

6d.780nm.1260sw

"the master of my sea..."

- Image Dragons

Nha Trang to Singapore
Seawind 1260 catamaran
A co-production Pro Sail Asia and Virus.Pirates



The Seawind 1260 is one of Seawind's most successful models with a few hundred of them out there and a few hundred more on order!

Due to the effects of Covid on production and shipping 'Andiamo' needed to be delivered from Vietnam to Singapore where Paul and Francis could step onboard and begin their sailing sojourn.

These are the delivery notes as recorded by the Three Amigos.



*"I say all words inside my head
I'm fixed up and tired of the way
that things have been, oh-oooh"*



After two years of stationary living, what a great opportunity to escape! I found peace, it's true.

Who do I have to thank for this...

The definite lack of humans - The lack of Google.

Special thanks to all those behind the scenes in the Seawind factory for giving up 3 months of their lives to live in the factory to finish the boat (Stefan and Team).

Annie and Vanh for clearing the mountain of papers.

Alice at Team Pro Sail Asia for putting it altogether!

The production crew,

Scott, Norman and Donald McCook

In conjunction with the Virus.Pirates,

Jiri "George" Levy for the great humour and not losing the winch handle!

Commander Campbell Jenkins for the precision turn off Tioman Island and getting us to Singapore in one piece.

Mostly, Paul & Francis for trusting us with their future!

Snottly

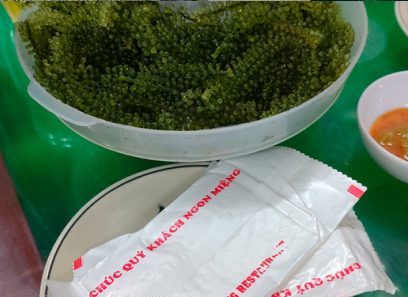


Nha Trang **The first voyage.**

To facilitate the handover process, 'Andiamo' was delivered by Stefan and the Seawind team the 252nm's from Ho Chi Minh to Nha Trang

Vietnam has the best coastline in Southeast Asia. Part of its charm is that it has been and still is, locked away from recreational boating. It's a long sliver of seaboard with great variety in topography from north to south.

Nha Trang is a very nice beach side city that now resembles south beach Florida. Just ten years ago, Nha Trang was a sleepy port so the transition has been rather incredible.



Trial Nha Trang

Nha Trang Port, picturesque, charming and challenging from a yacht-paperwork perspective but, the sailing conditions were ideal with the skyscrapers forming a lovely backdrop. Clean blue water, 25 degrees C and consistent 15-20 knots of breeze with 8, 9, 10 knots of boat speed. Vietnamese cuisine is definitely amongst the best for its variety, flavours and no meal is complete without Seagrapes.

Seawind Handover

Regulations are plentiful in Vietnam and more plentiful when you are a foreign vessel! Assisting with the daily mountains of paperwork, Annie and Vanh dutifully jumped through all the hoops to allow the daily test sails to happen. As it goes, when the Port Master says you can sail from 3 to 5pm, you can't be a minute late or a minute early! Such is.

Stefan was thorough over the three days to handover the 1260 including sailing in 15 to 20 knots of breeze, clear blue water and the Nha Trang skyline as a great backdrop. It must be said that due to circumstances beyond anyone's imagination, this was the very first time Paul and Francis had seen the glossy white Seawind.

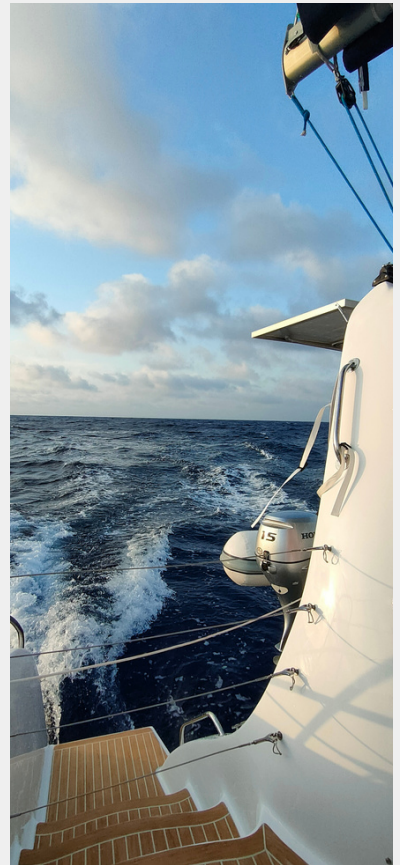
With the handover all settled, loading for the trip down to Singapore could commence. Joining us for the journey was Nha Trang resident Jiri Levy a very handy guy on a boat and sourcing things around town, Jiri proved to be invaluable.





Unchartered Company

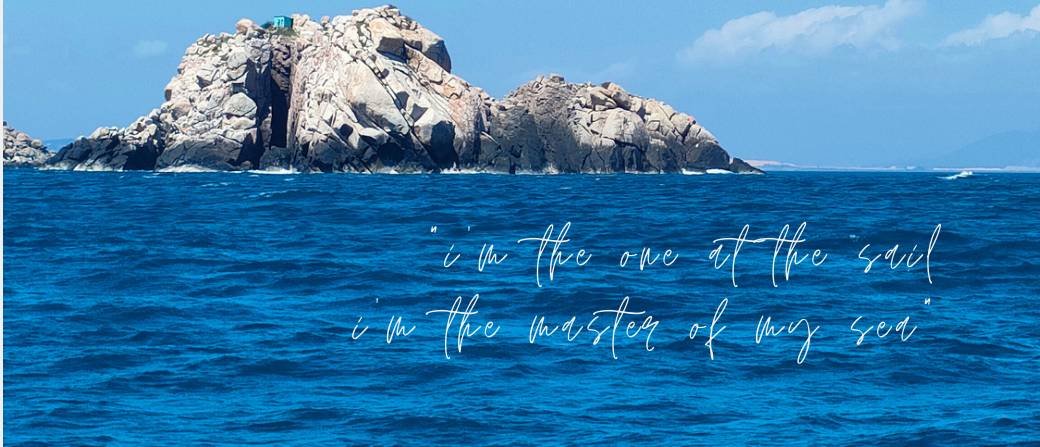
We'd planned for a Thursday departure but with the passports only coming back to hand at 8pm in a barnacle boat, we'd have to wait until the following morning for Port Clearance! Such is!! A Rapido 40 trimaran left Vung Tau on the Monday and had reported back that they were sailing in 20 knots NE wind. That would have put the R40 in Terengganu, Malaysia in about two days! We were anxious to get on the last bit of the NE knowing full well that it would fade out the further south we got.



Day One
It's a trap.

Sailing out of Nha Trang, let the games begin! Hon Noi is a rocky dot of an island at the mouth of the south channel and from there it's a right turn, head into the South China Sea and 780 nm's to the Red Dot. It was a great day to be on the water and heading out into the vivid blue. As the day progressed, the wind clocked from 030 to 050 degrees allowing the course to progressively head further south, ideal! Somewhere along this track the 1260 hit 13.8 knots of boat speed for the trip record. That's really not bad at all!

Enter The Dragon, Hon Noi, the last of the rocky outcrops south of confines of Nha Trang Bay. Dragon imagery was a feature of the trip after all, Vietnam is Southeast Asia's awakening dragon!





The idyllic conditions induced some idle conversations amongst the three amigos that was only punctuated by "I don't feel so well" from Giovanni Georgio - you can call me George! Poor chap, two years of no sailing had taken away his sea legs! Oh well all the more food for the rest of us!

This sailing gig' is easy!

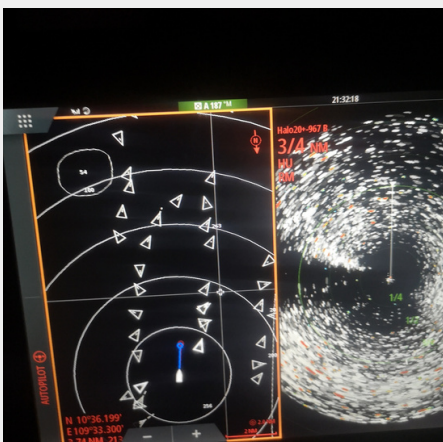
Set the boat up, and off you go! The Seawind has evolved from 40 years of offshore sailing it's set up to be a Bluewater cruising cat, predominantly tested in the Tasman Sea. As such, it's narrow easily driven hulls glide through the water in a very comfortable fashion.

My overall impression of the boat is that it is solidly put together and all the testing accomplished in the Tasman has translated into a platform that doesn't creak or groan under load. Even in a seaway, all the doors, cabinets and drawers open and close without fuss. And so it was a great days sailing!



Along comes my first grave yard shift and well, all I can say is, if you are a fish in the sea here, you are toast!

This portion of the South China Sea is littered with thousands of fishing vessels. Oddly though, there was an order and, like the streets of Ho Chi Minh, it took a bit of figuring as all the AIS blips were from the 'sticks' along the lengthy fishing nets that were everywhere! Luckily they were oriented in an almost north/south which made it a lot easier to pass through. After a few hours of this it began to feel like tearing down a runway with side markers!





**And on the keyboard..
Georgio Jiri**

**Also from George,
one day out, "I'm not feeling so
good".**

In the omnipresence of ships! The healthy diet. No school like old school.

Something deeply satisfying about paper charts. Our modified chart table is going to be included on future trips. It was also the 'man overboard, board, in Nha Trang! The first sunset out, not blindingly beautiful but made great by the lack of land!

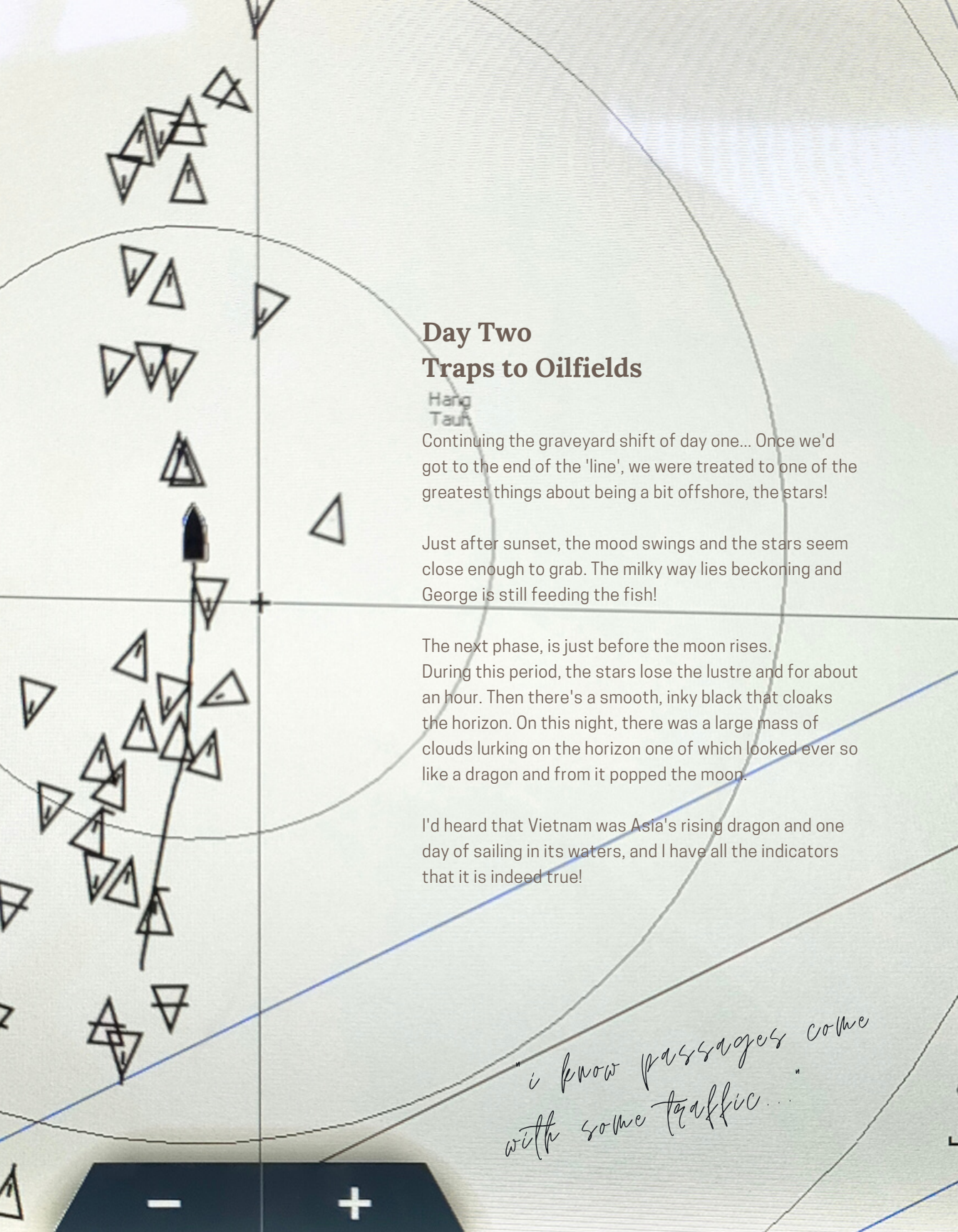


**This sailing
gig is easy!**

*And the night time action
is out of this world! Dragon
Islands, Dragon clouds, Dragon Peaks...*



Pop the 'kitchen' window open and in comes the first sunset of the trip. Room with a view is for sure! The Seawind design is considered a 'narrow hull' cat. The hulls are easily driven and on Day One and we recorded the best speed of the trip 13.8 knots..



Day Two Traps to Oilfields

Hang
Tauh

Continuing the graveyard shift of day one... Once we'd got to the end of the 'line', we were treated to one of the greatest things about being a bit offshore, the stars!

Just after sunset, the mood swings and the stars seem close enough to grab. The milky way lies beckoning and George is still feeding the fish!

The next phase, is just before the moon rises. During this period, the stars lose the lustre and for about an hour. Then there's a smooth, inky black that cloaks the horizon. On this night, there was a large mass of clouds lurking on the horizon one of which looked ever so like a dragon and from it popped the moon.

I'd heard that Vietnam was Asia's rising dragon and one day of sailing in its waters, and I have all the indicators that it is indeed true!

*"i know passages come
with some traffic..."*



Night time station, as good as any nite club! Boat data, not the biggest nor the fastest for the trip. Just the first fast one!

Status:	Safe
NavStatus:	Under engine
Draught (m):	8.3
Latitude:	N 5°32.531'
Longitude:	E 106°31.935'
Accuracy:	Low
ROT (°/s):	0.0
SOG (kn):	18.10
COG (°M):	202
Heading (°M):	200
Destination:	SINGAPORE "PEBGA
ETA:	25/04/2023 00:00

Right, back to sailing.

The South China Sea is littered with oil and gas pockets. It's also home to the Spratley Islands as they are a disputed territory between Vietnam, the Philippines and now, China. Spotting them 120 nm's further east reminded me of the 'Siddartha'.

When I arrived in Singapore in the 80's, Siddartha was the largest cat on the moorings at Changi Sailing Club. The husband and wife team of Jenny and Peter Marx had completed the construction of the Crowther 15m catamaran in Singapore and were involved with the occasional charter. One of the charters was with an amateur Ham Radio group that were interested in the Spratley Islands. Even back then it was disputed! When Siddartha slipped out of CSC, that would be the last time she was seen. Somewhere close to the Spratleys, a rocket went through one of the hulls as the crew hopped into the dinghy from the other hull. Lucky to be picked up by a passing ship bound for Hong Kong and finally found their way back to Singapore. Spratleys, best you stay away from there!

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The date was April 3, 1983.

Those on board the 15m-long catamaran sailing out of Changi Sailing Club expected their pleasure cruise to be anything but notable. But by the end of the week, the world would come to know of the Siddhartha and its six passengers and crew.

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Now 65, her wrinkled hands hold up a faded brochure with the words "Yacht Siddhartha" while speaking with us. Even though it has been more than 30 years, Miss Toh remembers her days running a private charter service with then-boyfriend, German national Peter Marx like it was yesterday.

The attack on the Siddhartha made headlines then, but this is the first time she is telling her story publicly. Back then, she had left it to Mr Marx to answer the questions.

Slowly, she narrates the entire incident to The New Paper on Sunday over old newspaper cut-outs at her home last week. She hasn't forgotten a single detail. But it is a story that she has shared only with close friends so far, so it takes some persuasion for her to open up.

"It was such a long time ago," says Miss Toh with a wistful smile. On April 3, the couple took on a charter for four German ham radio operators - amateur radio enthusiasts who travel to remote locations to broadcast signals to others around the world.

They had decided on Amboyna Cay, an island in the Spratly Islands group. Claim over it is heavily disputed by Vietnam, China, Malaysia, Taiwan and Philippines.

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"We thought it was uninhabited," says Miss Toh.

On April 10, as they circled the island, they discovered they were wrong.

They saw men in military uniforms waving flags at their direction. Two cannons were pointed in their direction.

"We didn't know if they were asking us to go towards them or go away. So we tried sailing away." Then she heard the frightening sound of artillery fire.

"The first salvo missed us. The second one didn't. The shells kept on striking the ship.

"Peter was struck by shrapnel on his shoulder. One passenger got hit and fell overboard. No one saw him again," says Miss Toh.

Another of their passengers broadcast on their ham radio: "They are shooting at us... The boat is on fire... We are leaving now."

The five remaining passengers who survived the gunfire swam out to their dinghy, which had been freed from its tethers by the explosion.

They huddled together in the dinghy, keeping their heads low to avoid detection

'Siddhartha' "He who has attained his goal"

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They huddled together in the dinghy, keeping their heads low to avoid detection and watched as the Siddhartha burned in the distance, broke apart and then sank.

STAYING ALIVE WAS A STRUGGLE

Says Miss Toh: "Peter and I looked back. There was our yacht on fire and there went our livelihood. I had three cats on board too."

Exhausted from their close escape from death, they soon realised that the dinghy was no lifeboat - there was no food, water or means to communicate with the outside world.

It could barely accommodate five people and had a hole in it due to shrapnel damage.

Miss Toh ripped her skirt into two, plugging the hole in the boat with one piece and tending to her boyfriend's wound with the other.

"I just sat there in my panties. We didn't talk much to conserve our energy. All we could do was wait," she says.

Meanwhile, other ham operators around the world heard their distress call and alerted the authorities.

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Soon, an international search-and-rescue effort was under way.

But for Miss Toh and the others on the dinghy, staying alive was a struggle.

The days were scorching and the nights were freezing. They waited for rain to alleviate their thirst, but there was nary a drizzle. By the fifth day, everyone was fighting their individual battles against hallucinations and thirst.

Says Miss Toh: "When I pinched myself, the pinch mark didn't disappear. That was how badly dehydrated we were."

She thought about her family back at home and her own mortality.

She says: "If my time is up, then so be it. I did not panic because I became at peace with myself.

"I just looked at the waves in the day and at the stars at night. I was fully prepared to die."

On the eighth day, one of the German passengers, Mr Gero Band, took a desperate gulp of sea water to quench his thirst.

Within hours, he died peacefully. The others rolled his body overboard after saying a short prayer and watched it drift away.

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Within hours, he died peacefully. The others rolled his body overboard after saying a short prayer and watched it drift away. "We all thought Peter was next to die because of his wounds. If only Gero had waited one more day."

They were eventually spotted by a passing Japanese container ship, the Linden, the next day. They could barely walk up the gangplank to the ship.

The four survivors arrived in Hong Kong to the cameras of "more than 200 journalists who were waiting for us".

As to why she doesn't talk much about the incident, Miss Toh says: "It was so long ago and no one remembers the incident now. "It was hell. I don't know if anything can be worse than what I went through.

"From that day on, I made it a point to live life to the fullest and devote it to others around me."

Beloved 'Auntie Jenny' of Block 33

The residents of Block 33 in Eunos Crescent have been receiving leaflets inviting them to block parties at the 14th-storey common area for the

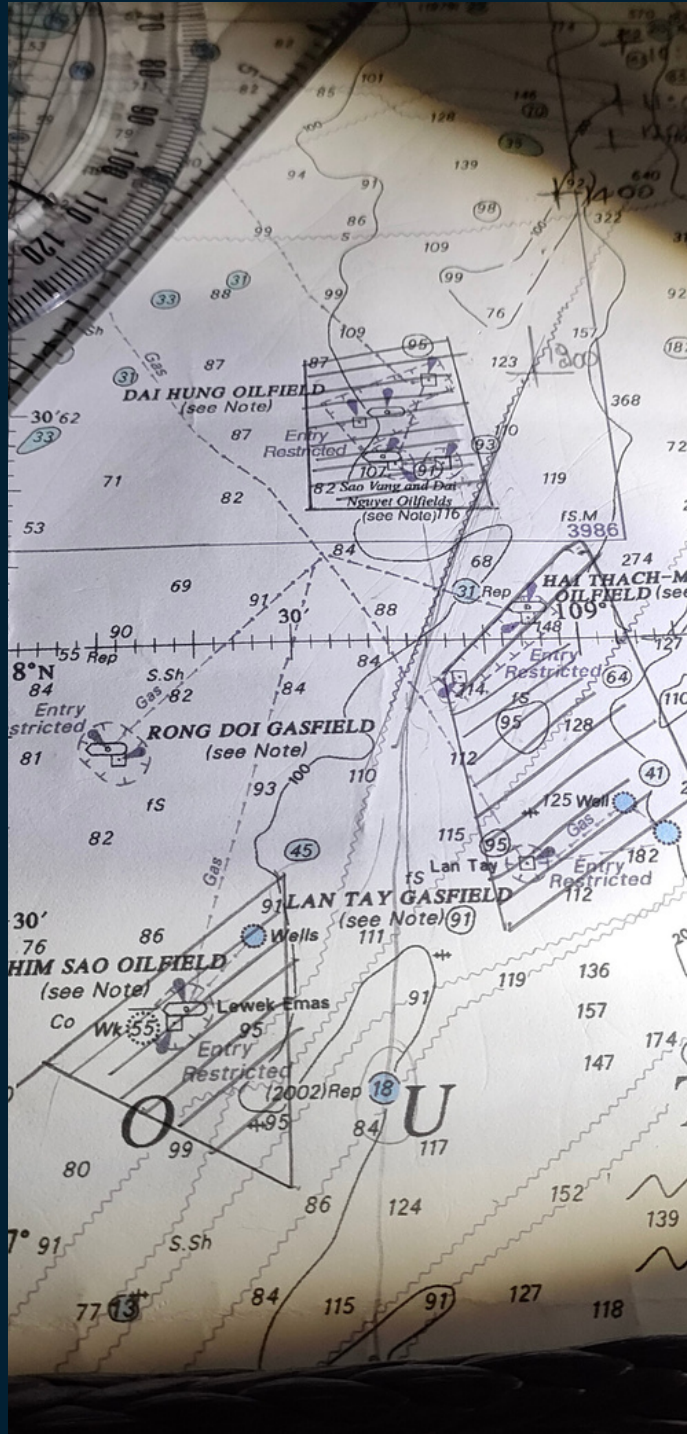
We were on track for the southern most of the Vietnamese oilfields. These are marked with well defined safe zones. Within these areas are numerous underwater structures and so it's a good idea to stay clear unless you are the Chinese Coast Guard!

"This is the Han Tai Gas Field calling China Coast Guard 2044. You are ordered to keep clear of the exclusion zone. You are in Vietnam Territorial waters. You are requested to keep clear!"

A reply went something like... "these are China waters" and steamed right through!

Big trouble in little China. But in another sense, there are records of Chinese vessels in the Riau Archipelago in the year 440 A.D. that pre-dates the Javanese and goes some way to explaining the name "South CHINA Sea"!

The Han Tai field is something of a 'gate' as this shipping lane is one of the busiest and there we were, playing pinball! If we thought it was daunting then how would you feel if you were on the Cosco vessel that was doing 19 knots where we were doing 7! It's pretty impressive to see big ships a mile to starboard doing such speeds, all 333 metres of it! Kind of like the open scene of Star Wars, it goes on and on and on...





The time to
REFLECT.



Day Three Oilfields to Gas fields

Exiting the Vietnamese oilfields we could now aim at the Natuna gas fields of Indonesia with Truly Asia - Malaysia just 200 miles inshore.

We had a relatively easy passage as the shipping lanes are a bit further offshore. I say relatively as that was during daylight hours! As soon as the graveyard shift came around again, some controller somewhere, opened the flood gates! Bounded by Natuna, all the ships seem to pass right through here! At least they were fairly orderly in passing port to port, the radio chatter reveals the errant ships that prefer starboard to starboard!



Albatross Time traveller.

I see Natuna on the chart and in comes a flood of memories. Back in the 80's, the only way to and from the gas field was by a flying boat.

The Gruman Albatross was based at Seletar Air Base, Singapore incidentally, the amphibious base for Colonial Singapore.

Every morning, the Gruman would roar off for the 20 minute flight to Tanjung Pinang, Bintan Island to meet the crew on the incoming jet from Jakarta. With the oilies onboard Captain Bryan McCook would head off to touch down in the waters of Matak Island, taxi up the boat ramp and disgorge the crew into the awaiting rig helicopter, then reverse the whole trip.

I was lucky enough to score a flight on the Conoco Albatross out into the Natuna Fields and now, here I was doodling past!

This operation went on for years and come to think of it, it's the reason I ended up in Singapore forty years ago! Right now, I can still hear the roar of those radial engines. Dear old dad, what an aviator!



Close Encounters of the George kind!

Not a great photo but the best we could do with a fishing mother-ship bearing down on us. It passed out the back but only after we cranked the engine up and buggered off! One thing is for sure, if you are a fish in the South China Sea, you are toast!

The other oddity that appeared included 'Fred' the submarine that was taking supplies from the surface

Day Four Ferdinand wasn't wrong!

Matak sits on the nav' screen all night as we chug along at 5 knots under the sliver of a waning moon. Trying to get out of harms way at this speed takes long range planning especially when you see the Seaspan zooming into view. At 0200 hours the Tayama zooms into view, 366m at 18 knots then beaten by a twenty knot, 333 metre bruiser the Seaspan! She takes the prize for the fastest ship on this trip. But largest was another monster ship, 400m.

Notice To All Mariners: Objects in the rear view mirror are larger than you think!

We found the 1260 to be a very comfortable platform. A part of that appeal is the Aussie 'verandah'. True, we didn't test the bar-be-que but the canopy provided great relief from the intense sun of Southeast Asia. The helm down position is really comfortable as the low CoG is very sure footed even in a seaway.



**"The land
below the
wind" Ferdinand
Magellan, 1521
He wasn't
wrong!**

At least the major ships keep to their lanes although Channel 16 was alive with big boy chatter. "Pass starboard to starboard"... "NO, alter your course and go port to port"... "Okay I'll alter my course to port"... "NO!!! Follow the regulations"... Reality show with 100,000 tankers in the modern world!

We knew the wind would tank in the lower half of the South China Sea. And we know this because, Ferdinand Magellan bumped into Sabah, Borneo naming it "The land below the wind" before being killed in the Battle of Mactan (present day Philippines) in 1521. True enough the typhoons that devastate the Philippines year after year don't venture into Malaysia.

That fact alone makes Malaysia one of the safest cruising grounds. Benign and balmy conditions make this a great kick-off place for Paul and Frances.

Engine on at 6 23.871 N 107 07.300 E

The new Yanmars are very good. Their indicated burn rate proved to be accurate.

Single engine operation gives an economical 5.5 knots at 1600 rpm.

We did 424 nm's of motoring

191 litres consumed

Average 2.22nm/Litre

The dial showed 1.2nm/l at best and 4.8 nm/l at 2000 rpm on a single engine.

At about 50% load and single engine we could do 6.5 - 7 knots speed.

At 30% load we averaged 5.5 knots.



As if on cue, we crossed the Ferdinand Line, the wind evaporated and the South China Sea went silky smooth. Great for photography but not so good for sailing progress. After three days of beautiful conditions, this was the shifting point. Away with the Screecher and on with the motor! That's Tioman Island and the swaying palms of "South Pacific"!

Day Five

Detour ahead

By now we were closing in on Singapore and we knew we were required to download the instructions for entering Singapore port. These are "strictly to be adhered too" - words from James the clearing agent. As we were about 60nm's east of Tioman Island, we slammed a hard right turn and headed for the island to pick up a signal.

One of the best-kept secrets of Tioman is that the island starred as Bali Hai in the 1958 blockbuster island romance "South Pacific". Swaying palms, stunning beaches, beautiful women... We saw none of the above as an AIS SART warning popped up on the screen!

*"this dragon don't hold his breath,
don't need no breathe..."*

The granite massif located on the southern tip of Tioman Island is called the Dragons Horns and is one of the tallest walls in Southeast Asia, attracting friend Sharin Hashim and his climbing team to conquer the peak on the eve of Malaysia's National Day. The Dragon imagery of this trip escorted us all the way down!



We chased the alert of a period of time as there have been a number of recreational divers disappear in the strong tides of the Malaysian East Coast. We gave up after an hour when the target was travelling upstream at some knots! - Not on our watch! Meanwhile, three Androids were searching for a signal to download the sailing instructions and to see what had gone on with Facebook over the last few days! - Nothing.





**Still
Motion**

With our lives updated, we settled in for the evening with a great burst of colour. From here and the sixty odd miles to Lima Channel were going to be easy. Yes, this sailing gig' is easy!

Beautiful Chaos

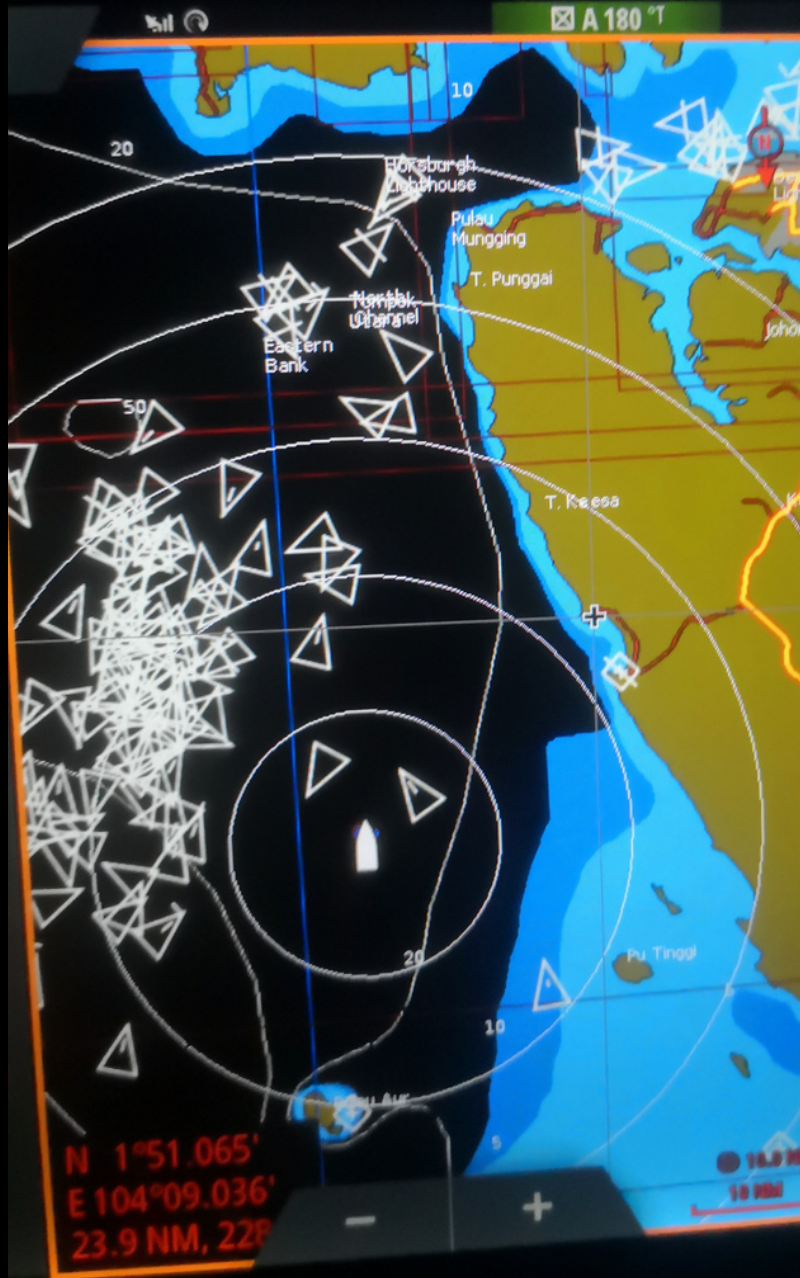
Lima Channel is the most south easterly tip of Malaysia. In the 80's Alice and I sailed a Hobie 16 from Singapore to Desaru, then we did it a dozen more times. We extended that when we got our Nacra 5.0 and went to Rawa Island. We extended that to Tioman when we got our Corsair Dash 750. Each time it was a peaceful passage. Day became the night and in the morning light, the island would be right there! Based on history, this night should be no different.

Well, a new inclusion on the boating scene is a completely new anchorage. There must be 500 ships lying on anchor within 20-30 nm's of the Johore coastline.

It was pretty simple until, in the dead of night, you suddenly realise that some of these are moving without proper lights and no AIS. Dodging those became a fulltime hazard.

Thankfully Campbell is much better at reading radar signatures than I!

Note to self: when next we go up the coast, go close to shore!





Day Six Welcome home

For the last five days we'd dodged getting rained on. With Campbell still on the helm and assisted by George we could join in the major traffic lanes as the Sailing Instructions noted. "Stay in the lane, do NOT cross into Singapore waters". So we lined it up staying on the extreme starboard of the incoming ships lane.

Right about here you do get the feeling that we are the slowest car on the expressway as ship after container island zooms by! Singapore Traffic Control, hats off to you guys for keeping patience with all the idiots that can't follow instructions as the radio is just constant verbiage!

It's almost as constant as the number of times that you have to cancel the AIS Dangerous Vessel warning. This popped up so continuously that the Chartplotter over heated and had to be re-booted! Opportune moment! Typical!!

ITCZ Doldrums

Any trip through Singapore waters is in the company of large vessels. As the first rain shower greeted us at 0730 hours, rolling in from Batam Island so began our day of getting bathed and dodging ships. But at least we did get to test out the weather curtains!

During this period of the year we experience sudden rain squalls. Singapore lies just One degree north of the equator and famously in Inter Tropic Convergence Zone. This is the narrow belt around the Equator that has driven many great navigators crazy! It certainly drives us crazy as the northern hemisphere climate melts into the southern hemisphere weather and we are left with truly unstable conditions. Hot, dry, wet but always humid!

We were headed for One 15 Marina where we could complete port clearance formalities then head on to Raffles Marina where Andiamo was to be berthed for the Singapore portion of her new adventures.



Welcome home but it is that time of the year! George testing the weather curtains.!



Campbell

"Finally a shower on a 40' boat
that a 6' guy can stand in! Beats a
French Hotel"
- Campbell Jenkins

Jiri

"I don't feel so good!"
- Jiri 'George' Levy

"Are we there yet"
- Scott McDanger

Scott

Andiamo

Six days, 780nm's later, Andiamo rolls into Raffles
Marina at 9pm ten minutes later than we expected
courtesy of a Singapore Coast Guard check.

The Asides

Quotes: "I don't feel so good!" Poor boy George

"Finally a shower on a 40' boat that a 6' guy can stand in! Beats a French Hotel" - Campbell Jenkins.

Sails: Don't leave home without a screecher. We would not have made the long Day Two miles without it.

Impressions: The first impression of the Seawind... It's a solid platform, it doesn't creak or groan in a sea way. Its Tasman Sea development program has surely played dividends here. Doors, drawers and hatches all open and close even while you a sailing along in waves. Solid and reassuring.

Sail handling: The systems are easy to use and come readily to hand at the helm station. An experienced sailor wouldn't have much difficulty sailing solo.

Protection: Weather protection is great. Hiding from the elements was easy and the visibility from the helm stations is great. At night it's a little difficult to see through the front screens, so just pop your head out the side. Ventilation with the forward hatches open is excellent.

Missing: Campbell reckons it's missing an Ice Cream maker. I said a "bread maker"!

Instruments: Having the Radar was worth the weight of an Ice Cream maker!

Takeaway: The biggest takeaway for me, having the radar is great, learning to read the signatures is vital for its proper use. There was a period there at 3am with a big vessel with no AIS, no nav' lights bearing directly down on us in the middle of an anchorage. It was on the radar but its signature didn't look anything like a 'boat'. Practice with your radar in daylight hours so that you can fully appreciate it at night.



We're glad we didn't need these! But next time could we have an ice cream maker!

