



Going SOFT

Instead of a starvation diet or shivering in polar climes, Don opts for all-out luxury in his forthcoming Pacific Ocean expedition

Life can be simple if you plan it right. Just following a proven path or doing as all the others do will keep things running smooth. Right now, I'm in the Philippines up to my eyeballs with all the dramas of commissioning a new, sophisticated expedition boat in preparation for an eight-month 6000nm voyage across the Pacific.

How do I feel? Well, to be honest, I envy the checkout chicks I see every day during my multiple shopping forays to fill the bilges with food. They go to work each day, nine to five, work in air-conditioning, receive regular pay packets and know exactly what is happening tomorrow. They probably even relax each night at home? Wow!

After weeks of solid boat preparation, we set off last week

on a six-day sea trial, always looking over our shoulder for the next "issue". We returned to port with a bigger work-list than we had months ago.

Problems with alternators, pumps, wind generator, solar panels, desalinator, autopilots, bowthruster, ship's horn, spotlight, GPS compass, diving gear, Walker sailing dingy, outboard motor, main generator, cabin fans, kayak paddles and worst of all, more slime in the fuel. When you carry 8000lt of fuel that is a BIG problem.

Fortunately, the air-con is fine and the crew still happy, even though we were all stung by jellyfish and did not catch one fish!

Now you might ask yourself what is this all about? I do often believe, after all, that you only need a strong hull, rudder, rig and

Left: Sea trials were to find problems and there were plenty, so returning to port with a long list on a new boat is a good thing. Crew had some great training and we will be fit for sea next time out. **Above:** A boat-load of things onboard ICE and a crew who are happy to be a part of "User Pays"! From the left, Jane, Mark, Mellisa and Carrie.

sails for that grand adventure. I have done a bit of that but now I want the extras and toys on my boat and to do that you will pay more than just the purchase price.

There is a lot to be said for go now, go simple, but ICE will soon be "better than new" as they say in the pages of this very magazine, and there is a lot to be said for that, too.

If you buy a boat that is a few years old, with all the bugs ironed out, you may get more of a bargain than you realise. Through all the frustrations and extra dollars I would not have it any other way. I knew this would happen. It always does with any new boat, but I know ICE is a "special" boat.

Toys are big on the list of

accessories for all my expedition boats. I love doing things. Some cruisers are just happy to have tea parties and afternoon get-togethers as they motor along. I seek more.

This is my first real liveaboard trip for many years and I just like to get out there and do things once we get to an anchorage. This expedition (see www.bluetreasure.me) is all about blue sea and sky, warm water, diving, wreck hunting, looking for treasure, surfing, fishing, filming, and generally exploring.

When I looked at the boat at anchor last week, loaded with all the extra "things" on deck, I thought to myself, "Wow, lucky we're not headed to the Southern Ocean, my usual haunt, but for the Pacific." Things are starting to look just fine... once they're all working.

USER PAYS?

I am often asked how I can afford to do some of the things I do. The simple answer is "with difficulty" because it always costs too much.

Living in Antarctica for a year



Eight months away means filling every available space! Chief mate Mellisa (foreground) gave up a 10-year career on megayachts in the Med' to join the crew of ICE.

Some of the *Trade-a-Boat* team of volunteers who answered an add for help, rebuilding 15yo Jessica Watson's (centre) boat *Ella's Pink Lady*, now to be immortalised in the Brisbane Maritime Museum.



required an \$800,000 budget and only \$200,000 came from sponsors. Sailing solo around the world in 1990 cost \$750,000 with 35 per cent from sponsors. To help with funding, the www.taliskerbountyboat.com voyage last year required each of the crew to contribute \$20,000 for the privilege of being starved on ships biscuits and little water for 48 days in a wet open boat.

To find crew for this current expedition I placed an ad on a cruisers forum. It started a major debate.

I did the numbers covering food, fuel, maintenance, wear and tear, insurance, and so on, and it worked out that each crew needed to cover \$2000 a month to realistically pay their way on *ICE*. That then was the deal.

For the eight months, each person would provide \$16,000 into the kitty. For many of the diehard cruising fraternity this was outrageous! They could live on \$15 a day, for everything, so I was going to make a fortune.

Meeting and living with new people is always part of the fun on any expedition. I like to know that new crew are prepared to cover

their real costs of participation for two main reasons. First, I know they really want to be there and have passion for the activity. Second, I am not wealthy enough to pay for someone else's fun.

When you are trying to insure and run a million-dollar boat, loaded with things, across the

MOST OF THE VOLUNTEER WORKERS HELPING JESS REBUILD THE BOAT WERE TRADE-A-BOAT READERS WHO ANSWERED THE ADVERT FOR HELP

Pacific, you spend more than \$15 a day I can assure you.

As I mentioned on the cruisers forum, if I did not want to spend \$16,000 on the crew contribution for *ICE* across the Pacific, I would go buy a small boat on eBay USA and equip it with all the right gear off eBay USA... all for probably less than \$16,000. All I would need then is my food for some real adventure.

The choice is up to the individual. If I were chartering *ICE* (and I am not) it would cost each person onboard more than \$500 a day.

There was no shortage of applicants for the four permanent crew positions. *ICE* now boasts a quality international crew of pirates bound for adventure. Chief mate/engineer is 29yo Mellisa from South Africa, decky/bosun is Mark, 27, from Adelaide, comms/computer specialist is 35yo Carrie from Canada and general hand is 29yo Jane from China. If you want to join me and play with some "things" on *ICE*, there are temporary crew spots available via the website.

PINK LADY FOREVER!

It is exciting news that the Federal Government has purchased Jessica Watson's yacht *Ella's Pink Lady* and given it to the Brisbane Maritime museum.

That boat is a worthy symbol for so many things (most of the volunteer workers helping Jess rebuild the boat were *Trade-a-Boat* readers who answered the advert for help) and will now live on forever, bringing to life an amazing dream. So Cool! 🍷