

SV NEVER DIE WONDERING II



Fresh supplies



Fish offering



Spice Islands live volcano [note tied to cannon]



Meditating Seram Island

Voyage 2022

The Spice islands to West Papua

At present I am writing this newsletter from my yacht Never Die Wondering II, in Sorong West Papua, Eastern Indonesia. My original plan was to sail to New Guinea, of which has taken me 9,000 nm and 4.5 years to get here, there was never a particular destination in New Guinea any part of the Island that is renown to be the last frontier, but in the end due to all the hurdles regulations etc Covid? West Papua is where I have arrived.

After leaving Tual, exploring many of the isolated Islands were by the people would greet you to their islands, in the most welcoming of ways, cooking and feeding you with their freshly caught and cooked fish, sago breads, coconuts.

Not many visitors come to these remote islands and even less since covid. At one stage a fishing boat pulled alongside with their catch and offered a bag of fish. And not wanting any payment. I have found the Indonesians to be the friendliest of people.

***“Traveling leaves you speechless
then turns you into a storyteller”***

Abu Abdella Mahomed 1369

After Crossing the Banda Sea that in some places is 7 km deep, and sightings of humpback whales we arrived in the Spice Islands [Banda Neira] and what an incredible place, anchoring at the base of a live volcano with the stern lines tied to an old Dutch cannon. It was here that Dutch V.O.C and the British India trade company fought over the control of these small islands of which was rich in Nutmeg that was sold for more in weight than gold at the time.

The Bandanese suffered terrible brutality at the hands of the Dutch V.O.C including commissioning Japanese samurai warriors who sailed to the islands to execute 45 of the clans' leaders, beheading them and enslaving the people, due to the slaughtering and exodus of the islanders by up to 90% the Dutch brought in slaves from Java for the labour of harvesting Nutmeg.

England lost the control of the island of Rhun to the Dutch then in retaliation they invaded new Amsterdam and took control of what is known as Manhattan today. And agreement of cease fire by both the English and Dutch on the agreement England keeps New Amsterdam [Manhattan] and the Dutch keep Rhun Island, we all Know today who got the better deal?



Banda islands



Traditional dancing



30 school children discovering the journey



The Banda mob from Banda Neira

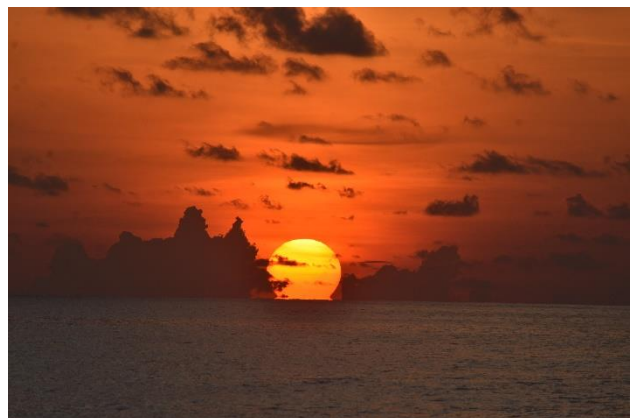
The Spice islands I found to be an adventurer's paradise, rich in history incredible people of which have many blood lines from Arab traders, Portuguese, Chinese and mostly derive from either Banda or the many islands in the Indonesian archipelago.

On a couple of occasions, the local school children visited Never Die Wondering II to learn of the journey. I befriended some of these wonderful people and as the trade winds had now come to an end [no wind] I decided to stay on for a while, 6 weeks in total, my Italian crew Simon continued his journey to Singapore to Kayak to Thailand. I emersed myself with the culture of Banda by way of a culture day of singing and dancing, writing my new book or learning about their cuisine and eating wonderful dishes, the variety of spices through the alleys of the market bazaar, nut megs, cloves, cinnamon, chilli.

Taking my Bandanese friends Mita and Anwar and family along with their entourage? sailing while at the same time they are showing me their wonderful islands, snorkelling in the magnificent coral gardens, even experiencing snorkelling in the hot water from the lava flow. All things come to an end, and after a welding maintenance job, I solo sailed the rest of the Banda Sea and made it to Ambon just in time to extend the visa for another 60 days.



Preparing for the Kora – Kora race



Sunset Banda Sea

Ambon to Sorong [Southern Raja Ampat]

In Ambon Alexa from Switzerland joined me to crew from Ambon to Sorong West Papua over a 3-week period, her keenness was exceptional 30 hours in flights, Switzerland to Singapore to Jakarta to Sulawesi to Ambon.

A lot of Indonesia is uncharted, and the charts sometimes have you sailing on land with 50 meters of water under you.

There was an island with 50-meter rocky peak, coconut trees, beaches that did not exist on the chart, but showed 2 meters water depth? Having someone keeping an eye out for coral is paramount.

“It’s impossible says doubt

It’s dangerous says fear

It’s pointless said reason

Try it anyway said the heart”



Alexa making friends



crossed the Ceram sea



Out riggers Fishing



Saleman Seram



One of the many Villages



Sunsets

The island of Seram is the largest and main island in the Maluku province of Indonesia and has many smaller islands adjacent, we sailed from Ambon heading west then north and along the northern section until crossing the Ceram sea to Southern Raja Ampat [Misool]

Visiting the many villages and people along the way. SV Never Die Wondering became the party vessel for many of the villages and even a platform for diving into the waters. Sometimes it can be overwhelming when tired from sailing to be visited by up to 40 people all wanting to come on board.

The sea life is everywhere in these waters while in Banda I saw up to 60 Melon head whales, while sailing to Sorong many humpback whales, dolphins are ever present, but the bird life is prolific on the islands, the incredible Papua Horn bill making morning flight with its ancient call a somewhat prehistoric look and noise from this bird is a magical moment.

Sailing into the islets of Misool we encountered 3 small storms in one day, with squalls blowing under the 40 knots but they are gone as quickly as they come, but very daunting coming into the islands were by the charts are not correct, and visibility is poor due to a storm.

One night rafting up along side a fuel tanker as preference to tying lines from the cliff walls due to being in very deep water and no where to anchor.

While exploring this region, what is referred to southern Raja Ampat we discovered magical lagoons fringed by coral reefs with towering rock walls. And then welcomed again when anchoring adjacent a village of west Papua by friendly warm people.

I need to extend the visa here in Sorong, this will give me another 2 months to explore Northern Raja Ampat and the many islands to Sulawesi.

“Live every day as if it was going to be your last

because someday you’re going to be right?”



Villages Island Seram



Isolated place west Seram



Magical Sunsets



Pulau Balbulol

"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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