



LOG of the ROMANCE

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INDIAN OCEAN GARDEN OF EDEN, SHARKS, ARABIAN NIGHTS, WATER-
SPOUTS, CAPE OF STORMS, RIO--AND HOME FROM 'ROUND THE WORLD!

The Indian Ocean is wonderfully alive, and our catches leaving Cocos Keeling nearly rivaled that other Cocos far back in the Pacific. We landed our first shark, a murderous white tip, which scattered the crew like minnows and made a bloody shambles of the deck even after we cut off its head and tail. Remembering mock scallops are stamped from shark, we deep fried tiny morsels and found them sweet, tender and juicy--such a delicacy that we attached the next poor shark to come along in a complete reversal of "Jaws."

The Seychelles are a synthesis of every tropical island, a little bit Tahiti, a lot Caribbean. Those who love the Baths of Virgin Gorda would be astonished to find them transplanted to the Indian Ocean and multiplied a hundred fold on several islands. The Vallee de Mai is thought to be the Garden of Eden, as it contains plants found nowhere else on this globe. The most bizarre is the Coco de Mer, with the largest fronds, and the largest nut, a 40lb double coconut which so resembles the female pelvis as to be downright indecent!

In the Indian Ocean we added to our collection of atoll types, plain, raised and 'world's largest' (2), with Desnaches in the Amarantes, a sunken atoll. A ring of shallow reef encloses a cobalt lagoon, with only one thin strip of white sand and coco palms above the water. Aldabra is a "strict nature preserve" administered by the Royal Society of London. Among its many odities, Aldabra is the last refuge, other than the Galapagos, of the giant land tortoise, 120,000 of them to approximately 8,000 in the Galapagos. Here we snorkled Johnny Pass, which Jacques Cousteau calls the world's most beautiful, a living kaleidoscope of corals, fish, and pink and orange sea anemones.

Moroni, Grand Camoro is a mystical city straight out of the Arabian Nights, dazzling whitewashed minarets set against ancient grey stone buildings, narrow alleys and bazaars, crowded with turbaned, white robed

men, and dark women veiled in yards of red, gold and turquoise Arabic cloth. Hot rain in banana leaves, and vendors squatting beside mounds of steaming fruit under an Arab arch. Dhows in season, cloves, vanilla and spices, and the shrieking wail of the Koran shattering the still harbor night.

Madagascar Channel weather: ominous cyclone swells from the south, force six and stuns'ls, oily calms and blue-black clouds dumping out a bagfull of snakes, wreathing, twisting waterspouts that formed and dissipated and formed again, churning the sea and sending Romance fleeing with her Alpha heart beating wildly.

Our arrival in South Africa was a tremendous thrill. Many Robertson's parents waving from the Durban breakwater, were just the first of many friends old and new to make our stay so enjoyable--ex-Port Capt. Jimmy Deacon, Derek Chamberlain, "Mr. Magic," so many more. Carol Roehm and David Baker, both shipmates of many past deepsea voyages, came from Cape Town to join Romance for Christmas and the classic rounding of the Cape of Good Hope.

The 800 mile passage from Durban to Cape Town, around the dread "Cape of Storms" lived up to its reputation as the wildest stretch of ocean in the world voyage. The New Year came in with Romance hove to in a full gale, under double sheeted mainstays'l, and with 3 oil bags out. The little ship rode so well, what could have been a worrysome experience became instead one of pure enchantment. Never before had we seen Romance in such seas! An angry army on the march, grey-green mountains breaking dangerously with a long sustained roar--only to slide harmlessly under the hull as Romance rose to meet them. New Year's Day was one long orgy of picture taking, with many a camera soaked with spray. One more gale--and Cape of Good Hope itself was almost an afterthought. Romance flew by at 6:30 PM doing 4 knots under bare poles, resisting all efforts to slow her for a daylight arrival at Cape Town. Dawn colors tinting Lions Head and Table Mountain, a low fog bank obscuring the harbor, and sure enough, the famous "table cloth" spilling over to foretell a SW gale-- Cape Town is an unforgettable sight from the sea.

Kap Stad--Cape Town, has long been known to sailormen as the "Tavern of the Seas," the friendliest port on any ocean. South Africans sailed their own big barques right through World War 2, carrying vital cargos to Australia and South America. Men who were young seamen then, are now the bulwarks of Cape Town's seafaring community, and Romance roused memories of their own adventures in sail.

A Cape Horners Party had been planned for us even before the world voyage began. Seventeen ex-Cape Horn seamen from twelve ships, nearly all huge 4 mast barques: Lawhill, Passat, Padua, Parma, Herzogin Cecilie, Abraham Rydberg (Skipper's ship,) Commodore, Calbuco, Grief, Danmark, Olivebank, Dumphreyshire, gathered aboard Romance to yarn and reminisce. Among distinguished Captains-- Phil Nankin, Commander of SA's Merchant Naval Academy; renowned marine artist-author Guenther Schulz, and three seafaring women: Mrs. Alice Soderlund and Doris, widow and daughter of Lawhill's long time Master, and the exciting Pam Erikksen, author and world's best known woman Cape Horner. For us, it

was the truly one chance in a lifetime--that overworked phrase--to meet Cape Horners in such numbers (or to meet them at all!) We roamed from group to group, soaking up sea lore, and the still fresh enthusiasm of this spirited, vital group of men and women the big cargo carrying square rigger, long gone from the seas, still mark as their own. Commodore Allan Gregory topped off a night to remember by presenting Romance with the Royal Cape Yacht Club burgee-plaque, a treasured memento of this city of shiplovers.

Oh, yes, and for those interested in other things, there were trips to the spectacular Cape Peninsula, the top of Table Mountain, the lovely old Cape Dutch town of Stellenbach, and through the beautiful Estate Vineyards, which produce South Africa's elegant wines. The countryside is lovely up through orchards and pine clad mountains to breathtaking Fransch Hoek Pass, High Noon and the game parks. Our bus mired in a muddy track and we had to walk out--fortunately not through the lion preserve. Braais (barbeques), parties, dinners and the company of good friends made Cape Town the hardest of all ports to leave.

Romance was down to her last ocean--3,890 beautiful sparkling blue miles across the lonely South Atlantic in 36 days to Rio de Janeiro. With a rollicking fair wind, Romance reeled off 26 straight days under stuns'ls--perhaps a modern record, which may stand for years to come.

Rio, the "River of January" is a city of 8.3 million people, all of whom go to her famous beaches, Copacabana and Ipanema on Sunday. Christ looks down in benediction from Corcovado, on Solings racing beneath the Sugarloaf, and along wide Avenidas of Portuguese mosaics, glittering highrise apartments, parks and multi-lane tunnels through mountain spurs which divide the city. Rio, the most beautiful harbor in the world, looks just the way you picture it. Colorful, exciting, very rich, and very poor.

Romance now beat her way around the fat bulge of South America, Cabo Sao Roque, 1,700 miles to windward against the strong Brazilian current. We were pleased to raise Fernando de Noronha in 21 days, an island of curious volcanic pinnacles and tremendous surf. Our Pitcairn trained boatcrew came to grief, as a towering swell upended the longboat, soaking outboard, passports and cameras. Undaunted, the crew swam the surf, while the boat stood by prudently beyond the surf. Fernando has a neat 18th century cliff-top fort where the surf booms a subterranean roar of compressed air and water--and World War 1 howitzers still oiled and polished awaiting an attack on the town.

With only 2,000 miles to go, we really felt we were homeward bound. Our 6th and last Equator crossing of the voyage, back in the old familiar North Atlantic. Easter Sunday at sea, far from hens, the Bunny managed only jellybeans, a frozen omlet and a braided Easter bread with South African candied fruit. Killer whales about.

Devil's Island--we got only a close look, instead of a visit to this infamous ex-prison colony. Silted sand bars blocked the anchorage and rendered the 'newest' costal charts useless. Muddy brown shallows, strong cur-

rents and steep, breaking seas extended many miles from the coast, and we were glad next day to have blue water under us again.

Soon Romance was in the Caribbean again, and every Trade Wind sea an old friend. Tobago, one last new island for Romance, and in Trinidad, the final celebration: Menu: South African Lobster Bisque in coconut cream, Tahitian raw fish, and Bali turtle, Rio hearts-of-palm salad, All American turkey, Minnesota Gold wild rice stuffing, Trinidad fresh vegetables, cold tropical fruit, West Indian coconut-rum sauce; iced champagne.

April 29th, Romance sailed from Trinidad, bound for--Grenada. The champagne went on the ice at 4 AM, Grenada in sight at dawn, squalls in the mountains and out at sea, a blustery welcome . . . and at exactly 1242½, Pt. Saline came abeam. Romance had crossed her outward track, and the circumnavigation was over!

All over but the shouting, the champagne, and throw-everybody-in-the lagoon. As fine a crew of swashbuckling, tar-blooded, salt-crusted shell-backs as ever sailed a tall ship around the world.

A very strange feeling--there's nowhere to go tomorrow, no more unknown lands beckoning . . . for now . . .

. . . but June 15, 1978, Romance will again be bound out into the vast Pacific in search of new adventures. Until then, we hope to see many old friends this winter in the Virgins.

Summary of Summaries

Total Distance: 33,369 nautical miles. Total Time: 329 days, 07 hours.
Total Av. Speed: 4.222 K. Total ports visited: 66
Longest day's run, Noon-noon: 172 NM, So. Atlantic. Shortest: 54 NM, Pacific.
Longest passage: Cape Town-Rio, 3,890 NM in 36 D, 06 H, Av. Speed 4.47 K.
Shortest passage: Azucar Village-Rio Diablo, 3 NM in 45 min. (San Blas).
Best 6 day's run: 159, 150, 166, 166, 144, 140: Total: 925 NM (Caribbean).
Best measured speed: 11 K, light abeam to light abeam off Cape Elizabeth, So. Africa. Longest stuns'l run: 26 straight days, So. Atlantic Ocean.
Heaviest gale: Indian Ocean, off East London, So. Africa (C. of Good Hope.)
Meals cooked: 27,659. Fish caught: 722½ lbs. Took water 11 times, fuel 6 times in 19 months. Major stoning: St. Thomas, Fiji (shipped from USA), Cape Town. 87 gallons peanut butter consumed during Night Watches!

next Expedition:

SOUTH PACIFIC

