

Makin' Waves

SeaScape Sailing's News, Views, n' Latest Hot Gossip!

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New "Wannabe Skipper" Courses

So the bug's bit. You've been out sailing with friends, you've done the vacation(s), you've even done the sailing course, passed the tests, got the certificate. Salt water has infiltrated your veins, and we're very sorry to tell you, but the condition is incurable.

But do you really feel ok about being totally responsible for a live-aboard-sized sailboat, and everyone on it just yet?

All of us here at SeaScape have obviously been there and had to jump that gap, from plenty of sailing experience as crew, to actually being the one in charge. A scary leap. Running a sailboat is about 10% to do with trimming sails, the remainder a whole heap of other miscellaneous (but vital!) knowledge and experience.

Our new "Wannabe Skipper" courses are here to bridge that gap; to learn in a very immediate and practical way – *How to safely run a sailboat*. From those nail-biting moments docking the boat, to what-to-do-if-the-engine-won't-start, to gourmet lunches at 35 knots! We'll even share the secrets of all the mess-ups we made in *our* early days, in the



Nav class results? OK, boys, think we need to do some more work!

hopes that maybe you then won't! You won't go home winning any races, but you will know the most vital elements about how to run a safe – and fun – sailboat for you, friends and family.



Hi from the Helm! By Skipper Di

This is the first time we've ever started our newsletter on a serious note – but we feel that the tragedy of Sept. 11th, and subsequent world events, should not go unmentioned in the midst of all our other frivolous chat.

First and foremost, to those of our SeaScape sailors whose lives were affected directly – our heartfelt sympathies. Words are just so totally inadequate here. But it was heart-warming to

hear how many past SeaScapers had been contacting each other with offers of help, places to stay, etc.

We were in Greece at the time, of course; in Patmos, with three boatloads of Americans. Every taverna with a TV was swamped. There were concerns about continuing to fly our American flags, so we took them down. There was no need; the reaction of the locals was of complete disbelief and horror also, followed instantly with total sympathy/support. For weeks afterwards (including in Turkey), many locals made a point of coming over just to say "We are so sorry, this is so awful". The Greek church bells tolled every hour, on the hour, on that Friday of mourning.

Of course, next reaction from the locals was "Uh oh, there goes our livelihood next year"; so many of these families now very dependent on tourism. In Turkey especially; they are very aware that their tag as a "Muslim country" will cause them serious economic hardships. It was

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Seychelles Trip Report

By Robert, our Accountant Afloat

Your correspondent, still jet-lagged from another SeaScape adventure to the wonderful Seychelles reporting... For those of you that failed to listen in geography class, the Seychelles are scattered over 115 coral islands lying 1600kms off the coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. The three main islands – Mahe', Praslin, and La Digue centre around 4 degrees south of the Equator... so it is very warm and tropical!

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Notches on the Mast Awards

There must be something irresistibly romantic in the Greek air (or food, or ouzo?). Three weddings, two engagements and several honeymoons this summer!

(OK, so two "real" weddings, the third was a little suspect...)



Diana & Jeff...

Together for several years, thinking of getting married, but not quite gotten around to it. We must definitely claim Greek isles influence on this one – to the amazement of all their (3 boatloads!) of friends, Jeff popped the question, and skipper Matt was called in to do the honours.



Sharon and Bob

Formal wear was required for Sharon and Bob's engagement ceremony, and their (also 3 boatloads!) of friends came up tops on creativity! Our skippers do also find themselves wearing many different hats, but "Father Ray"... we have our doubts!



PS – extra notch points for the garter, Sharon!

And, um, Darrell and Aimee...



As we cannot have any improper behaviour on our trips, it was decided that Darrell and Aimee, sweethearts at first sight on our Aug. singles trip, should be wed. The appropriate ceremony was performed on Marathi, and decency was thereby observed. Our skippers are getting almost as good at instant divorces as they are at instant weddings...



if we'd had such a cool priest and church when we were kids, we might not be so afraid of church roofs collapsing on us now!

BYO Priest?

Another Notch on the Mast Award goes to Marsha Calvo and group, who – just in case of any moral emergencies – brought along their own priest.

The goats on Marathi didn't quite know what to make of 16 or so people taking over the old church ruins on top of the hill, being awfully serious for half an hour, then reverting to our usual seascape-sailor-type-behaviour (quaffing the wine and telling bad jokes).

This group of practical joke playing sailors came from a very spirited "new age Catholic church" (sorry guys, if we don't have the label quite right!). General consensus amongst the crew was that

...and the Winner in the Romance Section, a DOUBLE Cupid hit ...

Steve – very long-time SeaScape "old salt" and his lovely bride Nabila decided to bring a few best friends/family on their Greek islands honeymoon. Cupid, obviously not content with one major hit, decided to zap some of the friends too. Out of the blue during "happy hour", Tom raised his glass to Deb – and proposed!



Deb, not known for being short of a word or two, was quite speechless for at least 30 seconds. Happily for all, the next words out of her mouth began with "Yes!"...and we had an engagement party to add to honeymoon celebrations! Congratulations, Steve & Nabila, Deb & Tom.

Rescued - One More Greek Kitty

Kitty cats of Greece – you see them in calendars and postcards all over Greece, a motif of the Greek islands, awfully cute and appealing. The sad fact is, however, that most cats in Greece are strays, ignored or worse by the locals, many kittens born in the spring only to die in the winter months when the tourist scraps dry up. A depressing story for a vacation newsletter?

Yes – except that we DO have some good news – the tale of Mythos, who purred his way into SeaScape sailor Lisa's heart one dinner time; followed her all the way to the bar, enduring our rowdy crowd till the wee small hours, then loyally tagged along behind his new mom to the boats. Smart kitty. A few months later, he is now still purring his way into everyone's hearts at Lisa's home in the States!

Lisa agrees that there is definitely something very special about these Greek kitties; they know that they are very, very lucky; they're loving, playful, grateful for their new home and life. (And no, we don't care who thinks we are nuts; those of us who've taken a little Greek kitty home know!)

So here's another new SeaScape venture – a Greek kitty rescue mission! Anyone else out there interested in a kitten with oodles of personality, let us know! Seriously, it is not hard to get a kitty into the States (sorry, still a pain for England & Australia) – just needs a vet certificate and someone willing to take the kitty as hand-baggage. We can take care of all the other details, just need the courier...



Thailand Revisited

Always one of our favourite spots, we dropped by recently to check out new routes, new options – and found some very cool ones! To be incorporated into a new trip next year, a sail-dive-canoe trip, one week for sail n' dive, 10 days for the added canoe option.



Southern Thailand has seen some dramatic changes in the past decade. 12 years ago, I was lucky enough to go out on one of the very first Sunsail boats to sail the Phang-Nga bay area, their base only just established. A few

other cruising yachties and the longtail boats were our only company, the islands deserted or with just tiny fishing villages. Today, "James Bond Island" is literally swarming with orange life-jacketed tourists, daytrip boats cover the beach entirely. The beach vendors are getting uncomfortably pushy; and sadly, it's all spreading to the rest of the bay incredibly fast.

Introducing mass tourism to places like this is always a catch-22. It has changed the economy of this area completely. Wonderful that the tourist income has improved the lives of many local families; sad to see the change in attitudes in



Our home for this exploration was basic, to say the least; floating bamboo huts, anchored to the steep-sided land behind. But the peace and tranquility of the area was just immense.

Hence, next year, we will be adding a sail n' dive week to our

the more populated areas. As the tourist flood becomes a little too overwhelming, the traditional Thai welcoming smiles get worn thin, the rip-off-the-tourist-schemes start to multiply. Who can blame them?

For this reason, we decided a few years ago to head out to where the tourist boats and high rise hotels have not yet reached. A day or two in the resorts is fun, and some famous spots like Phi Phi can't be missed, no matter how touristy! – but otherwise, our little peek into Thailand, her culture and people is pre-tourist invasion, Thailand as she always used to be.

Always looking a little further ahead and afield, we went back this Nov. to check out new spots – and found one which we MUST add to our SeaScape menu (before it's too late also!)

Khao-Lak National Park – a dam created to provide hydroelectricity for the area has now also become a rainforest haven for wildlife. Towering limestone cliffs, monkeys and hornbills flitting around treetops, elephants, even supposedly tigers (though we didn't see any!).

Thailand itineraries; and for those with a little more time to spend, 3 days exploring this amazing national park area. We hope it will never be "too late", and Thailand's recent awareness of "eco-tourism" will keep this land pristine; but, just in case – we're aiming to get there soon!



Yet Another Addition to Our Seascape Family

Our office manager Carole obviously thinks she has us kids (the crew) out in

Greece sufficiently under control, so she can afford to go out and adopt a couple of real kids!

We're very happy to welcome Olivia and Bella into our little extended family, two extremely cute and also very lucky little Chinese girls. We'll be training them early to be our next generation female skippers...

Many of you will have had long phone chats with Carole... so here at last is the Face Behind the Scenes!



Our Other Three "Babies"...

Are doing just fine too! AnnaMaria, Angelina and Vassilis... the latter due a name change this year! Many people ask the meaning of "Vassilis", at which point Diana um's and ah's and tries to change the subject. When pinned down, she will admit that the name is actually a very common Greek boy's name, the closest English equivalent being "Bill".

Bill the Boat. Not the most romantic title for one's first baby... and emphatically not our choice, it came with the boat! However, the renewal of our charter license in 2002 gives us the chance to rename... so with appropriate sacrifices to the gods, chants and naked dances around the deck – we shall rename this ship "Artemis" – the goddess of the hunt, and patron goddess of our home island of Leros!

A Belated Welcome Aboard to Mathew & Jill



Our great hosts on AnnaMaria! Despite the motley collection of sailors, wannabes and landlubbers we kept sending them, they are still bravely coming back for more next summer...



(far left): Mathew & Jill in "official mode". We look like this for, oh, thirty minutes after folks arrive.

(left): Then the crew seem to degenerate to their more normal garb – or as normal as it ever gets...



Seychelles Trip Report

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The entire country only has a population of some 80,000 – the islands are very neatly maintained, the local Creole people immaculately dressed. We travelled around each of the

major islands yet saw no evidence of poverty or alcoholism. The economy appeared strong despite the support of only three main sources of income – tourism, commercial (it's a tax haven) and fishing.

We boarded our 42 foot catamaran at the yacht basin, Victoria, the country's capital "town". With the pungent smell of Port Victoria's "about to be exported" fish drying in the tropical sun behind us, we circum-navigated Mahe' for the first three days. Of particular note was Port Launay, a National Marine Park – the colour of the water like nothing any of us "old salts" had ever seen before plus plenty of fish and corals for the snorkelers!

A relatively long motor to La Digue, had us negotiating a somewhat tricky harbour entrance between rain squalls. The Seychelles is cur-

rently experiencing a severe drought, (we even found bottled water scarce during our trip provisioning) so valiantly James, Chantal and Karen collected the water running off the binimi at 4 am of the fourth morning!

La Digue is a very beautiful island where the principal means of transportation are ox-cart and mountain bike – otherwise there are just a couple of lorries and utilities with seats perched at the back that serve as primitive buses... so off on mountain bikes we went! Most roads are paved and relatively flat, cooling tropical rain showers kept us comfortable while we peddled, photographed and licked ice cream.

Dinner was memorable for the huge local lobster that Chantal tried to consume at the Chateau St. Cloud!

On to the island of Grande Soeur where we plunged into the crystal clear water and swam ashore only to be accosted by three large

dogs as we ventured through the island's coconut grove. A French caretaker advising us that the island was private, requested that we depart and ensured we left the island and set sail (well motored actually) immediately!

Onto Praslin, the country's second largest island – dinner was scheduled for the very swish (and we gathered very expensive) Praslin Casino, so we flagged down a local bus, jumped on-board with a colourful collection of the locals and rumbled towards our feed... only to be told at reception... "sorry guys, no shorts allowed". Cries of "we're on a sailing holiday", "its hot", and "but I've got nice legs" failed to gain us entry!

Not to be let down the next morning we sailed to anchor off La Lazio – this beach has recently been voted (we don't know by whom) as one of the ten most beautiful beaches in the world... and we reckon they weren't far wrong... huge granite boulders contrasting the fine white sand of the beach, ringed with palm trees – it really was paradise found!



Hi from the Helm! (continued from page 1)

ironic to us, anchored Keci Buku answering emails re "is it safe in Turkey?" – when we felt a whole lot safer sitting in this little bay than being anywhere in the States at that time!

Obviously, we have a vested interest in saying, "Of course it's safe" – it's our livelihood too! But... we were there ourselves, and we know from firsthand experience that the on-the-street attitude is extremely condemning to these terrorists. Ditto with Thailand and Malaysia (we just returned from a trip there). So at least, we'd like to relay the message we were getting everywhere from the locals – "Please tell your friends back home we don't hate them, we love them – please come back!" OK, translation = "we love your tourist \$\$s..." – but if that helps dispel cultural disparities, so be it!

Obviously, no-one has a crystal ball on the future, but we can at least tell you folks "back home", that really and truly, it IS just "life as normal" over there. And anywhere our trips go, we go ourselves.

The Up n' Coming Sailing Season 2002... (see insert)

SeaScape Ski Reunions

Whistler, Jan. 24-28

Sun Valley, Feb. 2-9

Thailand - Malaysia

Feb. 10th-23rd (mostly couples)

Feb. 24th-March 9th (singles)

Australia's Whitsunday Islands

Nov. 17-23 & Nov. 24-30

And of course, our full summer season sailing program in Greece and Turkey! (April to the end of Oct.)

- Our ever-popular "mostly singles" sailing groups
- More combo Greece-AND-Turkey trips
- Our NEW wannabe skippers and learn-to-sail courses

Full details/dates available as separate word docs – email or call us!

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