

## Sailing the Windward Islands on a Cruising Catamaran

As documented by Gene Jurrens (pictures by Doug & Marti Olson)

Did you ever dream of making a number of significant ocean passages without squandering valuable vacation time on overnight watches? Did you ever dream of sailing in 30 knot trade winds under full sail without feeling like you were over powered? Did you ever dream of experiencing up close and personal several different West Indian island cultures while rubbing shoulders with hard core cruisers on their terms? Did you ever wonder what it was like sailing outside the hurricane belt but still tasting a sample of Caribbean spice?



*Left to right: Doug, Marti, Kay & Gene down-island at Troy's Mom's place on Carriacou Island.*

Well, four of us middle-aged dreamers did, and so we decided to charter a 38 foot sailing catamaran in the Windward Islands for ten days, and got an opportunity to achieve a feeling of real accomplishment to all of the above.

We started out on an island called St Lucia and concluded

our bareboat charter on the southwest coast of Grenada, below 12 degrees Latitude North, and 82 miles from the coast of Venezuela. This is considered essentially the southeastern "corner" of the Caribbean before you run into South America. This region is fascinating for at least two reasons. First, it's usually very windy but south of the hurricane belt. Second, unlike our experiences in Virgins and the Leeward Islands farther north, there are very few boats here and even fewer charter boats. Big fun.

For your amusement, here are some extracts from the logbook of four erstwhile cruisers, Doug & Marti Olson and Gene & Kay Jurrens, aboard a new and yet un-named catamaran stoutly built in South Africa. This is not so much a travel log as much as some local experiences that might prove to be of some value if you're planning a cruise "down island" in the southeastern Caribbean. Since some of this information may be dated, you might want to get updates as you plan. Specific areas of particular interest we experienced, included getting to the boat from the US, clearing Customs between several island nations, localized sailing conditions, areas of significant crime to avoid,

provisioning idiosyncrasies, getting to know the locals, finding a few tasty restaurants, foraging for lobster, and a secluded but highly social bay where some cruisers hang out. Here we go...

#### **Thursday, April 19, 2001 Travel to St. Lucia**



Twelve hours of flights from Minneapolis to San Juan to St Lucia (2+ hour noisy prop flight) and the Admirals still look fresh! A fifteen minute cab ride saw us arriving late at a nice tropical hotel called the Rainbow (arranged by the Moorings charter company) at Rodney Bay on the north end of the island. The look and feel was not unlike Tortola in the British Virgins. We snacked at a nice restaurant on the main canal to the sea, celebrated Marti's birthday at the bar,

and then off to bed by 2100 hours.

#### **Friday, April 20, 2001 Rodney Bay, St. Lucia to Marigot Bay, St Lucia (by land)**

A nice relaxing morning ashore with a good breakfast (very American, but the milk was chalky!). We started celebrating the Jurrens' wedding anniversary - 32 years today! We took a walk to the beautiful white sand beach where we met a cruiser who was a fellow Minnesotan, cleaning his beached & overturned inflatable dinghy. Jerry and his wife Lil, aboard "Quality Time", a 38 foot Caliber, have been "down island" for two years, expecting to do so for another couple of years. They like the Windward Islands very much, but go "up island" (i.e., the Virgins) when they have neophyte sailors from the States visit (less aggressive sailing "up there", you know).



We caught the 1300 Moorings-arranged thirty minute roller coaster ride (on land) to Marigot Bay to pick up our boat. Got our first glimpse of her – a 38 foot catamaran that was custom-built for The Moorings charter company in South Africa by Robertson and Caine. After a quick

lunch overlooking Marigot Bay, we had our 3PM chart briefing and 4PM boat briefing. This is a relatively small charter base, but quite efficient and very beautiful. Our first experience in the Windwards was with scarce provisions. Our strong recommendation, based on this scarcity, which we would find to be true throughout the Windward Islands, is to have your charter company provision your boat on your arrival. Provisions are generally scarce, obscure, or hard to get to down here. Especially limes, folks, and they're SMALL, so get a lot at every opportunity. But fear not - since bananas are a main crop in these islands, fresh fruit (bananas!) are NOT a problem! It should be obvious where our priorities lie – boat drinks!

Caught a great meal and some wonderful wine at a place in the midst of a mangrove swamp called “JJ’s” where the dance floor in the bar adjoining the restaurant was a pool. Dancers, after a few local concoctions, jumped in the shallow pool, clothes and all, and danced the night away, much to the entertainment of the diners (including us!). Somehow, pictures of this night are nowhere to be found! We relished dessert on the bow of “our” boat at 2400, including what were to become the omnipresent cashews. Then off to bed in anticipation of an early morning departure.

### **Saturday, April 21, 2001 Short hop from Marigot Bay to “The Pitons”**

We cleared customs out of St Lucia by 0930, with an “overtime” provision (and payment), as we would not actually be departing the island until we had made a one day stopover at the Pitons (by the coastal village of Soffriere, St Lucia) down the coast. Doug was kind enough to yield first day captain’s honors to me, and we alternated days as captain.

Not too far for the first sail--about 10 miles. After a quick breakfast, we motored out of Marigot Bay, put up full sail in 20 to 25 knots of Easterly trade winds in 2 to 5 foot seas, and started on what was to be 10 days of sailing on a port beam reach! As the winds built, Doug swears he fell victim to some evil potion slipped into the previous night’s wine at JJ’s, causing him some gastrointestinal distress during the exertion of reefing the mains’l... foredeck blues--a curse that I would share with him later in the voyage.

The Pitons are majestic twin mountain peaks well in excess of a thousand feet each that are primary features of the island of St Lucia. About two miles before reaching our anchorage, we



were met underway by our first “boat boy” (Joe). We didn’t think we needed his services. How wrong we were! We picked up our mooring, with his (at that time, unwanted) help, but the mooring balls are spaced so close together (all six of them in a HUGE bay!) that we needed to have a stern line taken ashore and tied around a palm tree. Joe did this for us, which ended up being a LOT of work for him, after which we gratefully gave him “10 EC” (ten dollars in Eastern Caribbean States currency, which was a little less than \$4 US) and a Carib beer. Little did we know at the time, it turns out that this is a legitimate part of the island economy, and the “boat boys” earn their living in this fashion, so by all means, welcome this useful service bargain!

We dinghied our rigid inflatable powered by a five horsepower Mariner outboard motor to the town of Soffriere (“So-FREE” which it wasn’t!) and were met by a cadre of locals who cater to helping visiting mariners, the most prominent of whom was an older gentleman of questionable countenance named Marvin. He wanted to look after our dinghy for us. We had been told by the charter company to always lock our dinghy to the dock or to our boat at all times. Marvin told us “No need to lock. I watch for you”. I said “OK” and he said “Touch my hand before you go”. I shook hands with him and he said, “OK then”. I guessed at that point that we had a contract. Who knew?

Soffriere was our first high voltage culture shock - it truly looked “third world” to us. The



locals appeared to be a fiercely proud people living in poverty, and attempting anything and everything to retain their pride while eeking out a meager living. We had a good lunch of flying fish sandwiches at a restaurant whose proprietor was a European gentleman. He explained that the older well-weathered gentleman who was carrying buckets of seawater from the bay to rinse off the restaurant’s sidewalk below us was doing so in return for the

privilege of living below his restaurant’s patio deck. This way, he explained, he wasn’t taking charity, but was earning his abode. He said, “These are a proud people... to know them is to love them”. Our attitude relaxed considerably when we heard this pearl of local wisdom by way of a German expatriate.

We found a local market to pick up some supplies with brand names we’d never heard of. The actual cuts of meat we found looked largely accidental or maybe even brutally emotional. We were obviously rather out of our element as we seemed to be the center of attention, but the people were nice enough, just surprised to see “yachties” in their market.

As we hustled back to the dock, we saw quite a gathering of “dock boys” passionately discussing some unknown topic among themselves as we passed. The older boys were saying, “Dem’s Marvin’s people - leave ‘em be”, which they did, but the younger boys exclaimed excitedly, “you throw coins in water, we dive for ‘em - good fun!”, so we did, and they all disappeared into the water as if by magic! Marvin was very helpful, passing groceries into the dinghy and helping the girls. Doug and I each gave Marvin “10 EC”, and I felt as if we had earned a dear friend for life.

Back to the boat (thankfully) for a well-earned dinner of burgers, beer, beans & chips... Delightful! After being rewarded with a fabulous sunset, we retired early for the next day’s “long” crossing. The Pitons are spectacular. We had a delightful first day of sailing and “living aboard”, but of far greater and more profound import, we had learned how to trust a stranger in a strange land, and had been gratified by knowing we had gotten it right!

**Sunday, April 22, 2001 Pitons,  
St Lucia to South End of St  
Vincent (45 Miles)**



The alarm annoyingly clattered at 0545 announcing the beginning of a long day at sea. Papaya and English muffins were punctuated by the worst alleged French coffee we had ever tasted. We weren’t sure it was even coffee! Underway at 0730 under full sail into our first squall with sustained 30+ knot winds and lots of spray (Doug donned his dive mask at the helm). The boat handled beautifully, however, and the wind dropped back to 20 to 25 knots, so we kept full sail for awhile. When it piped back up to a steady 30 knots again, we reefed jib and main. The seas were 10 feet, 15 at times.

A rather wild ride, but the boat felt very stable. The foredeck, however, during the reefing operation, dealt out a few challenges for yours truly. I harnessed and tethered myself to the mast while reefing the main. The boat had a hard foredeck, led forward by two sizeable trampolines. 15 foot beam seas will spank the bottom of a cat smartly, and strain tons of sea water through those tramps in a noisy and messy manner, which added considerably to the level of interest of this cat’s foredeck duties. Oh yeah... I really do need to get a waterproof camera to record moments such as these.

Leaving the northern tip of St Vincent several miles to windward, according to local knowledge, to avoid “island effect” (increased “blusteriness”), we sailed down the coast of St. Vincent, a large mountainous island, much of which we were advised to give a wide berth due to local crime at that point in time that some might prefer to label “piracy”, and arrived at a nice harbor called Young Island Cut for a mooring with a local celebrity named Charlie Tango. We hailed him on VHF channel 68, and he promptly sent

one of “his boys” to assist us. Quite an eight hour passage! We could hardly stay awake, but got ourselves to dinner at the Lime Pub by way of Charlie’s rather conspiratorial recommendation. Great seafood, but sitting on the veranda, we were advised not to place



our bags too close to the edge of the lanai. We found out why. There were some local “hooligans” who were being chased past the restaurant on foot by the local authorities while we were sipping our gin ‘n tonics... never boring, as they say...) We “go back ship” for early bed in anticipation of tomorrow’s passage to the island of Bequia (“BEK-wee”).

### **Monday, April 23, 2001 Young Island Cut, St Vincent to Admiralty Bay, Bequia**

No alarm clocks this morning as we only have a short sail ahead of us - about 8 miles or so between islands. After yesterday’s “sled ride”, discretion being the better part of valor (and a bit of a queasy stomach for some of the crew playing no small role), we decided to start with a reef, and took in another, as we neared the “Bequia Blast” a local phenomenon of the unabated Atlantic fetch between the islands, coupled with “island effect” of “Kick ‘em Jenny”, a small island off the north coast of Bequia.

This pass is notorious for kicking up a wonderful gusty surprise for unwary sailors, which only INTENSIFIES as you come into the LEE of the point off Admiralty Bay. We were delighted to be forewarned of this little surprise package. Even so, with a 40+ knot blast, I learned that two turns around the jib sheet winch is not enough. Releasing the rope clutch, the sheet “blasted” through my right hand, taking a good deal of the skin from the palm of that hand with it! Anyway, this was nice souvenir. The jib reefed without further ado, and we made Admiralty Bay, now feeling saltier than ever, and by 1100 hours!

We tied to a mooring owned by “Bloody Mary”, one of the small boat helpers (unlike the Virgins, it is very difficult to pick up a mooring without help from a “dinghy” - no pennant, and the ball must be physically picked up out of the water to attach to its underside. We have a theory that this is a planned “inconvenience” so as to make it necessary to contribute to the local economy, making it necessary to pay for the service of helping “yachties” moor their boats. We now pay for this sort of small service willingly--now that our Soffriere “paranoia” was a lesson well learned, and obscured in our distant history - two whole days ago!.

Admiralty Bay was a beautiful anchorage. We had lunch aboard followed by a dinghy trip into town to clear customs into the Grenadines. We chose not to fly our quarantine flag as they're a bit lax about requiring this down here, but did promptly and proudly hoist our Grenadines courtesy flag, even before making port.



Upon our arrival at the dinghy dock, we immediately became “I-mon’s people”. Once again, I-mon assured us that he would watch our dinghy faithfully for us, so “no need to lock it up, Mon. I-mon’s here”. So we placed our trust in I-mon, and away we went, confident that our dinghy would indeed be there on our return. Well, at least that’s our story. We still worried.

Our quest this vacation would be the ongoing saga of gathering provisions - we had two simple requirements. First, we wanted to recognize what we were going to eat and drink. And second, we needed BROWNIES, which were surprisingly hard to find (unlike the British Virgin Islands). We were learning. Oh yeah, we also wanted some cool souvenirs. After all, we’re still Americans AND charterers!

After much scrounging around in local markets, souvenir shops, and a few other local haunts (including Mauvin’s model ship shop - Bequia is known for their “boatmen”, and they have a very distinctive style of small sailing workboats that are used for everything from offshore fishing to the annual Summer regatta, which they take VERY seriously) we “go back ship” by about 1630 with some supplies and a few souvenirs (but no model ships - very spendy).

We cleaned up for “happy hour” on the foredeck, and were entertained by a local singing t-shirt vendor who visited us with his wares in his boat. When we tipped him liberally, we thought he would leave. On the contrary, he then felt compelled to stay and give us our money’s worth in song (after song, after song!). The girls abandoned us to fix dinner, so Doug and I listened (and listened!).



Grilled chicken, a Caesar salad and garlic mashed potatoes, served with a nice red wine, made for a perfect evening on board (I didn't say we were ROUGHING it!). We even



had brownies (of a sort) on the foredeck for our traditional “howling at the moon” (even though almost no moon!). We didn't know that down in these latitudes, the new moon actually SMILES at you ever so boisterously! Even without wine and brownies!

## Tuesday, April 24, 2001 Bequia

We stayed put here in Bequia today. Kay and I went for groceries this morning while Marti and Doug cleaned up the boat. Daffodil Marine Services in Admiralty Bay have this wonderful little fleet of powered barges that deliver diesel, water and ice, so we took on water and ice. Kay and I went foraging at Doris's, who gets HER supplies from the Windjammer supply ships, and makes up the prices at the cash register... Nice stuff but WOW! Do NOT go to Doris if you're looking for a deal. I think the prices escalated after Kay commented that they seemed high. Oh well.

Marti made some wonderful tuna pasta salad for lunch, and we dropped our mooring to move not too far to Lower Admiralty Bay also on Bequia to drop the hook in a more secluded setting. We spent a nearly guilt-free afternoon sunning (and shading) and reading. Doug and Marti took a dinghy ride around the bay before cleaning up for dinner.

Sunset drinks on the boat were followed by a dinghy ride to dinner. The ride ashore involved negotiating some non-trivial surf to beach the dinghy. This was challenging, and most of us were a more than a bit soggy at dinner. I knew this was a potential issue when Captain Doug got “the look” from his charming wife, Admiral Marti. We





pulled the dinghy well above the tide line and secured it to a sea grape tree. We received some local help who actually refused a tip for their help. We insisted, and hoped we hadn't unintentionally insulted them. "Coco's Place" was a rather arduous hike up the mountain, but what a view of Admiralty Bay! The food & company was unsurpassed as well, after another "colorful" dinghy launch, with Doug chest deep in his dinner clothes! We "go back ship" and on board for the night by 2100 hours.

### **Wednesday, April 25, 2001 Bequia to the Tobago Cays ("Ta-BAY-go Keys")**

After a breakfast of bagels, cheese, salami and coffee on the boat, we weighed anchor for



what was reported to be one of the most beautiful spots on earth - the Tobago Cays. Once we wove our way through the rather tricky approach (between the formidable Balene Rocks and the reef system circling these three uninhabited sand islands, we dropped our hook twice in order to get the right location and holding (45 pound CQR plow with all chain rode) as there were spots of poor holding grass but far more good holding sand.

These keys were every bit as beautiful as advertised. Palms and sand islands with an uninhibited view of Atlantic dawns off our bow (prevailing Easterly trades plumbed us in that direction) and Caribbean sunsets off our stern. In a word, unbelievable!

With our catamaran, affectionately named "Hull 38" (too new for a real name and better



than “Nobody”), we anchored in 5 feet of water. This was the shallowest anchorage any of us “deep keelers” had ever anchored overnight! One of the most beautiful sunsets ever was coupled with some terrific tuna steaks on the grill. We were going through charcoal briquettes and lighter fluid like crazy. We all decided we’re staying in this place at least one more night for sure. If we were in our own boats, maybe we’d stay a month or two ! Oh, the stuff of dreams!

#### **Thursday, April 26, 2001 Still in the Tobago Cays**

We moved the boat a few hundred yards closer to the incredible reef system that surrounded the Cays, so Doug and Kay would have less work against the Atlantic current to snorkel the reef. I was staying dry due to lack of surface flesh on my wounded paw. They toured the reef leisurely where Kay reported spotting a giant Eagle Ray. Way to go, guys!

There was never shortage of boat vendors, that is, the local people who sell their wares from their little wood boats. These visits can be annoying when you’re trying to take a peaceful nap, but a convenience if you’re willing to pay a premium. Even though Marti had made signs that we hung on the shrouds while in Soffriere to stave these visitors off when we’re napping, etc. (the signs say “Not buying right now, come back when sign gone”) we did not hang these signs up here, and it was great fun. We were offered t-shirts, shorts, jewelry, ice & lobster.

This last word became our mantra for the day. It may sound incredulous, but we bought a total of 31 POUNDS of lobster during the course of that day (two lobsters from “Eddie



Murphy” & two from “Walter” – they obviously all choose their own “stage names” carefully). We boiled one (no pot aboard big enough so we had to rotate “him” vertically!) And the other filled our entire grill! This after “babysitting” these two HUGE lobsters in a bucket of water until lunch time, at which point, Eddie returned to kill & clean these monsters for us.

You’ll be glad to know that the girls stopped short of naming them before cooking them (remorsefully). Later, Walter came by, we bought two more lobsters from him, and he offered to have Nikki “over on da island” cook ‘em for us for 20 EC. “DONE!” Doug and I had another very worldly experience when we went ashore to the small “uninhabited” island in the Cays called Baradal. The few local men there looked to be merely camping out, which may have been a bad assumption, but it was a

very primitive camp. They were very accommodating, however. This can ONLY be best described late in the day with much embellishment!



We had a great dinner on the boat to another unbelievable sunset, wonderful camaraderie, and early bed by 2100 hours (seems to be an emerging trend!).

### **Friday, April 27, 2001 Tobago Cays to Union Island to Palm Island**

Underway for a short sail around the island of Mayreau to Clifton Harbor on Union Island, just another 8 miles or so to the west southwest to clear Customs out of the Grenadines. These customs procedures must be taken rather seriously, as they can delay your departure if not handled properly. I stayed aboard to watch the boat, which we felt might be prudent



in this harbor. We tucked right into the center of a semi-circular reef in the center of the harbor and dropped the hook after declining a rather insistent young man who wanted us to tie to a mooring. We had read in Chris Doyle's cruising guide that these particular moorings belonged to some large day cruising cats, and we declined the young gentleman's rather insistent offers (as in MULTIPLE).

Doug, Marti and Kay dinghied ashore. Doug cleared Customs and had to walk about a half mile to the Airport to Immigration. We later found out "go two places, see three men", which meant go to Customs & Immigration, ensure you go through (pay!) Customs and Immigration to clear the PEOPLE, and then to the Port Authority to clear the BOAT! This is an important safety tip for all you first-time international campers out there.

The girls found some more supplies, which once again seemed to preoccupy us on this



trip as we constantly had difficulty finding what we were looking for WHERE ARE THE BROWNIES??!! My quest was DIET PEPSI (I failed miserably).

After only a couple of hours in Clifton, we weighed anchor for Palm Island. And as I look at the palm of my injured right hand, from this point on, I am convinced that this island is now my personal namesake.

Palm is a small resort island, and was reported to be a beautiful anchorage. It was. We dropped the hook and luxuriously napped and read the afternoon away. We went ashore for a drink at a very exclusive resort and then "go back ship" for a wonderful finger food dinner and wine. This was a very nice anchorage, but since the winds were Easterly (surprise!) and the seas were southerly rolling over a reef to our Starboard, we rolled pretty dramatically all night. We later learned an anchor bridle trick that would have helped keep us pointed more into the rolling seas to minimize our beam roll using a



pennant low on the anchor rode led back to a snatch block on the boat opposite the oncoming rolling sea. Another line is made off to a cleat, led thru this block and then made back off to the same cleat. This line is used as an adjustment line to put the boat at an angle to the lead of the anchor rode. The net effect is to swing the boat more toward the oncoming seas and at an angle to the wind. Cool. Wish we had known this trick that night! Although interestingly, it really didn't bother us too much - guess we're getting "saltier". Tomorrow we make for the island of Carriacou.

### **Saturday, April 28, 2001 Palm Island to Hillsborough Bay, Carriacou to Sandy Island to Tyrell Bay, Carriacou**

Wonderful breakfast rolls were a treat on the boat at Palm Island. Then we got underway to Carriacou. We stopped at Hillsborough Bay to clear Customs into the Grenadines and again, pick up some supplies. It took two tries to set the hook in this protected but somewhat windy bay (the picture below was taken after the wind had settled WAY down).



After a short stop in this rather colorful and very busy town, we moved the boat to a small spit of an sometimes dry land called Sandy Island, which was basically only a sand bar above water with a few palm trees on it, and it was the only barrier between us and a feisty Caribbean. Another GORGEOUS (day) anchorage, and another first for Doug and me - the NEW record for our shallowest

anchorage in 4.1 feet of water! Cats are cool. Doug even took a picture of the depth sounding.

After a very nice lunch and a very refreshing passing tropical shower (the word "shower" takes on a whole new meaning for us now - memories are made of this), we moved on to Tyrell Bay & dropped the hook after just a short motor around a rather dramatic headland on Carriacou.



A young boatman named Troy immediately came alongside and talked us into some local oysters at his Mom's restaurant later for happy hour. He needed to know how many we

wanted as he had to go diving for them in the Mangrove swamp across the bay... talk about fresh!

Marti & Doug decided to go for a dinghy cruise of the nearby backwater. Later we all took a walk through the small town waterfront, which was recovering from a significant storm earlier in the season. Troy's mom's restaurant, the Twilight, turned out to be the best restaurant in town, so we stayed for dinner. The food was good, but Kay preferred to share her whitefish with the resident kitty.



Early to bed for the crossing to Grenada in the morning

**Sunday, April 29, 2001 Tyrell Bay, Carriacou to Hog Island, Southwest Grenada**

We all slept the sleep of the dead. Alarm sounded at 0600. I grew to hate that alarm. We were underway at 0710 after a light breakfast, for our longest open water

passage of some 45 nautical miles. This impressed those of us who are normally Midwestern weekend lake sailors! The winds started us out at 15 to 20 knots, so full sail in 3 to 6 foot seas.

We had carefully plotted a GPS waypoint for the summit of a submerged volcano, and it was our objective to pass directly over it. With a GPS estimated position error of less than 15 feet, it seemed our odds were pretty good with a light touch at the helm. While in several hundred meters of water, for about 10 seconds, the depth sounder read 16 feet! In the middle of the ocean! We filmed some unusual wave formations almost exactly where we predicted the volcano's location to be, so we can only conclude that we nailed this charted phenomenon! Kay was disappointed, however, that the water temperature didn't change--it held rock steady at 88.7 degrees. It is now ill-advised to pass over that formation as it has gone active to some extent and is a charted hazard to navigation.

After blowing past the entire western coast of the island of Grenada, which is some 17 miles long, and standing off by a good ten miles from this heavily forested and mountainous island, we have been on a port tack for over 100 miles! In fact, in over nine days of sailing, we have yet to tack the boat! So we decided to overshoot our rounding of the southwest coast of Grenada, with Trinidad and Venezuela only 82 miles away on a course of 210 degrees. But then our whole trip had been at 210 degrees so far. This is when we decided to actually tack the boat just for the hell of it!

Well, we made such a mess of it that Doug and I embarrassed ourselves in front of the girls. First, the new lazy sheet got hung up on a cleat on the mast as we started to bring this beamy cat through the wind. Then the working sheet got wrapped around one of the mast winches. THEN the lazy sheet had no stopper knot in its bitter end (I am SO

embarrassed!), and blew right through the clutch and started wrapping itself around the working sheet. So, discretion still being the better part of valor (in spite of unabashed testosterone-perfumed humiliation), we dropped the sails and just motored the last couple of miles. We poked into the truly unimpressive True Blue Bay on the south coast, but decided to proceed further east to the very tricky entrance to Hog Island, reputed to be a haunt for cruising sailors. Folks, it was every bit that. We committed to spending the night in this colorful cruiser's haven, our last night on the boat, even though it was a forbidden "red zone" according to our charter company.

We weaved our way carefully through three overlapping unmarked reefs at the entrance, except for one badly worn & dubiously positioned Clorox bottle, and avoided two nasty short bars inside the bay adjacent to Hog Island. After dropping the hook and cleaning up, we were invited by a couple on an Island Trader Motorsailer, a sister ship to our "Sojourn", to come to a BBQ on the beach that happens there on Sunday nights. These were really warm and wonderful folks having a good time with some of the locals, who also were delightful company.



Hog Island was truly a cruisers' hideaway, and a place where some folks leave their boats during the storm season as this region is usually south of the hurricane belt, while they fly home to see grandkids, take care of business before returning to "the life". We liked Hog Island a lot.

### **Monday, April 30 Hog Island to Mt. Hartman Bay, Southwest Grenada**

After waking up to gentle dinghy wakes, we relished our traditional shipboard breakfast - bananas, bread, butter and coffee or juice. Kay and I went to visit our sister ship, "Island Dove". She was clearly a VERY salty cruising boat, complete with wind generator, solar cells, a six gallon plastic gas "can" for vodka storage (NOT for the engine!), and another for rum.



Tommy was the honorary sixty-seven year young mayor of Hog Island, and he had the hat to prove it, having been on the hook there for 4 months. His partner of ten years (NOT wife, she was clear to point out), Carolyn, was a self-proclaimed nurse for their travels, rendering first aid where needed to cruisers and locals alike. She had to leave during our visit. Carolyn was a 70 year old MAD woman in her overpowered hard dinghy!

She had to go negotiate with (beg) Grenada Immigration for an extension to her visa so she could be there when her bridge (dental work) arrived. She claimed she did not want to outrun her teeth! They had just completed filling their water tanks and deck buckets from the previous night's sweet water showers. They had been living on "Island Dove" through the islands for ten years, and previous to that, their Gulfstar 44 had been destroyed in St Croix by Hurricane Hugo. They were quite a couple. Later we were to see a picture of their vessel on a voyage in the cruising pages of Bob Bitchin's "Latitudes and Attitudes" magazine!

Before lunch, Doug and Marti took a dinghy ride to explore the harbors surrounding Hog Island. All we ever saw were dogs, but only heard "the" cow we had learned was a prominent fixture on the tiny island, which made us wonder how it got there – some swarthy cruising boat? So where's the hog? We never did see or hear him (her).

After lunch, we moved the boat to our last anchorage in adjacent Secret Harbor in Mt. Hartman Bay, the Grenada Moorings charter base where we would turn in our boat. We went ashore to scope things out, had something cold to drink and came back to the boat to



read and relax. For you BVI sailors, by now you should have noticed something conspicuous by its absence in many of the pictures – zillions of boats that aren't there!

After happy hour on the boat, we went to the Secret Harbor Resort for a drink and the best damn cheeseburger in the Windwards (maybe in the world – perception forged by deprivation creates a powerful human experience!). We were obviously resolving a beef deficit.

## **Tuesday, May 1, 2001 Mt. Hartman Bay, Southwest Grenada**

This was to be our last morning afloat for this trip. Breakfast ashore (eggs, bacon, potatoes, toast, the works - the first in 10 days!) at the Secret Harbor Resort. This place was really something special! Doug did a masterful job of docking our beamy catamaran (twin engines are nice, huh Doug!). At about 0930, we sadly moved off the boat. Somehow, we





messed up the Customs papers for the boat somewhere along the line (remember, “always go to two places, and see three men” in this part of the world), so Cosmos, the delivery captain who would return the boat to St. Lucia for us, said he would straighten it out for us. Go Cosmos!

“May Day” (not to be confused with “Mayday!!”) is a very special holiday in Grenada. They are an independent nation, and this is the day that anyone who has political opinions is penalty-free for voicing those opinions, whatever they may be. Everywhere we went radios were on and tuned to “the speeches”. All the workers were proudly wearing their union shirts and caps. It was delightful to see a people so engaged in their political process, and a privilege for us to share one of their special days with them.

We were finally back in full-blown tourist mode, after being in what seemed more like adventurer mode for the last ten days, so we did the boutique thing, we checked into fabulous rooms at the resort and relaxed on the decks off our rooms overlooking the harbor, with Bougainvillea blossoms bursting right below our deck right over the water, air conditioned rooms (air conditioned rooms!), a bathroom with a gorgeous tile tub and a bidet (a bidet!). A bit of heaven delivered.

We celebrated a wonderful farewell to Grenada and the Windward Islands over a five star meal at 1900 and early to bed for an early flight. This could be the fastest passing two week vacation we’ve ever experienced, yet it seems ages since we were in the Rainbow Hotel in St. Lucia.

### **Wednesday, May 2, 2001 Travel Home**

0600 taxi to the airport, 20 hours to get home, and the fantasy is over (for now). We are now blessed with a cadre of incredible memories, we suffered no major mishaps (only minor ones), and enjoyed, once again, the camaraderie of wonderful old friends, and made some new ones in the bargain. Life is good. We are indeed blessed. Here ends the log of Hull #38, Windward Islands, West Indies, Spring 2001.

In a word, “Wow!”

See ya, Hull 38!

