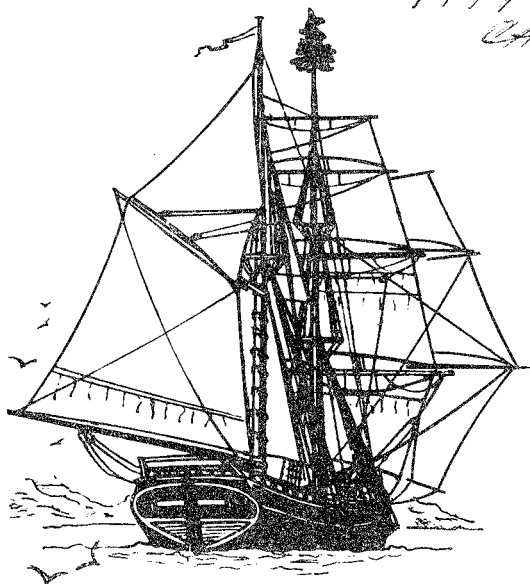


1974 UNKNOWN
CARIBBEAN #2?

CAPT. ARTHUR M. KIMBERLY
KIMBERLY CRUISES, BOX 5086
ST. THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS 00801



Warm Good Wishes For Christmas and The New Year

Dear Friends,

Aboard Romance this Holiday Season, we are looking forward to our all time dream voyage, beginning October 1975--a 20 month, 40,000 mile Trade Wind odyssey Around The World! The Galapagos, Pitcairn Island, Tahiti, French Oceania, Samoa, the Tokelaus, Fiji, New Hebrides, New Guinea, Borneo, Bangkok, Singapore, Bali, the Seychelles, Zanzibar, Mozambique, Cape Town, Ascension Island and the Amazon River. We're choosing a dedicated young crew to share this adventure aboard Romance. But that's getting ahead of the story.

1974 was an interesting year. With the fuel shortage, Romance made a mini-long cruise last summer, through the relatively unknown southern and western Caribbean. It began with a trade wind sleighride, surfing down spinach-green seas off the South American coast, (colored by the rich runoff of jungle rivers.) Isla Margarita's crowning peak pierced the warm haze, and we flew in to anchor off miles of golden-beach. Porlamar is an island hideaway for wealthy Venezuelans, and high rise hotels are going up beside old fortifications. But the people still till the sea in handsome, gaily painted open boats. One day's catch would seemingly feed all of South America, great shining beauties of every variety. We discovered "calamares," rounds of sweet, tasty squid, deep fried like onion rings. Perfect with iced Venezuelan beer. We were the only yacht, and the only Norte Americanos.

The summer's finest moment came just at dawn off Bonaire, when Romance sailed through a flock of a hundred bright pink flamingos settled on the water. They took flight down both sides of the ship just yards away, their great necks out-thrust, and long legs dangling behind. What a sight! Curacao followed, then a stuns'l run down to Cartagena, where we visited the new Columbian training barque, Gloria. In the primitive San Blas islands, we added to our colorful 'mola' collections, and played our traditional basketball game with the Cuna Indians, surely the smallest players on earth. We were beaten even worse than last time!

Panama, then another new island for Romance; San Andres, a little known Columbian playground. The windward beaches, protected by a barrier reef, boast fine hotels, seaside cafes, electric surrups and a sightseeing train that had three flats in four hours. Our snug anchorage on the lee side resembled a rocky Maine cove, with palm trees.

No roads lead into Port Royal, Roatan, Hondouras, a quiet lovely bay in the hills, which was once headquarters for Henry Morgan and more than 3,000 buccaners. They were not the first, however, for we dived on a wreck believed to pre-date Columbus by 200 years! (This from amphora datings by the University of Pennsylvania.) Had this ship continued westward for only another hundred miles, she would have discovered the Mayan civilization just coming to a close in the Yucatan. We pondered this as we visited these ancient cities which lay undiscovered under jungle growth for centuries.

Chichen Itza is like ancient Rome, with temples, altars, thousand columns, stadiums and an astronomical observatory. The ornately carved buildings, size and grandure is staggering. Ushmal must have been a government center, and uncomfortably suggests what Washington, D.C. may look like in a thousand years (maybe sooner the way things are going.) The great pyramids rise into the blazing Mexican sky, while country-folk still dwell in mud and wattle huts.

Cosumel, Miami and the Bahamas, more lovely than we remembered. Now we had to pay the piper for our summer of fine, fair weather. Romance battled back toward St. Thomas against a succession of tropical depressions, head winds and angry seas. At 3:30 AM one wild black night, we sustained a squall of full hurricane force. Romance was already shortened down to two small storm staysails, and these literally exploded, blocks flying into pieces and torn canvas showering sparks. With no further harm done, Romance tore off under bare poles. Rain stung like bees, the wind a solid weight. Pretty exciting stuff—but two of our more seasoned shipmates slept through it all!

May the New Year hold no squalls for you! (We'll be sailing the Virgins as usual until late summer.) Hope to see you, and til then, warm wishes for a blessed Christmas.