

THE JOURNAL OF THE  AMERICAN SAILING ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN SAILING

FEATURE STORY: FIRST ANNUAL ASA SAN JUAN ISLANDS FLOTILLA

So now you are a competent skipper, thanks to your ASA training and sailing in local waters. But the real draw of sailing for many of us is cruising new and exciting places. ASA has made that experience easy and enjoyable, providing guided flotilla sailing each year in the British Virgin Islands and the San Juan Islands of Washington State, as well as the more laid-back ASA Member Event in Antigua.

Our first ASA San Juan Islands flotilla in July of this year explored six of these beautiful islands just south of the Canadian border in northwest Washington State.



The ASA San Juan Islands flotilla provided a chance for experienced sailors as well as our youngest future ASA members to enjoy this picturesque area.

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ADVENTURES IN CRUISING • CAPTAIN STACEY BROOKS



Captain Stacey and two sailors relax in the cockpit, "chilling out after a fun day's sail."

When I first thought of going to Yugoslavia it was late in 1989 when I was in the middle of college and had a serious case of the backpacking bug. I was going to jump on the ferry in Italy and cruise across the Adriatic to Split, which I had heard was amazingly beautiful. Instead, war broke out in major proportions before I had a chance to get there so my travels and wanderlust were diverted to the Greek islands. Over the years, I had thought of returning but had not had the chance.

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Cathie and Peter Trogdon, owners of Weems and Plath, stand on either side of George Greenleaf, ASA's oldest living instructor at the age of 98. He turned 98 on Oct. 13th.

ASA celebrated its 25th anniversary with a formal reception at the recent Annapolis Boat Show. The event, held at the historic Maryland Inn in downtown Annapolis, hosted approximately 100 people, including ASA's staff, Board of Directors, Instructors and Affiliate representatives. Top sailing industry executives also attended the Saturday evening invitation-only event to celebrate ASA's progress since its inception in 1983.

One of the highlights of the event was a special appearance by ASA's oldest living ASA Certified Instructor, George Greenleaf who turned 98 on October 13. He was presented with a special gift of a Weems and Plath clock/barometer in honor of his longevity and achievements as a long-time ASA instructor.

ASA Founder and Chairman of the Board Lenny Shabes recounted the events that inspired the formation of American Sailing Association. Shabes, an accomplished entrepreneur and television executive, said that he considers his success in starting ASA as his top business achievement.

Peter Isler and Harry Munns, both of whom have been involved with ASA since its early days, also spoke about their experiences. While Isler is now well-known as a sailing industry spokesperson and world-famous sailboat racer, he recalled the early days when, "Lenny was my first boss, and I was doing PR for ASA." Isler now sits on the ASA Board and helps guide its management and future direction.

Munns, ASA's Executive Director for its first 20 years, talked about the satisfaction he has derived from being a part of an organization that has helped so many people enjoy sailing. Munns personally recruited ASA's first Affiliates and Instructor Evaluators in 1983. Currently, ASA has over 300 schools, 70 I.E.s, and 1,400 instructors.

Many of the attendees commented that the reception's location was "classy" or "historical" — perfect for a 25th anniversary event.

The Charley Noble

Celebrating ASA's 25th anniversary in Annapolis was fantastic — great venue, fantastic people, super food and drinks. Then, as the guests were leaving, an ASA board member approached me: "So Charlie, what do we have planned for next year?" After all, as the Executive Director in charge of charting our organization's future, ASA's first 25 great years are now yesterday's news. Here is what I said:



"There will be some fantastic new courses, educational programs and educational textbooks. We'll add some strong, new member benefits and member events. However, our biggest focus will be on continuing to improve quality."

ASA has grown tremendously, and we must insure that the quality of our products remain strong. Now, we will be adding even higher standards for all the component groups in the ASA system: affiliates, instructor evaluators and instructors.

Though many of these new requirements for our schools and instructors will not be visible directly to the sailing public, I do think that, over time, it will strengthen ASA's reputation for quality ... and it's the best investment ASA can make in itself.

"Charley Noble" is the old time nautical name for the smokestack over a galley ... So I'll try to keep any "hot air" in the American Sailing Journal confined to this column.

THE AMERICAN SAILING JOURNAL

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FEATURE STORY

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Activities included mooring at remote state parks accessible only by boat, anchoring in isolated coves, dining at fine shore-side resorts, participating in dinghy racing, a potluck, log rolling, swimming, crabbing, and a raft up. The experience was both fun and challenging. Ten boats with 45 participants got in a lot of sailing, seamanship and adventure with most exploring these waters for the first time, under the leadership of San Juan veteran, ASA instructor and USCG captain Roger Philips. The group spotted orca whales, dolphins, seals and bald eagles along the way.

Except for the commodore, none of the skippers had cruised these waters before, but all had ASA 103, 104 or equivalent experience and had put in time studying the charts of the islands and of our intended route. The skippers got a very informative and useful briefing from Roger Van Dyken, owner of San Juan Sailing, on the evening before our departure. That, combined with a daily morning radio net with commodore previewing the day's route, any hazards to watch out for and evening plans, kept everybody out of trouble. Each skipper could decide daily to stick close to the flag vessel or set out on their own, so long as all boats converged on the agreed destination before dark.

Sailors of all sorts

Most of the boat crews were made up either of groups of friends or families. We had a number of children along. A few crews were comprised of single sailors who were matched up with willing skippers by the flotilla organizer. All but one of the boats were chartered locally. The fleet got underway from Squalicum Harbor in picturesque Bellingham, Wa., and, after a welcome party on the beach, we were treated to moonrise at anchor on our first evening in Echo Bay on Sucia Island (the entire island is a state park). Next morning we headed west into the heart of the San Juans. We expected to see orca whales the following day when cruising down the west side of San Juan Island. There, the strong tidal current from the Strait of Juan de Fuca hitting the island concentrates the salmon, which draws the whales.

Instead, most of the fleet were surprised to encounter two frolicking orca pods just as we tacked around Turn Point on Stuart Island. When we started to see the splashes and tall black dorsal fins all around us, we have



(Above) Moonlit hills provide a tranquil background as the flotilla vessels lie peacefully at anchor in the San Juan Islands. (Below) The author, Roger Philips, enjoys his time at the wheel.



to and gathered at the rails. The whales put on quite a show for us, with one lucky photographer capturing a rare fluke display.

A fun time was had at the grand dinghy race in Reid Harbor on Stuart Island. Prizes were offered for the first three finishers. No big challenge rowing a rubber boat around a floating dock? Well, what if the oarsman is blindfolded and only guided by the voice of a crewmate? After many collisions, boats going backward, and rowing off in the wrong direction, the winner finally crossed the finish line, to be awarded first prize, an inflatable life jacket.

Ab, the eating

ADVENTURES IN CRUISING

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Finally, after becoming a sailor, I thought that there would surely not be a better way than a sailboat to visit this gorgeous region. I was not disappointed!

Croatia has come a long way since it broke out into full-blown war in the early 1990s. Within a mere 10-year period, this fierce nation experienced both the collapse of communism and a war of survival, which was to secure its independence. Croatia is now a mighty and proud independent nation that has come an incredibly long way to rebuild itself in a very short period of time. Through aid, individual loans and financial backing from the World Bank and countries like Germany, Italy and the United States, Croatia has been able to quickly rebuild itself. I was amazed to find ancient walled cities like Dubrovnik to be in such amazing shape. There are still remnants of war scattered through mainland Croatia amongst homes and businesses that are still being rebuilt. However, the outlying islands and areas along the peninsula seem to have been saved some damage. Speaking to locals I heard that Serbs had wanted to preserve these outlying island retreats for themselves so many of these villages and properties were spared.

East meets West

Croatia is a blend of Mediterranean and European flair, which gives it that particular flavor. With nearly 2,000 kilometers of dramatic shoreline and more than 1,000 islands in its waters, Croatia boasts one of the most unique stretches of coastline in all of Europe. Croatia is also situated in the middle of where West meets East – the point where the Catholicism of Western Europe meets the Islam and Orthodox Christianity of the East.

Getting to Croatia was fairly straight-forward; there are many ways to do it. I took a pretty direct route by flying non-stop from Atlanta to Rome then jumping on Croatia Air to Dubrovnik. Most major European cities have connections to Dubrovnik. Another choice would be to take a ferry from the eastern Italian coastline over to either Split or into Dubrovnik. My journey though took me by air. The approach to Dubrovnik by air is quite breathtaking. Dubrovnik is an ancient walled city scattered with brick and red-tiled roofs throughout. The drive from the Dubrovnik airport to the actual town took about 45 minutes, but I can tell you it was more than worth it. The hilly drive along the rocky coastline was absolutely stunning.

As the cab twisted and turned down the coastal highway,



(Top) A vessel rests peacefully at mooring near the hilly island of Mljet. (Below) Lights subtly illuminate the edge of the waterfront in the fading light of evening.

I was mesmerized by the beauty and color of the Adriatic. In places it was ink blue like the deep waters of the Aegean; but then closer to shore and along the scattered rocks, it was transparent and clear. My enthusiastic cab driver pointed out areas of interest and stopped along a cliff so I could get a good view and take pictures of the walled city of Dubrovnik. I was also lucky enough to get a running commentary throughout my journey filling me in on the state of Croatia since the end of the war in the early 1990s.

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ADVENTURES IN CRUISING

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I learned quickly that it was not prudent to ask too many questions about Serbians or the country of Serbia. There is a very strong sense of distaste for the oppression imposed on the Croats by the Serbians as well as many sad memories that still linger today.

Upon arrival into Dubrovnik, I am sure I looked almost as silly as the rest of the tourists as I was awestruck by the beauty of this place. The drive down into town and by the sea was something to behold. Exhausted by my journey, I crumbled into bed that first night dreaming of what it would be like to wake up the next day on the shores of the Adriatic.

A Marvelous Marina

I was not to be disappointed as I sipped strong black coffee by the sea the following morning. Well rested and excited to be there, I met with my first-mate Louize and we headed over to the Sunsail base where we had chartered the yacht. The base itself was two miles up a river and incredibly well protected. I was shocked and pleasantly surprised to find one of the most beautiful and well-equipped marina facilities in all of Europe! The marina itself had slip and dock space for over 1,000 boats. There were four good restaurants, laundry facilities, shower facilities, a huge provisioning store, a glistening lap pool, large fuel dock and chandlery as well as several professionally run charter companies including both Sunsail and The Moorings. This facility could rival marinas in France, Italy and Greece with no problem. In addition, the staff working at both the marina and charter offices was both friendly and helpful and lacked the attitude that is often attached to marinas in France and other parts of the Mediterranean. It was like a breath of fresh air and a very pleasant surprise.

After a day of provisioning and boat walk-through with Sunsail we were ready to welcome our guests. Luckily, everyone arrived with no travel problems or delays, and they were all very excited about being in this beautiful place. That evening, we enjoyed Croatian seafood specialties and experienced for the first time the excellent local wine. The peninsula area we were in is famous for producing some quite amazing wines. We had no problem jumping right in and doing some taste testing!

Up early the next day, we threw off our dock lines and squeezed our way out of our very tight Med Mooring situation. Cruising down the river out to sea at a pleasant six knots we were able to make our first anchorage in under five hours. Sailing north along the coastline, we headed for the island of Sipan and the tiny well-protected seaside village of Luka. Under the excellent



A sailor rows out in a wooden dinghy as the sun sets behind wispy clouds in the background.

navigation of my first-mate Louize, we sneaked our way into the small anchorage with no problems and were one of only six boats there that night. This tiny place was like a small hidden paradise that time had forgotten. In fact a lot of time has passed on this quiet island since Pompey's fleet is said to have evaded the ships of Julius Caesar here.

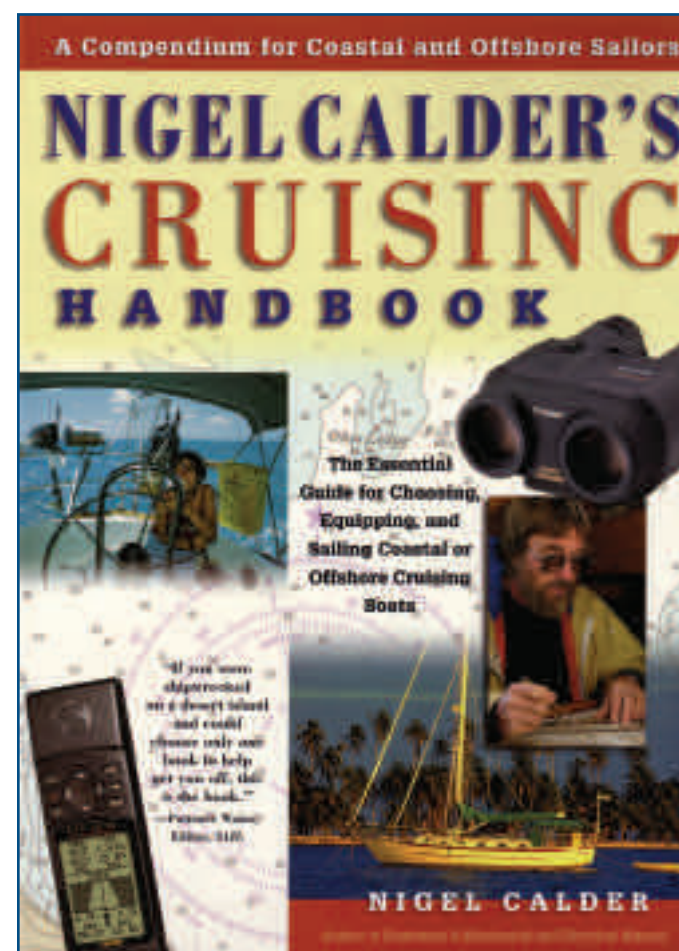
True island food

With one small beautiful church, several quaint cafes and only a handful of houses, it was the perfect first-stop and introduction to this magnificent cruising ground. After several fine bottles of wine, local cheeses and a well-needed shower we jumped in our small dinghy and headed to shore. This place smelled of lavender and the sea. It was delicious! We took a stroll around the horseshoe shaped harbor and soon found ourselves at the end of the walk ... right next to a quaint restaurant simply named Marka. With several window boxes filled with flowers and a couple of blue and white checkered tables resting right next to the water's edge we were instantly drawn to this place. We soon learned that the only waiter was the very friendly and proud owner himself. Shortly after, we knew he made his own olive oil, fished every morning with his family for the restaurant, and the menu was simply whatever was in season and whatever he happened to pull in on the end of his line that day. He also informed us that the only wines were local – no more than an island or two away. We had just found heaven.

We sat among friends that night and by the end of the evening we felt like we were family. As we drank robust local red wines, we watched dishes flow to the table full to the brim with grilled prawns tossed in his olive oil and fresh herbs.

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ASA MEMBER BOOK REVIEW • BY MICHAEL BASTIN



Title: Nigel Calder's Cruising Handbook

Author: Nigel Calder

Publisher: McGraw Hill, 2001

Pages: 588

The name of Nigel Calder's book is a bit of a misnomer. At almost 600 large pages it is hardly a handbook and with such a depth and breadth of information could instead be called a textbook for cruising. Unlike a lot of textbooks, however, it is very readable and written in a way that allows the reader to read from cover to cover or jump around to sections of interest as required. As well as containing a lot of valuable information, the book is filled with illustrations that clarify the points being made and many chapters include checklists that will aid in real world decisions.

I was also very pleased to find that even though it is a very large book, it is bound in such a way that no matter where it is opened it lays flat allowing the reader to follow instructions from the book while their hands are otherwise occupied (i.e. when splicing a line).

As an avid sailor and hopeful future circumnavigator, books of this kind always get my attention. Often,

however, they leave me disappointed as they have a lot of breadth and no depth, or conversely delve into so much detail that it's overwhelming or boring, but Nigel Calder seems to have captured the perfect balance. The only shortfall, in my opinion, was the total absence of any content to do with cruising multi-hulls. On the up side, most of the information throughout the book is relevant whether you have a mono- or multi-hulled vessel.

The book is organized into two sections, the first focusing on the type and attributes of a good cruising boat, and the second on the actual cruising skills that a sailor needs to get out there and do it.

In the first section, Nigel takes us through everything that you should consider when looking for the "perfect" cruising boat. From hull designs and materials to deck layouts and mechanicals, nothing is overlooked. He even has a section on options to acquire that first cruising boat. Of course, his focus is on the best, or most desirable characteristics in a cruising yacht, and anyone actually buying a boat would be hard pressed to get the perfect boat, especially if they are on a budget. However, the book does get you thinking about what you want or need in a cruising boat. Then the compromises are up to you and your budget. To assist you when you are finally ready to buy that first boat there is a very comprehensive Questionnaire and Checklist at the end of the first section. This would prove invaluable when inspecting and comparing possible cruising boats.

Once you have your yacht and are ready to go cruising, the second section covers the sailing and cruising skills as well as possible issues faced by cruisers. The chapters in this section deal with such varied topics as Navigation, Weather and how to handle it, and even Logistical Considerations, and are written in a way that anyone can understand. Again, he does a great job in explaining all of the aspects of cruising, and I was especially interested in his chapter called "The Ditty Bag" that covers a variety of subjects from ropes and sail repairs, to dinghies and wet weather gear. Of course, in my opinion, sailors planning on needing the information in the Navigation and Weather sections might be better served in taking classes or having experienced crew along rather than just reading these sections. While they are very well written and make a great reference reading, these are areas that should be taken very seriously and have a large effect on safety.

If you are planning to go cruising or just like to dream the dream, then Nigel Calder's Cruising Handbook is definitely a valuable addition to your library.

Originally hailing from Australia, Michael Bastin now resides in Minnesota. Sailing since he was seven, he ended up moving to the USA to teach sailing for the YMCA and currently instructs Basic Keel Boat and Radar for the Northern Breezes Sailing School.

SAFETY AT SEA • CONFIGURING YOUR GPS

By Capt. Christoph A. Winter

Congratulations! You pulled it out of the plastic, and, like almost everyone else, you are now the proud and very confident owner of a GPS unit. Regardless of your background, sailing history or personal preferences, everybody will agree that these small, affordable units have become almost standard equipment onboard all boats. They add reliability, accuracy and ease to all the tasks that kept navigators quite busy in years gone by.



Capt. Winter

But **STOP!** Not so fast. Do you really understand all the parameters that can be configured on the countless pages at your fingertips? While you should try to work your way through the handbook to get the most out of your investment, here is a short summary of key settings and some concerns that can, if not addressed properly, turn your trip into too much of an adventure. You will usually find them on the Navigation Setup or similar page of your unit.

Set the value for the Datum to WGS84 or to the Datum of your chart. This allows the satellite signals to be properly mapped to the right 'shape' of the earth and to provide you with Latitude/Longitude that matches your chart. If the Datum is not set properly your position will not be accurate.

Set the value for Magnetic Correction to AutoMag (or something like it). GPS intrinsically only 'knows' True North. AutoMag will adjust the value for Variation to give you the correct magnetic directions for anything from courses to bearings.

Make sure critical units are set properly. Distances in nautical miles; Speed in knots (nautical miles per hour); Latitude/Longitude in degrees/minutes/decimal minutes e.g., 41°23'547". Anything else will be difficult and potentially misleading for your interpretation.

Using Waypoints, make sure you set them in the right Datum (see above) and correctly. Here is where a good plan can go bad. Waypoints should be checked on the chart and should be safe to approach.

Make sure Routes are sensible. Once keyed in or captured, consider the risk to navigation from tides and currents. You know that the accuracy of surveys and the density of depth soundings is often less than the accuracy of your GPS with WAAS (Wide Area Augmentation) ... and you don't want to 'find' the differences!

Ask yourself as you are looking at this marvel of technology: Would you undertake this voyage without the GPS? Over-reliance on accuracy presents its own risks especially during night sails.

Do you have a backup means of navigation available (charts, compass, DR Plot, etc.)? Despite its ease of operation, a GPS should not replace solid knowledge and the ability to work with simple tools. Remember, the COLREGS hold all of us to high standards by requiring precautions that are the "ordinary practice of seamen." GPS and its integration with Chart Plotters, RADAR, DSC, AIS and other equipment is a powerful tool that can make all of us safer on the water. Use it wisely and have an enjoyable time this summer!

Capt. Christoph A. Winter has been an ASA Sailing Instructor for over 12 years, teaching more than 1,000 students mostly in advanced courses and navigation. He is a USCG-licensed Captain and received the ASA Outstanding Instructor award twice. He also holds a doctorate in nuclear physics from the University of Goettingen, Germany. His Ericson 34 can often be seen sailing the waters of New York Bay.

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FEATURE STORY

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Among many trip highlights was an elegant dinner served at the Rosario Resort on Orcas Island in a classic mansion overlooking East Sound. The mansion was built at the turn of the twentieth century by Robert Moran, Seattle mayor and shipbuilding tycoon. With many nautical motifs, it is listed in the National Historic Registry. It includes a theatre, where we heard a complimentary talk and saw a slide show about island history and wildlife.

This elegance contrasted with our final night together, when all boats rafted up in Inati Bay on Lummi Island for a potluck dinner and bonfire on the beach (which we had all to ourselves). There was lots of laughter and good-natured kidding about the food – surprisingly delicious given it had to be cooked aboard and dinghied ashore!

Prizes were impartially awarded by the commodore for best salad, main course and dessert. Offered by one or two boats was succulent Dungeness crab they had caught that day.

Finally, the fleet headed back toward Bellingham, heeling nicely on a brisk beam reach. We left with much more experience and cruising confidence than we started with, new friends, amazing memories, and a warm feeling of accomplishment.

ASA Members' comments:

"Thanks, Roger! We had such a great time; we'd love to do it again next year. We really appreciate all the time and TLC you put into making the experience so enjoyable. You planned a wide variety of experiences for us, and I feel like we had a great sample of what the San Juans have to offer. We also made some great new friends."

"The San Juan Flotilla was my first experience with an ASA group sailing event, and I was impressed with the organization, the itinerary, the charter company and everyone involved. What a fine group of people to sail with! They came from the Midwest, the West Coast and locally - families, singles, men, women, young and younger.

The San Juans were absolutely beautiful, and the harbors were so quaint with loads of character. Even the orca whales put on a show for us. Can't wait to do it again next year!"

When not leading flotillas, Roger Philips is chief sailing instructor for the Newport Beach Sailing School, www.newportbeachsail.com, in southern California, and a charter and delivery skipper.



Members of the flotilla had a chance to enjoy each other's company as well as each other's cooking.

For more information

Visit http://asa.com/news/san_juan_flotilla2008.html for more about our cruise. We are already planning next summer's flotilla – actually, there will be two of them in the Pacific Northwest: the San Juan Island cruise June 12 – 19, 2009, followed immediately by our new Canadian Gulf Islands flotilla June 20 – 26, 2009.

The flotillas will depart from Bellingham, WA, and you can choose to participate in one or both. Please contact Roger at enrapt@gmail.com for details and to reserve. We are again limiting each flotilla to ten boats.

WHERE AM I?



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SAILING DESTINATION

The Abacos Islands • Story by Jo Anne Richardson



Trailing two dinghys, these sailors are prepared to go ashore in the many lovely coves and towns dotted throughout the Abacos. Photos by the Bahamas Tourist Board

For a sailing vacation that takes you to the original Caribbean, away from cruise ships, big crowds, and bigger hotels, consider the Abacos Islands. The Abacos, a 120-mile long string of islands and cays in the northern Bahamas, are just 175 miles east of Palm Beach. Despite this proximity to the eastern United States, the Abacos have not lured the high volume tourist crowds of other Caribbean locations. This low-key attitude, coupled with pristine beauty, makes the islands a true sailor's paradise. And because there are over 700 of them, you'll never run out of places to explore.

A decidedly friendly and unassuming place, the Abacos enjoy pleasant

temperatures and steady trade winds. Picture yourself on a beam reach propelled by warm, steady breezes with water and islands everywhere you look, and you'll get a sense of the paradise that awaits you. After dropping the hook in one of the area's numerous – and often unoccupied – coves or inlets, take a stroll along a sugar sand beach or simply spend the afternoon relaxing on the boat. Because the islands have numerous shops where you can re-provision and a variety of delicious restaurants, you'll find plenty of places to restore your energy.

Lots of ways to fill your days

You could easily spend all your time in the Abacos enjoying pleasant day sails in outstanding conditions. Great Abaco

Island, which acts as a mainland, is separated from the numerous barrier islands that lie to the east by the Sea of Abaco. This geographical layout means that sea conditions are usually calm. And with steady trade winds and temperatures that range from the mid-70s to the high 80s, conditions are usually perfect for cruising and exploration.

However, the waters around the islands provide more than just an opportunity to gunkhole. With their lush coral reefs, numerous shipwrecks and idyllic underwater photography conditions, the islands are fast developing a reputation as a world-class diving spot. Whether you are a beginner or an accomplished snorkeler or diver, you'll find that the

blue-water clarity makes the islands an ideal spot for enhancing underwater skills.

The waters also provide outstanding opportunities for racing enthusiasts. If you find yourself in the area in July, check out the annual race, Regatta Time in Abaco. The regatta, held annually since 1977, gives sailors of all experience levels a chance to stretch their competitive muscles, and enjoy numerous before- and after-race parties.

And if sailing, snorkeling and diving don't fill all your time, head to land. There you'll find championship fairways and greens for the golfers in your group, plus tennis courts, beaches and numerous shopping spots. When on land you'll also want to find time for birding – with over 65 species, the islands are truly a bird-watcher's paradise.

Making your way to the islands

If you plan to bring your boat from the Eastern United States, remember that many large boats successfully make the Gulf Stream crossing every year. Although numerous solo, smaller boats successfully make the crossing as well, many find that the companionship and security of a flotilla helps make the crossing lower in stress and higher in fun.

Whether you plan to stay in the Caribbean for a short or a long visit, the Abacos are a great first stop after you have crossed the stream. In the islands, you will find over 18 full-service marinas with dockage, fuel, and supplies, as well as lots of friendly advice on great spots to sail, eat and play.

If you prefer to charter a boat in the islands, you can take private or direct commercial flights from south Florida



(Above) Your vessel's draft becomes an important consideration in the shallow waters. (Below) The famous striped lighthouse in Elbow Cay offers a look at the way we used to navigate.

or Nassau. In most cases, you're destination airport will probably be Marsh Harbor International (a short 40 minute plane ride from Miami). There are numerous taxis available there, as well as a ferry service that can take you to other islands.

Keep in mind that upon arrival in the Bahamas, you will pass through customs and will need to present a passport. If you arrive in your own boat, you must have government-issued photo identification as well as a document showing your U.S. citizenship.

If chartering is your plan, you'll find numerous companies in the island that provide bareboat or crewed boats. Marsh Harbor and Hope Town are just two of the spots providing charters. The charter companies can provide potential itineraries, provisioning advice, and other information.

continued on next page





(Left) Sailboats find safe harbor in the turquoise waters and emerald shores of the Abacos. (Below) Whether bringing your own vessel or enjoying the convenience of a charter, the Abacos offer relaxation as you cruise.



SAILING DESTINATION

continued from previous page

So many places to explore

Numerous routes and stops throughout the islands give you lots of places to sail and play. From Marsh Harbor, head up the Sea of Abaco to Green Turtle Cay. This sailing route, one of the most popular in the Abacos, is approximately 20 nautical miles long. Along the way, you'll find cozy anchorages, beautiful beaches, and great diving and snorkeling.

En route, stop at Treasure Cay, a resort community with a large marina and Three-Mile Beach – one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. The marina has guest moorage available, or you can pick up a mooring or anchor in the fully protected basin on the way to the marina.

Upon arriving in Green Turtle, a small island that can easily be covered by foot, you'll find an array of restaurants, and marine and shopping facilities. While there, be sure to check out the lovely fishing village of New Plymouth.

Other popular stops between Marsh Harbor and Green Turtle Cay include Man-O-War Cay and Great Guana Cay. Great Guana's long, lovely and sparsely populated beaches are some of the most beautiful in the world. The island has several viable anchorages, including the popular Baker's Bay.

In the southernmost part of the islands, you'll find one of Abacos' most popular destinations and one of its

For more information

For additional information, contact the Bahamas Out Islands Promotion Board at 1-800-OUT-ISLANDS, go to: www.myoutislands.com or www.bahamas.com.

loveliest, Elbow Cay. Elbow is home to the Bahamas' most famous landmark - the red and white striped lighthouse. The lighthouse, one of the last operational kerosene-fueled lighthouses in the world, can be seen from 23 nautical miles away.

You'll want to return as soon as you leave

The Abacos Islands are a cruising spot that has managed to retain a friendly, understated charm. Surely, you will miss the pleasant locals, picturesque villages, and sugar sand beaches, after you leave. But it is the long days of balmy-breezed sailing that will have you returning sooner, rather than later, to this unhurried paradise.

Jo Anne Richardson is a Seattle-based writer and photographer. Her work has appeared in numerous publications.



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ASA MEMBER PRODUCT REVIEW

by Patrick Shuss

As your head breaks the surface of the water, you scan the water and watch as your boat sails away. What do you hope for most - that the crew noticed your sudden departure - that they can quickly reverse course and execute a perfect man-overboard recovery?

You'd better hope that you're wearing a life jacket.

The 2007 United States Coast Guard (USCG) statistics state that last year, of 485 reported falls overboard, there were 208 deaths. If, however, you're wearing a flotation device, your chance of drowning (the most common cause of fatality) decreases by almost 90 percent.

The Pro Sail 33 inflatable personal flotation device (PFD), by Bluestorm is intended to save your life. With a host of features tailor-made for sailors, it goes beyond just keeping your head above water. I was provided a Pro Sail 33 to evaluate over several days of sailing and would like to share my experiences with you.

The Pro Sail 33 is a USCG Type V PFD that employs automatic, manual and oral inflation. Upon immersion in water, the automatic inflator fires the 33 gram carbon dioxide cylinder that fully expands the bladder with over 35 pounds of flotation. Close to hand, on your right, is the manual inflator that can be triggered with a strong tug on the red fob. Finally, an oral inflator is positioned within easy reach to let you add air by blowing into the flotation bladder. With these three methods of inflation, I feel that most emergency situations were addressed.

The Pro Sail 33 is secured with two-inch wide nylon webbing that goes down the back and secures around the chest. Atop the large Delrin front buckle are two very sturdy D-rings to provide an attachment point for a jackline tether. This upgrades this product to true offshore performance. The front shell is made of 500 denier CORDURA fabric, while a neoprene collar prevents chafing. The flotation bladder is a durable impregnated fabric, and SOLAS-grade reflective tape on the shoulders makes you more visible. The around-the-neck design allows for good mobility of your shoulders and no restriction of your torso.

A zippered pocket on the left side has room for small electronics and an elastic clip makes sure they stay put. A safety whistle is attached to the collar with elastic and tethered with cord.

The waterproof front shell protects the automatic



The Pro Sail 33 personal flotation device has an automatic inflation system, providing security upon entering the water even if the sailor is unconscious.

For more information

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inflator from accidental activation by an errant wave or incidental splash. Though I didn't test this PFD in my local ocean waters, I did try it out in the safe confines of a swimming pool. I first removed the automatic inflator and replaced it with the manual conversion cap. While standing in chest-high water, I orally inflated the bladder to a snug fit and sat down to allow the PFD to support me. Instantly, I was floating face-up with good clearance above the water. With effort, I could roll over on my face, but the PFD returned me to a face-up position within a few seconds. I feel very confident that this device would float me, whatever my condition, safely on the surface.

The flotation bladder was easy to deflate (using the oral inflator) and repack. Rearing kits for automatic inflation, including a new carbon dioxide cylinder and an automatic inflator, are available online for less than \$20. One piece of advice: if you immerse the unit in water to test its flotation, make sure that it is completely dry before you re-install the automatic inflator. I didn't wait long enough and the residual moisture caused the unit to inflate about six hours later.

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PRODUCT REVIEW

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The Pro Sail 33 is intended for sailors at least five feet five inches in height and with a chest diameter from 30 to 52 inches. This PFD is a little more bulky than models without the automatic inflation system. The front shell may interfere with close action, such as cranking a winch, but this is a minor issue. If I were to add anything to this PFD, it would be a signal mirror and a small battery-powered strobe light to improve night visibility. Sailors who don't meet the minimum size requirements would benefit from a smaller version. I'd recommend this PFD for any sailor who ventures beyond the cockpit of their boat. Whether racing around the buoys or crossing an ocean, your best chance at in-the-water survival starts with staying above the surface. Bluestorm's Pro Sail 33 is designed to be unnoticed until it is needed and then to inflate automatically to ensure that you have the best chance to be rescued.

ASA members can purchase the Pro Sail 33 directly. While it retails for \$189, it is offered at a members-only discounted price of \$162.99 (shipping included). The instructor price is \$135.99. This PFD is priced well below competitor's life jackets with similar features.



With its streamlined design, the Pro Sail 33 makes movement aboard your boat a breeze.

Please note that Type V inflatable PFDs do not satisfy the requirement that a USCG-approved life jacket be available for each boater, unless they are being worn at the time of inspection.

Patrick Shuss is a Southern California ASA member with over twenty years of experience in boating and sailing. He enjoys evening 'beer can' races, longer coastal races, and vacation cruising on monohulls and catamarans.

ADVENTURES IN CRUISING

continued from page 6

And then, shortly after, we watched the platters be taken away completely empty! We ate family style all evening not knowing what would come next. After devouring whatever delicacy lay in front of us, we soaked up the heavenly juices with fresh hot bread and drank it all down with tasty local wines. Only our second night and we simply could not get enough.

The next day, we woke early and watched the sun hit the harbor walls, reflect off the sea and bring this small settlement to life. After some well-needed strong coffee and fruit we set sail for the island of Mljet – pronounced "Mee-shet." We had read that this was a lush, green island and one of the few Croatian islands that is truly a National Park. To read about it is one thing – to see it is quite another. On our sail that day we were hit with fierce winds coming from all directions so when we finally arrived we were extremely relieved! As we approached our small entrance and prepared to snake our way through the high cliff walls, everything and everyone on the boat went silent. No one could speak because there was no way to describe the wild, rugged beauty of this place.

Breathtaking Mljet

Croatians describe Mljet as their greenest island and we could most assuredly see why. Blessed with rich Mediterranean vegetation, a clear and clean sea, gentle sandy coves and rich underwater fauna, Mljet is breathtakingly beautiful. It is the island widely known for growing an assortment of white and red wines of very special bouquet and strength. It is also famous for goat milk cheese, honey that used to be offered at the imperial courts, and most of all for the kindness and openness with which the islanders greet visitors to their island. Our plan was to only stay in Mljet a day and a half! We stayed for three days and three nights and really had to drag ourselves from this magnificent place.

Not only was the beauty of Mljet unbelievable, but the rich and long history of this small island was hard for me to grasp. The island has endured centuries of occupation and whims of various leaders and dictators. Those include Ulysses and the nymph Calypso, the Roman Emperor Augustus, Napoleon's army, the English fleet, a hundred years of Austrian rule, the Italian occupation including the annexation of the island to Mussolini's Italy from 1941-1943 as well as the anti-fascist movement of Tito's Partisans. This small island has endured so much, and as I walked the lush, green mountainous terrain and the rocky beaches, I was struck by the feeling that all these occupations must have been driven not only by the island's geographical location but also by the sheer richness and beauty of this place.



The tiny town of Ston, on the peninsula in Croatia, brings to mind another epoch in time.

Over time, everyone wanted to own this island; but in the end, no one owns her. The peacefulness on Mljet has been a long time coming and is well deserved.

As we threw off our dock lines that final morning in Mljet we were all a little heart-broken. This island had touched us and it was tough to say good-bye. As we looked over our charts, we decided that our next destination would be the Peljesac Peninsula and the village we were shooting for was Ston. Everything we had read in the cruising guides said that the approach was tough and running aground was easy to do here. The passage was three miles long but only 120 feet wide and in places barely 10 feet of water.

As we approached Ston, we first noticed the large salt flats and then were enthralled by the five-and-a-half-kilometer, fortified wall that surrounds the city and connects it with the smaller settlement of Mali Ston. This wall is the second longest intact wall, behind the Great Wall of China. This defensive system dates back to 1333 when the Republic of Dubrovnik began building the wall to control access in and out of the Peljesac Peninsula area. We walked the wall between the two settlements and ended up enjoying an afternoon and evening of local wines and oysters, for which this region is famous.


As our trip wound down, we started thinking about our past week and how wonderful our sailing and cultural experience had been. We had only barely touched upon the beauties along the Croatian coast. There are so many opportunities here for not only a wonderful sailing experience but an enriching cultural experience as well. I would highly recommend Croatia to any sailor looking for a challenging sailing experience, wonderful food and wine, warm people and cultural enrichment.

For more information on sailing in Croatia, contact Capt. Stacey Brooks at Sea Dog Sailing, www.seadogsailing.com.

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INSTRUCTOR TIP

By Capt. Paul Mirenda

Navigating Inter-Coastal Markers

While navigating in areas where both inter-coastal and channel buoys are present, it is imperative to differentiate between these two types of navigational aids to safely navigate within the channels.

When sailing or motoring in channels where inter-coastal (IC) and channel buoys merge, it is important to identify and understand the difference between these two types of navigational aids. Failure to do so could result in passing on the wrong side of the buoy and leaving the channel.

After entering the inlet from the ocean, you would follow the “Red Right Returning” rule when heading up the channel, keeping red buoys to starboard and green buoys to port. These buoys get higher in number as you head up the channel.

After leaving an ocean inlet channel and encountering the inter-coastal waterway marks, you need to be aware that “Red Right Returning” does not apply. A small yellow triangle or a small yellow square identifies inter-coastal buoys or day marks, but they can be difficult to make out from a distance.

To safely navigate the IC Waterway you need to stay within the boundaries marked by the IC buoys or IC day marks. You may find the IC Red or IC Green color does not have the same significance as a normal channel buoy. In this case the yellow squares and triangles are more important than the actual color of these buoys as these yellow symbols indicate which side of the marks to pass.



Not fully understanding the differences between channel markers and inter-coastal markers can leave you high and dry.

For instance, you just left the inlet and are now heading north up the inter-coastal waterway. You will find you need to keep the red buoys (with yellow triangles) to port and green buoys (with yellow squares) to starboard, which is contrary to the rules concerning normal red and green channel markers.

Using navigation charts, you should plan your course before leaving the dock to determine which IC marks and normal channel marks you will encounter on the way to your destination in order to stay out of harm's way. Refer to Chapman's or Chart # 1 to better understand IC marks.

Paul Mirenda has been a USCG Licensed Captain since 1992 and ASA Certified sailing Instructor since 1988.

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