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## 34 A SEASON OF SOUTH PACIFIC MEMORIES

Tom Partridge and Susie Plume bought ADINA their Hylas 46' via Berthon in 2012 in preparation for the adventure of a lifetime. They and ADINA have now voyaged far and they write regularly for Yachting Monthly where their tales of far away seas and extraordinary lands cannot help but capture the imagination. Their tale of the South Pacific with wonderful imagery make us all want to join them there. [www.yachtadina.co.uk](http://www.yachtadina.co.uk)



## 40 THE VOLVO SHOW ARRIVES IN NEWPORT USA

The Volvo Race was big news in Newport, Rhode Island this Spring, and the Berthon USA crew dived in with both feet, participating in the event and providing a stake boat for the start of the leg to Portugal. Alex Rudkin, son of Berthon broker Bill Rudkin, works on the programme and gives a fascinating insight into the logistics involved in building the Volvo villages that are erected whenever the Volvo show comes to town.

[www.berthonusa.com](http://www.berthonusa.com)

## 42 THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SNOW BUSINESS

Darcey Crownshaw is a Berthon client and enthusiastic Windy owner. He is also very big in snow! Starting on his kitchen table, he developed a system of making fake snow from recycled paper. The business has now grown exponentially and the Snow Business now makes over 200 different types of snow, and if you have watched a film this year with some snowy scenes, the chances are that Darcey was the snow man! His article tells this great and very snowy tale. [www.snowbusiness.com](http://www.snowbusiness.com)

## 46 OF CLOCKS AND YACHTS

Peter Harrison is an enthusiast yachtsman who is currently campaigning his TP 52 to great effect. Starting with a Tofinou, he soon got the yachting bug. Also the European CEO of Richard Mille the legendary watch makers, he tells us about his yachting as well as about the new material that Richard Mille are using to create the RM 011 NPT watch which is the perfect yachtsmans' accessory. [www.richardmille.com](http://www.richardmille.com)



## 50 SKI VOILE INTERNATIONAL

Gavia Wilkinson-Cox has been racing her Dragon in the International Fleets for the past 13 years, competing in some 14 to 16 regattas annually and is currently ranked 12th in the World Ranking List of International Dragon Class. These epic dayboats provide extremely hot racing and the fleet is international with regattas throughout the season in some amazing locations. The first regatta of their year takes place in Juan les Pins and offers a combination of sailing and ski-ing. The perfect way to kick start the season and also tremendous fun. [www.intdragon.net](http://www.intdragon.net)

## 52 GIRL POWER AT BERTHON BUT PLEASE MIND THE (SKILLS) GAP

The Apprenticeship programme at Berthon is fundamental to the business and in an environment where as a nation we are not training enough youngsters to provide the skills that we need now and in the future, we are proud of the number of young men and women that learn their trade with us. Brian May, managing director of the Berthon Group explains the problem and showcases Tayler Lightbourn, one of our 1st year Shipwright apprentices. [www.berthon.co.uk](http://www.berthon.co.uk)



## 54 THE COURT OF VERDERERS

The New Forest is an ancient and very special place and is the largest area of lowland heath in Europe. Very local to Berthon's HQ it has a unique form of governance which has been in operation since 1079. Dominic May who runs Berthon Boat Company is the Official Verderer, presiding over the Verderers' Court. He writes about this extraordinary organisation and how it protects and nurtures the New Forest for both the present and the future. [www.verderers.org.uk](http://www.verderers.org.uk)

# A season of **South Pacific** *Memories*

  **Tom Partridge**

As Susie and I guided ADINA, our Hylas 46, through the towering gates of the Miraflores Lock at the end of the Panama Canal emotions were running high.

Less than a year after leaving Hamble in England, and following a few months shake-out in the Mediterranean and Christmas in the Caribbean, here we were heading for the Bridge of Americas, about to embark on our South Pacific adventure.

We spent a couple of days in Panama City enjoying its vibrancy and culture before heading to the calm of the nearby Las Perlas islands. Here we made final preparations for our passage to the Galapagos Islands during which we'd cross the equator for the first time.

Ten days of light-wind sailing later we arrived in San Cristobal just as the sun was setting, welcomed by the sight of numerous paired tips gliding through the water – not sharks but a

shoal of manta rays. Formalities are strict in this environmentally sensitive area and costs high so many share the experience with friends and family, as did we. Being anchored on your yacht is one of the best ways to see the wildlife; sea lions swim by poking their heads up inviting you to play, pelicans sit on top of your pulpit looking for fish, small Galapagos penguins dart by, a ripple on the surface reveals a turtle. Ashore you can spot the famous blue-footed boobies doing their unusual courtship dance on the rocks or pre-historic looking marine iguanas basking in the sun.

Dragging ourselves away for the longest voyage of our counter-clockwise circumnavigation, three thousand nautical miles west took us to French Polynesia. While all landfalls are special, landfall >



Wildlife abounds in the anchorage at Isabella Island, Galapagos



Tom Partridge and Susie Plume



Sea lions spin and dive, enticing you in to swim with them in the Galapagos Islands



Blue-footed boobies entertain with their mating dance in the Galapagos Islands



Ua Pou in the Marquesas - another striking backdrop for anchoring



in the Marquesas has to be the most breath-taking of all; majestic hills and emerald green peaks soar into the sky, a mixture of coastal palm trees and thick pine forest higher up. As we explored these verdant isles we relished in the abundance of fresh fruit - bananas, papayas, limes and the unique grapefruit-like pamplemousse. We marvelled at big tattooed Marquesan men beating drums and performing intimidating dances, pounding their chests and legs, gaining our immediate respect.

A four day sail brought us to the fabled Tuamotus Islands, seventy-eight low-lying coral atolls scattered over a thousand miles. Known as the 'Dangerous Archipelago', sailors historically steered well clear but modern day GPS has made the atolls far more accessible. Tides rip in the lagoon entrances requiring your utmost concentration, often leaving the heart a-thumping. Here, life is simple; days are spent enjoying dives in the shark-rich passes, evenings around beach fires meeting up with fellow cruisers for a potluck dinner. Few cruisers leave the Tuamotus without a purchase or two of some of the world's most treasured black pearls; we were no exception, Susie timing her birthday shopping to perfection!

Carrying on through French Polynesia, we arrived in the Society Islands for the annual Heiva festival in July. With celebrations throughout the islands, the biggest are held in Tahiti. We were soon absorbed by outrigger races, coconut tree-climbing and spear throwing but for us the real attraction was the dancing. Troupes of up to two hundred women and men wriggle and stomp away in beautiful hand-made island costumes competing for the top prize while elders sing traditional island songs.

The Society Islands offer weeks of leisurely sailing in protected lagoons around Moorea, Huahini, Raiatea and Bora Bora before a decision needs to be made on your route to Tonga. North to the famed Suuwarow, south to Raratonga or straight through the middle with a chance to stop at Palmerston, Niue and Beveridge Reef, a decision that is dictated by weather. We sailed straight across, encountering the notorious South Pacific Convergence Zone, dodging squalls before a stop on the coral island of Niue exploring its many sea tracks and hidden inlets.

*With celebrations throughout the islands, the biggest are held in Tahiti.*



The Marquesan dancers gained our immediate respect, competing here at the Heiva festival in Papeete, Tahiti



The Tuamotus are famed for their black pearls - many cruisers indulge in a purchase or two!



Male spear throwers taking aim at the Heiva Festival in Papeete, Tahiti



Once in a lifetime, swimming with humpback whales in Tonga - this is the calf!



The stunning uninhabited island of Kelelesia, Ha'apai Islands, Tonga



In Fiji you always need to keep a lookout for coral

The Vava'u island group in north Tonga provides an opportunity to relax and catch up with friends. There are numerous beautiful islands to explore with easy sailing and good anchorages but the real drawcard is that this is one of the few places in the world where you can swim with magnificent huge humpback whales come August and September.

Always keen to explore and get off the beaten-track, we left the masses and headed south to the seldom visited unspoilt Ha'apai islands. Here we found our paradise for two weeks, relaxing into a happy rhythm – treading the white beaches, snorkelling, and collecting shells.

With the end of the season looming, Fiji was calling with its infectious greeting of “Bula! Bula!” You quickly understand why many elect to spend an entire season exploring this vast archipelago. In the east we enjoyed the more traditional lifestyle, being absorbed into village life and learning the time-honoured art of sevusevu - the presentation of a gift of kava roots to the village chief. We had a quick pit-stop in the west, visiting the famed Musket Cove as a base from which to explore the popular Yasawa Islands with crystal clear waters and vibrant reef. >



Serene sea snakes swim in front of us in Niue



Snorkelling with a Black Tip Reef Shark, South Fakarava, Tuamotus, French Polynesia



Soon we were on our final passage to Vanuatu, a choppy one for us, where we had booked Adina in to a boatyard in Port Vila for the upcoming cyclone season. Vanuatu is a destination for those seeking adventure; a green and fertile country with people who claim to be the happiest on the planet. 'Kastom' (custom) remains strong with each island embracing its own traditions and where chiefs still play an integral part of life. For us the fun of trading with locals and sharing kai-kai (food) were real highlights.

As our season drew to a close we could not help but reminisce about our incredible year which left us rich with lifetime memories. The South Pacific is a truly unique sailing destination; landscapes vary dramatically, individual country customs and cultures are different, but one thing remains throughout – the friendly welcome you are assured wherever you go.



We enjoyed some good and fast trade wind sailing around the Tuamotus Islands



Traditional Rhom Dancing is a must-see when visiting Ambrym in Vanuatu

## TOP TIPS FOR SAILING in the South Pacific...

- ✓ You will need to be self-reliant and capable of fixing everything and anything – know your yacht!
- ✓ Ensure you have ample spare parts for all critical components you couldn't live without
- ✓ Speak to the manufacturers for advice, carry their contact details and build a relationship before you leave
- ✓ Embrace local food but stock up on staples and favourites in Panama
- ✓ Subscribe to Bob McDavitt's weekly weather Blog – email [bob@metbob.com](mailto:bob@metbob.com)
- ✓ Download satellite images in advance to aid navigation, particularly in areas with reef and tricky lagoon entrances
- ✓ Use an SSB radio to join a radio net and meet fellow cruisers – nets vary by season, just ask around
- ✓ Consult [www.noonsite.com](http://www.noonsite.com) as a great source for up-to-date country-specific information, especially regarding regulations
- ✓ Get a boat card to help staying in contact with friends you make and locals you meet
- ✓ Make sure your snorkelling and diving equipment is ready for a lot of use
- ✓ Take your time and enjoy it!

## *South Pacific Calendar*

**Sailing Season:**

March to end of November

**July:**

Heiva Festival, French Polynesia

**August and September:**

Swimming with humpback whales,  
Niue and Tonga

**September:**

Fiji Musket Cove Regatta

**Throughout:**

Kastom dancing in Vanuatu



Susie leaving nothing but footprints in the beautiful Ha'apai Islands, Tonga