



Postcards from the Caribbean #9
S/V Polyphonic
Jeff Grossman / Jean Levine
and the cats Sarge & Shadow
Dateline: Antigua

After leaving Grenada our first stop is the island of Carriacou (pronounced “Carry Ah Co”), which is still part of the Grenada chain. Here we meet up with several of our friends from Mt. Hartman that are also working their way back north. This gives us an opportunity to have Cruiser Sunset Cocktails on Polyphonic.

We spend an afternoon snorkeling at Carriacou's Sandy Island with Union Island in the distance. Then we sail to Union island to clear into the Grenadines. From Union we have a short, but delightfully romping sail to the picture perfect Salt Whistle Bay at Mayreau Island, Tobago Cays, Grenadines. Yet another beautiful Palm tree lined beach, this time crowned with a Salt Whistle Bay Rainbow! While snorkeling here we get to play with some cuttlefish (small squid). They are very curious and will let you swim right up to them, and they change their colors instantly as they move over different backgrounds, or express different moods (like the “you’re too close so I’m outa here” colors).

From Mayreau we sail to Canouan (pronounced “CanOhWhan”), another island we did not stop at on the way down. Soon after anchoring a local fisherman offers us lobster at a cheap price, so we ask for three of them. Off he goes to catch them, talk about fresh! When he comes back he shows us a Slipper lobster, which we had never seen. The Slipper is about the size of a large slipper with a big wide tail. Since we had never tried one, he tosses it in with the others, and an extra regular lobster too! I filled the cooler with salt water and put the five Bugs (Yum!) in so they could be happy (and alive) when we were ready to cook them for dinner. Oh, were they delicious! The Slipper was the best of the bunch!

Canouan is home to the Moorings Base for the Grenadines, so we took the dingy ashore for a base visit and an island walk about, taking yet another Poly at anchor photo. On the windward side of the island is the Canouan Beach Resort which was spectacular. We also met one of the locals who challenged Jeff to a foot race. Though Jeff had doubts about the fairness of the competition but the Local claims he has beaten opponents faster than Jeff looks. Intimidated, Jeff declined to race the local tortoise.

From Canouan we continue North up the Grenadines chain to Bequia. We would love to stay in Bequia for weeks, but our schedule only allows a few days. But we get a chance to meet some cruisers and swap for 15 new movies (yeah!) and snorkel some rocks we had missed on our last visit. The highlight of this snorkel was seeing our first Sea Snake! They are between 2’ and 4’



long, very colorful, and they can be quite poisonous. Fortunately this one was swimming on the bottom busy eating something and ignoring us.

Bequia is one of the favorite stops for the Windjammers tall ships cruises. There is almost always one of the clippers coming or going. This time the three masted Mandalay was at anchor when the four masted Polynesia sailed in. As the Polynesia passed her sister she fired a cannon in salute, to which the Mandalay replied with her cannon. They continued to exchange salutes, with the reports echoing off the cliff walls on either side of the harbor, for quite sometime. It was easy to imagine oneself back a couple hundred years!

Before we leave Bequia we make a quick visit to Pearl who serves Ice Cream and a sunshine smile at the Gingerbread. Then it is off for the long sail around St. Vincent to St. Lucia. A quick over night in a beautiful protected bay in St. Lucia (Anse Cochon ... which ironically translates to Bay of Pigs) then on to Martinique and our return to Anse Miton.

Under sail we pop below to see Shadow resting while hugging his stuffed double. Way too cute!

There were two unique things we saw on this visit to Anse Miton. The first was when the gentleman on the boat next to us had gone for a swim off his stern. We heard him talking to someone, but could see no one else in the water, only a large seagull looking bird floating about 30' away from him. Turns out it was his pet duck! Yep, not long later we see duck on deck preening its self and getting ready for another day of boat life!

The second was seeing the Royal Clipper, the Star Clipper lines flagship. The Royal Clipper is a 5 masted Full Rigged Ship able to fly over 36 sails. Jeff finally learned what the 4th and 5th masts are called ... from front to back ... Fore, Main, Middle, Mizzen, Jigger. We got to see her ghost out of Martinique's Fort de France Bay, sailing in a breeze just strong enough to bend cigarette smoke with all sails flying!.

From Anse Miton it's an easy afternoon run to St. Pierre, a night on the anchor, then we shoot up to Dominica's Portsmouth to give Raymond his hat back. He had left it on board when we passed through four months ago and he was surprised to see it again. Next we touch base in Isle de Saints and stay long enough to snorkel an afternoon. We see another Sea Snake, a strange crab with a flounder following it, and these weird "Iguana Fish". We call them "Iguana fish" since they have markings similar to an Iguana, and they sit motionless on the bottom in an arched pose. You can snorkel right up until you almost touch noses before they decide to move. We learn later that they are really called "Sand Divers".

We next sail for Dashaies on the NW corner of Guadeloupe where we will be meeting our friends Steve and Ricci. It is the nicest weather we've had for passing Point Vieux on Guadeloupe's SW corner. (Deborah, looks much calmer, eh!). But it starts to rain when we get to Dashaies, and it keeps raining for over eight days. Long enough that we were starting to take



reservations ... by twos. Certainly the longest period of rain we have had the whole trip. Of course, Murphy's Law says this is when our guests get to take their Caribbean vacation! Yet, we have a wonderful, and too short, visit with Steve n' Ricci. They take us out to our favorite Guadeloupe restaurant for a superb Saber dinner.

A late season Depression forms in the Caribbean, screws up the normal trades, and gives us West winds and swells into Dashaies. On the second morning of their visit, Dashaies starts to become dangerous and we have to bailout. So we head back to the Saints to give Steve and Ricci the snorkel tour of Isle Cabrit and Pain de Sucre, and the walk up to the Fort Napoleon for the view. Two days later the weather up north has cleared so we pop back up to Dashaies to provision, and the next day sail for Antigua. We have delightful sail to Antigua with a nice power beam reach for over half way than a half hour play with the spinnaker until the wind dies and we power into Falmouth. We follow in our friends from Mt. Hartman, Bob & Jane on Serendipity UK (or "Dippy" for short). They have been to Antigua before, and are coming back to work for the season.

Tour Nelson's dock yard, drool at Mega yachts (marina in front of us has a 100' minimum). Impanema with 140'+ mast. Ketches whose mizzens tower over Polyphonic's main.

From Falmouth we sail around the West side of the island to Jolly Harbor, then up to Deep Bay. This Bay has a great beach with small islets (or very large rocks) separating it from the main ships channel into the capital of St. Johns. This provides front row seats for watching the cruise ships come in, followed a few hours later by party boats full of cruise ship passengers winging into the bay. The greatest show was the Jolly Roger's Pirate Ship (aka floating party) arriving with landing craft in tow and hitting the beach. T-shirts, trinkets and beads suddenly hang on lines from the Palm trees. Was it not just a couple hundred years ago when the people from the ships brought trinkets and beads to the beach to barter with the natives in return for valuables? Is it not amusing that now it is reversed? Go natives! Those of Jolly Roger's passengers who didn't go to the beach stayed busy by walking the plank and swinging from the yardarms. Literally, they had a plank set up as a diving board, a rope swing set off a yard arm, and of course, the Jolly Roger pirate flag flying from the masthead.

With tear in eye we see our friends off, the visit went by too fast and we really miss our friends from home. After a quick visit to St. John's for provisions we sail all the way around Antigua to Green Island in Nonsuch Bay on Antigua's mid-east coast. On the way, it is so clear that we could see Guadeloupe, Montserrat, Rodonda, Nevis and St. Kitts at the same time! Montserrat provided a nice show of blowing ash and steam thousands of feet into the air. We were glad to be well to windward.

Green Island great ZD anchorage. Peregrine noted it is their favorite in the Caribbean and that they stay there until the garlic runs out. We have great lunch at Harmony Hall followed by a



dinghy up to Devil Bridge in Coda (Monotone on deck getting repaired). Wow breaking waves! Snorkeled reef some fish recovering coral, conch.

We close with a trip to Shirley heights ... good walk up, spectacular view ... fun steel band ... real mixture of people ... “cruise ship” tourists, superyacht crews, cruisers and locals.