

Seashell Scotland Orchids for Aphrodite

AN ENGROSSING THREE-year exploration of the Greek Islands and the south west coast of Turkey made by two live-aboards on a small wooden sailing boat.

Just before the explosion of tourism and the introduction of GPS on yachts, the author, a novice sailor, and her partner and mentor, an experienced skipper, make a bid to escape the impending recession and explore the Aegean world. After renovating vintage yacht *Cappelle* in the wasteland that passed for a boat-yard in northern Greece, they plunge into the new life of live-aboards.



Informative, funny and lyrical by turns, the book describes not only the joys and hazards of sailing the Aegean in all winds and weather, but also the very different people on both sides of the encircled sea. They stravaig from island to island, from the popular to the little known, and to anchorages only a small boat might penetrate. Crossing and recrossing the Aegean Sea they sail from Attica to the Saronic Islands and the Southern Peloponnese;

from the Dodecanese Islands to the coast of Turkey; from the Gulf of Gököva and the peninsulas of Dorian and Hisarönü to the most far flung of all Greek islands, Kastellorizo, and on to Cyprus; and finally from the Halkidiki and the windswept Cyclades to the Ionian via the Mani.

In Rhodes they rescue a mangy scrap of a Greek kitten from the waves, who refuses to leave his sanctuary and matures into Wacky, their loyal and irrepressible Ship's Cat. He adds a great dollop of humour and never misses the boat.

They become accustomed to night sailing for, with many islands some sixty or so miles apart, it is preferable to enter an unfamiliar anchorage at dawn rather than dusk. Their smattering of Greek and Turkish serves them well and they are taken to the hearts of the locals, especially the poorest, who view all live-aboards, rightly or wrongly, as homeless foreign outcasts, impoverished and therefore kindred spirits. Adopting of necessity the simple life, they deal with water shortage, sleep deprivation and occasionally hostile seas. When circumstances allow, they make a point of visiting inland sites, among them Pamukkale's calcified waterfalls, Cappadocia's cave-dwellings and the Metéora, the Monasteries of the Air. If they suffer petty officialdom, discomfort, exploitation, theft and brief hospitalisation, there are firm friendships to be made among the Greeks, the Turks and fellow live-aboards, and idyllic times to enjoy.

The book is illustrated with maps and photographs

"Down by the sea in the bitterest, most wind-blasted spot stood my sugar-coated dream boat, a wooden hull on a botched cradle, its feet in a pond across which skidded chunks of snow. A crazy ladder tied on with string led to the deck. That this scene of arctic desolation was underwritten by an oil drum daubed with the Greek for "Rubbish", summed things up..."

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For a review copy or to arrange an interview with the author who lives in Scotland please contact Amolibros on 01823 401527 or email amolibros@aol.com

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