

Grenadines Getaway by David Bergevin

I was thinking in August of 2002 about the upcoming winter months and planning (yes really) the projects that were necessary for next year's sailing activities. Bill George asked if I would be interested in doing another charter this winter. We (Beverlee and I, Max and Sarah) had just returned from Alaska. I'm going broke anyway, what the heck, "Sure I'm always interested" says I. Well, deposit figures and airplane reservations and cost inquiries became the daily activity.

Destination: St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A series of picture postcard tropical islands in the Caribbean Sea. The islands extend northward above the tip of South America and Venezuela. Trinidad and Tobago, then Grenada and next are the Windward Islands that extend all the way up in a semi-circle to the Virgin Islands. Too many countries to name them all.

The time: the Saturday after Thanksgiving for a seven-day excursion.

Who: Bill George, three of his college buddies (first clue), and myself (Gilligan).

The five were to connect up at various locations along the way. (second clue).

The flight to Miami was good, arriving near 10:30 or so in the morning. "When is the next flight David?". I replied, "seven tonight". Dan Black was supposed to land at 4:00pm or so. The three of us headed for South Beach (as in Miami Beach) via taxi cab.

Now we had scraped ice in the morning to leave home and thus were still dressed as normal people from Tennessee would dress for this time of the year. Changing to shorts in the restrooms and carrying coats all day (great pillows by the way) was the expected. After a great brunch at an outdoor cafe, a walk along the beach seemed appropriate. Lots of in-line skaters, some with bikinis and cut-offs and some topless. Most of the guys were gay but the girls were okay.

Back to the Miami airport and meet up with Dan coming in from Austin, TX. We caught the plane to Barbados, where the adventure was to begin. Got off the plane, crossed the tarmac (no jetways) and through customs/immigration and into a small Toyota Taxi. Four grown men, the driver and baggage for 4 for a week. We are friendly already (oh well, good practice for sailboat living).

I had made the reservations. The bar stayed open for the new arrivals (us) and a few drinks/beers later it was time for sleep. Barbados is on Atlantic time. We left Tullahoma at 4:30 am CST, it is now 11:30pm AST. I think I'm tired now.

5:30 am (Oh Geez!) wake up time, 6:30 flight to catch to St. Vincent. (Note here: no mention of meals since brunch Saturday).



Puddle Jumper (turboprop airplane) to St. Vincent uneventful. Upon arrival to Customs I had somehow not received (or misplaced) my declarations form. There were only two officers on duty and both were processing the new arrivals. I had to wait until last and then request a new form, then fill it in properly, then process through. Another Toyota taxicab (or was it a Nissan) and off to Blue Lagoon for the arrival at Sunsail Yacht Charters. Lunch was first on everyone's agenda, then check in. Stashed our gear on board "Timeless Passage" our chartered catamaran. Met Ken Wilde, our other poor unfortunate shipmate and headed for some much needed sustenance. Ken had arrived the day before via St. Lucia, having purchased his tickets for the day earlier than he was supposed to.



Bill and I did the chart check out (clue 3) and the boys did the provisioning ("guys, 4 cases of beer ain't gonna get it"). We are underway now and once we clear the breakwater we see that the seas and wind are somewhat more than it appeared on the hill looking out.

"A reef wouldn't hurt," says I, "Ok" says the skipper (Bill). It really didn't matter, it was already set when the sail went up (I forget which clue this is). As we head for Bequia (Beck-Way), comments were made such as "how come none of the other sailboats have the sails pulled up", and my favorite, ("how come the front sail on that boat is so small"). Clearing the tip of St. Vincent made it all too clear what style of sailing was coming our way. The roller furling Genoa came out all the way and we're off ... 8.5-9.0 knots on a beam reach, YEE-HAH!!

Admiralty Bay was the first night destination and peaceful it was. A very large four-masted Windjammer type cruise ship came in after we had arrived near sunset and graceful it was with all the sails up. (Photo of it at anchor)

Dinner and Breakfast were both excellent as was the night's rest. Restocked ice block and crushed and 2 more cases of beer. Most important, toilet paper and soap, as there was none on board due to provisioning oversights.

I finally figured out the reefing is for sissies and after taking apart the gear, I was able to release the clutches that were holding it in. (must have been there a long time because it was so salt encrusted, another clue, I think).

Off we sail to Mustique (Moose-Teak) (don't forget that I am hard of hearing and we were almost out of beer already). Lunch at world famous Basil's Bar (they actually have a web site) (photo is of Basil's Bar). Mustique (as it is told to us), is owned by 57 individuals, including Mick Jagger, David Bowie, Princess Margaret and other hoity-toity's. We stayed log enough to say "yeah so" and off to the next stop.



Charleston Bay on Canouan is the nighttime destination (what day is it anyways)(who cares).

Dinner was great and breakfast was also (Photo of the breakfast setting with all 5 of us). All meals thus far have been ashore.

I am becoming proficient at rubber dinghy handling; no one has fallen in yet. Remember, there are no streetlights on the water and Dinner runs well past dark. We have not found the flashlight that is on the boat either.

We are headed to the territorial waters of Grenada just so that David (me) can buy another flag. After turning around Petit Martinique, we are off to Union Island and Clifton Harbor. A young man offers a mooring for \$20 E.C. (East Caribbean Dollars) cheapest yet, we take it. There is a milk jug attached to God knows what. No other moorings in sight. We tie up and head for lunch.



The Anchorage Yacht Club sounds good, so off we go. Don't get your hopes too high David, the outdoor patio is quaint but nothing fancy. Three of the guys want to walk through town so we took the dinghy to the other end of the town's waterfront to prepare for provisioning (more beer and ice). The guys caught up and we all went for sightseeing. Back to the boat and naptime. Reading is a passion and as daylight was departing, chowtime (again). I declined and guarded the boat reading well into the evening. The plan was to awaken and sail to the private Palm Island for breakfast. We did, and had a fabulous breakfast. There were flags of many nations around the restaurant walls. Absent was "Old Glory". What an awkward feeling. This is an area that mostly Europeans come and that was evident all around.

Off to the Tobago Cays for a snorkel adventure. We made it into the National Park and managed to set anchor after several tries. Very distracting to notice that the people around on other boats watching us were not wearing clothes of any sort. Well we didn't lose the anchor (don't know why) and the masks and fins went on. I grew feathers and chickened out. My last salt-water snorkel activity left a lasting impression (face to face with a 4' Barracuda in the BVI).

Anchors aweigh (electric windlass, I can get used to this), and off to Salt Whistle Bay, Mayreau for lunch. Beautiful palm trees and Chickee Huts for outdoor dining. We anchored again, they wanted \$35 E.C. (about \$20 U.S.) to moor just for lunch, no way! Others were unsuccessful anchoring and finally gave up (sand bottom, solid wind). We spent way too long for lunch and needed to head out.



Destination Mustique for the Thursday night Jump-Up (street party after dark). As the sun went down and we were still hours away, Bequia was the diversion (Mustique was upwind). Friendship Bay was the anchorage (nothing helpful in the book). No moorings to be had so we dropped the hook and went in for dinner at the only place that had lights on the dock. Great choice, three piece guitar/mandolin band singing. Lobster (again) and bedtime. I don't know when the dock lights were turned off but around 2am Bill woke me up asking, "Do you think we might be dragging anchor". I am awake now!!!

Sure enough the land seemed a whole lot different than when we set anchor before (either that or the hills have moved). Anchor drills ensued (multiple), it is amazing that turning on two engines can awaken the dead as lights were popping on all the other boats as we tried to reset the anchor. Success and sleep. The morning came and we realized that we were nearly on the shore before we knew it. To this day I have no idea why Bill chose that moment to check up on the situation. Breakfast and off we go again.

2-hour sail to Mustique (missed the party). The boys want to go sightseeing, I want to sleep. They get in the dinghy and somebody pulled the starter rope right out of the engine. I rummage for some tools and take the motorhead off and masterfully repair the engine. They went off and me and the pillow had a date. Dinner was a feast at Basil's (world famous don't you know). Breakfast ashore croissants and danish (freshly baked).

St. Vincent here we come. I checked into a hotel room (air-conditioned) at the Marina, took a shower after lunch and slept until the following morning wake-up call at 4:30am (6:00am flight). Barbados, Miami, Nashville (man is it cold here). I still can't get warm, but I have warm and fond memories of a life long pipe dream that came true. How's yours doing?

Some Facts: temperature 28-30c, wind 25-30knots continuous, airfare roundtrip to Barbados \$450, St. Vincent \$150, Boat Charter \$2900 (split 5 ways) food, beer, souvenirs (I haven't a clue), but the memories are totally "priceless".

Fair and Warm Breezes,
David Bergevin

Around the Islands Challenge (AIC)

Remember that the new challenge will run from Jan 1, 2003 to Dec 31, 2003. Please send time and mid lake wind conditions to Tom Bentley bentley@edge.net. He will calculate and periodically post the standings. A suitable trophy will be awarded at the spring banquet.



Highland Yacht Club Meeting Minutes

No Business Meeting in February.