

Ocean Voyaging Preparations

With John Kretschmer

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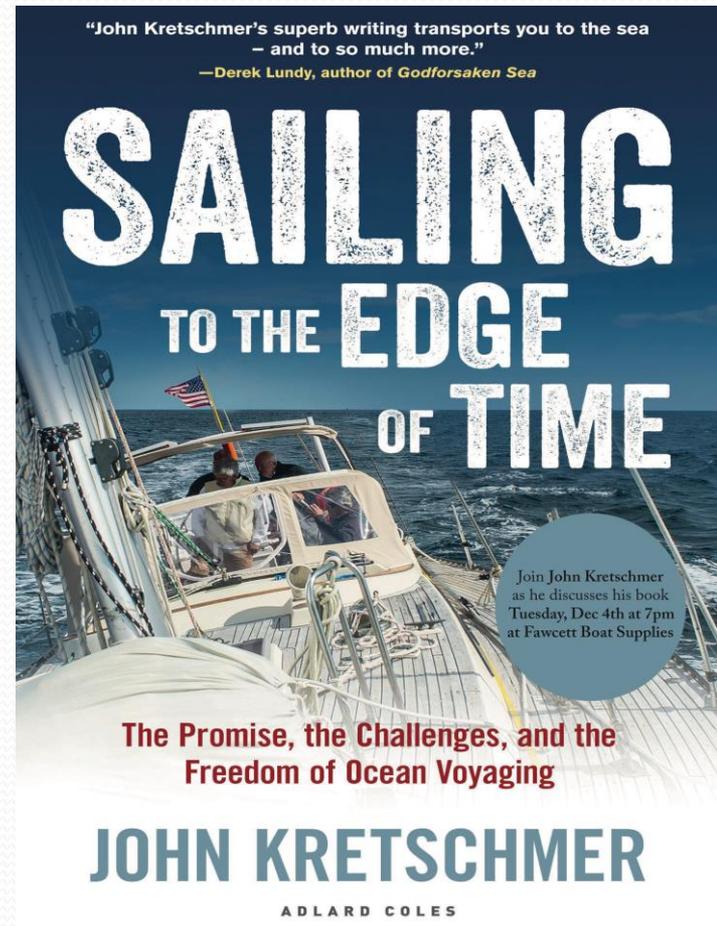
John Kretschmer

- **Captain**

- 300,000+ offshore miles
- 27 Atlantic crossings
- Record-setting Cape Horn voyage

- **Author**

- *Cape Horn to Starboard*
- *Flirting with Mermaids*
- *At the Mercy of the Sea*
- *Sailing a Serious Ocean*
- *Sailing to the Edge of Time*



Seamanship = Safety

Preparing for an Ocean Voyage is the
First Step in Good Seamanship



Situational Awareness

- is the key to successful, fulfilling, happy, and safe voyaging. SA, developed by the military, is the perfect way to think about merging safety and seamanship.
- Understanding where the danger points are on a boat, how fittings are loaded, what is likely to happen next – that's good seamanship and the ultimate way of being safe underway.
- Developing Situational Awareness while coastal sailing is essential for ocean voyaging.

Smiling in Force 10



Spend Time Sailing – Not Just Buying Gear – You Need Skills

- good helming,
- keep sails well- trimmed and avoid flogging,
- use of preventers,
- organizing fair leads to reduce chafe,
- practice heaving to and fore reaching
- fit storms sails
- Navigation Skills

Getting ready for another blow mid-Atlantic



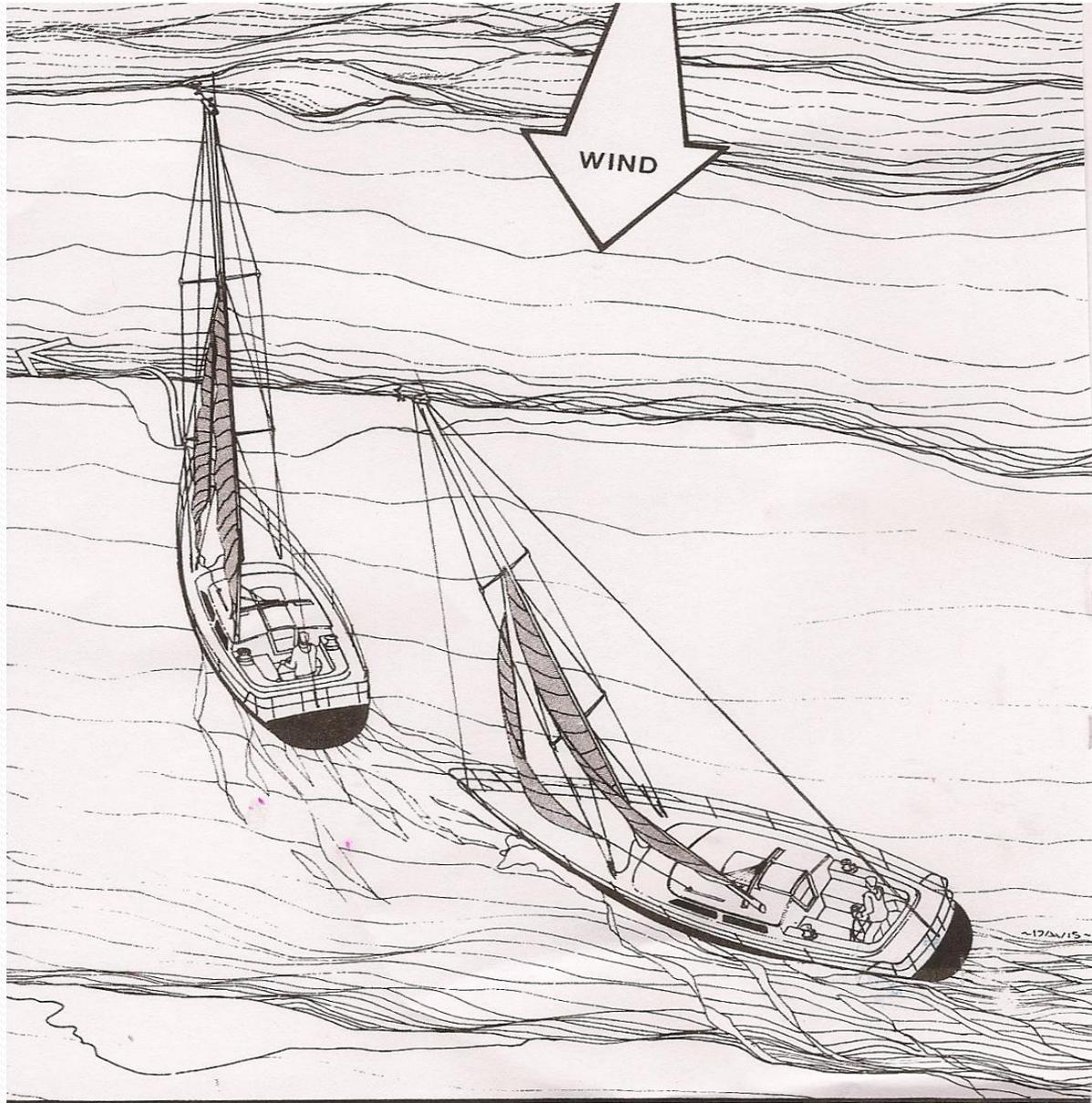
Steering
Downwind in
Big Seas on a
January crossing
of the N.
Atlantic, not a
time for
learning.



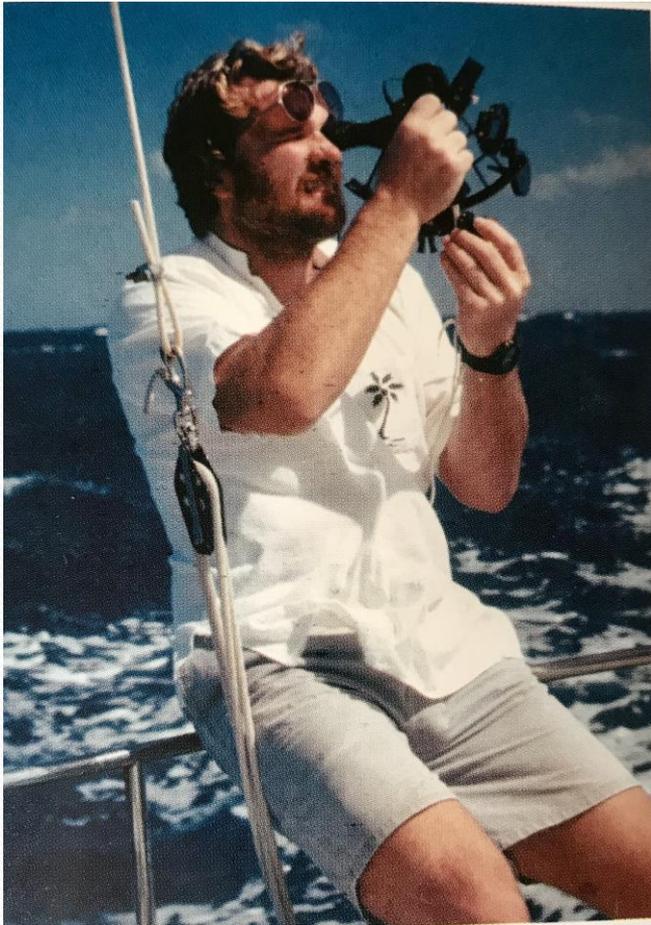
Heaving-to



Forereaching



A Timeless Skill



Safety Briefing

- 138 offshore training passages later, still give the briefing every time.
- It begins with the topics of management, body and boat, body taking the lead.

Body Management.

- Sleeping, eating, regularity, peace of mind, these things are super important, and in many ways, keys to safety at sea.
- Can't underestimate the importance of keeping yourself together. Avoid dehydration and constipation, and cope with seasickness, take naps, listen to your body as it adjusts to a new environment.
- Ultimate goal – to feel the same, or even better, than when ashore. At that point offshore sailing becomes magical – and quite safe. I will emphasize this point throughout the seminar

Body Management

- Sleeping
- Eating
- Regularity



Boat Management

- Staying ahead of the systems, simple systems are better as a general rule.
- Good reliable gear requires less management.
- Think of boat management as a battery bank. If you are constantly tapping into it for small problems, when you really need power you won't have it.
- On the other hand, don't be lazy. Problems never solve themselves, they just get worse. It's always better to deal with something before conditions deteriorate, the old notion "If you think about reefing – do it" is always a sound policy.
- Deck walkabout is critical. I always find things, even if it's just to throw the flying fish overboard.

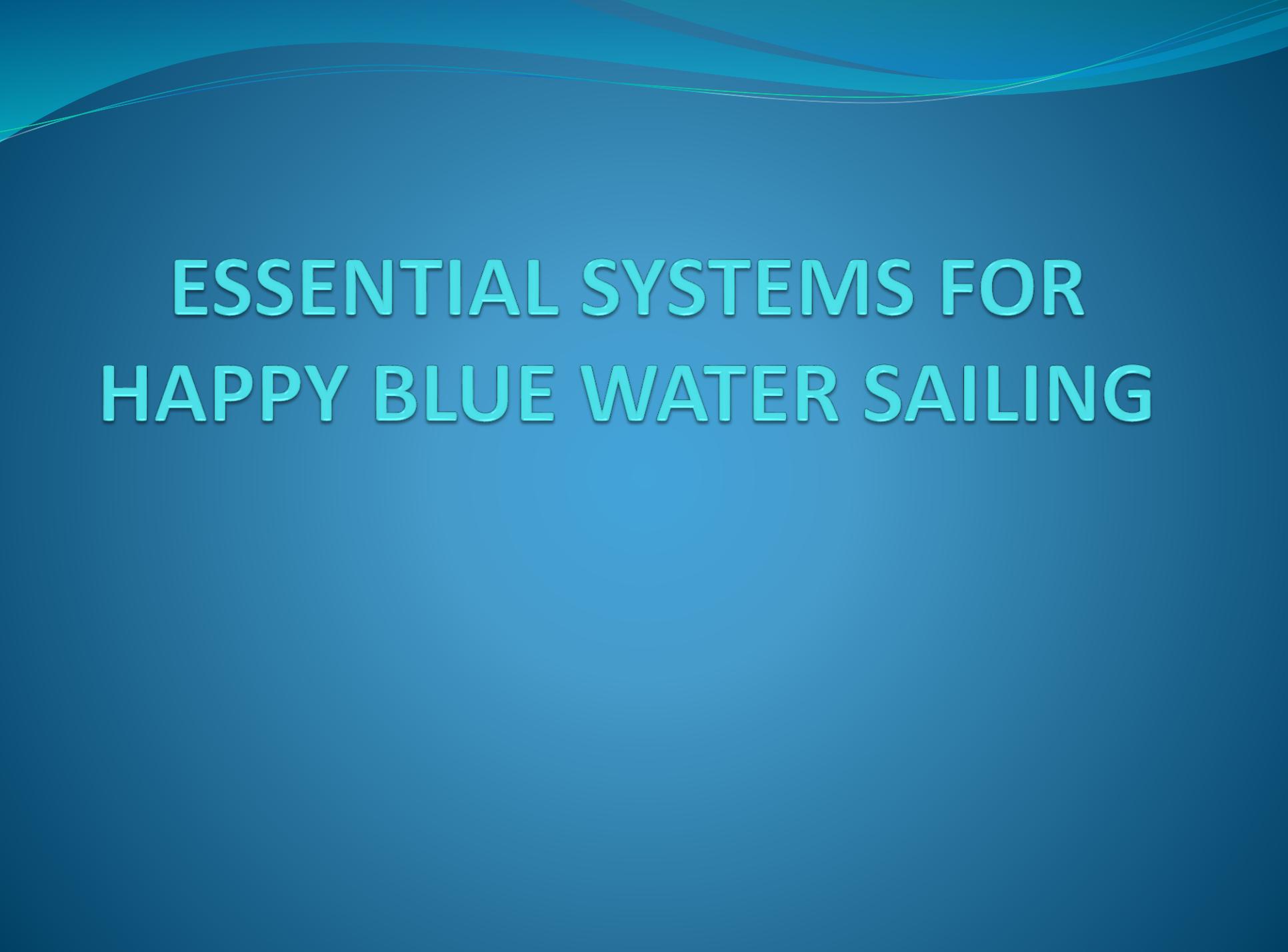
Planning



- Assign crew roles
- Safety equipment
- Know how to deploy your safety equipment
- Practice communications
- Float plans

Leadership

- Know the difference of when a situation is a crisis and when it's not.
- Knowing your crew's strengths and weaknesses.
- Stay fully engaged in the crisis, but also remain flexible and willing to adapt your tactics
- Stay Calm, be decisive, don't need to be the hero
- Speak with one voice



ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS FOR HAPPY BLUE WATER SAILING

AUTO-PILOT/WIND VANE

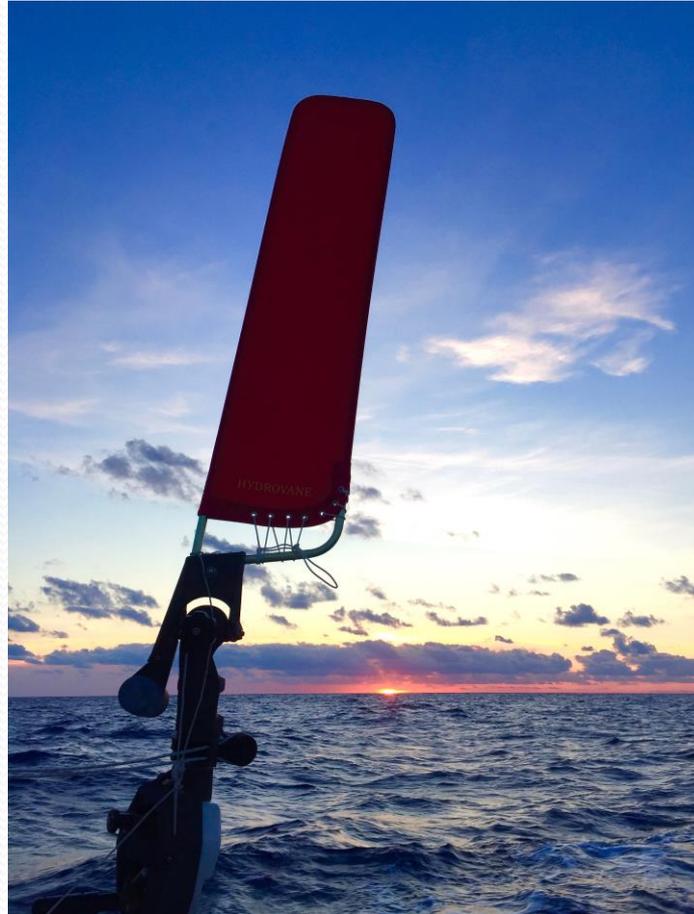
- Without self-steering most of the magic of passage making disappears. The development of reliable self-steering and the popularity of cruising go hand in hand. Today's autopilots are remarkable, and it will quickly become the most important piece of equipment aboard.
- If I could choose one electronic gizmo, I would not pick, GPS, AIS, RADAR, SAT PHONE, I would pick an autopilot.
- If I could pick two items, I'd pick a back-up autopilot.
- A wind-vane self-steering device is a wonderful addition to any boat but it does have limitations although the well-equipped cruising boat has both. The beauty of a vane of course is that it requires no power, just the wind, and it extremely effective for boats under 40'.

Steering Vane



Hydrovane





Auto Pilot



RUGGED HEADSAIL FURLING GEAR

- Roller furling gear is the biggest revolution in cruising behind the development of fiberglass hulls.
- Good roller furling is what makes short-handed cruising possible, and it's a huge safety feature. It is in fact, the most important safety feature on the boat.
- However, inadequate or worn out gear is aggravating and unsafe. Spend money on the best furling gear you can afford.
- Top brands include, Furlex, Harken, Hood, Schaefer, Pro-Furl.

Furled Headsail – 10 Knots



Furlex, Harken, Profurl Schaeffer – Some Top Brands



SIMPLE BULLET PROOF ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

- There is no denying it, our boats today are dependent on electronics of every kind. A bullet-proof system is critical. By bullet-proof I mean three things:
- It has to deliver the amps where and when they are needed, it has to easily regenerate what it puts out, and it has to be as simple and reliable as possible.
- Resist the urge to complicate the electrical system, instead engineer it with superior components in a straight-forward manner.
- Complimenting the basic charging system with solar, wind and water also offers a vital backup system should the engine or alternator or generator become inoperable. Beyond backup systems, we are at the point where alternative energy can be the heart of the power generating system.



Tidy Wiring



STAYSAIL/STORM HEADSAIL

- A system that removes the furling headsail from your heavy weather storm management program is essential.
- This can be achieved by a staysail, either fixed or mobile, or with a storm jib designed to wrap around a furled headsail. The former is much preferred.
- Staysails, especially storm staysails, are wonderful tools, and much more useful than the trysails (storm mains) that we all used to carry.
- An additional and obvious point is that every passage should begin with fresh sails in general as nothing breaths new life into an old boat like new sails.
- Indeed, the number one factor in determining a successful outcome in storm conditions, are stout sails.



You Need Small Sails



The Smaller the Better



Around the Furled Headsail



MAINSAIL REEFING AND PREVENTING

- Once you complete an offshore passage you will realize just how important it is to be able to reef the main off the wind. You almost never read about this, but it is vital.
- There are times when coming upwind to reef is not practical, safe or even possible. A slippery luff track with robust slides, shackle and halyards are essential. Retractable lazy jacks and possibly a downhaul system help.
- An overall well designed slab reefing system is still the best.
- The main boom is the most dangerous piece on the boat and also one of the easiest to break. A proper main preventer made of stretchy line that is led forward to allow for soft pseudo jibes, is the way to go.

Tying in the 3rd Reef



In Boom Mainsail Furling



COCKPIT PROTECTION

- A spray dodger and bimini are vital, and nowadays storm panels protecting the cockpit have become common.
- This system has to be well designed however to actually withstand severe weather. I have lost three cockpit enclosures to date!
- Keeping the crew warm and dry changes the very nature of a passage.



Complete Coverage: Can you see?





WHISKER POLE

- It is vital to be able to sail efficiently downwind, and you will not be using a spinnaker very often – plain and simple. A heavy duty running pole, whisker pole, will be one of the most important pieces of equipment on every tradewind passage.
- I have crossed many oceans with the mainsail resting on the boom, and a poled genoa providing all the necessary horsepower.
- Storing the whisker pole on a track on the mast to allow for easy deployment without hefting it off the deck means you will use it more often.
- Some believe the whisker pole should be stored on deck, to be available as a jury rigged spar should the mast go down, I disagree.
- Using the whisker pole makes sailing much safer and efficient, and if you can rig it without much fuss you are much more likely to use it.

The Way to Cross Oceans



Prevented Fore and Aft



Even Reaching



A-Sail, Poled Out Genoa, Logging miles



Wing on Wing



SEA BERTHS

- It is amazing and sad, how few boats are rigged with adequate sea berths these days. This sounds like an old bugger's lament, and I not crying out for the return of old narrow designs, just for a place to sleep while underway in every condition.
- Sleep is one of the three essentials to happiness on a passage, you have to put some thought into this before shoving off.
- With imaginative use of lee cloths some doubles can be made into secure singles for offshore sailing.





Sea Going Galley

- A safe, secure galley where the cook can make hot, healthy food in any condition is fundamental to happy passage making.

Counter and Locker space, Fiddles, Deep Sinks

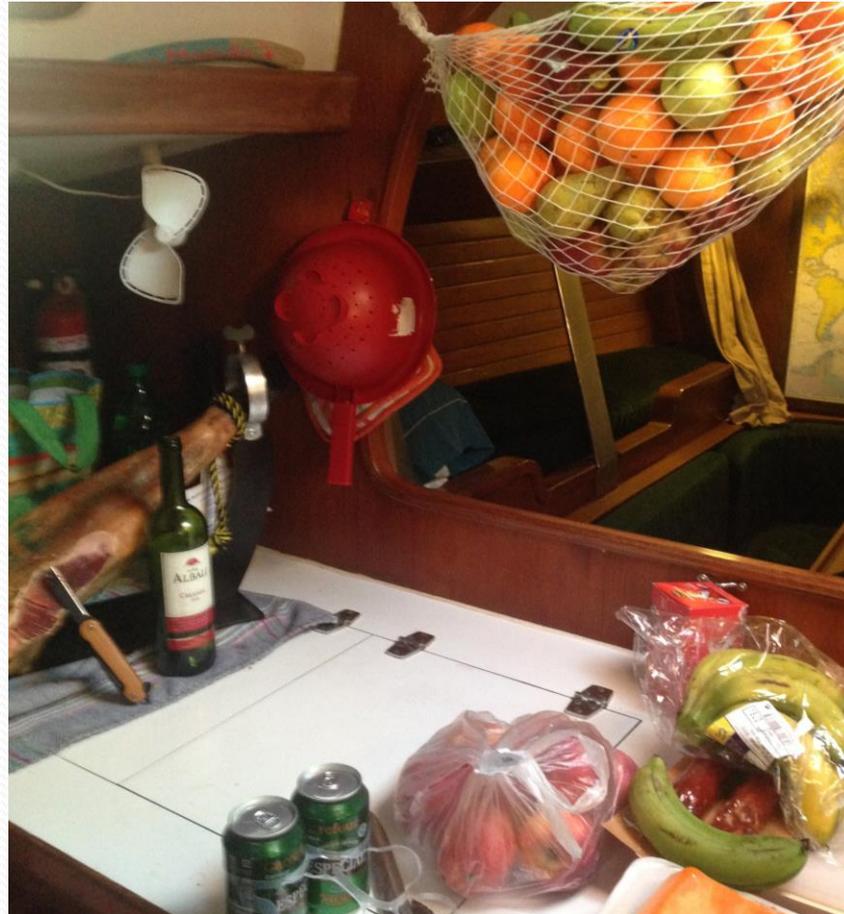


A boat is not an excuse for a bad meal





Quetzal's galley, before a passage



PERSONAL GEAR

- As the Scandinavians say, “there is no bad weather, only bad clothing.”
- With today’s gear, there is no excuse to be miserable at sea. It can be costly, but money spent on top quality foul weather gear and underneath layers is money well spent.
- Sooner or later offshore cruisers will learn from dinghy sailors and start wearing gear that not only keeps you warm and dry but allows for a full range of motion.
- One interesting note is that slowly but surely survival suits are making their way aboard cruising boats. Survival suits are affordable and dramatically increase your life expectancy if you end up in the water, and when boarding life rafts.

Staying Warm in the Labrador Sea



And in Scotland!





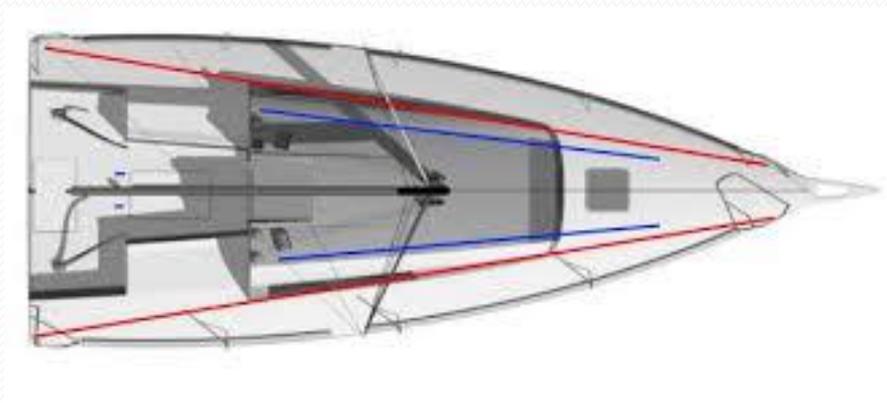
Even in moderate weather, good gear is essential



DECK SAFETY GEAR

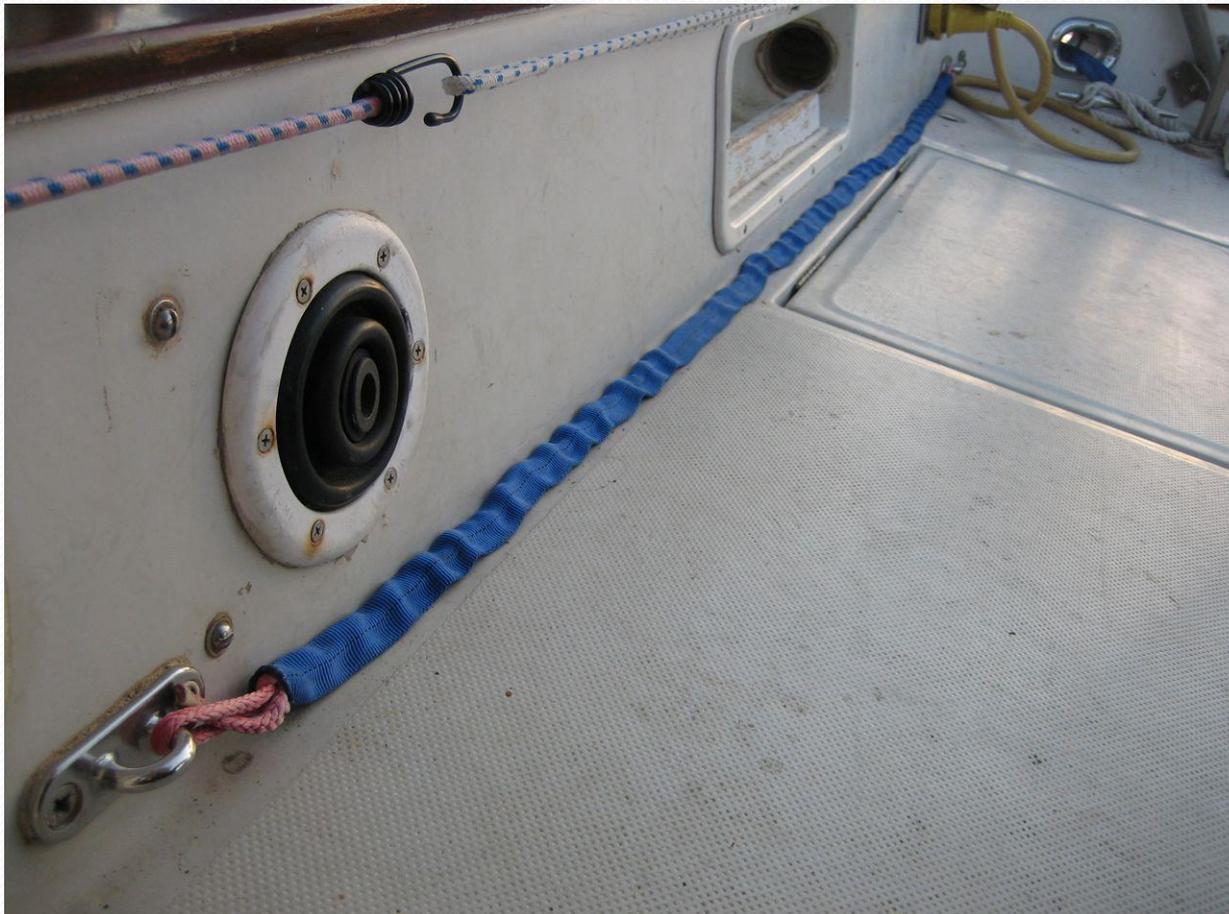
- You can spend a fortune on safety gear, and while it enhances your peace of mind, it does not always make you safe.
- Think hard about this and put your money into a top quality life raft, stout well designed jack lines, top inflatable harnesses and PFDs, and a simple, easily deployed retrieval system.
- New wireless MOB systems with AIS will gradually become standard on cruising boats.
- Most importantly, as discussed throughout this workshop, have a plan for man-overboard emergencies. The best strategy is to heave-to immediately

Jacklines





Jackline in cockpit, between strong points



Iridium Go – Communication and Data



Communications

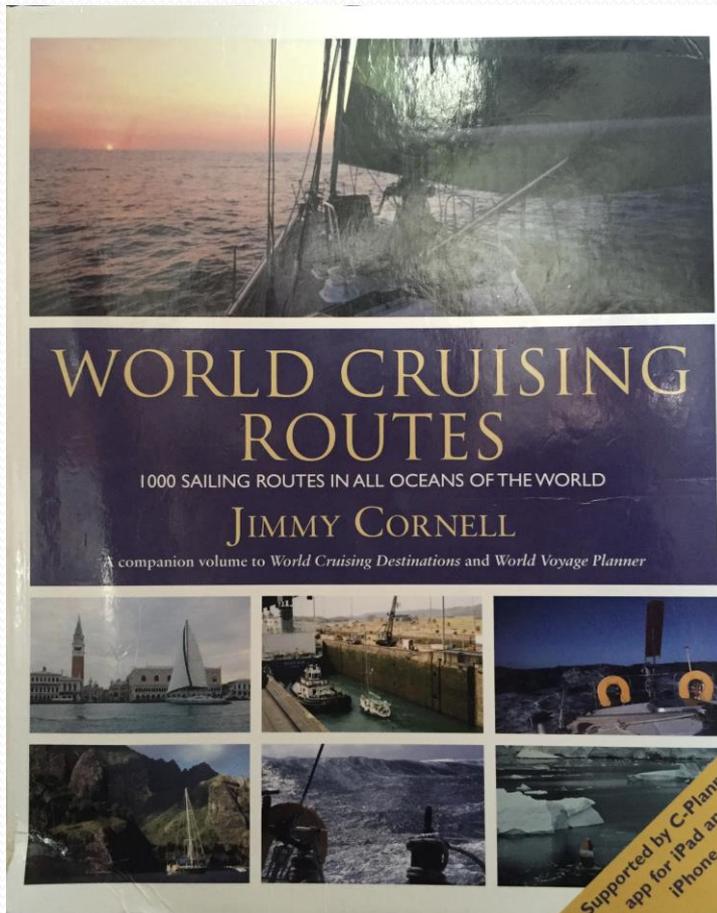
- **Satellite Communications** have arrived.
- We use an Iridium Go hotspot on the boat and it is very affordable to send emails and texts.
- We also use it to download GRIB files and always have very current weather information.

Communications

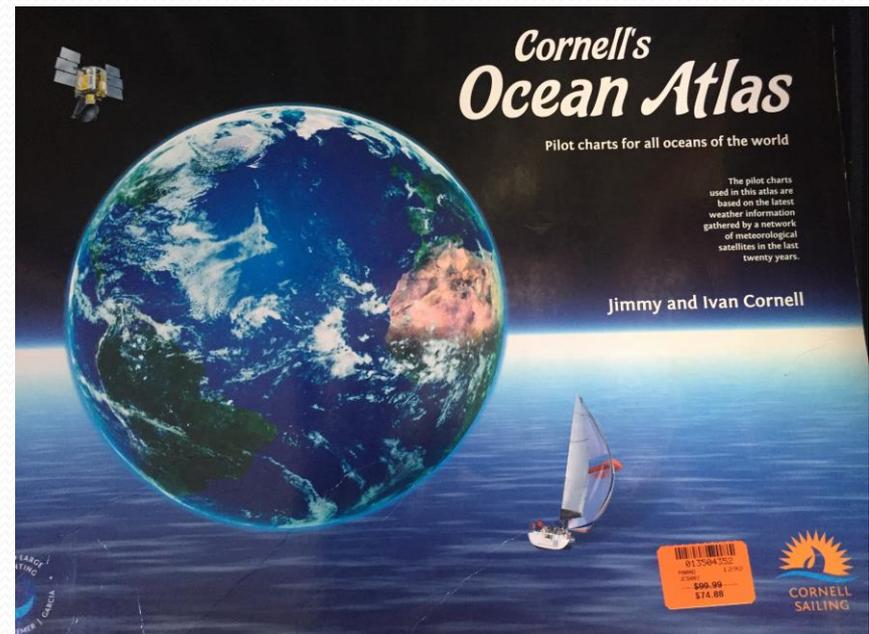
- **Personal trackers**, SPOT, INREACH, YB Tracking and others are affordable communication options.
- Most are now two way communicators, not just tracking device.

General Route Planning Reference Guides

World Cruising Routes by Jimmy Cornell



Cornell's Ocean Atlas by Jimmy & Ivan Cornell



Atlantic Crossing – Bermuda to Lagos via Horta, Azores



Atlantic Crossing Cape Verde to Martinique

