

explore

PROSAIL ASIA
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ISSUE 01

*3 hulls
3 amigos
3 days running!*

TOP-SECRET HIDEAWAYS
DISCOVER THE BEST OF BINTAN





schedule

DAILY

- 01** Changi Sailing Club to Bintan Ferries Marina (BBC). [4 hours]
- 02** Bintan Ferries CIQP to White Sands Beach Island. Trikora. [6 hours]
- 03** White Sands Island to Kelong Island Channel. [3 hours]. Return [1.5 hours]

04 White Sands Island to BBC via Fishermans Bay total [5 hours]

05 Bintan Marina CIQP to Changi, Singapore. [4 hours].

****** Some of the best sailing in recent times. Locations were great. Weather, ideal.

EXCLUSIVES

01 Bintan Marina facility is good with CIQP and marina berths,

02 White Sands Beach, great little hideaway. Stunning beach.

03 Pulau Kelong channel. A very nice channel that makes for an interesting day sail.



Day One...

Get outta' town.

Depart from Changi Sailing Club, Singapore with the Corsair Dash 750 and three amigos! An hours motoring 5 miles out to the Singapore Immigration Clearing point at the eastern extremity of Changi Airport's massive land reclamation where, you hand over all your life's important documents into a fishing net!

Fishing net or not, the officers are always helpful and as long as you have the right papers, clearance is swift enough.

From there it was Southeast for 18 miles. Wind, 8-10 knots Southeast - typical delivery!



Crossing the Singapore Straits is always interesting. Seldom is there lots of wind but there are lots of ships of all types. Never fewer than a dozen at any one time.

On this day, the wind was exactly where we wanted to go. Another typical delivery So instead of just 18nm's it became more like 25! Such is.

The Immigration Clearing point for Bintan is right at the same dock as the Bintan Resorts Ferry Terminal. The entrance into the channel is clearly marked with a large ship that is in process to becoming a hotel.

Coast past the ferry berth and you will come to the BBC Marina for private boats. Small but adequate with enough space for about 10 boats.

At BBC you hand your papers over to the Clearing Agent and they will be handed back to you in about 40 minutes.

Bintan Resorts is like a separate territory within the Indonesian Island. All the ritzy resorts are located in this belt. The cheapest room along this coast is about S\$ 130/night. (Grand Lagoi Hotel). We opted to stay one night and continue on the next day to our target paradise island.

Fee's for the Marina and Clearing came to about 2 Million Rupiah (S\$ 200). This included the Inbound/Outbound charges, stamping fees and the marina charges for a berth for 2 nights. Best idea would be to leave the boat there a few weekends but on this occasion, we were just 'testing' all the systems.





Day Two...

Get the show on the road

Here we split up. One of us went by road to the city of Tanjung Pinang while two amigos would sail the dash around the corner and down the eastern seaboard of Bintan. This area of the Riau Province has much historical significance as it was the center of the Malay World for a long time. Today Tanjung Pinang is a rather large lowrise town of about 100,000 people. But you can find most everything you need in the city as it also has an international ferry terminal servicing the local market from Malaysia and Singapore. There is a General Hospital here and an Airport that will have international status in 2 years time.



Interestingly for me, I only time I have flown into Tanjung Pinang was from Seletar Airport, Singapore on 'Dad's' Gruman Albatros amphibian. That was just about 30 years ago and the Gruman used to pick up the offshore rig workers here and then take them out to Natuna Island!

Meanwhile the Dash set off on the 20nm to White Sand Beach Island. This is about half way down the eastern side of Bintan. It's a private island with a small resort on it surrounded by some of the nicest waters.



Berakit lies on the NE corner of Bintan Island and here the local style of fish trap is a huge catamaran structure that is towed into place. During the season, there are hundreds of these perched over their favourite rocks. About half way up the east coast there is a bay were the catamarans go ashore for repairs. It's possible to get into the for flat water during the blowing SE. Approach from the north.





Day Three...

How far can you go in three hours.

Looking at White Sands Beach as a base for sailing, it's very good. Within a 10 nm radius you have enough beaches, bays and islands to keep the interest up. A stones throw away is Nikoi Island (famous private island). A bit further SE is Mapur Island. Mapur is large enough that you could find flat water in either the NE or SW Monsoon. The Western side is reef fringed but the best beaches, kilometers of them, lie on the east and notherest sector.

On this day we headed towards the flukes and channels around Pulau Kelong and Fishhead Island.



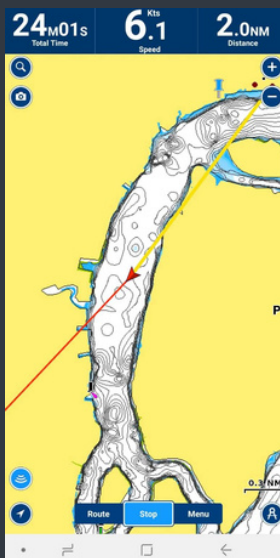
Fishhead Island is another private island that has become a feature of the annual Nongsa Neptune Regatta - the world's only Equator race. So from White Sands Beach we could easily reach Fishhead Island in 3 hours.

As we have visited Fishhead before we preferred to sail through the channel north of Pulau Kelong and this was a good 'discovery'. In this channel, is the container port for Bintan Island, a nice enough fishing village and an abandoned massive Keppel Shipyard. This is a deep water channel and it was really nice to just cruise through with plenty of sights to see. There were plenty of very heavily constructed docks, obviously signs of when the area was strip mined of all its bauxite! There is something nice about drifting past relics from the past. Maybe we just don't do it often enough.

With the SE wind blowing it was an easy passage through Kelong Channel. During the last few Neptune Regattas, a cruise ship has been spotted in this channel. Apparently it's a passenger ship that makes it's way up from Jakarta. The channel is well marked with navigation buoys and there are literally hundreds of little passage off the main channel.

The islands here are lined with bauxite which led to them being stripped until the Government put a halt to it. Gabi Island, just a mile north of Fishhead has the last stretch of beach on the islands in this area. At the eastern entrance to the channel is Nina Island. This is a pretty reef fringed sandy white beach that would be a nice day sail and island to explore.

The sail back to White Sands Beach was a cracker! Spinnaker up and a cool 12 - 17 knots boat speed!





Day Four

Accommodating...

Although White Sands Beach is a day's sail from Singapore, you would swear you were on a different planet! But as they say, all good things must come to an end, (well for now).

Accommodation on White Sands Beach was very comfortable. There are two styles of rooms available.

One, the wooden chalet and
Two, the 'tent' for glamorous camping.

Both are air-conditioned but the chalet has an ensuite bathroom and the 'igloo' requires using the shared bathroom which was very clean. In fact all of it was very clean.

It's a narrow sliver of an island that lies north-south. The chalets are arranged on the sunset and sunrise sides of the island. We can suggest that the sunset side is better as it beats the morning heat. The island at this point, is only about 50m wide so walking across to watch the sunrise is not going to be a hardship.

Beverages including alcohol is available in the bar area. The music is good but the food could do with a little interest. Having said that, running a resort on an outer island isn't easy as everything has to be manually carried in.

After a great day's sail all you really need is a cold beer, a shower and a clean room anyway. The rest will take care of itself.





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Day five...

Reality check...

After being on the run for three days, the three amigos finally have to get a grip on reality. All on board agreed that the 5 days in Bintan waters were some of the best days sailing in years. Of course gunk holing is always fun, it's like exploring, putting your foot prints down for others to follow. It had that kind of feeling! In a way it was as there aren't many boats which have sailed over and spent a few days hanging of the east coast of Bintan.

What made it so enjoyable? Great water, really nice islands, the magic of wind and wind power. No joke, we had three days of easy running all above 12 knots of boat speed! Bliss...

But it was time to cross the Singapore Straits and while it might be interesting from a ship spotters point of view, it's seldom enjoyable as the wind fades just as the Singtel signal is received and the water switches from deep blue to murky brown. Such is life!





Overall

1. TRANSPORT

Have boat, will travel. Sailing there is the best idea but you can get there by regular means as well. From Singapore it's a ferry trip away. Ferry > Taxi > Dinghy Ferry.

It's easier to take the 'regular' ferry from Singapore to Tanjung Pinang. Then it's a 30 minute taxi ride from the west side to the east where Trikora Beach is. Jump in the transfer dinghy from there. Door-to-door using this method is about 3 hours. Cost roughly S\$ 100. Including 2-way ferry.

Taxis. Inside Bintan Resorts territory, taxis are pretty much Singapore prices. Outside the territory they are one third the price.

2. ACCOMODATION

If you go to where the Bintan Resorts Ferry Terminal is, you will land in Binta Resorts country! This belt is virtually a separate territory from the rest of Binta. It was developed to cater to the 5-star and Singapore market with the prices reflecting that. The resorts along this belt are very nice, for a day, and then you'll be twiddling your fingers.

Least expensive and closest the marina is Grand Lagoi that does have a very nice pool area on the top floor. That's S\$130/night and the rest are all above that.

On our return, we stayed at the Bintan Sayang Resort with it's quaint rooms right over the water. This is out of the Bintan Resorts area and it works out to S\$ 70/night.

