

Dear Anne,

July 11, 1975

We made our landfall on the island of Hiva Oa in the Marquesas after twenty four days of light to moderate sailing. Conditions during the crossing never threatened to be difficult and we were without mechanical or electrical problems. We witnessed a great thunder and electrical storm north of the equator and passed through a few rain squalls. Radio contact was maintained with over twenty other sailing vessels for the entire passage. The most difficult problem was salt accumulating on everything. Salt on my face and neck caused sores early on, however I learned to rinse with fresh water often and the problem went away. We learned to use fresh water sparingly, first to bathe and then the same water used to wash clothing and finally it was used to wash top side surfaces. Bobbi provisioned us very well with food - we ate very well. We traded watch every three or four hours. We simply passed each other going up and down the companionway for 24 days. The ship's cat did well - she slept a great deal but was playful when awake. She never stood watch. We crossed the Equator on a very calm morning and celebrated in the traditional way with sacrifices to King Neptune and shots of rum. Having sailed across the Equator Bobbi, Banditta and I, become what sailors call "shell backs". I don't know the term's origin. South of the Equator we picked up some great wind giving us some 140 nm days under all working sails - time and Oso Bueno seemed to fly.

The Island appeared as it did to the first explorers that discovered it several centuries ago, very tropical and without any sign of man visible from the sea. The Marquesas are very lightly populated with about 6000 people on all of the islands combined. Polynesian people outnumber the French by at least fifty to one - very different then Hawaii. Landfalls always have a special joy about them and I've suspected that the pleasure is proportional to the length of passage. This landfall was an exception. I think we were out so long that we were afraid to get off the boat. Hiva Oa was great but the passage was greater. The harbor at Atuona on Hiva Oa had everything from ice cream bars to cold fresh water showers - all a sailor could wish for. Gradually more and more boats came in and after a few local adventures we decided to push on to Tahuata.

Tahuata was a white sand anchorage of great beauty and we had it to ourselves. Ashore was an abandoned plantation with a variety of tropical fruits that found their way to Oso Bueno's galley. Snorkeling along the north shore was perfect. We were finally intruded upon by another cruiser who made amends by giving about six pounds of freshly caught bluefin tuna. We left the island of Tahuata and sailed to the north shore of Hiva Oa where we enjoyed an evening anchored on a lee shore with 25-30 knots of wind and lots of water on the foredeck.

Baie de Taiohae on Nuka Hiva became our next destination as it is noted for its' safety and tranquility. That it was! We stayed for several days enjoying other cruisers and many shore based adventures. After a circumnavigation of Nuka Hiva with stops at two more of its' bays, we sailed to the island of Ua Pou. We suspect Walt Disney fabricated that island! It is volcanic with needle like spires that soar into the clouds - you expect King

Kong to emerge any moment. We anchored off a small village and spent several days enjoying the very friendly people before our passage to the Dangerous Islands (the Tuamotus).

I'm sitting in the cockpit of Oso Bueno in Papeete harbor, rum & mango juice in hand, watching the sun drop over Moorea just fifteen miles distant. Emy Lou Harris is on the stereo (Satan's Jewelled Crown), and Bobbi is in the galley - tuna blanco with cheap french wine for dinner tonight. We've been here for three weeks now and we're both anxious to slip over to Cook's Bay on Moorea. Papeete has its' pluses & minuses for sure - \$3 for a beer and women I wished I'd known about when I was sixteen. I'll back up to where I left you last - I guess leaving the Marquesis for the Tuamotus, an archipelago of ancient coral atolls.

We left Ua Pou about one and one half months ago and had ourselves a very fast ride into the Tuamoto's, 25-30k winds & moderate seas. Oso Bueno arrived off Kauahi at the most perfect time to enter the pass - one hour after high tide. With Bobbi on the spreaders, we crossed the lagoon and found good anchorage off the village of Tearavero, population one hundred. This place was great! Bobbi gave out suckers to the local children and soon had them chanting her name. A young girl, approximately seven, became my manager, determining which child I carried on my back and which direction I walked. This is a future woman I would wish on no man. She would shout at me in Tuamotan pointing with great emphasis, frustration and anger until my feeble brain understood what my next task was to be. I ditched the little Nazi by running for my dinghy. I kept a sharp lookout the remainder of my time on the atoll. A case of beer cost \$75 U.S. dollars here - coconuts are free.

Kauahi to Fakarava was one day's sail and a very nice one with just enough wind to push Oso Bueno at about six knots with yankee & main out on a broad reach. We were radioed about two hours out from the atoll that a child was experiencing a rapidly progressing knee infection and could Roberta help? The answer was yes and as the winds eased, we motored up to shorten our time of arrival. the child was treated by Roberta and recovered very quickly avoiding a flight to Papeete and winning us a few friends on Fakarava.

This atoll was populated with several hundred people and had a total of 17 miles of road. Everyone has 4-wheel drive monster vehicles and lives on Planter's Cheeze Balls. Nights are occupied with Hulk Hogan and "Kick Boxing" videos - anything violent. Several of the adolescents dress like L.A. gang members. Their behavior is however, very polite and kind. The people were wonderful to us and we were able to see our first native dancing at the local "Mother's Day" festival. The island matriarch was about 80 years old and weighed in at about 300 pounds. Halfway through the evening she physically removed the microphone from the local band leader and began to sing very old Tuamotan songs. She never stopped. Try as they might to recover that mic from her, they could not. Much later, as we boarded Oso Bueno in the anchorage, we could still hear her chanting/singing into the microphone.

Oso Bueno left Fakarava in the company of Cruisaway, a New Zealand vessel we met up with in Puerto Vallarta. We had a slow sail taking advantage of occasional squalls but eventually being becalmed about halfway to Tahiti. The sea and the sky stopped all movement, we could not detect a horizon as evening came on and everything, both sea and sky turned red and purple. We were in a sphere without seams. Morning provided an equal scene and latter some breeze to help us on our way.

Love,

Dore & Billie