CARIBBEAN On-line
COMPASS
OCTOBER 2013 NO. 217
The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

Destination St. Pierre:

OLD PORT — NEW RULES

See story on page 16



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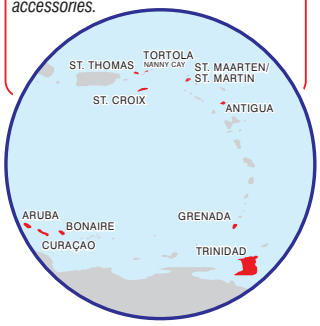


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The Caribbean's Monthly Look at Sea & Shore

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OCTOBER 2013 • NUMBER 217



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Cover photo: Marc Verstraete's portrait of quaint St. Pierre at sunset. At the northwestern end of Martinique, St. Pierre has long been an attractive stop for yachts



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

'*Caribbean Compass* has proven to be the premier guide to yachting in the Caribbean... the magazine does a great job of keeping readers in-the-know on destinations, yachting news and trends.'

Christy Recaii, writer
St. Lucia

Click Google Map link below to find the *Caribbean Compass* near you!

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Info & Updates

Carriacou Port of Entry Relocates to Tyrrel Bay

On August 9th a new yacht clearance office opened in Tyrrel Bay, Carriacou. The clearance office is a brand new, purpose-built building located at Carriacou Marine Boatyard & Yacht Club (formerly Tyrrel Bay Yacht Haulout) on the south side of the bay.

Tyrrel Bay is better protected than Hillsborough, the former port of entry for yachts on Carriacou. Tyrrel Bay is a sheltered anchorage within easy reach of restaurants, bars, supermarkets and dive shops.

Customs and Immigration office opening hours are normally 8:00AM to 4:00PM Monday through Friday (closed for lunch from 12:00PM to 1:00PM) and 9:00AM to 2:00PM on weekends and public holidays. Telephone (473) 443-7273.

Carriacou Marine, the new location for the Customs and Immigration office, offers many services including haulout, dockage, dinghy dock, minimart, café/bar and a chandlery stocking a good selection of Island Water World goods.

President of the Marine and Yachting Association of Grenada (MAYAG), Anita Sutton, has also issued an update on Grenada's participation in the SailClear online clearance system: "The Government of Grenada, Grenada Customs, Immigration Department, Grenada Ports Authority, Grenada Board of Tourism and MAYAG are working together on a project funded by the Caribbean Development Bank to ease yacht movement. The implementation of the SailClear online clearance system is underway and a team is looking at how we can progress towards a single yachting space making Grenada more attractive to visiting yachts."

For more information contact mayagadmin2@gmail.com.

Navigation Notice for Tobago

As this issue of *Compass* goes to press, the last remaining cardinal marker alerting sailors to the position of Buccoo Reef in Tobago has been reported missing. John Stickland of Store Bay Marine Services, Tobago, says the cardinal marker at Pigeon Point, charted position 11°11.09N, 60°51.12W has disappeared. Charts generally indicate there are two cardinal buoys marking Buccoo Reef; both of these are now missing. There are currently no buoys or markers indicating the position or boundaries of Buccoo Reef; therefore extreme care should be taken when navigating in this area, especially at night.

The matter has been reported to the relevant authorities.

Buccoo Reef is a protected marine park and yachts should not venture inside it unless for shelter from a hurricane.

For more information contact john@sbms.co.tt.

New Caribbean Marine Association Member

John Duffy, President of the Caribbean Marine Association, reports: The newly formed Martinique Yachting Association (MYA) has become the ninth Eastern Caribbean country to join the Caribbean Marine Association and the first of the French islands.

CHRIS DOYLE



Martinique, which boasts the Eastern Caribbean's largest charter fleet at Le Marin, is the newest member of the CMA

The MYA was formed in July this year under the Presidency of Douglas Rapier, a well-known yacht agent in Martinique. One of the first actions of the newly formed association was to make an application to join the CMA.

Several other islands in the Eastern Caribbean are endeavouring to form marine and yachting associations and the CMA hopes to be soon welcoming them on board.

—Continued on next page

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Fajardo, Puerto Rico

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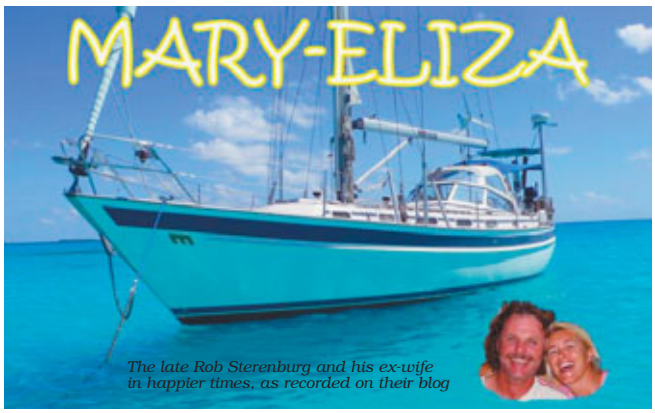
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With the expansion of SailClear.com, actively supported by the CMA, freer movement between participating islands makes collaboration through the CMA essential to the wellbeing of the Caribbean yachting industry. Already operating throughout most of the OECS countries (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States), it is hoped that SailClear.com will also be accepted by the French and Dutch islands.

For more information on the CMA visit www.caribbeanmarineassociation.com.

Cruiser Killed in Porlamar, Venezuela

A sad update to the article in last month's report about violent crimes against cruisers in Venezuela ("Venezuela: Is It Safe?" *Compass*, September 2013) is the news of the death of Robert Sterenburg of the Malo 42 *Mary-Eliza* at Porlamar on the morning of September 3rd.



The late Rob Sterenburg and his ex-wife in happier times, as recorded on their blog

Rob was shot while reportedly resisting three or four armed robbers who surprised him and his girlfriend aboard the yacht. Commissioner Anthony Frontado, Commander of the Municipal Police of Mariño, confirmed that the criminals used an inflatable dinghy to reach *Mary-Eliza*, which was anchored approximately 500 metres (almost a third of a mile) from the shore, presumably to avoid such an attack.

Receiving multiple gunshot wounds, Rob was taken to the emergency room at the Luis Ortega Hospital, accompanied by his girlfriend, but according to different reports he was either pronounced dead on arrival or died soon after. Two prosecutors have been commissioned to lead the investigation into the death.

The largest city on the Venezuelan island of Margarita, Porlamar is often the clearance port for yachts coming from the Eastern Caribbean. Fulfilling the sea gypsies' criteria of "warm, cheap and interesting", not to mention hurricane-free, this was once a popular cruisers' hangout with up to a hundred visiting yachts occupying the anchorage. Recently, there were as few as two. The anchorage has been largely abandoned because of the numerous crimes, ranging from dinghy thefts to violent boardings, committed there.

Sources say that *Mary-Eliza* had arrived at Porlamar from St. Vincent & the Grenadines about three weeks before the attack. Rob, a Dutch citizen, had been cruising for more than 11 years and had visited at least 54 countries. Friends say that Rob and his ex-wife, Jacqueline, had visited Porlamar aboard *Mary-Eliza* a decade ago, that he had fond memories and, despite warnings from other cruisers, wished to return.

Rob was the second foreign visitor murdered in Margarita in less than two months. On July 19th, a Colombian hotel guest, 32-year-old Jorge Alberto Huaca, was killed on the beach at Pampatar during the theft of his gold chain.

A cruiser who recently visited the nearby island of Blanquilla said, "We talked to a lot of fishermen, sailors who know Venezuela, and also to the coast guard; all of them told us that Margarita still is a very dangerous place and that they wouldn't recommend going there."

Carriacou Campers Experience Snorkelling

August 22nd saw Camp Kayak and Deefer Diving Carriacou join up to provide an underwater experience for the children of Carriacou. Fourteen young Camp



Kayak participants and four volunteer staff members were taken to Anse La Roche on Deefer Diving's 30-foot catamaran, *Bobcat*, for a fun afternoon of snorkelling and swimming.

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Deefer Diving staff members Gary Ward and Kenneth Alexis were on hand to teach and then guide a snorkelling tour around the bay. "Everyone had a really good time and we saw some amazing marine life, including moray eels, sting rays and a fantastic array of reef fish," Gary Ward says. Camp Kayak provides an excellent summer school for children from Carriacou, offering an amazing array of activities to entertain, challenge and provide new and amazing experiences.

For more information visit campkayak.org.

Grenadians Qualified as Sailing Instructors

On September 10th the Grenada Sailing Association announced the successful completion of the inaugural GSA Instructor Training Course. With support from the Minister for Sport, the Hon. Emmalin Pierre, Permanent Secretary Veda Bruno-Victor, and the Grenada Olympic Association, the GSA developed the course to complement the new Community Sports Programme initiative of the Ministry of Sport and the Junior Sailing Programme.



Instructor Earl Tobias, the GSA's Jacqui Pascal and trainee Anthony Boatswain

Head Coach & Chief Instructor of the Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Academy, Earl Tobias, led the GSA Instructor Training Course, given at the Grenada Yacht Club. The participants in the course were selected from all over Grenada and Carriacou.

Kevin Banfield of the Gouyave Sailing School qualified as Senior Instructor. Rees Evans of the Grenada Yacht Club, Kaya Wilson of the Windward Sailing Club, Carriacou, and Akim Clement and Anthony Boatswain of the L'Esterre Sailing Club, Carriacou qualified as Level 1 instructors. Teena Marie of the Windward Sailing Club, Carriacou qualified as a Level 2 Instructor. Israel Dharangit of the Gouyave Sailing School and Noah Bullen of the Grenada Yacht Club qualified as Assistant Instructors.

This course was made possible with donations from the Grenada Olympic Committee, Camper & Nicholson's Port Louis Marina, the Grenada Yacht Club, Budget Marine, Island Dreams, Island Water World and Horizon Yacht Charters.

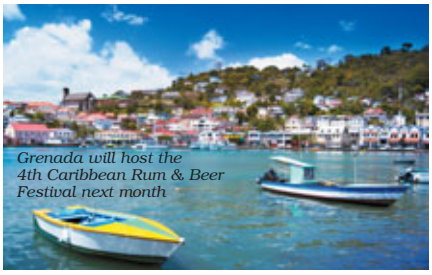
For more information on the Grenada Sailing Association visit www.grenadasailingassocation.org.

Exploring Caribbean Rum and Beer in Grenada

What can be more relaxing than sailing through the Caribbean, watching the sunset, while sipping on your favorite rum cocktail? Or maybe you prefer to have a cold bottle of Caribbean beer while lounging on the deck.

Seasoned sailors may know the ins and outs of the various Caribbean rum brands or what Caribbean beer to imbibe. However for lesser mortals the fact that there are over 50 rum distilleries in the region and more than 20 breweries mean the choice is overwhelming.

Enter stage right the Caribbean Rum & Beer Festival. Now in its fourth year, the Caribbean Rum & Beer Festival organized by Azure Management Services, is a showcase of Caribbean and international rum, beer, food and culture. It is the first and original Caribbean Rum and Beer Festival in the Caribbean and boasts over 70 different products to sample during the two days of the event.



Grenada will host the 4th Caribbean Rum & Beer Festival next month

This year's festival, which is hosted in partnership with the Grenada Board of Tourism, takes place at Grand Anse on November 22nd and 23rd. It promises to provide patrons with tastings, presentations from industry experts, a cocktail competition, a golf tournament and live musical entertainment. Be there!

For more information see ad on page 11.

USCG Distress Frequency Change

Effective August 1st, the US Coast Guard stopped monitoring voice frequency 2182 kHz for international distress and safety, and they will discontinue monitoring the International Digital Selective Calling (DSC) distress frequency 2187.5 kHz.

"This termination decision was made after a review of Coast Guard medium-frequency (MF) communications sites revealed significant antenna and infrastructure support degradation that put the Coast Guard at risk of not being able to receive and respond to calls for assistance on the 2 MHz distress frequencies," says a Coast Guard spokesman, quoted in the magazine *Latitude 38*.

Maritime information and weather broadcasts on 2670 kHz will terminate concurrently. Watchkeeping continues on existing voice and DSC frequencies in the 4/6/8/12 MHz bands as described on the US Coastguard navigation centre website, www.navcen.uscg.gov.

Department of Corrections

In last month's Caribbean Eco-News item "Documentary Highlights Seaside Village's Environment" we misstated the name of one of the documentary's producers: it's Skylarc Pictures, not Skylark Productions.

Welcome Aboard

In this issue of *Caribbean Compass* we welcome aboard new advertisers the Caribbean Rum & Beer Festival on page 11; and Xtreme Fuel Treatment in the Market Place section, pages 42 through 44.

Good to have to with us!



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Island Water World Opens Chandlery in Marigot, St. Martin

Island Water World will be opening its third chandlery on the island of St. Maarten/St. Martin — this one in the center of Marigot, on the French side.

The store is housed in the old museum building next to the tourism office. It abuts the Geminga boatyard on one side and Marina Port Royale on the other. It is easily accessible by dinghy or road and is right in the hub of marine activities in the town.

The business will be managed by Valerie Leroy, well known among cruisers for her ability to source hard-to-find products and parts. She will continue to also own the commissary and Island Water World Agency in Marina Fort Louis.



This new store will carry a broad range of merchandise that reflects the full-assortment philosophy of Island Water World. Access to larger quantities will be easily achieved by the proximity to the company's distribution facility in Cole Bay.

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

New Jolly Harbour Location for Budget Marine in Antigua

Robbie Ferron reports: The Budget Marine store in Antigua started in November 1992 in the commercial center of the Jolly Harbour Marina and within a year moved to a larger building. This building was really a cement plant that was modified to accommodate a retail store. It was located right in the boatyard, however, which made for ease of supply to boatyard projects.

Now Budget Marine is moving into a purpose-built facility very close by and looking



forward to serving the Jolly Harbour and Antigua markets more efficiently as we celebrate 21 years in Antigua and come of age! The new building is just a few metres farther from the boatyard and adjacent to the storage yard. It is actually closer for marina guests.

The new building is custom built with high ceilings to display large amounts of merchandise and forklift access for the second floor.

By moving in September we will be fully settled in and ready for business when the season starts. With this opening we celebrate our 21st birthday in Antigua and are ready for a great 2013/2014 season.

For more information on Budget Marine see ad on page 2.

Venezuelan Marine Supply Celebrates 20 Years

Denis Laesker, co-founder of Venezuelan Marine Supply, reports: In August 1993, Vemasca opened its doors in Porlamar, Isla Margarita, Venezuela. Back then, the number of sailboats cruising Venezuelan waters was increasing fast and Margarita was the only island destination in the Caribbean with no marine chandlery available.

The company soon added a series of services including a one-step check-in or check-out process. Cruisers began to stay for longer periods of time as a water delivery system was also put in place. A dinghy dock with a watchman was built just across the street. A little restaurant was set in the premises. Laundry, book swap, and mail drop were available to all visitors. Since day one, Carlos "Charlie" Adam, a fluent English-, German-, and Spanish-speaking salesman, was always available to help the cruisers understand and enjoy the island and the country he loved.

During these years, there has been change of governments, change of political orientation, severe exchange control, Charlie passed away, the store had to move to a new location, and Margarita slowly disappeared from the list of cruising destinations in the Caribbean — but Vemasca is yet steaming ahead.

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Today, 20 years after its founding, the very existence of the company, as a boat sailing in very rough seas, is due to my daughter, Ritchie Laesker, who is able to see the light on the horizon!

For more information on Vemasca see ad on page 26.

Caribbean Northern Lights Dealer Conference

On August 20th and 21st, Northern Lights dealer principals and representatives met in Deerfield Beach, Florida for their semi-annual Caribbean Dealer Conference. Dealerships from the USVI to Trinidad were represented and factory representatives were updated on issues arising from dealers' territories. The Caribbean is a prime cruising area for owners of Northern Lights Products and the factory encourages these meetings to get feedback from their customers and to monitor the level of service their Caribbean dealerships are able to provide. A wide range of issues was discussed, including the Caribbean NorthernLights.com website, new products and product changes, warranty policy and claim procedures, and the Technicold brand of air conditioning, refrigeration and load banks. New generator models up to 500kw currently under development were unveiled.

Freight methods from the US to the Caribbean were also discussed, with particular emphasis on the fastest method of shipping to each country. Ideas were also generated on how to reduce the cost of shipping, to improve customer satisfaction. Although some countries are able to import items on a duty free basis for Yachts in Transit, all countries impose some costs, such as brokerage fees and government surcharges. There is no solution for these charges and so parts prices suffer the unavoidable additional costs.

Comparison of the Northern Lights products with other marine generators was discussed. It was generally felt that the NL product required less maintenance, used far fewer parts, was easier to repair, had far more parts redundancy, and ran longer than anything else on the market today. A major differentiator was the factory support that is offered by Northern Lights. Although most of the dealers attending are dealers for at least one other marine generator manufacturer, none had the level of support they experience with NL with any other manufacturer. The overall cost of ownership with Northern Lights was felt to be significantly less than any competitor, despite the fact that the NL product was slightly more expensive up front. All of these factors make the NL product uniquely qualified for customers in the Caribbean, as they put far more hours on their generators than most pleasure craft owners.

The subject matter was interesting enough that all the participants remained at the Conference well after the planned ending time.

For more information on Northern Lights visit www.caribbeannorthernlights.com.

Custom Fuel Bladders from Aero Tec

Aero Tec Laboratories (ATL) of Ramsey, New Jersey is now offering their world-renowned custom fuel bladder services to the yachting community. For nearly 45 years, ATL has led the way in developing rugged and reliable flexible containment devices for the motorsports, aviation, military and marine industries. Over the years, ATL has worked with leading boat and yacht manufacturers and has absorbed valuable customer feedback, giving them a broad understanding of the needs of the marine market.

ATL's innovative series of FueLocker fuel bladders provide a vital auxiliary fuel source that allows yachts to reach exotic destinations without the burden of their vessel's limited fuel capacity.



ATL realizes that deck space is extremely valuable. In most instances, jerry jugs are cumbersome and simply consume too much space. Aero Tec's custom fabrication capabilities allow captains and owners the ability to specially tailor bladder sizes and configurations to best utilize available space.

ATL can build fully self-supporting, military-spec rubberized fuel bladders in a wide array of shapes and sizes that safely accept both gasoline and diesel. When not in use, all ATL bladders are completely collapsible which makes for effortless transport and compact storage.

In addition to their custom capabilities, ATL's warehouse is fully stocked with a complete line of space-saving ATL FueLockers in seven standard sizes varying from 50 to 500 US gallons.

For more information on ATL see ad on page 38.

Free Cruising Guides Announces 'The Directory'

Earlier this summer, Free Cruising Guides announced "The Directory", a comprehensive resource for cruisers throughout the Caribbean. The Directory includes businesses of interest to cruising sailors, ranging from boatyards to welders, marinas to restaurants to car rentals. The directory also includes vendors outside of the Caribbean who offer worldwide service of product delivery to your boat.

The Directory offers an interactive feature where users can rate and review businesses, which will help you while you help fellow cruisers. The Directory is free: go to www.FreeCruisingGuides.com start!

In other Free Cruising Guide news, the Free Cruising Guide to the Dominican Republic is now available in an updated Spanish-language edition.

For more information on Free Cruising Guides see ad on page 34.

Product Spotlight: Hawk Filler Coming Soon!

Sea Hawk Paints introduces Hawk Filler, a premium marine filler recommended for use with Sea Hawk's Tuff Stuff. Hawk Filler is an extremely hard, impact-resistant, two-part, fast-drying epoxy that repairs blisters, cracks, joints, and scratches in gel coat and fiberglass. It goes on like putty to fill, patch, seal or re-build aluminum, wood, concrete, fiberglass and steel, both above and below the waterline. Its hard-as-nails surface can be drilled, tapped, or machined. Perfect for patching and repairing damaged underwater surfaces.

For more information on Sea Hawk Paints see ad on page 17.

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Grenada Yacht Club Sports a New Look

On July 25th, the management of the Grenada Yacht Club hosted a cocktail ceremony to mark the opening of its newly renovated club and facilities.

The Grenada Yacht Club was first opened in 1954, and was housed near the water police shed on the pier. As a result of Hurricane Janet and the loss of the entire pier, the club had to move and obtained a lease for land at The Spout in Tanteen. In 1960, the premises were rebuilt and opened by the Administrator James "Jimmy" Lloyd.

In 1961, the club was used to accommodate many of the passengers who were rescued from the *Bianca C* after fire devastated the cruise ship.

Since then, the club has become a landmark in Grenada, offering over 45 berthing spaces to Grenadians and visiting yachtsmen. The club continues to play a vital role in education through the Grenada Sailing School.

The club has also been the headquarters and home of Grenada's Budget Marine Spice Island Billfish Tournament, the longest-running and largest billfish tournament in the Southern Caribbean since its inception over 45 years ago.

The newly renovated premises boast a bar, restaurant and catering services by Creole Shack. Additional facilities include secure berthing for boat owners and stylish surroundings, where members of the business community and other organizations can hold functions.

The Grenada Yacht Club remains committed to its mission to encourage boating, yachting and participation in yachting events internationally and in Grenada. Come and visit this unique venue that is so rich in heritage and is now a stunning landmark in Grenada's maritime architecture.

YCCS Marina Recognized for Design Excellence

The American Society of Civil Engineers' Coasts, Oceans, Ports, and Rivers Institute COPRI) announced that its 2013 Project Excellence Award in the Large Project category, was awarded to Bellingham Marine, in partnership with H+K Engineering Group, for their work on Yacht Club Costa Smeralda (YCCS) Marina, Virgin Gorda.

The project consisted of building a world-class superyacht facility on a small island in the British Virgin Islands. The island's limited infrastructure and the region's exposure to dynamic weather events created some unique challenges for the team. Accolades were given by the judges for the team's success in delivering an award winning facility that addressed the difficult environmental conditions associated with the remote, deep-water project site and the needs of the large yachts mooring to the docks. The project was also praised for its exemplary use of engineering best practice.

"Advanced modeling and analysis of how each individual pile would perform was vital to ensure the long term successful performance of the entire system," said Bill Huffman, Principal and Senior Engineer at H+K.

The extreme nature of the Virgin Gorda site including water depths over 35 feet (nine metres) and extremely hard limestone, combined with the loads placed on the docks by large vessels, necessitated the development of a technically advanced floating dock system.

COPRI's Project Excellence Award recognizes innovation, through both research methodologies and techniques that decrease negative environmental impacts and demonstrate significant achievement through design, analytical and construction concepts.

Cuba's Mega-Marina Project

Cuban government officials announced a marina mega-project at Cuba's premier beach resort, located on the Hicacos Peninsula, about 150 kilometres east of Havana. The project, an expansion of an existing, modestly sized marina, is part of a billion-dollar push to diversify Cuba's tourism offering and move it upmarket.



At build-out, Marina Gaviota Varadero will be the largest in the Caribbean, with a capacity for close to 1,300 boats of different sizes and berths for six megayachts, according to Frank País Oltuski, vice president of state company Grupo Gaviota SA. Marina Puerto del Rey in Puerto Rico is currently the biggest in the Caribbean. País made the announcement in May at the international tourism fair FITCuba 2013 in Varadero. The new marina will nearly triple Cuba's transient marina slip capacity.

Construction of the complex is already well underway, with the opening of Phase 1 expected for the 2013-14 winter season. Phase 1 of the expansion will accommodate 400 boats.

Puerto Rico's Puerto Del Rey Marina Expands

Meanwhile, the Caribbean Journal (www.caribjournal.com) reports that the Puerto Del Rey Marina in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, presently the largest marina in the Caribbean, will be receiving a US$450 million transformation, including improvements to the restaurants and facilities, an expansion of capacity beyond its current level of 1,100 boats and a mixed-use real estate component. The expansion will mean the marina can receive ships of more than 200 feet. Work has already begun, and the government said the project would create between 300 and 500 permanent jobs upon completion. Puerto del Rey was acquired in June by Putnam Bridge Funding.

St. Lucia and Taiwan Explore Yachting Sector Partnership

The opportunity for a billion-dollar yachting sector partnership is being explored by the Governments of St. Lucia and the Republic of China (Taiwan).

During an August state visit by Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou, St. Lucia`s Minister for Tourism Honourable Lorne Theophilus encouraged the Taiwanese to use St. Lucia as a hub to market yachts built in Taiwan, the world`s fourth largest producer of megayachts.

"We propose further that we can offer an incentive registration and berthing of yachts purchased from Taiwan amongst a variety of other initiatives which include joint marketing that will result in fiscal benefits for both of us," Theophilus said.

In preparation to maximize the potential benefits from the billion-dollar yachting sector partnership, the Government of St. Lucia has moved to legislate the establishment of a Yachting Registration Desk. Steps are also being taken for the establishment of maritime training programmes at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.





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LOA in feet	Daily $/ft/day	Weekly $/ft/day	Monthly $/ft/day
up to 32	$0.85	$0.77	$0.72
up to 40	$1.10	$0.99	$0.94
up to 50	$1.20	$1.08	$1.02
up to 60	$1.30	$1.17	$1.11
up to 65	$1.45	$1.31	$1.23
up to 75	$1.50	$1.35	$1.28
up to 80	$1.65	$1.49	$1.40
up to 100	$1.70	$1.53	$1.45

For yachts above 100 feet LOA, and for bookings of longer periods, please contact us for a personalised quote. Multihulls are charged at 1.5 times the standard rate. Weekly and monthly rates apply to yachts staying consecutively for 7 days or 30 days respectively.

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Caribbean Eco-News

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire Report Available

The 2012 Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire Research & Monitoring Report is now available at www.bonaireturtles.org. The report captures ten years of systematic and ongoing research on the sea turtles of Bonaire. Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) is a non-governmental research and conservation organization that has been protecting sea turtles since 1991 with funding from conservation and research grants, merchandise sales and donations.

Of particular note in 2012 was the record number of sea turtle nests that were found on Bonaire, which was probably due to the increased monitoring by STBC's excellent Beachkeepers. Last year the group saw their first live Olive Ridley sea turtle on Bonaire. It had become entangled in fishing debris and washed up at Lagoen, where it was rescued by STCB staff, untangled and returned to the sea. Find out more about this and other strandings starting on page 32 of the report.

Lionfish Problem Addressed in the Grenadines

Staff from six marine protected areas in Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines were trained in lionfish capture and handling in Carriacou from August 28th through 30th.

The lionfish was accidentally introduced to the Caribbean Sea and poses a threat to native reef fish. Their voracious appetites, coupled with their rapid reproductive rates, are making lionfish a major obstacle in marine conservation. Their management is necessary for the health of the fisheries and tourism industries, which are the basis of livelihoods for many people in Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and throughout the Caribbean.

The marine protected areas represented from St. Vincent & the Grenadines were The Tobago Cays Marine Park, Mustique Marine Conservation Area and the South Coast Marine Conservation Area. From Grenada were the Sandy Island/Oyster Bed, Woburn/Clark's Court and Moliniere/Beausejour Marine Protected Areas.

Other areas of focus during the meeting were the sharing of best management practices for coral reef conservation, the importance of mangrove ecosystems and marine law enforcement. On the final morning, some 20 local school children took part with the rangers/wardens in a series of outdoor marine education activities organized in association with the KIDO Foundation.

It was the third annual networking meeting for the marine protected areas of the Grenadines, made possible by The Ocean Foundation and the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative of the Organization of American States.

Study Underway on Seabird Predators in Saba

Saba hosts important populations of two endangered seabirds, the Red Billed Tropicbird and Audubon's Shearwater. Recent research shows that tropicbird breeding success in the past years has been close to zero in the large nesting sites at Great Level and Bunker Hill.

Using motion-triggered infrared cameras, sponsored by the Dutch nature management organization Vogelbescherming, to take images of predators preying on chicks and eggs at active nests, it was discovered that feral cats might largely be responsible for the demise of the birds. Rats are also likely to be part of the problem. To better understand the issue and derive possible solutions, researchers are conducting studies on the distribution and diet of feral cats on the island.

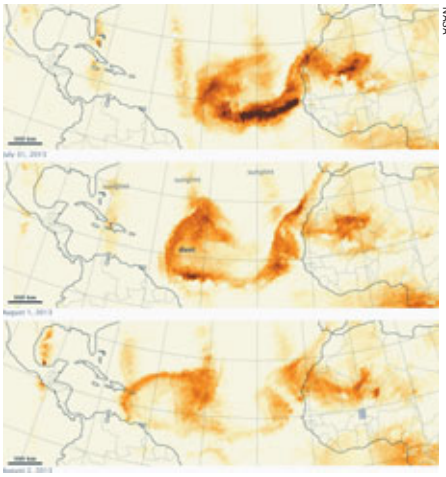
Research elsewhere has shown that one cat can kill hundreds of prey animals per year. Consequently, even low numbers of cats can devastate entire tropicbird populations. Since the seabirds are relatively long-lived, the impacts are usually noticeable only after the damage is irreversible.

In this study, students from Wageningen University will be interviewing Saba residents to find out their views on cats and what measures could be supported towards a long-term solution. A small number of stray cats will be removed from the seabird colonies to study the effect on breeding success as well as diet, health and diseases of the animals.

Depending on the outcome, directed predator control in critical seabird areas and better pet care practices may need to be implemented and enforced on Saba.

Sahara Dust — Health Concerns?

According to a recent report at www.caribbean360.com, clouds of "Sahara dust" are attracting increasing attention from regional scientists. They now say that the particulate matter may cause health concerns and merit more study to understand its potential impact.



NASA

These images from the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration show vast clouds of Sahara Dust moving across the Atlantic toward the Caribbean

Over time, human activity has changed the composition of the dust clouds. Scientists say that they now contain trace amounts of metals, microorganisms, bacteria, spores, pesticides and faecal matter, although no evidence exists that the quantities are sufficient to pose a threat. Eugenio Mojena of Cuba's Institute of Meteorology said the particles are believed to originate in the semi-arid Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert, where farmers raise livestock and employ chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

African dust sampled in Barbados had elevated levels of arsenic and cadmium, according to Joseph M. Prospero, professor emeritus of marine and atmospheric chemistry at the University of Miami. "The specific impact on health is not known here or anywhere else. It has been extremely difficult to link specific particle composition to health effects," said Prospero, who is lead author of a paper on the dust published in September by the bulletin of the American Meteorological Society. "So it cannot be said what effect all this dust has, but there is reason for some concern."

Experts also worry that chemicals in the dust may pose a threat to coral, although the theory is still a subject of debate.

On a more positive note, the dust clouds may inhibit the formation of hurricanes in the Caribbean. According to Prospero, lower rainfall in West Africa presumably causes more dust, which reduces sunlight, lowers water temperatures and cuts evaporation, all factors in cyclonic formation.





Regatta News

Melges Class Added to Triskell Cup, Guadeloupe

The regatta season is starting! The 13th annual Triskell Cup regatta will be held in Guadeloupe from November 1st through 3rd.

President of the Triskell organization, Jean-Michel Marziou, says, "We hope to see between 50 and 60 boats coming, mainly from Martinique but also from Dominica, Barbados and Antigua.

"This year there will be a special class for Melges 24, and we can expect four boats from Martinique, one from Guadeloupe, and hopefully another one from St. Maarten.

"And, as usual, a splendid party with special dinner for crews!"

For more information see ad on page 15.

New Cape Verdes Route Popular with ARC Sailors

In 2013, demand to join the ARC transatlantic rally has been unprecedented and organizers have added a new route option to offer a new experience. ARC+ Cape Verdes will depart the Canary Islands on November 10th, two weeks earlier than the traditional start, and feature a three to five day stopover in Mindelo, Sao Vicente, before continuing with the tradewinds to St. Lucia.



WORLD CRUISING CLUB

View over Porto Grande, Sao Vicente, Cape Verdes

Many returning crews have welcomed the stopover in the Cape Verdes as a chance to explore somewhere new. The islands are perfectly placed to "sail south until the butter melts" and an exciting programme of events will be arranged during the stopover to introduce crews to the Cape Verdes' culture and scenery. The earlier departure from Las Palmas means that despite the stopover, ARC+ boats are due to arrive in St. Lucia during the first week of December.

The new ARC+ Cape Verdes will depart Sao Vicente on November 20th, with a prizegiving ceremony in St. Lucia on December 7th.

The traditional ARC Gran Canaria to St. Lucia direct will start on November 24th, with a prizegiving ceremony in St. Lucia on December 21st.

Every boat is welcomed to St. Lucia at Rodney Bay Marina with rum punches, fresh fruit and chilled beer. There is so much to do on St. Lucia that many yachts stay on the island for Christmas.

For more information on the ARC visit www.worldcruising.com/arc

For more information on Rodney Bay Marina and Boatyard see ad on page 7.

Newick Award to be Presented at St. Croix Regatta

The Richard Newick Perpetual Multihull Award is to be presented at the 21st annual St. Croix Yacht Club International Regatta, held November 15th through 17th.

In memory of the father of modern multihull design, Richard C. Newick, who passed away at the end of August 2013 at the age of 87, three of his long-time friends and fellow sailors are dedicating a perpetual trophy in his memory for the first place winner of the Multihull Class at the St. Croix Yacht Club International Regatta 2013.

Dick, as he was known, lived and built boats on St. Croix from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. He was an active member of the St. Croix Yacht Club, built the first Optimist prams for their junior sail-training program, and won the island's first Sailfish (early Sunfish) Regatta in 1961. Dick's boats, starting with the *Ay Ay*, a 40-foot catamaran, served the Buck Island tourist trade — *Trice*, a trimaran, is still in service.

The award was created by Paul Voytershark, Llewellyn Westerman, and Joe San Martin, with the help of wives and daughters. Paul will present the award. Paul's son, Peter, actively races a Newick Val series trimaran in New England. Llewellyn (Lew), a calypsonian of note, plied the Buck Island trade in his Newick-designed trimaran *Charis* for 40 years. In November 1999, *Charis* and Joe San Martin's *Three Little Pigs*, a Newick Tricia design, were destroyed by Hurricane Lenny. Lew now sails a George Silver designed trimaran, *Charis II*. Joe sails a 23-foot Newick designed trimaran, *Piglet*. Lew and Joe have both firmly stated their intention of winning this perpetual award; both are in their 70s. So all you multihull sailors, register now and be part of this great sailing tradition!

Meanwhile, the Rhodes 19 Class promises to be as competitive as last year and, with seven or more boats, the winner of this class gets to go to the scales and win his or her weight in rum.

The Spinnaker Racing Class will compete for the rum and the Perpetual St. Croix International Trophy.

All classes must have seven or more boats in their class to hit the scales — a tradition started by Mumm's Champagne over 20 years ago.

For more information see ad on page 13.

2013 Caribbean Dinghy Champs to be Held in Antigua

The Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) announces that the 2013 Caribbean Dinghy Championships will be held from November 15th through 17th.

The Championships have been held in Antigua for the past two years while being organized in association with the CSA. In 2013, Antigua Yacht Club and the National Sailing Academy as hosts will take over all organizational aspects of the event and the Caribbean Dinghy Championships will become one of a slate of CSA-sanctioned events. The Caribbean Dinghy Championships were originally hosted by a different Caribbean country each year.

The change was made primarily because the logistics of having the event organized by one nation on an annual basis makes for a simplified planning process. In addition, one of the main roles of the CSA is to maintain and manage the CSA rating rule and organization of events moves away from a core function of the Association. Promotion and support of the growth of dinghy sailing and yachting in the Caribbean is another of the major objectives of the CSA, however, and sanctioning this and other events is seen as a major way of achieving this goal.

The event sees teams of mixed age groups from juniors to seniors racing in Laser Open, Laser Radial, Zoom 8, Optimist and Laser Pico classes. The event is an excellent stepping-stone into competitive sailing for many entrants.

The Notice of Race is available online at www.caribbean-sailing.com. If you would like to enter a team, please contact Antigua Yacht Club at www.yachtclub@candw.ag. Please note only one team per country is eligible for entry.

St. Lucia's ARC Flotilla 2013

Danielle De Rouck reports: St. Lucia's ARC Flotilla 2013 will take place on November 24th, starting at 10:00AM, and parading from Castries Harbour to Rodney Bay Marina, to celebrate the official start of the 28th edition of the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) 2013 from Las Palmas Gran Canaria to St Lucia. In big yachts, small yachts, Hobie Cats, Lasers, Fireballs, fishing boats and more; we motor, sail, windsurf, kite-surf, etcetera — all watercraft are welcome.

The flotilla is organized by IGY Rodney Bay Marina and the Marine Industries Association of St. Lucia in cooperation with the Saint Lucia Tourist Board. Last year we had 58 entries and more than 350 participants! Registration is free.

For more information contact arcflotilla@gmail.com.

St. Lucia's Mango Bowl 2013 on Target!

Plans continue to be rolled out for the 2013 Mango Bowl Regatta, November 29th through December 1st, with competition for Racing (spinnaker), Cruising (non-spinnaker), J/24 and Surprise Classes.

—Continued on next page



—Continued from previous page

The Skippers' Briefing will take place at 6:00PM on Friday, November 29th at the St. Lucia Yacht Club, followed by a barbecue at the club. A spectator boat will be in attendance at all races for members of the public and press.

There will be three races each on November 30th for the Racing and Cruising Classes, and six for the J/24 and Surprise Classes; the two one-design classes will race together.

On December 1st there will be two races each for the Racing and Cruising Classes and three for the J/24 and Surprise Classes, with prizegiving in the afternoon.

The entry fee is US$100 (US$90 if pre-registered in full on-line by 5:00PM on November 16th).

With some exciting racing expected and great social occasions it's not to be missed. A growing list of sponsors includes IGY Rodney Bay Marina, Blue Waters, Heineken, Mount Gay Rum, Island Water World, Johnson Hardware, Regis Electronics and Rodney Bay Sails.

Get on the contact list to receive the Notice of Race and Entry Form by contacting Mango Bowl Regatta Co-ordinator, Anne Purvis, at slycsecretary@gmail.com or SLYC Sailing Captain, Fredric Sweeney, at sweeney4490@hotmail.com.

For more information see ad on page 11.

Mount Gay Round Barbados Race 2014

The Mount Gay Rum Round Barbados Race Series will be held January 15th through 24th, 2014, with three additional spectacular days of coastal racing.

The organizers have announced an expanded programme for the 78th anniversary racing series, with three days of coastal sailing off the south and west coasts of the island, with courses designed for all sizes and classes of yachts, followed by the signature 60-mile Round Barbados Race, and ending with an optional 300-mile passage to Antigua.

The race around Barbados dates back to the 19th century, based upon bragging rights for the fastest 'Trading Schooner'. The prize was worth its weight in gold to captains in an era where prices for cargo arriving ahead of rival ships commanded a massive premium. While most boats sailed for the honour of the fastest time, the consolation prize of a barrel of Mount Gay Rum for the slowest certainly spurred on some captains, and had to be discontinued after two boats remained out at sea for days stalling to take the prize.

Registration for this annual event commences on January 15th at the Barbados Cruising Club, with online entry available now.

For more information visit www.mountgayrumroundbarbadosrace.com.



Racing for round-the-island bragging rights in Barbados

GEOFFREY BOURNE

Island Water World is Title Sponsor for Grenada Sailing Week

The Grenada Sailing Week Board is pleased to announce that Island Water World will be title sponsor for Grenada Sailing Week 2014, to be held January 30th through February 4th. This well-established chandlery was a Race Day Sponsor in 2013 and their increased support for the 2014 event is much appreciated. For this edition the organizers intend to introduce sailors to the very best that Grenada has to offer and invite sponsors, supporters and participants to "Spice it up in Grenada!"

The regatta will be moving to different bays around the western and southern Grenada coast for varied sailing experience by day and stimulating social activity every night. Participants will receive a warm welcome at Grenada's premier Camper and Nicholsons Port Louis Marina with everything on hand for easy registration and a comfortable arrival, including the Skippers' Briefing and Welcome Party on the Thursday evening. On the Friday racing starts in and around the sheltered waters off Grand Anse and ends with a party at the popular Victory Bar and Restaurant.

Racing on the Saturday will take the yachts around Point Saline to Le Phare Bleu Marina, perfect setting for a Pirate Party. On Sunday Lay Day there will be Hobie Cat Match Racing organized by the Petite Calivigny Yacht Club and a dinghy concert out in the bay with live music and bar on a barge.

On the Monday and Tuesday the yachts will race off the challenging south coast, ending up at Prickly Bay Marina for great entertainment each evening, including the awards dinner and party at the Tiki Bar on the final night.

Register online at www.grenadasailingweek.com and find further updates via the GSWFacebook Page and E-Newsletter. Take advantage of the low early registration fee of US$80 per boat by registering and paying by December 31st.



Spice it up! Grenada Sailing Week offers mouth-watering racing conditions

2013 ST. CROIX INTERNATIONAL REGATTA

November 15th, 16th and 17th

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Registration Fee Only US$150

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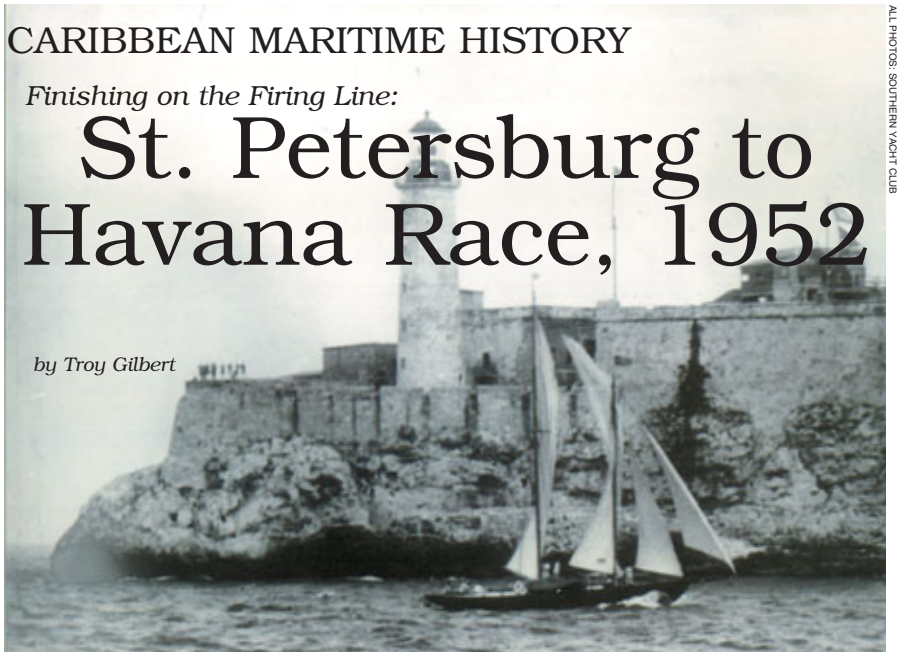


CARIBBEAN MARITIME HISTORY

Finishing on the Firing Line:

St. Petersburg to Havana Race, 1952

by Troy Gilbert



ALL PHOTOS: SOUTHERN YACHT CLUB

Windjammer II *crossing the finish line in front of Morro Castle at the entrance to Havana Harbor*

"No one was hurt, fortunately," said George Bass of Detroit as he pointed out the bullet holes in his yacht's mainsail. "But it was much too close for comfort. Within 30 seconds after we crossed the finish line, we were sprayed by a burst of small arms and machine gun fire."

Days earlier, in early March of 1952, the bar and piers at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club in Florida were hopping with crews preparing for the 284-nautical-mile St. Petersburg to Havana Race. Garner Tullis of Southern Yacht Club in New Orleans was gunning for his fourth overall win on his 60-foot schooner, *Windjammer II*, and to equal his three bullets in the race of 1948. John "the Taxi King" Hertz, Jr. of New York had wagered large amounts of money that his recently acquired big ketch, *Ticonderoga*, would defeat the new scratch boat in the fleet, *Doris III* out of Texas. George Bass and his crew from Detroit on his 60-foot



Above: *The crew of* Windjammer II *stands on deck in Havana Harbor*

Right: Windjammer II *underway in 'schooner weather'. We're not sure why the mainmast is shorter in this photo*

staysail schooner, *Ben Bow*, were hoping to better their second-place finish from the year before and then again enjoy the exotic clubs and nightlife of Havana. Le Hederman was simply looking to redeem himself and his all-female crew onboard his 40-foot schooner, *Tropicair*, after they'd gotten "lost" during the race the year before in the Gulf of Mexico and caused a bit of scandal in the national media.

While all of these sailors were preparing to fight the Gulf Stream and the weather, on a military base outside of Havana, a 33-year-old Cuban Army Colonel named Fulgencio Batista was plotting a coup d'etat on the island nation. Understanding that the American and international press would be on hand for this prestigious regatta, his timing was impeccable and shrewd.

As part of the Southern Ocean Racing Circuit, the regatta was in its 19th year and in early March, the crews could still expect the errant cold front that would wreak havoc in the Gulf as it runs into the warm and moist air of the tropics. At noon, to rousing crowds along the shores of Tampa Bay and cannon fire from the Coast Guard cutter *Nemesis*, on station as committee boat, the record 29 official participants started their epic journey to Cuba. Against an incoming tide, but with a 20-plus-knot breeze and more expected in the open waters, conventional wisdom was that history was going to be



made and the race record of 35 hours and change set in 1949 by the Cuban schooner *Bellatrix* was certain to fall.

Doing lazy circles behind the fleet and waiting a full 15 minutes until after the last of the starts, Hederman aboard *Tropicair* unofficially took his start time and headed southwest, cheered on by the crowds on the shore and spectator boats. Nicknamed the "rebel yacht" by the media, *Tropicair* and her crew had made a name for themselves via a salacious event in the previous year's race, having not been officially sanctioned by the Race Committee and then getting "lost" in the Gulf of Mexico for three days before "limping back" to Florida. The national media had made hay out of one man vanishing at sea with eight single women for three days.

In 1952, *Tropicair's* registration was again denied by the Race Committee, as they considered the all-female crew to still not have enough sailing experience. Having trained for most of a year and determined that they would compete in this regatta, even if unofficially, the crew of *Tropicair* sailed out of the bay in defiance of the Race Committee.

By midnight that first evening, all 30 yachts had covered roughly 60 miles and were positioned in a 12-mile area of building seas. The Coast Guard cutter *Nemesis*, now acting as a convoy escort, powered back and forth through the fleet while overhead a Coast Guard plane was on station from a nearby airbase in the Keys. In the easing air of the evening the *Doris III* had passed the *Ticonderoga*. But by the next morning "schooner weather" had returned with winds rising to 30 knots out of the northeast. In the heavy wind, even the *Tropicair* had caught up to and was in a pitched



Windjammer II *bound for Havana — and a surprise welcome*

battle with the tailgunners of the fleet.

With crews understanding that they were possibly on record-breaking runs in the stormy weather, full canvas was run up on many of the boats, and the leaders built separation. For some this was personal. Hub Isaacks normally chartered *Ticonderoga* for this regatta and had raced her to two firsts, in '50 and '51, but only months before the start, Hertz (who would eventually add to his fortune by renting cars) had bought the boat out from under him. Having to scramble, Isaacks had scoured the South for a fast boat to charter and avenge this affront. Now he skippered the largest cutter in the fleet, the *Doris III*, and in winds building to over 30 knots, he had his crew pile everything on, trying to hold his lead on the "Mighty Ti" as she was reverently known.

In Havana, the American press were enjoying their expense accounts and expecting the fleet to begin sailing past the finish at Morro Castle, which lies at the entrance to Havana's harbor, in about ten hours. With a week of festivities planned at Havana's finest clubs, including the trophy presentations by Cuba's President Carlos Prio, early reports and dispatches were that the planning for the regatta celebrations was fully underway, yet there was a tense mood in the city.

It was the same on the water. With major storms lashing the fleet, several competitors started experiencing equipment failures and began dropping out, some in desperate straits. Radio communications were lost with *Tropicair*, sparking a flurry of media stories over the wires calling it a hoax, spotlight grabbing or, at worst, affirming why women should not be allowed to compete in such a dangerous and rigorous sport. The leaders, though, were flying to the finish.

With the Coast Guard's *Nemesis* busy directing spotter aircraft to check on the trailing and retiring boats in the Florida Straits, *Ticonderoga* was within sight of Cuban shores and on track for a record finish. The Texan crew of *Doris III*, effectively considering this a match race with *Ticonderoga*, piled on even more heavy canvas in the gale, but the load was too much, a bolt sheared and she lost her foresails. Within sight of Cuba, and thoroughly defeated, *Doris III* turned and limped back to Florida.

As the sun set, *Ticonderoga* sailed into the finish in Havana Bay… to nothing.

—Continued on next page

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Not even race organizers were present to greet them, with the Mighty Ti having unexpectedly shaved nearly five hours off of the long-standing record. However by 1:00AM, as the bulk of the fleet was set to finish, the welcoming committee arrived.

With most of the government buildings, including the Presidential Palace, situated around the historic harbor of the city of Havana it would behoove a military junta to ensure these symbols of power were seized first and rapidly.





In the days before Lycra suits and crash helmets, the crew of an unidentified center-cockpit ketch (above) and Windjammer II *(right) pose for the press before the start in St. Petersburg s*

Tanks and lorries filled with troops were winding their way through the city streets headed towards the waterfront and the seats of Cuban government. Skirmishes began breaking out throughout Havana as the US Coast Guard cutter *Nemesis* sailed into the harbor. Just to her stern was the schooner *Ben Bow* with her crew from Grosse Point Yacht Club of Detroit, sailing in wet and weary from their ordeal but thrilled to be finishing.

As the *Nemesis* dropped anchor in the bay and the Coast Guard sailors reported on deck to customarily salute the Cuban flag flying above Morro Castle, heavy .50-caliber machine gun fire swept the vessel, sending the cutter's men to general quarters. At this moment, the *Ben Bow* passed the finish buoy just off the cutter's starboard side and the exhausted crew cheered at what they thought were celebratory fireworks greeting them. However, crewmember Moon Baker, who had seen heavy action during World War II less than a decade before, recognized the sound and hit the deck as the gunfire passed directly over their heads and peppered the schooner's sails. The two boats had come between an exchange of fire between combatants firing across the narrow bay. Within two minutes, the *Ben Bow* came about in the harbor and headed back out to sea.

The Coast Guard and the US Embassy were suddenly confronted with a serious and chaotic situation with another ten yachts sailing straight into a violent regime change. Furthermore, some crews were already onshore and wives, friends and Race Committee members who had flown down to Havana for the regatta festivities were now on the docks of a strategic military target that was flooding with Cuban tanks and troops. American tourists were already fleeing Havana's hotels and casinos and swarming the US Embassy and the nearby airport.

The *Nemesis* immediately radioed the still racing yachts and directed them to turn and head back to the United States, with most of them doing so. Unfortunately, the *Tropicair* had lost her radio in the wet conditions onboard and, unaware, the "skipperette" crew continued on to Havana.

As dawn broke at the reception area for the yachts, the Race Committee from St. Petersburg was reported in a "state of hysteria and that all organized race procedure had broken down." Many of the boats were quickly preparing to set sail and return to the safety of the stormy Gulf of Mexico, but several crews wanted to stay and see the excitement. Even the *Ben Bow* had opted to take their chances in the safety of the harbor and had returned to tie up.

With every American airline having cancelled flights in and out of Havana, the US Embassy ordered the *Nemesis* to take on as many of the "racer chasers" from the waterfront as possible and return to the United States. With 75 Americans and their luggage packed onboard, she left that afternoon as the women of the *Tropicair* sailed into the bay. The *Tropicair* rafted up at the docks and the women changed into their matching white crew shirts, red shorts and scarves. They were greeted by their fellow racers — and Cuban troops and tanks. Not only had they "unofficially" finished the regatta, but they had sailed into the teeth of a coup d'etat.

Later that day, a dispatch from a sports reporter sent down to cover the race stated, "Some of the yachtsmen are going to leave, and it is very likely that the reception, banquet and entertainment will all be called off. However, the prizes will be given them, possibly this afternoon."



St. Pierre:
NEW RULES IN AN OLD TOWN

by Marc Verstraete Van de Weyer



St. Pierre, Martinique, lies beneath volcanic Mt. Pelée. In the photo above, taken last January, the yachts anchored near the dock are in the protected zone. This is no longer allowed. On the map at right, see the no-anchoring zone, designed to protect historic shipwrecks

A massive eruption of Mt. Pelée on May 8th, 1902 destroyed the city of St. Pierre. About 30,000 people died during the eruption, around a sixth of the total population of Martinique at that time. St. Pierre — then the largest city in Martinique and one of the largest in the Caribbean — was busy, alive, and extremely attractive. With its theater and grand parties, it was called "the Paris of the West Indies". The main artery for this city was the waterfront; nearly everything and everyone came and went by boat. Rum and agricultural products were exported and consumer goods imported directly by ship.

When the volcano erupted, a glowing red ball of superheated gas and steam grew out of the side of Mt. Pelée with a terrifying roar, then slowly detached itself and swept down on St. Pierre. It destroyed everything in its path, reducing St. Pierre to rubble and cremating most of the people alive. It moved into the bay, destroying the ships at anchor. One steamship, the Roddam, *with horribly burnt survivors, managed to limp away. A few survivors were later taken off other burning ships. The wrecks of these ships still lie on the seabed.*

Today, St. Pierre is one of the most interesting historical anchorages in the Caribbean. Apart from the ruins still scattered throughout the town, including the splendid theatre, you can visit the little volcano museum. There are hiking trails on the now-sleeping volcano, and the wreck diving in the harbor is, needless to say, unique.

— Chris Doyle



No-Anchoring Zone Protects Historic Shipwrecks

The French government has established a no-anchoring zone in St. Pierre. The decree, dated June 2011, is now active and enforced by the maritime affairs police. This new situation is mentioned on the new charts and their updates.

The aim of the no-anchoring zone is to protect the many historical wrecks of the bay from the anchors and chains of the cruising yachts and superyachts. I was part of this project at its beginning.

The no-anchoring zone is delimited by special yellow marker buoys (*bouée marque spéciale* on the chart) in the north, west and south, and the end of the city dock in the east. In April, the west yellow marker buoy broke its chain and drifted off after a large yacht tried to use it as a mooring. It was re-installed on September 12th.

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Inside the protected zone there are four white mooring buoys (*coffre d'amarrage* on the chart) for the exclusive use of dive boats. These are for use by the local Martinique dive operators or cruisers with a dinghy or small boat for the time of one dive only. These mooring buoys are NOT to be used as overnight or day moorings. The maximum size for boats using the dive moorings is 12 metres or six tons. These mooring buoys are placed near the most important wrecks.

Anchoring

Plans for two special mooring buoys for super- and megayachts are on paper (green *coffer megaship* on the chart) but await funding. Meanwhile, large yachts are advised to anchor south or north of the protected zone.



A plan for an official mooring field for other yachts is also included in the overall project, but has encountered heavy opposition from local fishermen. Meanwhile, cruising yachts are legally allowed to anchor anywhere outside the protected zone, as there is no official zone reserved for fishermen. However, this has been the cause of friction between yachts and fishermen when yachts get in the way of fishing activities. If you have real trouble with a fisherman, stay calm and call the emergency police number, 17, on a local phone or call the coast guard (CROSS-AG) on VHF channel 16.

Anchor as close as possible to the shore in five to eight metres; the holding is very good in sand and mud. Be careful not to anchor deeper than ten metres, as there is a steep slope that drops fast to over 30 metres and dragging is almost guaranteed. At night the winds might drop and the current will move the boats in all directions, so make sure that you and your neighbors have plenty of swinging room.

You can also anchor on a large shallow plateau south of the bay, which makes a longer dinghy trip to town but at least you are well away from the crowd and safe.

During high season, from November through May, there can be as many as 95 yachts on anchor in St. Pierre. The average is 25 per night. Last season, I counted 3,750 cruisers in a period of about five months.

The Dock

There is a large, solid municipal dock. Be aware that both the left and right sides of the dock will be used by day-trip catamarans from around 10:00AM to noon; do not leave your dinghy there but closer to the ladders near the shore. Please do not lock your dinghy to the dock ladders; these ladders are for everybody to use! There is no theft problem in St. Pierre; the city is very safe. Virtually the only thefts from yachts in Martinique have been perpetrated by other yachtsmen, but I have never known of such actions in St. Pierre during the past five years. If you absolutely feel the need to lock the dinghy, please use the many stainless steel rings available for this purpose all around the dock.

On Mondays, there are two large ferryboats going and coming from Fort de France



Above: St. Pierre's iconic waterfont at sunset

Left: The author, at far left, with colleagues in Martinique

and Guadeloupe that will use both sides of the dock for its full length from around 11:30AM to 2:00PM. A kiosk is being built in front of the city dock at the marketplace for Customs and ferry ticketing. The plan is to have a regular ferry service from St. Pierre to Fort de France, Les Saintes, Guadeloupe and Dominica by next season, so yachtsmen should enquire when on site, as the ferry schedule may vary between winter and summer and the dinghy docking might be regulated.

St. Pierre offers no on-dock fuel or water. But both are available within walking distance in town, as are all the needed food stores, restaurants, fresh daily market and bread.

Marc Verstraete and his wife, Nadine, are retired Merchant Marine/Navy officers, teachers and historians. Marc is also a former member of the Cousteau team, having been a research and expedition leader for underwater discovery missions.

The Verstraetes are sailing around the world on their aluminum catamaran, Bonobo. *Authors of video and photographic works on wrecks, they are currently working in St. Pierre on a mission involving the history of the ships sunk during the 1902 volcanic eruption.*

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Colombia's Perfect Pit Stop



ALL PHOTOS: DAVID MORGAN

DESTINATIONS

by Brenda Webb

Colombia is an obvious stopover for sailors heading from the ABC islands to the Panama Canal. Who doesn't want to explore the spectacularly restored Spanish colonial city of Cartagena?

However getting there can be a bit tricky and my husband, David, and I had to cool our heels in both Curaçao and Aruba until Caribbean weather guru Chris Parker gave the green light. We'd become so used to hearing his daily report of 30-plus knots in the "typically windy area of Colombia" that we wondered if we'd ever get there. But wait long enough and fair winds will come and so it proved and *Bandit* had a lovely run from Aruba in 20 knots.

Friends weren't quite so lucky. Seasoned Kiwi sailors who had already crossed the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, they struck their worst seas ever, with five-metre swells and more than 40 knots of wind. We listened anxiously for them on our morning SSB net and were relieved when they made it to Cartagena, exhausted but unscathed.

Cartagena was our planned destination as well, but their reports were anything but glowing, saying the marina was old and rough, boat wake constant and annoying, and the long dinghy ride ashore a pain.

Above: The safe and secure Santa Marta Marina in Colombia with the picturesque Sierra Nevada mountain range in the background

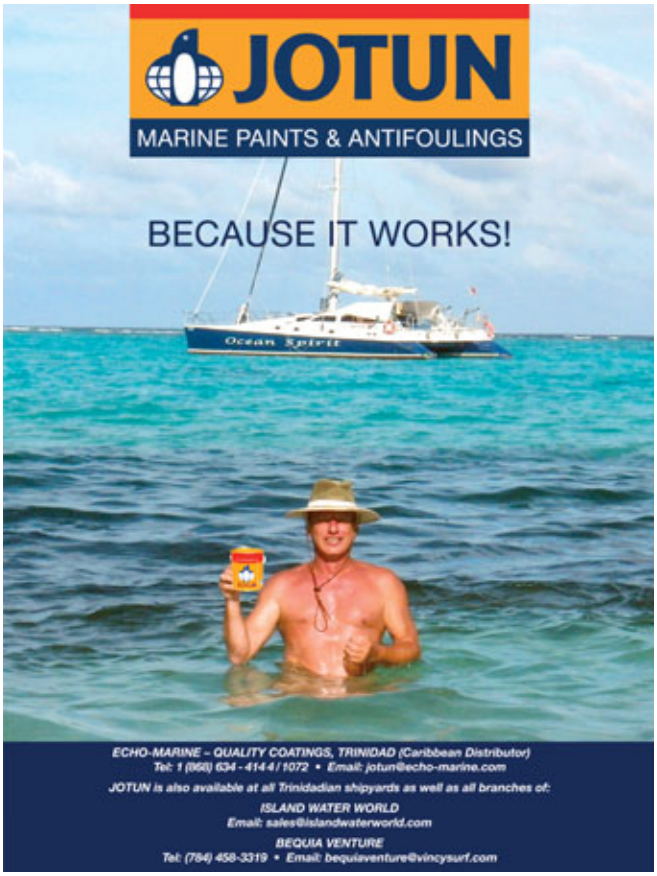
Right: Kiwi sailors Mark Farrell, Amanda Church and David Morgan outside the rustic coffee shop in the Colombian mountain village of Minca, an easy day trip from Santa Marta

Santa Marta

So we opted for the city of Santa Marta instead and it proved a perfect pit stop. It had everything cruisers need — a safe and secure marina with efficient, friendly and helpful English-speaking staff, a relatively painless check-in procedure through an English-speaking agent (arranged by the marina) and great facilities including clean and modern showers and cheap washing machines and driers.

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Excellent provisioning was only a few blocks away at a modern supermarket while the street markets had fantastic fresh and cheap produce including wonderfully creamy avocados, juicy mangos and delicious persimmons.



The lovely beach retreat of Taganga is a scenic bus ride from Santa Marta; we opted not to anchor there

We had considered stopping at several anchorages before Santa Marta, however the weather window dictated otherwise and we headed straight for sheltered Santa Marta. As we dropped our mainsail in the bay the wind gauge showed gusts of up to 30 knots — we'd made it in the nick of time.

Plans were to explore Cartagena and Santa Marta by land and then provision and head out to an anchorage for a few days, but our helpful agent put paid to that, pointing out the long-winded formalities necessary for anchoring. We'd also heard about a few security incidents and, in fact not long after we left Santa Marta for Providencia, a yacht anchored in Taganga Bay (near Santa Marta) was boarded and the occupants robbed.

That may have been an isolated incident, as the Colombian Coast Guard does regular patrols, but much of the nice anchoring area was farther west than we planned to go. Fellow Kiwis Amanda Church and Mark Farrell on *Balvenie*, who were with us in Santa Marta, did spend time in the Rosario Archipelago on their way to the San Blas and enjoyed it.

Complicated formalities curtailed our stay in Colombia to ten days — any longer would have involved more expense and more paperwork. As it was, we had to temporarily import *Bandit* — unbelievably, stays more than five days require that.

Our agent organized everything for us, albeit at a hefty fee, and it seemed, as in so many Latin American countries, that this was the only way to do things. He did an enormous amount of running around for us with endless visits to officials and back to *Bandit* and in the stifling heat we were happy to pay him to do so. In the scheme of things it wasn't a huge cost. Often such situations and costs are fluid, so check updated information before you go.

Santa Marta was a great spot to base ourselves and we were surprised to see so few other foreign boats in the marina. Admittedly it's not one of the Caribbean's cheapest marinas but the facilities, helpful staff and security measures more than make up for that.

Travelling in Colombia was easy, although we cursed our lack of Spanish (we didn't learn it until later in the season in Guatemala). As we stuttered our way through a few basics with a particularly friendly taxi driver we kicked ourselves for not having a better grasp.

Inland Adventure

One of our best adventures was a trip to the coffee (and apparently cocaine) growing area of Minca in the Sierra Nevada mountains. It took a bit of effort to get there but was well worthwhile. The aforementioned taxi ride took us to the other side of Santa Marta to what we thought was a bus station. No — just more taxis, even more run down than the city one we'd just used.

Sitting in the beat-up Chevette with mismatched doors, leaking windows (we were there in rainy season) and a driver with slick shades and a heavy foot, we wondered if we'd made the right decision. We tore our way up the rutted, metal road through the rainforest hearts in mouths.

Minca was a sleepy village but it had a fantastic coffee shop — well, they do grow it here. It was a wonderful relief to get out of the intense heat in Santa Marta and up into the cool air of the rainforest. It lived up to its name, though, and our afternoon hike to the waterfalls was curtailed due to torrential rain. One advantage — the rain did slow our driver down on the return trip as torrents of water made the road treacherous.

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Panama Canal Transit: The Little Boat that Could!



by Di Kilbride

Nothing feels quite as blissful as being safely at anchor after a drama-filled Panama Canal transit.

Our 28-foot Compass, *Matira*, an Australian-designed full-keeled, fiberglass sloop, has been our home for nearly 25 years. Phil Cook and I have worked in many countries, moving on when new horizons caught our imagination. So far we had been able to live with our preferences as to how much modern equipment (such as a powerful engine) we needed on board. The canal transit caught us completely by surprise.

Unexpected Engine Rebuild

We had an engine that seemed reliable but very slow, so we were already a bit wary of how we would manage the transit. Our first setback occurred when our oil light came on while returning to our berth from hauling out at the boatyard so we asked around for a mechanic and Greg came over right away. At that point our engine completely failed to start. As luck would have it, the admeasurer arrived at that moment to measure our boat and sign the certificate with our Ship ID for the transit, assuring us that arrangements could be made for us if we could maintain three to three and half knots with our own engine — once it was in good running condition again. We knew how fortunate we were to discover the problem at Shelter Bay Marina and not halfway through the canal.

We ended up with a complete rebuild of our eight-horsepower Yanmar inboard motor. Thanks to Greg (a Canadian aircraft engineer cruising on a yacht with his family, currently working freelance for the marina and known affectionately by local cruisers as the "Engine Whisperer") in the end we felt 100-percent confident of the reliability of our engine.

Elated with our rebuilt engine, we contacted our agent to make arrangements to transit the Canal. Another admeasurer came to check that our engine was functioning well and to confirm that we had been on sea trials with the mechanic, then signed an updated form with our boat details and said he would be in touch with our agent.

But Wait...

Then the nightmare began. We were refused a canal transit with the use of our own engine, were labeled as a "navigational threat", and were instructed to find an auxiliary engine that could make a minimum of five knots.

The next day several guys from the port authority came down with a fisherman's 15-horsepower outboard engine, planning to drill holes in *Matira's* transom to attach a makeshift wooden bracket. No, no holes! There must be another way. After an hour of fiddling with ropes and plywood, the outboard was somewhat attached, but it destabilized our stern with its heavy weight placed off-center to avoid the wind vane. "This won't work," we told them. The guys looked next day for a smaller outboard that we could rent, but none could be found.

We asked our agent for another solution. We suggested the possibility of rafting up to another yacht to transit the 28 miles across the lake. We had heard directly from others who had transited the canal a few years ago by rafting up next to another yacht, so we asked around and found another Australian yacht whose crew agreed to help us out if our canal date coincided with theirs. We thought this would solve our problem but the port authority refused to consider this option anymore.

Our agent suggested he would look for a launch that the port authority would approve to tow us across Gatun Lake. That option was refused.

Our agent and another agent had also mentioned an option of being able to anchor a night at the far end of the lake and, by paying a hefty delay fee, taking an extra day to transit the second set of locks. No deal, said the canal authority.

We were completely shattered and felt that we had been labeled as a problem boat. We asked our agent to arrange a meeting for us with himself and one of the port captains to see what solution we could find. Otherwise we had no idea how we would ever transit the Panama Canal, this year or any subsequent year.

A Way Forward?

Our agent set up a meeting with a man whom he claimed was the most "sympathetic and yacht-friendly" port captain, making certain that we understood this might be our only opportunity to get approval for the transit. The port captain explained that at three to three and a half knots our boat was at risk of not being able to maneuver appropriately, warning us of the dangers of not being able to maintain a minimum speed at all times to deal with adverse currents, the unpredictable wake of tugboats and ships passing us in the channel across the lake, the strong currents in the locks because of the huge amounts of water being displaced, or the danger of engine failure and the consequences of being fined and towed in these circumstances as well as the danger to other boats and ships.

In a moment of genius Phil and I suggested that *Matira* could now maintain "nearly four and a half knots" with her newly rebuilt engine and asked if we could change our minimum speed to four point two on the form. The port captain hesitated then agreed, all of us knowing that this was a huge compromise to the normally strict minimum of five knots.

He then suggested with a chuckle that we might want to find the lightest line handlers



Top left: The canal transit crew on Matira *before leaving Shelter Bay Marina*

Above: Motorsailing through Banana Cut in Gatun Lake, located between the 'up' and 'down' locks of the canal. Banana Cut is currently off limits to most boats because of the debris from excavations

available and reduce the amount of tires to keep *Matira's* extra weight to a minimum.

We signed the revised form, shook hands and headed back to the marina. Yippee — we were on our way. Little did we realize until the actual transit occurred how important his advice was about the power to maneuver if required and how often we would be tested.

As per instructions, we found three ideal lightweight line handlers. Tomás was a 62-year-old Panamanian with plenty of experience crewing on yacht deliveries and Nikka was a young German woman who had just bought a boat a few berths down from us. Both spoke English and had prior canal transit experience. Our third was a Kiwi crew on another boat, Beth, who had plenty of boating experience and was keen to experience the canal transit. More importantly, Beth brought her guitar along to entertain us in the evening.

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Transiting from the Atlantic side requires an overnight stay in the lake, so two advisors are required to make the entire crossing and allowance had to be made for sleeping and eating arrangements for five people. This was a challenge on a 28-foot boat but we came up with some very creative solutions.



Having sundowners on the ship mooring buoys in Gamboa at the end of the second day — before being sent off to anchor

Into the Canal at Last

The engine performed well heading across to The Flats, where we waited for the advisor to join us for the few miles motoring to reach the Gatun Locks, a series of three chambers to raise vessels a total of 85 feet to exit into Gatun Lake.

Heading into the first lock we knew we were due for a thunderstorm. Heavy clouds followed by rain, lightning and loud booms accompanied us through the locks as night fell but we weren't concerned. We were rafted up to a large catamaran with two powerful engines and he had better visibility from his steering station than we did.

We separated after the three locks and tied up to a mooring ball around 8:00PM. Beth played for us after dinner, celebrating our departure from the Caribbean under a clearing sky before we tucked into bed for the night. Nikka and Beth had brought along a tarpaulin that we attached in the cockpit from our weather cloths across the top of our sailing canopy to form a kind of tent to guard against rain while they were sleeping. Tomás slept on the double settee in the main cabin and Phil and I had our bed in the forepeak. All very cozy and everyone was happy to get some sleep, aware that the next day would bring a long trek across the 28-mile lake with our little engine moving us along slowly but surely.

Next morning we were up early for the advisor, who showed up 45 minutes later than the scheduled time of 6:00AM (we think this was significant later). He was keen for us to make the "down" locks that day, so he chose to take the Banana Cut. Not only did we get a rare glimpse of a different and beautiful part of the lake, but we also got permission to put up all sail to help us! The wind was on the nose for the narrow cut, slowing us down a bit until we joined the main channel where we motor-sailed with full sails under a light, steady southeast breeze, convinced that we were making up for the slow start.

All too quickly we reached the Culebra Cut where sail was prohibited and our speed dropped substantially as we zigzagged, following the channel, with wind and current against us at times. At 11:30 the advisor radioed in to learn that we had a 12:50 lock transit, which gave us only an hour and 20 minutes to make the last seven miles. Maybe with the extra 45 minutes we might have made it, but we were slowed by adverse currents, the wake of tugs and ships passing us, and wind on the nose. We now understood why the port captain was so insistent on maintaining a minimum speed across the lake.

One More Night

Since we wouldn't make the second set of locks on time, we were given special permission to stay in Gamboa for the night, seven miles from the locks. The advisor showed us to a double buoy where ships usually tie up. Later in the day the wake from a tug shoved *Matira* against the buoys and our port toe-rail cracked slightly from the impact. At this point we considered it negligible damage, just so grateful to be transiting the canal.

By sunset, a security boat came up to say that we couldn't stay on the mooring and showed us to the anchorage a bit farther down. We wondered why the advisor didn't take us there in the first place as it was much more peaceful to be at anchor. Everyone was happy for a second night on the lake under a clear sky with stars glittering like diamonds. We felt we had really lucked out with all the added bonuses after such an effort to get this far.

Day Three: More Challenges

On the third morning we were thrilled to have a leisurely start to the day. However, 10:00AM rolled around and still no advisor. We called our agent, asking where the advisor was. We let him know that we phoned the transit office and they appeared not to recognize the name *Matira* on the daily schedule, even though Tomás spoke Spanish with the woman on the other end of the line. Eventually at noon an advisor showed up, who admitted later we were not scheduled on the roster that day. He advised that we would be late for the 12:50PM transit (again) so we were re-scheduled for 3:25PM. Already we could feel things were taking a turn for the worse.



Beth plays guitar while Phil cooks breakfast and Tomás assists

After a two-hour wait at the tug wharf, the advisor set us up for a port-side tie up to the tug we would go alongside in Pedro Miguel lock. However the tug was still maneuvering a ship that would follow behind us in the same lock, so the advisor made a poor judgment call for us to tie *Matira* to the starboard lock wall to wait for the tug. We had been asked only to prepare a starboard bow line but we didn't realize at that time why he wanted it. He had not taken into consideration the wind and current pushing us forward, so when we threw the bow line to the lock attendant on the wall the stern kicked 90 degrees and our bow was being shoved into the wall as the lock attendant attached the bow line to a large Samson post. Phil and I attempted to set up and throw a starboard stern line to another lock attendant while our three line handlers were fending *Matira* off at the bow with all their strength until the bow line was loosened and at the same time we hit reverse hard to kick us back from the wall. Eventually the boat swung around enough for the lock handler to attach the stern line we had thrown to him to keep us facing forward. A very close call. The advisor just expected us to use a bow line and kick in reverse to keep us in place! Had we even known he would suggest doing this, we would have handled the situation differently. Another reason for a strong engine.

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Westward Across the Atlantic

A passage across the Atlantic Ocean is not a trip to be lightly undertaken. Your boat and crew must be prepared to face heavy weather. If this will be the first ocean passage for you or your boat, do some rehearsals: While still in your home waters, when a good hard blow comes through, take your boat out for a sail and ascertain any deficiencies in either boat or crew. Take your boat back in and rectify the deficiencies. Then go out in a second blow, which you will be much better prepared for. Go home again and rectify any deficiencies that are still not corrected from the first trial. Etcetera.

The hardest part of sailing westward across the Atlantic is getting from Europe to the Canaries or Madeira. Once there it is basically all downhill and easy sailing to the Caribbean.

Take a look at the weather charts on the back of the Imray-Iolaire North Atlantic Passage Chart 100. These will show why you should have gotten out of Northern Europe by September, as the gale frequencies there increase drastically after mid-September, through October and November.

If you are leaving from Gibraltar, carefully check your weather report — in November you can run into some bad southwest blows, and the northwest coast of Africa has virtually no harbours of refuge. Take off on a good weather report from Gibraltar, and work your way well to the west to give yourself plenty of sea room before heading southwestward to Madeira or the Canaries.

Madeira and the Canaries

In the Madeiran Archipelago island of Porto Santo, there may be room in the harbour at the marina, or you can anchor off. In Madeira one can find a wonderful secluded anchorage in Baia D'Abra. It is usually deserted, and a few miles west of there, one can find the Quinta do Lorde marina three miles east of Canical.

> *'From Brava to Antigua you will have some glorious sailing'*

If you continue on to the Canaries you will discover that there are relatively few anchorages and the marinas are usually chock-a-block full. Unless you are joining the ARC rally (www.worldcruising.com/arc), forget about going to Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, until after the ARC departs. The ARC will have two starts this year, one on November 10th, bound for the Cape Verdes, and one on November 24th, bound direct for St. Lucia.

There is a marina at Rubicon on Lanzarote, plus Puerto Calera where space might be available. The islands' best infrastructure to support the yachting industry and make good any deficiencies discovered in gear and equipment is in Tenerife.

In the opinion of many, the nicest islands in the Canaries are the three westernmost islands: Palma, Hiero and Gomera.

The Cape Verdes

We visited the Cape Verdes on *Iolaire* in 1985 and 1989 and preferred them to the Canaries. I revisited them via "the big bird" in 2002, and again in 2005 on *Sincerity*, an 88-foot ketch.

I recommend spending December exploring the Cape Verdes, and crossing the Atlantic in January when the trades have filled in and late-season hurricanes are avoided. Landfall should be Isle Sal to check in, and then sail downwind to São Nicolau, Sta. Luzia (an uninhabited island with a three-mile-long white sand beach), and São Vicente and its port city of Mindelo.

Mindelo is wonderful, with beautiful colonial Portuguese architecture. A German, Kai Brossman, has a 120-berth marina (www.marinamindelo.net) with repair services, electronics, rigging and sail repair. Kai also points out the Cape Verdeans are wonderful at improvisation; he feels that within three weeks anything broken on a yacht can be replaced or repaired.

After Mindelo, sail south to Santiago, which has a dozen unexplored anchorages available to the experienced sailor — check Google Earth and see what I mean. Then visit Fogo, with its colony of blue-eyed, red-haired Cape Verdeans descended from a French count who arrived in the 1880s and cultivated grapes (and the local damsels!). Then on to Brava, which has an excellent harbor on the northeast side and a sheltered cove on the southwest corner, a perfect jumping-off spot to cross the Atlantic.

Across the Pond

I am strongly of the opinion that when crossing the Atlantic you should go from the Canaries down to the Cape Verdes, enjoy the cruising there, and then cross from the Cape Verdes to the Eastern Caribbean.

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The reason I say this is because the Great Circle route from the Canaries is 2,535 miles, but this route can really only be sailed by boats that have plenty of fuel and/or are lightweight fliers with a crew that is willing to do a lot of sail changing, setting spinnakers and the like. The more traditional route is to head southwest from the Canaries, at least down to 20°N, and then across — about 2,615 miles. This route brings you quite close to the Cape Verdes, so why not sail from the Canaries to the Cape Verdes? It is only 780 miles, with guaranteed tradewinds down the African coast.

While there are several good harbors with interesting towns and villages ashore, the Cape Verdes are not the Virgin Islands. The coastlines are unreliably charted and underdeveloped, but they do offer the yachtsman who is skilled in coastal piloting and eyeball navigation a wonderful opportunity to wander off the beaten track. You can enjoy the Cape Verdes and then take off from Brava, a wonderful little island where the Yankee whalers used to pick up crew. From there to Antigua (2,175 miles) you are down in the deep tradewinds, and will have some glorious sailing as the course is a little bit north of west and the tradewinds are a little bit north of east. You can rig your spinnaker pole semi-permanently out to starboard, to be used to wing out the jib if it is blowing hard, or for your spinnaker if the wind goes light.

Iolaire, 46 feet on deck, has sailed three times from the Cape Verdes to the islands of the Eastern Caribbean — in 14 days and some hours in 1949, under gaff rig when owned by R.H. "Bobby" Sommerset; then in 1985 and 1989 under my command as a double-headsail Marconi yawl. On all three trips the spinnaker pole was rigged to starboard and left up there for the entire trip. No gybing!

Southwest Winds

If you look at the weather charts, you will note that in November in the Canaries, there is a southwest arrow. If the wind goes round to the southwest, you should sit in the Canaries and wait until it goes back around to the easterly quadrant. It can blow southwest for two or three days and blow hard. The ARC has discovered this occasionally, when participants were discouraged to discover they were beating to windward in heavy weather for the first three or four days of their transatlantic crossing, rather than having a delightful sleigh ride all the way.

It should be noted that a southwester could settle in for even longer periods. In 2002 dozens of boats that left the Canaries were driven all the way down to the Cape Verdes, where they stopped to pick up fuel and/or wait for the wind to go around to the east.



Avoid a heavy bash to weather by waiting out any winds from the southwest

Boat preparation and sailing directions westward across the Atlantic are covered in more detail in my *Transatlantic Crossing Guide*. The comprehensive *Street's Guide to the Cape Verde Islands* was published in 2011. Both are available at online booksellers.

I recommend the following charts for a westward transatlantic crossing:

- Imray C20: Gibraltar to Azores and Canaries
- Imray-Iolaire E2: Islas Canarias. Plans: Pto de la Luz, Pto de los Marmoles and Pto de Naos, Pto de San Sebastian, Pto de Santa Cruz, Darsena Pesquera (Santa Cruz de Tenerife), Morro Jable, Pto de la Estaca
- Imray-Iolaire E3: Arquipelago da Madeira. Plans: Pto Santo, Pto do Funchal
- Imray-Iolaire E4: Arquipelago de Cabo Verde. Plans: Pto da Furna, Pto Grande, Pto de Sal-Rei, Pto Novo, Pto da Praia, Cavaleiras, Pto Velho, Bahia da Palmeira

This article is updated from a version that appeared in the November 2009 issue of Compass.



HITCHING THE WIND

by Francisco Pedro



'Looking for boat' — Alexis, Berta and Florian standing next to the dinghy dock, waiting for yacht owners to pass by
Inset: The walls of a bar in the biggest marina in the Eastern Caribbean are covered with notices

Their traveling flows like the winds and the tides. They refuse the airplane. Every year, hundreds of backpackers show up in the marinas of Portugal, Spain, the Canaries or the Cape Verdes. They look for a lift: a lift on a sailing boat, which would take them to the other side of the ocean. Here is a portrait of a new nomad tribe, populating a milieu that for decades has gathered rich elites and crazy travelers.

November 2012, longitude 15° west

It's the end of cyclone season in the Atlantic, the beginning of the crossing season: the shores of the Canary Islands are boiling with yachts. Next to the marina of Las Palmas, among the majority of polo shirts and leather shoes, there are young people carrying their backpacks and musical instruments around. They walk for miles along the docks, they swim over to the anchored boats: "Good morning! Do you happen to be crossing the ocean? Need some crew?"

"Hitching boats is about going to ask boatowners if they would like to take you aboard, in exchange for helping out in the navigation, doing small tasks, taking the helm, cooking...", Berta, a 22-year-old from Catalunya, explains. Short hair, shining eyes staring at the other side of the ocean, she was tired of the big cities: Paris, where she studied literature, Barcelona, where she grew up. "I had this idea of leaving, of going for a big trip. Hitchhiking, you are super free. At any time you can say, 'Today I'll look for a boat to head somewhere else.' And if you have no money, it gives you a chance of traveling."

Every year, by this time, there are hundreds of young backpackers like Berta, who show up by the marinas of Cascais, Gibraltar, Brittany, to look for a lift to cross the ocean. And it's here, in the Canaries, that all their paths cross. "Las Palmas is pretty crazy. It has become the Mecca of boat hitching," says Manon, a blue-eyed Austrian girl. With her partner, Adrien, she is undertaking a trip which will eventually lead them to Cuba. "We knew it had become super popular over the last years, because everyone talks about it. But as we arrived we were shocked: there were tons of backpackers. We said "Wow, we'll never be able to find a boat'."

For Alexis and Florian, 28- and 24-year-old brothers who escaped from Paris's bad weather to discover South America, the search has been going on for a month. "We all have something in common, but endless different life stories. There are people of all nationalities, old and young, more or less hippies, rich, middle-class and moneyless people...."

The "bateaustop", as it was baptized in French, is done anywhere in the world where there are sailing boats, and is not a recent phenomenon. "My dad and my uncle used to hitch boats. But it was different: it was mainly among sailors; there were way fewer people. I think it's great that there are so many, it opens up the sailing milieu to other people," Quentin says. Long loose hair, this little Mowgli of the seas was brought up on a sailing yacht, and is now looking for a boat to join his brother in Guadeloupe. "Even if there were always the rich, with beautiful boats, before there were mainly adventurers. The Canaries and the Caribbean were filled up with travelers. Nowadays the majority of sailors are people on holiday or retired, who stay around the marina bars. In a way, backpackers bring back the spirit of discovery, of adventure."

The quest isn't always a smooth and easy road to go. One learns how to take no for an answer. There are captains who take the opportunity to ask for a contribution to the boat's kitty way above the voyage cost: ten to 40 euros per day. Furthermore, from January on, there will be fewer and fewer boats crossing the ocean. Some give up, or make new plans.

"Even if there are so many people, the search doesn't become competitive; there is a lot of mutual help. Everyone shares their plans: 'go there, there is this and that boat'," Alexis and Flo explain. Dozens of young travelers squatted in a huge abandoned hotel in Las Palmas, and brought it back to life with a collective management, enabling it to host those who need. They share cigarettes and songs, dreams and doubts, skills and knowledge. Like the tides and the winds, they let life flow. "And," Alexis confesses with a smile, "everyone ends up having his lucky day."



'In a way, backpackers bring back the spirit of discovery, of adventure,' says Quentin

December 2012, longitude 30° west

Alexis had pictured himself in Latin America by his birthday. The prediction was missed by some months. The two brothers and the retired French couple who took them aboard are all sitting on the deck, specially decorated. There is birthday cake and a special meal. The Cape Verde islands have disappeared in the horizon, slowly replaced by the rising sun. The immense blue takes over the landscape. Without notice comes the torrential rain. "There we remained for half an hour, T-shirt and shorts all soaked, the food turning into soup. Just happy, like children."

"The voyage starts right away with the joy of having found a boat, of finally leaving Las Palmas. To move on, to leave Europe!" Alexis says. "It's a joy I don't have when I hitchhike on a road," Berta tells. "To enter someone's boat is to enter his little hut. It's full of photos, books, travel stories." Manon, who is used to hitchhiking the world's roads, reminds us that in a boat "there is the psychological aspect of spending so much time together in such a confined space, and to be at someone's service." She and Adrien, with other *bateaustopeurs*, hopped on the yacht of a rich French businessman, who turned out to be "a quite dictatorial captain": "we were all afraid of his intense emotional fluctuations".

—Continued on next page

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As with most of those who hitch a crossing, none of them had ever sailed before. "I knew absolutely nothing. Not even if I'd be seasick or not. It's a whole new thing, from A to Z, and it's really exciting," Manon says. They discover Tabarly and Moitessier, and the great sailors inspire them. The experience awakens a passion — sometimes a passion for life.



For Manon and Adrien, more than an old dream, this way of traveling was an obvious choice: they had no money for boarding a cargo boat, and they have refused to take planes for a long time. "When you know there is a real trouble with CO2 emissions and you keep flying just for your own pleasure, that is something so selfish, so scornful of all of those who can't do it and who suffer the consequences of climate change. The airplane is one of the latest markers of the planet-wide social injustice: we are lucky to catch super-cheap flights, which is a privilege of the super-wealthy. Planes fly from rich places (Paris, London and Frankfurt) to the poor ones, not the opposite."



"By plane you are way more framed; for months you know you are going to arrive on that day, at that time, at that place," Quentin adds. "This way everything is unpredictable." "When you see an island on the horizon, land in sight, it's just crazy," Alexis explains. "You count the days and the hours." "When you refuse to take the plane and you go by land or by sea, you're able to discover and understand so many other things, about the history, the geography... You see something else," Manon says. "For me it's impressive to be tracing a path which is so historically marked: the route of colonization, of the conquests, of slavery."

In the same ocean, on the same route: once taken to extend the empire, to conquer, taken today to escape the empire of consumption, to discover other landscapes and ways of living.

March 2013, longitude 60° west

Le Marin, Martinique, has the biggest marina in the Eastern Caribbean. The crowded bars have their walls covered with notices: Dominica, Colombia, Pacific Ocean, Europe... There are boats leaving in all directions — and young travelers eager for a place aboard. It's a meeting point for those who were able to reach this side of the Atlantic, a stage for enthusiastic meetings among *bateaustopeurs* who had met in the Canaries, the Cape Verdes, other Caribbean islands, weeks or months before. They share hugs and crossing stories.

There is Jean François, a 70-year-old Swiss guitar player and geologist, a boat hitching veteran. The two young guys from Quebec, who, without ever having sailed before, find out that they're better sailors than their captain, who ends up leaving them the boat and the money to take it up to Canada. There's Pat, Australian descendent of the famous mutineers of the *Bounty*, who took 15 backpackers on his catamaran. There is Julien, musician and clown tired of a life touring around Europe, who wants to cruise the Amazon in a canoe — on his own.

Berta joined Alexis and Flo. It has been two months they're exploring Martinique. They set up a small hut on the way out of the marina. They make handicrafts out of local seeds, which they sell to the tourists. They live off the food thrown away by supermarket chains and charter companies. They are looking for a boat that will take them to Venezuela or Colombia. "It's not because you don't have a lot of money that you can't do endless things. But you must dare to. You must not be ashamed of scavenging supermarket bins, cooking meals out of dumpster-dived vegetables, sleeping on beaches or at the house of a random person who invites you over."

"People here got used to the idea that white people are tourists, and they see you right away as a wallet. I am, rather, looking for the contact with people, or simply with the space and the possibilities it offers. Agriculture, fishing — all of that interests me. I want to explore how it is done here. While loads of tourists just come to disconnect from their work," Berta adds, "the fact that you don't have a lot of money, that you are seen this way, sleeping on the beach, brings you closer to the people here. It would be very different if I would show up with my 4x4 and my clothes a hundred dollars each."

"People who flew over, you've got the impression that they didn't even get to come down from their plane, to realize they are here. We sail and take the waves in a freer rhythm, closer to the culture of the Caribbean," Adrien says. "To arrive in the Caribbean by plane," the young architect adds, "is as if you would come in by the chimney. The door here is the sea!"

Manon and Adrien met Quentin and together have embraced an unexpected adventure: together they bought an old sailing boat. They explore nearby sinking boats to recover all kinds of objects. From supermarket dumpsters, they fill up on provisions. Although they have zero money, they overflow in excitement.

Today is Manon's birthday and it is their first trip, along Martinique's coast. The debut gathers Alexis, Flo, Berta, Quentin, Adrien and Manon. Exiting the dock, they see themselves reflected on Bill Gates' superyacht, also stopping by the marina. Later on, under the stars, they share stories and songs on the cockpit. The boat moves in the Caribbean Sea, once filled with pirates, dissidents of the European empires, today filled with these backpacked nomads, dissidents of the consumption-work society, who rifle supermarket dumpsters, conquer the time, seek an immeasurable treasure: adventure.

"It can be seen as a luxury: to give yourself all the time we give ourselves, to look for all the complications we look for, just for the sake of hitching a boat, when we could as well just catch a flight... But it means so much more, to travel the way we do," Manon says. "I've really changed my notion of time," Alexis confesses. "The boat moves on super slowly, you take loads of time to find it. For weeks we have now been looking for a boat to South America. If I had waited five minutes for my metro I'd be way more cranky." Florian adds: "We learn not to rush, but rather to enjoy the beauty of the places we are in."

"When people ask if we are on holidays, we say no," Alexis says. "We are traveling." Why? "Holidays are just a break in your working time", Manon explains. "To us," Quentin shouts from the cabin, "working time is a break in our lives."

Left: Being pulled by a sailing boat in the Caribbean Sea

Bottom left: 'Hitchhiking you are super free.' Says Berta 'At any time you can say "Today I'll look for a boat to head somewhere else"'

Below: From backpackers they become the owners of their own boat, and take their friends aboard for the debut





TRADEWINDS

by Frank Virgintino

It is too late for Happy New Year 2013 and too early for Happy New Year 2014. However, it is perfect timing for Happy Tradewinds New Year.

November 1st is the official end of hurricane season and the beginning of the reinstatement of the tradewinds season. Actually, the tradewinds do not cease but they are not the same during the Caribbean summer as they are during the Caribbean winter. The subject can be complicated. An overview of the tradewind basics for anyone contemplating cruising in the Caribbean can be helpful.

Tradewind Basics

The equator receives the Sun's direct rays. Here, air is heated and rises, leaving low pressure areas behind. Moving to about 30 degrees north and south of the equator, the warm air from the equator begins to cool and sink. Between 30 degrees latitude and the equator, most of the cooling sinking air moves back toward the equator. These air movements toward the equator are the tradewinds. The Coriolis Effect (the deflection caused by the Earth's spinning) makes the tradewinds curve toward the west, whether they are traveling to the equator from the south or north. South of about 30 degrees the northeast tradewinds blow mostly from the northeast toward the equator. The northeasterly tradewinds are dry and relatively constant winds. They are a sailor's joy because they are generally dependable at about 15 knots and do not carry humidity.

Why is there a difference in summer and winter tradewinds? At about the equator is the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), a region of light and irregular wind broken by occasional thunderstorms and squalls. The ITCZ moves north during the northern summer and south during the northern winter. The location of the ITCZ can vary as much as 40 to 45 degrees of latitude north or south of the equator based on the pattern of land and ocean. Because global heating and cooling lags behind the position of the sun, the ITCZ reaches its northernmost latitude at or after the end of the northern summer. As the ITCZ shifts, the wind develops a northerly or southerly component.

Expect the tradewinds to be northeasterly from November through April or May. From June on, the wind begins to develop a southerly component. Actually that is the ICTZ moving northward.

Contrary to what many believe, the wind in the Caribbean is even more constant during the summer months than during the winter months. The first wind graph on the next page indicates that in January, 58 percent of the time there is no tradewind blowing, while in July there is no tradewind blowing only five percent of the time. The second wind graph clearly demonstrates that *average* wind speeds are higher in the Caribbean summer than in the Caribbean winter.

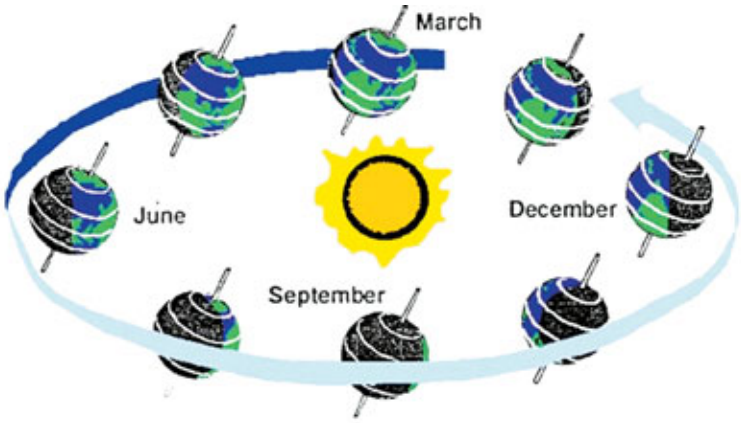
As the northeasterly trades reinstate themselves, however, the winds can be much stronger. As this happens in December, these stronger tradewinds became known as the Christmas Winds. These winds usually continue through mid-January and can range from 20 to 35 knots. The winds can persist for days at a time without abating and can result in higher than normal seas and rough conditions. However, at other times there will be no wind at all.

If you arrive in the Caribbean in November, you have arrived at the "beginning of the season" — the tradewind season — so, Happy New Year! The ITCZ has moved back south and the tradewinds from the Sahara are bringing dry wind and blue skies — a sailor's delight.

Cruising During the Winter Tradewind Season

The tradewinds blow moderately, approximately 12 to 15 knots, during most of the winter season, except for the period of the Christmas Winds when they blow harder. The wind will be from the east-northeast to northeast. Your cruising and routing should take the wind speed and direction into consideration. Early in the tradewind season, in the northwestern Caribbean, "northers" will come down from North America and bring grey skies. They often overwhelm the tradewinds and can be used to head east. This technique is very well explained in Bruce Van Sant's book, *The Gentleman's Guide to Passages South: The Thornless Path to Windward.*

—Continued on next page



After the northern hemisphere is warmed by being tilted toward the sun, the Intertropical Convergence Zone (i.e. where the northeast and southeast tradewinds converge in a low-pressure zone) moves northward. Tropical cyclones are often the result of disturbances within the ITCZ; as we now begin to tilt away from the sun and the ITCZ moves closer to the equator, the Caribbean hurricane season is ending

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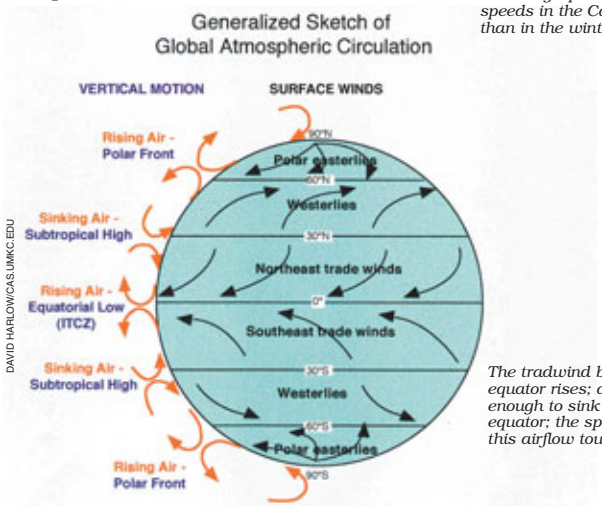
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In the Lesser Antilles, you can use the tradewinds to head north and south along the island chain, often experiencing the kind of sailing that dreams are made of. From the "top of the hill" at Martinique all the way to Grenada, it will be a sleigh ride.

If you are in the Eastern Caribbean and want to head west towards the ABC islands or the Greater Antilles, the challenge will be to find enough wind to maintain your speed. With the wind aft of the beam, unless you short-tack downwind, you will often find the cockpit hot and your average speed below five knots owing to the relationship between the true wind and the apparent wind.

Use Reaching Strategy

One of the best cruising strategies for sailing in the Caribbean is often overlooked. This strategy is zigzagging north to south and south to north across the Caribbean Sea as you set your destinations. Given the average wind speed during tradewind season, your boat will often perform better on a reach — and that can be achieved by sailing north or south across the Caribbean Sea, rather than running to the west or beating to the east.



The tradwind belt in a nutshell: hot air at the equator rises; at about 30 degrees it cools enough to sink and flows back toward the equator; the spinning of the earth deflects this airflow toward the west

From Grenada or Trinidad, you can head west to the ABC islands if the forecasted wind is 20 knots or better; with the current with you, your speed over the bottom will be impressive. If however, the wind forecast is only 12 to 15 knots from the northeast, from Grenada you can make for Ponce, Puerto Rico — a wonderful destination. As the crow flies it is just over 400 nautical miles and in "average" tradewinds should be a wonderful three-day sail. Once at Ponce, you can depart for the ABC islands, a little more than 300 nautical miles, to the south-southwest. The ABCs are a delightful group of islands and well worth the visit. From the ABCs, you can cross back over to the Dominican Republic and make for Boca Chica, a distance of approximately 350 miles, and use that stop to visit the historic city of Santo Domingo.

The point is to use the tradewinds to your advantage if you want to sail more and motor less. Many cruisers have a notion that the tradewinds blow all the time and that you simply put your sails up and go. It is not quite that simple.



Surprisingly to many, the graph above indicates that the tradewinds can be quite undependable in January, and the graph below right shows that average wind speeds in the Caribbean are higher in the summer than in the winter

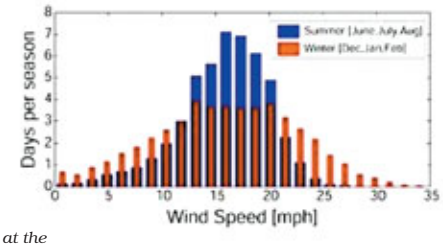
As the tradewind season grows older, the tradewinds become more constant and your planning and routing can be altered to take the change into account. With more wind, more often, you can spend more time sailing and less time waiting for wind.

Cruising During the Summer

As the ITCZ moves back north in the summer, the constancy of the winds and the average wind speed both increase. However, rain and humidity become a daily occurrence and the threat of storms and even hurricanes becomes much greater. At this time of the year, it is best to be south of latitude 12 degrees north.

The hurricane history shown on the map on page 47clearly demonstrates that safe cruising, beyond the reach of most storms, should not be "north of 12." Grenada is safer from named storms than other islands in the Lesser Antilles, and Trinidad still safer. If you choose to cruise during hurricane season, you can head from Trinidad to the ABC islands with a strong wind from the east-southeast and a favorable current. Venezuela is also safe insofar as storms are concerned, but generally bypassed owing to its record of crime, including violent crime, against cruising boats.

Beyond the ABC islands, Colombia, Panama and the San Blas Islands are also in the "safer zone" regarding storms.



The Caribbean is not any one group of islands; it is many islands and many countries that surround a large body of water called the Caribbean Sea. That sea, like any sea, has certain characteristics that change during various times of the year. If you are on a cruising boat, and in particular a cruising boat under sail, understanding those characteristics has everything to do with the ease and enjoyment as well as the safety of your voyage. Every month has an opportunity for the cruising boat and it is rare that you will find yourself bored. So let's celebrate November — the advent of a new tradewind season.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Frank Virgintino is the author of Free Cruising Guides, *www.freecruisingguides.com.*

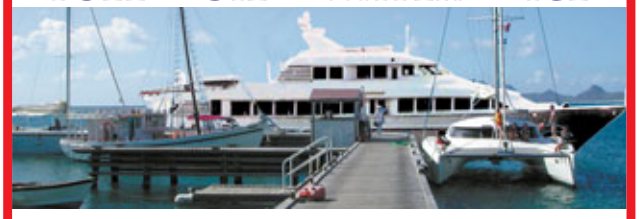


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DESIRED THINGS

by Polly Philipson



MAIN PHOTO: JASON PICKERING / ALL OTHERS: POLLY PHILIPSON



Main photo: Desiderata *captivated onlookers during the 2011 Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta* *Inset: 'Passion?' 'Yes please!'*

Left: Julia sanded and repainted the spars

"Passion?" asks Julia as she raises her drink.
"Yes please," replies Stuart, clinking his glass against hers.
"Trouble?" Stuart enquires with a grin.
"Always!" responds Julia.

Never were more fun-loving words spoken than these, by two people who have embraced the chance to follow their hearts. Stuart and Julia are the proud owners of S/Y *Desiderata* — a classic ketch, and sistership to none other than naval architect John G. Alden's *Malabar XIII*.

A war baby, *Malabar XIII* was built in 1945 when construction materials were scarce. Nevertheless, her efficiency and easy handling made her a keen contender during ocean races and regattas. Most notably, Alden had success in the 1948 Bermuda Race and 1951 Transatlantic Race. Design 0756 is one of only two ketch designs that Alden personally owned and raced; cutter-rigged, she has a mizzen staysail and spinnaker, which sets her apart from his other designs. The addition of a doghouse allowed for an extra berth to be added.

Built in the US in 1975, *Desiderata's* classic design still excels under sail. This is why Stuart fell in love with her at first sight, when she was working as a support vessel for the Australia-Mauritius ocean rowing race. Aptly, "desiderata" means "desired things" and Stuart, knowing that this was the only classic ketch for him, took over as skipper and never looked back.

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence" — Stuart has now enjoyed many miles of sailing *Desiderata* to appreciate these perceptive words written by Max Ehrmann in his 1927 prose poem "Desiderata", for which his yacht is named. In 2011, Stuart and *Desiderata* sailed around Madagascar to South Africa and crossed from the Cape of Good Hope to Brazil via St. Helena and Ascension Island. They arrived in time for the Caribbean season — where better to spread their wings than during the 2011 Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta?

The response from spectators and friends was overwhelming. *Desiderata* was an instant hit with her graceful classic style and romantic historical presence. Stuart, or rather *Desiderata*, was receiving constant dockside attention. Following the busy regatta season, Stuart wished for the peace of the open ocean again; he set off for Majorca completing another joyful transatlantic crossing on his one true love.

Desiderata was soon to work her magic again. Upon first glimpsing her, Julia was captivated with the idea of a life at sea, on board a classic yacht. I dare say that Stuart may have played a part in this too, as passion is infectious when heartfelt. Together, they spent the summer fervidly sailing the Ionian Sea, and discovered their equal enthusiasm for creating fine cuisine and entertaining. Then an idea formed — everyone loved "*Desi*" and Stuart and Julia adored showing guests around her — why not charter professionally?

With this notion in mind, they cast off via Gibraltar and the Canaries. Accomplishing another transatlantic crossing, they reached Barbados in time for the 2012/13 Caribbean season. Stuart and Julia spent the winter months formulating their plans, and trying out their ideas on friends and family who happily sailed throughout the Lesser Antilles with them.

A great team, Captain Stuart and First Mate Julia positively shine as they show new guests around *Desiderata*. Instantly, you understand that she is their pride and joy, and they have the welcoming ability to make everyone feel part of the boat's exclusive crew.

Stuart realized that *Desiderata* required a major refit and revamp to optimize their exciting project. Having enjoyed the time they spent in Grenada, and it being hurricane season, this was the island they chose to rejuvenate *Desiderata* to her full glory. A former owner had refitted the interior in 1997, but the ketch needed to be altered for additional privacy and comfort for charter guests.

As *Desiderata* is one of only five yachts built to John Alden's design number 0756, Stuart wanted to preserve the style of her classic woodwork and general layout. *Malabar XIII* was nostalgically called "The Last of the Malabars" and *Desiderata* is the last one of this unique design remaining afloat — a good reason to stay true to form. One of the ideas behind the refit was to employ local businesses or individuals who admired and understood the ethos behind *Desiderata*. Stuart and Julia got to work researching and meeting prospective service providers on Grenada.

Luckily, Grenada is a friendly island where word-of-mouth recommendation and a thriving sailing community exist. Through social events and sailing connections, a wonderful group of skilled craftsmen were assembled to attend to *Desiderata*'s every need. Stuart and Julia have been exceptionally impressed by the organization and communication between businesses to achieve deadlines and work alongside each other on a 66-foot boat. They have found a very high quality of workmanship throughout the project.

Desiderata is a fascinating example of nautical design history, and the craftsmen involved in the major refit have shown great skill and understanding. Stuart decided to take on the important role of Project Manager, and Julia enthusiastically got stuck in with all the hands-on work such as painting masts, interior design, budget control, and any other job that needed doing.

Below: S/Y Desiderata *at the halfway point of her refit in Grenada*



Steffan Meyerer and his team at Driftwood Fine Yacht Woodwork performed all of the joinery work, completed deck hardware installation, and oversaw the other woodwork projects such as the beautiful cabinetry created by Rene Froehlich. The challenging job of rigging was completed by Niels Lund, while Matthew Watton provided engine, control, and steering gear maintenance. Danny Gray, at Nauti Solutions, is making *Desiderata* shine with new stainless steel chainplates and cranse iron. Marine electronics were expertly installed by Simon Clay at Navicomm Marine, and Stuart Proudfoot efficiently completed the plumbing and electrics on board.

To make "*Desi*" really stand out, Julia worked with Desmond McDonald, at Creative Furniture & Upholstery, to embellish the yacht with a stunning new colour scheme and sumptuous upholstery fabrics. A captain's La-Z-Boy saloon recliner was added — definitely a unique first for a classic ketch! Of course, none of this work would have been so successfully completed without such a friendly and accommodating place to work — sincere thanks to all at Clarke's Court Bay Marina, on Grenada. Sherri Roopchand, at Wholesale Yacht Parts, played an important role too — importing all of the required parts in an efficient, stress-free manner.

Max Ehrmann wisely wrote "In the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul." Stuart and Julia have found Grenada to be the perfect island to complete a very hectic schedule of work, without missing out on a traditional Caribbean lifestyle. It has been easy for them to integrate and explore the culture of the island, thanks to the welcoming attitude of many Grenadians and the sailing community — they extend their thanks to many new friends.

The end of this story is actually the beginning of Stuart and Julia's fresh embarkation on *Desiderata*. If you see *Desiderata* sailing in the Lesser Antilles give her a wave, and I hope you enjoy admiring her classic beauty as much as I do. A final excerpt taken from Max Ehrmann's poem "Desiderata", which I think suits the end of this tale — "Enjoy your achievements, as well as your plans... Strive to be happy."

From 1400hrs on Saturday, October 19th, Stuart and Julia will be hosting a free open day on S/Y Desiderata *at Clarke's Court Bay Marina, on Grenada. Everybody is welcome to come and have a look at her, and marvel at all the work that has been completed.*

In November 2013, Desiderata *will start her new charter life, taking guests on board. Stuart and Julia's aim is to share the delights of sailing this classic yacht with guests, and also offer the opportunity to race in classic regattas. For more information visit sydesiderata.com.*



HORRORSCOPE OCTOBER 2013

♈ ARIES (21 Mar - 20 Apr)
Winds howling like banshees could cause you to make constant course changes in creative pursuits and have a macabre effect on your sense of humor. After the 8th there will be an eerie glow on the romantic horizon — and it's on a heading that leads straight to you!

♉ TAURUS (21 Apr - 21 May)
As the tricky seas in your love life become treats, boat business will be bedeviled. The spirits of energy are with you and details that are putting you in irons will magically clear up after the 15th.

♊ GEMINI (22 May - 21 Jun)
You may need a potion from the witch doctor. Ask for Love Potion Number Nine to dispel the curse of choppy seas in your love life after the middle of the month. Things may be looking grim now but zombies should be exorcised by Halloween.

CANCER ♋ (22 Jun - 23 Jul)
Want to get out from under the curse of the doldrums in your creativity? Hop on your broomstick and set a course that will best affect your finances, and then hunker down like a gargoyle and concentrate your charms on that.

♌ LEO (24 Jul - 23 Aug)
Phantoms on the horizon will mislead you on your romantic course and cause you to waste time heading for mirages. Goblins in the electronic systems will have great fun making your life hell and could have a negative effect on business unless you can control your actions.

♍ VIRGO (24 Aug - 23 Sep)
The wraith of a past love may haunt your boat and cause problems in your current romance. This aspect will last through Halloween and will not be exorcized until next month.

♎ LIBRA (24 Sep - 23 Oct)
Get out your cauldron and start working on your spells to be sure of clear sailing and following seas in inventive projects. Vampires and werewolves will try to lure you into spooky seas but your positive attitude will be too strong for them.

♏ SCORPIO (24 Oct - 22 Nov)
The rattle of skeletons in your hanging locker will cause creepy feelings in the main cabin. Send the mummies of these past loves to Davy Jones' locker. Let bygones be "bye bones".

♐ SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov - 21 Dec)
The Jack-O-Lantern on the bow will attract the spirits of love to you but the black cat on the rail could drive them away. Consult the wise old owl for a good romantic spell to assist you with a new love to celebrate Halloween with.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 Dec - 20 Jan)
Use your Ouija Board to plot your course through goblins in your organizational course before the 15th. You will need these talents for solving problems with shipmates; these problems need to be deep sixed by Halloween or things will get really creepy on board.

♒ AQUARIUS (21 Jan - 19 Feb)
There will be gremlins in the electronics for you this month and they could put a curse on boat business if you don't find a charm to help clear them out. Use your creative talents to find new ways to expel them.

♓ PISCES (20 Feb - 20 Mar)
There will be bats in the belfry of romance, but your financial course will have the help of good spirits. Don't allow hobgoblins in communications to turn you into the grim reaper by Halloween.

Island Poets

Caribees

I crave the embrace of tropical isles;
Kiss of sea and the sun, where everything smiles.
A warm beach at sunset, good book and fine wine
Enhanced by this goddess, this woman of mine.

Tomorrow we sail the Caribbean Sea.
There's no other place that we'd rather be.
The powerful wind, the protean ocean:
We're one with the elements, always in motion.
The snap of the jib as it fills from the tack
Billowing forward; we've no thought to look back.
Frolicking dolphins plunge through waves by our side,
Children of Neptune along for the ride.

Engulfed by a storm, we stand out to sea,
Keep as far as we can from that cruel shore alee.
Great swells lift us up like God's hand from the sky.
It seems for a moment we'll actually fly.
The current and keel, the wind and the sails,
Balance each other and laugh at mere gales.
The sails are reefed twice, the bow is our spear:
We are one with the ocean, nothing to fear.

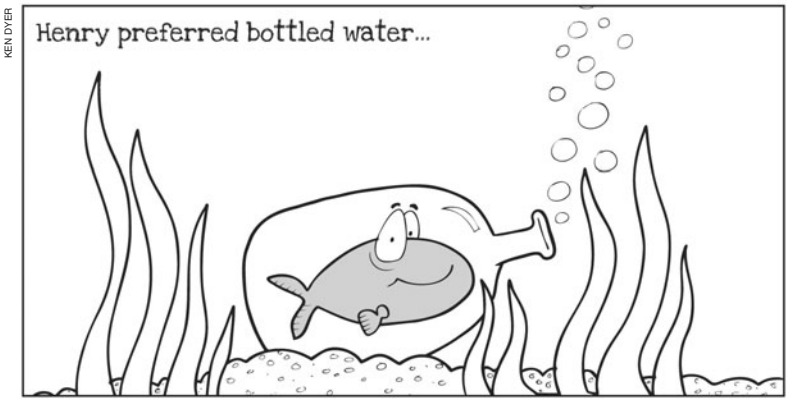
In the lee of an island the wind settles down,
The island's steep sides like a green evening gown.
And now we're becalmed, wild sea turned to glass.
Our sails await calmly: they'll let no wind pass.
Shake out the reefs, raise the mains'l again
The wind will return — just a matter of when.
Ah! Here's the sweet zephyr we've been waiting for
To push us on forward with full sails once more.

Into the channel Columbus once sailed,
Off to the port his Fat Virgin's unveiled.
What must it have been like, to find a new sea?
Why don't we go do it, just you and me?
Down Drake's Channel we glide, sails wing and wing.
The jubilant freedom makes our hearts sing.
Parting the waves, gently sweep them aside,
Steer for our next port: a glorious ride.

— W. Scott MacKinnon



Seaweed





Clients and Cleaners

Ever wondered how fish get clean or brush their teeth? When fish get dirty they line up at their local underwater fish wash. It's like an underwater car wash for fish! This is called a fish cleaning station. Cleaning stations associated with coral reefs may be located either on top of a coral head or in a slot between two outcroppings. Several species of small reef fish are known to invite larger fish to stop by cleaning stations, where the cleaners groom their customers and pick them free of parasites. The clients swim away spic-and-span, and the cleaners get an easy meal: a classic example of a mutually beneficial relationship.

What's the buzz?

Cleaning behaviour was first described by the Greek historian Herodotus in about 420 BC, though his example (birds serving crocodiles) appears to occur only rarely. Biologists have debated the role of cleaning symbioses for over 30 years. Cleaning symbiosis is a mutually beneficial association between two species, where one (the cleaner) removes and eats parasites and other materials from the surface of the other (the client). Some scientists believe that cleaning represents selfless co-operation, essentially pure mutualism. Others hold that it illustrates mutual selfishness, reciprocal altruism. Others again believe that cleaning behaviour is simply one-sided exploitation, a form of parasitism.

Who are the cleaners?

Cleaning is performed by various creatures, including cleaner shrimp and numerous species of cleaner fish, especially wrasses and gobies. The cleaner wrasse, sometimes called the blue streak wrasse, is a very active fish that displays cleaning symbiosis with nearly any other fish species, even some as small as itself. When diving, one can often observe the cleaner wrasse darting in and out of large groupers' or moray eels' mouths, working to eat parasites off. The trade-off is simple: the smaller wrasse gets a meal and the larger fish is cleaned of annoying parasites. The cleaner wrasse relies on microscopic parasites to provide a large portion of its nutrition. As you can imagine, it takes a whole lot of tiny parasites to meet the nutritional requirements of a cleaner wrasse. On the coral reef, it's realistic for the cleaner wrasse to serve hundreds of fish a day. Each of these fish is covered with dead skin and parasites, which offers the wrasse plenty to eat.

Why aren't cleaners gobbled up?

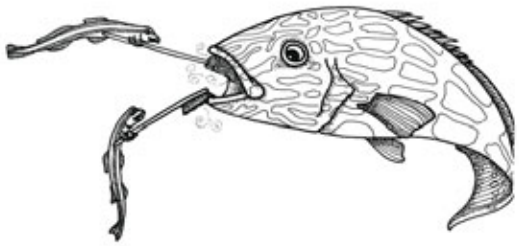
Scientists have long wondered how bigger, fish-eating clients find cleaners and apparently recognize that the smaller fish are off the menu. Studies have found that cleaner fish, such as gobies and wrasses, are more likely to sport a "cleaner uniform" that signals their profession — a dark side stripe accentuated by patches of blue and yellow — in order to make them conspicuous and easy to distinguish on a coral reef, and a tactic that also helps the fish avoid being eaten by their clients.

What clues attract clients?

Small body size and the presence of lateral stripes provide initial information about cleaning services that attracts clients. Subsequent levels of client interest, however, appear to be based on other cues, which may include other visual or tactile signals. For example, cleaner wrasses often perform a zigzag dance, which seems to attract clients. It is not known whether the natural rate of dancing is constant or whether cleaners modify their dancing rates as clients approach.

Color, rather than pattern, may also convey further close-range information. The reflectance spectra of the color pattern of many coral reef fish include ultraviolet (UV) wavelengths, and many reef fish species have structures in their eye (i.e. ocular media) that permit the perception of UV light. It is not yet known whether cleaner fish have UV patterns, but some scientists have discovered the existence of an unusually long wavelength component in the blue coloration of cleaner-fish and cleaner-shrimp. For the client, such "cleaner blue" color may confirm cleaning activity at close range.

Finally, physical contact between cleaner and client usually follows the initial approach by client and is an important determinant of the length of client visits at natural cleaning stations.



CRUISING KIDS' CORNER

Mr. Mongoose Answers the Call

by Lee Kessell

Mongooses were introduced into the sugar-growing islands of the West Indies to kill the snakes and rats living in the cane fields. In Asia the mongoose was valued because it is not only quick and can kill the most vicious viper, but if it is struck, its blood has a special property that makes it immune to snake bite. Barbados has no snakes but there are rats aplenty and, just to let you know now horrible some people can be, it was quite common to set fire to a poor mongoose and set it to run through the neighbour's fields before the cane was ready to be cut so that their harvest would be poor.

But to get to our story. In St. Lucia, that pretty island of mountains and beaches, the mongoose has found its way into many a suburban property, especially if there is lots of bush about. These furry little animals with their lovely bushy tails will eat just about anything — bird's eggs, mangoes dropped from the trees, lizards, worms, baby chicks and, in fact, any chicken that it can get its teeth into.

Mistress Lizzy was a fine-looking wild chicken and she had brought up batch after batch of speckled chicks that sooner or later got eaten by whatever bird or animal was about to grab them. But Lizzy had enough of all that. She guarded her chicks and tried to keep them safe but in the end she had only one half-grown chicken left. Maizzy had wandered off by herself while her mother was pecking at whatever food she could find. Lizzie searched and searched for her and made clucking sounds that should make Maizzy come running back to her, but nothing. What could she do? There was only one answer to that. If Maizzy were still alive, Mr. Mongoose — if he hadn't eaten her already — would be the one to find her.

Lizzy plucked up her courage and carrying the biggest, juiciest worm she could find in her beak she hurried off to the home of Mr. Mongoose where he lived in the hollow at the foot of a tall tree. Lizzy found Mr. Mongoose sunning himself in front of the hollow and waited for him to speak.

"What have we here? Chickens make a good meal and here you are."

Lizzy dropped the worm before Mr. Mongoose and with a trembling voice spoke in a half whisper: "Oh Mr. Mongoose, sir. None of my pretty chicks have ever survived until one, Maizzy, and she wandered off and I cannot find her. My heart breaks and I beg you to help me find her."

Mr. Mongoose was touched by the bravery of Mistress Lizzy and so he looked at her with his bright black eyes and told her that he would help.

Mongooses have a highly developed sense of smell and so, asking Lizzy where she had last seen Maizzy, he hurried off to track her. Mr. Mongoose picked up the trail of the missing chicken and after much running about and backtracking into dense hedges that should have kept out chickens and mongooses alike, Mr. Mongoose at last found Maizzy. She was tired and frightened — and now terrified at



looking into the fuzzy face of a mongoose!

"Don't be scared, little one. Your good mother sent me to find you, so follow me and you'll soon be home." But Maizzy was not going to trust any mongoose, so Mr. Mongoose grabbed her by the back of her head and very gently carried her off to his home at the bottom of the tree and dropped her at the feet of her waiting mother. When Mistress Lizzy saw her daughter and Maizzy saw her mother they cried and laughed with joy.

"Oh thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Mongoose, sir!"

Mr. Mongoose smiled at the happy pair and said, "Next time I'll eat you both!"

Lizzy and her chick didn't know whether Mr. Mongoose was joking or not and they didn't stay around to find out but hurried off home. There certainly would not be a next time!

THE END

—*Continued from page 19*

Cartagena was fascinating and we spent several days just wandering the streets and soaking up the amazing sights. UNESCO money has enabled plenty of restoration work to be carried out but it doesn't take long to find gritty side streets that haven't been airbrushed yet.

Getting there was simple: the marina organized it all for us and for a few dollars extra we got a "door to door" service. Blame it on translation but somewhere along the way the return driver missed the "door to door" bit and dropped us a few miles away from the marina. It was pointless arguing — he wasn't going anywhere. But the extra taxi ride cost less than US$2.



Taganga is an old hippy haunt, now hip backpacker hangout, over the hill from Santa Marta and worth a day trip for the scenic bus ride alone. From Taganga it's possible to take a local boat to a nearby beach, which was a pleasant way to spend the day.

Fellow cruisers we met in the marina had just completed the gruelling five-day trek into Ciudad Perdida, the "lost city" built by the Tayrona people in the 11th century and only re-discovered in 1975. Said to be more authentic than Machu Picchu thanks to a complete lack of tourists, we were tempted to tackle it.

Further research revealed that the walk took hikers through thick bug-ridden jungle, through multiple river crossings — some deep — and up hundreds of steps. Call us unadventurous, but we'd already missed the dry season and the thought of slushing and sliding through mud in inadequate footwear put us off. Any cruisers going to Santa Marta would be advised to check this hike out, as it receives glowing reports.

Before we reluctantly left, we filled our freezer with cheap eye fillets of beef and whole chickens while the fridge was overloaded with wonderful fresh produce.

Colombia was a worthwhile stopover and, if cruisers can negotiate their way through the formalities, it's definitely worth visiting for longer than our ten days.



Above: Plans were to head out to an anchorage for a few days, but our helpful agent put paid to that, pointing out the long-winded formalities necessary for anchoring

Left: Cartagena's beautifully airbrushed streets make sightseeing a fantastic experience but be prepared for the crowds

Brenda Webb is a New Zealand journalist who, with husband David Morgan, took time out to go cruising. They bought their Moody 46, Bandit, *in the Mediterranean in 2006 and are slowly en route to New Zealand. Share their adventures at www.yacht-bandit.blogspot.com.*

For an update on renovations at Club Náutico Cartagena visit www.noonsite.com/Countries/Colombia/cartagena-club-nautico-an-update-on-renovations.



MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON

OCTOBER- NOVEMBER 2013

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 2013		21	0122	11	1913
DATE	TIME	22	0212	12	2002
1	0901	23	0301	13	2050
2	0946	24	0350	14	2138
3	1032	25	0437	15	2226
4	1119	26	0523	16	2315
5	1208 (new moon)	27	0609	17	0000 (full moon)
6	1259	28	0651	18	0004
7	1353	29	0738	19	0054
8	1450	30	0823	20	0143
9	1547	31	0909	21	0213
10	1646	**November 2013**		22	0318
11	1744	1	0957	23	0403
12	1840	2	1048	24	0446
13	1934	3	1141 (new moon)	25	0531
14	2026	4	1238	26	0615
15	2116	5	1338	27	0659
16	2206	6	1438	28	0745
17	2255	7	1538	29	0834
18	2344	8	1635	30	0925
19	0000 (full moon)	9	1730		
20	0033	10	1823		

The Sky in October 2013

by Scott Welty

The Planets in October 2013

MERCURY - Evening star most of the month. Maximum elongation (angle from the Sun) on the 9th.

VENUS - Setting well after the Sun (about 2100 hours). Moving toward maximum elongation late in the month.

EARTH - Thinks the Sun rises and sets with her.

MARS - Rising around 0330 hours in Leo.

JUPITER - Rising after midnight and setting in the daytime. Riding in Gemini.

SATURN - Evening star early in the month but moving toward the Sun later on.

Sky Events This Month

4th - New Moon

6th - Nice grouping! Crescent moon, Mercury, Venus, and Saturn (Figure 1)

18th - Full Moon

21st - Orionids meteor shower (see below)



FIGURE 3

The 'nearby' Andromeda Galaxy

The Orionids Meteor Shower

Yes, it peaks on the 21st in the early morning sky but the nearly full moon is going to ruin the meteor show this year. Only the very brightest meteors will show up in the sky. This is the shower that is caused by the most famous of comets, too — Halley's Comet. Dust and debris left behind from that comet is in the path of the Earth in October. The name comes from the fact that the meteors seem to be emanating from a point within the Orion constellation.

Constellation of the Month: Pegasus/Andromeda

October is a fine time for these two giant constellations (see Figure 2) as they are now rising out of the east and climbing ever higher in the nighttime sky. As usual it takes quite an imagination (what were those Greeks drinking?) to see a winged horse there. The four stars that form an obvious square are supposed to be the body while the stars leading out to the star Enif are the head and neck. The other two strands of linked stars are to be the front legs/hoofs or maybe the wings depending on whose drawings you find.

As you can see, the star Alpheratz serves as a star for both Pegasus and Andromeda. In the legend, Andromeda, the daughter of Cassiopeia, was chained to a rock to be eaten by Cetus the sea monster. Wow, tough sledding that! In any case if you can follow down the strands of the legs of Andromeda and then just a bit up you'll notice a "smudge" in the sky. Put your Steiners on that! That's the Andromeda galaxy (Figure 3), the nearest galaxy to our own Milky Way. Historically, it wasn't clear if these smudges were local or far away. When Hubble figured out that galaxies weren't just far away but STUPID far away, as in millions of light years, the universe got a LOT bigger. The Andromeda galaxy itself is 2.5 million light years away. That means that the light from there that is entering your Steiners left Andromeda 2.5 million years ago. Remember, this is the *nearest* galaxy to us!

To Contemplate While Having a Glass of Wine on Deck

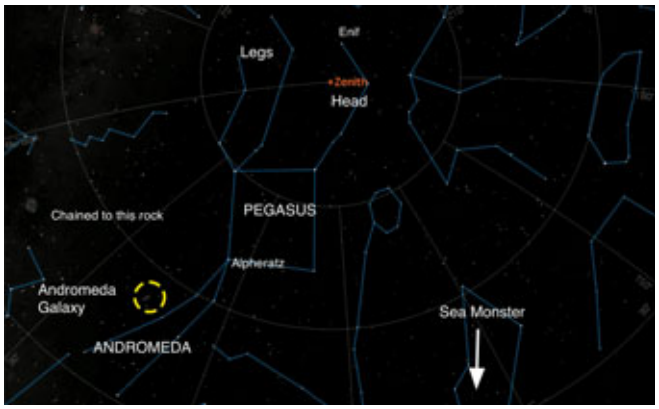
Two and half million years ago... Here on Earth that's the first emergence of the genus, 'Homo' which evolved into the present day Home Sapiens... not to be confused with Republicans.

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



Above: The western sky after sunset on October 6th

Below: The giant constellations of Pegasus and Andromeda ('zenith' indicates looking straight up)





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—*Continued from page 21*

…Panama Canal Transit

The advisor suddenly understood our limited maneuverability with an eight-horsepower engine (we kept discussing this the whole way along but he finally GOT IT) and asked the tugboat captain to make sure he went slowly in the locks for us.

All went well until we were motoring away from the starboard tie-up against the tug in the second lock (we had switched from port to starboard tie up for the last two locks). The tugboat captain suddenly revved up his engines and screamed past us to the final lock, creating a tsunami-like wake that threw us around 90 degrees again, this time heading full tilt to the left side of the wall. We threw hard in reverse just before our bow hit the wall and the only damage was to the line tying the anchor down, which snapped on impact. Instinctively Tomás jammed his foot down on the chain to stop the anchor being pulled over the bow roller, and then quickly retied the anchor with the remaining bit of rope.



Tied up to the tug in Pedro Miguel Locks — before the drama

At the same time, we bounced backwards from the impact of hitting the wall, the effect of being kicked hard into reverse and from the rebounding wake from the tug, with the boat being pushed forward at the same time by the wind and current. Now we were going straight for the right wall of the lock! We managed to hit forward gear quickly enough to stop our windvane at the stern from being crushed against the wall while also gaining control of the direction of the boat so that we were facing forward just in time to be ready to tie up to the tug for the next lock. Again it seemed we were being tested to see if our engine could handle the extreme circumstances that can arise in the locks. Our adrenalin was pumping overtime and by the time we left the locks night had fallen.

Through at Last

Phil and I found that our vision was blurred by all the lights of the city and the channel markers, and with ships and tugs all moving in different directions the experienced Tomás took over to steer us to the Balboa Yacht Club where we were scheduled to meet up with our agent to drop off the tires, ropes and line handlers.

We arrived at La Playita anchorage at 9:00PM, tired and stressed, but so relieved. For a long while Phil and I thought that returning to the Pacific was only a pipe dream — but here we were at last.

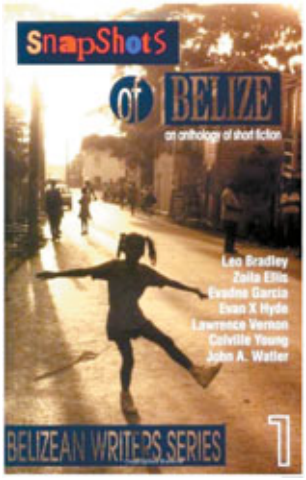
Our engine performed beautifully for the transit but we were certainly tested a few times on whether we could handle an emergency situation. Lesson learned: a Panama Canal transit requires a good engine.

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BOOK REVIEW BY J. WYNNER

SAY CHEESE, BELIZE!

***Snapshots of Belize**, edited by Michael D. Phillips, Cubola Productions, 2001 Edition, ISBN-976-8142-07-3.*



The collection of short fiction *Snapshots of Belize*, edited by Michael D. Phillips, is exactly what the title of the book says it is — snapshots. The slim book comprising nine concise stories by seven diverse authors takes about as long a time to read as looking through a photo album.

Sir Colville Young, Belize's second Governor-General, and Leo Bradley Sr., called "without doubt the first identifiable writer of short fiction", have two stories each. The other writers are Zoila Ellis, Evadne Garcia, Evan X. Hyde, Lawrence Vernon and John A. Watler.

The opening story, "Elastic Gold", is a wonderfully written outdoor tale about Max Flowers, a fisherman, and his son Sonny, searching the mangroves in their dory for rubber. In this, Leo Bradley's first tale, he creates a sense of time and place. The time was 1944 when "German submarines were playing havoc... with American shipping... How often had wrecked life-boats and floating bodies, and broken bits of spars and masts that found their way on the Belizean coast, told the tale of midnight sinkings in the orgy of vicious warfare! And now the ships that bore the bulk of rubber... vomited them unwillingly into the sea as torpedoes found their mark... these masses of rubber flotsam and jetsam to lie finally among the mangroves of Turneffe Caye and several other islands. An agent in Belize City was paying twenty cents per pound for any bulk found and delivered" — a price that caused many a fisherman on the Belizean coast to fish for elastic gold instead. Max and Sonny, on finding their elastic gold, head out to sea towards Belize City, only to encounter a black boat twice the length of their dory lying in wait to relive them of their precious find. And so Bradley concludes his story with a sea chase of riveting seamanship.

"The Representative", which follows, is the first of Sir Colville Young's two snapshots in this album. It deals with politics and shows people's skepticism with politics and politicians.

"The Honourable Jonas Harold Parker ('the silver tongued talker') was, unusually, visiting his constituency. It is true that the next election was not due till the end of the year, but the party leader had given him an ultimatum. He had neglected his area for four years. Then in this fifth year he had allowed the dry season to pass idly by. So today, in spite of the water-filled potholes, he had parked his air-conditioned Buick on the edge of his division and was canvassing house to house. He wore his friendliest smile, had his warmest hugs for the ladies, and his most confidence-inspiring handshakes available for the men. He had also decided to take a few of the children into his arms" — a snapshot of politicians I'm sure most of us have in our photo albums.

In "A Conscience for Christmas", Evan X. Hyde's offering, cool-as-cucumber Caldo's main thought on Christmas Eve was that when he attended his office party, "if he saw anybody suitable, he would move her off and take her somewhere where they could be together". But fate intervenes. On his way to the party he witnesses a mugging of an old lady and comes to the rescue of the victim, Miss Gertrude, who invites him to her home to have a drink with her. He goes not too willingly — "Christmas Eve was one night you did not spend with old women" — and is immediately filled with nostalgia. "He could see and feel Christmas in here. Black cake and ham, turkey, the crisp store smell of new linoleum and curtains and varnish and paint. A brightly decorated Christmas tree with angel hair blinking with colourful lights and presents underneath. This was a home at Christmas when he was a boy." Miss Gertrude is full of chat and tells him, "My granddaughter has gone to a party. She is too young, but it is with a friend, so I sent her."

When he finally leaves and goes to the party, who should he meet there but Tricia, Miss Gertrude's granddaughter. That's when Caldo discovers his conscience.

Zoila Ellis's "The Teacher" has every reason never to forget the day old Ramsey died. It was on that day that the former Catholic priest — who had had a breakdown, did not speak for three months and came to Cucumber Bank to teach — was comforted and found solace in Miss Bella's counseling.

After the burial he visited Miss Bella and her family... He and Miss Bella were sitting in the parlour facing a huge vase of red plastic roses. Unbidden his voice broke the quiet.

"I used to be a priest you know."

"True Teecha? What happen? Yu stop?"

"Yes, I stopped."

"Oh well, betta yu stop something than yu eena it with only half yu hart..."

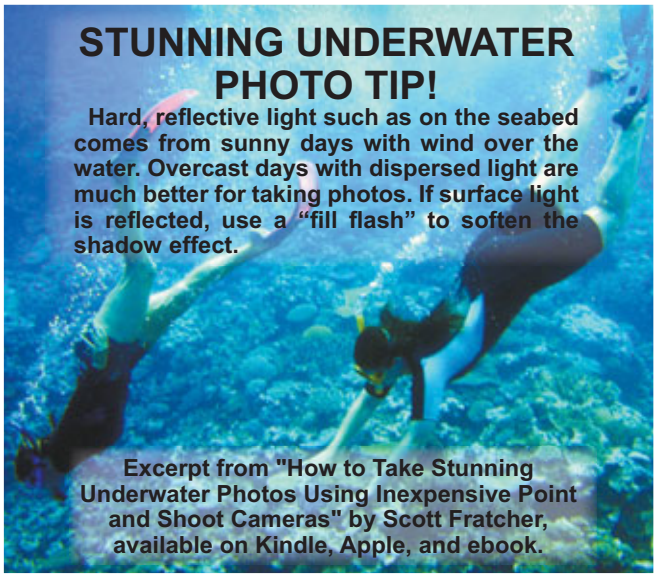
Later, "as he paddled home, he felt like laughing and crying at the same time. How could she know what she had done for him? Her simplicity and truth were as natural as the river and together they had set him free."

At two and a half pages long, "Crab Seasin" is Evadne Garcia's blurry snapshot. Non-Belizeans may not be able to read this tale, which is written entirely in Creole. Reading it was for me (a Trinidadian) an exercise in frustration. All I was able to glean from the story is that it was about catching crabs.

As the saying goes, "Be careful what you wish for — you might get it!" Jim Hilton, "the government's expert on excavating old Mayan sites", brings home a magic stone in Lawrence Vernon's tale, "The Third Wish". Although Jim warns his father about its evil potential, the elder Hilton still invokes the power of the stone, and things go awry to the detriment of the family.

In one of the longer pieces, and the last tale in the book, the light-hearted "Bitter-Sweet Revenge" is the presentation of John A. Watler (a typo at the beginning of the story has his name as Walter).

After some tit-for-tat and anxiety, the book ends on a happy note with Rip Harper saying to young Slim, "There is nothing to be sorry about, son. I did you a mean trick and you did one back to me, so we are even, ha." And that is the gist of the story.



GOOD GUIDES ARE TIMELESS

Until Don Street wrote his first guide in 1964, the guide he used was Norie and Wilson's "Sailing Directions to the West Indies", published in 1867.



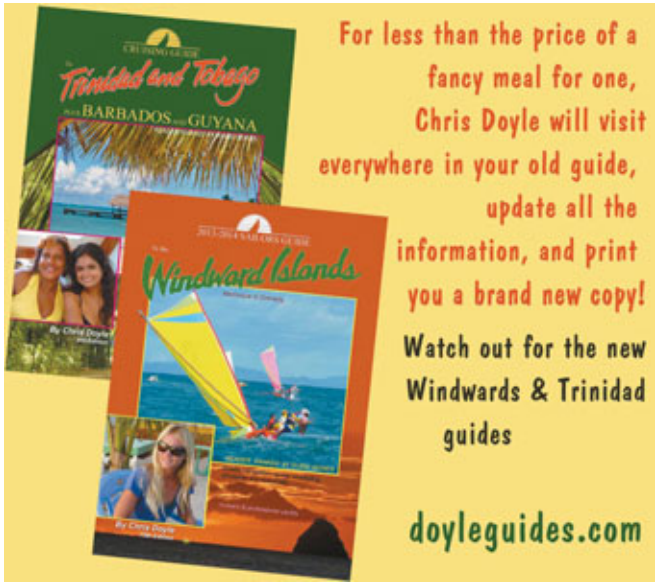
Real sailors use Street's Guides for inter-island and harbor piloting directions, plus interesting anecdotes of people, places and history. Street's Guides are the only ones that describe **ALL** the anchorages in the Eastern Caribbean.

In 1980 Street said in print that if anyone could come up with an anchorage safe for a boat that draws seven feet that he has not covered in the guide he would buy the drinks. Thirty-two years have gone by and he has never had to buy drinks.

Real sailors in the Windwards, Leewards and Virgin Islands circle in Street's Guide the anchorages that are **NOT** described in the other popular guides. Do the same and you will have quiet anchorages.

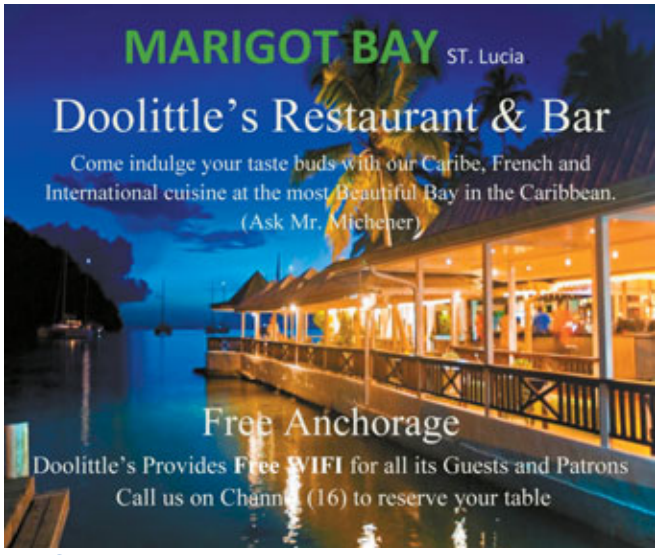
HURRICANE TIPS! Visit www.street-iolaire.com for a wealth of information on tracking & securing for a storm

Street's Guides are available at Island Water World and Johnson Marine Hardware in St. Lucia, Sully Magras in St. Barts, and Blue Water Books & Charts in Fort Lauderdale, or contact channelsales@authorsolutions.com









info@marigotbeachclub.com www.marigotbeachclub.com

Healthy eating on board the boat is as important as the set of your sails. Preparation is key and wise decisions are vital to ensure plotting the right course. There is no point taking on the full force of bad weather when sails can be reefed early!

Similarly with provisioning, if a casual approach is taken, your stocks of healthy food may be quickly depleted, leaving the crew with little energy to perform needed tasks. But planning ahead really pays off.

A healthy approach to take when sailing is to keep meal preparation simple while ensuring foods are nutritious, satisfying and energy enhancing.

As we may not always have access to the best in fresh produce while cruising or passagemaking, it is important to keep the boat well stocked with long-life energy foods. This will allow more room for simple but nutritious meals if required — once we stayed out on Lighthouse Reef for an extra five days on a minimal food supply.

Keeping airtight containers filled with raw natural grains and dried beans are easy ways to ensure there is a never-ending supply of energy enhancing foods. Store rolled oats, quinoa, amaranth, kidney and butter beans, chickpeas and other legumes in airtight containers (preferably Tupperware). A wonderful trait of these nutritious foods is they will keep unrefrigerated for months on end and they won't "come alive" (begin their sprouting process) until they are soaked in water. Just be careful not to get them wet in storage or they may begin to sprout (or worse, rot).

Keeping a supply of raw nuts and seeds in the same fashion is a good way to keep a never-ending supply of healthy snacks on board and to ensure protein requirements are met.

Provision for Perfect Health

by Marissa Nieves

While I hardly ever keep a wide variety of canned goods on hand (I finally threw out the old baked beans from 2006), I do always have a variety of nut butters (fresh peanut, almond, hazelnut), local homemade jams, 100-percent tomato paste and raw "bush" honey on board. If you are low on refrigeration, you may also wish to stock up on pre-packaged milks. You can find clean nut (almond/hazelnut) milks in the long-life section of the larger local supermarkets. Watch out for hidden additives such as sugar, sucralose, colors and preservatives.

I always keep a few packets of instant miso soup, which could potentially make the world's fastest dinner (and they double up as a wonderful vegetable stock).

Herbs and spices are also essential provisions. They can turn basic rice and beans into exciting Caribbean spicy cuisine. In addition to great taste, some herbs and spices also provide essential minerals and aid with food digestion and absorption. For example, one small cup of stinging nettle tea is loaded with calcium, chlorophyll, chromium, cobalt, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, protein, riboflavin, selenium, thiamine, zinc, and vitamins A, C, E, K, all essential vitamins and minerals for ensuring healthy digestion, sustained energy, muscular endurance and even body fat loss.

Nutritional herbs and spices include cinnamon, turmeric, cumin, paprika, parsley, oregano, thyme and coriander. Among other qualities, turmeric is an excellent blood purifier and very good immune booster. Parsley, oregano, thyme and coriander are all wonderful cleansers and are great for lowering cholesterol.

Along with a diet high in fresh fruit and vegetables, these basic ingredients will create healthy and simple meals.

Hit the fresh food markets in any of the islands to find an array of locally grown healthy produce ranging from delicious mangoes, ripe pawpaw (papaya), abundant bananas, sweet pineapple, juicy watermelon, nutritious soursop, pink grapefruit and young coconut to just-picked tomatoes, celery, pumpkin, sweet potato, lettuce, carrots, red onion, spinach, cucumber and leeks.

Cooking on board can easily be made fresh, simple and fast. Try this versatile bean salad. It can be used as a side dish, an "on the go" snack while sailing or as a base for your favorite bean dish.

As you set sail to your perfect sailing destination, why not set your sails for perfect health as well? After all, in good health you will be able to experience all of sailing life at your fullest potential.

Boater's Bean Salad
(serves 4)
1 Cup kidney beans
1 Cup butter beans
1/2 Cup yellow lentils
1 tomato, chopped
1/2 cucumber, chopped
1 spring onion, finely chopped
3 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon lime or lemon juice
2 teaspoon fresh parsley, chopped
1/2 red onion, finely chopped
1 tin tuna or sardines or cooked fresh fish (optional)

Soak dry beans in clean salt water overnight. Rinse and boil in a pot of fresh water until soft. Drain and cool. Add cooked beans to a large bowl with remaining ingredients and mix together. Serve immediately or let flavors set in the fridge for an hour or overnight. Will keep refrigerated for three days.

Marissa Nieves, a personal trainer and nutritional consultant, is currently sailing in the Caribbean. Visit her website at www.marissanieves.com.

Cloves:
Fresh is Best!

Fresh is best, especially when it comes to spices. The Caribbean is lucky to have a climate that produces many tasty spices, like cloves. Fresh cloves are considerably more fragrant than those boxed and sealed, and they are much bigger. Fresh-from-the-tree cloves are pink and as they dry they turn a deep maroon. They can be up to three quarters of an inch long. The large end of the clove is actually the immature, unopened four-pointed flower bud of a tropical tree.

With their tapered stems, cloves resemble small carpenter's nails (the name comes from *clavus*, the Latin word for nail). Their unique aroma almost makes you feel warm. Chew one, and your mouth is flooded with a very sharp but delicious taste.

A different shore excursion can be searching out the local spice vendors at every island. The market in Castries, St. Lucia has an upstairs section that has many herb and spice vendors. A good quality clove will release some of its oil if you dig it with a fingernail. Another trick to determine freshness is to place a clove in a cup of water. Good quality will float vertically. Stale will either sink or float horizontally. Ground cloves are also available but won't stay fresh as long as whole cloves. If you locate fresh cloves keep them sealed in a glass container in a cool, dark place.

I recommend keeping all spices together, individually sealed, in a tight-sealing plastic container. One grab and you have your entire spice rack. Every spice keeps better and longer in the refrigerator.

The easiest way to grind fresh whole cloves into a powder is to use a coffee grinder.

Cloves are native to the Indonesian islands. Asians have used this spice for more than 2,000 years. Chinese would chew cloves to freshen their breath before addressing the emperor so as to not offend him. Arab traders brought cloves to Europe around the fourth century. During the Middle Ages cloves were widely used because their pungent flavor hid the taste of poorly preserved foods. The Portuguese were the first to control the spice trade. They brought large quantities of cloves to Europe. Cloves were then one of the most valuable spices. In the 1600s the trade became dominated by the Dutch. The Dutch were successful for a century until the French grew the clove tree in various other tropical climates, including the Caribbean.

If you have a chill from wet weather, chewing cloves has a tendency to warm you. Folklore says that sucking on two whole cloves — without chewing or swallowing them — helps to curb the desire for alcohol. A few drops of oil of cloves in water will stop vomiting and relieve nausea — great for seasick crew! Essential oil of clove is effective repellant against strep and staph bacteria. Cloves are considered to have a positive effect on stomach ulcers, vomiting and flatulence by relaxing the smooth muscle lining of the digestive tract. Cloves have powerful local antiseptic and mild anesthetic actions, and a numbing effect on mouth tissues; dentists use clove oil as an oral anesthetic and disinfectant. Clove oil is an active ingredient in several mouthwash products and a number of over-the-counter toothache pain-relief preparations. Cloves kill intestinal parasites and exhibit broad anti-microbial properties against fungi and bacteria, thus supporting its traditional use as a treatment for diarrhea, intestinal worms, and other digestive ailments, and are even said to be an aphrodisiac. They are also an important in making incense and clove essence is commonly used to produce many perfumes.

Two teaspoons have about 15 calories with plenty of minerals like manganese, magnesium, calcium with vitamins K and C and omega 3 fats. Cloves are used in a number of spice mixtures including garam masala, curry powders, and pickling spices. Cloves also help flavor Worcestershire sauce.

Cloves have a strong flavor so don't add too many. Powdered cloves are even stronger.

A nice trick is to stick a few cloves in a piece of meat or fish for a unique taste. To make a unique, healthy dessert, add a few whole cloves to soft fresh fruits like mangos or bananas and bake for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon before serving.

Spiced Lentil Soup
1 ounce butter or margarine
1 large onion, chopped
1 stalk of celery, chopped with leaves
1 Cup lentils (red preferred)
1 litre vegetable stock
1/4 Tablespoon ground cloves
1/4 Tablespoon ground allspice
1 hot pepper, seeded and minced (optional)
salt and black pepper to taste

Method: Melt the butter in a large skillet and fry the onion and celery lightly for 10 minutes, but do not brown. Add lentils, vegetable stock, and spices. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and allow to simmer gently for half an hour, or until lentils are soft. Cool slightly before serving.



PRINCETON.EDU

Clove Tea
Good for whatever ails you!
2 Cups water
1 Tablespoon whole cloves
1 stick cinnamon
1/2 Tablespoon ground nutmeg
1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 Tablespoon honey or brown sugar

Boil water and spices for five minutes. Cover and let stand for ten minutes. Strain before adding lemon and honey.

Steamed Cassava Pudding
2 pounds of sweet cassava, peeled and grated
1 Cup of fresh grated coconut
1 Tablespoon grated fresh ginger root
1/2 Cup brown sugar
4 whole cloves, slightly crushed
Cinnamon and nutmeg may be added to your taste.

In a suitable bowl combine all ingredients. Tear off about four pieces of aluminum foil about two feet long. Fold each piece so it is doubled to a foot square. Spoon equal portions of the cassava mix into the center of each piece. Fold and make a seal. Steam for about 45 minutes and serve warm. Traditionally this was made in banana leaves.













FLASHBACKS

Dear *Compass*,

Rain, rain, rain here in the Bay Islands of Honduras — but only two other boasts here in the Bight on Guanaja, and a hurricane hole close by. *Compass* seems to be creeping into this corner of Honduras, as I came across a copy from June 2012. Lovely scent of home.

However, as beautiful as are the photos and as good as are the flashbacks, I was somewhat taken aback by a photo on page 24 of that edition. Therein was a photo of a lovely vessel overtaking a Carriacou sloop, and also a photo of the boom end of the *Eilean* (built in 1936), with a very pretty bronze plate on the end of the boom where I have a bronze star. Onboard of *Eilean* this plate has been obviously polished — while not one of the three shackles in the photo are seized, and the one at two o'clock is actually coming unscrewed! Guess I just have a different perspective on things. I have no time for crew that know how to polish but who do NOT check seizings! Roger Fothergill of *Tern IV* would turn over in his deep watery grave.

The Carriacou sloop seems to be having a tough time keeping its ensign at the end of the boom. It belongs at the peak! And ya know I have not yet seen another island sloop whose boatswain knows how to properly reeve the "jung frau" (virgins) or deadeyes, and doubt if anyone there even knows what a Matthew Walker knot is for.

Other than that... I am well. I have recently taken an inventory, an "accounting" if you will, and to my credit I have Life, Health, Freedom, Shelter, Food, Water, Tools, Clothing and Fire. To my debits I owe the obligation to use all my credits Wisely, Responsibly, and Joyously!

John Smith
Mermaid of Carriacou

KEEP IT CLEAN

Dear *Compass*,

Just a quick addition to Maurice Howland's great article in the September issue on stainless steel and cleaning. My husband and I found a fantastic product call "Bar Keeper's Friend" that we have used for years on stainless steel. It takes the rust right off, shines the stainless and is extremely cheap. It is a powdered oxalic acid product found in any grocery or hardware store where you would find comet or other cleansers. It is a totally amazing product for removing rust and stains and less than US$2. We also use it to clean all our stainless steel pots and pans.

Harry and Melinda Schell
S/V Sea Schell

SECURE MOORINGS

Dear *Compass*,

Don Stollmeyer mentioned the issue of private moorings in the September edition of *Compass*. One regularly reads of unreliable moorings (both government-installed and privately installed) in various Eastern Caribbean islands, but never can I remember sailors complaining of unreliability of the "Moor Secure" moorings in the Virgin Islands. These moorings have eliminated the problem of poorly anchored bareboats dragging down on other boats or ashore during periods of heavy weather.

Over Christmas and New Years 2005-6 my wife and I were sailing in the British Virgins when the Christmas Winds arrived with a vengeance. The hinges blew off the gates of hell for four days. A steady 25, most of the time 30 knots, and at times gusting to 40 knots. Yet on the VHF we heard no stories of bareboats, or in fact any boats, dragging anchor! We noticed that during the whole period of the blow, few boats were sailing; most were holed up on Moor Secure buoys. These buoys eliminated one of our evening amusements. Formerly we would watch the antics of inexperienced bareboaters anchoring or trying to anchor. I would often say to Trich, "With a comedy act like this, who needs TV?"

Cruisers in the BVI do complain, however, that all the harbors are so crowded with mooring balls that it is all but impossible to anchor. However, my *Street's Guide to Puerto Rico, Spanish, US and British Virgin Islands* describes in detail every possible anchorage from western Puerto Rico eastwards to Anegada. Nancy and Simon Scott's *Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands* describes all the anchorages that are popular with bareboaters, and thus likely to be full of moorings. Buy both books, read them side-by-side, and circle those anchorages that only appear in my book — they will most likely be quiet and mooring-free.

The organizations in the southern islands should emulate Moor Secure's method of installing moorings: using sand screws not anchors, proper chains and risers, regularly inspected and maintained. If this is done, the unreliable mooring problem in the southern islands will be ended

DM Street, Jr.
Glandore, Ireland

A CALL FOR ATTENTION

Dear *Compass*,

I am a regular sailor in the Grenadines, a retired Ambassador from Venezuela, a writer and contributor to Chris Doyle's *Cruising Guide to Venezuela and Bonaire*. Following is a translation of my column of Monday, September 9th, 2013 in *El Universal*, the leading newspaper in Venezuela, calling for the attention of the authorities and the public. It ranked among the most read of that day's news.

Mistreatment of Yachting Tourism

Death returns to the coasts of Venezuela. A Dutch cruiser, Robert Sterenburg, who was with his girlfriend aboard the sailboat *Mary Eliza*, and after having visited more than 50 countries, met death in Margarita at the hands of the criminal underworld. We continue adding to the statistics as the most unsafe country for boaters. They stopped visiting us for many years. Thousands of foreign ships were once in our waters and contributing to the development of a marine industry and creating employment for young Venezuelans on the coasts of the country; today they prefer to be anchored in Trinidad where they are received properly and government is aware of the positive impact that yacht tourism has for locals. This is also true for the majority of the islands of the Caribbean, including Cuba, which has its doors open with the Hemingway Marina and new nautical tourism developments underway.

Colombia takes advantage of the situation of insecurity in Venezuela and has released a policy of public relations all over the world, inviting recreational boats to visit that country and take advantage of Santa Marta and Cartagena. The coast guard offers security for safe navigation.

The *Compass* magazine, which is produced for all the Caribbean and preferred in the nautical sector, in a dramatic report titled, "Venezuela: Is It Safe?" says that while the Venezuelan coasts were once a favorite spot for the "yachties" from Europe and the United States, it became an inhospitable place owing to lack of security and the apathy of the authorities. We have today the highest instance of criminality in all the Caribbean. A source said that the problem for yachts was not so much the number of incidents but the overly violent nature of these.

Once a few years ago, in this same vein, I referred to this issue in the sense that it seems that there is no clear policy to defend yachting visitors and thus avoid the bad image of the country that exists in that international yachting community that crosses the waters of Venezuela. Some international nautical forums and journals are bitterly concerned with this issue.

No doubt this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the nautical authorities and ministries alike. Dear Minister Izarra, as Minister for Tourism of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, here is an issue that you should take into your hands to encourage tourism that is much more profitable for the country than other forms.

Oscar Hernández Bernalette
Caracas, Venezuela

SAFETY FIRST

Dear *Compass* Readers,

I would like to acknowledge *Caribbean Compass* for the courage that the editors have in covering the topic of crime in the Caribbean as it relates to cruising boats. This is not an easy thing to do and many journals simply overlook the subject in favor of "blue skies and Caribbean sun" articles. Surely, crime should not be the focus of everything that we discuss but it is, sadly, a fact of life that we must cope with while we cruise.

Donald Street wrote in the August edition of *Compass*, "just take note of the pockets of crime and avoid them." Were it that simple, no one would ever be mugged or worse! "Crime" may be one word but it is many different deeds. Don goes on to say that "considering the huge number of yachts in the Caribbean east of a line drawn from Aruba to the western end of Haiti, the crime ratio is not that bad".

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I do not know what "not that bad" means. If it means that the odds of being killed are not high, I would agree, but I do not think that crime against cruising boats in the Caribbean should be taken as a lesser threat than any other risk we prepare for when we go cruising. Don thought that perhaps my articles on how to avoid crime may have overstated the amount of crime that affects cruising boats, but the days of sleeping with the hatches wide open have long since passed. Some areas have more crime than others and some areas more violent crime than others.

In the September issue of *Caribbean Compass* there were a number of articles covering the pros and cons of cruising through Venezuela. What makes Venezuela different, if anything, from the rest of the Caribbean? Are there "safe areas within that country"?

I have consistently, over the last five years, recommended avoiding Venezuela completely. Is that too harsh a warning? An exaggeration of risk? The truth is that there is a big difference between Venezuela and the other countries in the Caribbean. In almost every other country in the Caribbean the rule of law* is present. Venezuela is currently a country without the rule of law and, as a result, there is a great deal of crime. Those in poverty have been told that people who own yachts are rich and that stealing from them is appropriate. Every Venezuelan is not a criminal; however, desperate people do desperate things and there is great desperation in Venezuela at this time. Crime in Venezuela is not just theft but is also frequently accompanied by violence.

Most recently the owner of a yacht anchored off Margarita was killed and his girlfriend seriously hurt in a boarding. There was a time when some would say, "Yes, Venezuela has crime, but the islands of Venezuela are safe." Now we hear, "Yes, Venezuela has crime, but the islands of Venezuela *to the north*, such as Las Roques, are safe and can be used as a stop on the way to the ABC islands." How can they be declared "safe"? All of Venezuela is suspect and should be avoided by cruising boats at this time. Forget that some people believe there are safe areas and forget that some cruisers have cruised there and not been assaulted. The *probabilities* of crime against cruisers are high and the *probabilities of violent crime* are high. The reasoning that you can beat the odds is not sound. If you take a gun that has one bullet in its six chambers and you put it to your head and fire and the gun does not go off, does that mean that the gun is safe? No, what it means is that you were very lucky. Every time that you pull that trigger and do not get hurt you continue to be lucky but the *probabilities* say that the odds will catch up with you.

We do not go cruising to see if we can beat the odds. The definition of cruising is broad, but for most of us it does not include putting ourselves and our guests in mortal danger. How many cruisers would now cruise through the Red Sea without a second thought? Consider that Venezuela today is the "Red Sea" of the Caribbean. In the Red Sea pirates prosper because they are beyond the reach of the rule of law. That is how it is in Venezuela. Anyone can rob you, even hurt you, and then disappear into a very large country.

It is simple to understand that Venezuela is very beautiful and that fuel and food are so inexpensive as to wet the jowls of even the best-financed cruiser. However, read carefully through the Caribbean Safety and Security Net data (www.caribbeansafetyandsecuiritynet.com), Noonsite (www.noonsite.com) and the analysis undertaken by the Caribbean Security Index (www.freecruisingguide.com). You will be able to study all types of crime in different locations. You will note the sheer amount of violent crime in Venezuela against the cruising community in recent years. A few years back, a cruiser was attacked aboard his yacht in Simpson Bay, St. Maarten, and left for dead. However, it appears that that incident was a "one off". In Venezuela we have a clear case of repetition without variation: robberies committed with violence, even murder.

When we go cruising, we cannot eliminate all risk. The best that we can hope to do is minimize it. The risks of rocks and reefs and risks of bad weather, as well as risks of being attacked, are among our concerns and we need to evaluate each of them carefully and work to keep ourselves and our boats from becoming a statistic. *The best way to reduce risk is to avoid it.* That is what we do with rocks and reefs and bad weather, and that is what cruisers ought to do when they decide to cruise to a foreign country with a record like that of Venezuela. If a country's record is not perfect, you can still decide to go if you take the necessary precautions. If the record is dismal and includes violence, avoid it, regardless of what someone else (who may have been lucky) has to say.

My level of concern rises when cruisers take their children to dangerous countries. Adults can decide whether to visit or avoid a place, but underage children go along with their parents or guardians without understanding the risks or having a say in whether they want to be exposed to those risks. If you have children, cruising with them in risky areas goes to the heart of responsible parental decision-making.

Use your sails to "vote" and route around locations that have high crime rates. Avoid any country that has a demonstrated history of violence, just like the cruising community avoided Colombia for so many years when it demonstrated a similar record.

A beautiful shoreline with many uncrowded anchorages and cheap fuel and rations are as alluring as sirens. All of us can come up with reasons for our belief that the area is okay; however the reasoning is flawed by being less than objective. The number of cruising boats that visit Venezuela has declined dramatically over the last five years and testimony from many of those in the country bears out the old adage "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!"

The Caribbean is large and there are many countries that you can visit that have a good track record for putting your safety first. Countries where the rule of law is enforced and where the authorities are concerned that you be kept safe should be high on your list.

Frank Virgintino, author
Free Cruising Guides

** According to the World Justice Project, the rule of law is a system in which the following four universal principles are upheld:*

• The government and its officials and agents, as well as individuals and private entities, are accountable under the law.

• The laws are clear, publicized, stable and just, are applied evenly, and protect fundamental rights, including the security of persons and property.

• The process by which the laws are enacted, administered and enforced is accessible, fair and efficient.

• Justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.

FRIENDS OF ILE-À-VACHE

Dear *Compass* Readers,

Here's a short update on the activities of friends of Ile-à-Vache in Haiti.



We are improving the fish farms and building more water cisterns. I have eight solar panels to install on the fish farms to provide aeration for the ponds to increase the harvest. I am concentrating on food and water that they can manage on their own. If the project is not sustainable by Haitians I do not start it. They have fished out the area all around Ile-à-Vache so fish farms are of big interest. Tilapia are grown in our ponds; a thousand now available for harvest.

The Cayman boat has been continuously used as a water ambulance. It has saved lives. It has been maintained with care. Wagner is proud of it. Unfortunately it hit a net that had steel line in it and the transmission burned out. I shipped it for repairs via a visiting yacht, to the USA, but in reality the engine is physically too big. It is not worth fixing and shipping back. We could use a simpler smaller engine if one is available. I bought one for Wagner in Haiti but it will not last. That boat is on the move all the time. I have repaired it with epoxy at times, as it carries heavy loads.

The generators are both working. The library has electricity so visiting aid workers have some power. Samuel's store is doing well as he has ice. His new fridge, provided by us, is fed by solar and his generator. Having ice is a big item. In the photo, the bucket with the spout on the left is a water filter system. We provided over 50 of these to the village. We would like to get more. Samuel is able to provide meals for tourists at his store/restaurant. This is a good source of income.

I have a big load of aid to sail down this fall or winter.

Please get in touch if you'd like to help with any of our projects.

Bruce Leeming
friendsofileavache@gmail.com

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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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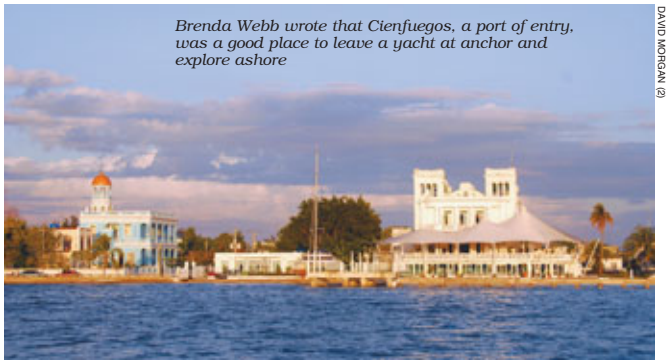
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Letter of the Month

Dear *Compass*,

Just wanted to tell you how excited I was when I saw the August cover and the Cuba article by Brenda Webb. There was some wonderful photography that brought up many good memories of our cruising there many years ago, including meeting the delightful Commodore Escrich at the Hemingway International Yacht Club.



Brenda Webb wrote that Cienfuegos, a port of entry, was a good place to leave a yacht at anchor and explore ashore

DAVID MORGAN (2)

Like Brenda, we also found the authorities in Santiago to be annoyingly slow. One of the officials at Marina Hemingway insisted on a bribe and took a 20-dollar bill out of our wallet when we refused. He was later fired. The rest of the officials we encountered were generally efficient, polite, and doing their jobs under less than ideal circumstances. We towed one official's rowboat back to the dock after he rowed out to our boat on a hot day and refused to take even a soda from us. His oars were hand-cut from what looked like a scrap plank of cheap wood. Most of the officials we met were much nicer than some we've encountered in certain unnamed islands further east and south.

Unfortunately, the article was filled with reasons *not* to sail to Cuba, and then inexplicably urged yachties to go — NOW! Three-fourths of the article complained about clearing in and out of every port. Good heavens — compare this with the requirements foreign-flagged yachts face to cruise the USA! Jimmy Cornell's *World Cruising Destinations* has one and a half pages on formalities for foreign yachts wishing to visit the US. By comparison, Cornell has only three-quarters of a page on formalities in Cuba and just half a page on formalities in Russia. A Russian visa may be obtained in advance from an accredited Russian travel company, a yacht club or from a private individual!

Some highlights from Cornell's *Destinations* regarding formalities for entering the US by private vessel:

• Foreign yachts are routinely inspected upon arrival in the US, and the whole crew must appear at Immigration within 24 hours of arrival (often requiring a taxi or rental car).

• All vessels must have a registered 406Mhz EPIRB on board (we never had one in all the years we cruised).

• Arriving in the US from anywhere — including the USVI, Puerto Rico and Hawaii — means dumping your meat, meat products, fresh produce and plants.

• All non-US citizens must have a visa, obtained in advance at a US Embassy or consulate, when arriving by private vessel. For Caribbean cruisers, there are embassies only in Barbados, Belize, Caracas, Curacao, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama City, and Trinidad. (This is one explanation for the near-demise of the St. Croix International Regatta and the reduced international attendance at regattas in Puerto Rico and St. Thomas.)

• Foreign-flagged vessels must notify Homeland Security when moving to a new berth, even it is in the same port, or face a US$5,000 fine. Some countries are exempted from this requirement and may obtain a cruising license, valid for one year, no renewals until after a 15-day absence from the country.

Customs and Immigration officials are far more stringent in enforcement on the US mainland than in the Virgin Islands, at least for now, but it's just a matter of time before the USVI and PR officials follow their lead.

All yachties are welcome in Cuba — it is only US vessels and crews who need worry about returning from Cuba to the US.

From the photos you published, Cuba seems to be in better shape than it was years ago. When we were there, the country had already started to fix itself up for tourism. European, Mexican, Canadian and South American tourists had already discovered the wonders of this unique land and its surrounding waters. Fidel had eased many restrictions on private citizens and companies to attract and provide services for foreign visitors. It would be my guess that the tourist industry has continued to grow. [*Editor's note: Indeed. See "Cuba's Mega-Marina Project" in this month's Business Briefs, page 9.*] Once the floodgates from the US open, the country will be bombarded by a new, wealthy class of tourist, and let us hope the



An unforgettable aspect of Cuban culture: live music everywhere

Cubans are strong enough to preserve their culture and environment under that increased pressure.

I must agree with the article about going to Cuba — NOW! But I wish the author had focused more on why to go. Cuba has so much to offer the cruising yacht, and the relatively minor nuisance of clearing in and out make it just that more special once you are there.

Besos,
Elena Pimiento
S/V Habanero III

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CALENDAR

OCTOBER

3 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Thanksgiving Day)
6 -12 46th Bonaire International Sailing Regatta. www.bonaireregatta.org
12 Public holiday in Venezuela (Day of Indigenous Resistance)
14 Public holiday in Belize (Pan American Day), and the Bahamas (Discovery Day)
17 Public holiday in Haiti (Anniversary of the Death of Dessalines) and Jamaica (National Heroes' Day)
18 FULL MOON Parties at Trellis Bay and West End, Tortola, and at Nevis
19 Virgin's Cup Race, BVI. Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club (RBVIYC), tel (284) 494-3286, sailing@royalbviyc.org, www.royalbviyc.org
19 - 20 Trafalgar Regatta, BVI. RBVIYC
21 Public Holiday in BVI (St. Ursula's Day) and Curaçao (Antillean Day)
23 Woburn Thanksgiving Regatta, Grenada
25 Public holiday in Grenada (Thanksgiving Day)
25 - 27 World Creole Music Festival, Dominica. www.wcmfdominica.com
26 20th Annual Nevis Fishing Tournament, Nevis Yacht Club, www.nevisyachtclub.com
26 – 27 Caribbean Sailing Association AGM and Regatta Organizers' Conference, Puerto Rico. www.caribbean-sailing.com
26 – 27 16th Foxy's Halloween Cat Fight (catamaran regatta), Jost Van Dyke. www.foxysbar.com
26 – Nov 2 27th Annual Pro Am Regatta, Virgin Gorda. Bitter End Yacht Club (BEYC). info@beyc.com, www.beyc.com
27 Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Independence Day)
31 National Heritage Day, Antigua

NOVEMBER

1 Antigua & Barbuda (Independence Day) and Haiti (All Saints' Day)
1 - 3 Triskell Cup Regatta, Guadeloupe. ***See ad on page 15***
2 Public holiday in Haiti (All Souls' Day)
2 Clarkes Court Bay Marina Junior Regatta, Grenada
2 – 3 Discover the Caribbean Fajardo-Ponce Feeder Race, Puerto Rico. www.discoverpyfc.com
3 Public holiday in Dominica (Independence Day) and Trinidad & Tobago (Diwali)
3 Start of Caribbean 1500 and ARC Bahamas rallies from Chesapeake USA to Tortola, BVI and Abacos, Bahamas. www.worldcruising.com/carib1500
6 – 9 BVI Charter Yacht Show, Tortola. www.bvicrewedyachts.com/boatshow
7 – 10 Discover the Caribbean – Big Boat Races, Puerto Rico. www.discoverpyfc.com
9 – 10 Jolly Harbour Caribbean Regatta, Antigua. Jolly Harbour Yacht Club (JHYC), Antigua. tel (268) 770-6172, regattas@jhycantigua.com, www.jhycantigua.com
15 – 17 St. Croix Yacht Club International Regatta. ***See ad on page 13***
15 – 17 Caribbean Dinghy Championship, Antigua. Antigua Yacht Club (AYC), tel/fax (268) 460-1799, yachtclub@candw.ag, www.antiguayachtclub.com
16 – 17 J/24 Barbados Match Racing Championships, J/24 Club of Barbados, info@j24barbados.com
17 Curaçao Youth Sunfish Championship. cursailing@gmail.com
17 Fire Ball FULL MOON Party, Trellis Bay, Tortola, www.aragornsstudio.com/fire.htm. Bomba's Shack Full Moon Party, West End, Tortola
18 Public holiday in Haiti (Battle of Vertieres Day)
18 - 26 St. Barth Cata Cup (F18 catamarans). www.stbarthcatacup.com
19 Public holiday in Belize (Garifuna Settlement Day) and Cayman Islands (Remembrance Day)
20 Start of ARC+ Cape Verdes rally from Gran Canaria via Cape Verdes to Rodney Bay, St. Lucia. www.worldcruising.com/arc
22 – 23 4th Annual Caribbean Rum & Beer Festival, Grenada. ***See ad on page 11***
22 – 24 Discover the Caribbean Dinghy Races, Puerto Rico. www.discoverpyfc.com
22 – Dec 1 BVI Restaurant Week. www.bvitourism.com/restaurantweek
23 Public holiday in Montserrat (Liberation Day)
24 Start of ARC rally from Gran Canaria to Rodney Bay, St. Lucia www.worldcruising.com/arc
24 St. Lucia's ARC Flotilla. arcflotilla@gmail.com
25 Public holiday in Suriname (Republic Day)
30 Public holiday in Barbados (Independence Day)
30 23rd Annual Gustav Wilmerding Memorial Challenge, Tortola. West End Yacht Club (WEYC), Tortola, BVI, tel (284) 496-8685, martin@sailsistership.com
29 - Dec 1 Mango Bowl Regatta, St. Lucia. ***See ad on page 11***
30 - Dec 1 Anegada Lobster Festival. www.bvitourism.com/anegadalobsterfestival
TBA Course de l'Alliance, St. Martin. www.coursedelalliance.com

All information was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of Compass *went to press — but plans change, s o 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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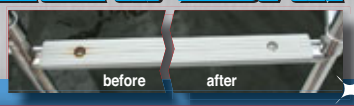
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Venezuela's Pirates

by Cris Robinson



I thought the article "Venezuela: Is It Safe?" in the September issue was good. *Caribbean Compass* would be irresponsible to publish articles like the one describing the Chapmans' trip without also pointing out the dangers. They were lucky.

I have lived in Venezuela for 40 years and sailed its coast from Los Testigos to Los Monjes, both in my own boats and while delivering other boats. When I first arrived it was a cruiser's paradise with very few visiting foreign boats, and one could anchor anywhere. Local fishermen would offer fish and lobsters in exchange for rum, cigarettes or even fresh water. Petty thieving was common but violent crime virtually non-existent.

Then came the boom years when tourist companies and cruisers discovered a country with an incredible variety of unspoiled scenery, cheap fuel, and free from hurricanes. The infrastructure of hotels and restaurants, boatyards and marinas, and small tourist companies expanded rapidly, creating prosperity and employment. The biggest capacity hotel in South America, the Doral Beach, was built in Puerto La Cruz and during the hurricane season there would be a hundred boats anchored off the Paseo Colon, where tourists queued up waiting for tables in the restaurants.

Margarita Island was declared a duty-free zone and new hotels sprang up like pimples on a teenager's face and were filled to bursting with packaged tourists. Prices and crime rates rose accordingly.

Then Caribbean destinations like the Dominican Republic and Mexico became cheaper and more attractive than Venezuela and the daily charter flights from Canada and Europe went there instead. New hotels being built were left unfinished, while operating ones went bankrupt, including the Doral Beach where the employees stripped furniture and fittings from the bungalow-style rooms in lieu of the severance payments they were owed.

Cruisers and eco-adventure tourists still came, however, and cruisers became a target for pirates. This first started along the wild Paria peninsular coast, an area where smuggling of drugs, people, and guns between Venezuela and Trinidad was also growing rapidly. Boats clawing their way along the coast at night to avoid the strong easterly trades and the current were boarded and robbed as they rested in secluded bays.

In 1998 Chavez was elected President after failing to install himself in a military coup, and armed the lower classes to help protect him against further military coups. The bad guys got 9mm Glocks and AK47s and the police and judges were told not to prosecute "the people". Violent crime increased on land to the point where in 2012 there were around 16,000 violent deaths, that is more than 40 every day, and the indictment rate for murder is less than ten percent — that is to say, in over 90 percent of these cases nobody was even brought to trial.

Along the coasts attacks against cruisers became more numerous and more violent; guns now replaced knives and machetes, and victims were often wounded or killed. Not only Paria, but Cariaco, Mochima, and the Porlamar and Puerto La Cruz roads became frequent targets; cruisers stopped using the anchorages and moved into the marinas.

In Puerto La Cruz the Bahia Redonda boatyard manager, Pierre, was murdered with his wife in their car by hired gunmen outside the boatyard gate when arriving to work on a Monday morning. Nobody was ever arrested for this crime. The Aqua-Vi yard manager, Victor, was attacked, kidnapped and extorted with threats to his family and had to leave the country. Then Ken Peters on *Chill* was killed in the Isla Borracha incident. We all pulled our heads out of the sand.

Local fishermen were also attacked while out at night and were stripped of their outboard motors and fishing gear and left adrift, with bullet wounds if they tried to resist. The pirates left the local sports fishing fleet owned by upperclass Venezuelans alone, however, because they are well armed and ready to defend themselves. I met one Mako owner who showed me his collection of pistols and rifles, then capped it by pulling out a case of hand grenades. I believe that in the good old days the pirates assumed foreign boats were also well armed but eventually realized that most cruisers do not carry guns. For this reason, flying a Venezuelan flag may help to dissuade attacks.

The authorities are not able to reverse this situation. The attackers use the ubiquitous *piñeros*, open boats from about 12 to 30 feet long driven by outboards. There are probably about 50,000 piñeros along the 2,000 kilometres of coastline. The vast majority are used by innocent fishermen, often victims of attack themselves, but some are also smugglers and pirates. These boats approach you at anchor or underway and offer to sell fish or lobsters, or ask for water. There is no way to tell if they are dangerous until they get close and pull out guns and start shooting, hoping surprise and shock will render you defenceless while they take over the boat.

The Guardia Nacional have some old cutters capable of maybe ten knots trying to catch piñeros which can easily do 15 to 20 knots, and a few smaller but faster skiffs which are often out of action due to mechanical problems. The twin outboard launch used by the police to patrol the canals of El Morro in Puerto La Cruz was stolen recently!

For these reasons many cruisers avoid Venezuela altogether, preferring Grenada, Trinidad, the ABC Islands and Colombia as safer refuges from the hurricane season. Ironically Colombia, which used to be extremely dangerous for boats, is now a safe and attractive destination thanks to a concerted effort between the state and local government, security forces, and local citizens to clean up the region for tourism.

Most boats travelling west from the Lesser Antilles now avoid Paria, Testigos, and Margarita, perhaps stopping at the outer islands of Tortuga, Los Roques, and Las Aves, which have not so far suffered serious incidents, probably because they are too far offshore for coast-based piñeros to operate.

Those of us who stay in Venezuela barricade ourselves inside the safer marinas, under self-imposed curfews, sleeping lightly because boats have also been attacked and robbed even inside marinas while the security guards snoozed.

Some have Rambo-ed up with heavy weaponry like the locals, but this can lead to problems with the authorities, and also may actually attract putative pirates looking for weapons. Policemen and soldiers are regularly murdered in Venezuela for their guns. Flare guns and machetes might deter some attackers (a flare fired or thrown into a piñero near the plastic gasoline tank will certainly distract the occupants) but are not much good against AK47s and the like.

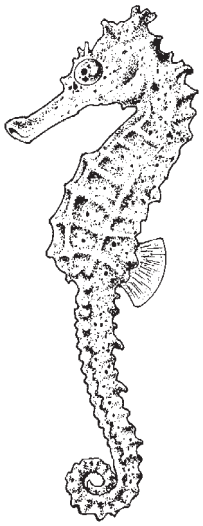


There are thousands of piñeros *in Venezuelan waters. Most are operated by hardworking fishermen who can also be the victims of pirates — but the bad guys use these boats, too*

On unavoidable local trips such as deliveries we now plan the voyages so that we leave and enter ports in the daytime, and, after taking Prozac, head straight offshore at max speed to be well over the horizon during the night. The higher the wind and rougher the seas the better. At night we travel without lights except when ships are near. If piñeros approach us we wave them off and shoot over their heads if we have the artillery.

They prey. We pray.

Cris Robinson is a marine surveyor and author of A Small Slip, *available at Amazon.com.*



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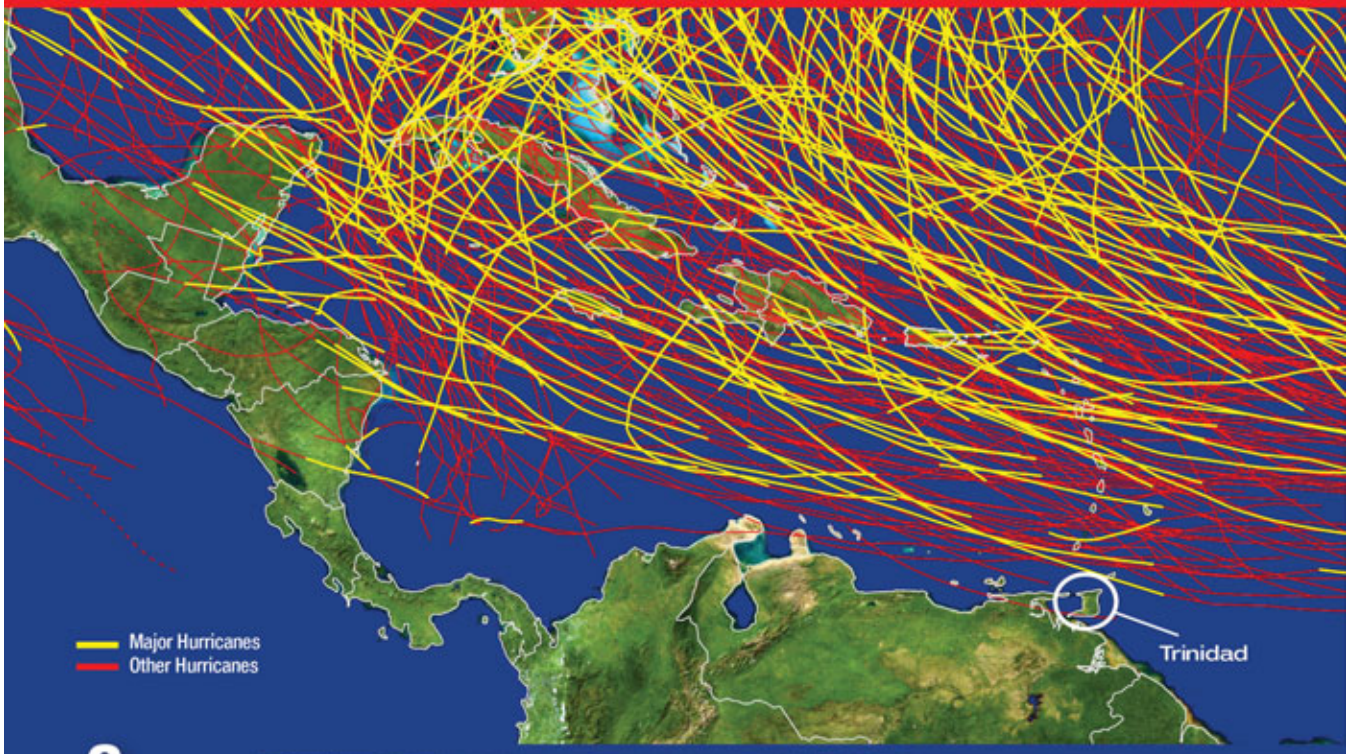
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