

# The British Virgin Islands

*"Cheeseburgers in Paradise". That Jimmy Buffet song echoed in our mind every time we thought of the **BVI** and every time we thought of our trip on **Kahuna**. We just sailed these fabulous waters without a concern. Everyone who has shared our trip had the same longing to "do it again". Many locations can duplicate the special appeal of the **BVI**, but then, they didn't have **Captain Bill** and the **Kahuna**. Four couples, Bucklins, Evanses, Kellies, and Wilsons, did this trip twice and wanted a three-peat. Here is a photo journal of our trips.*



Our 72-foot ketch, the Kahuna, with her sails down.



Captain Bill and First Mate Birgit ready the Kahuna for our visit.



Sharyn, Terry, and Barb sit on the porch of an old Dutch Fort in Tortolla awaiting the arrival of the Kahuna..



Captain Bill sailed the Kahuna into the harbor at Road Town, Tortolla



Sharyn liked to captain her own craft. Paddle in hand she headed her Kayak out into the sea.



You are never too far from home. At Marina Cay near Tortolla we shared a Pina Colada with neighbors, Jamie & Jodie, also sailing this week.

# British Virgin Islands -2000

In May 2000 four couples, the Larry and Beth Bucklin, Tom and Sharyn Evans, Terry and Barbara Kelly, and Dick and Shirley Wilson chartered the sailboat Kahuna to sail the Caribbean. It wasn't our first trip. It was a repeat of the same adventure we had just one year before. However, we enjoyed it so much it was definitely a "repeat".

None of us knew how to sail and this was supposed to be a vacation. That was where Captain Bill, our cook Birgit, and the first mate Brody participated, rather significantly. Bill not only provided us with a beautiful 75-foot ketch, but he was our personal tour guide as we roamed the British Virgin Islands. Birgit, who was the first mate in 1999, was our gourmet cook. After watching her hoist sails, who would had thought she could cook. We were in gastronomic heaven. Brody was our slave. He made sure our "huggies" never lacked a beer, that our rooms were always clean, and dingy was available to ferry us to any white coral sand beach that caught our interest.

The BVI were as about as close to paradise on earth as we could get. The seas were at 85 degrees and perfectly clear for 200 feet. They were unequaled for any watersport we could image. Of course we sailed, we snorkeled, we scuba-dived, we para-sailed, and we laid half submerged on immaculately clean beaches. And, at night we either watched the mysterious glow of noctua lucca, while anchored all by ourselves in a private little cove, or we ventured ashore for far more raucous entertainment at the "Billy Bones" or at the floating bar the "Willie T".

***This photo journal captures unforgettable memories.***



Sitting on Patio outside Village Cay our first stop



Behind the Patio was the harbor



A good place to eat in the harbor



Enjoying a meal at the Captain's Table



A picture of harbor from our Motel window



Sitting at Village Cay Bar waiting for Kahuna to arrive



Were these "boys" (Terry & Larry) ready!

The Kahuna was a three-masted ketch with contrasting ivory white sails and navy blue hull. When we sailed into a cove or port all eyes turned our way. It felt like we had hoisted the "Jolly Rodger". Captain Bill kept his prize spotless. Twice a year he had the ubiquitous mahogany waxed and polished as if he were expecting a visit for the King and Queen. Of course we had our "rules". Everybody showered BEFORE boarding - no sand or salt marred the finish. Only bare feet while on board. At first it seemed a little "anal", but after a while we shared his enormous pride.

Each couple had their own stateroom in the aft and the crew bunked in a couple of cabins in the bow. Well, maybe stateroom was a bit of an exaggeration. It was only a 75-foot sailboat. We had a bunk and a bathroom with a shower. Mid-ship was the mahogany dining room, large enough to seat ten people comfortably, a galley, and a lounge with bar.

When we told people about sailing for a week, they immediately mentioned getting "sea sick". Unless we were in rough seas, which were fairly uncommon for the BVI, there was very little of the motion that upsets stomachs. Even when we sailed and laid over at 45 degrees, our only discomfort was from yelling "yahoo" as the seas sprayed in our face as our feet caught the top of the waves while dangling off the side. Captain Bill was also a pro at finding anchorages that didn't "rock and roll".



Our home for a week



I climbed all the way up the mast for this picture



Girls were ferried out to the Kahuna



Guys were ferried out to the Kahuna



This was where we snack and have breakfast



Here we had our nightly gourmet dinners

*Our goal this trip was to dive the Rhone. I was a world class dive of 80 feet and was the opening shot in the movie "The Deep" with Jacqueline Bisset. We were unable to make the dive in 1999 year due to strong currents, but this year we were committed and we took Captain Bill with us to make sure our dive boat didn't reverse course at the last minute. However, maybe it should have.*

*We weren't the only divers that day. There were four others and they were "newbies". Three of them never got to the bottom. The surface was a bit rough with two to three-foot swells. Our first beginner deposited his breakfast before entering the water, the second followed suit while bopping in the waves, and the third decided she wanted to skip it all. So our guide had just our crew of five: Barbara, Terry, Larry, Bill, and me.*

*The currents at the bottom were stronger than were expected. We spent much of our energy keeping together as we swam around the broken hull of the ill-fated mail ship. In fact, I ran out of air and had to surface before the rest of the group. I attempted to get the attention of my "buddy" and our "guide" before heading up, but to no avail. I couldn't wait. I only had enough to get to surface and to inflate my vest.*

*Later that week we made another dive to some coral reefs. Although the currents continued to be strong, it was relatively shallow and uneventful - except for the sailboat of pretty young lady nudists near our anchorage*



Getting ready on the dive boat



You suit up then slide off the back



Terry and Larry waited for tanks



Barbara got some last minute help



Terry backs into the water



This picture was shot with a cheap throw-away camera



Beautiful unspoiled coral life

*"And what do you guys want to do today?" asked Captain Bill. "I have to run over to shore this morning and get some supplies. We were out of pina colada mix. How about young Brody take you for a great hike?"*

*Now wasn't that what the geriatric ship wanted to hear? Oh well, we needed the exercise. Not having to move a muscle for food and drink, we were beginning to cause the boat to list when we carried around that extra tonnage we had already gained in just a few days.*

*Captain Bill continued with his sales pitch about "island aerobics", while his crew nodded their heads in agreement. We agreed to attack "Billy Goat Bluff" - aptly named by us for its rocky trail that rose a steeply as the roof line on a New England cottage. The path commenced just to the right side of "Billy Bones" house of fun.*



The trail head was deceptively innocuous



Tom, Terry, and Barb were the first to arrive topside



Sharyn, Shirley, Beth, and Larry pull up the rear



The universal "trails end" marker was here



Proof positive, sealed in stone that we made it



A view of the "Wille T" from our perch.



A view of the shore across Norman Island

*We were totally lost in time. Today was now, tomorrow was to be, and yesterday was forgotten. Our ship sailed with no purpose, no direction, no concerns. It just sailed. We knew there was life and death around us, that there were issues of significance, that others depended on them and worried about them, but for now, for this short stop in the progress of time, nothing seemed to matter. The universe may have been racing to conflagration. That problem could be fixed tomorrow, but for now omphaloskepsis was the priority.*

*Ever wonder what we did on our little sail boat for a week, besides eating and drinking?*



Beth showers on the stern



Larry reads a best seller



Sharyn cleans her purse



Shirley contemplates in deep thought



Sharyn & Shirley sun bathe



Terry inventories the beer.

The Caribbean Sea was on the continental shelf so it was relatively shallow. In fact it was so shallow in spots that the land poked through the sea and we called it St. John's, St. Croix, St Thomas, Tortolla, Beef Island, Virgin Gorda, Norman Island, Saltpeter Island, Eustatia Island, Jost Van Dyke, Anegada, George Dog, West Dog along with numerous cays. The area was discovered in 1493 by Christopher Columbus and people have been sailing to it ever since.

Fortunately, the British retained possession of a group of these islands for they were dramatically less spoiled than their American cousins. There were no crowds, no personal water craft, few commercial establishments, and the islands were sparsely populated. Because of customs considerations it was also difficult for water traffic to move between the islands, so the American crowd had to "stay home". When we visited the BVI, it was relative peace and quiet, most of the coral beds were still alive and colorful, and we could find a private anchorage for an evening stay. We could almost hear Jimmy Buffet humming "Cheeseburger in Paradise" in our head.

So what did we do in Paradise? Why we sailed of course! Maybe in the evening we could stop in one of the beach shacks that served some rum drink, such as the "Billie Bones", the Willie T", "Saba Rock", or "Foxies". If we had a weak heart, we wanted to avoid some of these haunts - about mid-night clothes become optional.



"You want me to do what?" I asked



Sails deployed we headed for Virgin Gorda



Catch enough wind and we dipped our legs in sea



And, just what has the Captain spotted?



... maybe a little bare fanny next door.



Everyone assists in furling the sails



Sharyn paddles her own boat into the sunset.

*When we weren't sailing or scuba diving, our other activity was just to enjoy the pristine waters that were the BVI. Captain Bill was part fish. He led us out on daily snorkel trips to all the best coral beds. His big trick was to free dive some of the caves and then invite us to join him. Larry tried, but Bill could stay submerged for minutes at a time. We snorkeled the Indian Rocks and Bight near Norman Island, the Baths at Virgin Gorda, Sandy Spit near Jost Van Dyke, and Bill's private waters just off Eustasia Island (it was the best spot. The "rent-a-sailboats" weren't permitted there and few others risked the shallow reefs), just to name a few.*



Look what we found hidden under water and under a rock



The group got ready for our daily snorkel trip



A few people try to sail their own personal water craft.



How was this lobster different from a Maine Lobster?



The picture was taken by Larry. We tried this trick last year but the picture wasn't any good



The ladies seemed surprised!



Just "hanging out" behind the Kahuna



The beaches were a highlight of the BVI. They were clean, devoid of people (except for the Baths at Virgin Gorda. We had to hit them between the Cruise Ships), and composed of ivory white coral, bleached by the sun, and ground to a fine gravel texture a little grainier than a sand beach. We took every opportunity to experience this unique island feature. Little a mother duck, Brody would transport his brood to the nearest shore where the eight of us would wallow carelessly in the sand. He made sure we always had plenty of food and drink, ferrying the coolers and even our cook to our point of relaxation.

The picture of Terry, just below, said it all!



Beth, Sharyn, and Barb enjoy the beach



Larry, Beth, Tom, Sharyn, Barb, Terry

New Poster for BVI Chamber of Commerce



Brody was the young one in in the front of the picture



Our cook (Birgit, aka Biggie) made a beach lunch



We sit on the beach and each lunch



Barb and Sharyn walk along Cane Beach on north side of Tortolla

*This page has those items that just wouldn't fit under the main topics. All represent the simple, unspoiled life on the islands.*



Functioning Rum factory on Tortolla. For a buck we got a five minute tour



"Billie Bones" was a shack on Norman Island and a hopping bar with music the blares almost to sunrise.



"Willie T" was a floating rum shack anchored in the Bight at Norman Island. Suck rum from the navels of the nude ladies & dive from the top deck into the sea.



The Rum still was in the center of the picture about a third of the way down from the top.



At Soper's Hole, West End, Tortolla, Sharyn watched the sun set again on a fantastic vacation.



Barbara's leg was our only casualty



Girls outside of "Billie Bones"



"Saba Rock" is an up-scale club at the Bitter End of Virgin Gorda.



"Foxy's" was a shack on Jost Van Dyke that frequents famous visitors such as Jimmy Buffet.



This evening was our night to treat the crew to a shore party. We went to the restaurant at the Bitter End Resort. Didn't come close to what we got on board the Kahuna even on the worst night.