



West & East Coast Cruises

Both West and East Coast cruises took place during the festive season with plenty of enjoyment on both sides of the country...

2020 West Coast Cruise

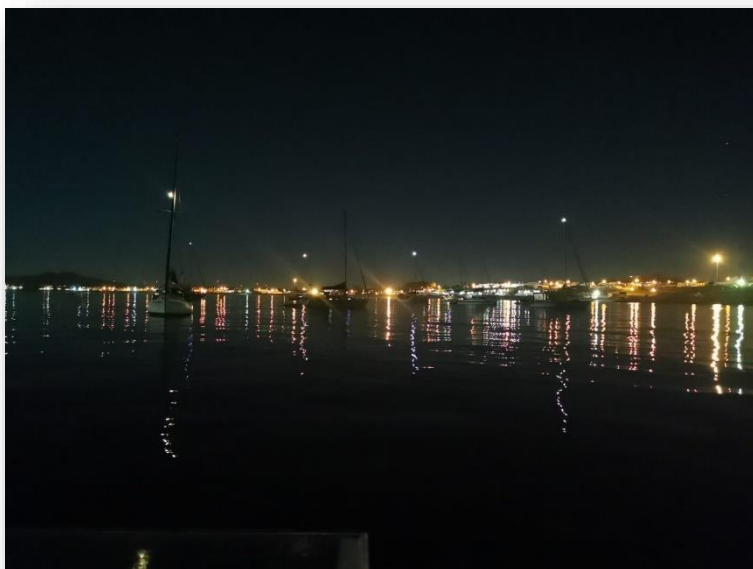
This enjoyable event, with 26 entries, started on the 26th December with a welcoming evening at Saldanha Bay Yacht Club. Due to Covid restrictions only skippers were allowed to attend. The skippers each in turn introduced themselves and their boats after which they received a bottle of Haven red wine to share with their crew who were waiting back on their boats. The wine was sponsored by Glen Carlo, South Africa, to whom we are very grateful. The skippers also collected the meals for their crew so returned to their boats pretty well loaded down.



Sunday 27th had the boats on the move to various destinations in and around Saldanha Bay. San Parks placed a restriction of 10 boats that would be allowed to anchor in Kraal Bay. Kraal Bay is a firm favourite with all skippers sailing the West Coast. This restriction meant that other anchorages would have to be found, so some got into Kraal Bay, while some anchored in Oudepos, an anchorage on route to Kraal Bay, two boats sailed down to Dassen Island, while others did some day sailing around Saldanha Bay.

On Monday the 28th, after a very calm night on anchor, all the boats cruised back SBYC. The yacht club had organised a spit braai and music for the evening but this was changed to a Covid spit braai due to the message from our President. Due to this message restrictions were put in place that only allowed 2 people per boat on shore at any one time. Even so it was enjoyed by all.

On Tuesday the 29th most of the boats cast off for an early start to the leg to Paternoster. A few boats sadly decided not to continue after the lock down rules were tightened. The cruise up the West Coast was memorable. Shipping was active in the main channel while we were leaving so it was a case of stick to the north side of the channel and keep your eyes open. The high light of the trip was the number of whales that were encountered on route. They mind their own business and get on with life, noisily breathing in and out, interacting with each other, the odd one breaching while others showed their tails and fins. Awesome to be close to them. Two boats, independently experienced a whale appearing unexpectedly, coming up from the depths and surfacing right next to their boats. A nudge against the hull was felt by one crew then the tail hit the



water and splashed everything in the cockpit. Nothing confrontational, just by accident. 20 boats were anchored in Paternoster that evening and were a sight to behold. As the sun was setting in the west, a full moon was rising in the east, and with the calm conditions, what an experience.

Unfortunately that was where the 2020 WCC ended. Port Owen Yacht Club had really set up a fantastic reception for the participants and of course the old year's eve party. Covid restrictions put an end to all that. As the normal prize giving breakfast could not take place at POYC, the generous gifts supplied by our many sponsors ensured that each participating

boat received a gift. This distribution was done through a lucky draw and delivered but hand.

Many thanks to all our sponsors, the SBYC & POYC members who worked so hard to make this a success, yes it was a success as, with all the restrictions in place, everybody still had a ball.

East Coast Cruise

The annual KZN East Coast Cruise recently took place in the holiday week between Christmas and New Year's Eve. And while the weather window for departure from Durban to Richards Bay opened on 26 December, the westerly wind was only forecast to arrive on mid-day of the 27th. A few of the usual suspects had entered: Sundance, Dual Flyer, Tikila J and Mafuta, who were joined on the entry list by a number of cruising yachts who had not made the journey before: Good News II, Fairwind, Seacrets, She Myra and Alkistis. As the forecast was for a pretty south westerly, with an unsettled sea due to the previous few days' easterly winds, crew mutiny was always going to be a factor. Mafuta dropped out. Tikila J decided that after the previous year's hammering that fair weather sailing was infinitely preferable, chose to anchor at Vetchies for the morning and head home to a warm bed. Good News II, with irreconcilable rigging issues, remained in Durban.

First to leave was Alkistis, a little early, as the NE was still blowing, but that early departure proved extremely fortuitous for a surf-ski paddler in difficulty outside the north breakwater. Good deed completed they headed off just after 11am. Shortly thereafter they were joined by She Myra – the smallest boat in the fleet – who, braved the weather as far north as Umdloti before turning back to Durban. A brutal upwind slog into 25-30knots saw them back into the harbour just before dusk. Describing the sea as a washing machine, with a comfort zone being stretched, they nonetheless had an exhilarating day on the water. Fairwind departed at 3pm, Seacrets, with some complete novices on board, at 5pm, Sundance at 5:30pm and bringing up the rear, the Seascope 40 Dual Flyer. The pics that came off the boats en-route told the story, rough seas, big fish and smiling faces.

Fastest elapsed time was Dual Flyer in 12.5 hours with Seacrets closing the fleet off with a time of 18.5 hours, the others peppered in between with times around the 14-15 hour marks. It was not a race after all. Zululand Yacht Club provided all the post-cruise necessities, with the sailors and President Cyril closing the bars the night before everyone was due to return! All sailors were safely home shortly after with only Seacrets electing to remain in RB for a week, returning to Durban on 5 January.

Special thanks to all the sailors for competing and to Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, a committee member in the newly formed OSASA, who helped behind the scenes in smoothing the administrative path into Richards Bay Harbour. Sailing in the time of Covid has its challenges, but nothing that can't be overcome by the simple desire to get out on the ocean!