

AROUND THE WORLD IN 302 DAYS

You don't have to wait until your kids have flown the nest before sailing around the world on a superyacht as the Ryan family proved on board Tenaz.

Words & Photos (unless stated): Judy Ryan



Photo: Claire Marches

Photo: iStock



Almost everyone who's ever owned a boat dreams of cruising around the world on it. Sadly, very few of us actually do. Work, kids, health or other commitments usually put paid to our ambitions. Mike and Judy Ryan were no different with three young daughters and a hectic hotel business to run but in 2007 they decided they had waited long enough to fulfil their dream. At the time their youngest daughter Fiona was just 8 years old, Madeleine was 10 and Justine 12. Mike had come to the end of a major project launching the Ritz Carlton hotel on Grand Cayman and Judy was preparing to move the family household to London. Nine months and a handful of charters later to help determine the size and style of yacht they'd need and they were ready to set sail in their newly acquired 39m sailing yacht Tenaz. With two liveaboard tutors to home school the kids (www.tutorsinternational.com) and a crew of five including their first mate and future Captain Amy Galloway, their nine month adventure was about to begin. This is their remarkable tale gleaned from Judy's own blog:

September 11 – Palma, Mallorca

A final scurry of activity this morning, packing the loose items away, one last shop to pick up some fresh milk and hammocks, then off we went. We are currently still within sight of land, with the high chalky cliffs of Palma going past our port side, but we should shortly be turning around the point and heading to Tunisia.

September 12 – On passage to Tunisia

Woke up this morning to the swirl of water at the porthole. The girls have all settled well, although there have been a few grumbles as they adjust to the regimented life on a boat. They certainly toed the line

with the clean cabins, though, once Captain Tim informed them there would be cabin inspection every morning at 8:45 am. School is taking a little longer for them to adjust to. I suspect that they envisaged flitting around, dipping into some math here and jotting a few things down in a journal between swims. Having to actually sit down and learn French verbs is taking some getting used to.

September 16 – Hammamet, Tunisia

Today I went into Tunis with Corina our chef and dived into the local market. It was fortunate that we only had three shopping bags. Once we had filled them with fresh bread, olives, harissa, dried apricots and figs, cheese and herbs, we could barely get back to the boat.

21 September – On passage to Italy

On watch last night from midnight to 3 am. Luke had been telling me about seeing dolphins at night. Just as he said that, we heard a splash, and dolphins appeared on our beam. For a good ten minutes we watched a pair of them surfing away at our bow, small, dark shapes with light green phosphorescence channelling down their sides. It was magical.

23 September – Capri, Italy

Woke up this morning to the beautiful island of Capri. Breathtaking cliffs, studded with caves, pine trees and terraced gardens woven between houses perched precariously above each other. One can easily imagine Grace Kelly and Robert Montgomery leaning against the balustrade of the marina restaurant, smoking their cigarettes and planning night escapades. Later we all threw ourselves into the azure blue sea, then launched the tender to explore some of the coastline and caves. One cave you could swim right through, ending up on a perfect little pebbly beach,



Photo: Jamie Chandler



Photo: Lou Oghit / Travel / Alamy

Photo: Eye Uniquitous / Alamy



Far left: Mike and Judy Ryan with their three daughters (from left) Madeleine, Fiona 8 and Justine 12.
Middle: Tenaz, the 39m Dubois yacht they bought to cruise around the world.
Second left: The Medina in Tunis.
Left: Husband and wife tutors Jon and Ruth taught everything from music to languages and local culture.
Above: Stocking up on food in the Tunisian market.
Above right: The breathtaking cliffs at Punta del Cannone in Capri, Italy.





Photo: Jeremy Horner/Corbis

29 September – Pompeii Italy

We went to Pompeii today. I was blown away by it. If you closed your eyes you could conjure up an image of an evening in Pompeii with the whole town circling the forum, children running amok, lovers eyeing each other, older couples strolling slowly.

September 30 – Vulcano, Aeolian Islands Italy

Vulcano is fascinating, with its steaming volcano, its black sand beaches and the steaming mud bath. We shed our clothes and waded into the water. I had expected more warmth, but it turned up unexpectedly in little vents at the bottom of the pool. We scuttled around in the water, scooping up the mud from the bottom and washing it over our arms and faces.

October 5 2007 – Corfu, Greece

This evening was the girls' big performance. Every other Friday they have a Regional Module, where they work with the tutors on the geography, history and culture of the country we are in. They had decided last week that they would put on a Greek play, using their knowledge from Pompeii combined with research into Greek life and mythology. They wrote the play, made props, costumes, programmes and music, and practised and practised and practised some more. Amazing!

October 12 – Hydra, Greece

What a ridiculously beautiful, picturesque town, set around a natural harbour with a small breakwall lined with caiques, stone buildings and cafes spilling out. A cargo boat just came in on our starboard side across the water, and arriving on the other side are a dozen or so mules, waiting to take the load from the boat. This really is a vehicle-free island!

October 18 – Istanbul, Turkey

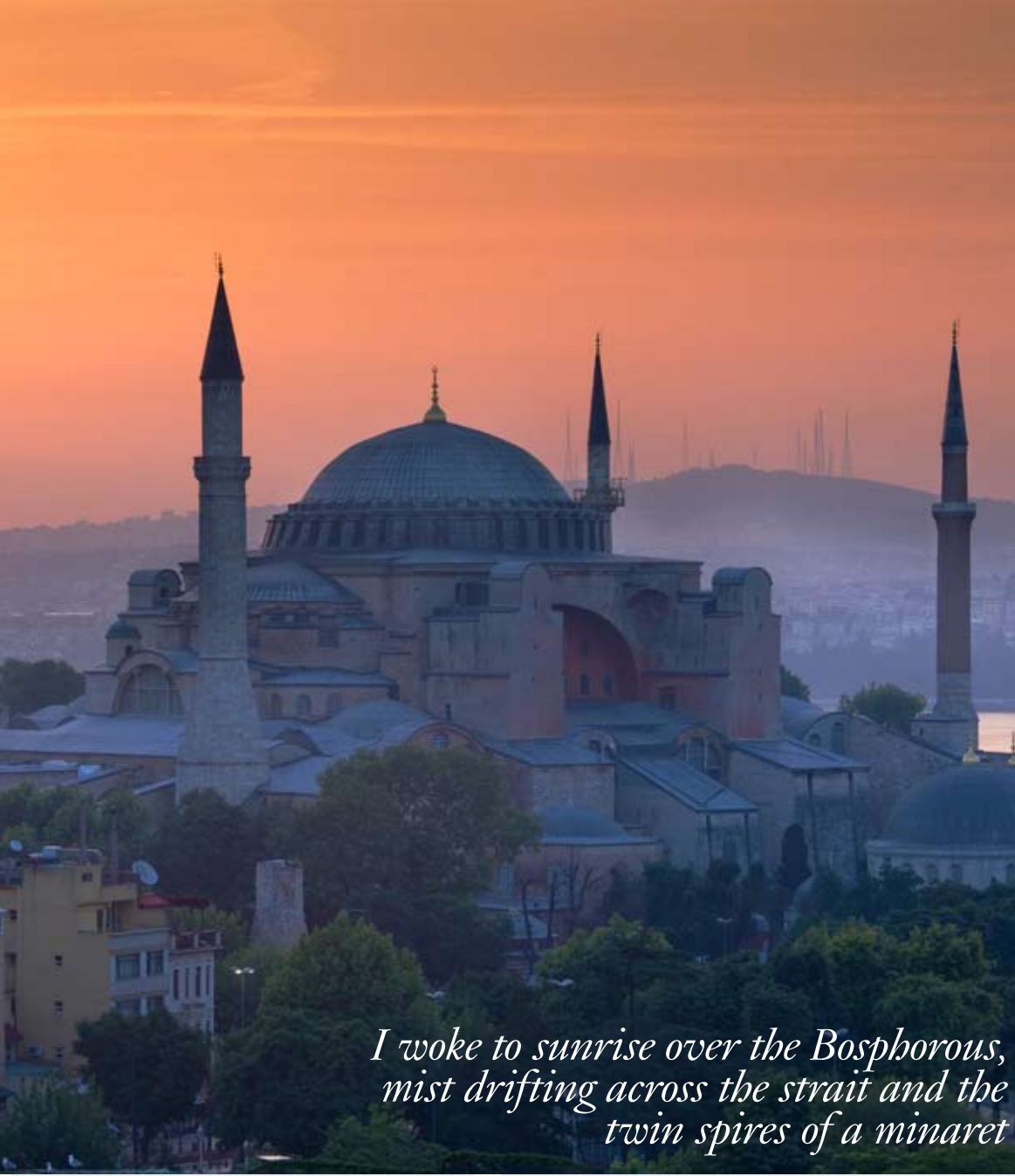
I woke to sunrise over the Bosphorus, mist drifting across the strait and the twin spires of a minaret in the foreground. It was unreal. We feel as though we have crossed a divide here. We are on the cusp of Asia.



CORFU

Athens

RHODES



*I woke to sunrise over the Bosphorous,
mist drifting across the strait and the
twin spires of a minaret*



Photo: Travelpix Ltd / Getty Images

Photo: iStock

- Top left:** Tenaz dominates the tiny harbour at Hydra in the Greek Islands.
- Middle left:** The bustling streets of Corfu town.
- Bottom left:** Justine dries off after a dip in the Ionian sea between lessons.



- Top:** Captain Amy and her crew get to grips with Tenaz's spinaker.
- Middle:** Justine acting out the girls' original Greek tragedy on route to Athens.
- Bottom:** The Acropolis.
- Left:** View of the Ionian islands with their countless deserted bays and beaches.



Hurghada

Top: A delay in transiting the Suez canal allowed the Ryans to explore the pyramids at Giza on camels.
Middle: Who needs Starbucks when you can enjoy an authentic Egyptian coffee at a cafe in Cairo?
Bottom: Fiona enjoys her first exploratory dive in the Red Sea aged 8.
Bottom right: A walled town in the desert near Mount Sinai



Sharm-el-Sheikh

November 7 – *On passage to Egypt*

Speed records were set yesterday on Tenaz. True to form, Michael and Tim took turns getting faster and faster up to 15.9 knots. Then Amy quietly stepped up to the helm and zapped it at 16.5 knots. Women always come through in the end – calmly, quietly with little fuss, they get on with it and do a better job. Go Amy!

November 19 – *Port Said, Giza, Egypt*

Wanting to transit the Suez canal but rather than having another hapless day in Port Said we went off to see the Giza Pyramids. The pyramids themselves are stunning in their magnitude and starkness. They loom upwards, piercing the sky, completely ignoring the hordes milling around at their bases.

November 21 – *Great Bitter Lake, Suez Canal, Egypt*

Streaming southwards, enjoying the strangeness of sailing through the desert. Sand mountains jut up

towards the sky, their folds looking like a rhinoceros' hide, the colours fading from beige to ochre to grey. The moon is almost full, and the mountains absorb the light and send it back with sharp edges and hidden shadows. I wonder if you ever get tired of the beauty of the desert.

November 26 – *Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt*

This was Fiona's first dive. I couldn't get over the image of her, drifting along with her tank and regulator, fins kicking gently, bubbles going up at regular intervals. I could just look at her and marvel that she is eight, and scuba diving very comfortably.

December 7 – *On passage to Djibouti*

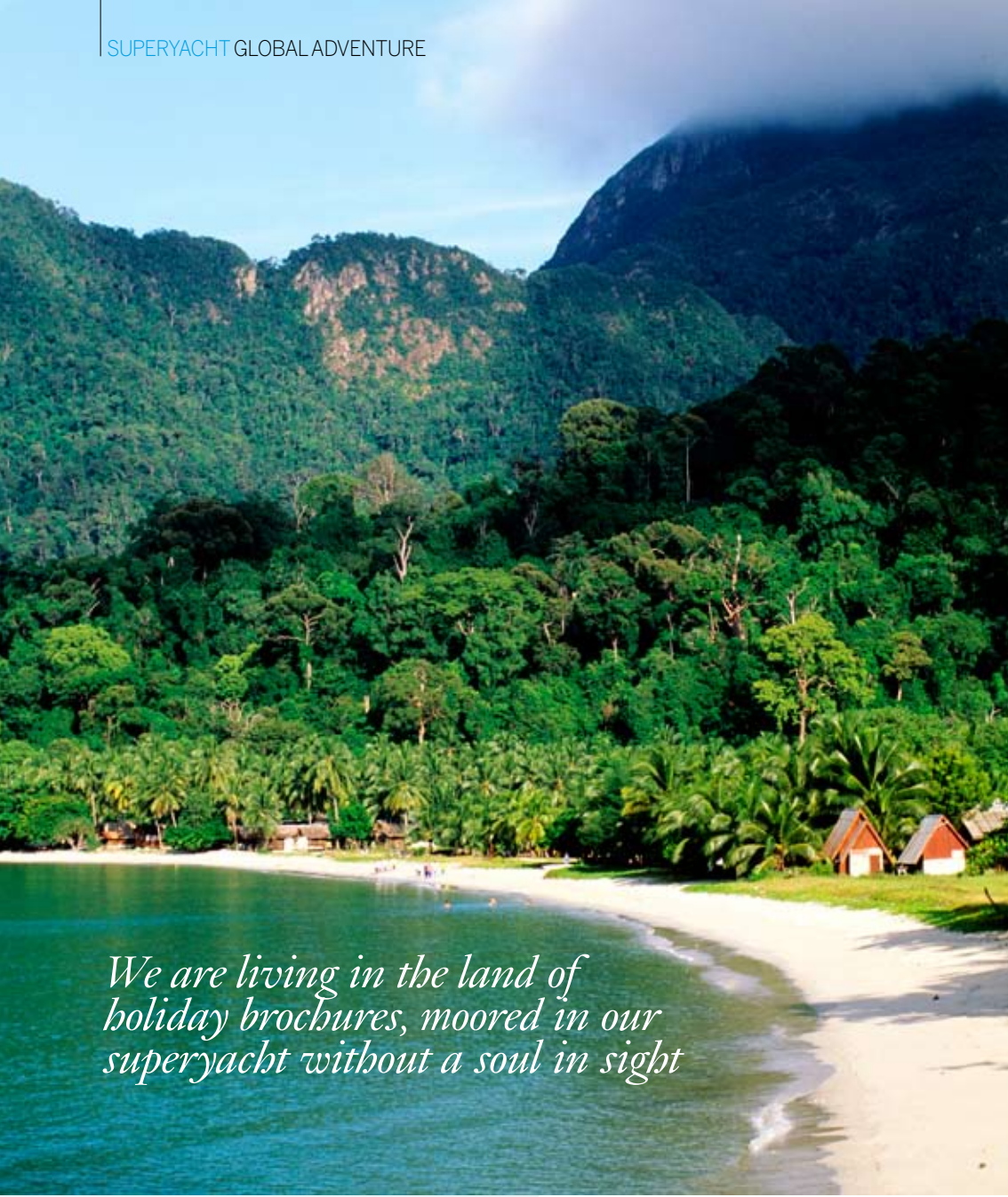
We are prepared for pirates but hoping for the best. So we have our LRAD (Long Range Acoustic Device), which sends a painful noise in the direction you point it. Painful to the point of eardrum-bursting. This was our choice over weapons, as none of us is keen on having

The mountains absorb the light and send it back with sharp edges and hidden shadows. I wonder if you ever get tired of the desert's beauty

Salalah

DJIBOUTI





We are living in the land of holiday brochures, moored in our superyacht without a soul in sight



Photo: iStock



Photo: Hemis / Alamy



Top left: One of the many fabulous bays at Langkwawi island in Malaysia.

Top right: Swimming with elephants in the remote Andaman islands.

Middle: A Komodo dragon whose powerful jaws and poisonous saliva can tear a person to shreds.

Above: The family kept cool at night in the tropics by sleeping on the foredeck.

Left: Michael and Judy toast their 17th wedding anniversary with champagne on a beach in the Maldives.

MALDIVES

December 25 – On passage to the Maldives

We left Oman at 6 pm on Christmas Day and headed straight into some roly, windy, disturbed seas. It was too bad that I couldn't write earlier, as I would have had some choice words about why we were inflicting this pain and discomfort on ourselves voluntarily. Now, however, with the end in sight, the seas settled, and the sun shining, it all seems like a bad dream. The last couple of days have been idyllic, the boat gently moving with the wind on her beam and the swell from the aft port quarter. This was what the brochure had promised!

January 3 – Maldives

Happy New Year! We're living in the land of holiday brochures right now, moored in our super yacht, the awning spread over the fore deck, all our toys – kayak, pico laser, tender – hanging off the stern, a desert island just off our bow, ringed with a coral reef, and resplendent with coconut palms and some kind of fruit-bearing tree. Loads of fish leap and play around the boat, and there isn't a soul in sight.

January 4, – Maldives

What a lovely day we had today, celebrating 17 years of marriage. I was told that my presence would be requested on deck at about 5 pm. The captain, crew and the girls had gone ashore and set up a barbeque area, complete with a table decorated with palms and shells, two lounge chairs covered in cushions, a bottle of champagne and some hors d'oeuvres. We were taken there and left alone for a couple of hours, sipping Champagne, reminiscing about the past and our dreams for the future. What a treat!

January 8 – Dubai

ANDAMAN ISLANDS

En route to London for the girls to take their entry exams for school. It will be a shock for the system, given that we are travelling from the Maldives.

January 23 – Phuket, Thailand

Back to the tropics, and it was rather welcome after two weeks in London. Thailand is a beautiful country, full of palm trees and bougainvillea, smiling people and exotic fishing boats.

February 15 – Outram Island, The Andamans

I lay in the hammock for quite some time after the girls had gone to bed, looking up at the stars, listening to the wind through the nearby mangrove. This year is so surreal that at times I have to remind myself what is going on in the real world. To be plucked out of such a regular life and realize that here I am, swinging in my hammock on the deck of my yacht in the Andamans, with nobody at all in sight, miles and miles from any real civilization. It takes my breath away.

Saturday, March 1, 2008 – Langkawi, Malaysia

There are 99 islands in Langkawi (104 at low tide), of which only two are inhabited. Having cruised past a few of them now, I can understand why. They are rough islands with jagged edges of limestone, smothered in foliage with trees smoothing over the summits. But not the wild, creeping vines and palms of a humid jungle, rather loads of different hardwoods with varying shades of green. Eagles soar overhead, and the occasional longtail boat putters by. It is breathtakingly beautiful.

Friday, April 11, 2008 – At sea, Indonesia

We are in the southern hemisphere at last. We passed the equator last night at 21:54. Today King Neptune came by, accompanied by her helpers. All those who had not yet crossed the Equator on a boat were gathered together on the aft deck while Neptune read out our crimes. They were grave indeed, ranging from Madeleine talking through movies to Charlie washing a load of laundry and turning it yellow. Justine was accused of swinging on all the stainless and leaving her grubby pawprints, while Fiona was guilty of inhabiting Planet Fi and not giving anyone a passport to visit.

Punishments were meted out. Fiona had an egg cracked on her head, Madeleine had to eat "dog food" (aka carrot cake), while Justine also had an egg put under her hat and broken. Noah fared the worst, as he had a strip of hair sheared off the top of his head.

April 13 – On passage to Borneo

This afternoon was like something out of an advert. I sat on the aft seat with icy water in hand reading The History of Medicine. I had a clear sight line down the port side watching the bow of Tenaz going up and down with sea stretching out on all sides, and fluffy clouds dotted in the clear blue sky. Nothing in sight, just the sun on my face and the wind keeping me from melting in the heat. This was one of those moments when I realize how lucky we are to be surging through the Java Sea to Borneo. Life will never be the same again.

April 15 – Kumai, Kalimantan

A gently sputtering river boat pulled alongside about 8:30am. We didn't go far from Tenaz before we turned off up a tributary of the Kumai river. After a couple of hours of cruising, we pulled up to a small jetty perched high above the water. There was a large, male orangutan just off to one side, his face peering through the branches. He just sat in the trees, watching us nonchalantly as he broke off pieces of branch.

May 8, 2008 – Bali, Indonesia

Surf day! The girls went with one instructor, and caught on remarkably quickly. It was so enjoyable to watch the effortlessness with which they glided along the front of a wave, popping up, staying low, and riding it into the beach. They looked so natural.

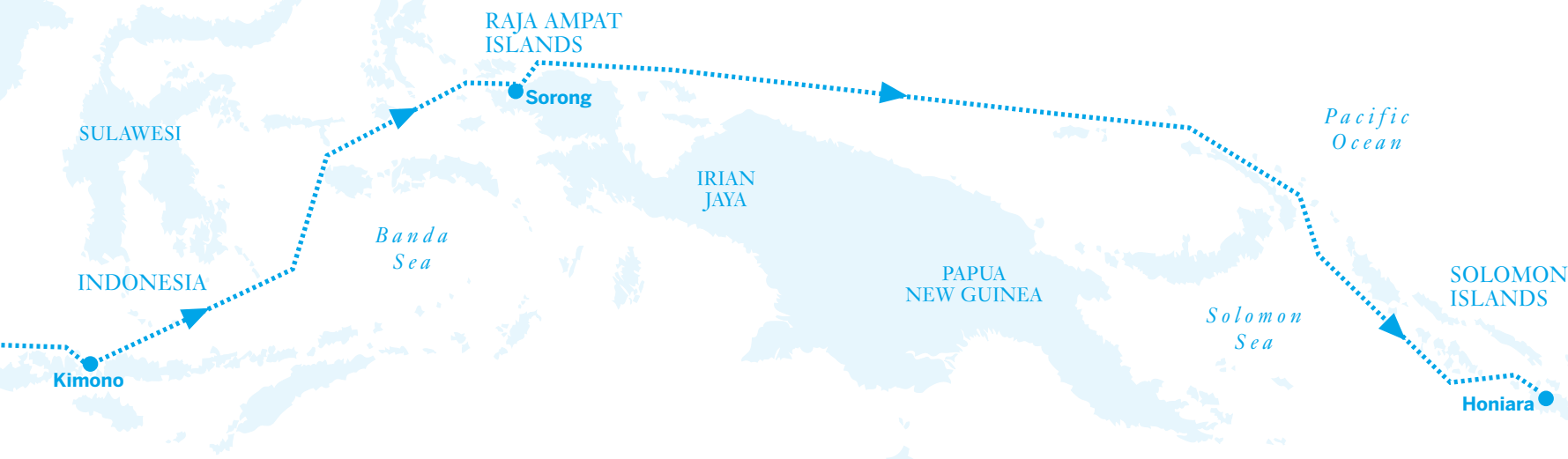
May 12 – Komodo Island, Indonesia

Today we went to the fabled Komodo Dragon island and found three komodos, basking in the sun. They are enormous creatures, looking evily sombolent, their eyes flickering open every now and then to check us out. Although slow and methodical in their motion, they are capable of running quickly, and would take you down and rip you apart before you even realized you were being attacked.



Left: Justine proves that scenes like this really do exist outside the pages of a holiday brochure

JAVA



June 11 – Honiara, Solomon Islands

Today our dive was on a B-17 bomber, which had ditched in 1942. We dropped down onto the unseen wreck, and the plane slowly emerged from the gloom. Only the tail was missing, the rest of it was spread out on the sandy bottom with its two wings stretched out, its four engines lying battered and broken on the sand. The amazing part was seeing the cockpit, with its controls ready and waiting for the never-to-arrive pilot.

Friday, June 20 – Luganville, Vanuatu

Two weeks in Vanuatu, beginning with a dive on the S.S. President Coolidge, a transatlantic luxury liner that was converted to a troop ship for WWII but inadvertently sunk by an American mine in 1942. The visibility wasn't good, which made it quite dark, however that just lent an air of mystery to the whole dive. We still saw piles of jeeps, rifles, tanks and medical supplies.

Saturday, June 28 – Pentecoste Island, Vanuatu

Today was the day that had been dictating our schedule – the last land diving on Pentecoste Island for the season. Men and boys tie vines around their ankles and throw themselves off a 20m tower of sticks, landing head first in the dirt below. The last guy was like the main attraction at a concert. He spent a fair amount of time raising his arms, turning from side to side, looking a like a superstar except that he was naked other than his penis sheath and a few colourful leaves tucked into the back of his belt. Gradually the chanting and stomping got wilder until we could feel its power through the bare earth. As he jumped, the entire crowd held its breath. The fall itself was quite graceful and when he landed, the group ran to pick him up and carry him off, still attached to his vines and still chanting.

Photo: Atlantide Phototravel/Corbis



Gradually the chanting got wilder. As he jumped, the entire crowd held its breath



Above: The land divers of Vanuatu prepare to clamber up a rickety bamboo tower before tying vines round their ankles and hurling themselves off.

Far left: Biology lessons on board as the girls help dissect a fish

Left: Tenaz's garage full of diving gear, skis, fishing rods and water toys ensured there was never a dull moment.

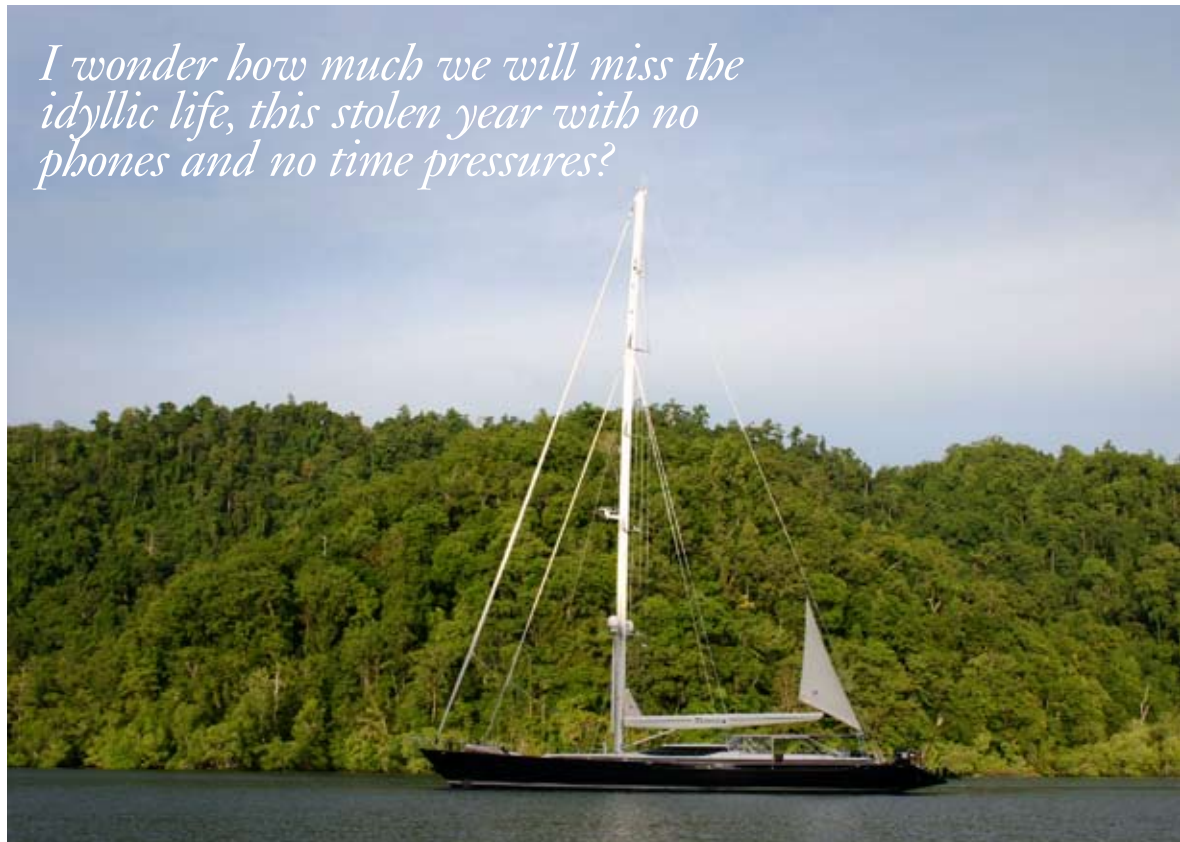


Top: Judy gets into the spirit of things with a traditional Indonesian head dress.

Middle: The girls hang out on Tenaz's massive boom.

Bottom: Michael tries a local canoe for size. He liked it so much he bought it off the local chief and shipped it back home.

Right: Tenaz at anchor off one of the many Indonesian islands they visited.



I wonder how much we will miss the idyllic life, this stolen year with no phones and no time pressures?

June 29 – On passage to Vanuatu

What an unbelievable year this has been. The areas of the world we have been able to visit, the geographical knowledge we have gained, the time we have had to spend together as a family. There's been a lot of learning involved, a lot of growing, and a lot of fun.

Thursday, July 3, 2008 – Efate, Vanuatu

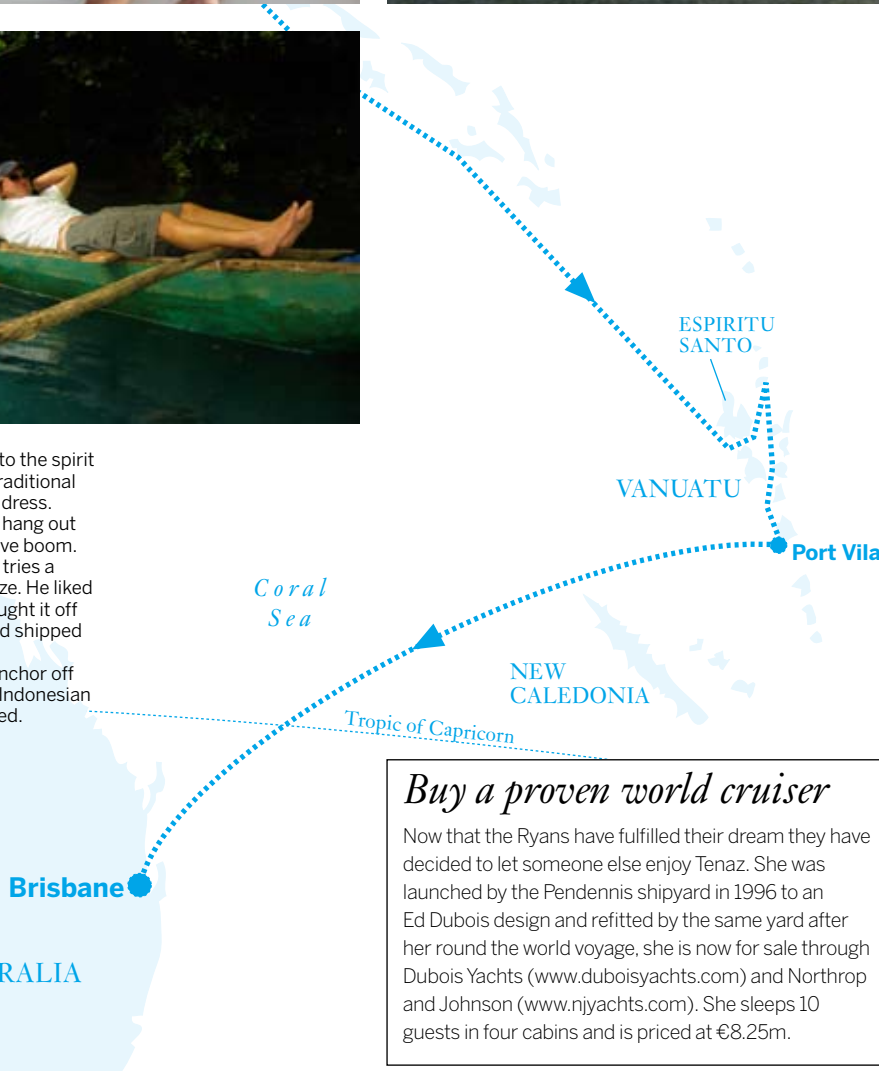
We are so pleased that this trip is ending on such a positive and fun note. The girls ended the afternoon with one of their longed-for activities – tea with Captain Amy up the mast. She is truly a gem and has been such an awesome role model for the girls.

Tuesday, July 8, 2008 – At Sea

Sitting in the cockpit listening to Eric Clapton, the sun has just set behind a bank of grey clouds, the boat is slowly moving up and down with the motion of the waves, it all seems so surreal. I wonder how much we'll miss the idyllic life we have had this year, this stolen year with no phones, no time pressures, lots of time spent listening to each other, enjoying the views, the sea and the clouds. We have all learned a great deal this year, about ourselves and about the world we live in. Having experienced the simple life in the islands of Indonesia and the South Pacific, I won't be able to look the same way at our life full of excess.

Mid July 2008 – Brisbane & Sydney, Australia

We have arrived in Australia and our year of fabulous travel is over. The experience has been above and beyond what we could have imagined, and I don't think anyone on the boat will not be affected by it. The year will certainly stand as a watershed for me, at least, and I can already hear the conversations that are marked by, "Oh that was before Tenaz," or, "Just like when we were on Tenaz."



Buy a proven world cruiser

Now that the Ryans have fulfilled their dream they have decided to let someone else enjoy Tenaz. She was launched by the Pendennis shipyard in 1996 to an Ed Dubois design and refitted by the same yard after her round the world voyage, she is now for sale through Dubois Yachts (www.duboisyachts.com) and Northrop and Johnson (www.njyachts.com). She sleeps 10 guests in four cabins and is priced at €8.25m.