

Sailing Trip to BVI with Rob & Donna Reiley ~ 5/19-5/30/19

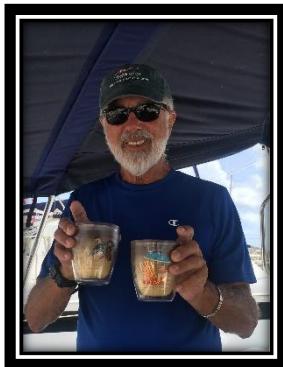
Sailing, Eating, and Drinking in Paradise

By Cindy Crane

Sunday, May 19, 2019 ~ Ed and I woke up Sunday at 4am and left home at 5am on our journey. There was a beautiful full moon in the sky as we left Marco Island. It was a smooth trip to Miami Airport. Going through security, Cindy's carry-on was searched (and Cindy had a full pat-down) because of Eddie's new container of baby powder. It took 3 levels of security before they would let her pass. We had a nice breakfast at KuVa restaurant and an easy flight on American Airlines to St. Thomas. After getting our checked bag, we took the taxi to Red Hook Ferry dock which would take us to St. John.



Another couple on the taxi with us had just told them they wanted to "go to the ferry", but really needed to go to Tortola instead of to St. John and that is a totally different ferry, so they had to drive all the way back to the airport. Rob & Donna met us at the ferry dock and we had Happy Hour drinks at High Tide. Then we walked to The Tap & Still for Happy Hour drinks and excellent burgers. We walked back to the dinghy dock. Remarkably our luggage didn't sink the dinghy, and after a short ride, we arrived at our boat, Windfall.



Rob & Donna had already been on this boat since May 7th. Windfall was a beautiful 45.3-foot Beneteau monohulled sailboat, exactly like Rob & Donna's own boat. It had 3 staterooms, 3 heads, good freezers, twin wheels, and a spacious cockpit...the perfect size for two couples. As soon as we got onboard and got settled Captain Rob made us our sundowners as we watched a beautiful sunset. We were moored at Caneel Bay and our first drinks tasted great! We got a little rain tonight and got our first exercise in jumping up to close the hatches and banging our heads on the ceiling of our berth.



There is so much devastation still at many of the beautiful resorts on St. John from Hurricane Irma and then 2 weeks later Hurricane Maria. All of the vegetation is brown, probably from all the salt water spray two years ago and the current drought.



Monday, May 20, 2019 ~ We woke to a leisurely light breakfast on board Windfall, then we motored into BVI to Soper's Hole so that we could go through customs. Our first mishap was that when Captain Rob and Eddie were tying up to the mooring ball, the pin in the shackle on the hasp came unscrewed and we floated away from the mooring ball. We had to come back around to the mooring ball and tie up to it with a line. Of course, going through customs was a big deal and took two dinghy trips with forms and passports to get all the paperwork done. Once this mission was accomplished by Rob and Eddie, we motored to Tortola and the Moorings where we docked for the night, filled up

with water and diesel fuel, and got the house batteries changed. Seems that the batteries would not hold a charge correctly and Rob & Donna had needed to run the motor two hours at a time for two or three times a day. This was not good! When we arrived at the Moorings, James came onboard and told us of his troubles after the big storm when his parent's home burned down just before Irma, then his house was destroyed during Irma, then he moved in with his brother who threw him out and he was going to be out on the streets. When filling us up with diesel fuel, the man spilled some fuel on the boat and it didn't get cleaned up soon enough, so that diesel smell permeated our cabin and the rest of the boat. Eddie and I slept in the other cabin for the night. It always takes a long time to get things accomplished in the islands, so while we were waiting for someone to come by and fix the batteries, we went shopping. We took a taxi to one of the grocery stores for supplies and then went to another store that was close by. Since Rob & Donna have been sailing here for the past 19 years, they know the right places to go! We were in search of Myers dark rum to use as a floater in our Painkillers. We could find none at either store. Alas, we later found out that no Myers rum had been delivered to the entire BVI for a while! We bought Black Strap Rum instead. At the Moorings we were able to take "real" showers which felt wonderful. Once we were all cleaned up, we took the dinghy across the bay into town and walked to Capriccio de Mar for a delicious dinner. We had a good bottle of wine, pizza, lasagna, chicken parmesan, and penne with sausage. We had a pleasant night's sleep on the dock with AC. There was still that diesel smell though...

Tuesday, May 21, 2019 ~ We had a leisurely morning onboard at the dock while we waited for the new batteries. It turns out that most of the batteries were not working correctly, so they were all going to be replaced. Ed and Rob got dinghy gas and went looking for a pin for the shackle. We finally got the new batteries and mentioned that there was this bad diesel smell. Captain Morgan, who works at the moorings and is a friend of Rob & Donna, immediately came on board when Donna mentioned the smell, went into our cabin, pulled our bed out and, sure enough, when he uncovered the fuel tank under our bed, he found that the cap was loose and diesel fuel was leaking everywhere. So now



we had to wait longer until someone could come by and clean up this mess. While we were waiting, we had our first Painkillers. The Black Strap Rum, which we used as a floater, was very strong, but a nice addition to the drinks. We decided that it would taste excellent as syrup on pancakes and decided to do this later in the trip. We had a light lunch on board. The weather was beautiful with a pleasant breeze. There was a big Disney cruise ship at the dock across the way.

Like the rest of BVI, Tortola and the Moorings suffered much devastation during Hurricane Irma. Of the 400 boats docked there most were damaged, many completely destroyed. But the Moorings has rebuilt and come back strong. In talking to several of the employees at the Moorings and later to many of the restaurant and bar owners throughout BVI, we heard over and over again the sad stories of going through the storm and the great loss that was suffered. Many of the people told of riding the storm out in their bathtubs covered with mattresses to keep alive as they could hear the storm tearing apart their homes around them. The prevailing impression I got from everyone was that they are a very resilient people and are all just thankful that they survived. Hurricane Irma was a category 5 storm when it went

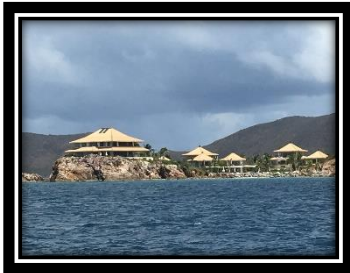
over the islands. (It was one mile-per-hour short of a Category 4 when it went over Marco Island). Irma was followed by Hurricane Maria just two weeks later, which dropped tons of rain.



After our diesel spill was cleaned up, we left the dock (a little difficult because the bow thruster was not working properly), and sailed the 5 miles to Great Harbor on Peter Island where the new Willie T's is located. Rob & Donna's head has been clogged the entire trip, but they didn't get it fixed while at the Moorings, so there was an odor during the sail. At Peter Island, there were only about 12 boats anchored. We had a Painkiller on board and then we took the dinghy over to the Willie T's for some drinks. We had a couple of "MoCo's" (Captain Morgan and

Diet Coke). It was a slow night at Willie T's. When we left, to go back to our boat, the dinghy was very slippery and Cindy fell into it, but was OK. At Windfall, Rob fell getting onboard and cut his elbow. There was blood, but Admiral Donna cleaned up the wound and bandaged it. Our dinner on board was delicious...steaks, mashed potatoes, and salads. This has been a great day and we all had a good night's sleep.

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ We had a nice breakfast of bagels, yogurt, etc. Rob's elbow was still bad. When Donna was removing the bandage to clean the wound, he had a huge hematoma, which burst, shooting blood everywhere. She got it cleaned up and rebandaged and Rob said that it felt better after he got rid of all that blood. But we were worried about it and continued to keep a close watch on it. We left Peter Island and got on our way to North Sound in Virgin Gorda. As we motored along through the St. Drake's Channel, past all the islands Donna told us that the way to remember the names of the island group is "Ginger Cooper gave Salt Peter to Norman. We motored towards North Sound and tried to put up the sail, but there was a problem with the lines and then the auto pilot of the navigation system went haywire, so we just kept motoring. At one point, our navigation system spun the boat around 180 degrees and scared us all to death. So, we had to turn off the system and now had to actually steer the boat ourselves. Now we will all become "real sailors".



Our anchorage is at Prickly Pear, just past Necker Island where Sir Richard Branson has one huge complex, now with 3 wind turbines. The other side is Mosquito Island where Sir Richard has an even bigger complex of houses on the point. Leverick Bay is to our right. We had a light lunch as Rob & Eddie tried to get the navigation system working...RTFM!! (Read the fucking manual!) On Necker Island, you can stay for a mere \$30,000/night! All day we have had a nice little seagull staying with us on our dinghy. I named him Jonathan. Captain Rob

made us Rum Punch Old-fashioneds with a Black Strap rum floater...delicious! Tonight's dinner is pork



loin cooked on the grill, sautéed onions and peppers and rice. Everything was delicious and we all agreed that everything tastes better on a boat! We now have two seagulls, Jonathan and Livingston. We also have 5 very



large remoras circling around in search of some handouts. I wonder where the sharks are! Tonight, there was a fabulous sunset!

Thursday, May 23, 2019 ~ We awoke to another beautiful breezy morning. We had a big breakfast of eggs, bacon, and English muffins. We motored into the Bitter End area. Wow, it was so very sad to see the TOTAL devastation. Eddie didn't even realize that this was the Bitter End location. The entire resort was totally gone! Saba Rock was also totally destroyed by Hurricane Irma. However, they are furiously rebuilding on Saba Rock. The Fat Virgin is gone. The whole area had so much destruction that it was devastating to see. We motored over to Leverick Bay and anchored



there. This place had lots of damage also, but has really rebuilt well. We had drinks and lunch at The Cove Grill at Leverick Bay. They served us great Mudslides. Makisha was our waitress and she made us reservations for tomorrow night's dinner and show. Rob also set up our rental car for our Virgin Gorda adventure.



We went back to the boat for siesta and then we all got cleaned up, dinghied in and took our rental car. Captain Rob drove us up to Hog's Heaven for drinks with a view. Wow! Back on the boat, we had a very light dinner with wine.



Friday, May 24, 2019 ~ We were all up bright and early for our great Virgin Gorda adventure. At the Leverick Bay beach bar there was a family of goats looking for something to eat. Rob drove us on the roller coaster road through Spanish Town and over to the Baths. We hiked down and had a beer at the little beach bar. The water here was great and we saw a few fish while snorkeling. Cindy saw a squid. We hiked back up to the Top of the Baths for beers at the fresh water pool. Next, we had a great lunch at Mad Dogs, which had just reopened last month after being destroyed by Hurricane Irma. The huge boulders at the Baths continue to amaze me...how did they get here?



There was so much destruction from the hurricane and it has been a very slow process of recovery. Most of what I remember of Spanish Town is totally gone. What was left of the huge complex of cute stores was just the steel beam frame and the steel beams were bent over like plastic straws. We had the same feeling when we went by Saba Rock and what used to be the Bitter End. We all felt so sad for the people who lost so much. I wondered what happened to all of the animals during the hurricane? How about all of the little chickens? All of the vegetation is still so brown, from the salt spray and then

the drought. Who knows if it will ever come back lush green again? That will certainly hurt the tourist industry even more. Captain Rob made Painkillers and we shared a meat pie for appetizers.



Tonight, we went to the BBQ party at Jumbies Beach Bar. Our table had a sign that said "Reserved for Rob", and Donna was our server! We all had great fun and the BBQ was delicious. There were all sorts of salads, macaroni and cheese, corn on the cob, BBQ chicken, spare ribs, pulled pork, and fish. There were delicious cookies for dessert and

Cindy took some back to the boat for later. We all ate too much! There was a nice Reggae band playing and then the three Mocko Jumbies came out. We motored back to our boat for a good night's sleep.



Saturday, May 25, 2019 ~ We awoke to an early beautiful morning with more sun and blue sky than we have had the last several days. We had a light breakfast. We drove over to the dock for water and ice and a quick trip to the store. Then we were off for our great day of sailing to Anegada. Since the auto pilot navigation is not working, we had to actually sail the boat, so we took turns driving, and Cindy got to steer for a while. It was a little scary as we got to Anegada because another sailboat seemed to be racing us just as we were coming into the very narrow channel. But we were able to find a nice spot to anchor. A very large stingray swam by our boat. Donna cooked us nachos for lunch...so delicious! We walked down the beach, checking out restaurants for tomorrow. We had drinks at Neptune's and met the owners. At the bar there were some nice people from the east coast of Florida and it turns out that they were all on the boat that had been racing us into the channel. They were very nice and were getting ready for a big sail to Saint Martin. As they left the bar, we all saw that the lady only had one leg and we watched in awe as she gingerly hopped onto the dinghy to go to their boat. Remind me to never complain about anything again! Happy Hour on the boat was followed by a gourmet dinner. What could be better?



Sunday, May 26, 2019 ~ After a good night's sleep, we had a gourmet breakfast of sausages and pancakes with Black Strap Rum syrup...delicious! We took our rental car around the island with Admiral Donna as our driver. We saw the pink flamingos, several goats, some sheep, and a cow or two.

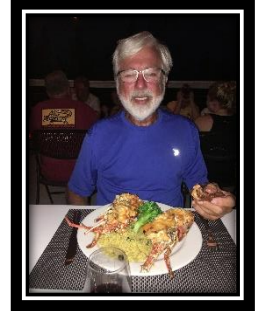
Our first stop was at Flash of Beauty Beach for a drink and a walk on the beach. This was usually a great snorkel place but was a little rough today, so we didn't go in the water. Next, we stopped at Big Bamboo Bar for a drink. We met some nice



people at the bar. One group was burning their message into a board to save at the bar, just like Rob & Donna have done in the past. You can tell that all of the bars were damaged by the storm as all of the graffiti was dated 2018 or 2019. Our third stop was Cow Wreck Beach for drinks and snacks and a walk on the beach. We saw the same people at this bar as we all seem to follow each other around the island. Our last stop was Anegada Beach Bar for drinks, a beach walk, and the lovely pool. The luxury tents that they were building a few years ago were still



there but they now had thatched roofs. After our bar tour of Anegada, we went back to our boat and started getting ready for our gourmet lobster dinner at



Wonky Dog. This was truly a delicious dinner! We had Lobster Thermador and Jerk Mango Coconut Lobster. For appetizers, we had Three Way Conch and Firecracker Shrimp. We had two bottles of a nice Malbec wine from Mendoza. After our dinner we chatted with Desne, the owner, about going through the hurricane. Anegada has really rebuilt much faster than the other islands.

Monday, May 27, 2019 ~ After some rain last night and this am, we had a light lunch and left Anegada. This was a long full day of sailing, and Cindy got to drive the boat a lot and help with the lines, etc. We took a mooring ball in Little Harbor on Jost Van Dyke and, after getting cleaned up, we went to Sydney's Love and Peace for a drink. They were experiencing some electrical problems, but the power finally came back on. We spoke to Sydney's daughter, Strawberry, who told us about going through Irma in her bathtub while the rest of her house was all blown away. But she was so thankful that she was alive. Dinner on the boat was steak, mashed potatoes, and veggies.



Tuesday, May 28, 2019 ~ After a delicious breakfast by Chef Donna of breakfast tacos, we motored to Great Harbor. Rob & Eddie went in to get ice and had breakfast beers at Corsairs. They talked to the bar tender for quite a while and got the scoop from him about Rudy, who according to this guy, turns out to be not a nice guy! It seems he ran off with a woman from Tortola and took everything with him leaving his wife and son with nothing. Then when the

insurance check came after Irma it was made out to just Rudy and he took it all. According to the guy from Corsairs, Rudy's wife and son have been working extra hard to scrape together enough to get the business going again. They hope to open next month, almost two years after Irma. The bar tender who gave us this



information had been living there and helping Rudy's wife and son for two years since Hurricane Irma.



We went in by dinghy and walked down to Rudy's place. At the cemetery there was a cute family of goats with two boy goats butting heads and two little baby goats following their mama. We flagged down Easy Eddie Taxi who took us over the hill to the beautiful White Harbor which was very busy with lots of boats and people from the big ships. Soggy Dollar had lost all of its vegetation, but was still doing a thriving business. We had Painkillers and got some chairs to sit on the beach. We ran into our new friends from Arizona that we had met at Big Bamboo. They were all dressed as pirates. Then the guys got Cindy a Rum & Diet, which had no Diet! We walked down the beach to the end which had huge tents which looked like it could have been a cruise ship excursion



place. We stopped at Coco Locos for some delicious Rotis (meat pies). We walked through Hendo's Hideaway and then back to Soggy Dollar and got Easy Eddie Taxi for our ride back to Great Harbor and Foxy's. Cindy bought some huggies there. We took our dinghy over to



Sugar and Spice where Donna ordered pates (meat pies) for later in the trip and we talked to Joan, the owner, who was very nice and accommodating. We went back to Windfall for a relaxing night. We could hear the music and party going on at Foxy's but we were too tired to take the dinghy back in.



Wednesday, May 29, 2019 ~ We woke up to a very overcast and rainy morning. After a delicious breakfast of meat pies, Ed & Rob went in and checked out of BVI customs, which was surprisingly easy this time. When they returned to the boat, we motored to the dock to fill up on water and ice. We sailed back to Caneel Bay in St. John where we got a mooring ball for the night. After a long-failed attempt by Eddie to do our customs check-in online, we all took the dinghy into Cruz Bay and went to the customs office to check in to USVI. The most miserable, obnoxious woman possible waited on us and finally got the job done. We were all so stressed out after this that we went up to The Taproom @



St. John's Brewery where it was Happy Hour with \$1 off drinks and \$5 off pizzas, so we had a couple of beers each and two pizzas. This was very relaxing and delicious. Next, we stopped at the Sun Dog Café, a cute little bar with the tallest bar stools imaginable. Cindy had a Chocolate Banana Bushwacker, Donna had wine, and the guys had two Rum & Tonics each. We had the smoothest dinghy ride yet back to the boat for another round of Painkillers and then off to bed.

Thursday, May 30, 2019 ~ We had quick showers, finished packing, and then Rob took Eddie and Cindy over by dinghy to the Red Hook Dock where we caught the 10am ferry to begin our trip home. We had

an uneventful taxi ride to the St. Thomas airport. We had huge burgers at the airport restaurant and then a relatively smooth flight back to Miami. No problems getting our bags, and then we did our long car ride back to Marco Island.

It has been another wonderful sailing trip with our great friends...Rob, "Oh Captain, My Captain", and Donna, "Admiral and Chef Extraordinaire". We really love the BVI and the USVI. The waters are so very beautiful and the islands still have lots of fun bars, especially at Anegada and Jost Van Dyke.

