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Our South-East Asia Adventures: Highs And Lows Of Our Voyage From Australia To The Maldives (Seven Seas Adventures Book 6)



Our South-East Asia Adventures

Highs and Lows of our Voyage
from Australia to the Maldives





Synopsis

The "Seven Seas Adventures Series" is based on the colour paper edition of "9 Years on the 7 Seas with S/Y Nor Siglar", also published as a text-only Kindle version by the same name. As a growing number of reading devices now support colour images, we have published this in 7 parts with colour images, corresponding to the 7 parts in the printed edition. Our passage in the wake of Captain Bligh across the Coral Sea through the Torres Strait to Gove in Northern Australia is one of the toughest in our eight years of cruising; a close-hauled nightmare bucking into fierce headwinds and rough, breaking seas, dodging nasty rain squalls and heavy traffic through busy shipping lanes. Avoiding pollution and debris in the water off the coasts of the Louisiades and Papua New Guinea is a new challenge for us. We do the 1,400 nautical miles non-stop in 14 days and savour a ten-day break, somewhat marred by threats of crocodiles, deadly jellyfish and electrolysis, before reprovisioning for two months in Indonesia. Nervous about piracy in this part of the world, we sail in convoy with six other boats. Our worst scare, however, is overcrowded fishing boats with men in black balaclavas skirting our bows at high speed attempting to get rid of evil spirits onboard, but also their lack of navigation lights at night and petty thefts at anchor off remote villages. We visit the famed Spice Islands in the Moluccas, bypass unsafe Timor and cruise the southern chain of Nusa Tenggara with its spectacular volcanoes and quaint mountain villages known for their ikat weavers, colourful markets, arts and crafts and traditional dances. We stand face to face with bloodthirsty Komodo dragons, meet our closest cousin, the orang-utan on a 3-day river trip in Kalimantan, visit fishing villages with golden domed mosques and rest up at a peaceful home stay in central Bali surrounded by lush and green terraced rice fields and quaint temples. We learn about rituals, rites and reality and attend a Hindu cremation in the free. Near disaster strikes when we go hard aground and almost lose Nor Siglar were it not for fellow cruisers who come to our aid in the 11th hour. More troubles lurks in the South China Sea; the ham radio cuts out and electrolysis is eating up our propeller. But the problems are easily fixed in Singapore's modern Raffles Marina where cruisers debate a sailor's dilemma prompted by having passed a dead man floating in the Java Sea without picking him up, concerned about legal and bureaucratic ramifications. We cross the heavily trafficked and infamous pirate infested Strait of Malacca, spend a month in Langkawi, and leave Nor Siglar safely in Rebek Marina while touring Malaysia and Thailand by land, a nice break after five months onboard and almost 6,500 nautical miles since leaving Fiji. On our return we move north to spend Christmas in splendid isolation in Thailand's picturesque Phang Nga Bay and tour a "hong" near James Bond's Paradise Island by dinghy, while thieves break in onboard Nor Siglar. Fed up, we

move south to tiny and beautiful Phi Phi Don and ring in the New Year on Patong Beach near Phuket with thousands of other revellers. With the expansive Indian Ocean ahead of us, and not many places to provision on the way, we do a humungous provisioning and set off to the Maldives 2,800 nautical miles to the west. More trouble looms on the horizon as we are plagued with thunder and lightening squalls, fortunately escaping any strikes but the furling forestay suddenly snaps, resulting in frantic manoeuvres on the foredeck. We manage to get hold of it and the situation is saved but our endurance is running thin. “I am getting too old for this”, Martin exclaims. But then, when making landfall in tiny Uligamu in the northern Maldives, life is good again. The island is gorgeous, the people pleasant, the culture interesting and who can complain about swimming with manta rays? We feel we have landed in the last paradise on earth.

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