Archives of Richard Crockett & Sailing Publications.
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Daydream

I daydream often! Show me a picture and I am already on my way. This is how I landed up owning a boat in the Caribbean, never having sailed before. Not very bright you might say. I am the first to admit the stupidity of the situation. My argument is that you are never going to accomplish your dreams until you put yourself in a position of no return. This is how it all started…..

I buy magazines, lots of them. One day I came across SAILING in a secondhand book store. It was about five years old. Before long I was engrossed in a very interesting sailing trip. Not sure where, I can't remember, but that is not the point. The point is that I was hooked on the idea of holding a tiller, a stiff breeze blowing and flying along, preferably somewhere in the tropics where civilization (I mean real civilization) is in the next bay.

Armed with this idea and a spare R200,000, I was determined to find a yacht in the next issue of SAILING. Not of a patient disposition, I went to CNA, bought a copy and breezed through the magazine looking for the broker adverts. "Bloody Hell", is an alternative expression for my surprise at how the prices of yachts had increased. The thing is, I jumped five years in a couple of hours and my money had not appreciated in that time. This proved to be very inconvenient and also the first of many mistakes.

Time passed, my collection of new editions of SAILING amounted to four or five. In this time I had visited a couple of yacht clubs and had walked along their jetties admiring the yachts. They all still looked alike to me. The yachts were beautiful and they all had fantastic names, names that suggested that they were loved dearly. They captured the spirit of old American adverts where the whole family stood around a new car with really big smiles on their faces, and even the dog seemed happy. I visited yacht clubs more frequently. I started to recognize the same faces which increasingly bore smiles as I visited. I also noted that some boats just never moved. Those happy 'American advert people' were on the boats that never moved, except the happy smiles were spent scrubbing, sanding, varnishing and cleaning bilges. Actually, they looked pretty annoyed. I did not see the dog…

Finally, having given up on the thought of buying an old boat and fixing her up I came across an advert in the classified section of SAILING. $US23,000 is the first thing that struck me. With simple math, the sudden realization dawned on me that I could buy this thing, boat, whatever it is. The word 'sloop' and the size 33' stood out; the rest I had heard of but had no clue what was meant. By this stage you would think that I might have found myself sailing and even having learned something. Your first impression of me being stupid was not that far off, because I had still not gone sailing. In my defence I had bought a couple of books by now, with terminology that proved very difficult to understand. Why on earth can't these people just give 'things' decent names? A sheet and a halyard is the same thing, or is a halyard a lanyard…. I give up!

My main source of information was the internet. I 'Googled' the boat type and found a couple of images. Excellent, I was going to be a proud owner of a sloop! I told a couple of people about a sloop I wanted to buy, expecting them to say 'they are good boats' or 'they are not very good'. Instead, they looked at me quizzically and asked what make it is. Later, it turns out it was a Lello … sloop. So before I made any inquiry about the boat, I wanted to see what a Lello looked like. Thanks to Google, I found out that it was long and it really did not have much space in the back area or for that matter inside, but it was called a cruiser and that was all I cared about.

I contacted the owner of the Lello in the magazine and at the same time inquired about a Lello advertised on a brokerage site on the internet. An auto reply told me the agent would contact me in the next couple of days. The owner of the yacht replied the next day. It turned out to be the same boat. I explained the lack of a quick reply cost the broker the chance of doing the deal as I had spoken with the owner already. Within minutes we entered into a colourful discussion of which nationality should shove their head further down the toilet. At the time, I naturally assumed that the Americans could do it better. He turned out to be Canadian. Later, I would regret my response.

The deal was done, with a press of my index finger. The money drained from

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Pursuit

by Stephan Smith

my account; this was to be the beginning of my yachting dream. I was to experience this feeling on an ongoing basis for the next three months. I enquired about several sailing courses. I wanted the Yacht Master one and then I would be off to the Caribbean. Several years and tons of ocean time? Are you kidding? I own a yacht, I don't need any licence. But I do need to learn how to sail.

Now I needed to buy sausage skins, for my boat. Yes, sausage skins! I am a vegetarian so this sausage skin idea freaks me out. This is the part where your faith in me is restored. I had arranged for someone to look over my boat. What a fantastic person, he did not even want any payment from me. After I pushed him for some form of payment, he asked me to bring him some sausage skins. There was silence on my side, is he joking? This sailing lot are ridiculous! But I know my boat is fine. So I look for sausage skins. I now own a boat and am happy, except for the fact that I have paid for her and it is hurricane season! When I read articles on 'how to buy a boat' no one told me not to buy a boat in hurricane season! A very important point I will add. Mistake number…..I think I will stop counting!

With a bit more sailing experience behind me and a Day Skipper licence I was ready to go, except for some radio licence 'thing'. On contacting ICASA I was told that the exams are held on a Monday only. And I would not be able to do the exam for at least six weeks, even although most people don't pitch for the exam. I would not be allowed to wait and see if there was an opening; instead ICASA would call me. Judging by the letters section in SAILING I learned that sailors do a lot of complaining. So that is what I did. I complained to everyone, ICASA, SAS the boat shop. I swear, even my dog was tired of it. ICASA came through for me and I was able to sit the next exam.

I had done so much complaining I had not bothered to study. With a lot of cramming the exam proved easy enough, otherwise everything about sailing seemed pretty difficult so far. I kept telling myself, 'as soon as I get onto the water, everything is going to change'. Even though they have run out of hurricane names by now and have resorted to using the Greek alphabet, I remained upbeat about my venture.



Daydreamer



The day arrived for me to fly to the Caribbean. I have received my parcels in the mail containing maps of the Caribbean. My intention is to sail around the Caribbean, then find someone who is able to sail back to South Africa with me. My first doubt about sailing is introduced by way of the newspaper; a Lello has sunk on route to the Caribbean.

My trepidation vanished as the landing in Saint Maarten is fantastic. I have read much about St Maarten and am looking forward to its curiosities. Within minutes I am through customs and am seated in a massive American van, right out of the A-Team, complete with 'Mr. T' and all the bling, on a small island on the way to Bobby's Marina. My first impression is that the pilot has flown right back to equatorial Africa, because it looks like a bomb has hit the place. This, because of all the tropical storms.

Aaaahhhh, my new boat, still floating after hurricane season has passed! Even the Greek alphabet could not stop me from sailing her around the Caribbean. She looks all blue and shiny and in great condition despite being born in 1983. The previous owner arrives and introduces himself. I note his priorities are in order as he has not neglected to bring me several beers. We go over the boat discussing things that I have recently learned. He leaves and I literally crack open a beer which slices my mouth open as I take the first sip. The superstitious would have told me to sell her there and then. That night, while gently rolling alongside the jetty I can hear the water around me and the distant beat of club music. I am happy!

At the break of dawn Justin, the previous owner, and I enlisted help from other yachties to help move her to a stern-to berth. As we rounded the corner there were several boxes drifting in our path. To our amazement an island delivery vessel had started sinking. There was nothing we could do but watch her sink. People on the jetty also seemed amused by the event but no one seemed in any hurry to assist. Finally we secured and I immediately started taking stock of the situation. I was alongside several other yachties who were all illegally employed in some maritime position in Saint Maarten and who all seemed to casually dodge deportation.

What will they think of me when I ask them to teach me how to attach the sails to the mast? I was not taught this in any of those damn courses. I laid the sails along the quay and began to figure it out. The other yachties passed with smiles and short conversation about the sails. I realized from their behaviour that the sails are not in very good condition. Should I ask where the top is or should I smile. I smile. In a short enough time, I had it worked out and with a bit of trouble, thread the reef lines through the boom too. Not too shabby!

Island time! The others laugh while I complain. My engine has a leak and the mechanic takes forever to come around. I need to install my SSB but can find no one prepared to do it. It seems there are no electricians around who are prepared to do the job. They are all remaining available to service the super yachts. The manual was useless! The other yachties are useless! They all know about an SSB, they all have well-intentioned ideas, but no one seems to know exactly what to do. Do I ground this to the engine and petrol tank or do I attach it to the keel only? Dumb-asses! I am more confused than ever. With my plan formulated I find a shop that sells braided copper. I set about attaching the copper braid to everything metal I can find. While entangled under the nav station I hear over the VHF that a recreational fishing boat is in trouble. With only one engine running and in heavy squally conditions, he is struggling to come alongside because he requires two engines to steer properly. I immediately recognize that he is coming in alongside me. I untangle myself from under the nav station to render my assistance. I am thrown a rope but have nowhere to tie it to, so I hold on and soon others assist. A piece of the jetty gives way and I find myself in the water between the boat and the jetty.

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Daydreamer



I come up from under water amazingly with my glasses and the cap still in place, swim like crazy, dive under the jetty and struggle back up the other side. This is all too much; this sailing thing is not much fun. Later, we laugh about the experience over beers at the pub.

In my endeavours to find flares and supplies for the boat, I found that Saint Maarten is littered with South Africans. I am told by American yachties that Saint Maarten's marine industry would collapse if the South Africans were to leave. I can believe this, as all the assistance I received, wherever I bought equipment or used anyone's services, turned out to be South African. This was not surprising when I realized that the price of a bottle of beer is cheaper than a bottle of mineral water or a can of coke!

Now that I owned a dingy I decide to head out into the bay and anchor where life is more peaceful. My engine had developed another leak, this time through some or other flange. Although I had been shown how to rectify the leak it remained a constant drip while the engine was running. On occasion it developed into a fast trickle and faster still when I turned my back. I can only describe my mental health as acutely paranoid about this situation.

On my way out into the bay to anchor, I was presented with the problem of the depth sounder failing as well. I had no clue as to the depth and was certain that if I put out too much scope I would swing into other boats so I put out less - which proved to be too little. This became apparent at about 02h00 when I was gaining on the boat behind me. Try pulling up an anchor and setting it again in swirling winds in the middle of the night! By the next morning I was exhausted, I hated 'sailing' and I had not even set sail yet.

Prior to setting sail in the morning, I tried fixing the depth sounder, checking everything. I concluded that the depth sounder chose to ignore any advances I would make on it. Begging, pleading and even swearing at it went seemingly unnoticed. In revenge I broke it to a point that at least I would have the last say! Stupid thing! This was a mistake, because no one told me that electronics hung around a boat in a clique. Soon the GPS, which up till now was working perfectly fine, decided to sulk. This happened just as I was preparing to head out of the bay for nearby St Barts. I traced the problem back along the line to a bodge-job connection in the aerial coaxial cable. No matter how much I fiddled I could not reinstate a long term relationship with it.

If I can do without the depth sounder I certainly don't need you! Besides, I had another GPS. A mutiny had now ensued. Soon enough, the wind meter stopped working too. I was beginning to take this way too personally now. Beside a brief introduction on the first day, I had nothing to do with the wind meter at all. I enlisted help from one of the other yachties to go up the mast to determine if the connection was sound. This proved fine. I traced the problem back to wiring behind a panel.

Now the entire electrical system would fail completely. I finally asked for assistance from several other yachties including the previous owner. A debate ensued and with much fiddling and prodding it was determined that the earth was faulty on the engine. Although this was to be the last of the electrical problems it was not to be the last of the problems, not by a long shot. At this point I was so determined to go to St Barts, I was prepared to leave the yacht behind.

With my mind made up all I had to do was fill the diesel and water tanks and I was going to be on my way. Well not exactly. A thumping developed over a stretch of 200 metres, but because I was already engaged in coming alongside for fuel I could not check this. The assistant at the dock informed me that I had ensnared some small metal object. A queue developed and I had to attend to this in the open water. I had a quick look and decided it would be fine for another 200 metres. While drifting, I quickly went overboard and freed the propeller of a small metal buoy. It was late in the afternoon by now, as I headed out past the headland.

As I prepared to raise the sails a massive squall hit me from nowhere. After trying for an hour I gave up and motored to St Barts. Half way along I decided to anchor in the bay of a small island called Ile Fourchue. It was hardly the thing I expected in the middle of the Caribbean; not a single bush not a single tree. Nothing, just rocks! Sitting there with a beer in hand I decided that 'this sailing thing' had begun to grow on me, although technically I had still not sailed.

The next morning I went to feed the fish. It was a pretty disgusting affair actually. Once I had done my business. I went above deck to find a school of fish around my boat in a pool of murky water. Curiosity got the better of me, so I bent over. I could not understand what attracted them, and then it dawned on me what they were eating. Let's say that I was happy to remain a vegetarian. While snorkelling I stayed well clear of the other boats anchored around me in fear that they would entertain this pastime while I was below. Starfish, barracuda and a mix of brightly coloured fish swam around me. As the sun set I could hear someone take a breath near the boat. On inspection I realized it was a turtle coming up for air. Later, I was to swim with one. Since the trip to St Barts was so short I decided to motor the remainder of the way as well.

St Barts was just the place the books had described, palm trees and a bay filled with yachts and no sign of any industry. It became practice for me to anchor as far away as I could from anyone because my track record so far left a lot to be desired.

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Daydreamer



This proved to be a good decision. While on St Barts I walked around the island and made my way up onto a hill overlooking the bay. I could not figure out why my boat had to swim upstream, like the proverbial salmon! She was facing the exact opposite way to all the other boats! At first I reasoned that the keel would affect my boat in a different manner to the others, as it was heavier and had a full keel. I decided that it would correct itself. Finally, when I arrived back at the boat I was thankful to find that although she had in fact dragged, it had only been a few metres. I reset the anchor. From now on I would dive below and check that it was set correctly. I would not learn my lesson as poor anchor setting was to continue and a very dangerous situation was still to come.

I decided to try another bay that was more secluded. Eventually I decided to go back to Anse de Colombier as it was very peaceful and the snorkelling was great. I had established a good routine thus far; before setting sail I would study the charts before heading off. This, although good practice made me a bit too confident; and since I had already been to Anse de Colombier I would not check it too intensely. As I rounded the island I decided to head between a small rocky outcrop and the island itself. A quick squint-eyed glance at the charts told me I would be ok. Who was I kidding? Too late to react, the earth rose up sharply below me. The realization of my mistake was met with a massive crash below me. I was nearly thrown into the water. The boat see-sawed for what seemed like an eternity before she settled. I had run aground. I checked to see if I was drifting then dived overboard to see how to get myself free. Within seconds I was back on board. I had found a narrow passage through the rocks, and with a couple of small nudges I was in the clear. After anchoring and checking to see that I was not taking on any water, I sat in the cockpit totally dejected. I took little comfort in the fact that while below the water I had seen the remains of another boat strewn on the floor of the ocean in the exact place I had hit. After a couple of beers, my mood had perked up. If this was the worst that could be thrown at me I had handled myself pretty well. At least I thought so and since there would be no one to disagree, except for the dysfunctional depth sounder, as the captain of this boat I could categorically state this. Sitting there with a beer in hand, the sun setting, I imagined the depth sounder whispering insults at me. I did not mind, I had just fed the fish and was watching an entire theatre beneath me. Another day in the Caribbean…

First thing in the morning I dived overboard to evaluate the damage. On first inspection it did not seem so bad. The Lello was strong. I had hit the reef doing about five knots, the keel had some damage, but nothing serious. I could not leave it like this though. So I set sail back to Saint Maarten. What an experience! Right up to nine knots, I was really flying along. I did not have a care in the world, how could I? I was sailing! This was everything I had read about in that first magazine. Then as I slowly settled in I heard a nagging thump coming from under the boat. I assumed I had picked up some seaweed. Since I was a short way from Saint Maarten I would wait till I arrived there before investigating. As I 'thumped' along, the carefree feeling of sailing drained away as would the remaining dollars I had exchanged to pay for the repair. That night I found myself at the pub again. Everyone I had met was there too. Finally I was able to contribute to their stories about how boats bite back.

The best place to have my boat repaired was in Simpson Bay lagoon, Philipsburg, more of a destination for tourists off the cruise liners. Philipsburg is the only place in the world where you will find a tin of coke for sale in the window alongside expensive jewellery! I had not entered Simpson Bay lagoon before, which required waiting for the bridge to lift. According to a sailing guide I should ask permission to enter. I did this and received no reply over the VHF. Eventually I queued up behind all the other yachts. While motoring in I half expected the bridge to close at the last minute; this did not happen. Once inside I found a nice out of the way spot to anchor and set about finding a place to haul out. Island Water World and Bobby's Marina were the two choices. Island Water World was expensive while Bobby's, although not as convenient, was considerably cheaper. I made an arrangement to be hauled out in



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three day's time. In the mean time I motored around Simpson Bay lagoon in my dinghy. I was amazed to find yacht wrecks all over the place. There was also a fairly large ship, orange with rust, aground on the small island in the middle of the lagoon. The books I had read suggested this was the place to go in a hurricane. Could have fooled me. There were even relatively good yachts, abandoned and stripped of everything valuable, floating freely except for a rope attached to a tree.

It was on one of these jaunts that I noticed the cinema. With nothing to do, I would go to the movies tonight. Around sunset I set off in my dinghy for a night at the movies. How bizarre, but fantastic. I tied up to a dilapidated jetty in a seedy looking area of the lagoon. I was certain my dinghy would be missing on my return. Almost attacked by a pit-bull, I made my way between some boats and a house. The film was good enough, but the feeling of having to swim back to the boat nagged in the back of my mind. After the movie I found the dinghy as I had left it. I climbed in and headed back in pitch darkness. Since I had fixed the coordinates into the GPS, I had no problem in finding the Lello. This was the first time I had gone to the movies by dinghy and found my way home by GPS. Technology was brilliant! Where else in the world could I do this?

With arrangements set, I made my way to be hauled out. As I came alongside I noted a loud thud when I put her astern. For the moment it did not matter since I was alongside and ready to be hauled out. Lance, another South African, looked at me quizzically as she was hauled out. There was a fresh coat of 'anti-barnacle paint' on her already. I was happy to hear that it occurred on a regular basis. Life on the hard was no fun. The mosquitoes were incessant! Even while I was showering they would take a chance. The only thing that topped the noise of the mosquitoes was the aeroplanes taking off, which caused the boat to vibrate. I neglected to take note of the airport when making enquiries. Not very bright. This was a 'special mistake' - I could not think of being anywhere worse as it was the 22nd and in three days it would be Christmas. I had no idea how long I would be here, this would be determined by 'the drip'. I am not referring to anyone - my pastime here was reduced to watching water drip from my hull. This time, the drips seem abnormally small; still I kept watch. This continued for four days. Lance was very helpful. He arranged for someone to fix my hull at a fraction of the price I would have paid anywhere else. And he would work over the Christmas period! Another couple of days and I would be back in the water sailing. Because I did not have any experience, my available time was spent trying to find someone experienced enough to sail back to South Africa with me. I found a couple of candidates prepared to do this.

While on the hard I pondered the curiosities of Saint Martin or Saint Maarten (depends on which side of the island you live). It is a strange place. It beats the pants off any Harry Potter story for

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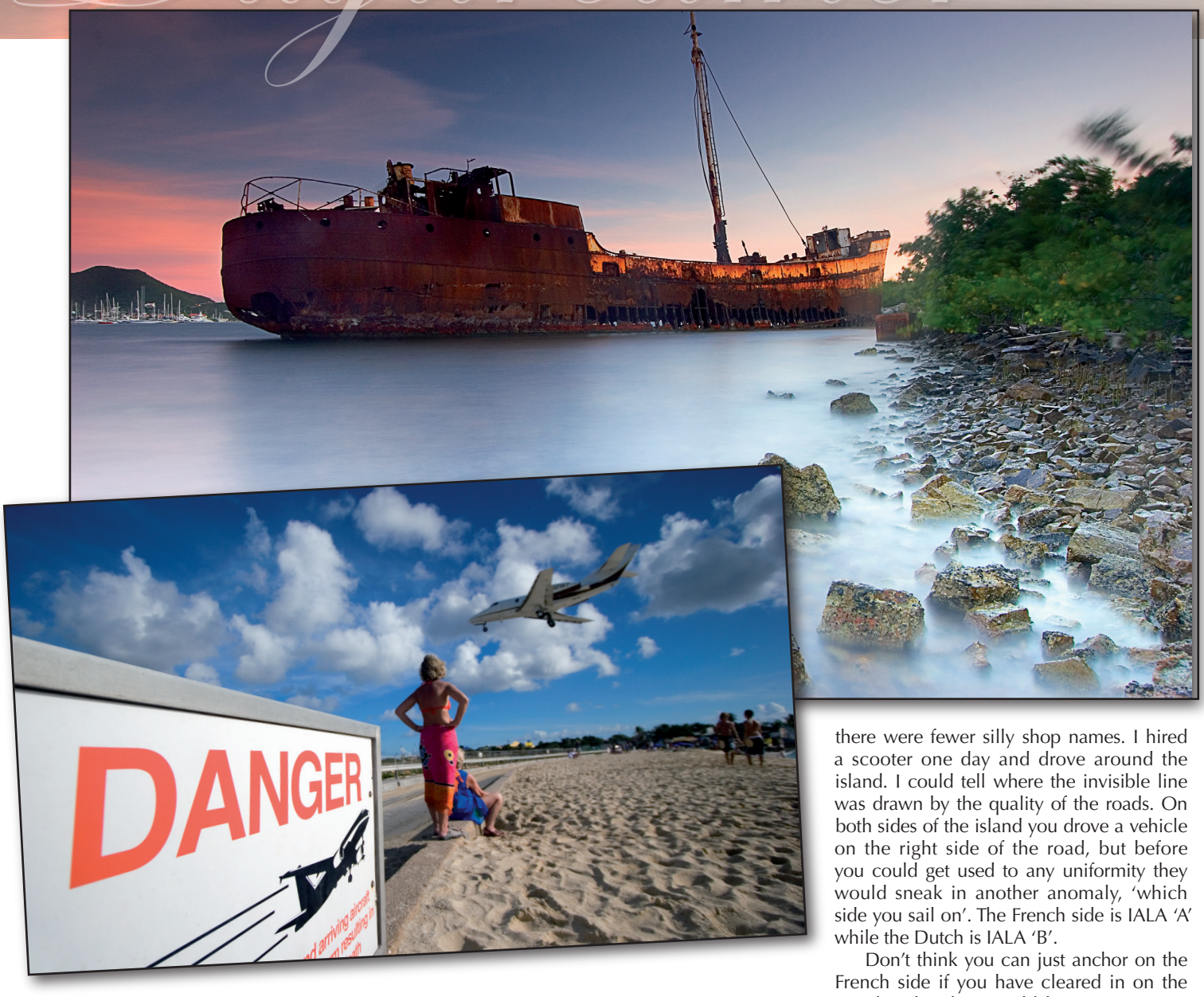
Daydreamer



its sheer bureaucratic oddities. To start off with, the island belongs to the French and to the Dutch. Only the French side is part of the EU, yet they both belong to countries in the EU. On the French side they speak French; on the Dutch side… well no…they don't speak Dutch, but I know of seven other languages including Afrikaans! On the French side the Euro was widely used and most currencies were accepted, on the Dutch side the Euro was not accepted, yet the Dutch guilder was, but no one traded with the Guilder. I never found out why. This was strange but not as strange as advertising the prices in a currency that they never traded in - the Caribbean dollar. I stuck to American Dollars like everyone else, except on the French side where if you bought something your change was given in Euros, not much help when I was going back to the Dutch side.

Calling from abroad (which in this case includes either side of the island as the French bit is seen as part of Guadeloupe; while the Dutch as part of the Netherlands Antilles) requires a separate dialling code for both sides. That I can understand but many business people carried two cell phones. If you called the other side on a cell phone it required an international call. Two phones … problem solved. The oddities did not end there. You needed to be careful about what appliance you bought; the French side is 220V while the American, I mean Dutch side is 110V. So moving house meant changing plugs and a couple of appliances. On the French side the locals behaved like the French - even the stray dogs remained aloof. On the Dutch side they behaved American. All said and done, everything seemed far more organized on the French side. The shops were of a much higher standard, houses were built less haphazardly and there were fewer silly shop names. I hired a scooter one day and drove around the island. I could tell where the invisible line was drawn by the quality of the roads. On both sides of the island you drove a vehicle on the right side of the road, but before you could get used to any uniformity they would sneak in another anomaly, 'which side you sail on'. The French side is IALA 'A' while the Dutch is IALA 'B'.

Don't think you can just anchor on the French side if you have cleared in on the Dutch side. That would be too easy. You have to clear in on the French side first. But at least they let you motor between the two sides in a dinghy unhindered. I half expected them to be on different time zones too, but thankfully they have left time alone and annoyingly opted to agree on 'Island Time'.

Complaining aside, I was happy that I could finally go back into the water for New Year's Eve. Lance manoeuvred my Lello back into the water. As I motored out there was an incredible grating, banging noise. The sound of dollar coins being ground away! I knew immediately that this was going to cost a lot more than the simple repair to the hull. Not only that, but I was taking on water, enough to worry me. Lance assisted and soon we were ready to be hauled out again. After a simple repair and much discussion we agreed that being on the hard over New Year's Eve was about as

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sad as the stray dogs moping about the island. I would need to have serious work carried out to the propeller shaft and the entire stuffing box had been ripped apart.

Lance towed me back out into the lagoon where I anchored in what we believed to be a safe and comfortable location. Two days later, after some heavy winds (aptly named Christmas winds) and much rolling caused by motorboats tearing by, she started to drag again. Except this time I was not on board. Again, I could tell from a distance that she was dragging because she was facing in the wrong direction. I was on my way back from Lance who was going to tow me back in.

Here is my only piece of advice, do not get a 2,5 whatever outboard because the trip back to a drifting boat took forever. It seemed like the boat was dragging away from me instead of toward me. I made it on board just before she came alongside a big steel motor boat containing the German-family-Robinson with his Thai wife and extended family including Rottweiler. I decided to take up as much anchor rode as I could to allow me to drift past this unhappy-big-hairy-man-in-underpants and his Thai smiley wife. Panicked, he launched his dinghy and came alongside me to act as a fender. This was not necessary as Lance arrived in time to tow me back to be hauled out. The German man hung around long enough to tell me that the anchor I carried was a piece of rubbish and that I should get something decent. At this stage I totally agreed with him. Nothing like the sheer excitement of sailing! Stupid daydreams, stupid internet, stupid 'happy-sailing-people' and their silly boat names. If I find that dog from the smiley old American advert.....

Back on the hard! After a good look at the prop shaft and the stuffing box I am told that the boat will be on the hard for at least three weeks. Because of all the fibreglass and the sheer amount of work, there is no way I can stay on board for the duration of this repair. Lance suggests I camp on one of the beaches. I laugh and he doesn't. This scares me more than crashing into a rock. The cost of a flight back to RSA works out to be cheaper than hanging around Saint Maarten. I decide to enlist the help of a yacht broker. If the boat manages to sell in my absence then so be it. But there is no way I am hanging around here. The mosquitoes have no fear of daylight here, they attack at any chance. There would be little chance of survival on the beach in the night.

The problem is that I have already alienated the only broker on the island. This assumption proves incorrect. This is the first mistake I am happy about. Another South African comes to my rescue. He talks faster than I can think, but he knows what he is doing. We agree that I will return in several weeks to attend to her if he has not already sold her. Before he leaves, there is already a Frenchman on his way to have a look. Since it took almost a year to sell the boat to me I am confident that I will return for her. I allow the Frenchman on board. In minutes he is trying to haggle the price down significantly. I am happy to keep the SSB and sell him the boat at the reduced price he offers me. "What is zees SSB? Nooo, I do not need zees ting" he says annoying me further. Were it a car he was buying I could see him kicking the tires.

After he leaves, I get a call from the broker. He tells me that the Frenchman has offered an even more ridiculous amount for the boat than before. Except now he would like 'zees SSB' included. I would not sell it to him now even if he offered me the full price. I leave my shiny blue Lello on the hard. That night I stay in a hotel. I ponder about the last three months. How is it possible that I can go sailing in the Caribbean and land up spending so much time sitting on a yacht, on the land, in view of the Caribbean Sea? This was ridiculous. I also managed to receive a perfectly good yacht in the water, almost hole her and leave her on the land when I leave!

Even leaving the Caribbean proves difficult. The island has run out of fuel, so we have to fly south to refuel the plane in order to fly north. My calamitous trip back to South Africa takes four days. My bag is misplaced, so I spend the remaining days in the same clothes. In this time I reflect on the past three months. I realize the beauty of the Caribbean, I laugh while remembering the planes taking off, and seeing an unsuspecting girl in high heels do a hundred metre sprint with her skirt around her midriff while being sandblasted by the jet as it prepared for take off - hardly the strut she performed minutes before.

Chickens with their baby chicks on the beach, people chopping coconuts and the funny characters I met, some with as little experience as me. On my arrival in South Africa I am met with the news that my Lello has been sold. With sadness, my time of reflection continues. The thing I remember most is how it felt while sailing back to Saint Maarten. The sails filled and *sv Miroba*, the Lello sloop heeled over, watching the GPS clock up the knots, a clear blue sky and equally blue water rushing past me. An experience the sea will not allow me to forget.

Fortunately I bought right and sold right. The inconsequential amount of money I lost on the trip was the result of my stupidity and not because I chose to go sailing. If I had half the chance I would do it all over again. Well ... most of it anyway. I still buy sailing magazines so that I can live other people's adventures, but every now and again I check the classifieds....and I day dream often! ⚓

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