

POSTCARDS

Compiled by Gilles Ruffet

HANG TIME AN ATLANTIC CIRCUIT WITH THE FAMILY

For the Cook family, the call of the sea was stronger than anything else. A dream the family have been living since the day they set out in search of freedom and fun aboard their Saona 47.



After leaving La Rochelle in 2017 and crossing the Atlantic, we sailed to the Bahamas before spending a few weeks on the coast of Nova Scotia in Canada (where Karen is originally from). Exploring my home province by boat was simply amazing. We also had the support and company of so many family and friends. It was an incredible experience, and I would recommend the Canadian Maritimes – the Atlantic provinces of Canada - to any cruiser. In October 2018 we sailed down the Eastern Seaboard down to Norfolk, Virginia, making stops in Nantucket and New York City, to name just a few. From there we went offshore to Nassau in the Bahamas. We really loved cruising the Exumas but didn't love the thorny path eastward to get from there to the Caribbean islands. We were forced to do a lot of upwind miles. Once we arrived in the BVI's we relaxed a bit, invited friends aboard and spent a few blissful months through

the Caribbean islands. Some highlights were kite-surfing at Necker Island, spending time in Anse du Colombier in St Barths and visiting Iles des Saintes in Guadeloupe. In the spring of 2019, we travelled another 2,000 miles back to Canada via Bermuda and enjoyed another glorious summer on the east coast. A highlight of this summer was our trip to Newfoundland, Canada's easternmost province. We enjoyed the friendly people and the wild ruggedness of 'The Rock'. A highlight of Newfoundland was anchoring in 'White Bear Bay', a fjord with massive cliffs and stunning waterfalls that was completely remote and utterly breathtaking. Our daily routine is well-established: we rise early and enjoy a cup of coffee while catching up on emails. Even on the water, our can't escape their schoolwork. There's always math, English and reading. They're even learning French! After we're done with the morning routine, we

swim to the beach and go snorkeling or exploring. Brad and I enjoy water sports such as surfing and kitesurfing, so we are always watching for good conditions. Generally, the afternoon entails a bit of downtime, work for the parents, and games for the boys. Sunset is often enjoyed from the flybridge with a gin and tonic in hand as the boys enjoy another swim. After dinner we are not far from bed - these days full of fresh air and activity are tiring! We believe that life is too short to be afraid to let slip the lines at some point in our life together. We evaluated our situation and decided to make our dream come true. Kids grow up so quickly, and in a few years, they'll be more interested in spending time with their friends than with their parents, so we wanted to enjoy this time with them. But what's next? After the Caribbean this winter, we'll be bound for the Mediterranean for a year or two.



Who: Brad, Karen, Ben, Charlie

Where: Atlantic circuit

Multihull: Saona 47



Milo One Discovering Alaska

After Polynesia and then Hawaii, Milo One has headed for Alaska. A different kind of voyage!



Navigating, often when under engine, requires great vigilance to avoid huge floating logs and kelp slicks. A careful study of the routes according to the currents, which are sometimes very strong, is also essential. Every day something new comes along: fjords, waterfalls, green expanses, rivers, forests, lakes, mountains, glaciers... We admire the fauna, brown bears, grizzly bears, wolves, deer, humpback whales, killer whales, otters, seals and sea lions. We set out every day in search of our food, boots on, armed with fishing rods, knives, buckets and bags for picking whatever we might find. We either follow the river bed whose path is outlined in the tall grasses flattened by the animals, or by penetrating under the magical foliage of a primary forest, or into the heart of a secondary dense forest. This is an exercise that often forces us to cut right into the marshes. Our footsteps cross bear tracks that are fairly fresh, so we remain vigilant. We speak loudly, our bear sprays ready on our belts. It doesn't take much to be happy. Here, the bear is indeed the king of the animals: salmon, red berries, insects and honey are at his disposal. We watch the brown bear or grizzly

bear fishing on the shore or at the foot of the waterfalls and playing in the tall grass on the plain. No one comes to disturb his peace and quiet. We live free, and yet our meals are worthy of a four-star rating. Thousands of salmon are waiting for us in the riverbed. A crab trap completes our hunting gear, and some days we go mussel fishing. For the rest, mushrooms, blueberries and cranberries fill our buckets. Near the glaciers, the temperature drops from 20° to 6°C (68° to 43°F). It's a familiar landscape of icefields that we had previously encountered in Patagonia which opens up before us. The growlers come out, white or blue. We slalom carefully under an increasingly biting wind. We're a thousand miles from any civilization. Only the spirits of the First Nations will come to haunt us one evening, piercing the intense blackness of the bay with a mysterious glow. Spectacular light dances over the dark ridges of the pine trees, the northern lights rippling just for us. The magnetic fields vibrate vertically and dilute in the sky, the lights coming alive as if to the sound of music; white with a hint of green. We hold back our breath, our tears and our emotion.



Who: Sabrina, Yvan, Oscar, Manu, Marinella
Where: Alaska
Multihull: Catana 582
www.vivreenbateau.com



Cassandraville Racing From Dar el Salam to Zanzibar

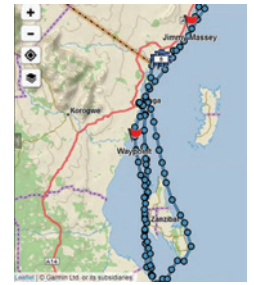


Have you heard of the Dar Tanga Yacht Race? Bill took part on his Elf 26.

We crossed the border between Tanzania and Kenya before anchoring at the Tanga Yacht Club. We set sail again at dawn the next morning, in convoy

mode, bound for Dar-es-Salaam, finally anchoring after midnight a few miles from the northern tip of the island of Zanzibar (Unguja), before going back down to Dar. The race started a few days later, with more than 25 boats on the starting line. The instructions were simple: keep Zanzibar to port in both directions. Cassandraville left Msasani Bay after Bongoyo Island and headed east towards Zanzibar, close to Bongoyo Island's reef. Hidde knew these waters well, and his strategy paid off. We passed three boats while sailing close to the island and its reef. Theoretically, after passing the northern tip of Zanzibar, the ocean current should carry us to Tanga. However, finding the right strip of current turned out to be more complicated than expected. On several occasions, we crossed cargo

ships on the freight route. They had rolls of barbed wire all around them to prevent pirates from boarding. This was a reminder that the regatta had been cancelled for a few years because of problems with piracy along the Somali coast. While it would theoretically have taken us six hours to reach the south-eastern tip of Zanzibar, we had been gone for 16 hours and had still not arrived. The wind had dropped and Cassandraville was not fast enough before the tide turned. «Never mind,» I decided, «We'll start the outboard engine and go back to cruising class.» At dawn, along the exposed Indian Ocean coast of Zanzibar, we were sailing with sail and motor, carried along by the current. Daybreak came as we approached Tanga. It took an hour to cross the channel to the Tanga Yacht Club. We were very happy to anchor. We'd done it! We had just covered 120 nautical miles in 34 hours. What a saga!



Who: William « Bill » Kosar
Where: From Dar-es-Salaam to Tanga and back, keeping Zanzibar to port in both directions. ("Tanzacat")
Multihull: Cassandraville Elf 26

Who: David, Zam Bevan, Chris, Philippe, Samuel, Chuck
Where: Between Tahiti and Tikehau, Tuamotus, French Polynesia
Multihull: Corsair 37
www.sailtahiti.com

Miss Kim Thai Heading for Tikehau, in French Polynesia

David delivered a brand new Corsair 37 trimaran to the Tuamotu islands during the middle of the rainy season. Here, he shares his impressions...

It took us a few days to set up the carbon mast, the fiber rigging and the rest of the equipment. No sooner had the trimaran been launched than a weather window opened up for the Tuamotus. In general, before setting out to sea on a new boat, it is advisable to carry out a series of sea trials to put everything through its paces. However, this crew offers an impressive amount of experience that has been earned over the years: David, manager of Sail Tahiti, has already sailed halfway around the world on a Catana. Zam Bevan is the production manager of the Corsair shipyard. Chris, owner of Miss Kim Thai and Motu Ninamu in Tikehau, is a former professional surfer and has recruited Philippe, another surfer. Completing the team are Samuel, a professional skipper, and Chuck, an American senior reporter. We left Tahiti ready for 175 miles of close-hauled sailing. The Corsair soon started to show its capabilities: 11

knots upwind at 40/45 degrees off the true wind which was blowing at 8-9 knots. It's a great sensation. The boat glides over the water and it's a real pleasure to be at the helm. It becomes even more enjoyable when we drop 20 degrees to test the Code 0: the trimaran hits 12 knots, with peaks at 13/14 in the surf. Squalls begin to appear on the horizon. The wind picks up to 15 knots, then 20, and we take in the first reef. At the beginning of the night, the



squalls intensify. In the absence of the moon and before daybreak, we lower the mainsail and finish the night under jib alone, well furled. We progress at a sedate 7 knots. At dawn, Tikehau is only around fifty miles away. The squalls have lost their intensity and we hoist the mainsail with the first reef. We're already in the channel, the entrance is magical, and the sun is finally in the air. The coral heads are clearly visible and we sail alongside the coconut palms to Motu Ninamu. Miss Kim Thai is going to start a beautiful sailing career in the Tuamotus with all her Ninamu customers.



Cat'Leya On the trail of the youngest volcano

Between Tonga and Fiji, there is a volcanic area that has only been active for 4 years. It has turned two islands into one...

Far to the north we could see a huge plume of white smoke, accompanied by a darker trail. The chart indicates that this is an area of volcanic activity. It has been referenced since 1996. Tofua, west of Ha'apai, is an island whose collapsed crater shelters a freshwater lake. Tofua is also known because Captain Bligh, after the mutiny on the Bounty, made a short stopover there with his whaleboat and his companions of misfortune. However, what really interests us is the possibility of hiking right up to the edge of the crater. Other boats have passed onto us the GPS coordinates of the only point where it is possible to land. The waves are rolling in, and there's no question of anchoring the dinghy. Bertrand, the skipper of Mupi, prefers to keep an eye on his boat, he's the one who will take us down to Tofua. The ascent lasts nearly 2 and a half hours, and takes us through a previously inhabited area, coconut palms, a small pineapple plantation and under a canopy of trees. Then with the altitude the vegetation becomes lower, and at the top, only volcanic rocks remain. The landscape is magical. The clouds cling to the west face before descending the slopes of the crater. From time to time we can see the inland lake, at the very

bottom, with its islands. It's an incredible blue green color. In front of us there were many small craters, one of which was spewing out quite thick

white smoke. The descent turned out to be more complicated, without a compass or map. We managed to get lost twice and ended up going straight through the ferns to catch up with our initial route. But this is nothing compared to boarding the dinghy: we had to throw ourselves off the rocks! The next day, departure for Hunga Tonga and Hunga Ha'apai, which had witnessed the emergence of a volcano... only 4 years previously. This volcano was born from an underwater eruption between the islands of Hunga Tonga and Hunga Ha'apai, which filled the sea between the two land masses, giving birth to a new, unique island.



Who: Jean-Pierre
Where: Tonga, Pacific Ocean
Multihull: Lagoon 52 Sport Top
www.sailingcatleya.blue



Toucan & Scottish Escapades

Chris delivered his cat almost 400 nautical miles across Scotland.

Who: Chris
Where: From Dalgety Bay on the Firth of Forth to Kippford, Scotland
Multihull: Toucan 2 (Strider Turbo)

It was a very long sail ahead of us: up the East coast to Inverness, through the canal to Fort William and then down the west coast of Scotland. The Marine Haggis had had his input, suggesting "Why not use the Forth Clyde canal?" Never heard of it! It was tight but do-able. Maximum width of 6m/20' (Toucan's beam is 5.3m/17'5") and an air draft of

3m/10' (the mast has to come down). We could do it. The wind was light. It was sunny but chilly and, because the mast had to come down for the canal, I sailed under jib alone. I set off in glorious sunshine from the Kelpies basin on a passage through the Forth/Clyde canal. There was something like 19 locks. Southbank Marina was full, so we moored

for the night at a canal-side pub. I had always thought that bascule bridges were like Tower Bridge in London where water fills large counterbalance tanks and its weight lifts the bridge. These had 4 hydraulic rams at each corner and lifted the bridge up. It reminded me of a table. We then got to the fun part. We had to go under the main road to Loch Lomond, which didn't lift and had an air draft of less than a meter (3'). The ingenious solution was to enter a lock basin; the water was then pumped out, lowering us 3m (10'), enough to pass under the bridge; then filling the lock back up

once we were the other side. After taking a taxi to buy fuel, I was ready to go but the engine wasn't! All my good organization came to naught. Never mind there was a good wind. I got a tow out to about a ¼ mile offshore and hoisted the sails. The aim was to round the Mull of Galloway on the last of the ebb and then take the flood tide up the Solway. I would be in Kippford soon. But the wind died! I reached Crammag Head lighthouse and rounded the Mull. The flood tide sets slightly north into Luce Bay and with hardly any wind I was pushed in between the Scares which are jagged rocks halfway across the bay on the edge of the danger zone. After rounding Burrow Head and abeam of the entrance to the Isle of Whithorn, Toucan was romping along in the dark leaving trails of phosphorescence behind. As dawn broke I was joined by 2 dolphins that played around the catamaran for half an hour or so. They were larger than usual and brown in color. I thought they were Pilot Whales at first but they had the distinctive sickle shaped dorsal fin. When I got home, I looked them up and I think that they were White Beaked Dolphins.



ELYT Charter Tahiti in Bora Bora

Torea Colas is the son of the famous sailor Alain Colas. With his wife Emily, they have developed a new concept in solar powered catamarans on which you will soon be able to discover the beauty of the Bora Bora lagoon.

ELYT, which stands for Exclusive Lagoon Yachting Tahiti, is a new concept of touristic yachting which is distinguished by a design ideally adapted to Polynesian lagoons. The ambition of this houseboat is to offer a new way to discover French Polynesia with a charter product that is both ethnic and contemporary.

This catamaran has been designed and is built by the naval architect Nicolas Gruet, also manager of the Blue Composites Tahiti shipyard. Inspired by the large Polynesian double canoes, it adds a «green» touch to the turquoise shades of the lagoon thanks to its exclusively electric propulsion method, and its

onboard wastewater treatment system. Even if we are not talking about a sailboat here, love and respect for the ocean remain strong family values. Alain Colas discovered the sea in the Pacific Ocean, and Tahiti for him was the culmination of a quest. It is this spirit of adventure and freedom, symbolized by the bird from the Manureva voyage, that this solar-powered catamaran aims to embody. The inspiration is local, but the construction integrates modern technologies and vacuum construction techniques bringing both comfort and safety to cruisers. With a beam of 6.30 m (20'8") and a length of 12 m (39'4"), the catamaran offers nearly 140 m² (1,500 sq ft) of living space on two decks and integrates four double cabins, two bathrooms, a galley, a lounge-dining room and a lounge deck offering a 360° view of the turquoise water and its coral garden. ELYT is an original product that respects the environment and has the non-negligible merit of being built locally.



Who: Emily & Torea Colas
Where: Bora Bora
Multihull: Solar Catamaran
www.elytchartertahiti.com
www.ngdesigns.com
www.bluecompositestahiti.com



Who: Dominique, Mathias, Nicolas and Gilles (who's written this postcard)
Where: Between Saint-Martin and Trinidad, West Indies
Multihull: Outremer 5X
www.levoyagedepom.com



Pom 3 On course for Trinidad

While on a delivery trip from Saint Martin to Trinidad, the crew of Pom 3 would have liked to stopover at Isla de Aves. However...

The sails are ready and we set off for Aves, with just one idea in mind: to set foot on this sandbank claimed by Venezuela. The boat is well trimmed and is running well. She always performs to the best of her ability whatever the conditions. The feeling of gliding is there, sailing above 11 knots on a beam reach, with barely 18 knots of wind. It's magical. During the first meal on board, I try to compensate for my low sailing level with my cooking skills instead. Just to show the others that I'm not there to make up the numbers. I've never found it so easy to cook at 10 knots. It's like being at home. Placemats, cutlery, plates and glasses behave themselves and have the decency to stay put in front of each guest. What about the watches? I'm more of a morning person, I like to be on deck before daylight to see the magnificent sunrises. In just a few minutes, blue makes its appearance and everything changes. We go from shades of gray, from the twinkling of the moon and stars to the blue, pink and orange of the sun's reflection on the clouds. It is beautiful. By mid-morning, Aves is in sight. You can see a sort of platform with a few containers stacked on a large sandbank. There is also a military ship anchored in front. We are heading towards them at 10 knots, with our black sails fluttering like those of a pirate ship. We decide to anchor next to the boat as there might be a small wave behind this big sandbank. I can already imagine myself inflating the paddle to go and catch a wave or two. That's when the VHF calls out to us! A female voice with a strong Hispanic accent

questions us in English: «The boat with the black sails, what are your intentions? «We told her that we wanted to make a quick stop for one or two hours, and the answer was clear: «That's not possible, we're going to carry out live fire testing.» A few minutes later, Aves disappeared in our wake...

