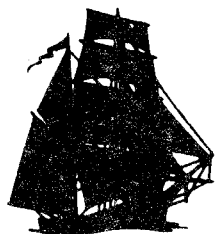


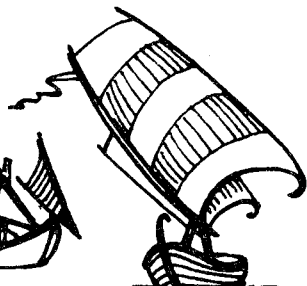
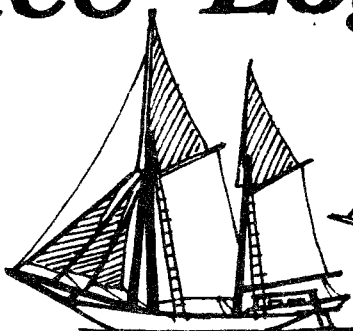
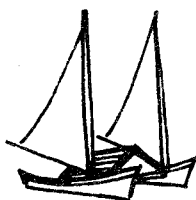
Romance Log

2ND WORLD WARR C

Double Issue
11 and 12



Summer '81



Bali, Singapore, Indian Ocean, Cape of Good Hope

Sailing Indonesia is a journey into the past, a history lesson in ancient seafaring. Leaving Komodo, Romance sailed in company with BAGANS, square fishing platforms with masts stepped in tandem on twin hulls. Laying to a huge wooden anchor weighed with rocks, the Bagan lowers her net below the thatched-over deck, and the fisherman keeps a night-long vigil with a kerosene lantern lowered to attract the fish. In Undjong Padang, Makassar, our neighbor 'perahu lajars'--sailing vessels--formed a very large fleet of the types above. L to R: Bagan, Pinisi (with tripod mast and bowsprit,) Java Sea fishing boat, Makassar fisherman. Their comings and goings under sail provided endless pleasure for the ship watchers.

One quiet night outside Makassar, the 12-4 watch met with a Strange Encounter of the underwater kind, quick-pulsing strobeflike patches of illumination 150 to 200 feet in diameter. The first one appeared directly below us, and gave us a fright--we imagined a submarine about to surface under us! At one point, 8 or 10 patches covered a 70° segment of the horizon, so bright they created a loom. From aloft, the pulses took on patterns, sometimes revolving like the sweep of a lighthouse, sometimes two patches would alternate throwing beams toward each other: \rightleftarrows ; and sometimes the pulses were sent out in series $\rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$. A spot on our lee bow 'avoided' us, dimmed and stopped pulsing until we were by, then brightened and resumed. We watched for 2 hours without discovering what they were, except that the Sailing Directions noted "unusual bio-luminescence" in the area. We preferred to think of them as Underwater Flying Saucers.

Bali is like nothing else in this world, a magic kingdom where temples rise like Disneyland castles, and pony carts clip-clop through the warm tropic night. Where brightly painted fishing trimarans have eyes and ears and swordfish bills, temples have wooden gongs, and sweet faced cattle wear tinkling brass bells. Where duck-patrols wade rice paddies and men plow with patient waterbuffalo. Women wear batiks woven with golden threads; and stone gods, sarongs of gingham plaid. The same legendary dance plays, the Barong, Legong and Kris dances are performed nightly, and the Balinese themselves

never tire of them. Where kite-flying is a national sport and cock fighting a passion. Where all life is ceremonial, and every day begins with offerings of flower petals and incense. Where marriage processions are a half mile long, and cremations attended by 5,000 people, and all Balinese pray to the great shrine Besaki on the sacred slopes of Mount Agung. The Balinese are small, childlike and beautiful, and nearly every man is an artist with brush or wood or stone. The spirit of Bali lives aboard Romance in the warmth of golden teak, custom carved to our own designs, main beam, bunk and stern boards, and Barongs for cat-heads, the fearsome, friendly monsters beloved of the Balinese.

Singapura, the only city in the world with a 26' water-spitting Merlion, half lion, half fish, guarding its river, bumboats, sampans and junks--and a business district as modern as tomorrow. But Chinatown is more fun. Pyjama clad grandmothers padding softly to market, scribes brushing gilt good luck characters on red velvet, wood carvers chipping away on fat buddhas. Streets choked with Chinese Operas, charcoal brasiers, parasols, trishaws, sidewalk tailors and stands hawking everything from solid brass incense burners to bright cellophane lanterns in the shape of birds, animals and airplanes, all dancing in the warm air. Women squatting to brew tea amongst baskets of green vegetables, red peppers and purple onions. Caged red roosters, and wooden trays of oysters and cuttlefish, snake meat and fruit bats. Apothecarys musty with all manner of cures, dried frogs and seahorses. Gleaming food stalls with the tantalizing aromas of Char Siew (roast pork), Kai Fan (chicken rice), Mee Goreng (fried noodles), and Satay (pungent pieces of meat charcoal broiled on skewers.)



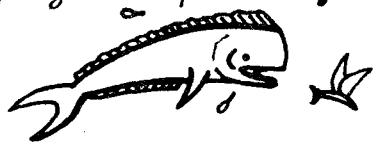
Romance sailed from Singapore on the night of Moon-Cake Festival, the "15th day of the 8th moon" lighting our way down Doerian Straits like a cellophane lantern, while we observed the occasion with sweet Moon Cakes filled with bean paste and lotus seeds. Down the narrow Selats Berhala and Bangka, the Java Sea and Sunda Straits, Romance picked her way through missing buoys, shifting sandbanks, pea green shallows and racing tides, thankful at last to gain the open sea.

Near gale. Very early the first morning in the Indian Ocean, Skipper spotted a tiny sail in the immensity of watery mountains, and ran Romance down to investigate. The glasses revealed only a scrap of pink and white cloth on a slender pole--a fishing marker? Then we saw it--the unmistakable 'spider legs' of a small Balinese trimaran, outriggers broken and hull submerged. "Down sail!" We skirted very close, looking down into the tiny dugout. A small outboard was neatly tipped up, and a bright blue plastic pail lashed half way up the mast, perhaps in a last attempt to catch fresh water--but the tiny craft was empty, her lone fisherman gone. We had happened by too late. He had blown offshore, that was certain, but how long had he survived? We watched the tiny derelict until she was lost from us at last in the somber seas astern.

It blew so hard at Cocos Keeling, we wore oilskins going into the beach. This did not, however, prevent celebrating Mate Tom's birthday with a bonfire dug in under the palms. We grilled and consumed 150 turtle Satay sticks with spicy Indonesian peanut sauce; potatoes baked in the coals, drinking coconuts laced with rum--and the world's first charcoal flavored chocolate cake. None of us would have minded being marooned on this lovely atoll at least for a little while, our enjoyment of these Indian Ocean islands, the Seychelles, Desroche, Aldabra, Comoro heightened by the knowledge that they would be our last tropic isles until the West Indies. 3.

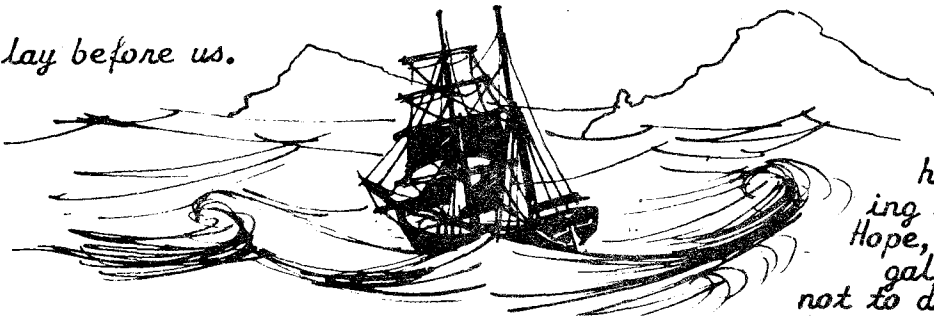
Desroche is best known as a sunken atoll, all of it beneath the surface of a tranquil cobalt lagoon, except for one perfect stretch of sand and palms. But we prefer to think of it as the first island in the Indian Ocean with Rent-a-Cow Service. We were offered the loan of the animal if we cared to milk her. Millie approached with a peace offering of tasty flowers--and the creature chased her! We settled for a boatload of coconuts, and churned our butter Pitcairn style, from the rich cream squeezed from the snowy grated nuts. 8-10 large nuts yields a pound of butter, and a quart of sweet buttermilk.

Off the African coast came the best fishing in two world voyages. We were literally surrounded by flashing legions of golden-green dorado, lashing the sea in a frenzied attack on flying fish, a fusillade of silver bullets ricocheting off bright blue wavetops, each one relentlessly pursued by a streaking dorado. They were not in the least interested in our lures. Until Tom Shafer brought out a miniscule white feather on a barbless hook, given him by a fisherman in New Guinea. Rediculous, we thought, until the tiny feather hit the water, and was instantly attacked by three dorado. The winner was flipped on deck and went 4 feet and 26 pounds! We rushed to imitate the magic lure, and soon the deck was littered with fish. The catch, 9 dorado and a wahoo, totalled 199 pounds. The prize was speared by Tom on a Tahitian pronged spear by moonlight. After that, we quit, freezer full, but the dorado attack-force stayed with us for many days, a delight to see.



In Durban, we drydocked, overhauled the engine, and stepped a new steel fore lower mast, in preparation for the Cape of Storms, a gross oversimplification of a massive project magnificently done by what just may be the best Romance crew ever. We celebrated Christmas together as the close-knit family we have become in 14 months at sea in the small world of a sailing ship. Bert Rogers read aloud the story of Bethlehem, as lights twinkled on the tree, and each watch sang carols. Rebecca Mac Donald embroidered a red flannel stocking for each of us, and there was feasting, and gift giving, and more feasting, and finally, a Christmas afternoon swim in the Indian Ocean. Durbanites hosted a seemingly endless round of braais (bar-be-ques); and there were trips into the game parks and Drackensberg Mountains, and surfing on Durban's famous beaches. Soon it was time to sail. The Cape of Storms

lay before us.



Well, Romance cut 4 days off her 1977 time rounding the Cape of Good Hope, with just enough gale conditions so as not to disappoint the crew.

We hove to in a South Westerly snorter off East London, with oil bags out, and a warp streamed to slow down our drift. A peace offering to the storm gods of the Southern Ocean. There were 7 of us aboard who had seen far worse conditions.

Those who go down to the sea in ships, must expect sometime in 15 years, to meet with near survival conditions. For 33 days in 1978, this little ship--and these 7 friends--battled 4 successive North Pacific gales, suffering from cold, wet and fatigue. We were hove to then for days at a time, with the wheel lashed, and seas sweeping the decks. (We stood in seawater, because it was warmer than the wind.) We saw the power of the sea, the stern boat lost, and the bulwarks stove in. But we saw too, the strength and the integrity of our ship. And together, ship and men--these 7 and others led by Mate Robie Price--won through, battered but triumphant. Now, nearly two years later, as Romance ran before a bright, crisp, fair wind off the southern tip of Africa, Skipper marked the occasion with a little ceremonial speech and picture taking. First the '78 North Pacific crew, then all hands together. This voyage, too, has had its storms, and the crew that emerged, every one, are the finest of shipmates. The rocks of Cape Agulhas lie astern. We are on our own side of the world again.

Cape Town. Table Mountain's famous tablecloth spilling over the top like suds on a beer stein. It blew a living gale more days than not in the Tavern of the Seas. The City Beyond the Stormy Corner remains a refuge for all seamen; the friendliest port in all the 7 seas. So many of the world's sailormen gravitate to the glorious Cape Peninsula in their golden years; to live within sight and sound of one of the most spectacular stretches of coast on earth.

Skipper and I made a pilgrimage down that glorious sea-torn coast, to stand at last on the windy cliffs of the very Cape Point, that last rockheun bastion of the African Continent, where Vanderdekker is doomed to sail his cursed Flying Dutchman against the gales forever. We stood in the wind high above the sea, brilliantly blue and flecked with white. Far out, the breakers fell upon reef and rock, and marching shoreward, hurled themselves to destruction far below; the crisp, sharp salt-wind filled with wheeling seabirds, and blown spume--a sight worth sailing the whole world to see.