" eatery, and three gourmet places to explore — Basil's Bar, Cotton House, and Firefly. We started with the last one of them.

Firefly is situated uphill from the harbour, with a stunning view and lush surroundings, but it might feel like an unnecessarily long walk, unless you are very athletic or hyperactive. If you make a reservation, they will send a car to pick you up for a free ride from the harbour, and will get you back to the dinghy dock when you're done for the night. Conveniently, it's possible to call them and make a reservation directly from Basil's Bar... eventually... after a few wicked sunset cocktails!

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Despite trying to stick with the budget, we had been to many a so-called high-end restaurant in the Caribbean, from St. Martin and Tortola to Guadeloupe, and have mostly been disappointed, often by the service, sometimes with the food, almost always by the sommeliers. So when we were met by attentive staff at Firefly's luxuriously crisp balcony dining room, receiving a fair wine list, we realized that our expectations might be both met and exceeded. A warm rosemary and feta cheese snack set on our table as a welcome — an *amuse-bouche* — and an exciting menu made the impression even better. We came back to Firefly two days later for another round of their grilled beef of excellent cut. And I confess that the desserts had us coming back there a third time.



Left: A table at the Cotton House

Top right: Basil's, one of the top ten bars in the world

Bottom right: The streets of Mustique, decorated in celebration of the good life

After having had the pleasant experience at Firefly, we decided to try the Cotton House, which seemed to be an even more impressive place. It's a longer walk, but you can phone them also, from your boat or from Basil's Bar, and they will send a ride to get you. Our guidebook stated that the Cotton House is one of the fanciest hotels in the Caribbean, and the restaurant would have top chefs. The expectations were soaring as we entered the magnificent Great Room, and lingered by the bar for a glass of champagne. If any place could beat that lovely food of Firefly's, it would have to be here.

Just like at all the other places in Mustique, it was not a problem to get a table at the Cotton House. In the beginning of April, right between the US and UK vacation weeks, only a few guests come to the island, meaning that only a few couples (all cruisers from the look of it) occupied the places around us; most tables were free. The linen tablecloth reached all the way down to the floor, the candles were flickering and the ambience was highly luxurious; I remember thinking that "someone here knows how to create a dining atmosphere".

However, the food was not to match the surroundings. The menu was predominantly Italian/international, and we were served an *amuse-bouche* as a flirt with the Italian theme: the waiter announced "a spicy meatball". Although impressed by their initiative, I found it rather tasteless, an impression that was not altered by the appetizers and the main course. We ordered their finest meat, but it did not reach the high quality one could expect from a place with this reputation: it was tough and rather tasteless. As we complained to the waiter, we were met with a nonchalant approach. I guess that if I were a well-to-do resident of the island, someone like Kate Moss or Bill Gates, then the staff would listen more carefully to my feedback, and perhaps even offer a replacement for the main course. But I was neither a resident of the island nor a famed celebrity, so we just left the main course uneaten, drank up the (rather mediocre) wine that the waiter had recommended, and left the place. Truly a shame, and hopefully just a day's glitch in the overall quality — I would love to get back there one day and imbibe the ambience once again. They serve "afternoon tea" which I would very much like to try; especially since it can be enjoyed during daylight hours when it's possible to fully take pleasure in the view and the surroundings, as well as the taxi ride there.

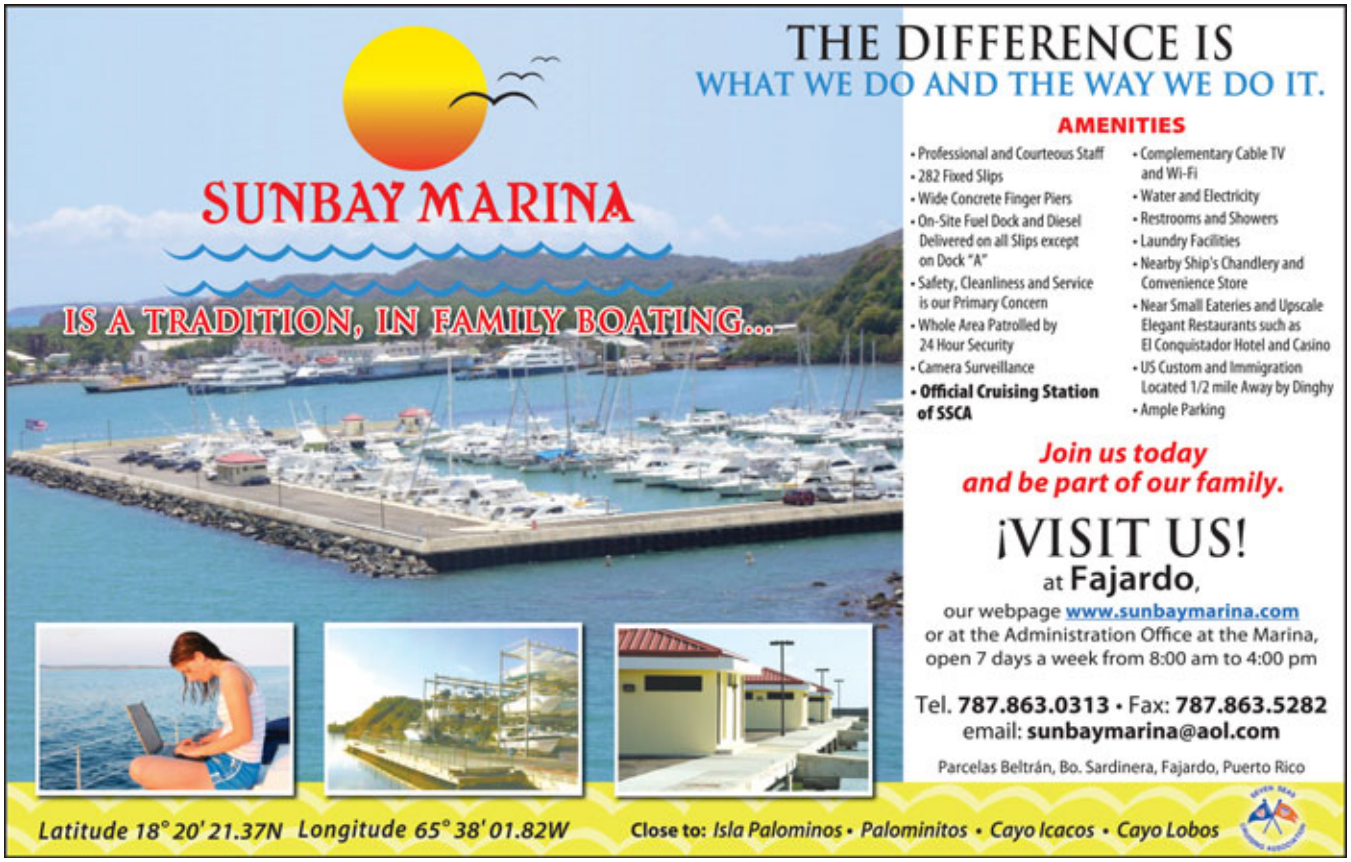


After seeing the possible contrast between the different restaurants in Mustique, we decided to check out Basil's Bar. It's hard to miss for the boat folks — it's located just by the mooring area of Britannia Bay, protruding over the gentle waves — and we had more than a few drinks there during daytime and sunsets, making use of their free internet and power sockets. The staff are eager to serve you in any way possible, and they don't forget to let you know that you're welcome for dinner, an invitation that we declined for a few days but finally could not resist.

After trying their lunches, we suspected that the food would be above average but costly, but our minds were changed briskly as the dinner came in. Served with freshly baked bread and gorgeous wine, and made with excellently chosen ingredients, the meal was splendid, the most memorable being the shellfish concoction over pasta. Apart from the food, the bar there ranks as one of the top ten in the world, which the owners are very fond of proclaiming. Don't miss their specials that may include evening barbecue or live music, and which draw quite a crowd even off-season. And, of course, do enjoy the drinks, which are made with fresh fruit, a lot of delicious liquor, and topped off with fresh Grenadian nutmeg.



When we finally left Mustique, we had stayed for so long that we had to miss out on the Tobago Cays and head straight to Union Island to clear out for Grenada, as we were picking up new crew and needed to get going. But it was worth it: this visit to the island, with its lovely protected nature, its amazing beaches — and some exceptionally fine dining, which was truly a must!



Suriname:
A Destination for Sailors? Why Not!
Part Two:

The Four Tops

DESTINATIONS

by Petra and Jan Willem Versol





ALL PHOTOS VERSOL

Main photo: A fairy tale scene at Laarwijk. Inset: Kids with a monkimonki
Top right: The Kabalebo River, one of the most beautiful areas of Suriname

Part One of "Suriname: A Destination for Sailors" provided a general introduction to this relatively new cruising destination. In Part Two, we give you our four top reasons to visit Suriname.

A Unique Jungle Experience Aboard Your Yacht

If you want to explore any island in the Caribbean, you anchor in a bay and take a bus or hire a car to see the sights. But in Suriname things are different. Suriname has four main rivers flowing from south to north, and there are innumerable intersecting rivers and canals. Some of them are navigable, even for a yacht drawing over two metres.

The Commewijne River, a wide side-river to the Suriname River, is dotted with historic plantations, some of which are restored to their old glory. The most splendid one is Frederiksdorp, where, with a bit of luck, you can even experience a Javanese *djaran kepang*.

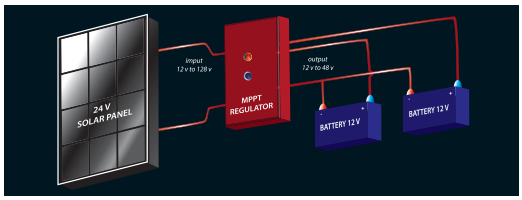
A *djaran kepang* is a traditional Javanese (Indonesian) show. The dancers come on stage as horses and gallop around accompanied by special gamelan music. Their leader, who obviously has control over certain natural powers, leads the dancers into a trance, changing them into monkeys, snakes or tigers. The show can be rather gruesome, especially when the dancers become tigers and then chomp on live chickens.

In our case — a wedding — the dancers luckily changed into monkeys and this was very funny to watch. The monkeys husked coconuts with their teeth and did funny things such as holding a piece of husk to an ear and pretending to make a telephone call with this "cell phone", holding up a stick as an antenna. One very cheeky monkey teased the bride by wearing a dress and putting two half coconuts underneath as breasts. With an even bigger coconut on his belly he lay on the ground pretending he was a woman giving birth.

The leader keeps his "monkeys" under control because things can get out of hand easily. If necessary he soothes the dancers; to free them from their trance, he mumbles incantations.

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—*Continued from previous page*

Once awoken, they are confused and sometimes ashamed because they can't remember what they've done. Perhaps it is all inspired comedy, but anyhow, it is a splendid show and not to be missed.

From Frederiksdorp you navigate upriver for 13 miles and continue to port on the Cottica River. From here on, you'll find yourself in the jungle. The Cottica is not wide but it is deep and there is plenty of room to anchor. Be sure your boat is well lit at night, because bauxite freighters come downriver and perhaps they want you to move a bit. Inform MAS (Maritime Authority Suriname, www.mas.sr) on VHF 12 or 16 before you go up Commewijne and Cottica and they will warn the freighters to expect you.

Along the Cottica River are plenty of small *marron* villages. *Marrons* are descendants of slaves who rebelled against their oppressors and ran away into the jungle. Nowadays they still live close to nature and they are famous for their knowledge of the medicinal powers of plants. They are especially good at healing broken bones (even some orthopedic surgeons in Paramaribo send their patients to bush doctors) and with their ointments brewed from leaves they also cure gaping wounds in limbs which in regular hospitals would have been amputated. We have seen it with our own eyes and it is fascinating.

The Cottica is navigable up to Moengo.

The Delights of Domburg

Domburg is a former cocoa, coffee and citrus plantation and now a lovely village. All the basics are there: ATM, supermarkets, daily fruit and vegetable market, cybershop, barber, service station, outpatient clinic, etcetera. The central square is shaded by huge mahogany trees and lined with Javanese *warungs*: small restaurants where you can enjoy local food such as fried rice or noodles with chicken and vegetables, or deep-fried cassava with spicy fish for less than three US dollars per portion. Rita's sailors' pub is the yachties' favourite hangout. Leave your dinghy on the small beach and join the fun!

On weekdays there is not a lot of activity other than Rita's pub and some locals who are liming in the shadows, but on Sundays Domburg is crowded with people who come to spend their day off. All eateries are open then, firing up barbecues to serve roasted chicken and chicken- or even caiman-kebabs. Try *peijil* at the Javanese market: vegetables topped with a spicy peanut sauce and served in a banana leaf.

A good hike from Domburg is to go into La Rencontre. Walk from the main square to the left directly into the first dirt road (La Rencontre 1e straat), past the small cemetery at the curve. Cross the bridge over the picturesque lock (still functioning!) and go left; follow the road to the second lock and walk straight into the forest. Wear rubber boots in the wet season and bring mosquito repellent as there might be a few troubling you there. But this won't spoil your stroll; this place is a beauty spot, making you feel as if you were in the Garden of Eden! Enjoy the lush greenery, the sunlight filtering through the leaves, see the flowers (there are lots of *palulu*, a huge red jungle flower), hear and see the birds, the *sapacaras* (giant lizards), and more wildlife right on your path.

Visit Little Paradise, a botanical garden and guesthouse owned by Erik and Neeta Kuiper. They are happy to tell you all about tropical trees, medicinal plants and herbs, and exotic fruits and flowers. Little Paradise is located on the Para-Boxelweg, about 30 minutes walking distance from Domburg. There is no fixed entry fee, but a small donation is welcome. Be sure they are home by calling in advance +597 370111. Most probably you can also arrange that they pick you up in Domburg. Erik and Neeta also serve meals on request and the food they serve here is surely the best in the area.

The ferries on the jetty go to Laarwijk (check the timetables in Rita's pub) where you can enjoy Surinamese country life at its best! Have your camera standing by upon arrival at the creek, as the views are like scenes from a fairy-tale.

The PDP (Paramaribo/Domburg/Paramaribo) bus is the local bus to town; the fare is 3 SRD (less than one US dollar). There is no schedule; they leave from town when full and pick you up when they return. Be aware that the buses are used by people who work in the city, so from 5:30 to 9:00AM they run frequently but between 10:00AM and 2:00PM you may have to wait a long time. The last bus leaves Paramaribo around 5:00PM; ask the driver.

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Domburg's central square (left) is shaded by mahogany trees and lined with small Javanese restaurants. Rita's pub (right) is the yachties' favourite hangout

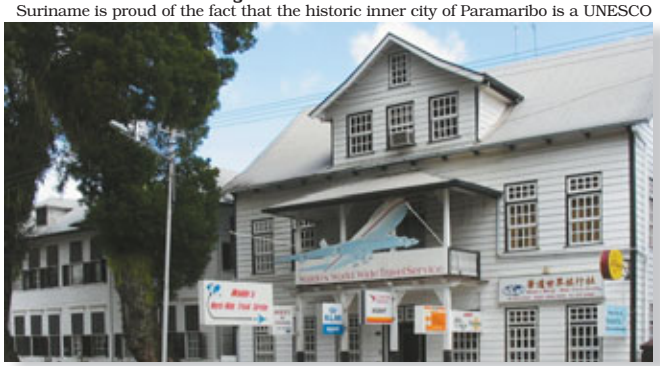


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Domestic flights depart from Zorg en Hoop in Paramaribo to more than 30 airstrips in the interior. International flights go from Zanderij (Johan Adolf Pengel Airport) to Amsterdam (daily), Trinidad (almost every day), Curaçao, Belém (Brazil) and Miami.

Paramaribo's World Heritage Site

Suriname is proud of the fact that the historic inner city of Paramaribo is a UNESCO



Heerenstraat. Wooden buildings are a feature of Paramaribo

World Heritage Site. The original and characteristic street plan dating from the 17th century is still completely intact, but the true stars are the famous wooden buildings.

Walk about in the inner city and see all the highlights. The Sts. Petrus & Paulus Cathedral (1883) was recently restored and is now (after nine years) again open to visitors. It is the biggest wooden building in South America and both the façade and the interior are impressive. Don't miss Fort Zeelandia, Palmentuin (Palm Tree Garden) and Waterkant (Waterfront); a spot full of atmosphere where we recommend dining on the Creole specialty *heri heri*.



Above: The beach at Galibi nature reserve, located in the Marowijne district

Below: Marron women in the remote village of Gunsi



Conspicuous in the street scene are the many hand-painted advertisements; the "wild buses"; the snowcone sellers; and the men carrying bird cages (there are bird singing contests at 6:00AM on Sunday mornings on Independence Square). Paramaribo is incomparable.

Stocking up in Suriname is a feast. There are several huge supermarkets, carrying both Dutch and American products, transport by bus is cheap and you can always consider taking a taxi back to Domburg for around US$12 to $15.

Health care is excellent in several big hospitals in town and polyclinics in the villages. Malaria is not an issue anymore (but check if you want to be certain).

Tours to the Interior

Take a tour with Mr. Twist! Mr. Twist is an extremely experienced guide but more importantly, he is a very helpful and friendly man who knows everybody in Suriname, and everyone knows him. The most important thing about Twist is that you can trust him. He has wide experience with sailors and knows what they enjoy. Of course you can discuss your destination(s) with Twist, but probably he will propose taking you to a secluded *marron* village, an indigenous village (Caribs), Brownsberg (a nature park) and he will stop along the way whenever he sees something that might be of interest.

Mr. Twist will show you the lives and ways of the Caribs, which are very much the same as 50 years ago, but one thing has changed: they have cell phone coverage now, and even computers and other electronic gadgets have found their way into the interior. The Caribs consider all this fancy stuff as a most wonderful contribution to their lives and the latest trend now is to name their children after these modern toys. "Toshiba and Facebook, come home at once!" "Mom, can I go play at Blackberry's this afternoon?"



A Carib chief playing a bone flute and a turtle-shell drum

You can also ask Twist to take you to Matapica for two days, in a pirogue through the breathtaking swamps, where you can watch the leatherback turtles nesting on the beach.

Twist will tell you about nature and wildlife, about the ways of the locals in the villages, history, and more. Your day out with him will be a great experience and something you will never forget. Call Twist at +597 404450 (home) or +597 813-9768. If you are not able to reach him, try contacting us at pjwversol@hotmail.com.

If you want something special, Kabalebo Nature Resort is a luxurious lodge located in one of the most beautiful areas of Suriname, deep in the untouched and malaria-free rainforest. Check it out on www.kabalebo.com.

Or explore on your own!

There are not many places where you can go without a tour guide, but the remote *marron* village of Gunsi is one of them and it is even possible to go there by bus, so this trip is quite inexpensive. Arrange with eco-resort Tei Wei's manager Dennis (tel. +597 856-1452) to pick you up by boat in Atjoni, the buses' final destination. Stay for a couple of nights in a *marron* hut, hike into the jungle (with a guide), bathe in the river while enjoying the massaging rapids and let the villagers cook for you.

Suriname does not have many beaches, but the most splendid one is found in Galibi. Be a guest in a Carib's home, enjoy family life, and in the meantime watch the leatherbacks and visit the zoo; a unique experience because only the caimans and the boa constrictor are kept in cages. All the other animals walk about freely!

More outings you can do on your own: go to Braamspunt with your own boat and watch the dolphins underway. Visit the fish and shrimp dryers on the beach and spend the night at anchor.

Fort Nieuw-Amsterdam is interesting. To visit, rent a bike in Paramaribo and cross the river by ferry. Or rent a car and drive to Coronie, a laid-back district where people live at a very slow pace. Admire the well-kept wooden homes in Totness, then go on to Nickerie to watch the scarlet ibis at Bigi Pan.

The list of things to see and do in Suriname is endless. Before you know it you have spent several months here; if you're spending the hurricane season, it will be gone in the twinkling of an eye. Then you'll be ready to sail again, refreshed, recharged and delighted to have found such a fine destination as Suriname.

Marine Stores and Facilities

The one and only chandler in Suriname is NV Propellor (Industrieweg 18c, tel. [597] 481348, e-mail: propeller@sr.net). Don't expect too much but still they might surprise you with what they actually have in stock. Go by bus, as the store is near Paramaribo.

In case of emergency, Holsu (the fish company in Domburg) may be able to help you out or arrange a mechanic. Also there are many mechanics, welders, electricians, etcetera in town and around CEVIHAS, the only place where you might be able to have your boat lifted. Talk about your problem in the sailor's pub and surely everybody wants to be of assistance.

Remember you are in South America, where people are creative and clever in finding solutions without spending too much money. You'll find many skilful mechanics, electricians, welders, and the like, but nobody is really specialized. So depending on the problem you have, check the Yellow Pages or just ask around.

For batteries and electrical parts check Cormoran at Burenstraat 9.

The following outboard suppliers are all in Paramaribo:

Yamaha: Wagenwegstraat 53

Evinrude and others: try the shop next door to the Yamaha dealer, they carry parts for many brands and are very helpful.

Mariner: Dr. Sophie Redmondstraat 2-12

Tohatsu: Dr. F Nassylaan 47

Petra and Jan Willem Versol have been cruising the Caribbean on the 40-foot ketch Witte Raaf *for five years and also have a home in Suriname. You will find lots of information on their website, www.witteraaf.info, and you can contact them at pjwversol@hotmail.com; they are happy to be of assistance.*

Petra says, "After our short article was published in the June issue of Compass, we had several e-mails from sailors who asked for more information because they definitely want to come to Suriname. One of them even wrote, "This is exactly what we've been waiting for!"

Detailed pilotage information on Suriname is available at www.cruiserlog.com/wiki/index.php?title=Suriname.

A Side-Step from Suriname to Brazil

by Petra and Jan Willem Versol



Above: Passengers' hammocks on the ferry's middle deck
Bottom: Renovated facades in Belém, founded in 1616

Belém, in Brazil, is a no-go area for yachts, as the Amazon estuary is infamous for piracy. But if you hop over by plane from Suriname, you can enjoy this magnificent typical and unspoiled Brazilian city, and even take an Amazon cruise, worry free. Surinam Airways runs direct flights to Belém four times a week for (as of this writing) only US$250 round trip. Be sure you have a yellow fever vaccination.

Belém, founded in 1616, is beautiful and ugly at the same time. Horrendous 30-storey apartment buildings, dirty housefronts and broken pavements sit beside many majestic old buildings, beautifully renovated façades, streets hooded with mango trees, traditional mosaic pavements, many neatly kept parks and old docks transformed into a tasteful entertainment district.

Touristy? Most of the tourists are Brazilians so you won't even notice them. The most important meeting point is the Ver-O-Peso ("Check-The-Weight") market on the waterfront, crammed with small shops selling nuts and herbal medicines, and many street vendors adding to the melee. This is the place to go for a beer. Contacts will be many, as Brasileiros love to express their appreciation of tourists other than fellow countrymen, and they often come over and shake hands.

In Belém we embarked on *N/M Clívia* — shipping onions, tomatoes and lots of other stuff, plus 70 passengers — and "cruised" to Santarém. The trip (US$80) took three days and nights, making 500 nautical miles against a current of two to four knots — and it was great fun! The meals (US$3 for a generous portion) invariably consisted of rice, spaghetti, beans and coleslaw, and chicken, beef or pork cutlets. The lower deck is reserved for the cargo so all the passengers' hammocks are crammed on the middle deck. Imagine sleeping with 70 Brazilians (all only communicating in Portuguese) on 80 square metres! But although criminality is an issue in Brazil, we never worried about inquisitive fingers in our luggage during the moments we spent in the bar on the upper deck, where the volume of the TV and/or CD player is pumped up to the max as Brazilians just love noise.

The landscape is spectacular and the trip very exciting. So were the contacts with the indigenous people in pirogues, most of them kids, who come close to the boat hoping to catch a little something. The older kids are true daredevils as they hook on at full speed (using a home-made steel hook) and climb on board to sell mangos, avocados and hearts of palm. The hooking on is actually quite risky and the releasing perhaps even more tricky.

The navigation is also interesting: no charts on board! No log or speedometer either, and also no GPS (why would you need one if you don't have a chart?). Actually the passengers were not allowed in the pilothouse, but the helmsman was very pleased with all the interest from our side. Or was he lured by the fact that each time we came around, we brought him a can of Coca-Cola?

At Santarém we got on a bus to Alter do Chão, a famous tourist spot nearby. Here we hired a local guide, who took us on a tour through the rainforest. This was not a tour on foot, as it normally would be, but by pirogue because the rainforest was completely flooded. So we navigated through the branches and treetops. This was not easy and the longtail outboard engine got stuck frequently. While the skipper was paddling in the front, JW kept control over the rear end of the boat, and in the meantime he also killed an entire ant colony hiding on a bromeliad! Superman!

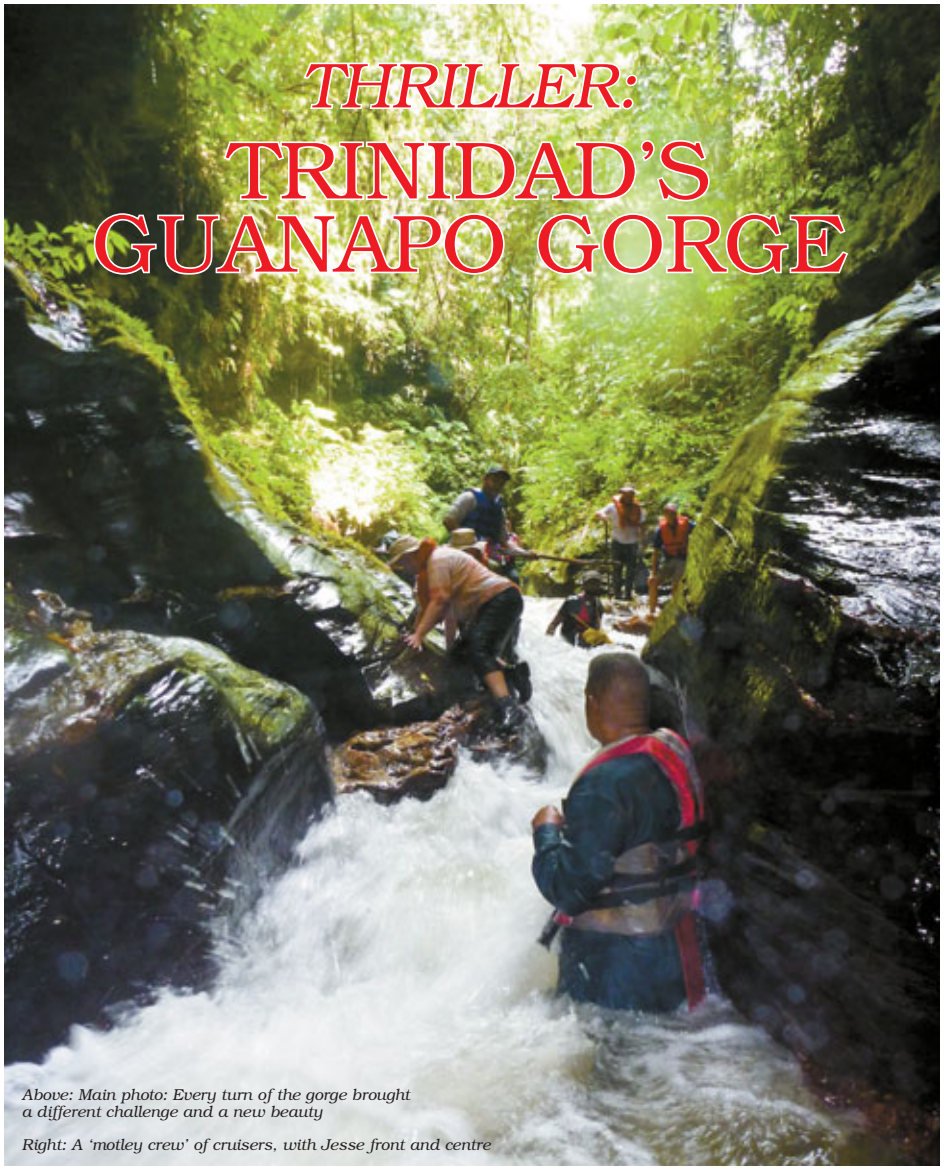
From Santarém you can fly back to Belém (domestic flights are inexpensive) and from there, back to Suriname — where you'll appreciate the peace and quiet even more after busy and bustling Brazil!







THRILLER: TRINIDAD'S GUANAPO GORGE



Above: Main photo: Every turn of the gorge brought a different challenge and a new beauty

Right: A 'motley crew' of cruisers, with Jesse front and centre

by Mike Perrin

As cruisers from the UK, my wife, Pat, and I look upon our boat, *El Lobo*, as a portable home from which we can explore the countries we choose. We enjoy hiking, and in Trinidad we consulted intrepid taxi and tour operator Jesse James. He suggested visiting the Guanapo Gorge. He had done it before and thought it would live up to our expectation. I announced the idea over the cruisers' net for a couple of days and in a short time we had a full complement for Jesse's bus. Those who took part were David and Angie from *Hurrah*, Neville and Glenys on *Alba*, Ian and Jackie on *Blackthorn Lady*, Joe on *Peregrine*, Rixzene from *Pogeyan*, Gerwald and Corinna on *Bellatrix* and of course Pat and yours truly — a motley crew ranging from the almost geriatric to the slightly younger and more supple.

We also liased with Laurence Pierre, alias Snakeman (or Snake to his friends), who was to be our guide. Snake recommended that we wear long pants and sleeves, and bring a packed lunch, bug repellent, a change of dry clothes and a life jacket. This last item could have been a problem, as the inflatable type we use for sailing would not fare well in the conditions we were going to encounter. Help came from our friend Peter on *Passagemaker*, an old traditional motorsailer, aboard which he inherited numerous items including a multitude of buoyancy aids.

Getting There

So the date was set and after a 0600 hours pick-up from our various marinas, off we went, heading for Arima where we met Snake at one of Jesse's favourite 'doubles' stops where Jesse then treated us all to one of his favourite snacks. The gang was augmented with a few more in a Toyota Hilux, two of whom were Jesse's brothers, Daniel and Davy. Their friends Billy and Mark completed the team. Once fed and watered we set off into the Northern Range, climbing all the time. As we progressed, the area became less densely populated and the roads worsened. We met little traffic and by the time our convoy reached the start point of our adventure there were few houses. We parked at what would be classed as a viewpoint in a tourist area, with a view across the valley to the mountains on the other side.

Here, Snake gave us his pep and safety talk and explained what we were about to subject ourselves to! He also reminded us why we should cover ourselves when walking. We would be walking through a rainforest that does have snakes, and anything you can put between them and you can only be beneficial. There are also the bugs that look for something to annoy, plus we would be likely to encounter razor grass and a few thorns. We were also advised that the trip could be called off at a moment's notice if the weather turned nasty.

We set off down a steep track, which at some time in the past had been tarmac. What was going through my mind (and probably everybody else's) was that we were going to have to walk back up this. We reached a disused cocoa house and regrouped under a mango tree with ripe fruit and fed off its abundant store. Around this cocoa house there was of course an old cocoa plantation and there are still a few trees left, which Snake pointed out to us. Refreshed, we set off, descending farther into the valley along a barely discernible trail when the heavens opened. We then knew we were in a rainforest! The trail led into a small watercourse, which with the rain was flowing well. As we followed this stream it then joined on to another larger one — the Guanapo River. This was the start of the gorge.

The Gorge

The gorge is narrow with high cliffs either side. Our first of many challenges along the route was a waterfall about six feet high and no way of climbing down. We had to jump into the water from the top of the fall. There was no backing out. Luckily the water was warm and the plunge was quite invigorating. The water was deep and we had a short swim to shallower water. It was then that we all appreciated the life jackets, as swimming in the turbulent water with a backpack would have been a little hairy.

From here we walked and sometimes swam to the next obstacle, which was a choke with bits of a tree and branches. It was at a narrow point, which made the current quite a bit stronger and not so easy for the non-fluid human form to pass through. So it was a scramble over the branches and into more deep water, trying to avoid getting feet tangled in what was underwater and invisible. Here it was not so much of a swim as just letting yourself be carried along in the current until your feet could touch bottom again.

The cliffs are about 100 feet high in places, with beautiful undulating curves that have been carved out by the water over thousands of years. At the top are trees and ferns, vines and creepers, hanging almost down to the water. You could almost imagine Johnny Weissmuller swinging overhead trying to see where Jane had got to with the shopping. Every turn of the gorge brought a different challenge and a new beauty. In places the gorge narrows to where you can touch both sides at the same time. It then dawns on you that if there was really heavy rain, this gorge could become impassable in a very short time through the sheer volume of water. We saw very little wildlife in the gorge and soon I began to wonder what it was that they knew that I didn't!

We did a couple more waterfalls and then came to a narrow bit with the water just cascading through. It was a matter of sitting down in the water and letting yourself be carried, at some speed I might add, through the chute and around the corner. Others who had passed through were out of sight so they were unable to warn followers that there were a few small boulders within the chute that had little respect for bottoms, so most of us finished up with a few bruises on the fleshier part of our anatomy. Angie, however, managed to acquire a rip to the back of her shorts and was exposing more of her anatomy she would have wished. Prepared as we were, nobody had a sewing kit to alleviate her embarrassment. In true British style she carried on regardless.



Our next obstacle was yet another waterfall, with a large tree trunk forming part of it. Here Snake tied a rope to the tree and Jesse was the first down. It was about a ten-foot drop but the water was too shallow to just jump down, so in turn we lowered ourselves down the rope and Jesse was there to assist before another swim along a twisty passage before we could touch bottom again. Jesse had to avert his eyes as Angie came down the rope!

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A Respite

After a longer swim/drift we came to a shallower stretch and a wide bank where we stopped for lunch. This was when we found out whether our attempts at waterproofing our packages were successful or not. There were a few soggy sandwiches but most of us enjoyed reasonably dry sustenance. We discussed our experience so far and it was unanimous that this was a real adventure. Snake had taken all the precautions that could be expected in a sane world. However, at the start of the trip, Snake indicated a secret spot where he had hidden the keys to his car in the case of an emergency. However if such an emergency occurred, we reckon that we would be hard pushed to even find his car from where we were!



During lunch we were treated to an aerial display of some Blue Emperor butterflies. These are butterflies with a wingspan of six or seven inches, with brown undersides to their wings but beautiful iridescent blue topsides that literally sparkle in the sun. It seemed a privilege to witness their display as part of their comparatively short life. The only other life we saw were some rather ornate dragon flies with either red or blue bodies, but I felt that there must have been other eyes upon us from the canopies of the trees as we plunged through the gorge.

Farther Downstream

Our trip was by no means over. After a short rest we headed off farther downstream with the gorge now behind us. We waded along the watercourse to another small waterfall and then into another narrow section, which was also deep. So another swim and drift along at a little more sedate pace to the next set of shallows. We then came to a tributary emerging from another small gorge with a semblance of a small island at its mouth. Snake indicated that there was a small waterfall and a pool at its base, but the current issuing was fairly swift, so the local lads went in with a rope to assist those who wanted to have a look. As soon as this was rigged, the heavens opened with a heavy downpour. Snake then shouted to those who had started in to come back out. Any extra water coming through this narrow gap would have made the stay inside untenable and the passage back out extremely dangerous.

We were already wet so the rain didn't bother us much. We were just a few yards now from the entrance back into the jungle and the trek back to our transport. Snake led us up through the forest at a pace that we all could follow, so that the group was always together without stragglers. This was not a well-used path and difficult to follow, but Snake knows his job and successfully led us along a route he knew. After a long steady climb back up through the trees and undergrowth we eventually arrived back at the cocoa house and the mango tree and a short, well-earned rest.

Getting Back Up

Now we had the steep climb back up the track to the 'main' road, the bit I was not looking forward to. We trudged up the hill at a really slow pace, some of us slower than others, and when we were about halfway Daniel came down the hill in the Hilux to collect the stragglers, of which I was one. We jumped on board as he was still going down hill and hung our legs over the back. 'Jumped' may not be the correct word here, it was more like a mammoth effort to heave our aching bodies up that massive three feet into the back of the truck. I couldn't turn my body to be able to see just how many had climbed aboard, as I was well jammed up against another body. (It felt female, but gentlemanly conduct prevents me from revealing which part of which body gave me some comfort on that ride back up the hill.) I reckon if anyone else needed a ride, we would have had to start another layer of bodies! However when we turned to go up, the hill was so steep that Daniel had to put on some power and Ian and I nearly shot out of the back. We had to stop the truck and raise the tailgate before the bumpy ride back up the hill. It wasn't comfortable, but it was a case of "de t'ird class ridin' better dan de firs' class walkin"!

Once at the top, it was into some dry clothes and the lads, bless 'em, had cooked up some pilau rice with chicken and a salad, enough to satisfy our hunger and top up our energy needs. I learned later that Daniel and Mark had been up at 4:00AM to prepare our meal and believe me we really appreciated their effort.

We said our goodbyes to Snake and the lads, who we now know were there to make sure we all got through, and boarded Jesse's bus for the journey home. Even though it was a bit of a bumpy ride back down the mountain, I think we were all pleased just to be sitting down. We had a short stop where we all enjoyed a cold beer at a roadside shop and we were back at our respective marinas by about 1730 hours. A truly memorable day and one we will talk about for years to come.

Things to Know

Laurence Pierre, a.k.a. Snake, runs a small company called Hike Seekers and his webpage, www.hikeseekers.com, will give you an idea of the schedule he arranges and the variety of tours and trips. He also has a section with pages of advice for hikers and campers in Trinidad and even if you are not going with Snake, these pages are well worth reading and taking notes.

Jesse James owns and runs a maxi taxi service and is well tuned in to the needs of visiting cruisers. Despite inheriting the name of a famous bandit, he is an all-round good guy and a good friend to cruisers; he takes our problems seriously. His office is in Chaguaramas, which is where all visiting cruisers are moored or hauled out. He has regular trips to the shopping areas, movie nights as well as outings to the popular tourist spots. However he is also accommodating to trips like the above and is a keen hiker himself. He can be contacted on VHF channel 68 or on his webpage www.membersonlymaxitaxi.com.

Trinidad is an island of vast natural beauty. It has a range of wildlife that can be seen if you know where to go. There are guides such as Snake who have intimate knowledge of the island and there is much to discover depending on your own ability and willingness to really see the things that you would not normally see. The opportunities to explore here are almost boundless and the photographic possibilities endless. This is our third hurricane season here and I have seen no other island where I would sooner be for shelter and haul-out as well as for the friends we have made. We are always sorry to leave but it feels like home when we return. Thank you, Trinidad.

Left: Trying to avoid getting feet tangled in what was underwater and invisible



CARIBBEAN VOYAGING

Part One: Coming to the Caribbean from the East Coast

by Frank Virgintino

EACH year during the fall, many cruising sailors from North America venture off on their trip "south to the Caribbean". It is the dream trip: the trip we have planned for and waited for, for so many years. Free at last!

However, when most cruising authors and yacht rally organizers speak of sailing to "the Caribbean" they mean the Lesser Antilles (i.e. the Leeward and Windward Islands). The traditional starting point for a "Caribbean cruise" is Tortola, British Virgin Islands and the ending point Grenada or Trinidad.

The Intended Voyage, the Routes, the Challenge

If the Virgin Islands are your landfall in the Caribbean then your trip "south" will really be a trip *east*! Look at Bermuda on the map and note how far east of mainland North America it is. Tortola is due south of Bermuda (Tortola's longitude is 64°50'W; Bermuda's is 64°45'W). The voyage from the East Coast to "the Caribbean" is not really a trip south; it is very much a trip east! Making your easting is the challenge.

There are three main routes to the Caribbean from North America:

- Offshore to Bermuda
- Offshore to the tradewinds (via alternate routes)
- Harbor hopping and island hopping ("The Thornless Path")

Route 1: Offshore to Bermuda

One can either stop at Bermuda or use it as a waypoint to turn south. This route is the farthest offshore route that North American sailors can take to the Caribbean and is a route for a stout vessel and a seasoned crew.

The advantage of this route is that once you arrive at Bermuda, you have accomplished the easting that is required to arrive in the Eastern Caribbean. If the Eastern Caribbean is not the destination you have in mind, this is not a route to be considered.

The distance from the New York area to Bermuda is a little more than 600 nautical miles, and it's another 850 nautical miles to the BVI. Both legs represent significant distances within the Atlantic Ocean.

The best time to make this passage is May to June, prior to hurricane season, or late October to early November, which should be just after hurricane season. Of course hurricanes do not know they have a season and it is possible to be unlucky. This is one of the risks of this route.

If you take this route in May or June, the prevailing wind will be southwest. The farther north of New York you depart from, the more close-hauled will be the tack. With a southwest prevailing wind, crossing the Gulf Stream should not present a problem. The Gulf Stream is wider farther north but also has less velocity.

If you choose a fall departure, there are early winter storms that can be encountered and in such a case crossing the Gulf Stream with the wind opposing the current is far worse than unpleasant. If you choose to depart late October to early November, you must be sure of the weather forecast, at least as far as northeast storms are concerned. There really is no ocean in which a storm is not a challenging event; however the North Atlantic is known for its extremely high and rough seas.

Keep in mind that while a nor'easter is an Atlantic storm, as fall approaches it is possible to also have the wind go to the northwest. A northwest wind above 15 knots can cause rough conditions, and at gale force very rough conditions.



If you undertake this passage in the spring, go east as quickly as you can, as when you find the tradewinds they will tend east to southeast. If you make the passage in the fall, you will encounter the trades blowing east to northeast and the amount of easting that you make will not be as significant.



Route 2: Offshore to the Tradewinds

The route map shows that the course from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay to Tortola is an east-by-southeast heading. At the time of year when the Caribbean 1500 rally uses this departure point (very late October to early November), the prevailing trades are northeasterly. Other popular jumping-off points are Beaufort and Morehead City, North Carolina. The "head offshore to where the butter melts and turn south", making landfall in the Virgin Islands course can be an excellent choice — if you want to arrive in the Eastern Caribbean.

When I do this trip, I always prefer to go even farther south and depart from Hilton Head, South Carolina — about 100 miles south of Charleston. I like Hilton Head and the stop there gives me one more chance to further prepare and fine-tune the boat. By coming south of Cape Hatteras, either through the ICW or on the outside, I have reduced the distance I will need to pick up the tradewinds by more than 150 nautical miles. From Hilton Head I can take a southeast heading offshore to cross the Gulf Stream. Once across and approximately 100 miles offshore, you will pick up the tradewinds.

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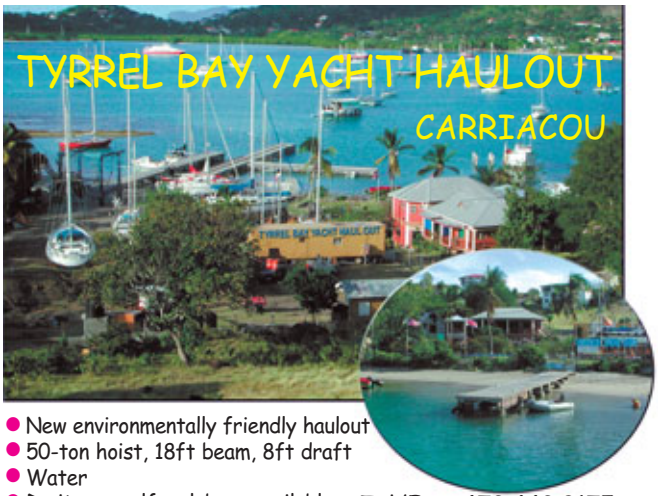
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—*Continued from previous page*

Once you pick up the trades (at about 22 to 25 degrees north latitude), you can follow them to the Eastern Caribbean, or you can shorten your offshore passage and turn south and head for the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti. This is the logical route, taking three to four days. Given that the tradewinds will be east to northeast, you will reach or broad reach down the eastern side of the Bahamas directly for the Windward Passage, where you will enter the Caribbean Sea.

Route 2: Offshore to the Tradewinds, Modified

Transiting the Windward Passage you arrive in the north central Caribbean. You can follow the south shore of Hispaniola to make easting to the Lesser Antilles. The south shore of Hispaniola is within the Caribbean Sea and is not a lee shore. The



shoreline is filled with beautiful anchorages (see the free *Dominican Republic Cruising Guide* at www.dominicanrepubliccruisingguide.com) and because it is in the lee of the second largest island in the Caribbean (only Cuba is larger) and one that has the highest mountain range, you can use the nighttime drop in the tradewinds to make your easting in light offshore winds all the way to the Virgin Islands.

There are a number of phenomena that occur at night off the coast of the Caribbean islands. The most dramatic occur off the coast of those islands with the highest mountain ranges. One phenomenon is "island shadow", caused by the difference between the temperature of an island and the temperature of the air. As heat rises off the island at the end of the day, the lee side develops a "shadow" of calmer winds. The larger the landmass of the island, the larger the shadow.

A greater phenomenon is katabatic wind. The air at the top of an island mountain range cools when the sun goes down and becomes denser and thus heavier than the air over the sea. As a result, the denser and heavier air begins to "slide" down the mountainside after sunset. Not only does the katabatic wind have a stalling effect on the tradewinds but many times will create an offshore breeze.

You can use the island shadow and the katabatic wind to sail eastward after sunset. At the very least, if you cannot sail because these winds are too light, you will be able to motorsail eastward with little, if any, resistance from the tradewinds.

This route entails offshore sailing, but much less than the other offshore routes. It also offers more options should unexpected weather or damage to the boat occur.

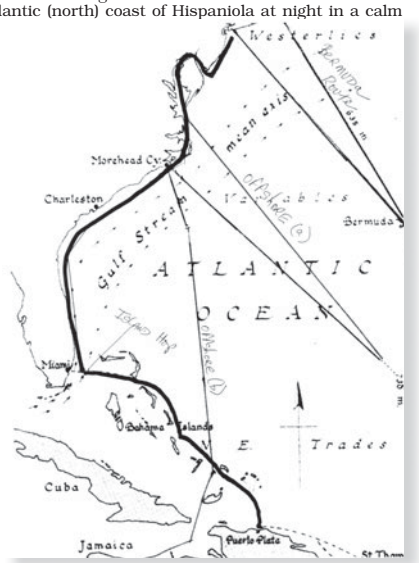
Route 3: Harbor Hopping and Island Hopping

On this route, one follows the coast of North America southward (via the inland waterway or on the outside) to approximately Miami, Florida. From Miami you cross the Gulf Stream and island hop through the Bahamas to the Turks & Caicos. From the Turks & Caicos one heads for the north shore of the Dominican Republic and then eastward along the north coast to arrive at the eastern end of the DR. Once there, you pass through the Mona Passage to arrive at the south side of Puerto Rico.

In his book *The Gentleman's Guide to Passages South: The Thornless Path to Windward*, Bruce Van Sant does an excellent job of routing through the Bahamas. The benefit of the route is that it gives one an opportunity to spend a great deal of time in the Bahamas and the Turks & Caicos.

The negative aspect of the trip is that it is just plain tedious. Day after day you face strong easterly winds and strong seas. Van Sant's methods provide for ways to minimize the effects of a windward path and most of his suggestions are excellent — provided that you understand them and do what he suggests. Doing what he suggests is not always easy, as he relies a great deal on weather patterns and in particular he uses northers that come south during the fall and early winter as a device to head east, because they stall the tradewinds. Nothing wrong with that, except that you have to be able to time the northers, to know when they start and when they end.

Northers can help mitigate the extreme roughness of the north coast of Hispaniola. The north coast of Hispaniola is one of the roughest and most dangerous coasts I have ever sailed. It has only one really good stop (Luperon/Puerto Plata), with no other stops that are normally tenable during most of the tradewind season. Some believe you can navigate the Atlantic (north) coast of Hispaniola at night in a calm that may be found. But no matter how calm the night, in my mind it is poor seamanship to hug a lee coast, for if weather comes up you will have the devil to pay!



Moreover, when you have finished transiting the north coast of the Dominican Republic, you have to cross the Mona Passage. There are many strategies to cross the Mona but I cannot imagine why anyone would choose to cross this very dangerous passage.

You really have to ask yourself, when you arrive in the area of Acklins Island or perhaps Mayaguana in the Bahamas, if it is really necessary to go farther east. Instead, you can free your sheets and use the trades to give you a quick passage south to the Windward Passage. Once through you will turn to port and head east along the south coast of Hispaniola. It is much nicer and much safer. After Ile-à-Vache, Haiti, at the southwest corner of Hispaniola, you will arrive to Isla Beata, Dominican Republic. From here all the way to Isla Saona at the east end of the Dominican Republic you have many safe harbors and anchorages that are beautiful and pristine. And when you make the crossing to Puerto Rico you are south of the dangerous Mona Passage.

The Windward Passage route is longer than going direct by about 200 nautical miles. However, we are cruising and enjoying, not racing and rushing. One of the greatest impediments to a successful cruise anywhere is "rhumb-line cruising". The shortest distance between two points may be a straight line but not necessarily the best routing. If you cruise through the Bahamas, having harbor hopped and then island hopped, I strongly recommend that you free your sheets and come through the Windward Passage.

Each route to the Caribbean has its advantages and disadvantages. The one that you will pick will depend on a variety of factors, including how much time you have, the time of the year, what kind of sailing you favor, how much offshore experience you have, the type of boat and equipment you will utilize, and the capacity of the crew.

Next month: Caribbean Voyaging, Part Two: Sailing Through the Quadrants.

For an in-depth discussion of voyaging to the Caribbean, see the author's recently released book, A Thinking Man's Guide to Voyages South: the many facets of Caribbean Cruising, *available free at www.freecruisingguide.com or through Amazon in Kindle format.*

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Changes and Challenges:

SHEEP, SHEPHERDS AND WOLVES

by Frank Virgintino

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. — Matthew 10:16

As cruisers, most of us have no motives other than to sail our boats and visit different countries to experience different cultures. Most of us like to leave a "clean wake." In this sense we are as innocent as sheep. However given rising crime around the world, as it affects cruisers, we need to learn to be shrewd as well.

A shepherd is a person who tends, feeds or guards flocks of sheep. In the case of cruising boats, shepherds would be those that serve our interests where we cruise. They have a responsibility to "shepherd" us: to take care of us because we provide them with their daily bread.

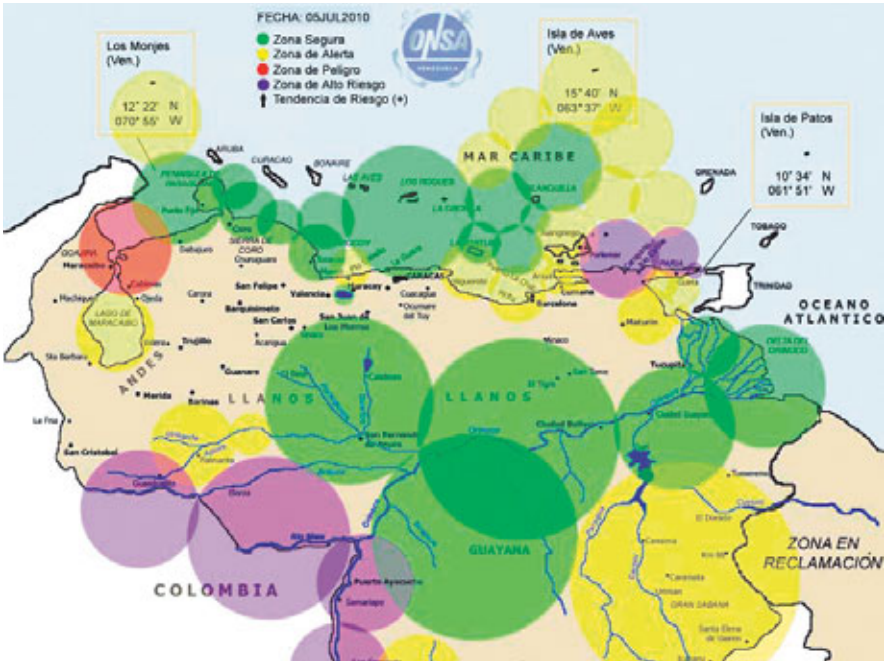
Wolves are social predators. They are apex predators — predators that have no predators of their own, residing at the top of their food chain.

Recently I read a report on www.noonsite.com, which reported that four catamarans with a group of 32 people anchored at Salt Whistle Bay in the Grenadines on June 2nd. According to the report, a local fellow named Joseph came out to the boats and made an agreement with the group to have a barbecue on the beach for US$20 per person. At 7:00PM the group went to the beach and Joseph was there to welcome them. The dinner was poor and there was not enough food but the group overlooked it and tried to maintain a holiday mood. When it was time to leave, Joseph was not to be found and the "owner" of the barbecue demanded US$25 per person. Some locals would not let the group go to their dinghies until the bill was settled. When the group finally returned to their boats they found that one of the boats had been broken into to and cash and other personal items had been stolen.

Aside from the hike on the price of the barbecue and the burglary on the vessel, there is something else that bothers me about this story: could the Shepherds and the Wolves possibly have been the same?

The Caribbean Safety and Security Net as well as the *Caribbean Compass* reported that on July 2nd there was an incident in the Tobago Cays. A couple aboard their boat was robbed of cash by two masked men who arrived in a colorful "local" boat at about 10:00PM. There was a struggle, there was a gun, there was a knife, and while the couple was not seriously hurt physically, Allen and Kate Barry of the *S/V Mendocino Queen* endured what no one should have to endure, for they did nothing to warrant it. But perhaps they were seen during the day aboard their vessel, just two people alone and both seniors. Perhaps the Wolves knew where to strike. Perhaps the Wolves were even "tipped off" — for why would that one boat out of the entire fleet be singled out?

Both of these incidents happened in the Grenadines. Now, before you conclude that I have an axe to grind with the Grenadines, understand that there is crime everywhere. However, what is unique about an area like the Grenadines and many other areas in the Caribbean is that the area caters to cruising boats. The boat the assailants came in to rob Allen and Kate was one of the island boats that we know well. Those that cater to the needs of cruising boats come in the same type of boat.



The author takes issue with the idea that there are 'safe places' within areas that are dangerous

The point is that if we cruisers are going to give money to various vendors in various anchorages, whether boat boys, mooring concessionaires, marinas or whatever, we must require — actually demand — that those who are prospering look out for us and our safety. In most areas in the islands just about everyone knows everyone. When the Shepherds are finished for the day selling us T-shirts, ice, fish, barbecues and whatever else, they must realize that what happens to us thereafter IS of their concern. Moreover, if the Shepherds and the Wolves begin to look alike in that they use the same boats or have lookouts that are watching to see what boats are lying at anchor with no one aboard, then it is time for the Sheep to say, "We are leaving, and telling the rest of the flock that this is not a good place to visit."

There is much discussion of how to deter robbers and fight off assailants. The truth is that if I have to even consider those prospects, I would simply prefer not to visit. I will go somewhere else that is known to be safer.

In an article in *Blue Water Sailing*, May 2011, one of the readers said that relative to piracy, he "just hates to see thugs being allowed to make the decisions as to who goes where. To say the solution is to just cede the area to the pirates only encourages and emboldens them". Perhaps true, but it is not for cruising sailors to solve this problem by using force. It is for the governments of the various countries, as well as the businesses that prosper from the money we cruisers spend, to provide the solution. It is incumbent on the Shepherds, who have their livelihoods at risk, to take the necessary actions.

In the August issue of *Compass* there is a review of Capt. Fatty Goodlander's new book entitled *Somali Pirates and Cruising Sailors*. We all know Fatty and we love him and his good-hearted humor. He is not known normally to be serious. However, in his new book the Captain is nothing but serious. In fact, he is angry. What has made Fatty so angry? Fatty is hurt, as we all are, for all the cruising sailors who have been kidnapped in the Red Sea area and in particular for the group of four that were murdered aboard the *S/V Quest*. Fatty says in the book, "But the fact is, Somali piracy affects everyone, and sailors in particular. If this trend of all profit and no penalty for the Somali pirates continues... well, there will be many imitators in the Caribbean, South America and Pacific as well."

I agree, but who is to impose the penalty? There was a time when the Colombia coast was dangerous and most of us did not cruise there. Things have now changed and with the proper patrols and initiatives of government the area is much safer. Marinas are being built and cruising boats are returning. Until such time as the governments of the areas that are consistently dangerous in the Caribbean take appropriate action, then we must hand out the penalty by not frequenting those areas.

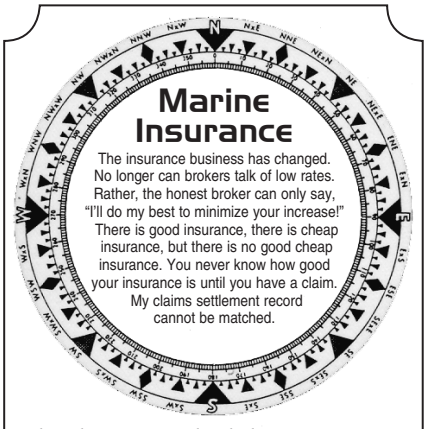
There has been talk of "safe places" within the areas that are dangerous. The map on this page is from ONSA (Organización Nacional de Salvamento y Seguridad Marítima de los Espacios Acuáticos de Venezuela). Think about how ridiculous such a map is. I will remember this map as I sail through the "green area". I will tell six armed ruffians approaching my stern that they cannot board because we are in a "safe area". This is sheer nonsense! There is no question that you can sail to Venezuela and not have an incident. For that matter you can walk through the roughest parts of any city in the world and not have an incident. But why would you risk it?

I personally will leave Venezuela as we left Colombia until my safety and that of my family and guests is reasonably assured. I will carefully read the *Caribbean Compass* every month. I will monitor the Caribbean Safety and Security Net as well as Noonsite and look for repetitive instances of crime. Then I will avoid any problematic areas and they will not have the benefit of the money we would have spent in their area. I will try to understand each area as well as I can so that I am not "scared off" of visiting someplace that may well be worth it.

We are the Sheep. We do not cause a great deal of trouble and most of us try hard to be good guests in the countries that we visit. We are careful to avoid doing anything illegal. Thus we are as innocent as doves; however we must be as shrewd as snakes as well!

As to the Shepherds, they have a responsibility to protect the flock. They do benefit financially by our presence, and if we leave they lose their livelihood. That is our leverage and we must use it consciously. As to the Wolves, they will always be Wolves. However, if we come to believe that the Shepherds are not protecting us or that the Shepherds and the Wolves are one and the same, then it is up to us to "get the flock out of there!"

Frank Virgintino is the author of Free Cruising Guides *and* A Thinking Man's Guide to Voyages South: the Many Facets of Caribbean Cruising, *available at www.freecruisingguides.com.*



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THE GREAT CARIBBEAN YACHTING INDUSTRY PROBLEMS REVISITED

Do the British Virgins provide a 'cookie-cutter' adventure? But they're safe — and popular

by Rob Kunkel

Thank you for the article about the Caribbean yachting industry in the July 2011 issue of *Caribbean Compass*.

Three problems are identified: crime, economy, bureaucracy. In reality, we can do nothing about the economy, except to better address our own.

Bureaucracy is another, almost uncontrollable, issue. The Caribbean contains scores of jurisdictions with hundreds of possible solutions, even on just one island. To take the "right" approach is like finding the "right" religion. Just as we will never have real uniformity in culture, we will never have real uniformity in Caribbean law enforcement. Nor would we want it!

But at the recreational sailor's level, "bureaucracy" does come to refer to unhappy interactions with Customs people or politicians. Boaters become used to whatever grilling we get from border authorities. Rude, mean, arbitrary? Sure. Like "island time", it is something that we get used to, and work around. In the end, many discussions about bureaucracy are really nothing more than barroom stories that get a good laugh.

Crime is what this discussion is all about. Crime is what makes the new money not come in.

I will now utter sheer heresy. Sometimes sailing is not entirely about adventure; rather, it's about "Adventure Lite" — simple, straightforward, and stress free. And crime free.

I am in full sympathy with the adventurer's dream. As I sit back and reflect from a cozy corner of a dry place in St. Thomas, facing the sea, I look up at three clocks in a row, like in those old movies. One is on Greenwich Mean Time. One is on St. Thomas time, my home. And one is on Pitcairn Island time, where it may have all started for me. "Adventures in Paradise", a short-lived TV series, fueled my wanderlust, and Jimmy Buffet's "Captain and the Kid" ("I never used to miss the chance to climb up on his knee, and listen to the many tales of life upon the sea") pretty much sealed my fate.

But, as ever, sailors just want to have fun, and be safe from crime. How to help them?

In the British Virgin Islands, for example, anyone who wants to emulate Jimmy Buffet can rent a relatively perfect boat and an already functional support presence. Predictability and reliability are major plusses for our wannabe Jimmy Buffet, with his picky spouse, teenaged children, and time and travel issues. What does the BVI have? Cookie-cutter harbors, cookie-cutter getaways, cookie-cutter bars with T-shirts and mugs. A colourful singing personality in a fantastic venue. And continual on-the-water security patrols. *Voila*! You have one of the ten best non-stress sailing adventures in the world.

Yes, that gives some of us the "been there, done that, want something more" feeling, but many visitors are very pleased with just what they get in the BVI. Sailing does not have to be a big stress. One man's cookie-cutter "heresy" is another man's (and woman's, and family's) delightful reality.

So, to the movers and shakers down island I suggest: Try the BVI model. Package a list of safe destinations that have all the things a new boater would like to see in a Caribbean experience. Identify the ports and businesses that can make it happen. Work together, and honestly advertise this package, with references.

When people travel in the US, most want a safe place to stay. Many go to franchise hotel chains, because they are reliable. Once people are settled, safe, dry, clean and fed, *then* they look for something more interesting. But, to start with, a clean place, efficiently run, with good ratings, will get the business. What works in Days Inn works in the Caribbean.

As for crime, when tourists come to my fair island of St. Thomas, the largest cruise ship destination in the world, our fair island puts good police on the street. We are there for the tourists. In St. Thomas, even with its high murder rate in some demographics, we do not have tourist crime, especially affecting our cruise-ship tourists. The industry will not let this happen. Our Virgin Islands government respects the almighty tourist dollar. As a lawyer, I have been a victim advocate in St. Thomas serving over a thousand real live crime victims for ten years. Perhaps two of them were tourists.

However, as I, Mr. Reasonably Experienced Boater, look at one of the photos in July's *Compass* article, the large "PORTS POLICE" lettering does not instill confidence in my soul. I would not know what to expect if I saw a boat like that zooming toward me. Imagine what our wannabe Jimmy Buffet would think. The operator of that speeding boat may be the nicest, fairest person in the world, but it's not a guarantee, and we don't know for sure to expect the best. It does happen that law-enforcement officials make boating an unhappy experience. Certainly, those in the US can be among the worst, but we are used to abuse in the US, and know how to handle it.

As we move down island, I am well aware of what it means to have government helping. In an ideal situation, government often helps by acting silently; the best governors can be those whose citizens do not feel that they are being governed. Government help might be better received by the visitor by being sometimes obvious, sometimes less obvious.

We should love our greenhorns. Who, for example, has the easier destinations and is more likely to see the newbie cruiser and first-time bareboater? Once visitors have had a good experience somewhere, they will want to come back. Make it easy for them to get there; make air travel as painless as possible to all destinations. After experiencing the easy-to-reach places, they will be ready to sign on for the more exotic adventures, as Don Street suggests. If their travel is properly marketed and they know a destination is safe, these new adventurers will find island travel enjoyable. Our duty, if we want them to come, is to foresee potential problems and solve them in advance. Don't scare them away! Let them grow to love sailing and the Caribbean as much as we do.

We have plenty to offer throughout the Caribbean, but sometimes it's not easy to see. Let us make it a little easier for visitors, by offering a simpler, better organized, even "cookie-cutter" package, with better security. Of course this begets another heresy, gentrification. Yes, this will be a great concern and should be avoided as much as possible, but let us not forget the goals. Keep people safe. Bring money down island. Capitalize on our greatest resource, the water.

Rob Kunkel is a former Compass contributor who wrote the column "Eye on the VI" from 2002 through 2008, and cruised the Lesser Antilles aboard his 41-foot Howard Chapelle-designed schooner, Windolee.

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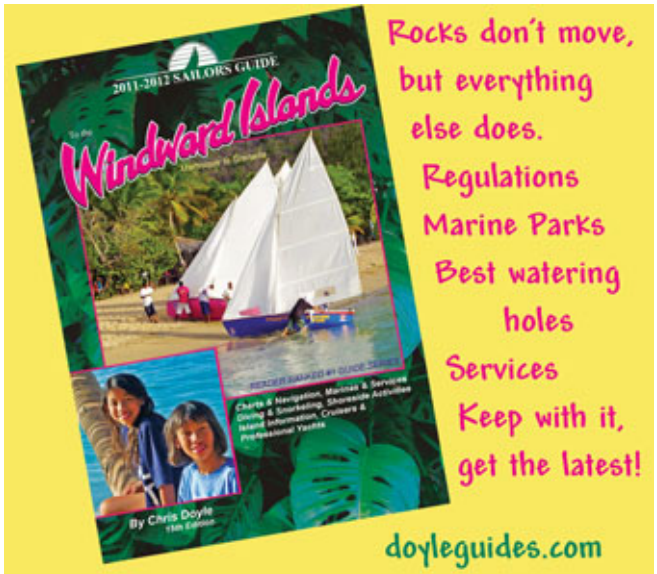


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Fear and Loathing in the Mid-Atlantic:

Gonzo Journalist Sails with Legendary Author

by William 'Billy Bones' Pringle

The following account is fiction, although it closely follows all the facts I have been able to glean from Donald M. Street Jr., the writings of the late Hunter S. Thompson, and from their shipmates on Iolaire, *Sandy Conklin and Paul Semonin, about an actual voyage from St. Thomas, USVI, to St. George's, Bermuda, in June, 1960.*

So, as taken from Thompson, Street and Conklin's respective (fictional) journals:



Thompson - June 11, 1960 at Fat City Bar in Charlotte Amalie, US Virgin Islands.

We came to this rum-soaked dive because Sandy claimed that all the sailors go there, and it would be our best chance to meet a captain and cop a cheap ride to Europe — either as passengers on a cargo boat to Spain, or crew on a yacht to Gibraltar. And she was half-right: the place was loaded with yachts heading out before the hurricane season begins, but no cargo boats heading for Europe, only a few local schooners heading down-island. After a few killer rum punches, we met Don Street, captain of the *Iolaire*, a 47-foot sloop bound for Bermuda, where he said we'd have a much better chance of finding a cargo boat heading east than here in the Antilles; he just happened to have a couple of berths available at ten bucks per person per day. Although that's a lot, we hadn't had any other luck finding a ride, so Sandy and I signed up. Why not? We didn't tell him about Paul, since he only wanted two "paying guest sailing apprentices"; I guess everyone else on board is "crew" — in other words, they aren't paying Captain Don, and are heading for New York after the stop in Bermuda. Don has a high raspy voice with a timbre and volume that carries across the bar easily as he calls out to old sailing buddies, and is a great bull-shitter.

Street - June 12, 1960, Yacht Haven Marina, St. Thomas

Well, I met this swagger-stick-affecting "former marine" named Hunter at Fat City last night who wants to catch a cargo boat to Spain with his wife, a nice-looking gal. I told him that they'd have a lot better chance of doing that from Bermuda, where I was heading in a day or two, and I'd only charge them ten dollars a day each for the trip, since I had a few bunks empty on Iolaire. *We'll see; I've got a bad feeling about this guy. A swagger stick!!? Come on!*

Thompson - June 14, 1960, at sea.

Captain Don was not pleased last night when we came aboard and he realized that we are three, as he had said that he can only have a total of six on board, and he already had three crew, plus himself. But he also realized that we might walk (and he could also charge another passage fee), so he relented, we stowed our bags, and this morning cast off the docklines, raised sail, and ever so sweetly sailed out of the harbor, bound for St. George's, Bermuda. Street obviously knows what he's doing; he's equally obviously going to be a pain in the ass with all his orders to do this and that — and right now! Hell, let the "crew" do that crap; we're paying passengers. I don't mind helping out, but I've had about enough orders in the Air Force at Eglin to last me a lifetime, and I'm not taking them from a pipsqueak yacht captain, period!

Street - June 14, 1960, at sea.

Great sail out of Charlotte Amalie, cleared Red Hook and Pillsbury Sound, and set a course for Bermuda. Crew working well, except for that twit "swagger stick" guy, who won't obey a single order! His "wife" (girlfriend more like it), Sandy, is very helpful, like she has to make up for his surly attitude, and this Paul guy that they sprung on me at the last moment has disappeared somewhere below. Good thing I have an experienced crew on board who can stand watches at night and steer a compass course! And it's a good thing that I checked everybody's documents last night (only drivers' licenses!) and departure money from Bermuda. Immigration is very sticky about people arriving with no means to depart, and these three didn't look flush, but they had barely enough.



Don Street (above) and Hunter S. Thompson (left) in the 1960s

Conklin – June 16, 1960, at sea.

Wow, you could cut the atmosphere with a knife on board here, at least from Hunter, who mostly lies sulking in his cabin. Actually, everyone else is having a great time, except maybe Captain Don, who is mightily pissed off at Hunter's attitude, particularly after he lost a bucket overboard. One of the other crew got out his sewing kit and some canvas, and made a beautiful new one in a couple of hours, with a rope sewn around the top (he called it a "grommet") and everything!

We've had really good wind, and the schooner *Isle Aire*, all 55 feet of her, is sailing along very nicely, which is good, since the engine quit working yesterday.

The rest of the crew are great sailors, and since I'm the only woman on board, I get a lot of attention, particularly from Scott, the first mate, which I think contributes to Hunter's foul mood. He's SO jealous, I can't talk to anyone without him flying into a rage!

Thompson – June 17, 1960, at sea.

Here I am, surrounded by vicious toad-eating sycophants to that tyrant Donald M. Street Junior, with nowhere to get off in this watery desert. At least we're making decent time.

"All hands; hey 'Swagger Stick', get your ass on deck, it's time to douse the chute!" No, let the gung-ho bastards deal with it themselves. Let the swine shout his lungs out; he's on the helm and can't get at me. After two years in the Air Force, I've had it with incomprehensible orders; the ones you do comprehend are bad enough. "All hands on deck?" No way in hell!

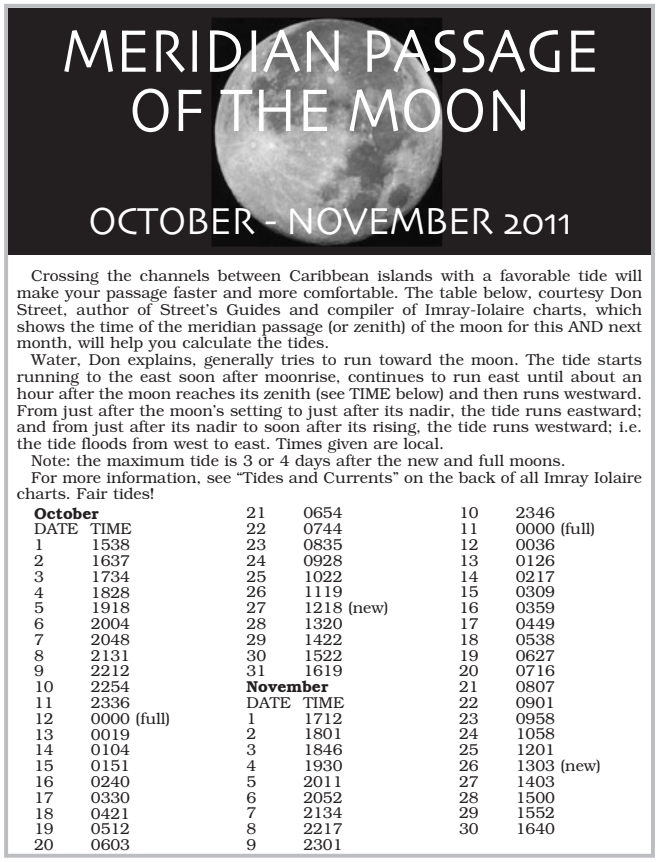
So I lost a bucket overboard; the goddam rope broke, rotten to the core, and I get the shit for it. And that guy Scott is all over Sandy, and the bitch is egging him on. Women are all either saints or whores; who said that? So true. Paul, the spineless cur, won't leave the cabin unless Street is on the helm, so he can't be told to do anything except exist. I can't even write with the boat lurching around; who knows if I'll even be able to read this...

(Here the narrative becomes illegible for several pages, except for the words, "scumbags selling nitro", "beer-guzzling Louisville pimps" and "fear and loathing in the mid-Atlantic Ocean".)

Street – June 17, 1960, at sea.

Never in my 30 years have I seen as useless a twit as this Hunter guy. If it wasn't for him, we'd be having a great sail — a little light in the doldrums, but we've made two knots or better the whole trip, and with no engine, that's doing well, with a 150-mile-plus day yesterday and a good SW breeze blowing today. Sure hope this wind holds for the passage through the cut into St. George's, and that we arrive there at all, since my grandfather's old gold watch that we use to navigate with may not be entirely accurate, although we checked it with WWV before we left St. T.

—Continued on next page



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!

October					
DATE	TIME	21	0654	10	2346
1	1538	22	0744	11	0000 (full)
2	1637	23	0835	12	0036
3	1734	24	0928	13	0126
4	1828	25	1022	14	0217
5	1918	26	1119	15	0309
6	2004	27	1218 (new)	16	0359
7	2048	28	1320	17	0449
8	2131	29	1422	18	0538
9	2212	30	1522	19	0627
10	2254	31	1619	20	0716
11	2336	**November**		21	0807
12	0000 (full)	DATE	TIME	22	0901
13	0019	1	1712	23	0958
14	0104	2	1801	24	1058
15	0151	3	1846	25	1201
16	0240	4	1930	26	1303 (new)
17	0330	5	2011	27	1403
18	0421	6	2052	28	1500
19	0512	7	2134	29	1552
20	0603	8	2217	30	1640
		9	2301		

—Continued from previous page

When it came time to dowse the chute, did "Swagger Stick" deign to come on deck to help get it down? What an arrogant POS!

Thompson – June 18, 1960, at sea.

What's important is to GET TO SPAIN as quickly as possible, to get on with it, and to get off this boat and away from its maniac skipper and his grinning, savage crew, the dirty waterheads! Then I can get back to writing, maybe start a second novel, as the first one was a two-year effort for nothing.

And the dog Bito has gotten more rum to drink on this passage than I have! Street always seems to have plenty of Heinekens for himself though.

Street – June 20, 1960, St. George's, Bermuda, lying at Ordinance Island.

What a sail last night, right through the cut, had to short-tack it, then the wind quit, as you get blanketed by the high cliffs on both sides, and the currents eddy on both ends of the passage. No moon, and we had to sail right up to the NE edge, not twenty feet from the cliffs with no visibility, before we got the back-lash and could tack, and a little counter-current helped sneak us through. But never again!! Not many people sail this size boat through during the day, much less at night, and the guys here at the Yacht and Dinghy Club won't let me or my crew buy a drink!!! At least, (and at last!), I got rid of Swagger Stick and his two pals, although I was sorry to see the gal go. "Cue Ball" Curry is coming down from New York with one of his friends to replace them, and I'm sure they'll be a hell of a lot better than that useless twit!



Left: Iolaire *had a few empty bunks for the trip from St. Thomas to Bermuda*

Below: Thompson in Puerto Rico before the voyage



Thompson – June 20, 1960, St. George's, Bermuda.

According to Captain Don, we had a near-death experience early this morning entering St. George's. As far as I'm concerned, I've had a near-death experience since we left St. Thomas, and I'm thoroughly glad to be shut of that whole boatload of breast-beating braggarts.

I'm here at a likely looking bar named the White Horse, finally getting back to normal; now for a ride to Spain!

Conklin – June 20, 1960, St. George's, Bermuda

Wow, what a sail last night in the complete darkness, coming through that narrow little passageway! It's the first time that I've ever seen Captain Don look nervous, and so it made me nervous too! But we made it! Then we had to sail up to the Customs and Immigration dock in the dark also, but the crew did great, and here we are in Bermuda. Hunter is already getting drunk in a dockside bar, and he's probably going to piss away his plane ticket money to New York. "It's okay", he says, "We're going to get a free passage to Europe on a yacht. You'll see. Why not?" he says.

Yeah, right, like anyone will hire us, after our trip on the *Isle Aire*. Word gets around you know, and Don's the toast of the town for sailing through the cut last night. Anyway, we'll see what the future brings!

Epilogue: Thompson, Conklin and Semonin were left in Bermuda; "They Hoped to Reach Spain But Are Stranded in Bermuda" (*Royal Gazette Weekly*, July 10, 1960), described their plight. Conklin and Semonin flew to New York, leaving Thompson. He borrowed money from friends and joined them a few weeks later.



THE ROYAL GAZETTE, WEEKLY, JULY 10, 1960

They Hoped to Reach Spain But Are Stranded in Bermuda

Trio of Americans Left Virgin Islands Three Weeks Ago

SHIPPING NEWS

Two Cruise Ships Due in St. George's

THE STRANDED TRIO. Left to right: Sandy Thompson, her husband, Hunter Thompson; and Paul Semonin.

Clipping from The Royal Gazette, *July 10, 1960*

The Rum Diary *is an upcoming film based on the novel of the same name by Hunter S. Thompson. Thompson wrote the novel in 1961, about his experiences in Puerto Rico just prior to the events in this article.* The Rum Diary, *starring Johnny Depp as Thompson, is set to be released on October 28th.*



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OCTOBER 2011

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
It was a long, hot summer. There could be misunderstandings aboard and trying to explain yourself will be futile. It might be time to change crew or jump ship if you find a lack of respect and co-operation, but don't jump the gun; wait till after the 13th to make your decision.

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
A female could make things downright nasty for you around the full moon on the 12th, and you might have friction with crew or cruising buddies after the 13th. Perhaps a clean break would be best before any bad vibes affect your relationship with everybody in the marina or anchorage.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
Your creative juices will be flowing and will be an asset to your business or financial situation. There will be a female crewmember or cruising buddy moving out of your life, which could be a good thing.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
Boat business may be a bit slow and trying to balance it out with ingenuity a challenge, but don't let it get you down — fair winds will pick up again after the third week and lead to exciting new prospects.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
Keep the working sails up and the helm on a steady course. Mars is in your sign and will give you the breeze you need to accomplish whatever you set your mind and energies to.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
Relax and have a carefree month. You deserve it after the rough seas you've had to navigate recently. You won't have to make any sail changes at all for a while.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
The advantageous feminine aspect in your life will sail away after the 9th, but your creativity and verbal skills will add beneficial currents to your business or economic progress.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
Your lack of sense of humor during the second week may get you into irons with your romantic partner if you can't watch what you say or have an arrogant "I'm captain" or "I'm admiral" attitude.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
You will be the center of attention in the middle two weeks of the month. Don't let it go to your head. Maintain a humble demeanor and it will bring fair winds in the future.

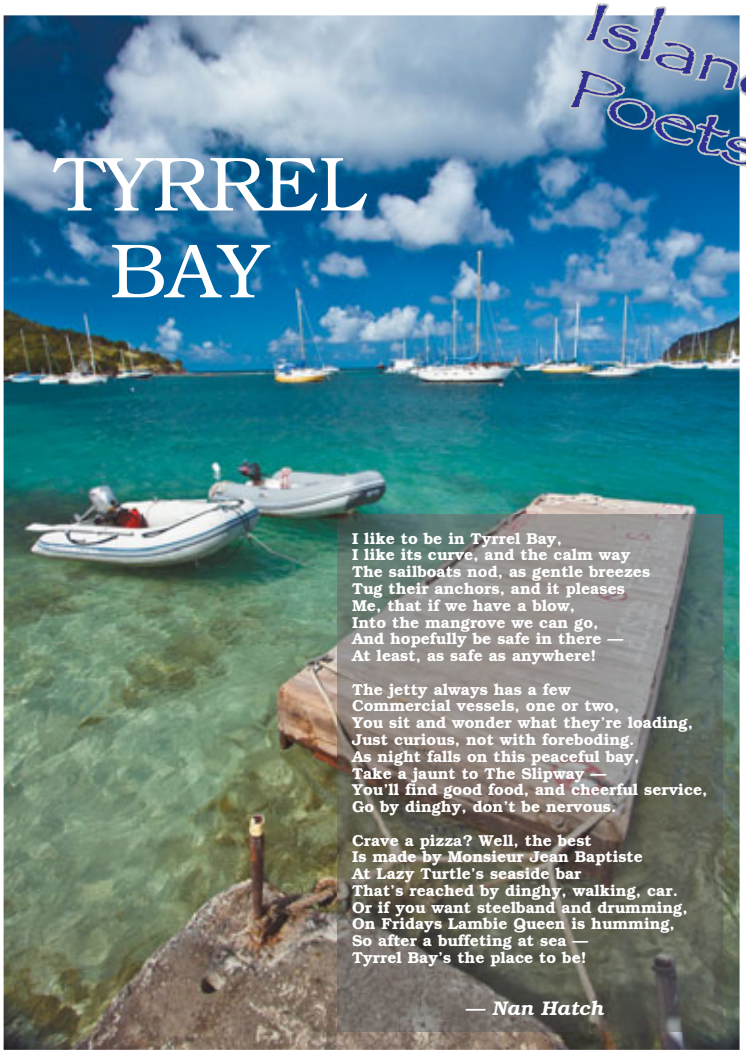
♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
You'll need a strong sense of humor to deal with boat business frustrations caused by problems in communication and inventiveness. You will feel like a juggler trying to keep too many balls in the air at once.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
It will seem that no matter which course you steer you'll meet with head seas and fluky winds. Divert yourself with a potential romance that sails into your sphere on the 9th.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
It looks like squalls with a troublemaker in the crew or anchorage after the 9th. A female will cause discord with complaints and backstabbing. This will continue until the third of November, when you either make her walk the plank or you talk it out.

Island Poets

TYRREL BAY



DAVON BAKER

I like to be in Tyrrel Bay,
I like its curve, and the calm way
The sailboats nod, as gentle breezes
Tug their anchors, and it pleases
Me, that if we have a blow,
Into the mangrove we can go,
And hopefully be safe in there —
At least, as safe as anywhere!

The jetty always has a few
Commercial vessels, one or two,
You sit and wonder what they're loading,
Just curious, not with foreboding.
As night falls on this peaceful bay,
Take a jaunt to The Slipway —
You'll find good food, and cheerful service,
Go by dinghy, don't be nervous.

Crave a pizza? Well, the best
Is made by Monsieur Jean Baptiste
At Lazy Turtle's seaside bar
That's reached by dinghy, walking, car.
Or if you want steelband and drumming,
On Fridays Lambie Queen is humming,
So after a buffeting at sea —
Tyrrel Bay's the place to be!

— Nan Hatch

parlumps marooned



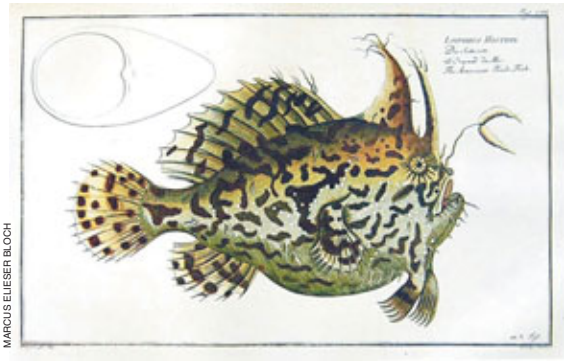
THE SARGASSO BREAKS FREE

by Lee Kessell

The Sargasso Sea is a slow whirlpool that straddles the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean, 700 miles from top to bottom and 2,000 miles long. It has been an inspiration for romantic stories through the ages but Jop was far from feeling romantic because he was a sargassum fish, a rather ugly (to humans) frogfish.

Jop lived under the sargassum weed and he exactly matched the greens and yellows of the weed and he knew he should be at home in the Atlantic — but this was different; where was he?

Jop was in a long shaft of sargassum weed that had been caught by a freak eddy, sending it journeying south until it reached St. Lucia in the Caribbean Sea. Other strings from the edges of the great Sargasso Sea had caught eddies of their own and ended up in other islands of the Caribbean.



MARCUS ELIESER BLOCH

When Jop was just a little tiddler, his mother had taught him how to survive under the sargassum weed. She had explained that the long lines of sargassum weed are held together by hooks on their tendrils and she had shown Jop how to use his front fins as feet and walk his way around to find food and friends, and eventually a wife.

"Now how am I to find a wife so far from home?" Jop wondered. He felt lost and uneasy about his future. He didn't know that there were others just like him in his raft and all the other rafts that had caught the currents and gone sailing off as if on some wild adventure.

Poor little Jop thought of all the bedtime stories that had been passed down through generations of sargassum frogfish, beginning with the story of Christopher Columbus sailing across the North Atlantic Ocean and marveling at the carpet of little yellow "grapes" (the air sacks that keep the weed afloat) that stretched for miles and miles. Columbus thought he was close to shore because among this ocean forest were shrimps, crabs, worms, snails and all sorts of small fish. The crew had been about to mutiny and return home, but now it did seem that an island was close. Columbus sailed on, pushed by a steady breeze. The crew was happy enough, with little to do but keep their bellies full with the fish they caught while frequent showers filled the water casks.

That was where the story finished and Jop now wondered how the adventure had ended, little realizing that he was living a very exciting adventure of his own. Although Jop felt sorry for himself he set out to explore the sargassum that was his home and see what he could find. But one day, out of the blue, a huge object towered above him. Was this the end? But before it could crush him, the bow of the sailing yacht brushed the sargassum aside, sending it upwards in a giant wave. Jop clung on for his life until all was calm again. Luckily for Jop his raft was close to shore because farther out, tankers and large cargo ships sank down upon the weed and crushed all beneath their hulls: fish, snails, shrimps and all.

Jop wondered what other dangers lurked in this new world and he was soon to find out because a bunch of children had swum out from the beach and were grabbing handfuls of the sargassum and were draping their bodies with it, laughing and throwing long wreaths at each other. When they grew tired they swam back to shore and left the sargassum to dry out and die on the beach. Jop had never seen humans before and now he hurried off whenever he heard voices. But how could a little fish move away in time? A scientific study was being made of the sargassum weed and all the animals it sheltered and luckily for Jop he just missed being scooped up in a collecting box and taken away for analysis.

Jop grew more and more depressed as each day passed but as he needed a wife to comfort him, he continued his search. Not too long after this Jop came face to face with the prettiest little frogfish he had ever seen. He was so stunned that he just stared at her. The little frogfish smiled the sweetest smile and his heart missed a beat. Could this be her? His future wife? "Oh thank goodness!" she laughed, "I thought I was the only one alive and now, here you are!" It was a miracle that they had found each other and they agreed never to part and so began roaming the sargassum weed together.

Indeed Jop had found his wife, the perfect wife. She comforted him, loved him and made him the happiest frogfish that ever lived in the sargassum. Jop loved her with all his heart and with her love to give him strength they survived many dangers together and eventually raised a family of their own in this new and perilous world.

THE END



by Elaine Ollivierre

DOLLY'S DEEP SECRETS

Tsunamis are huge water waves that can cause massive destruction as they power their way over large areas on land. **How can we predict when a tsunami is going to strike?** The simple answer is: we can't. We can't even predict when the earthquake that causes the tsunami is going to happen. And not all earthquakes cause tsunamis. **How can we know the difference? How can we stay safe?**

We need to learn as much as we can about earthquakes and tsunamis. First, we can look at the historical record and gather information about tsunamis of the past, which can help us learn about tsunamis of the present.

For example, a tsunami originated from a submarine earthquake off the coast of Portugal in 1755 and killed thousands of people. Reports from other countries showed that this tsunami spread out right across the Atlantic. This was the first time that scientists knew for a fact that tsunamis could travel for great distances without losing energy. The waves arrived in the Caribbean before they arrived in northern Europe. This showed that tsunami waves travel faster in deep water (like the Atlantic Ocean) than in shallow water (like the continental shelf of Europe).

The development of tide gauges also helped to advance our knowledge of tsunamis. The movement of tides had been known for thousands of years but it was only in the 19th century that a way was found to record tidal movements systematically. Invented in 1831, the self-regulating tide gauge was first used in the US in 1854. Earlier tide gauges had to be monitored by a human observer at regular intervals (every hour, usually) but the self-regulating type allowed the measurements of the water level to be recorded automatically on a paper-covered drum. These records were in the shape of curves and showed how the water rose and fell as the tides came in and out. Sometimes, the smooth tidal curves were interrupted by extra wiggles in the lines. Scientists recognized that these must come from submarine earthquakes far away and the tidal gauges were recording tsunami waves that had been generated from the earthquakes.

Do you know what a seismometer is? It's an instrument used for measuring earth movements. Next month, we'll find out how seismometers and seismographs are used to advance our knowledge of tsunamis.

WORD PUZZLE

By changing one letter at a time, how can you change the word TIDE into the word WAVE?

— Answers on page 45

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BOOK REVIEW BY ELLET BIRRELL

Mango Daiquiris and Mayhem

Walking out of Paradise*, by Judith Verity. Janus Publishing Company Limited ©2010. Paperback, 448 pages. ISBN 1-857567366. EC$29.95.*

What do fresh mango daiquiris, an inbred Caribbean island, a British real estate agent and a dry-clean-only bikini have in common? Read *Walking out of Paradise* to find out.

Safe yet sterile, Heather's London lifestyle fuels a simmering cauldron of desire for faraway places and Herculean challenge. In this novel written in the first person, the protagonist Heather, a stylish, not yet middle-aged, self-made gal, longs to return to a romantic place. Cognizant that she cannot return as the young bride she was 15 years earlier, her quest is to return to a simpler, more pristine place of the heart, or should we say of the mouth?



It is the erotic, unmatchable fresh mango daiquiris on which Heather sipped each day of her two-week honeymoon that inspire a move across the Atlantic Ocean. In real life, the British author owns and manages the Mango Inn in Marigot Bay, St. Lucia. But neither Mango Inn nor St. Lucia is to be found in this story. Instead, we visit the island of "Leon" in the Caribbean. We learn that there is sinister activity in the bay that houses her real and metaphorical Paradise. When she goes to purchase the Paradise hotel, all hell breaks lose.

Judith Verity's book does not confess whether the story is autobiographical, and all names are changed, but certain descriptives thinly veil the setting that inspired the story. She pegs small-town jealousy and pettiness, and even taps into some voodoo mystique. Verity establishes what connected Heather to her Caribbean Paradise — the intoxication of opulent sunsets, alcoholic beverages and sex with her new spouse — aphrodisiacs to which many can relate.

Coming from a sensible yet unsatisfying life, Heather chooses the big challenge of retrofitting and re-opening a hotel in a place where weather, culture and language are barriers. She wades her way into a heap of stress, mayhem and danger. Twists and turns bring her into a world where figuring out whom you can trust is like finding a needle in a haystack. Gregarious and hardly gun slinging, Heather finds herself amidst characters with knife and cutlass scars. She herself must dodge a few bullets. Bravery becomes her.

Her witty mother, a West Indian London co-worker, and a high-style girlfriend come to see Heather through the hotel's grand opening. They contrast with some conniving and often charming local characters, including the ex-owner of Paradise and bewitchingly beautiful Castella. Verity teases us with getting to know her characters beyond superficiality. In the last quarter of the book we come close to an insight about her best friend, Raavi, but are shut off when she tells Heather, "I'll tell you about it sometime." Canine concern trumps human love for Heather. When brutality has rained havoc on several people, it is her beloved mutt, Missy, for whom Heather is distraught.

Heather quotes from various self-help books she's read, using terms like "Future Pacing", "Law of Requisite Order". In real life Verity has written and published several personal development books. Their influence is evident throughout *Walking out of Paradise.*

Walking out of Paradise is like a non-illustrated, long version of Ilene Beckerman's *Love, Loss and What I Wore.* Verity sets the tone for Heather's tasks, challenges and events by how she chooses to dress. Having met the vivacious, fit author in person, she is modest in her self-description.

We grow to understand just how far a stretch her new life is for this city slicker when Heather goes through a confrontation of heart and mind. She flees her hotel that she has labored to remodel, runs across the adjoining beach, trudges through shallow water and dives in.

"Heather! That is my dry-clean-only bikini!" shouts Raavi. Heather gets out of the water promptly. For this reviewer, a no bathing-bathing suit puts the wearer in ski bunny category.

The ocean is not a friend to Heather. It makes a splendid backdrop for sunset cocktails, meditation or foreplay, that is, with feet planted firmly in the sand. The ocean is an environment for drug runners and unseemly sailors. It is a barrier, a place where people die.

Verity sounds the horn for protecting the dolphins from a proposed petting zoo in her bay. Over-the-hill Anglo hippies blame Heather initially as a promoter of trying to cage dolphins. They are among the many who unjustly assault the brave heroine. We start to get the idea that Heather, like a female Don Quixote, will clomp along on her faithful steed toward Paradise come what may.

As with any juicy novel, getting the reader attached to its characters is Verity's challenge. We do come to know Heather's sheer determination, her mother's cagey witticism, the sneer of beautifully bewitching Castella, and the highfalutin' haughty Leon dignitaries. The book became even more interesting toward the end when the protagonist, two friends and her mother try to solve what they believe to be a murder.

Verity paints Leon as Heather's "other lover". While men fail and forsake her, the island is a metaphor for paradise, for love, for passion. It is a state of mind and heart to which she arrives, and for whom she declares her true love. The story develops her struggle to go from infatuation with Leon, to mature love. By the end of the story, she accepts her beloved, foibles and all. Not people, not rain, neither drugs nor voodoo is going to keep her from settling down with her one true love, Leon. Well, Leon and his fresh mango daiquiris, that is.

Verity's strength is the fascinating Creole dialogue of her West Indian characters. She acknowledges in her introduction the various sources she called upon to clarify Creole expressions and semantics. She has gone to great lengths to make that accurate and authentic.

I wouldn't call this a sailing man's book, but for the armchair traveler, it is a tangy aperitif, especially if you like mango daiquiris.

This book is available at all branches of Sunshine Bookshops in St. Lucia and via Amazon.com and other on-line booksellers.

The Sky in October

by Scott Welty

The Planets in October

MERCURY and VENUS - Both trailing the sun as evening stars. Best seen later in the month.

EARTH - Going to a Halloween party as Uranus.

MARS - Rising between 0100 and 0200 and riding in Leo.

JUPITER - Rising at 1930 moving to 1730 by the end of the month and riding in Aries.

SATURN - Setting at 1830 on the first, and then earlier and earlier.

Sky Events This Month

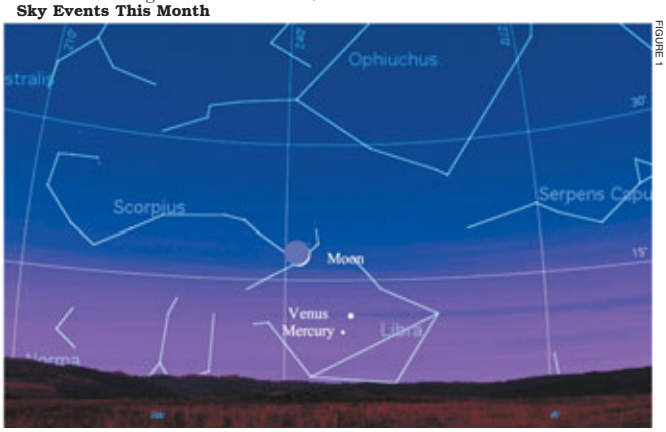


FIGURE 1

11th - Full Moon

16th - At 0045 hours Jupiter will be straight up (in your *zenith*) for Grenada. Slightly to the south of straight up as your viewpoint moves north of Grenada.



FIGURE 2

21st - Orionids meteor shower (see below).

26th - New Moon AND moon in perigee (see below).

28th - Nice grouping of Venus, Mercury, and the crescent moon (see Figure 1).

The Orionids Meteor Shower

One of the better predictable meteor showers of the year. Each year at this time the Earth passes through debris left behind by Halley's comet. As it happens the collision happens at a point lined up with the Orion constellation hence the name of the meteor shower (See Figure 2). You might see meteors far from Orion or even before Orion rises but they will look as if they are emanating from the elbow of Orion (called the *radiant* — see Figure 2). At peak time you may see up to 20 to 30 meteors per hour. The dark skies in the Caribbean will help but the moon will not. Try to get out and look before the moon rises at 0130 on the 22nd. Just lie on deck and gaze up, looking for meteors coming out of the southeast. Remember, it's not that the meteors are moving but it's the Earth crashing into them. If you see one know that you are looking at the fiery trail left from a grain-of-sand up to pebble size burning up in our atmosphere about 50 to 75 miles up. No need to duck... usually.

New Moon in Perigee

On the 26th we have our new moon for the month and coincidentally the moon is also in perigee. This is the point in its orbit that brings it the closest to the Earth (see Figure 3). So what? 'So what' is that this arrangement has the tendency to produce bigger than average tides. Tides are mostly caused by the moon because of the unequal pulls on the near and far sides of the Earth, stretching out the water. The closer the moon, the more *different* are these pulls, so the higher the tides. Add to this the fact that at new moon, the moon, sun and Earth are lined up, so we have higher tides then because of the slight tidal effect of the sun adding to the effect of the moon (spring tides).

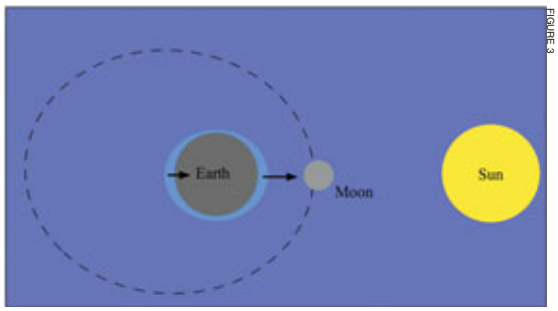


FIGURE 3

Figure 1 - Crescent moon, Venus, and Mercury at sundown on the 28th

Figure 2 - The Orionids meteor shower. Sky at 0100 on the 22nd, but you can look even before Orion rises on the 21st

Figure 3 - New moon AND moon in perigee. Tidal bulge is because of difference in pull on near and far side. (NOT to scale... at all!)

From the diagram you might think that this should happen every month, but the elliptical orbit of the moon itself rotates once around the Earth every 8.85 years. Tides are small in the Caribbean so variations in the tidal range are accordingly small, but you might look at tidal levels around the 26th. Note that there is a lag between the moon's position and the tidal effect. If new moon/perigee are on the 26th, the effect will be seen a day or so later.

To Contemplate While Having a Glass of Wine on Deck

As noted above, Jupiter is rising early in the evening and will be nice and bright in the eastern sky. Back in August, NASA launched JUNO — a solar-powered spacecraft heading to Jupiter to work out a number of nagging questions about the solar system's biggest planet, and also questions about the constituent elements at the dawn of the solar system itself. It will take the spacecraft five years to get there after looping around the sun and back around the Earth to get a gravitational boost. Think how amazed (and excited) Galileo would be. He first noted the moons of Jupiter, showing that there were things in the sky that revolve around something other than the Earth, leading the way to an acceptance of the fact that the planets themselves orbit the sun rather than the Earth. More than 400 years later and we're still curious about Jupiter. Just like good old Galileo!

Scott Welty is the author of The Why Book of Sailing, *Burford Books, ©2007.*

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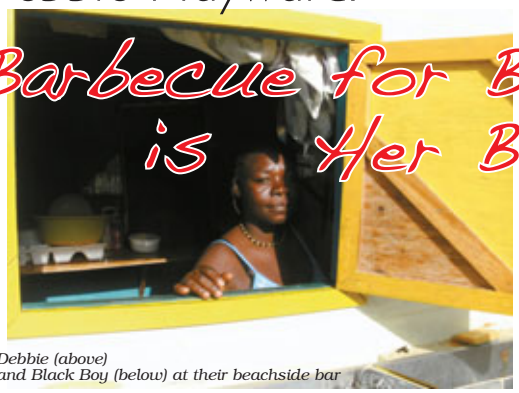
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Debbie Hayward:

Barbecue for Boaters is Her Business





Debbie (above) and Black Boy (below) at their beachside bar

by Mark Denebeim

The story of Debbie Hayward does not have a pretty start. In fact, it was tragic, and makes the telling of her life painful, though currently offering inspiration.

Debbie is the fifth and last child of a mother who died in childbirth, April 5, 1973. Debbie was born, and her mother died, on that fateful day in Chauncey, St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Her father quickly abandoned his newest child since there was no mother around to take care of his growing brood.

While in school, Debbie was teased for not having a mother, adding more pain to the empty place in her heart where Theresa should have been. Debbie's older sister by three years told her that "Mother was nice", but that is all Debbie knows of the woman who passed while giving her life.

Debbie was abused throughout her formative years, forcing her to abandon any educational path before she could read or write, neither of which she can do today. All through childhood, she endured various caretakers who did not have the wherewithal to look after her properly. Before she turned 17, she had two children of her own, from two different men, who both abandoned her.

As was common at the time, and is still quite prevalent today, a "Miss Brown" arranged a relationship between an older man from one of the out islands and a young girl from St. Vincent. As Debbie told me during our interview on the beach in June 2011, "Papa was told I was only 16 and a half, and that I already had two children, but he take me anyway. I bless Miss Brown every day."

Papa Hanson, originally from Bequia, came to Mayreau when he was just seven years old, and became a deep-sea fisherman as a youth. Mayreau, barely one square mile in size, is the smallest of the inhabited Grenadine islands, where 70 percent of the just over 300 inhabitants are related, making fixed relationships almost necessary. It was 1990: there was no electricity on the island (that came in 2002), only three cars, a dirt road, and work was scarce. Debbie and her infant kids went to live with Papa, hoping to escape the abuse and hardships of rugged St. Vincent.

They settled into Papa's modest four-room home on less than a tenth of an acre in The Village, which had been established ten years prior when the Eustace family donated 21 acres for those who lived on Mayreau. They claimed a spot on Salt Whistle Bay and worked hard, cutting and clearing the mangroves and roots, digging a large hole to bury it all. For five years, Debbie sold vegetables on the beach, next to the shore, making sure to stay on Government land, and often moving to higher ground when storms struck her small table and tent.

Word of her culinary talents soon spread and in lieu of selling vegetables Debbie began cooking for locals and tourists who knew how to find her. Besides serving great food, Debbie radiates so much warmth and kindness that people gravitate towards her. She built a small shed on the beach and her barbecue, and Papa's fishing, supported their growing family. Debbie bore Papa, 30 years her senior, three daughters, now 17, 12 and 8, during their time together.

Clothes, shelter, medicines — things we take for granted — were hard to find, much less easily affordable, throughout the years on the tiny island. Debbie never traveled farther than St. Vincent, about 30 miles north, until she was offered work as the flotilla cook and stewardess for Sunsail Charters for a two-week trip with ten yachts to Grenada in 2007.

Meanwhile, another Vincentian looking to improve his standing became her nearby competition in 1996. He lived in a makeshift hovel and struggled to sell his barbecue to charter boats that visited the idyllic Salt Whistle Bay. He was known as Black Boy, a clever, charismatic, frustrated Rasta chef trying to make a living away from home.

When Papa reached his sixties, and with naps taking precedence over Debbie's needs, she decided that "me and Papa was finished" and a romance with Black Boy began in 2004. It was agreed by all that while Black Boy would become her man, Papa would always be her family, so they would all live together in Papa's house. While she and Black Boy share a warm, loving relationship, Debbie assures me that there are no more kids forthcoming!

Their new merger and eventual success together was timely with a full house to feed: Debbie, Black Boy, Papa, the three daughters, a solid guy named Ice who is dating the eldest at-home daughter, and an adopted energetic seven-year-old cousin named Leon: eight in all. A 25-year-old handyman, Glenmore, is also part of their team, while Debbie's restless son and eldest daughter and her baby are also on Mayreau, but are trying to make it on their own, though Debbie is often called upon for assistance.



Black Boy and Debbie's Beach Bar and Restaurant debuted seven years ago under the stars and cool tradewinds on Debbie's original beach spot from her basic shed. They quickly established a steady relationship with Sunsail and the Moorings, earning exclusive referral to Black Boy's incredible lobster and fish barbecue for their clients. Debbie and her daughter cook for the family and for individual lunch and dinner selections, Papa catches some of the lobster and fish, Ice tends bar, Glenmore fixes things and Black Boy prepares the gastronomic feast popular in the southern Grenadines and known simply as "the barbecue". When you enter the bay, look for the yellow runabout called *Fire Power*; it will be Black Boy and Ice coming to invite you to dine with them on the beach.

Earlier this year they built a large festive structure with a metal roof, a bar, a generator and several picnic tables. Sunsail donated an aboveground water tank and some building materials as well as the fridge and bar cabinet — complete with foot pump and double sink — salvaged from one of their bareboats that had recently wrecked on the small reef in front of the restaurant. They also have chaise longues and hammocks on the beach, and operate one of two taxis on the island. (They also offer Mayreau's only ring-toss game, which I donated and installed! If you visit Debbie and her extended family, make sure to tell them that Captain Mark sent you.)

Life can still be a struggle for Debbie and Black Boy, but with a new season approaching, and with the only solid rainproof structure offering barbecue in Salt Whistle Bay, times should get better.

Captain Mark Denebeim offers charters and is writing articles and his memoirs aboard Sanctuary *throughout the Caribbean. For more information visit www.oceanbreezetours.com.*

OILDOWN SATURDAY IN LAURA, GRENADA

by Michelle Daniels

When I think about exploring the West Indies from season to season, I liken it to peeling the layers from an onion. Just when we think we've seen what there is to see, we discover another layer of the rich and interesting Caribbean culture. This time it was the traditional outdoor Grenadian gastronomical event called oildown.

Cutty, an institution here in Grenada, whose island tour is second to none, arranged for cruisers to participate in his own neighborhood oildown. On a beautiful Caribbean Saturday afternoon, 40 cruisers with appetizers or desserts in hand piled into three vans and were driven to Cutty's home village of Laura, located high on a lush mountain slope overlooking the south coast of Grenada.





Above: Cruisers preparing breadfruit for Grenada oildown

Left: Sharing a joke while the kettle simmers

An oildown is all about food and fellowship. Rural Grenadians grow a wide variety of local fruits and vegetables on their own land. It's quite common for a homeowner to have trees of mango, breadfruit, star fruit, coconut, limes, oranges and grapefruit; as well as plantings of dasheen, pineapple, bananas, cristophene, okra, beans, pumpkin, cabbage, lettuce and herbs. Some homeowners even have cinnamon, bay, and allspice trees. Fragrant herbs and spices such as thyme, chadon beni (cilantro), lemongrass, and turmeric complement the Grenadian garden.

Today's oildown featured all homegrown vegetables, herbs and spices gathered by Cutty and the two "head chefs", Martin and Andy. Soon after our arrival the activities began as Cutty demonstrated how to peel and cut the breadfruit, a large, pimply green, balloon-shaped fruit. The interior of the breadfruit is white with a spongy center embedded with small seeds that are not eaten. (If you imagine the ratio of seeds to flesh of a jack-o-lantern pumpkin, you get an idea of the edible to inedible proportion of the breadfruit.) An oildown is "hands on" and with knives ready, Gail (*S/V Vision*), Barb (*S/V Tusen Takk II*), Annette (*S/V Koolau*), and Chris (*S/V Ticket to Ride*) began peeling and slicing the breadfruit. Every now and then Cutty pulled a slice of breadfruit out of the bowl because it did not pass quality control as it had remnants of the spongy center still attached. Cruisers are quick learners, however, and the bowl filled as the pace quickened.

Meanwhile, on an adjacent table, Cutty demonstrated how to peel and cut dasheen, a large tuber vegetable. Roy (*S/V Bonanza*), looking quite dashing in his Panama hat, made quick work of prepping the dasheen. While Americans consider green bananas inedible, here in the islands they are an important ingredient in Caribbean cuisine and will be peeled and added to the cooking kettle. There was plenty of work to go around and soon a number of cruisers were helping grate, pare, cut and slice 27 breadfruit, 25 green bananas, four large tubers of dasheen, four bunches of callaloo, eight carrots, a pound or so of green beans, three small cabbages, and a pound or two of okra.

A key ingredient to the oildown (and the reason for its name) is fresh coconut milk. Martin brought out a pail filled with 16 mature coconuts. With his machete, he gave each coconut three or four raps, sufficient enough to crack the shell and create a small hole from which to drink the coconut water. Coconuts passed around and I enjoyed my own refreshing drink of fresh coconut water straight from the source. Andy set up an industrial-sized metal grater. Connie (*S/V Tashtego*) and Michelle (*S/V Bonanza*) volunteered to begin the tedious job of grating 16 coconuts and a large bag of fresh turmeric root. When they tired, Andy took over. Andy and Martin are built like linebackers. It was a hoot watching these two big guys slicing, dicing, peeling and grating.

Food prep was in high gear. But not everyone had his hands in the pot, so to speak. Relieved of their usual prep duties, some of the community brothers and cousins enjoyed liming on the sidelines. Chuck (*M/V Tusen Takk II*) fit right in to the liming scene.

Meanwhile, Martin built the fire over which the large soup kettle would sit and boil while three-year-old little Edie stood by his side, enchanted with his machete skills.

One thing I soon noticed was the absence of any wives, daughters or girlfriends (except for two who were manning the small bar on the property.) When I asked about this, I was told that the Laura oildown is a guy thing, the women preferring to stay at home. Very interesting. Aside from the girls serving beverages behind the counter, the only other local woman in sight was Miss Ruby, who sat quietly in her chair on the periphery watching the activities and occasionally using her walking stick to shoo off any dog that ventured too close. Miss Ruby is mother, aunt or grandmother to the clan of men and boys at today's oildown (excepting Cutty).

The word "oildown" does not have an appetizing ring to me. Martin explained that the name refers to the process where the oils from the coconut and turmeric, which are laid on top, work their way to the bottom of the kettle, adding flavor to each layer of food as it cooks over the fire. The second explanation I've heard is that the original word was "boildown", but the locals, speaking Patois, dropped the "b" some time ago. Today, as I watched layer after layer of fresh vegetables, and herbs fill the large metal cooking kettle, I anticipated a far more tasty result than its name implied.

With the kettle half filled with layers of sliced breadfruit, dasheen and pumpkin, it was time to add the meat — small pork pieces (with the thick skin still attached) and bone-in chicken pieces seasoned with thyme, island celery, seasoning peppers and chadon beni. More breadfruit, okra, beans, pumpkin and cabbage were layered on top the meat. A cluster of fresh allspice berries picked from a nearby tree were slightly crushed and added to the pot. Chopped callaloo leaves and freshly grated nutmeg were added next.

When all the prepared food had been layered into the kettle, Andy spent a number of minutes power-squeezing the juices from the coconut and turmeric gratings to extract every last bit of juice. The juice was added to the kettle; the gratings given to the animals.

Meanwhile, another local man (regrettably, I did not get his name) prepared the dough for dumplings: flour, salt and water. Caribbean dumpling dough is much stiffer than the traditional dumpling dough from back home and it took muscle to mix and knead the dough. Once ready, the dough was formed into six-inch tubular lengths. These were laid in a single layer on top. Enough water was then added to cover the vegetables and dumplings and the kettle was placed over an open fire where it cooked, covered, for 90 minutes.

While we waited for the oildown to cook, Cutty walked to his home where he harvested some chabeaux and Ceylon mangoes, pineapple and a large stem of the small sweet bananas (or figs as they call them) for us all to sample and take home. Yum! Cutty tried to teach us how to identify the differences between the two mangoes, but the subtle differences eluded most of us. Martin also went to his place and harvested a large bucket of mangoes, distributing them amongst the cruisers to take home. Another local picked some papayas to give away. I went to get the plastic bag I'd put my plate of brownies in and discovered that some of the local teenage boys had sneakily helped themselves to all of my brownies, retying the bag after completing the snitch! I teased them a bit, but smiled at the thought, thinking a trade of brownies for all this fresh fruit was a good trade for each of us. My bag of bananas, mangoes and papaya grew heavy.

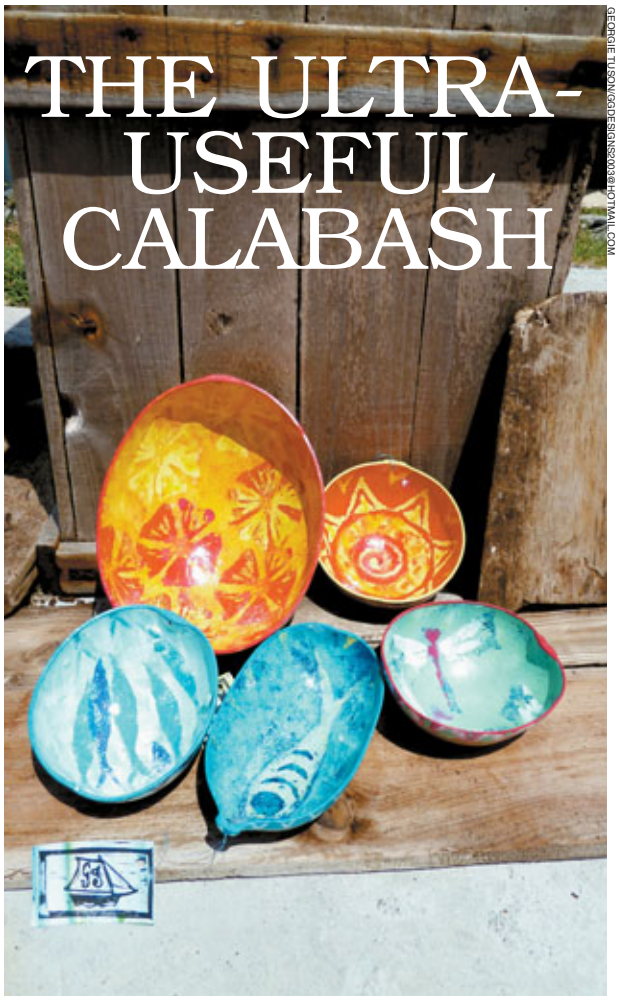
The first oildown taste test came after 45 minutes of cooking. I happened to be near the pot at the time so Martin gave me the honors of taste testing. With a long-handled spoon Martin scooped up a bit of the yellow liquid. Yummy! More salt needed, however. With the long-handled spoon Martin scooped out about a quarter of a cup of coarse salt from a wide-mouth jar and handed the spoon back to me. I sprinkled the salt into the oildown and then gently pressed it under the surface of the liquid. Stirring the contents is forbidden — if that's done, it's no longer an oildown, but a stew.

An oildown is about liming, fellowship and good eats. There's no hurry. The meal isn't ready until almost all the liquid has boiled off, leaving some thick sauce near the bottom of the kettle. Finally, as the sun set and dusk set in, the kettle was pulled off the fire and Cutty filled plates, spooning up a bit from each layer, ensuring that we'd each get a taste of everything.

The result? DELICIOUS!

Michelle Daniels is cruising the Caribbean aboard S/V Daniell Storey.

THE ULTRA-USEFUL CALABASH



Most of us 'old timers' know a calabash tree produces large round gourds. Once upon a time in the Caribbean, these "boleys" were used for all kinds of kitchenware, from dippers to dishes. Except for the occasional fishing boat bailer, calabashes are no longer commonly used for functional items, but instead are used to make more decorative things. It is shameful that the calabash tree has almost vanished. It is a unique tree that has made considerable contributions to Caribbean island cultures.

Centuries before Columbus, Native Amerindians planted useful calabash trees throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America. It is uncertain where *Crescentia cujete* originated. This tree was priceless to those Indians. Fibers from the bark were twisted into twine and woven into ropes. The hard branches and trunk made tools and tool handles. The wood has elasticity and can be shaved, like the wood of the apple tree, and woven into baskets. The gourd-like fruit was indispensable for cups and water containers, musical instruments, and storage containers. This wood was used later by Europeans for cattle yokes, tool handles, wooden wagon wheels, and ribs for building boats.

A Benedictine monk in the 1500s reported that the Taíno Indians in Puerto Rico cut eyeholes in large calabashes to pull over their heads. This was camouflage when they hunted river and lake birds. The Indians wore the calabash and waded into the water. The apparently floating calabash didn't frighten the birds and the hunters could easily grab the birds' legs from underwater.

The Taíno also gave the musical world two percussion instruments made from the calabash, the maracas and the *güiro*. Maracas are still made from small dried calabashes filled with a few pebbles or hard seeds. The traditional *güiro* (also called the fish) is made out of a hollowed-out calabash. The outside of the calabash is carved with grooves. A set of flexible wood sticks, a *pua*, are banded together and either scraped or rubbed up, down, or across the ridges, with a fast or slow tempo. That creates fine harmonious clicks that blend into the famous "cha-cha" sound. The calabash güiro isn't only recognized as a Caribbean percussion instrument. It is used in musical pieces ranging from Igor Stravinsky's classical 'The Rite of Spring' to The Drifters' 'Under the Boardwalk'.

I've never known anyone to try and eat a calabash and thought all were considered poisonous. However bush medicine uses the pulp to make a decoction for severe diarrhea, and respiratory ailments such as colds, bronchitis, cough, and especially asthma. A tea made from this tree's leaves is used to treat high blood pressure.

Today calabash art has bypassed calabash utensils. With a bit of carving, a splash of paint, and a coat of varnish, the calabash can be transformed into a unique container, purse or wall art. For boaters, calabash serving bowls are a lightweight, durable, attractive and natural Caribbean addition to the galley. Look for them in craft shops and markets, or create your own.

Calabash Art

1 calabash
1 bucket water
1 rough scrub brush
1 Scotch scrub pad
sandpaper
paint (to your taste)
varnish (optional)

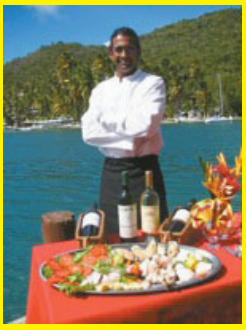
First, prepare the freshly picked calabash by cutting an access hole (and keeping the 'lid') and removing the seedy pulp. Then soak the shell in water, scrub the inside well with a rough brush, and then finish with a green Scotch pad. Put the shell in a breezy and partially shady place to dry. (Before drying, you can etch or scrape designs in the thin green outer skin for a special effect.) Once dried, the calabash will appear to be carved from wood. Rub both the exterior and interior with sandpaper until smooth. Create whatever you want: a güiro or maracas, a vase for potted plants, or a bowl to hold your keys. Leave natural, paint or varnish as the spirit moves you. If your calabash is dried properly, you'll enjoy it for years.

For the Gardener

The calabash is a great backyard tree because it doesn't get really big, usually about 30 feet, and can be pruned to a desirable height and shape. It can be grown from the small flat seeds of a dried fruit, cuttings, or root suckers. Calabash can survive salty sea blast and take most soils from fine to coarse, as long as it is well drained. Most calabash trees develop at least two trunks with a few strong branches that seem to twist with a natural sag. Orchids love to nest in a calabash tree.

Water the tree during the dry season and fertilize with a cup of 12-12- 17-2 bearing fertilizer every two months for superior calabash development. The calabash will bloom and bear at the same time. The large light green bell-shaped blossoms hang directly on the large branches and trunk. The branches are long, and spread outward with almost no secondary branches. They will produce fruit that can grow to a foot or more in diameter. The blossoms usually bloom at night and are fertilized by bats. The fruit matures in about seven months.

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Dear *Compass*,

I have known the Spice Island Boatyard in Grenada forever. And my parents, Alan and Shirley Hooper, are responsible for this. A few months ago they retired from their business, Essentials Mini Mart [*see "MAYAG's News from Grenada" in the Business Briefs department of the August issue of* Compass], and I find myself estranged, as this is a place that seemed to belong to us. One of my earliest memories (many, many years ago) was roller-skating through the parking lot and down into the yard. In those days the concrete was rough with potholes — inevitably there were many cuts and scrapes, all attended to by Selwyn Maxwell and a bottle of "mentholated" spirits.

My Dad started off managing the charter boat company, Spice Island Charters. Alan Hooper was a name known throughout the Grenadines. Everyone came to him, and this is how we met many people from far and wide, famous and not so famous: Chris Doyle in his charter boat days, Bob and Maranne, Mel and Sarah, Vinny, Sally and Tall Tom are the predominant ones for me. As we lived so close to the boatyard, in the house that is now called the Lovely House, Dad kept bringing home the stray yachties for dinner — which my Mum always seemed prepared for.

There was a short break after the "Grenada Intervention" in 1983, but we found our way back. The boatyard now had new owners. And what were the offices became a restaurant. Dad took the little house on the hill as his office and ran the charter boats for many more years. Mum joined the boatyard with the creation of Essentials Mini Mart, a great business that saw my brother Robert and me through school and university. It was where I made my pocket money working on Sundays, where I met many folks including Ringo Starr, and where I decided that I needed to learn another language as I struggled to understand the foreigners.

As a teenager, I was allowed to hang out with my friends in L'Anse Aux Epines until closing time at 6:00PM. Other times I would go the boatyard parties, of which Dad said nothing, probably because the owners of the restaurant, Cleve and Carol, were their great friends and he knew any mischief would be reported.

The years passed. My brother and I left and Mum and Dad were on their own. Things started to change again. Dad retired from the boating business and Sundays in the Mini Market became the weekly hangout for him and his boys, Grenadians and yachties alike. The boatyard changed owners again (it is now Prickly Bay Marina) and Mum and Dad were still there. In the last years it was their grandkids who made their pocket money working on Sundays.

But the time had come and after 30 years Mum, Dad, my brother and I say goodbye to the boatyard. Essentials Mini Mart is still open but has new owners. And the boatyard, well I guess we will visit but now we are just that — visitors.

Karen Maaroufi
Helvellyn, Grenada

Editor's note: We first knew Karen as our friends the Hoopers' adorable tousle-haired toddler. We are now extraordinarily proud that, her father having passed the torch to her a few years ago, Karen is Compass's *island agent in Grenada.*

Hello *Compass* Readers,

We would like to congratulate Jerry Stewart and the sponsors for putting on a great fun cruising yacht regatta during the Carriacou Regatta Festival 2011 [*as reported in the September issue of* Compass]. The weather was doubtful leading up to the start but cleared to three beautiful sailing days for the 22 yachts participating. Moderate wind, smooth seas and the clear skies guaranteed fun competition on the water, which was followed every evening by fun at great parties ashore. The primary sponsors — Mount Gay, Doyle Sails, Island Water World, Budget Marine, and the community local small businesses — provided high-quality race prizes deep into the fleet in both classes. Events on the water were efficiently run by the Race Committee led by certified official James Benoit. Many of the participants, along with cruisers from the nearly 100 visiting boats in Tyrrel Bay, arrived early to witness local Carriacou events leading up to regatta weekend. Sunday was a layday for yacht racing so most partied in Hillsborough while watching local Grenadine boat racing events.

As the activity wound down following Carriacou Regatta Festival 2011, some sailed off to Grenada Carnival starting soon after, while many stayed to watch the local boats race again in the Windward Regatta held on the east side of the island two weeks later.

Mark your calendar for early August next year.

Roy Hopper and Susan Tiziani
S/V Windborne

Dear *Compass*,

"Things are not always what they seem; there is a difference between milk and heavy cream." I know that a rose by any other name is still a rose, but if we call something by a name other than what it is, we get confused and that can cause all manner and sort of problems.

The Caribbean is defined, at least according to Wikipedia, as, "a region consisting of the Caribbean Sea, its islands (most of which are enclosed by the sea), and the surrounding coasts. The region is located southeast of the Gulf of Mexico and North America, east of Central America, and to the north of South America."

Situated largely on the Caribbean Plate, the region comprises more than 7,000 islands, islets, reefs, and cays. These islands, called the West Indies, generally form island arcs that delineate the eastern and northern edges of the Caribbean Sea. These islands are called the West Indies because when Christopher Columbus landed there in 1492 he believed that he had reached the Indian sub-continent.

The region includes the Antilles, divided into the larger Greater Antilles (Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico), which bound the Caribbean Sea on the north, and the Lesser Antilles (Leewards and Windwards, and also the ABCs) on the east and south.

Clearly when Columbus arrived he was confused. However, 500 years have passed and we still have confusion over what IS "The Caribbean". I cannot understand why this confusion persists and I am more frustrated than Fatty Goodlander is when he is told that he has to pay — for whatever! (At least he cannot complain about the guides I write, as they are completely free.)

Caribbean Compass in the September 2011 issue reviewed Les Weatheritt's updated *Caribbean Passagemaking; A Cruiser's Guide*. The book is not Caribbean Passagemaking. In fact, it is a passagemaking guide for the Lesser Antilles. I have read the book and it is well written but clearly mistitled.

The same *Caribbean Compass* September edition has an ad by the CMA (Caribbean Marine Association). Its slogan is "Many Islands, One Sea" and the ad shows a map of the Lesser Antilles. While I believe the association is an excellent one, it needs to either change its name to the Lesser Antilles Marine Association or change its map and tag line. [*Editor's note: Both of these changes are being considered under the CMA's new Board of Directors.*]

Even the dean of Caribbean cruising, Don Street, wrote an article last year for *Caribbean Compass* entitled "Cruising South to the Caribbean" and it explained all about how to sail to the Lesser Antilles. Now Don is on in years and has a reputation for eating "green lunches" but even so, he is clearly knowledgeable when it comes to geography. Must have been a "senior moment"!

What can this malaise be? What has caused this misnomer? Can it be that the tradewinds blow only in the Lesser Antilles? Or that the sun shines only in that part of the Caribbean? Perhaps it is an historical hangover from the days of Columbus that carries forward — or if not historical then perhaps hysterical, in that so many have dreamt so many years about "the islands beneath the sun". Or perhaps it is too much time at Foxy's enjoying and imbibing, so much so that they have lost their orientation and as a result no longer know where they are except in broad generalities.

A big hurrah for *Caribbean Compass* for its map, on page 3 of every issue, that reflects the entire Caribbean — all 1,000,000 square miles of it!

Frank Virgintino
www.freecruisingguide.com

Dear *Compass*,

Sir James Mitchell, in his letter in the September issue of *Compass*, pointed out that tourism is the Eastern Caribbean's main income earner, so the salaries of civil servants are paid in large part by tourist dollars, and that it would be helpful if they realized this and started to run their departments to make things easier for visitors, rather than discouraging them.

I recently received the draft Common Tourism Policy for the OECS. The figures it gave confirm what Sir James wrote. The total contribution of tourism to the GDP for the OECS nations varies from a low of 24.8 percent (Dominica) to a high of 74.2 percent (Antigua & Barbuda). In total employment, tourism contributes from 45 percent to 69 percent in half the OECS countries.

—Continued on next page

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—Continued from previous page

It is indeed time to realize we are in the tourism business, and make ourselves as competitive as possible. If officials came to realize that more visitor expenditure means larger revenues for their nation, and thus the possibility of increased wages, I am sure they are very capable of helping craft new regulations that will make things easier and more pleasant.

Sir James was kind enough to think my term "epauletsy" should be included in the Caribbean lexicon. I would far sooner we moved forward so fast that we could quickly think back on the idea of epauletsy as being something from the past.

Chris Doyle
Yacht Ti Kanot
www.doyleguides.com

Dear *Compass* Readers,

Using seven rather old and dilapidated Optimist dinghies, the Carriacou Junior Sailing Club (CJSC) currently provides weekly sailing tuition to 15 local children aged seven to 14 years old from different villages in Carriacou.



Carriacou children have limited opportunities and few activities outside of school. The club is run in an organic way. No fees are imposed. The more advanced sailors are learning how to run the club themselves, ensuring it will stay in existence, and coaching training for them would be invaluable. An anonymous donor pays for club grounds rental, otherwise the club receives no consistent financial support.

An integral part of the Annual Carriacou Regatta Festival held every August [*see coverage in last month's* Compass], CJSC has comprised the entire Optimist racing fleet for the last five years.

CJSC Director Teena Marie believes the club instills analytical thinking, teamwork and sportsmanship, and builds marine skills and self-confidence paving the way to a brighter future for members. "We operate with a merit system, which motivates them to be responsible for equipment, safety and conduct. The storage yard is our base, but we have to load the boats onto a trolley, cart them to the seawall, and slide them down a bamboo ladder and onto the beach; vice-versa after sailing. The children work hard in order to sail.

"We are in communication with Grenada Sailing Association, Opti-World, ISAF and patrons of junior sailing from all walks of life. The club needs hulls, rigging, sails, advanced training, financial support for traveling to regional events, life jackets, books, sailing shirts, gloves, etcetera. We also operate without a motorized support boat, so yachtspeople passing through could help us with a rescue boat and boat repairs.

"Right now we have big dreams. We have been invited to sail in the February 2012 Grenada Sailing Festival. We would also love to travel to June's 2012 Scotia Bank Optimist Regatta in St. Thomas, and some day host an invitational regatta in Carriacou with young sailors from other islands. We dream of upper-level training and coaching clinics… and more."

You can help CJSC realize these dreams and further the development of these excellent young sailors with financial support to a specific need by contacting smallfishcoop@yahoo.com. Or make a general donation directly to Grenada Co-operative Bank, Church Street, St. George's, Grenada; swift address GROAGDGD; account name Carriacou Junior Sailing Club; account number 521002059.

Corporate and individual donors will be recognized on CJSC Facebook.

Ellen Birrell
Yacht Boldly Go
Frank Pearce
Yacht Samadhi

Dear *Compass* Readers,

We send you two copies of this letter — the same in English and also in French, because the French *Compass* readers who don't speak English fluently are sometimes frustrated and we want them, too, to know about what is good in the area.

Let's speak about "after sales service". Last year we bought a dinghy at Island Water World in Rodney Bay, St. Lucia. We had, very quickly, technical problems. Ian Cowan, the manager, changed the bad part. That was very nice. After a few months the problem recurred, but we were no longer in St. Lucia. So we contacted Ian by mail. Mr. Cowan understood the problem and contacted the manufacturer. Forty-eight hours later the problem was solved: we took possession of a brand new dinghy.

Thank-you to Ian. It is always a pleasure to know that some professionals are not only selling stuff, but that they care about it and assure the customer's satisfaction. This mind-set in a manager ensures that all the staff have the same work ethic. Anytime you come in to Island Water World you are made welcome, and whatever you are looking for, someone is coming to help. And with a smiling face!

Another thing very important in this shop. When you want to speak to the manager you can always knock at his door and he will receive you to see what you need. Thanks again! We think it is important to inform the yachties who are too often complaining.

Nelly and François
Harmoony

Chers lecteurs de *Compass*,

Parlons "service après vente".

Nous avons acheté l'année dernière une annexe à Island Water World à Rodney Bay (Sainte Lucie). Nous avions, très rapidement, des problèmes techniques. Ian Cowan, le directeur (manager), a changé la mauvaise partie. C'était en soi une démarche très agréable. Après quelques mois le problème a persisté. Nous n'étions plus désormais à Sainte Lucie. Donc nous sommes entrés en contact avec Ian par mail. M. Cowan a compris le problème et nous a cru sur parole. Il est entré en contact avec le fabricant. 48 hours plus tard le problème a été résolu et nous avons pris possession d'une toute nouvelle annexe.

Merci à Ian. C'est toujours un plaisir de savoir qu'un certains professionnels sont non seulement là pour vendre, mais qu'ils se préoccupent de la satisfaction du client.

Cette attitude du directeur (manager) fait que tout son personnel adopte la même philosophie de travail. N'importe quand vous entrez: vous êtes bienvenus et quoi que vous cherchiez quelqu'un vient pour vous aider. Et avec un visage souriant!

Une autre chose très importante dans ce magasin. Quand vous voulez parler au directeur (manager) vous pouvez toujours frapper à la porte de son bureau. Il vous recevra pour vous aider à résoudre votre problème.

Merci à eux. Nous avons pensé qu'il était important de tenir au courant les plaisanciers quand parfois certains ont un peu tendence à se plaindre.

Nelly et François
Harmoony

Dear *Compass* Readers,

We recently received a couple of pictures taken by a sailor in Colombia, which show a sailing vessel by the name of *Double H*, from Mississippi. The vessel is lying on its side in Serrana Cay. Subsequent info, provided by local authorities, was that the vessel had drifted



onto a reef, and when boarded shortly after the grounding the authorities found everything in order, but no occupants. We wonder if your readers can provide any info about the vessel, and whether the people we knew on a boat called *Double H*, Sarah and Walton, are okay.

Sincerely,
Kathleen and Roland O'Brien
Formerly of *S/V M'Lady Kathleen*
Roland693@hotmail.com

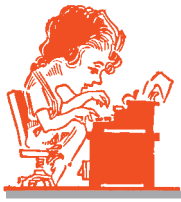
Dear* Compass *Readers,

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.

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St. Vincent & the Grenadines



Letter of the Month

Dear *Compass* Magazine,

"I have never been in a marina like this, have you? A marina that takes care of cats, like this one does."

I have been asked this question by most of the cruisers who visit Bahia Redonda Marina in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela.

My husband, Harold, and I first came to Bahia Redonda back in 2000; we stayed a week on our way west to Panama. Seven years later, after completing a circumnavigation, we decided to go to Venezuela for the hurricane season. We came to Bahia Redonda, which was full of American, Canadian and European boats. So full, in fact, that you had to make reservations in advance. We noticed the feeding stands around the marina, but never gave them any thought. Someone mentioned that they were for the "marina cats". We saw several ladies walking around in the mornings and afternoons with a container of cat food and a water bottle, but never gave them a thought either.

Harold and I like animals, but we are not really "animal people". We have had pets over the years — a couple of dogs and a cat — but never considered having a pet on the boat. We feel sorry for the dogs on boats as we think they deserve a life on land, smelling grass and running around trees. We have seen the odd cat on a boat at anchor and thought "isn't that cute" — but what about all the cat hair?

So how in the world did Harold and I become the de-facto caregivers of the Bahia Redonda cats?



Diana and Harold with two of the Bahia Redonda marina cats. Anybody want a cruising kitty?

A little background information is needed. Peter York, one of the owners of Bahia Redonda, told us that when the marina was being built one of the cruisers mentioned that it might be nice to have pedestal feeding stands for the cats. How long have the cats been here? I guess since the beginning. How many cats have there been? Hundreds. Currently, we have 15 resident cats. Every several weeks a kitten (or three) appears in front of the Bahia Mini-Mart. Ann Robinson, the godmother of the cats and owner of the mini-mart, opens a can of tuna and a carton of milk and cuddles each one. She has a collection container in the mini-mart and the cats survive on donations. Luckily, the cruising community is generous and with the help of a bake sale or two the cats continue to make it. The cats that stay in the marina are spayed or neutered. Ann has been successful in finding homes for hundreds of kittens. When a cat is not adopted, it becomes a resident.

The cats add so much life to the marina. Everyone enjoys seeing them come out at feeding time. Even the crustiest old grizzly singlehander can be seen snuggling and petting a marina cat. It is quite a sight to see the guy who never talks to anyone have a one-on-one conversation with Zack, Cleo, Silver or Chocolate.

Harold and I became the keepers of the cats because one day there was no one else. All those nice ladies who took turns feeding the cats each day sailed away.

What does it mean to be the keepers of the cats? It means walking around the marina at 0600 and at 1600 every day with a container of cat food and a water bottle. It means cleaning each bowl and looking over each cat. Talking to each cat, petting, snuggling and loving each and every cat. Making sure that they have a safe dry place to eat when it rains. Cleaning wounds, breaking up catfights, rescuing cats from the water, from under the dock, from up a palm tree. We have witnessed cats having kittens, nursed cats back to health after they have fallen in the sea and been covered in a oil slick, tended to wounds from catfights, had cats die in our arms and buried them in a grave on the marina site. The cats of Bahia Redonda have changed our lives. We adopted one of the orphans dropped off at the marina. Tigger was left on the dock wearing a little collar and with her own food bowl. She has become a member of our family. And yes, there is cat hair, but it is a small price to pay for so much love.

I have been meaning to write this for a while. When I search the internet for tips on cat care (looking up a solution to the latest problem we have encountered with the marina cats) I see so many sites. I wonder to myself, is there another marina like this one where people give so much love to stray and abandoned cats? Did I mention that Bahia Redonda Marina provides all the cat food? We go through two and a half bags of cat food a week. The marina owners never complain, and even when we said the cats don't like the cheap stuff, they gladly changed brands to Purina Cat Chow — the only cat food they will eat!

I guess I wanted people to know that there are special places in the world. Harold and I have been lucky enough to find this one.

Diana Thompson
S/V Zephyrus

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CALENDAR

OCTOBER

1 – 2 Race and Cruise to Jost Van Dyke. Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVIYC), tel (284) 494-3286, sailing@royalbviyc.org, www.royalbviyc.org
2 – 8 Bonaire International Sailing Regatta. www.bonaireregatta.com
3 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Thanksgiving Day)
11 – 21 Interline Regatta, BVI. The Moorings, www.moorings.com
12 FULL MOON
12 Public holiday in the Bahamas (Discovery Day) and Belize (Pan American Day)
15 Willy T Virgin's Cup Race, BVI. RBVIYC
16 Blue Food Festival (local cuisine), Bloody Bay, Tobago
17 Public holiday in Haiti (Anniversary of the Death of Dessalines) and Jamaica (National Heroes' Day)
21 Public holiday in the BVI (St. Ursula's Day)
22 – 23 CSA Regatta Organizers' Conference and AGM, St. Maarten. director@bigboatseries.com
22 – 23 Trafalgar Regatta, BVI. RBVIYC
25 Public holiday in Grenada (Thanksgiving Day)
26 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Diwali)
27 Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Independence Day)
28 – 39 Foxy's Cat Fight (catamaran race), Jost van Dyke, BVI. www.bvitourism.com
28 - 30 15th Annual World Creole Music Festival, Dominica. www.wcmfdominica.com
29 – 30 Barbados J/24 Invitational. www.sailbarbados.com
29 - 31 Triskell Cup Regatta, Guadeloupe. Triskell Association, www.triskellcup.com
30 – 5 Nov Bitter End Pro-Am Regatta, Virgin Gorda, BVI. Bitter End Yacht Club, www.beyc.com

NOVEMBER

1 Public holiday in Antigua & Barbuda (Independence Day) and Haiti (All Saints' Day)
2 Public holiday in Haiti (All Souls' Day)
3 Public holiday in Dominica (Independence Day)
4 Public holiday in Dominica (Community Day of Service)
5 SOL Optimist Championship, St. Maarten. St. Maarten Yacht Club (SMYC), tel (599) 544-2075, fax (599) 544-2091, info@smyc.com, www.smyc.com
7 Caribbean 1500 rally departs from Virginia, USA to Tortola, BVI. www.carib1500.com
8 – 11 BVI Charter Yacht Show. www.bvicrewedyachts.com/boatshow
10 FULL MOON
11 – 13 Heineken Regatta Curaçao. ***See ad on page 12***
11 – 13 Discover Caribbean Sailing Festival (1st weekend), Ponce, Puerto Rico. www.ponceyachtandfishingclub.com
12 – 13 Pete Sheals Memorial Regatta, BVI. RBVIYC
12 – 13 Jolly Harbour Yacht Club Regatta, Antigua. Jolly Harbour Yacht Club (JHYC), Antigua. tel (268) 770-6172, miramarsailing@hotmail.com, www.jhycantigua.com
12 – 16 Golden Rock Regatta, St. Maarten to Statia. http://website.goldenrockregatta.com
16 – 20 St. Barth Cata Cup (F18 catamarans). www.stbarthcatacup.com
18 Public holiday in Haiti (Battle of Vertieres Day)
18 – 12 Discover Caribbean Sailing Festival (2nd weekend), Ponce, Puerto Rico. www.ponceyachtandfishingclub.com
18 – 21 Barbados Food & Wine and Rum Festival. www.foodwinerum.com
19 Peg Legs Round Tortola Race, BVI. RBVIYC
19 Public holiday in Belize (Garifuna Settlement Day)
20 Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) starts, Canary Islands to St. Lucia. www.worldcruising.com/arc
21 Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (Remembrance Day)
23 Public holiday in Montserrat (Liberation Day)
25 – 27 Course de l'Alliance, St. Martin. www.coursedelalliance.com
26 – 27 J/24 Barbados Match Racing Championships. www.sailbarbados.com
26 – 27 BVI Schools' Regatta. RBVIYC
30 Public holiday in Barbados (Independence Day)
30 – 4 Dec Carlos Aguilar Match Race, St. Thomas, USVI. www.carlosmatchrace.com

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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WHAT'S ON MY MIND

An Alternate View

by James Lord

An incident was reported in July's Forum of a local ship dumping a large amount of trash into the waters of a small island bay that is also a popular yacht anchorage. It was done in broad daylight. Many yachts saw it; I was there and I saw it. It was an amazing amount of trash, truly awful. I thought so and others who saw it thought so. This vessel had violated one of the most fundamental and longstanding procedures for dealing with trash aboard a ship: dump it at night or in a place where nobody can see you. Fifty years ago aboard the US Navy ship I served on, we were always well out of sight of land when the intercom announced "All departments lay aft to the fantail to dump trash". More recently, a decade ago, an island famous for protecting its marine environment (by declaring its surroundings waters protected, an effective way to keep yachts and others out of bays that rich people regard as private) got caught dumping its trash from a ship down current of its protected waters. Do it at night.

What else might have been done? It was clear and simple enough to the cook where I had lunch the next day. They should have put it in the trash tip/dumpster. Everyone knows that, right? And so insisted a yachtsperson from a notably civilized country who believes that people automatically understand these things. Well, they don't.



Have you been to the dump on any of these small islands? It wasn't long ago that they were just dumps — smoke, stink, flies, rats, awful. Now they are landfills, much better. Still.... On these small islands, one problem is where to put your trash. When you take it on this little island it goes into a landfill in the middle of one of the two villages hidden behind trees

So what this vessel should have done is to load it into their tender, however messy it might be, take it to the dock, hand it up, and carry it to the dumpster. Or in this case, since it was enough to fill a dumpster, arrange to take the ship dockside and hire a truck to take it to the dump. All pretty straightforward, some hassle and cost, another extra tiny puff of greenhouse gasses.

Put it in the dump... where it should be? As opposed to over the rail, out of sight in an hour, no problem for this island anymore? Like (I presume) sailors, fishermen, and the people ashore have been doing for thousands of years? Well, new times, mon. Nowadays that sort of conduct is as inappropriate as, say, continuing to use more and more energy even now that 90-some percent of credible scientists who know anything about it agree that global warming caused by human activity is happening, is getting worse, and will have serious consequences.

So maybe not all problems have convenient solutions.

Still, here's a thought on the trash where I am. These small islands don't generate much trash. Most of what is produced here can be thrown on the ground; nature eats it up. Almost all of the packaging and devices come from the developed world: China, Japan, the Commonwealth, US, Europe, elsewhere. They are the ones who get rich off of the devices we buy that will eventually become trash, shipped in packaging that immediately becomes trash. And the developed world supposedly has the facilities to recycle the packaging (almost all of it bears a "recycle" icon and much of it already contains recycled material). They even have some ability to comply with the "proper disposal" note that manufacturers print at the end of most instruction manuals to relieve themselves (and others who made money along the way) from responsibility.

Here's what should happen. When a container of new stuff is unloaded, the packaging from the last shipment and the defunct stuff that is being replaced should be packed in the container and shipped back to the people who made it and presumably have facilities to deal with it. At their cost... which, of course, would be added to our price. And *they* should arrange it all, including hiring and training local contractors as necessary, since they have the management, networks, logistics, and money.

Realistically, and this is just dreaming, we should stop producing more and more trash and start producing less trash. In fact, we should begin to consume less. Now *that's* dreaming.

While I'm offering crackpot ideas, let me repeat the most intelligent thing that I've heard in a very long time. I didn't catch who said it, but the statement stands on its own. "What humanity needs is an entirely new model for what a good life is."

Caribbean Compass Market Place

Antigua



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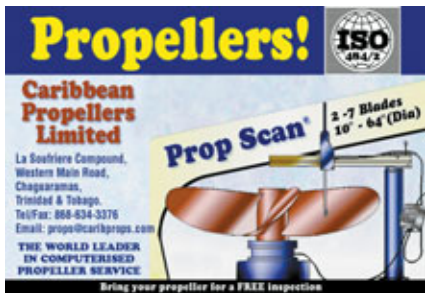
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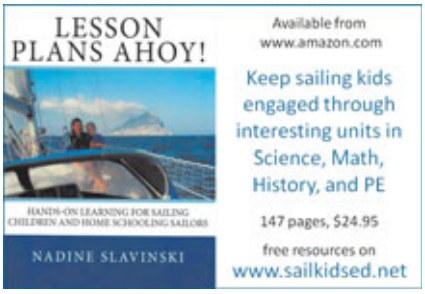
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Caribbean Eco News

—Continued from page 10

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