

SV NEVER DIE WONDERING II



Voyage 2021

Across the Gulf of Carpentaria

After lengthy work on the vessel back in Blue water marina Cairns, and the end of the wet season, I solo sailed to Townsville for a haul out: Anti fouled the hull and several jobs completed that required work out of the water then back in the drink, with the new destination Darwin that meant sailing back to cape York and the Torres straits for the now third time? this was plan B, as I hoped to sail to Papua New Guinea and to places I visited 11 years ago, but now legally impossible with the covid restrictions so hence Plan B cross the Gulf of Carpentaria, explore the Top of Australia and Arnhem land.

This time I tried to visit and anchor at different islands over the 2,000 nm journey to Darwin. This lifestyle isn't always free? As I was boarded by the Giringun Rangers who claimed I was in a green zone No fishing I had just thrown a line out while sailing as I past a fishing vessel with its nets out and no Green zone was on my new charts, the ranger looked at the charts and admitted there is something wrong as they should of come up? He told me I would only get a warning ? Two months later I received a \$2,200 fine. I had been informed the three rangers who booked me are all legally allowed to fish in green zones as being Part aboriginal? Talk about discrimination. Near were I was boarded I anchored at a place called Zoe bay, the most scenic of bays with the peaks of Hinchbrook mountains towering over

the bay the fresh smell of the rainforests with a large water fall cascading into the bay only a short distance of were your anchored moments like these makes up for those bad days.

“The cure for anything is saltwater – Sweat, Tears, or the sea”

The wet season had not finished when I moored back into Cairns marina for supplies one meter of rain fell with in a few days that held me up again. The saying that “Marinas are like crab pots easy to get in but hard to get out” Really became reality I only planned to visit Cairns to sell the Crowther temporarily but covid restrictions and work on the new vessel and the weather really made blue water marina a crab pot?



Frankland Islands



Haycock Island



Haul out Townsville



Were the rainforest meets the sea

“To desire nothing beyond what you have is surely happiness

Aboard a boat, it is frequently possible to achieve just that.

That is why sailing is a way of life, one of the finest lives.”



Cave on Double Island



From the top of Mt Cook Lizard Island

I was able to jump on the start of the south easterly trade winds surfing the swells and testing the vessel now in heavy weather of 34 knts of which many island to safely anchor in when the weather was a bit too much but I needed to find out exactly what she could handle and by the time I reached the Torres strait I was more than happy with her.

Jeff Mullenger flew into Bamaga to sail with me across the Gulf of Carpentaria. I planned to sail south for 150 nm so to have the trade winds behind as opposed the crossing from the tip of which would be a beam reach, that night I was sailing sitting on the bow area full moon gentle breeze watching woody island as comfortably sailing through inskip banks then it all went pear shape, a wind shift and 36 knts on the nose, travelling over this shallow bank and waves were constantly crashing over the roof of the vessel, by virtue of sailing through a passage in the banks I had no chose but to hold the bearing until safely out the wind didn't die down neither the predicted wind direction happen, so once cleared of the banks I decided to change the planned direction and head south of Crab island, when dawn broke and the land of cape York came into view we then headed south and had a great beam reach with the strong not predicted winds? with manageable swells due to the land. No sleep for me that night.

“A bad day sailing is 100 times better than a good day at work”



Spanish Mackerel fed us for weeks



Sunset crossing the gulf



Unique Wessel Islands



Jeff at the Hole in the wall

We sailed south of Weipa and crossed the gulf when the weather window was favourable, I have equipped the vessel with Iridium satellite and down load predict wind files that are accurate most of the time? And what a great run across the gulf spinnaker up most of the time, unfortunately blew [ripped]the asymmetrical, but had the large symmetrical and with the wind mostly around 180 a perfect run to Cape Arnhem, taking 4 hour shifts on the helm over the three day crossing. We visited Gove- Yirrikala then made our way through the Hole in the wall, a passage through a rocky island only a mile long but very narrow essential to pick the right tides to get you through safely. The islands of Arnhem land are unique with rocky escarpment's some of these islands have large fresh water swamps therefore hearing the morning flight of magpie geese. A lot of the water is unsurveyed so a bit of risk taking is acquired.

Spent a few days exploring Cobourg peninsula were one of the first British settlements took place in 1840s and failed, a lot of the building still standing. Arrived in Darwin late June, Jeff flew back to Victoria and an old flame rang me and came sailing for a couple of weeks exploring the peninsulas west of Darwin, were we came upon a large pod of false killer whales like small orca whales. Now the covid restrictions stop me from sailing to International waters and they are close by? Oh well now plan C a lot to explore and discover here in the territory, it doesn't get better than this.



Cooking on the coals wessel islands



Sea bird nesting



Morning light



Cobourg Peninsula



Nature provides some great dishes



Attractive new crew

"An adventurer, a free-spirited person must never conform to other people's expectations. It is essential to live your dreams, to explore and to discover. Anything less would eventually lead to a life of regret.

Pursue the ultimate- goal to NEVER DIE WONDERING."

Alistair J MacLeod

Never Die Wondering



Kind regards

Alistair Macleod

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