

Donald M. Street, Jr.



Volume III—Martinique to Trinidad

TEN NEW CHARTS AND A VASTLY EXPANDED SECTION ON
THE EAST COAST OF MARTINIQUE AND TOBAGO.

**Street's Cruising
Guide to the
Eastern Caribbean**

Completely revised and updated through January 1987, Street's guides
comprise the acknowledged Bible on the area by the dean of Caribbean
sailing skippers. Included are complete harbor charts,
sailing directions, currents, customs, yachting facilities, local lore,
history, advice, and personal opinion.

*Street's Cruising Guide to
the Eastern Caribbean,
Volume III—
Martinique to Trinidad*

Books by Donald M. Street, Jr.

A Cruising Guide to the Lesser Antilles (1966, rev. ed. 1974)

A Yachting Guide to the Grenadines (1970)

The Ocean Sailing Yacht, Volume I (1973)

The Ocean Sailing Yacht, Volume II (1978)

Seawise (1979)

Street's Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean (1980) in five volumes

*Street's Cruising Guide to
the Eastern Caribbean,
Volume III—
Martinique to Trinidad*



Donald M. Street, Jr.

*Sketch charts by Morgan B. MacDonald III
and Alan Wilkenson of Imray, Norie, Laurie and Wilson Ltd.
Topographical views by James Mitchell*



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Dedication

The idea for this cruising guide was originally conceived in 1963, and it was only through the hard work, perseverance, courage, and self-sacrifice of my late wife, Marilyn, that the original book got off the ground.

Fortunately for myself and my daughter, Dory, I met Patricia Boucher, now my wife, on the beach in Tyrell Bay. She has presented me with three active sons, yet has had time to help in business, sailing *Iolaire*, and exploring. Although she had hardly sailed before our marriage, she has taken to sailing like a duck to water. Her love of sailing was largely instrumental in my decision to keep *Iolaire* when I was thinking of selling her to reduce expenses.

It is only because of Trich's hard work keeping our various business enterprises going in my absence that I have been able to keep the third love of my life, *Iolaire*.

Iolaire has been my mistress for thirty years; at age eighty-two she is still the type of boat Michael Dufour would appreciate: she is "fast, beautiful, and responsive—like a good-looking woman." She first arrived in the Islands in 1947, remained for a few years, and cruised back to Europe in 1949, from Jamaica to England direct. In 1950, under the ownership of R. H. Somerset, she won her division's R.O.R.C. Season's Points Championship at the age of forty-five, returned to the Islands in 1951, cruised there during the winter of 1951–1952, sailed in the Bermuda Race in 1952, then cruised back to Europe and the Mediterranean. In 1954, she returned to the Islands, where I purchased her in 1957.

In 1975, we celebrated *Iolaire*'s seventieth birthday by cruising to Europe via Bermuda, New London, New York, Boston, Halifax, and then having a fifteen-day passage to Ireland. We cruised on to Cowes, took part in the fiftieth anniversary of the first Fastnet Race, and then raced to La Rochelle, La Trinité, Benodet, and back to the Solent—four races, totaling 1,300 miles, in twenty-one days.

After Calais, we went up the Thames to St. Katherine's Dock in the Pool of London under Tower Bridge, then back down the Thames and up the Colne River in Essex, where we lay alongside the dock in Rowhedge, where *Iolaire* had been built seventy years before. Then to Plymouth, Glandore in Ireland, Madeira, the Canaries, and back across the Atlantic in eighteen and one-half days to Antigua.

We arrived in Antigua seven months and seven days after our departure, having sailed 13,000 miles and raced 1,300 miles, all without an engine, visiting all the places people had said we'd never make except under power.

We decided that *Iolaire* should celebrate her eightieth birthday in 1985 by retiring from round-the-buoy racing. Her swan song in Antigua Week of 1985 was wonderful—third in the cruising division (seventeen boats), first in the boats twenty years old or older.

Then we took *Iolaire* on a 12,000-mile, double trans-Atlantic jaunt. In seven months we visited Bermuda, five of the Azores islands, Ireland, Vigo in Spain, the Salvage Islands and the Madeiran Archipelago, five of the Canary Islands, and three of the Cape Verdian Islands; then we rolled on home in fourteen days and four hours from the Cape Verdes to Antigua—not a record but a good fast passage for a heavy-displacement cruising boat.

Iolaire has nine trans-Atlantic passages under her belt, and I have sailed her a minimum of 120,000 miles; who knows how many miles she has sailed altogether.

There is little of the Caribbean whose waters have not been furrowed by her hull, and, as some of my good friends will point out, few rocks that have not been dented by her keel!

To my three loves—Marilyn, Trich, and *Iolaire*—I dedicate this book.

D.M.S.

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Publisher's Note

D. M. Street, Jr., a veteran Caribbean sailor, is also known as an author and the compiler of Imray-Iolaire charts of that area, and as a worldwide yacht insurance broker who places policies with Lloyd's of London.

Mr. Street also serves as a design consultant on new construction, most notably recently on *Lone Star*, a 54-foot wooden ketch, built by Mashford Brothers of Plymouth, England. He also serves as design consultant on rerigging existing yachts and finding good cruising boats for people who want a proper yacht. His latest project is to do a sailing and seamanship video series with SEA TV.

Street is mainly known as a cruising skipper, but he has raced with success on *Iolaire* and other boats. *Iolaire* has retired from round-the-buoy racing at age 82, but the skipper has not and can be found at the various Caribbean regattas skippering, or sailing as tactician with local knowledge, on other boats.

His contributions to sailing in the Eastern Caribbean consist of his cruising guides and the Imray-Iolaire charts. Thirty-seven Imray-Iolaire charts have replaced roughly 200 French, U.S., British, Dutch, and a few Spanish charts and are all that are needed to cruise the Eastern Caribbean.

As an author, he is prolific. His original *Cruising Guide to the Lesser Antilles* was published in 1966, *A Yachting Guide to the Grenadines* in 1970, and an updated and expanded *Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean* in 1974, with continued expansions and updates in the 1980s. The title of the last is now *Street's Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean*, a five-volume work that covers an arc of islands 1,000 miles long.

He has also written *The Ocean Sailing Yacht*,

Volume I (1973) and Volume II (1978). *Seawise*, a collection of articles, came out in 1976. He is presently at work at completely rewriting Volume I of *Street's Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean* in light of the information obtained on his seven trans-Atlantic passages and hundreds of interviews. The new book will be titled *Street's Trans-Atlantic Crossing Guide and Introduction to the Eastern Caribbean*. He is also working on a series of books, *Street on Sails*, *Street on Seamanship and Storms*, and *Street on Small Boat Handling*, a collection of updated articles that have appeared over the last twenty years; and *Iolaire and I*, the story of *Iolaire's* eighty-two years and Street's lifetime of adventures and misadventures in the yachting world.

He regularly writes for *Sail*, *Cruising World*, *Sailing*, *Wooden Boat*, *Tell-Tale Compass*, *Yachting*, *Yachting World*, and *Yachting Monthly*, and for publications in Sweden, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand.

For well over twenty years, Street owned land and houses in Grenada, but unfortunately the houses are no more. They were taken over by the People's Revolutionary Army in May 1979 as part of its military base. The houses did not survive the U.S. liberation in 1983, when helicopter gunships destroyed both of them. He hopes someday to rebuild on the old site. During the winter he crisscrosses the Caribbean. In the spring, he heads south to lay up *Iolaire* in Grenada, south of the hurricane belt. In July and August, he can usually be found in Glandore, Ireland, on the family Dragon, *Gypsy*, either skippering her or trimming sheets for his sons.

Preface

When I first bought *Iolaire* in 1957, I found on board what was then the only straight cruising guide to the Lesser Antilles. This was a mimeographed publication produced by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and edited by a Lieutenant Commander Buzby. Carleton Mitchell's *Islands to Windward*, published in 1948, was generally regarded as a good cruising yarn rather than as a cruising guide, but it did have some basic cruising information in the back of the book. Unfortunately, by the time I started sailing outside the Virgin Islands in 1959, *Islands to Windward* was out of print. In 1960, *The Virgin Islands* by George Teeple Eggleston was published, the result of a one-month cruise aboard Eunice Boardman's 55-foot ketch *Renegade*.

In 1961, Percy Chubb III, after a cruise through the Lesser Antilles, produced a small, privately printed *Guide to the Windward and Leeward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean*. In 1964, Linton Rigg authored *The Alluring Antilles*, a combination guide and cruising adventure of a half-year sail from Puerto Rico to Trinidad aboard the 45-foot ketch *Island Belle*.

These seemed to suffice for the small amount of Caribbean cruising done in those days, but starting in the early sixties the charter-boat business suddenly began to expand, and many new boats arrived. It was Frank Burke of Island Yachts who inspired my entry into cruising-guide writing. Figuring that too many of the charter parties were missing the best spots in the Virgins because their skippers had not been in the Islands long enough to get to know them intimately, he asked me to write a cruising guide to the Virgin Islands. This was done, and he had it privately printed. I received the magnificent sum of \$100—which to me happened to be a veritable fortune in those days.

This small volume later formed the basis of the Virgin Islands section of my *Cruising Guide to the Lesser Antilles*, published in 1966, after I showed it to Phelps Platt of Dodd, Mead, who encouraged

me to expand it to cover the whole island chain. This was followed two years later by Tom Kelly and Jack van Ost's *Yachtsman's Guide to the Virgin Islands*, and then by Al Forbes's excellent *Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands*, notable in that, unlike many guide authors, he had sailed the area for many years before he wrote his.

In 1970, following eight years of cruising the Grenadines, I produced *A Yachting Guide to the Grenadines*, after which, in 1973, came Julius M. Wilensky's *Yachtsman's Guide to the Windward Islands*, which covered largely the same territory as mine. Also in 1973, Gordon C. Ayer produced an interesting small guide covering an island group which had never been detailed before—namely, the Passage Islands.

If, in all this, one guide is found to read surprisingly like another, I ask only that you refer back to my original works to see who said what first. If nothing else, it's a matter of pride.

In *Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean* I have tried to include all the information I have gleaned in nearly twenty-nine years of cruising these islands. I have drawn not only from my own experiences, but, as you can see from the accompanying Acknowledgments, also from the experiences of old friends who are, in addition, good sailors. Thus I feel I have described probably every cove in the Eastern Caribbean where one could possibly think of anchoring.

If you find one I may have missed, please let me know. I boldly asserted in my 1966 guide that the book would never become dated because rocks don't move. Little did I realize how eagerly island governments would actually start moving them, along with creating new islands, making islands into peninsulas, building low bridges, and so forth, as the development of the Eastern Caribbean boomed. Further, any guide is destined to go out of date simply because the idyllic uninhabited spot of one year becomes a thriving hotel and cabaña settlement the next. Indeed, one of my readers

lately took me to task because he was using my original guide and expected to anchor off an island described therein as uninhabited. As he rounded between Pinese and Mopion, he was greeted by a brand-new hotel ablaze with celebration, and counted no fewer than forty-five boats moored in the lee of Petit St. Vincent! Please . . . don't blame me.

It is impossible for anyone to say he knows the Eastern Caribbean perfectly; after twenty-nine years I was still discovering new little anchorages. But the time came to look to new fields.

At various times, Venezuelan yachtsmen have extolled the virtues of Venezuela and the offshore islands. I originally went to Venezuela to give a slide lecture to a yacht club and to take part in a race. I then took *Iolaire* to eastern Venezuela for six weeks and later visited western Venezuela on *Boomerang*. There followed a month's cruise in 1978 and a two-week cruise in 1979. Certainly, I have not seen enough to write definitive cruising directions to Venezuela, Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, and this section is not covered as well as are the Lesser Antilles.

However, with the aid of Venezuelan yachtsmen Rolly Edmonds, Dr. Camejo of *Caribaña*, Pedro Gluecksman of *Bayola*, and Otto Castillo, port

captain of Sinclair Oil, and yachtsmen from the Eastern Caribbean, including Paul "Pog" Squire, Gordon Stout of *Shango*, Hank Strauss of *Doki*, Richard and Barbara Weinman of *Narania*, Augie Holland of *Taurus*, and Mike Jarrold of *Lily Maid*, I think we have among us put together an acceptable and fairly complete guide to the Venezuelan coast, its offshore islands, Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. Any additions and corrections offered by cruising yachtsmen will be greatly appreciated. Send information to D. M. Street, Jr., c/o Mr. David Payne, Cayzer Steel Bowater, 32/38 Duke's Place, London EC3 7LX, England.

During the summer of 1985, *Iolaire* visited and explored the Azores, the Madeiran Archipelago, the Canaries, and the Cape Verde Islands. The information gained will be included in Volume I of *Street's Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean*—under a new title, *Street's Trans-Atlantic Crossing Guide and Introduction to the Eastern Caribbean*. Now I feel my exploring days are over—the "old Tiger" has retired—and it is time that one of the young "Tigers" (daughter Dory or one of her three brothers, Donald, Richard, or Mark) take over *Iolaire* and explore new fields.

D.M.S.

Foreword

The Lesser Antilles stretch southward from St. Thomas to Grenada in a great crescent 500 miles long, offering the yachtsman a cruising ground of unequaled variety. Some of the islands are flat, dry, and windswept, their shores girded by coral reefs and their land barely arable. Others are reefless, jagged peaks jutting abruptly up from the sea, where they block the ever-present trades and gather rain clouds the year round; water cascades in gullies down their sides and their slopes are well cultivated. The character of their peoples likewise varies—from the charming and unspoiled although desperately poor Dominican, to the comparatively well-to-do and worldly wise Frenchmen of Martinique.

Unless you have a whole season at your disposal, it is foolhardy to attempt all the islands in a single cruise. Not only will you not make it, but you will fail to enjoy the slow, natural, and relaxed pace of life in these tropical islands. The first measure of a successful cruise is how soon your carefully worked out timetable gets thrown away.

Rule number 1 in the Antilles is: Don't make any plan more than a day in advance since you will frequently—in fact constantly—alter your intentions to suit the pace and attractions of the locale.

Rule number 2: Each night before turning in, read the sailing directions covering your passage to the next area, and study the detailed description of your intended anchorage. In some cases this will seriously affect the next day's plans—particularly the hour of departure. Remember, for instance, that when you're on the east coast of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Antigua, and Grenada, you must be in the anchorage by 1400 hours. Otherwise the sun is in the west, directly in your line of vision, making it impossible to see any reefs until it is too late.

Rule number 3: Do not enter a strange harbor at night if at all possible.

Rule number 4: No chart can be absolutely

accurate. In the Caribbean, learning how to read the water is as important as knowing how to read a chart. Eyeball navigation is the key to safe and satisfying sailing in the Islands.

Whether Puerto Rico to the north or Trinidad and Tobago to the south should be considered part of the Lesser Antilles is a question for the gazetteers to squabble over. For the purposes of this book, we welcome all three into the fellowship of proximity. Taken as such, the Antilles conveniently break up into a number of areas suitable for two- or three-week cruises. The start and end point of a cruise will be governed by your own tastes and the availability of air transportation. The air services into San Juan and Trinidad are excellent, for example; but neither of these places is a particularly good spot to begin a cruise. San Juan is dead to leeward of the rest of the chain—and who wants to start out with a hard slog into the wind against a strong current? Trinidad is not much better, unless you're going to Venezuela.

But air transportation throughout the area has been improving over the years. Direct international flights now also arrive at Antigua, St. Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Barbados, Grenada, and Maiquetía, the airport for Caracas. Favorite starting points for cruises are St. Thomas, Tortola, Grenada, and Barcelona/Puerto la Cruz in the El Morro area of Venezuela.

To get to most of these places, you must often rely on secondary, local airlines with shuttle services. These vary from being fairly good from San Juan to St. Thomas and Tortola and the Venezuelan airlines, to downright disastrous with LIAT. LIAT's aircraft, pilots, and maintenance personnel are first class, but the office staff has developed the art of losing baggage and double-booking reservations to an exact science. There are various take-offs as to what LIAT actually means—some people claim that LIAT is an abbreviation for "Leave Islands Any Time," while others insist that LIAT

really stands for "Luggage In Another Terminal." Still, it's all part of the adventure of a Caribbean cruise.

Which starting point you choose will say something of your tastes in cruising. If you prefer gunkholing and short jaunts between many little islands only a few miles apart, if you like snorkeling and little in the way of civilization, then it is the Virgins or the Grenadines for you. But you'd best hurry down because real-estate developers and other sailors are fast filling them up.

For those of you who want to give boat and crew a good tuning up for offshore racing, set out from St. Thomas up through the Virgins, then work your way across the Anegada Passage to St. Martin or Anguilla, and finish with a final leg up to Antigua. In doing so, you will gain a fair sampling of island diversity and of French, Dutch, and English colonial temperaments. The Anegada Passage is a nice, hard drive to windward, which should uncover any weak points in rig or crew.

Those interested exclusively in the pursuits of diving, treasure hunting, or snorkeling should steer for the low-lying islands of Anguilla, Barbuda, Anegada, Los Roques, and Las Aves. The reefs in these areas are vast and inexhaustible. Fortune hunters still flock to these islands, where innumerable off-lying wrecks date back hundreds of years, some presumably undiscovered. Consult the source books—but remember, these islands are low, flat, encircled by reefs, and hard to spot. The charts are based on surveys done mainly in the middle of the last century. Coral grows, and hurricanes have moved through the area a number of times; earthquakes have shaken the islands, and sand bars have moved. In short, you must be extremely careful. Do not let your boat become the next curiosity for inquisitive divers!

Saba and Statia (Sint Eustatius) are two attractive islands that are too seldom visited. Their anchorages are exceptionally bad, but when the conditions are right, they certainly are worth a go. Their close neighbors, St. Kitts and Nevis, are of historical interest, figuring as they do in the lives of Alexander Hamilton, Admirals Nelson and Rodney, and Generals Shirley and Frazer. St. Kitts is well worth a visit to see the beautiful restoration of the old fortress of Brimstone Hill. A number of the old plantation great houses have been restored and opened up as hotels and restaurants. Renting a car to tour St. Kitts is a good scheme.

If you like longer sails, the bright lights of civilization, and a variety of languages and customs, the middle islands from Antigua to St. Lucia

should keep you happy. The French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique afford the finest cuisine in the Antilles. The local merchants offer an excellent selection of cheeses and meats from Europe and the best wines available outside France. The tourist shops are a woman's delight, and the perfumes are at about half the Stateside price. Martinique offers a fabulous collection of bikinis, but the prices have gone up so much in France that the savings for an American are no longer substantial. Rough rule of thumb: The smaller the bikini, the more expensive it is.

The string arrived: its size—minuscule; its price—astronomical. One solution frequently used by the always-economical French women was to buy only half the string at half the price. Others felt that even that was too expensive and sailed *au naturel*—not really showing off, just economizing!

The universal pastime of watching members of the opposite sex is alive and well in Martinique, and the visiting seafarer soon gets into the spirit of things. This pastime can be enjoyed in many ways, but the two most popular methods are either strolling around the streets of Fort-de-France or rowing around in Anse Mitan (which today is likely to have forty or fifty boats in it) and pretending to admire the boats while admiring the crews. An added bonus here is that at Anse Mitan, going topless seems to be *de rigueur*.

The women in Fort-de-France may not be the prettiest in the Caribbean, but they are far and away the most stylish. And the men, sitting at the sidewalk cafés sipping their coffee or *punch vieux*, cut figures worthy of the *boulevardiers* of Paris. But newcomers, take note: The punch will make a strong man weak-kneed and the coffee tastes not unlike battery acid.

The French and their chicory-laced coffee have distressed visiting foreigners for many decades. A story is told of Count von Bismarck touring France after the Franco-Prussian War. He was ending a fine meal in a country inn and called for the maître d'hôtel and offered to buy all his chicory at 10 percent over the market price. The maître d' agreed and sold him what he claimed to be all he had. Again the count offered to buy any remaining chicory, this time at 50 percent over the market price; the maître d' produced a second quantity of the plant. For a third time the count offered to buy any that remained—at *twice* the market price—and the maître d' surrendered a small amount, assuring him that this was indeed all that remained. Satisfied at last, the count concluded, "Very well, now you may prepare me a cup of coffee!"

H.M.S. *Diamond Rock*, off the south coast of Martinique, is the basis for many stories in folklore, most of them inaccurate. The true story of Diamond Rock is contained in *Her Majesty's Sloop of War Diamond Rock*, by Stuart and Eggleston.

Dominica is for the adventurous. A ride into the mountains by Jeep and horseback will take you to the last settlement of the Carib peoples. Here the natives fashion the distinctive Carib canoes that are also seen in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia. With nothing but a flour sack for a sail and a paddle as a rudder, the islanders set out in these boats against the wind to fish in the open Atlantic. Not an easy way to earn a living. Because of various unpleasant incidents in the early eighties, Portsmouth in Dominica came to be avoided by many yachtsmen; but I hope that Mrs. Charles, head of the country's new government, will straighten out the difficulties and make Portsmouth once again a high-point of Caribbean cruising.

St. Lucia provides some superb anchorages at Pigeon Island, Marigot, and Vieux Fort, and the truly unbelievable one beneath the Pitons at Soufrière. The volcano and sulfur baths are an impressive spectacle, and it is well worth the expense to explore the island by car or Jeep, an adventure vividly recounted by George Eggleston in *Orchids in a Calabash Tree*.

St. Vincent, just north of the Grenadines, is a high, lush island richly and diversely cultivated. The island has an intriguing history, highlighted by the almost continual warfare among French, English, and Caribs that lasted from 1762 until 1796, when the Caribs were expelled to Central America.

Bequia is the home of the fisherman and whaler, an island where any sailor can explore, relax, and "gam" for days on end. The harbor is beautiful; life is relaxed.

After cruising the entire Caribbean and getting to know all the islands intimately, many experienced yachtsmen declare Grenada to be the "loveliest of islands." The highlands produce enough rain to allow the farmers to grow a large quantity of fresh fruit and vegetables, but the south coast is dry enough to allow the yachtsman to live and work on his boat. The island also has a dozen different harbors, providing at least sixty separate anchorages. Most of these harbors are only short, one- or two-hour sails from each other.

Grenada, with its excellent harbor at St. George's, was once the yachting capital of the Southern Caribbean. It suffered badly at the hands of its politicians for many years, and is only now begin-

ning to recover, since the U.S. liberation of 1983 gave capitalism another chance there. I'm sure the "Spice Island" will soon be able to provide the necessary yachting facilities to match its beautiful natural offerings.

Barbados is relatively remote and seldom visited by yachts except those that are coming downwind from Europe. If your plane stops there en route to another island, arrange for a layover of a day or two. It is undoubtedly the best-run island in the entire Caribbean. Everything is clean and neat (by West Indian standards); the people are charming and speak in the most wonderful accent. They are solicitous and helpful to visitors. The old carenage in Bridgetown should not be missed, nor should the screw-lift dock.

It is a shame that Tobago is seldom visited by yachtsmen. It is dead to windward of Trinidad, and from Grenada it is 90 miles hard on the port tack. Even if you manage to lay the rhumb line from Grenada, it will be a long slog, hard on the wind. Current and sea will drive you off to the west. It is fairly inaccessible except from Barbados, from which it is an easy reach southwestward.

The American and British Virgin Islands have been laboriously described in the various tourist guides, but whatever the evaluation of shoreside life, a sailor can pass a very pleasant month cruising this area.

Throughout the Caribbean, the character of the various island peoples is apt to vary broadly within a relatively small area. Even among formerly British Islands, each has its own peculiar flavor, its own outlook and accent. (In fact, natives are known to complain that they can't understand the English spoken on neighboring islands.) For the most part, the people are quiet and law-abiding. The racially inspired violence that periodically has troubled St. Croix and St. Thomas has been far less a problem in the islands farther south.

As the years go by, the Eastern Caribbean becomes more crowded; hence, yachtsmen are beginning to head west to Venezuela. In the fifties and sixties, cruising in Venezuela was looked on as a dangerous occupation—not because of unfriendliness to yachtsmen, but because Castro was smuggling guerrillas ashore in small fishing boats. The Guardia Nacional and the navy were frequently guilty of shooting first and asking questions later, with the result that a number of boats were ventilated by Venezuelan government agencies. All this is now a thing of the past; although you may have to fill out a lot of forms and papers, everyone is extremely friendly and, to the

best of my knowledge, there have been no nasty incidents involving yachts in Venezuela for many years.

Venezuela is, of course, totally different from the rest of the Eastern Caribbean. The people and language are Spanish. The off-lying islands provide some of the finest diving in the Eastern Caribbean, have not been fished out, and are generally uninhabited.

Yachting is only just beginning to make itself felt in Venezuela, and if you put your mind to it, with the exception of the large marinas in the areas of El Morro, Caracas, Tucacas, and Carenero, you can cruise about to your heart's content and see no other yachts except during weekends.

One cruising technique used by some yachts is to arrive at the marina on Friday night as the Venezuelans are all departing and berths are available, stay for the weekend, sightseeing, etc., on Saturday, have a night out on the town Saturday night, have a late sleep Sunday morning, and depart Sunday afternoon prior to the arrival of the returning Venezuelan yachts.

Unfortunately, the great welcome that the Venezuelan private clubs used to give visiting yachtsmen has cooled. As more and more sailors go to Venezuela to escape the hurricane season, the behavior of some has been such that the door has been slammed shut against the rest of us in most private Venezuelan clubs. If you know a Venezuelan yachtsman, write to him ahead of time and he can probably get the door opened specifically for you.

Los Roques, an area of 355 square miles, is almost as large as the American and British Virgin Islands with at least 50 percent of it unsurveyed. This does not mean that it is an area you cannot sail. Venezuelan and a few American yachtsmen (like Gordon Stout) have crisscrossed and spent as long as a week cruising this wonderful place. This is an area that a bare-boat organization should expand into. The boats could be based at Los Roques. Air communication to Maiquetía (Caracas's airport) is excellent from all over the world. It is only a thirty-minute shuttle flight from Los Roques, thus putting the charterer on board his boat in a very short time. Supplies could be shuttled back and forth from La Guaira via the ever-present small diesel-powered Venezuelan fishing boats.

The bare boats would probably have to be specially designed with a very shallow draft. The Hereschoff Meadow Lark draws only 18 inches with the leeboards up; coupled with a Freedom 40

rig, it would be ideal. It will be interesting to see what develops here in years to come.

Venezuela is an area of contrasts. The easternmost tip of the Peninsula of Paria rises 5,000 feet in the air with vertical slopes spilling into the Caribbean on one side and into the Gulf of Paria on the other. From the Gulf of Paria one can visit the mouth of the Orinoco River and Angel Falls, take trips into the jungle, and see unbelievable wildlife directly from the boat.

The north coast of Venezuela, as one progresses westward, begins with heavy jungle which tapers out to brush and ends up finally in Laguna de Obispos. In the Gulf of Cariaco one finds this fantastic harbor—the scenery ashore is like a lunar landscape. It gives the impression that it cannot have rained there in the past twenty years!

As one continues westward, the mountains of Venezuela are always close to the coastline and always barren. The cities are exploding rather than simply growing. Side by side are sophisticated new marinas and small fishing villages. Offshore are low, deserted reefs and uninhabited islands. After Puerto Cabello, most cruisers jump out to Bonaire, Aruba, and Curaçao.

Bonaire is low, flat, and sparsely populated. Its shores rise so steeply from the sea bottom that it is practically impossible to anchor in its lee. The anchorage problem has been solved by the new marina, which has slips and a 100-ton syncrolift dock; adequate supplies—fresh, frozen, and canned—are available. The people are very friendly. Bonaire has some of the best diving in the world, with excellent support facilities right at hand.

If you want to connect up with the outside world, go to Curaçao, with its excellent air communications and first-class hotels. Curaçao, too, has all kinds of supplies and excellent harbors.

Boats going westward usually skip Aruba, but it is a popular place for boats fighting their way eastward from Panama and the San Blas islands. This trip is a long slog to windward, and in years gone by yachts frequently stopped at Cartagena Santa Marta, or anchored behind Cabo de la Vela. However, because of drug trafficking, no yacht these days should even think of approaching the Colombian coast, much less anchoring offshore. Thus, even Aruba, basically a low, flat island covered with oil refineries, looks like heaven after a week or so of slamming into the heavy trade winds and westerly current.

We hope that with the aid of these books you will enjoy the Islands and Venezuelan coast as much as I have for some two decades. Anyone

contemplating a cruise aboard a charter boat is well advised to read the supplementary chapters, which will give you much background information. They not only will explain to you why perhaps the charter skipper looks tired (he has spent the last two days fixing his generator under sail while he deadheads to pick you up), but you will have a better idea of what to expect upon your arrival in the Islands. A host of important tips and facts that are not included in the average tourist or charter-boat broker's brochure will, I trust, be found in this book. And needless to say, anyone planning to bring his boat to the Islands should read the whole book carefully with pencil in hand to make notes on what is applicable.

It should be noted that much basic information for the Eastern Caribbean is found in Volume I of *Street's Cruising Guide to the Eastern Caribbean*. That book serves as a companion volume to whatever other volume you are using. Volume I also gives you an overall picture of the Islands and allows you to better choose what area you plan to sail; it also has a very important chapter on Wind, Weather, and Tide.

One caution in particular: In May, June, and July, the Caribbean is usually twelve to eighteen inches lower than it is in the winter. Thus, at the time of a low-water spring tide in those months, the water is a full three feet lower than it is at high-water spring tide in the winter. Although the Imray-Iolaire charts' soundings are based on the

lowest-level datum, not all charts or local knowledge take the difference into account. If you have any doubt about your situation, take soundings before you venture into questionable waters.

To repeat, "Sailing Directions" is probably the most important chapter, one that should be read and studied. It should be consulted regularly before finalizing the day's plans. While the navigational features and anchorages of individual islands are described in the chapter concerned with that island, the routes *between* the islands are described in the sailing directions—so be sure to consult them each day.

As an addendum to this, some advice to readers who operate bare-boat charter fleets: Study the book carefully, make your judgments, and mark on the sketch charts of each boat's copy the anchorages you want your charters to avoid.

Finally, be cautious. Practically every place in the Eastern Caribbean where a yacht can anchor has been described or at least mentioned, but not all are easy to enter. Many of these anchorages can be used only in good weather and perfect visibility. Besides, some boats are handier than others, and some sailors are better than others. Thus you must evaluate each anchorage for yourself before entering. The time of day, the weather, your abilities, the weatherliness of your boat—all influence the final decision.

Fair sailing to all.

D.M.S.

Acknowledgments

Yachtsmen who cruise the Caribbean should be thankful to Phelps Platt of Dodd, Mead, who saw my original draft of what was then going to be a privately printed guide to the Virgin Islands and liked it enough to encourage me to write a complete guide to the other islands. Yachtsmen should also thank Bernard Goldhirsch of United Marine Publishers, founder of *Sail* magazine, who did the 1974 updated and expanded cruising guide.

Thanks are now due to Eric Swenson of W. W. Norton and Company, who not only agreed to publish a completely updated guide, but also agreed that it should be expanded to include Venezuela, its off-lying islands, and Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, plus tremendously enlarged sections on "Getting There" and "Leaving." The guide is now so big that we have produced it in five volumes.

I must also thank the many yachtsmen who have helped me with valuable information. Augie Holland (the only person I know who cruises in a genuine Block Island Cow Horn), Ross Norgrove of *White Squall II*, and Carl Powell of *Terciel* all deserve a special vote of thanks for helping me update the Virgin Islands section. Jon Repke of Power Products, a refrigeration expert, electrician, mechanic, sailor, and pilot, solved many of the mysteries of St. Martin/St. Barthélemy/Anguilla by spending the better part of a day flying me through this area. Carl Kaushold supplied an excellent chart and information on Salt River. Ray Smith of Grenada was most helpful in his suggestions on tides and weather patterns in the Caribbean, and in compiling the list of radio stations and radio beacons. His brother, Ron, solved the mystery of the whereabouts of Tara Island, on the south coast of Grenada, which is improperly marked on the chart. Carl Amour of the Anchorage Hotel solved the great mystery of the rocks off Scotts Head, Dominica. Dr. Jack Sheppard of *Arieto*, the late Dick Doran of *Laughing Sally*, and Carlos Laverdero of several boats made possible the inclusion of the Puerto Rican and Passage Islands informa-

tion. Gordon Stout of *Shango* and Peter Lee of *Virginia Reel* made possible the inclusion of Tobago. Jerry Bergoff of *Solar Barque* and Sylver Brin of St. Barthélemy were most helpful in clearing up some of the mysteries of the eastern end of St. Barthélemy.

Pieter van Storn, formerly of Island Waterworld, and Malcolm Maidwell and Peter Spronk, of Caribbean Catamaran Centre, were most helpful in the Sint Maarten area. Hans Hoff, from the 90-foot ketch *Fandango*, is one of the few people who has won a bet from me on anchorages. The standing bet is I will buy a drink for anyone who can find a good, safe anchorage with 6 feet of water in it that has not been mentioned in the cruising guide. I expect to be nabbed once in a while by a small boat, but not by the skipper of a 90-foot ketch! Hans found an anchorage inside the reef on the north coast of Anguilla. Where the chart showed nothing but solid reef, Hans managed to find himself inside the reef with 40 feet of water!

John Clegg, formerly of *Flica II*, Dave Price, formerly of *Lincoln*, and Gordon Stout of *Shango* have continually popped up with wonderful odd bits of information that they have gleaned on their cruises from one end of the Lesser Antilles to the other.

Numerous other skippers have, over the years, given me a tremendous amount of help. They include, in the Antigua area, Desmond Nicholson, of V. E. B. Nicholson and Sons, English Harbour, and Jol Byerley, skipper of *Morning Tide* (and former charter skipper on *Ron of Argyll*, *Mirage*, *Étoile de Mer*, and *Lord Jim*), to name but two. For finer points on the exploration of the east coast of Antigua, I am deeply indebted to David Simmonds of the little cruising/racing sloop *Bacco*; David is also head of Antigua Slipways and the senior marine surveyor in the Eastern Caribbean. Thanks should also go to Simon Cooper and David Corrigan, both of whom unfortunately have left the Islands; Morris Nicholson of *Eluthera*; Simon

Bridger of *Circe* and other boats; Peter Haycraft and George Foster of Tortola, both of them harbor pilots and yachtsmen; Martin Mathias of the sports-fisherman *Bihari*; Bert Kilbride, diver extraordinaire of Saba Rock, Virgin Islands; and the Trinidadians Doug and the late Hugh ("Daddy") Myer of *Rosemary V* and *Huey II*. I want also to thank Arthur Spence of *Dwyka*, Marcy Crowe of *Xantippe*, Andy Copeland of various boats, Mike Smith of *Phryna*, Ken McKenzie of *Ti*, Dave Ferninding of *Whisper*, Chris Bowman of *Water Pearl of Bequia*, and the others whose names I may have forgotten. It is only with the help of experienced yachtsmen like these that a book of this type can be written.

A special vote of thanks must go to Morgan B. MacDonald III, my nephew, who did the sketch-chart drawings for the 1974 edition of the *Guide*; I'm pleased that many of them are still in this edition.

Jim Mitchell did a superb job on the topographical views of the Islands.

Thanks must go especially to the late Tom Wilson of Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson, who immediately embraced the idea of Imray-Iolaire charts when I presented it to him, and pushed hard to get the series out as fast as possible. His son "Willie" Wilson is carrying on Tom's work. And the Wilson family graciously allowed me to use sections of the Imray-Iolaire charts as harbor charts in this volume.

Alan Wilkenson, Imray's draftsman, has done a splendid job of drawing up the charts.

Admiral Sir David Haslam, retired head of the British Hydrographic Office, and his successor, Rear Admiral R. O. Morris, have been most helpful in supplying information and giving permission for material from the British Admiralty charts to be incorporated in this book. These appropriations have been made with the approval of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the Hydrographer of the Navy.

Jim Young of Dive Tobago provided reams of information on Bucco Reef at the southwest corner of Tobago, on Tyrell Bay at the northeast corner, and on many coves in between. The Tobago sketch charts in this book could not have been done without his help.

Molly Watson, her son Eddie, and all the members of the Trinidad Yachting Association have done a great deal to help get out the word on Trinidad.

I want to thank Patricia Street, my sister Elizabeth Vanderbilt, her husband, Peter, and their son Jay for their help in rechecking many facts.

Finally, a special round of thanks:

Maria McCarthy of Union Hall, County Cork, Ireland, labored long and hard during the summer of 1978, typing up corrections and inserts on the previous edition of this volume.

Audrey Semple spent the winter of 1978–1979 doing a magnificent job of cutting, gluing, correcting, typing, and fitting it all back together again.

Geraldine Hickey, my secretary during the winter of 1979–1980, did similar work under times of trying circumstance.

Aileen Calnan of Glandore, County Cork, not only worked with me in Ireland but also came aboard *Iolaire* in the winter of 1983, then continued in 1984–1985 and is still with us as typist-secretary-crew, sometime babysitter, and sometime cook.

Special thanks should go to Harvey Loomis, who for eight years has labored hard as editor of these guides. He not only is a good literary editor but is also an excellent sailor. As such he has been a tremendous help in rewriting the sailing and piloting directions to make them clear to the reader. Both I, the author, and you, the reader, owe Harvey Loomis a vote of thanks.

The help of these devoted friends of the Street family and of *Iolaire* has been invaluable to the production of this book.

D.M.S.

Charts

I used to carry on board *Iolaire* about 200 U.S., British, French, Dutch, and a few Spanish charts—all of which were out of date; that is, although they were new charts, the various government offices had not accurately corrected and updated them. The British Admiralty will correct charts of a foreign area only if the government concerned officially notifies the BA. Much worse, U.S. charts are corrected *only* when the whole plate is corrected; if you buy a new chart of Puerto Rico and it is a twelve-year-old edition, no corrections have been made on that chart since the date of the edition twelve years before!

Furthermore, BA and U.S. charts are often on the wrong scale for inshore navigation by a yacht. The charts covering Grenada, the Grenadines, and St. Vincent are 1/72,000, while the famous old Virgin Islands chart is 1/100,000, which is even worse; one needs a magnifying glass to find small anchorages and coves. In addition, it cuts Virgin Gorda in half. Several of the U.S. and British charts break up the St. Vincent and Grenadines area in odd splits not conducive to use by the average yachtsman. The U.S. chart of the Grenadines has an excellent blow-up insert for the Tobago Cays, but it does not have tidal reference points. The British chart does have this valuable information. Furthermore, the U.S. and Admiralty charts are based on surveys made in the 1890s. The latest NOAA and Admiralty charts have new deepwater information but retain the old, inshore errors.

As a result of all these difficulties, I signed a contract with Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson, usually known simply as Imray, which traces its ancestry back to 1670, to do updated and accurate charts specifically tailored to the needs of the yachtsman. Our information has been gathered from U.S. NOS and DMA charts, British Admiralty charts, French and Dutch charts, plus unpublished U.S. and British Admiralty surveys, topographical maps, and aerial photography, backed up by the information I have gathered in nearly thirty

years of exploring the Eastern Caribbean. Information also has been supplied to me by other experienced yachtsmen. Although it may be that I know the Eastern Caribbean as a whole better than any other yachtsman, there are individuals who know individual islands and areas much better than I do. These yachtsmen have been tremendously helpful in supplying me with their information.

Our charts come in one standard size, 25 inches by 35½ inches, and three colors: blue denotes deep water, white denotes water 5 fathoms or less; and yellow 1 fathom or less. Detailed harbor charts are inserted in the margins of the general charts. Useful ranges (transits) are shown to guide the mariner clear of dangers. Various overlapping coverages and often contradictory information found in the various French, U.S., Dutch, and British Admiralty charts have been eliminated.

Imray-Iolaire charts are kept up-to-date through careful attention to British Notice to Mariners, my own observations, and those sent by readers of these guides and users of the charts. Important corrections are done by hand at Imray prior to shipment; all corrections are logged in on the master sheet so that even minor corrections are included in new editions. Seldom do we go more than six months between printings of a chart. (The most popular Imray-Iolaire charts—those of the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, and Anguilla, St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, and Antigua—are available on waterproof paper.)

As of this writing, forty-seven Imray-Iolaire charts cover the entire Eastern Caribbean, except for Tobago and the area south of Isla Margarita in Venezuela. The Tobago chart will be along in due course. The other will not be done until we can obtain surveys showing what the Venezuelan government has done in this area in recent years. The new U.S. DMA chart of the area is inaccurate and should be used with extreme caution.

The Imray-Iolaire charts have become the

accepted standard; in the Southern Caribbean the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as the St. Vincent and Grenadian Coast Guards, use Imray-Iolaire charts rather than government charts. Very few chart agents in the Eastern Caribbean continue to stock the government charts.

In short, I strongly recommend that yachtsmen use the Imray-Iolaire charts instead of British Admiralty or U.S. government charts.

Most of the harbor charts in this volume have been taken from the relevant Imray-Iolaire charts. The few sketch charts included here are just that, sketches. They are as accurate as I can make them, but they are not official publications, and should be used only in conjunction with *reliable* navigational charts, with common sense, and with eyeball navigation.

Sailors should bear in mind that the Caribbean

is roughly twelve to eighteen inches lower in May, June, and July than it is the rest of the year. Imray-Iolaire chart soundings are based on this low, low datum. Other charts may not be.

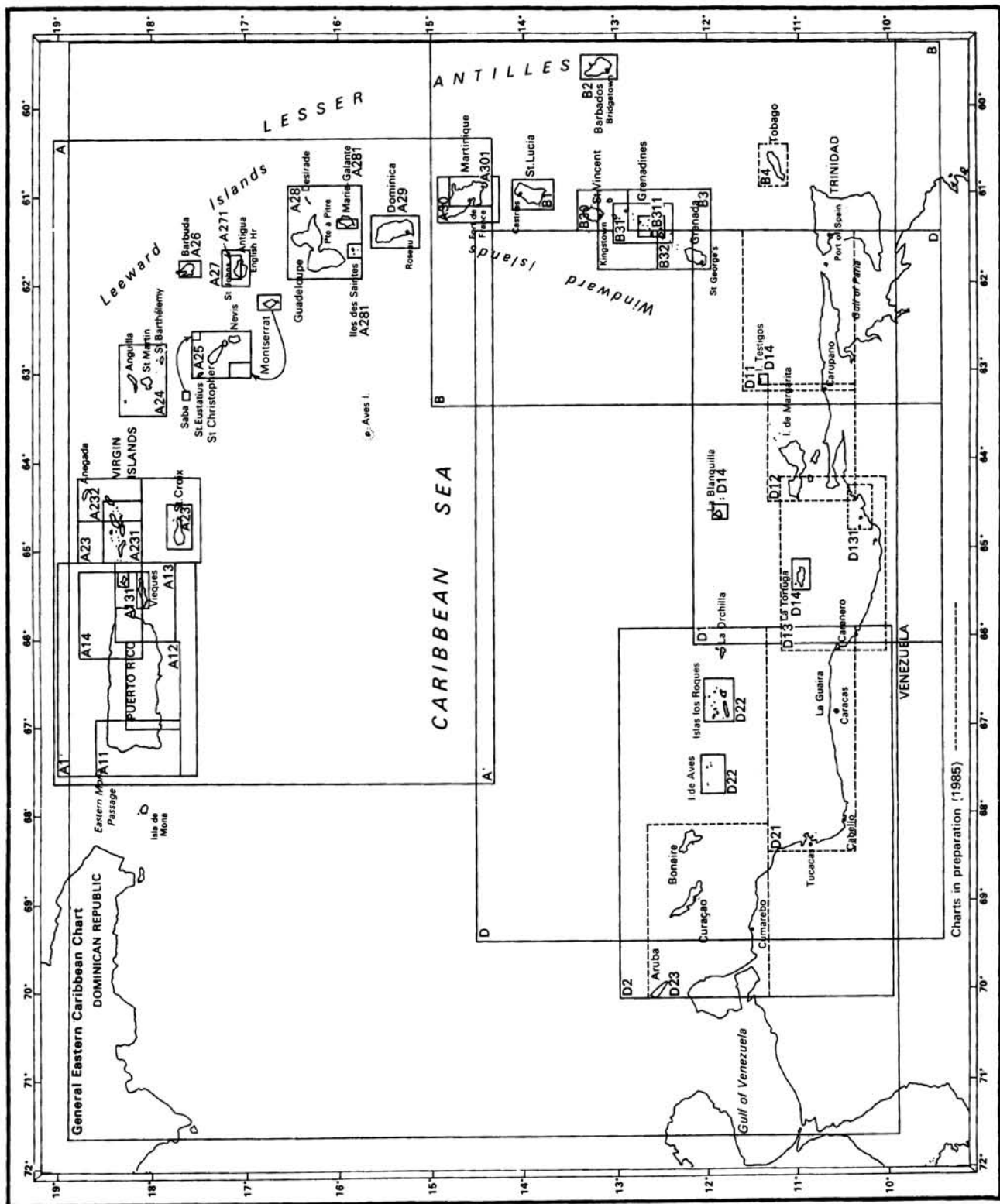
No chart can be absolutely accurate, but I feel that the Imray-Iolaire charts are the most accurate charts available. They can be kept that way only if experienced yachtsmen continue to feed information and corrections to us to correct the small errors that may still exist or to update charts where the topography has been changed by hurricanes, earthquakes, or dredging.

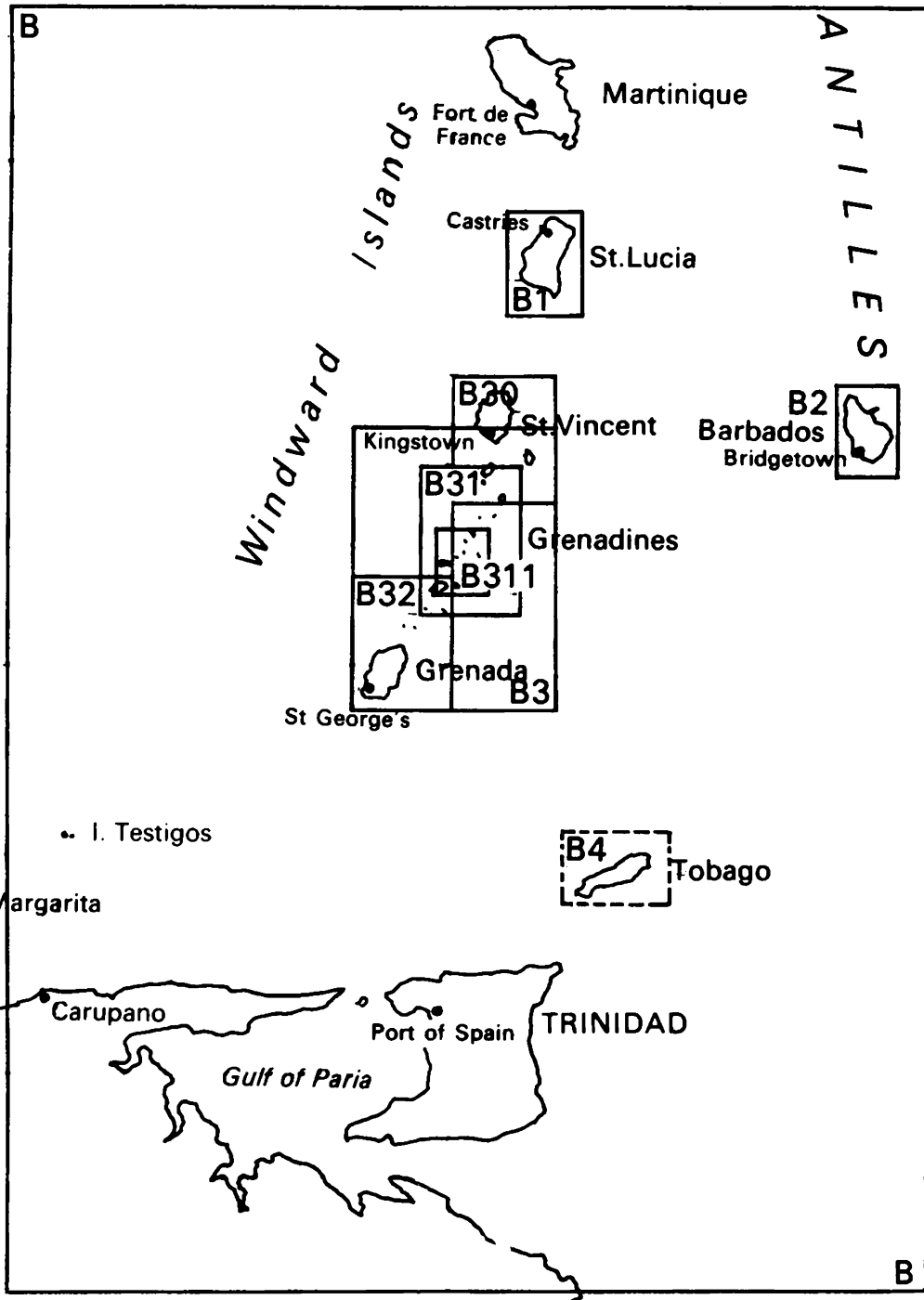
Please send information regarding chart corrections to: D. M. Street, Jr., c/o Mr. David Payne, Cayzer Steel Bowater, 32/38 Duke's Place, London EC3 7LX, England.

D.M.S.

U.S. Chart Number Conversion Table

<i>Old (C&GS)</i>	<i>New (NOAA)</i>
901	25671
902	25677
903	25668
904	25650
905	25641
909	25687
913	25654
914	25653
915	25655
917	25663
918	25661
921	25667
922	25666
924	25659
926	25685
927	25683
928	25681
929	25679
931	25673
932	25675
933	25649
935	25645
937	25644
938	25647





*Street's Cruising Guide to
the Eastern Caribbean,
Volume III—
Martinique to Trinidad*

[The Islands] are accessible in every part, and covered with a vast variety of lofty trees, which, it appears to me, never lose their foliage, as we found them fair and verdant as in May in Spain. Some were covered with blossoms, some with fruit, and others in different stages, according to their nature. The nightingale and a thousand other sorts of birds were singing in the month of November wherever I went. There are palm-trees in these countries, of six or eight sorts, which are surprising to see, on account of their diversity from ours, but indeed, this is the case with respect to the other trees, as well as the fruits and weeds. Beautiful forests of pines are likewise found, and fields of vast extent. Here is also honey, and fruits of a thousand sorts, and bird of every variety. The lands contain mines of metals, and inhabitants without number. . . . [Their] harbors are of such excellence, that their description would not gain belief, and the like may be said of the abundance of large and fine rivers, the most of which abound in gold.

—Christopher Columbus, on his return
to Spain from the Caribbean, 1494

1



Sailing Directions

Introduction

In the Eastern Caribbean during the winter months, the wind will vary from east-southeast to east-northeast, occasionally going all the way around to north. The current sets generally west at a knot or more. Thus the greatest problem encountered by the yachtsman new to the area is that of allowing his boat to sag below the rhumb-line course. At the end of the day he suddenly realizes that the anchorage is well to windward—a hard slog against wide and tide. My advice to avoid this situation is to keep a hand-bearing compass handy and take continual bearings; if you can't see the island ahead, take stern bearings.

This problem is complicated in the Grenadines by variable currents that can at times veer strongly to windward. Since the currents will almost always be on the beam, they will rapidly push you off course if you sail strictly by the compass. Hence the reason for ranges; stay on them and you will stay out of trouble.

It is also important to read the sailing and pilot directions for the area concerned the night before, in order to plan the next day's run, and to calculate your departure in time to guarantee arrival at the next anchorage while the sun is still high.

Proceeding South

MARTINIQUE TO ST. LUCIA

From the east coast of Martinique, you can pass to windward or leeward of St. Lucia, an easy reach

either way. From Fort-de-France on the west coast, it is still not too rough a sail to Castries. Do not be discouraged if, when you clear Cap Salomon, you are almost hard on the wind. Usually the wind hooks around the south end of the islands, coming in south of east, backing to the east as one sails offshore and to the northeast as Castries is approached. Thus as you leave Martinique, especially in the region of Pointe Diamant, do not fight your way up on to the rhumb-line course; frequently there is a tide-against-wind situation that can make it very rough. Better to ease sheets and alter course to south or even slightly west of south until you can clear off Diamond Rock. Then start to work your way up to the rhumb line, but don't work too hard to lay a course to Castries Harbor. As you approach St. Lucia the wind tends to back and lift you; if you are below the rhumb line you'll be able to work your way back up to it. Being hard on the wind the last six or eight miles is not all that bad, since you're under the lee of St. Lucia and in calm water.

ST. LUCIA TO ST. VINCENT

In proceeding south to St. Vincent, remember that there is usually wind on the lee side of St. Lucia from 1000 until about 1700, but it is likely to be calm the rest of the time. And it is a long sail down to Kingstown, the entry port of St. Vincent, or to Bequia. Thus, plan your departure so as to make sure you are clear of the Pitons by 1700 or you're likely to have to spend the night under the Pitons—a scenic but not swift trip.

Most yachtsmen sail from the Pitons to the west coast of St. Vincent on course 205 magnetic, which normally gives a very easy reach. However, they usually run out of wind in the lee of St. Vincent, and then from the southwest corner of St. Vincent have either a hard slog against the wind and current up into Kingstown Harbor or a fairly close fetch across to Bequia and then a beat up into Admiralty Bay.

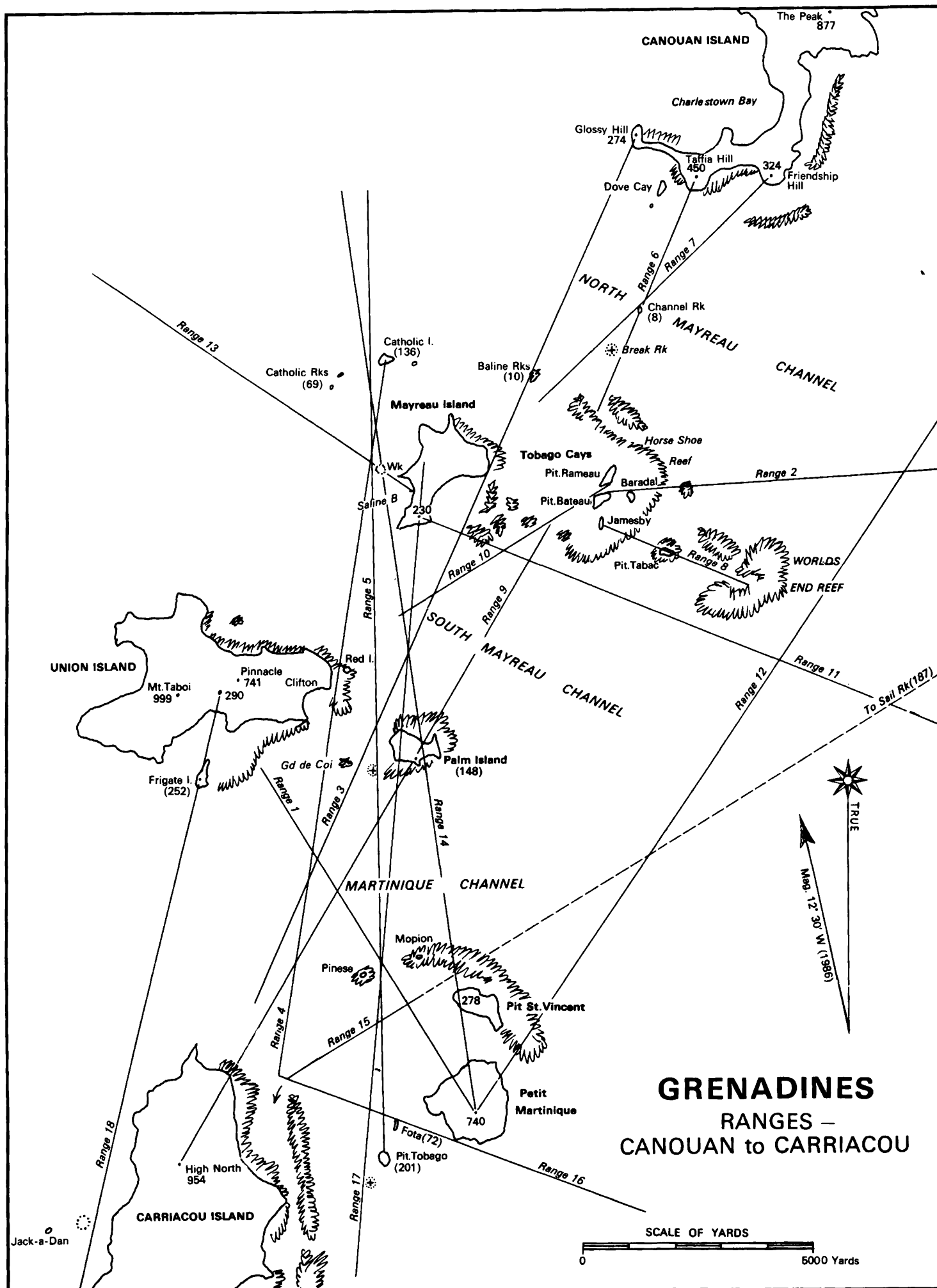
I prefer passing to windward of St. Vincent, setting a course from the Pitons of 190 magnetic with adjustments for leeway and current. In most conditions it is an easy reach; at worst, a close fetch. Sail down the windward coast of St. Vincent on an easy reach, enjoying the beautiful scenery. If it really pipes up, stay well offshore, as a heavy Atlantic swell will crest in 18 feet and break in 12. When you get to the southeast corner of St. Vincent, run dead downwind and anchor in Kingstown Harbor. Or, usually better, broad reach across Bequia Channel and enter at Bequia, an easier process than entering at Kingstown.

ST. VINCENT TO PETIT ST. VINCENT

Departing St. Vincent from Kingstown Harbor, Young Island anchorage, or the lagoon presents no difficulties. It is almost always a reach to Admiralty Bay. On the other hand, if you want to go to windward and east of Bequia—"over the top," as the locals say—you must hold high in the event of a lee-going (ebb) tide. Once around, you can stand southeast to Baliceaux or south to Mustique. The only danger here is Montezuma Shoal.

Leaving Admiralty Bay under sail is a good test of helmsmanship, since you will be running dead before the wind. Once past West Cay, stand south leaving Canouan to either side. Windward of Canouan, beware of the reefs that extend well offshore. These carry seven-tenths of a mile windward of Friendship Hill. There is one danger to look out for between the southeast corner of the reefs off Canouan and Baline Rock. The course leads directly across the breaking rock southwest of Channel Rock. The best route is to pass Channel Rock close

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| Range 1. | Peak of Petit Martinique bearing 161-341 magnetic leads between Pineise and Mopion. |
| Range 2. | North sides of Baradal and Petit Bateau in line with south side of flat land on Mayreau 099-279 magnetic leads through boat pass. |
| Range 3. | Glossy Hill, Canouan Island, in line with eastern tip of Mayreau 216-036 magnetic passes Grand de Coi to the east. |
| Range 4. | Catholic Island between Red Island and Union Island 201-021 magnetic leads west of Grand de Coi and also into entrance Windward Side, Carriacou. |
| Range 5. | Petit Tobago one finger open from Fota 011-191 magnetic leads between Pineise and Mopion, between Palm Island and to the west of the reef at the north end of Saline Bay, Mayreau. If more than half a finger's width of Petit St. Vincent shows to the east of Palm Island, bear off, or you will fail to clear the dangers at the north end of Saline Bay. |
| Range 6. | Taffia Hill in line with Channel Rocks 035-215 magnetic leads east of Break Rock. |
| Range 7. | Northwest side of Channel Rock open slightly from the summit of Friendship Hill, Canouan Island, 058-238 magnetic leads west of Break Rock. |
| Range 8. | Petit Tabac in line with Jamesby 306-126 magnetic leads into Worlds End Reef anchorage. |
| Range 9. | Middle hill on Palm Island under High North Carriacou, 042-222 magnetic leads through south entrance to Tobago Cays. |
| Range 10. | SE point of Petit Rameau in line with NW point of Petit Bateau 070-250 magnetic leads into Tobago Cays. |
| Range 11. | South Peak of Mayreau bearing 125-305 magnetic clears Worlds End Reef to the south. |
| Range 12. | Peak of Petit Martinique bearing 046-226 magnetic clears Worlds End Reef to the east. |
| Range 13. | The cliff on the northwest end of Saline Bay, Mayreau, in line with midpoint of dock. To locate wreck of the <i>Paruna</i> , proceed along this range until intersection with Range 14. |
| Range 14. | Peak on Petit Martinique between easternmost two hills of Palm Island 004-184 magnetic leads over wreck. |
| Range 15. | Sail Rock three fingers open from northwest corner of Petit St. Vincent 070-250 magnetic. To enter Windward Side, Carriacou, follow down this range until intersection with Range 16. |
| Range 16. | Fota closing with southwest corner of Petit Martinique 123-303 magnetic. From where this range meets Range 15 the channel through the reef may be eyeballed. |
| Range 17. | Westernmost hill on Mayreau over low land of Palm Island clears the 1.5 fathom spot off Petit Tobago to the west 026-206 magnetic. |
| Range 18. | Hill on Frigate in line with the 290-foot hill and radio mast on Union Island. The hill is between the Pinnacle (741 feet) and Mount Taboi (999 feet) leads clear inside shoal spot (4 feet) inside Jack a Dan, 025-205 magnetic to Hillsborough, Carriacou. |
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SKETCH CHART III-A

aboard to the southeast and run to the west until Channel Rock opens slightly from Friendship Hill, Canouan (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 7). Turn to the southwest and maintain this range, 238 magnetic, until close by Baline Rocks.

Passing to leeward of Canouan, there are no dangers between it and the Tobago Cays. Steer course 204 magnetic, making allowance for the current and passing between Baline Rock and the reef northwest of the Tobago Cays. The sailing directions within the Tobago Cays are given in another chapter, and I will not repeat them here. Basically, eyeball navigation will be required to get you clear of the inner reef; then sail southeastward until the middle hill of Palm Island lines up with High North, Carriacou (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 9). This range will guide you south between the windward and leeward reefs of the Tobago Cays. If your plan is to pass to windward of Palm Island, go east until the peak of Petit Martinique bears 190 magnetic. Sail that course until south of Palm Island, then sail southwest magnetic until you reach range 1, with the peak of Petit Martinique bearing 161 magnetic. If you maintain this range, you will come right between the two sand islands off Petit St. Vincent. But remember to follow the range rather than the compass course, since the currents will be tending to throw you off one way or the other.

If you are proceeding from the south entrance of the Tobago Cays to the west of Palm Island, a course of 239 magnetic—and an allowance for current—will take you between the reefs of Union and Palm islands. There are no reliable ranges, and a good deal of precautionary eyeballing will be necessary. Also, keep a sharp look out for Grand de Coi, which must be avoided. There is a new buoy (which may not be in place) west of Grand de Coi (for a short history of classic groundings, see page 112). It can be passed to the westward by staying west until Catholic Island aligns itself between Union and Red islands (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 4) and following this range on south. To pass eastward of Grand de Coi: Once the reefs of Palm Island are cleared to port, head up until Glass Hill joins the eastern end of Mayreau Island (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 3). This range should be maintained, keeping clear of the shoal at the southeast corner of Palm. And if your destination is Petit St. Vincent, hold this range until the peak of Petit Martinique bears 161 magnetic. Follow 161 midway between Pinese and Mopion. Once you have passed beyond the reefs, you may alter course to Petit St. Vincent.

SOUTH AND WEST FROM PETIT ST. VINCENT

From Petit St. Vincent to the windward side of Carriacou, head west until Sail Rock is three fingers off the northern end of Petit St. Vincent. Continue heading 248 magnetic (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 15) until Fota is overlapped by the southwestern corner of Petit Martinique (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 16). At this point you will be inside the reef. From here on south along the coast, use eyeball navigation. A skillful reef pilot in a boat drawing no more than 7 feet with a man aloft could continue south all the way through Watering Bay into Grand Bay.

A less taxing course from Petit St. Vincent is to sail southwest until the westernmost hill of Mayreau lines up with the western side of Palm Island (Sketch Chart III-A, Range 17). Turn south along this range, which will carry you safely to the west of the 1½-fathom spot southwest of Petit Tobago. Once past this danger point, the course should be altered to clear the reef off the eastern point of Carriacou, after which a course approximately southwest may be steered, passing to either side of Île de Ronde and Grenada.

The west coast of Carriacou is far less formidable. From Petit St. Vincent to Rapid Point is a straight-line course with no hazards. Around Rapid Point it is an easy reach down the coast of Carriacou with no dangers until Jack a Dan, at which time you should hook up with Range 18 (Sketch Chart III-A), defined by the peak on Frigate Island placed under the first peak west of the easternmost peak of Union Island. This will carry you clear inside the shoal spot between Jack a Dan and the mainland of Carriacou.

CARRIACOU TO GRENADA

From Hermitage Point at the southwest corner of Tyrell Bay to Diamond Rock (Kick 'Em Jenny) and David Point, Grenada, it is 228 magnetic without taking account of current. This is normally a very broad reach or a dead run. If the wind is in the north, it may be a good idea before you leave the lee of Carriacou to rig your main boom foreguy to starboard and set your jib on the pole to windward. This will save you a lot of rolling and slatting on the way down.

Once round David Point, the wind tends to hook around the island, often putting you dead before the wind most of the way to Black Bay, Grenada, where it will tend to come more abeam. If your

destination is St. George's, the course from Molinière Point is 178 magnetic, hugging the shore. If you are bypassing St. George's and heading directly to the south coast of Grenada, a course of 214 magnetic from Molinière Point will clear Long Point Shoal.

Work your way up the south coast of Grenada, continually tacking inshore to stay out of the westward flowing current and the sea. Consult the chart and use careful eyeball navigation.

GRENADA TO TRINIDAD

The sail from Grenada to Trinidad is usually an easy beam reach. The only difficulty is an occasionally strong current along with some tide rips that will set up between the two islands. The normal procedure for most yachts making the passage is to leave Grenada at about 1800, steer 170 magnetic (or 165, if your boat makes a lot of leeway) until you spot the Chacachacare light, and alter your course accordingly. This is a very powerful light, which can be seen as far as 25 miles away on a clear night. Do not head right for it, as it marks the westernmost *boca* (mouth) and the current will be pulling you in that direction anyway. Most boats favor entering the Gulf of Paria through the eastern *boca* in order to save a lot of windward effort. This should put you in Port of Spain early in the morning.

ALTERNATE ROUTES

Although the distance from St. Thomas to, say, Antigua is only about 200 miles, the course is practically dead against the wind all the way. There are plenty of islands in between that afford the opportunity to lay over, rest, and sightsee, but the windward legs will be pure hell nonetheless. In a small boat of 30 or 35 feet, your progress against heavy trades may be reduced to nothing.

Bear in mind that there are other ways to reach the middle or southern islands. Depending on the time at your disposal, you can sail from the Virgins direct to Grenada, St. Lucia, or Martinique, and from any one of these islands you can work your way north in easy stages off the wind to Antigua. The strategy is to define the southern reach of your cruise and to proceed north from there. If you are chartering a bare boat and are willing to pay the deadhead fee, you should consider picking up the boat on one of these southern islands. Otherwise, sail the passage yourself. With a break in the weather, you can lay a straight course from St.

Thomas Harbor to Martinique (143 magnetic), making it in two and a half or three days. This is not a great deal of time to give up if you are planning a cruise of two or three weeks. The disadvantages are that you will be close-hauled the entire way, and if you have just arrived by air from the States, setting out on a long sail direct from St. Thomas allows no time for the crew to get its sea legs or to build up a tan against the sun. Therefore, a preferable course would be to work your way east from St. Thomas through the Virgins for a few days. This will give you the time to shake down the crew, pick up some precious easting and a tan in sheltered waters, and then to take off through Necker Island Passage for Grenada. The course is 170 magnetic; the distance, 420 miles—an easy reach. Even if the wind veers to east-southeast, you will still be under slightly eased sheets and going like mad. If it is east to east-northeast, as is usual, you can make the trip in three days. Let me repeat that if you have the time to invest in this passage, I can recommend no better way of positioning yourself for a cruise of the southern Islands. You will have reached the southernmost of the Antilles without having strained to windward and with no serious windward work before you.

The course from St. Thomas Harbor to Grenada direct is 163 magnetic, 423 miles. You will have to hold one point high on the course for the first 50 miles in order to clear the eastern end of St. Croix, but once clear, the sheets can be eased for a nice easy reach to Grenada. The chances of the wind's swinging so far south as to put you hard on the wind are relatively slim. If the wind should really pipe up, its direction will back and give you a real sleighride. A heavy blow won't faze a small boat, as it will be aft of abeam. For the remainder of the passage there are two things to watch out for:

First, don't run up on Aves Island, which will be right on your track.

Aves Island is low and hard to find; it is a turtle nesting area and the scene of enough disasters and near disasters to fill a book. It has also been mischarted by almost everyone. According to the latest British Admiralty information, it is located at 15°42'10" N. latitude and 63°37' W. longitude. This may not be where it is on your chart, because it has moved three or possibly four times during my thirty years in the Caribbean!

Now the Venezuelan government (which, amazingly, owns Aves Island) has established a well-lit military base on the island. Still no navigation lights have been set up, but if you are in the area and see something that looks like a cruise ship

hove-to, it's probably Aves Island. Give it a wide berth.

Second, take sights to assure that you are not falling off to leeward. It would be an awful waste of time to beat the last 50 miles or so to Grenada. The current runs to the west through here as fast as 3 knots. Against a 3-knot current in the same direction as the wind, it would require 6 knots through the water to hold your own tacking in 120°.

Proceeding North

TRINIDAD TO GRENADA

It is best to depart Trinidad in time to arrive at Point Saline, Grenada, by dawn. More than one boat has grounded on Long Point Shoal tacking up from Point Saline to St. George's. Most yachts can hold a course of 015 from the easternmost *boca* to Grenada. Soon after the lights on the hills of Grenada are picked up, airport lights will appear. If entering at L'Anse aux Épinés, keep these high lights on the starboard bow but don't approach the coast till dawn or you may come to a sudden stop on the Porpoises. A better course is to head for Point Saline and round close aboard. Hug the coast and short-tack up the beach, passing close to Quarantine Point. This way you will avoid Long Point Shoal, which is most difficult to spot at night. There is no difficulty entering St. George's Harbor at night: anchor in the northeast corner, and proceed at dawn to GYS to clear.

GRENADA SOUTH COAST TO ST. GEORGE'S HARBOR

Do not leave harbors like Bacaye or Calivigny until the sun is high, because in the early morning the path of the sunlight is directly in line with the exit course. Once clear of the harbors on the south coast of Grenada, it is best to head directly for Glover Island, keeping an eye open for Porpoise Rocks (Grampuses); pass close south of Porpoise Rocks and then head for Point Saline. As I said earlier, reefs do extend well offshore between Calivigny Island and Prickly Point. Check bearings and ranges carefully as described above.

If you head directly for Point Saline, you will discover that the wind shifts to the south at Hardy Bay and you end up dead downwind, whereas if you stay offshore, as the wind shifts you may head northwest for Point Saline and still be on a reach. Once Point Saline has been rounded, favor the shore. Stay close in to avoid the sea and to take

advantage of better wind shifts than could be found offshore. When approaching Long Point, be sure to favor the Morne Rouge beach area, and stay inshore to avoid Long Point Shoal. If under power, motor directly from Point Saline to Long Point, leaving Long Point 100 yards off the starboard side, and proceed directly to St. George's Harbor or Grand Anse Bay clear of all dangers.

GRENADA TO CARRIACOU

When proceeding north from St. George's, plans must be made to arrive at Carriacou early in the day and in no event later than 1700. This necessitates a very early departure from St. George's. Many boats motor-sail all the way up the coast to David Point and then set sail for Carriacou. If you choose to sail the coast, it is best done close inshore. Every time you get a mile offshore on starboard tack, you should tack back in.

There is little or no wind on the lee coast of Grenada until after 0800 and it dies drastically after 1700. Grenada's highest point is almost 2,800 feet, and the main line of mountains approximately 2,000 feet. Do not make the mistake of standing offshore to find more wind—nine times out of ten you won't find any. *Stay in close.*

When you reach David Point (locally known as Tangle Angle, because of the way the current sweeps around it and causes tide rips), it is again important to tack to the eastward. In fact, you should tack to the east as far as Sauteurs and frequently to Levera Island before setting out for Carriacou. The current runs as much as 2½ knots (normally 1–1½) to the west through this passage. (Remember that many boats make as much as 15° leeway when on the wind.)

Occasionally, with the wind in the southeast, it is possible to lay the course from David Point to Carriacou, but this is very much the exception. Most Grenada–Carriacou races have proved that it is worth tacking to Sauteurs, even with a windward-going tide. In any event, be careful of the shoal spots between Levera Island and the town of Levera, as they can break in heavy weather. Proceed east until you can lay Îlet de Ronde, and then set out. Pass between the Sisters and Îlet de Ronde and stand north on starboard tack until smooth water is reached in the lee of Carriacou.

The best time to arrive at David Point is when the tides have just begun to run to windward. This will give you four hours of either slack water or weather-going tide, enough to reach Tyrell Bay before the tide changes.

As you approach Carriacou's southwest point,

you should note the tide. If you wish to go to Saline Island or One Tree Rock on the south coast of Carriacou, do so only if the tide is running to windward; otherwise it is almost impossible to get up to Saline Island unless you have a very powerful engine. It should also be noted that it is best not to tack east after Diamond Island (Kick 'Em Jenny), as this will put you into the worst of the current. Instead, stand north into the lee of Carriacou; good progress can then be made on port tack in smooth water.

ST. GEORGE'S TO CARRIACOU VIA THE SOUTH AND EAST COASTS OF GRENADA

When proceeding from St. George's to the south coast of Grenada, be careful of the shoals extending from the Islander Hotel over to the Silver Sands Hotel (Range C, Sketch Chart III-36).

Long Point Shoal off Long Point (locally referred to as Quarantine Point) is most dangerous. The northeast corner of the dock transit shed in line with Government House will clear Long Point Shoal to the northwest (Range B, Sketch Chart III-37). Government House may be easily identified, as it is a large, dark-colored house, with large verandas on both first and second stories, situated on the ridge northeast of town. It is the only house on the ridge with two flagpoles, one east and one west of the house.

The other route commonly used by yachts is to head from St. George's Harbor to Long Point, leaving Long Point to port 100 yards off. When Long Point Shoal comes abeam, head for Point Saline, which course will clear Long Point Shoal to the southeast; or use Range A, Sketch Chart III-37, course 062-242 magnetic. There is deep water along this entire shore, and you may sail 200 yards off with no danger and in smooth water. If it is blowing more than 10 knots, tie in a reef before rounding Point Saline.

When rounding Point Saline, give it a 200-yard berth, because when they built the airport they blew up and carted off the hill; most of it was used for fill for the airport but much fell into the sea. No survey has been done of the area since the hill was removed.

Upon rounding, unless you draw more than 10 feet the best procedure is to stay close inshore. This will keep you out of the swell and current. Each time you make a long tack offshore, the current and sea will set you to leeward.

Between Point Saline and Prickly Point, there are few difficulties as long as a lookout is kept during starboard tacks inshore. If beating to wind-

ward under sail, short-tack along the shore as close as possible, as it will keep you out of the swell and foul current, and will usually give you port-tack lifts; watch for shoals on starboard tack. From Prickly Point eastward, this coast has numerous reefs and sandbanks. All are clearly visible as long as the sun is fairly high.

It was generally thought that there was a good 2 fathoms of water everywhere between Glovers Island and the mainland. Deep-draft boats have happily sailed between the two without a thought. However, there is at least one 7-foot spot. We discovered it in *Iolaire* while racing along the south coast. We were on a direct line between the Porpoises and Point Saline, absolutely upright doing about 8 knots and with the point that forms the west side of Hardy Bay bearing about northwest. We felt a tremendous crash as we bounced off the top of a rock. Subsequently I have gone back and looked for the rock and have been unable to find it—it must be just a small pinnacle rising up off the bottom.

If you sail down the lee side of Grenada and continue around Point Saline and eastward to Prickly Bay, it means that at the end of your trip you'll have a good hard slog to windward. For this reason many people heading for the south coast would rather pass to windward of Grenada; then you have a glorious beam reach along the weather side of Grenada; you can east sheets around the southeast corner and run dead downwind for half an hour, then jibe over and reach into Prickly Bay. Once again, keep a careful eye on the depth of the water if the sea is running high. Breaking crests can demolish a boat in short order. This happened to Mike Forshaw's *Tawana*, which took a breaking crest on board and sank almost instantly. Luckily the dinghy had been tied on the cabin top with rotten old line, and minutes after the boat sank the dinghy popped to the surface. The crew righted the dinghy, bailed it out, and drifted ashore in it.

When running along the south coast of Grenada downwind, you should be careful about the reefs spreading south from Hog Island and Mount Hartman Bay. A good plan is to clear the south end of Calivigny Point by a half mile or more and continue on a course of west 270 magnetic until Prickly Point bears 300. Then you have to sail inside the Porpoises, which are exposed rocks southwest of Prickly Point with deep water all around *except* for a rock with only 6 feet over it, 40 yards north of the Porpoises.

When proceeding eastward along the south coast of Grenada under power, stay close to shore and keep an eye out for the various shoals. Remember,

of course, that you should subtract at least 3 feet from any depths quoted on the charts, and frequently as much as a fathom. Eastward beyond Fort Jeudy Point, there are a number of shoal spots well offshore: off Westerhall Point, Marquis Point, and Menere Point.

During the winter, if the wind is out of the east or northeast, it is unwise to beat up the east coast of Grenada. It can get very rough, with seas breaking fairly far offshore. On the southeast coast there is also roughly a 1- to 2-knot current dead on the nose.

However, if you elect to proceed up the east coast, note how far offshore the shoals extend north of Bacolet Point. Bear in mind that the current will be setting you onshore. Once Telescope Point is reached, a course should be set for Anthony Rock, which will take you clear of the shoals. The current between Telescope Point and Green Island sets very strongly to the south, so strong that the old sailing directions warn vessels about passing and getting south of the entrance of Grenville. The old square-riggers were not too good to windward. Thus, if by mistake they sailed past Grenville, they were advised to continue south, around Point Saline, up the west coast of Grenada, and try again. It seems a long distance to go a few miles, but in years gone by the sailors had plenty of patience, especially in adverse conditions.

Be very careful not to get involved with the 3-fathom spot between Anthony Rock and Sandy Island, as in heavy winter weather the ground swell breaks continually on this spot. The eastern side of Sandy Island kept directly in line with the west peak of Caille Island (Range E, Sketch Chart III-44) will pass clear to windward of this breaking shoal spot.

There is deep water between Sandy Island and Green Island, between Green Island and Levera Island, and between Levera Island and Bedford Point, but the Levera Island side of the channel should be favored for the deepest water. From the northeast corner of Grenada, it is usually an easy sail to Carriacou.

CARRIACOU NORTHWARD

The usual course is to pass along the west side of Carriacou, stopping at Tyrell Bay. When leaving this harbor, pass north of the middle ground, hug the coast, and make allowance for the rocks, which extend about 200 yards offshore from Lookout Point (the point south of Cistern Point). Under power or sail, the best course from Cistern Point

to Hillsborough Bay is between Mabouya Island and Sandy Island, being careful to avoid the reef on the southwestern tip of Sandy Island. Other than that, there are no dangers in this area unless you have a vessel drawing 12 feet. Beating to windward through this gap is good fun, as there is no sea and usually plenty of wind.

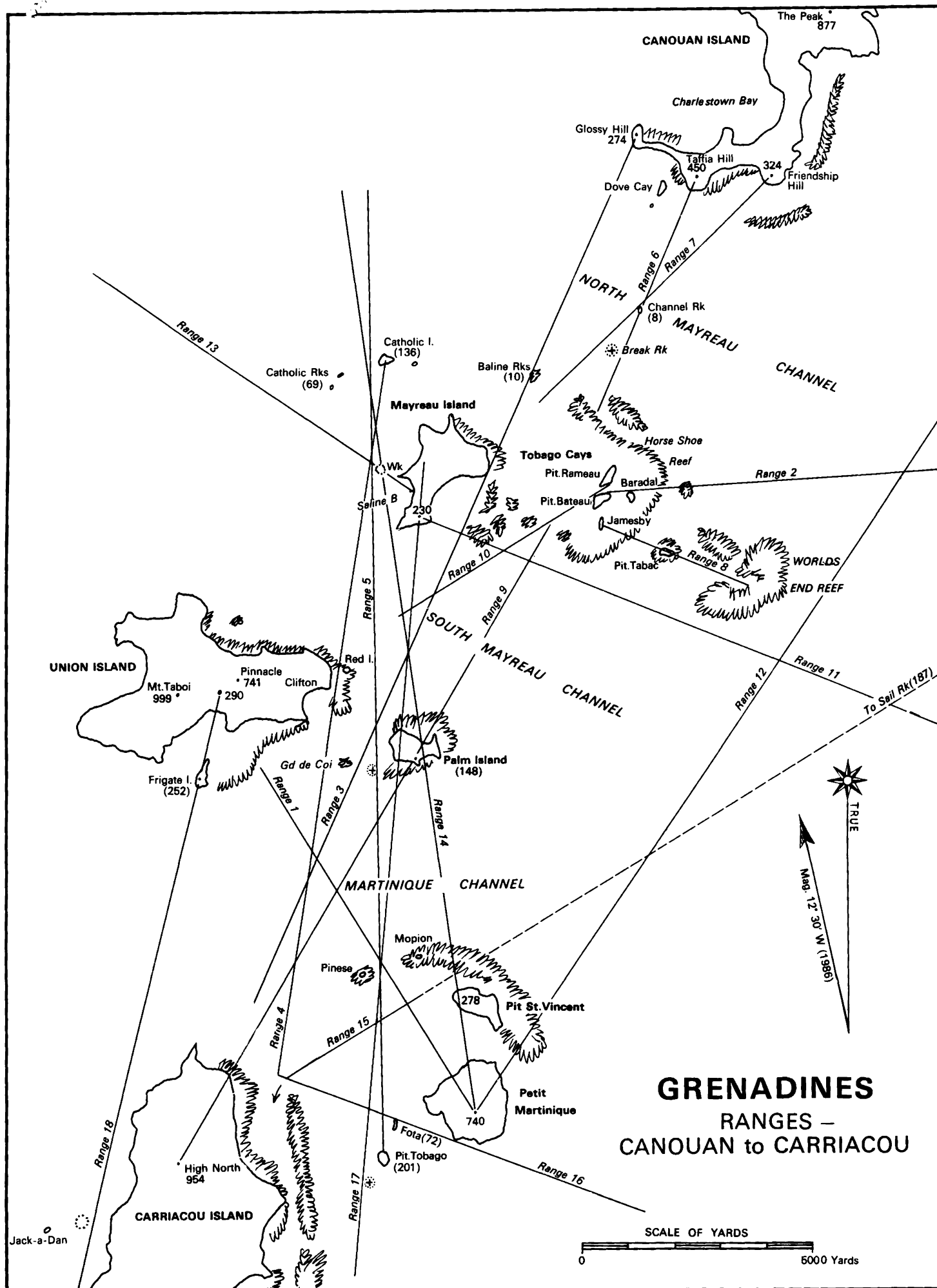
Between Cistern Point and Hillsborough, deep-draft boats can easily run aground. The old schooner range is still a safe one. Put Cistern under the stern and the hospital building at the top of the mountain on the bow and proceed straight to the anchorage. Once past Sandy Island, the course can be shifted slightly toward the Hillsborough jetty. North of Hillsborough there is one danger, between Jack a Dan and the mainland. This is a $\frac{3}{4}$ -fathom spot with quite a few dents in it. It can be passed inside by placing the hill on Frigate Island directly in line with the 290-foot hill on Union Island, which is the hill just west of the highest and easternmost peak on Union (Range 18, Sketch Chart III-A, course 023 magnetic). Be sure to stay on this range, as this shoal is particularly hard to spot.

Under power, you may steer direct from Rapid Point to the dock of Petit St. Vincent and clear all dangers. Under sail, it will be a dead beat to windward. On port tack, beware of the shoal off Little Carenage Bay and the shoal on the north end of Watering Bay. On the starboard tack, watch out for Pinese and Mopion, the two sand islands northwest of Petit St. Vincent. (Pinese may not be visible; it has recently been reported as being underwater.) There is ample water between these two islands but eyeballing is called for, as they both are continually growing and shifting.

Grand de Coi is now marked by a buoy west of the reef. For discussions on the buoy and its problems, see Chapter 7.

To head north from Petit St. Vincent, pass midway between the two cays and continue on course until Fota and the east side of Petit Tobago are one finger open (Range 5, Sketch Chart III-A, course 010 magnetic). This will take you east of Grand de Coi and east of the detached reef off Palm Island. Care must be exerted here, as the current will be at a right angle to your course and will tend to sweep you leeward. Thus a continual check must be made that you are still on range. A good lookout must be kept, or you may come to a sudden stop before you realize you're too close.

An alternate route clear of Grand de Coi is provided by Range 5 on Sketch Chart III-A, course 033 magnetic. This is Glass Hill (Glossy Hill) on



SKETCH CHART III-A

the western point of Canouan in line with the eastern end of Mayreau Island. Glass Hill will appear as a detached island west of Taffia Hill, as it is connected to Canouan by only a low sand split.

Beating to windward from Rapid Point to the region of Union Island, you will want to avoid Grand de Coi. Catholic Island placed between Union Island and Red Island passes clear to west of Grand de Coi (Range 4, Sketch Chart III-A, course 018–198 magnetic). North of Grand de Coi, you will have to tack to the east to clear the reefs to windward of Union Island.

North beyond Palm and Union islands is about the most dangerous area of the Grenadines. A reef at the north end of Saline Bay has damaged many yachts proceeding north along the lee coast of Mayreau. To clear the end of this reef, put Fota one finger open from the east side of Little Tobago (Range 5, Sketch Chart III-A, course 010–190). As you approach Grand Coi Point at the north end of Saline Bay, Mayreau, check to see if any of Petit St. Vincent is showing east of Palm. If Petit St. Vincent is at all visible, bear off to the west or you will come to a sudden stop on the reef off Grand Coi Point (profile insert, Sketch Chart III-1). With this reef behind you, there are no other dangers standing north from Mayreau to Canouan.

APPROACHES TO THE TOBAGO CAYS

When approaching the Tobago Cays from the west, if you are coming in under power, no problem—just head for the buoy northwest of Baline Rocks and pick up the newly installed range. The range is 139 magnetic. This leads directly to the anchorage in the slot. If, however, you are beating to windward under sail and cannot lay in the range, be careful of the 9-foot spot approximately 800 yards southwest of Baline Rocks—really a case of eyeball navigation.

If you are coming from Petit St. Vincent, sail west until the peak of Petit Martinique bears 160 magnetic over the stern, come to course 340 magnetic, eyeball your way between Pinese and Mopion—once clear of these two islands come hard on the wind until the eastern peak of Petit St. Vincent bears 190 magnetic. Stay east of this line of bearing until Union Island Airport bears due west magnetic. Then bear off until the middle hill on Palm Island lines up with High North on Carriacou (Range 9, Sketch Chart III-A, course 040 magnetic). Stay hard on this range until you have passed between the eastern and western reefs. The western one may be spotted by a small sand

island. However, these sand islands are prone to disappear at irregular intervals.

If you are coming from between Palm and Union Islands and heading for the southern entrance of the Tobago Cays, you must fight your way up to windward, until, again, the middle hill on Palm lines up with High North on Carriacou (Range 9, Sketch Chart III-A). Follow this bearing into the cays.

Or if the range to the south is obscured, a second range on the northwest corner of Petit Bateau just touching the southeast corner of Petit Rameau 063–243° also leads into the south entrance of the Tobago Cays.

TOBAGO CAYS TO CANOUAN

From the north end of the Tobago Cays to the western end of Canouan, there are no dangers at all. Glass Hill is easily laid from Baline Rocks. If you are bound for the windward side of Canouan and are tacking below Channel Rock, I urge setting out in slack water or a fair tide. Great care must be taken to avoid the submerged rock one-half mile southwest of Channel Rock. This rock is covered and breaks in a swell. Friendship Hill touching the northwest side of Channel Rock passes clear to the west of the breaking rock (Range 2, Sketch Chart III-A, course 050 magnetic). Channel Rock in line with Taffia Hill passes the breaking rock clear to windward (Range 1, Sketch Chart III-A, course 030).

CANOUAN TO BEQUIA

This trip should be made at slack water or when the tide is running to windward. The distance is 15 miles, and should the tide be running its full limit of 2 knots to the west, a vessel making 5 knots through the water would have to steer 045 magnetic, as opposed to the 028 rhumb line. Unless the wind were southeast, this would put you very close on the wind. During the winter, with the wind toward the north and a leeward running tide, you stand very little chance of laying West Cay, leaving you a tough beat into Admiralty Bay. Against a foul tide be sure to hold high on the course, passing close aboard to leeward of Pigeon Island. There are no dangers on the course to Bequia. If you depart during a weather tide, the only difficulty will be a strong tide rip off the north end of Canouan. Once Pigeon Island is reached, Quatre and Petit Nevis serve to break the swell, giving a

glorious sail the rest of the way in with plenty of wind and smooth water.

Once you have rounded West Cay, you may turn on the iron genoa and head for the anchorage at Elizabeth Town with no dangers in the way, or you can put the sport back into sailing and beat up into the harbor, but be very careful of the shoals on its south side.

BEQUIA TO ST. VINCENT

Bequia Channel has the well-deserved reputation of being exceedingly rough at times. This brief eight-mile passage has done in any number of small boats and dinghies over the years. The water is smoothest during a leeward tide. A windward tide will offset your leeway, but it will also manage to churn up a nasty, steep sea. I have seen the waves making up into almost boxlike shapes—6 feet high and 6 feet between each crest—a great place to lose a dinghy under tow.

From Admiralty Bay, round up close aboard Fort Point, watching out for Wash Rock 100 yards off Devils Table. Play the wind shifts close to the Bequia shore and keep inshore until you feel you can comfortably lay Young Island. If this does not seem logical, let me note that the 45-foot gaff-rigged schooner *Stella Maris* twice beat *Iolaire*—a 45-foot Marconi-rigged yawl—between Bequia and Young Island in just this way, tacking northeast along the Bequia shore before setting out.

Young Island is easily identified by a high peak just south of it on Duvernette Island, which looks like a loaf of French bread put on end. Kingstown will also be readily visible to leeward.

ST. VINCENT TO ST. LUCIA

There are two routes to St. Lucia from the south coast of St. Vincent. The more usual is to proceed up the west coast in easy stages, stopping off at Wallilabu. The lee of St. Vincent is frequently becalmed, so you may be forced to stoke up the engine. Hold high the course across St. Vincent Passage, as the current sets strongly northwest; at the southwestern corner of St. Lucia it becomes even more severe. If you fall four or five miles offshore when Beaumont Point comes abeam, you're going to have a rough beat inshore.

It is extremely important that you stay east of the rhumb line between the lee side of St. Vincent and Beaumont Point (the rhumb-line course is 015 magnetic). To be certain you are staying to wind-

ward of this course, continually take back bearings to make sure you are not sliding off to leeward. Frequently St. Lucia will not be visible from St. Vincent, thus the necessity of stern bearings. This is where a good hand-bearing compass is worth its weight in gold.

When you get discouraged about the sea conditions, remember that Vieux Fort, out to windward, tends to break the sea. Once you are halfway across, the seas should ease up. The last quarter of the trip will be in comparatively smooth water, with the seas hooking around the south coast of St. Lucia and coming much more on the beam. Similarly, the wind frequently hooks around the south end of St. Lucia, lifting you to windward and enabling you to ease sheets as the coast of St. Lucia is approached. This effect is generally only felt to windward of the rhumb line; to leeward of the rhumb line you will not be getting the lift and will have to fight your way up to the Pitons against wind and current.

The sail from St. Vincent to St. Lucia used to be a long one, because you had to go all the way to Castries to clear. It was illegal to stop anywhere in St. Vincent along the way. Finally, in 1985, the St. Vincent government did something I've been urging in print for fifteen years: They made Soufrière a preclearance station. This shortens the run by 12 miles. You still can't stop first in the Pitons, though—preclear in Soufrière, then backtrack to the Pitons.

The other way to St. Lucia is to take off south-eastward from Young Island or Blue Lagoon until you are off soundings. When the swell eases up, tack and head directly for Vieux Fort, a distance of about 45 miles. This is a course for able boats to windward and should be undertaken when the tide is running eastward. This is an excellent sail when the wind is in the east or south of east, and less than excellent if it veers northeast.

ST. VINCENT TO MARTINIQUE

Castries to Fort-de-France is one of the finest sails in the Caribbean. The first five miles are sheltered by Pigeon Island on the northeast corner of St. Lucia—smooth water and plenty of wind. On leaving Castries, it is best to come hard on the wind till north of Pigeon Island, and then to bear off direct for Diamond Rock (Rocher du Diamant). The course is 005 magnetic, usually a splendid close reach across 18 miles of open water. The wind swings further aft under the southeast corner of Martinique. Quite likely you will become briefly

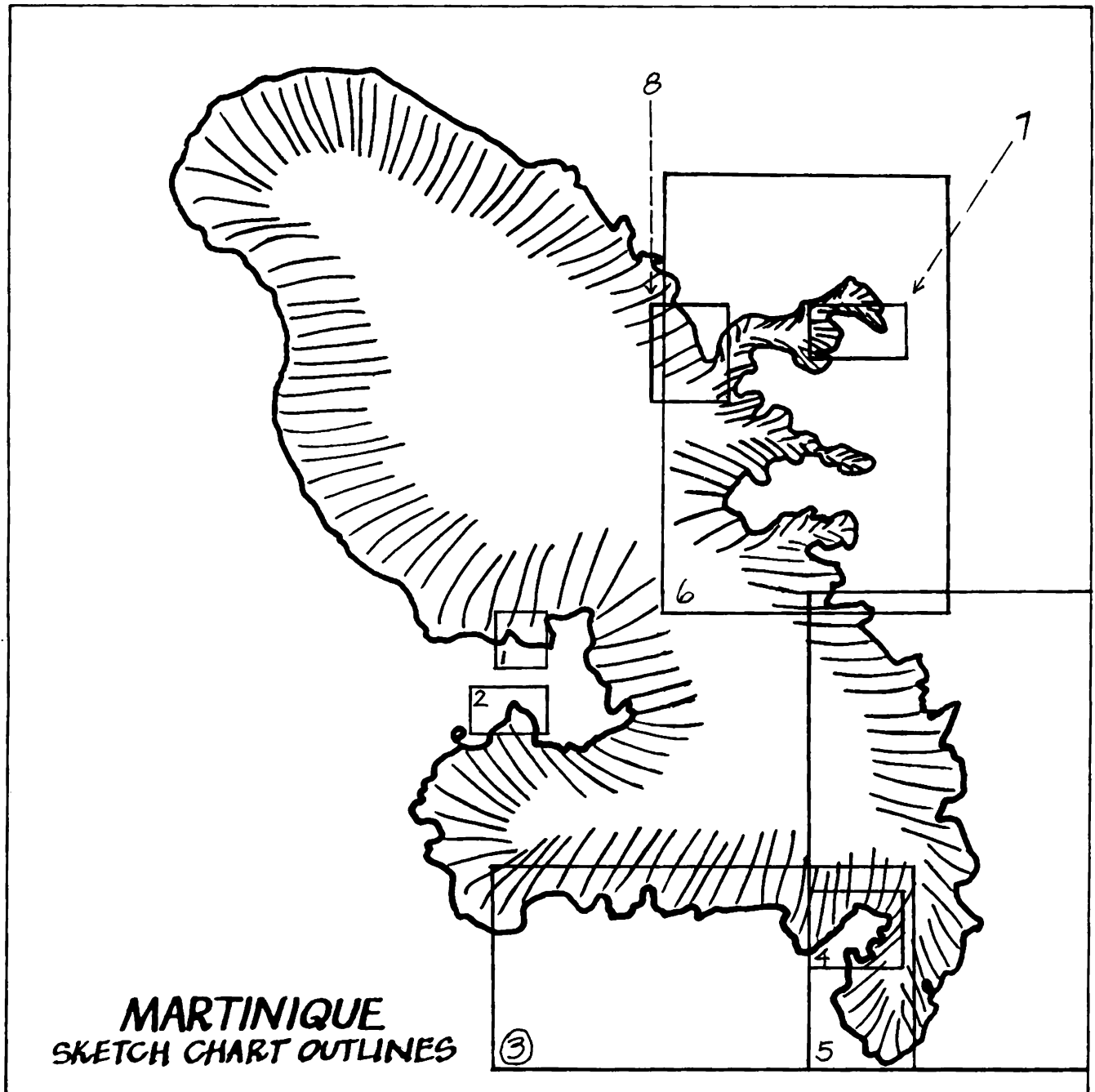
becalmed under Cap Salomon, but a good breeze resumes once you enter the bay of Fort-de-France. If you are making this trip at night, watch out for the unlit Fond Blanc buoy on the northeast corner of Banc du Gros Îlet; it is dead on a line between Cap Salomon and Fort-de-France.

MARTINIQUE TO DOMINICA OR GUADELOUPE

I prefer to head south, gunk holing around Martinique's east coast, before taking off from Tartanne,

clearing Caravelle Peninsula, and laying a course for Scotts Head, Dominica, 45 miles away on a broad reach. If you wish to bypass Dominica, steer 010 magnetic for the light on Îles de la Petite Terre southeast of Guadeloupe, a magnificent reach all the way.

If you decide to sail up the west coast of Martinique, don't set out before 1000, as there is no wind before this time. With any luck you will pick up a light breeze along the coast before clearing the lee of the island and setting out for Scotts Head.



2



Martinique

III, A, B, A-30, A-301

Martinique is one of the largest and most populous islands in the Eastern Caribbean, with 425 square miles and 340,000 people. The spoken languages are two strains of French, one fairly pure and the other an indecipherable patois. The natives, who are in fact French citizens, regard themselves as Frenchmen rather than West Indians, and this is reflected everywhere. Fort-de-France is a sort of Paris of the New World. Its women are beautiful and well dressed, and the sidewalk cafés are always filled with an assortment of types sipping their *punch vieux* and admiring the passing scenery. The restaurants are of a very high quality, and the local boutiques offer many of the latest fashions.

Martinique is high and lush. Mountains tower over vast fields of cane and banana. Country roads vary from beautiful four-lane highways to grotesque contours of rubble and mud. The good beaches are on the east coast for the most part and difficult to reach, except by boat.

In the last twenty years, tourism has arrived in wholesale fashion. As late as 1965, it was considered a noteworthy event to have ten yachts moored off the Savanne. In December 1973, I counted eighty-six; in February 1985, there were almost 100 boats anchored off the Savanne and another 100 in Anse Miton, and all 120 berths in the Marina du Bout were filled. Monsieur Le Breton, head of Customs and Immigration for yachts, reports that during January and February of 1985, fifty to sixty boats cleared every day. It's a far cry from the days when there were so few yachts and things were so informal that the recommended method of entering a yacht in Martinique was to write out one's crew list and hand it to the first gendarme you saw, who would probably lose it.

Customs and Immigration is open seven days a week from 0800 to 1200, and 1500 to 1700. With your ship's papers and passports visit the office at the head of the water and fuel dock at the western end of the anchorage; you will be greeted by Monsieur Le Breton (affectionately known to his yachting friends as 007), who will handle your entrance and clearance with tremendous enthusiasm and cheerfulness and no charge at all. (Other Islands should take note of the swift, efficient, and free Customs and Immigration service granted in Martinique.)

The amount of paperwork the French require is substantial, but they do supply pens, paper, carbon paper, and a running commentary as to why the French Islands are far superior to the former British colonies.

You may enter at Saint Pierre, Fort-de-France, Marin on the south coast, or La Trinité on the north coast (if you can find the Customs officer). However, you can leave only by clearing out of Fort-de-France. Your boat does not actually have to be in Fort-de-France: if you are on the east coast you can grab a bus, taxi, or car from the boat to town, fill out the Customs and Immigration papers, and return to the boat. Similarly, when entering, it is perfectly acceptable to anchor in Anse Miton, hop in the ferry, go over to Fort-de-France to enter, and then come back via ferry—at least it was in February 1985.

Flight service in and out of Martinique is excellent, with direct flights from Paris and the States, plus inter-island service to the Eastern Caribbean.

Cruise ships plow in and out all winter long. I have seen as many as three enter Fort-de-France on a single day. Hotels and guest houses are to be found throughout the island. Most of the new ones

are expensive, geared to the needs of the modern tourist. Some of the old-fashioned ones are not only less expensive, but much more fun, and have better food. There are many fine small restaurants on the island that do not appear in the travel brochures. On a French island, one should never worry about the outside appearance of a restaurant. Simply arrive around 1230 and observe the clientele. If it is predominantly French-speaking Martinicans (or Martiniquais), sit down and enjoy a meal. Like the Frenchman, the Martinican demands good food and value for money spent.

A stop at the tourist office is well worthwhile, as there you can pick up a brochure covering the vast majority of hotels and restaurants in Martinique. Cross check with the locals, who will be able to recommend which ones are best at the moment.

Out in the countryside there are a number of restored estates that serve as restaurants, guest houses, and hotels. It is a long ride from town, but Plantation Leyritz on the northeast side of the island in the foothills of Pelée has an extremely good reputation. Various others are also worth visiting.

The yachtsman who doesn't want to travel for his dinner or sightseeing should remember that the restaurant on top of the yacht club has excellent reviews—and is only a dinghy ride away.

Martinique is a prime spot to stock up on foods of all kinds. The various self-styled "supermarkets" carry an excellent selection of imported meats, cheese, and poultry. *A word of caution about French poultry:* It is frequently sold plucked and frozen but not cleaned. Be sure to gut it as soon as it thaws. (Buying chicken in Martinique is something of a risk anyway. The last time we purchased chicken in Martinique, my excellent mate and cook Alston Blackett prepared it in his normal superb fashion. After dinner we decided that Alston had made a bad error: after cooking the chicken for hours he should have thrown it overboard and served us the roasting pan, which would have been easier to chew than the chicken. We concluded it had flown all the way from France.)

The yachting industry has increased so much in recent years that some of the stores offer free delivery to the yacht landing; check with Yacht Services Martinique (YSM), the small office at the head of the dock, for further information.

The supermarket on the road parallel to the waterfront is good, has a friendly staff, and will deliver to the dinghy dock on request.

For years Philippe Vatiez has supplied yachts with wine, champagne, and liquor. His choice of

wine is superb, varying from cheap to the finest of the fine. We have always ordered from the bottom (cheap) end of his list and we have never had a bad bottle. He has moved his warehouse from underneath Ship Shop to the main port, but the chap who runs Martinique Yacht Services at the head of the fuel dock is his agent and will take orders and payment and arrange delivery. Place your order when you arrive and they will arrange delivery just before you leave; you must present your clearance papers before they will deliver the booze.

YSM also stocks the Street guides and, I hope, Imray-Iolaire charts.

When it comes to stocking the boat with food, you will find an enormous selection from which to choose. But I can recommend the second street in from the waterfront, Rue Ernest Déprog, where among other stores you'll find a greengrocer and some wholesale food shops where you can buy sacks of onions, potatoes, and so on.

A stop on any Eastern Caribbean island is not complete without a visit to the local market, and Martinique's covered market, its roof supported by ornate cast-iron pillars, was by far the best and most picturesque market in the entire Eastern Caribbean.

When I arrived in Fort-de-France in March 1986, I was shocked to find just an empty lot where the market used to be. My disappointment was replaced by joy, though, when I discovered it had not been demolished but had been disassembled to be repaired, restored, and rebuilt. If the restoration of the market is as good as the restoration of the cathedral (be sure to visit the cathedral), the market will turn out to be magnificent. The market, now totally open-air, has been temporarily moved to the east bank of the River Madame, near the river's mouth.

The easiest way to get to and from the market is via dinghy. Land at the small fueling station and tie your dinghy alongside the dock, using a couple of fenders. The secondary market, which is also the fish and meat market (plus an ice house, where block ice can be bought), is further up the river and has a larger and more convenient dinghy landing. There are also a couple of small supermarkets across the street. From the upper market you can load everything directly into the dinghy.

A word of warning: The River Madame is also the local sewer. Don't fall in; I don't know which would be worse—to drown in the river or to be rescued from it. If you have a leaky dinghy, be sure you are wearing sea boots or your toenails will dissolve in the bilge water.

Don't go to the market too early; the French don't really get going until 0830.

I cannot think of a better way to wind up a morning of shopping than to sit down at the open-air bar at the Impératrice or on the balcony of the Gallia, order a cold beer, and watch the fantastic scenery passing by. One can debate as to whether or not the women of Martinique are the most beautiful in the Eastern Caribbean, but they are certainly the best dressed and have the most fantastic carriage. The local boutiques offer the latest fashions, but at a price that is so high I think the extremely chic Martinique women must make their own clothes.

For marine supplies visit the Ship Shop on Rue Joseph Compère; around the corner, on Rue François, you will find SCIM, which has some marine supplies and plenty of fishing gear. Unfortunately,

anywhere near the area, the dock gate gets removed, and the dock is flooded. If you happen to have a few planks out, or some plates off the bottom of a steel boat, that's tough; you are sunk in the dry dock. This has happened more than once in years gone by.

Martinique now boasts four sail makers. Fidol has been holding fort for well over twenty years at Pont de Redonte, voie No. 2, telephone: 4227. Helenon (telephone: 97200) is in 34 Boulevard Allegre, the road on the east side of the River Madame. At Anse Mitane, sail makers can be found at the Bakoua Marina; they do quick repairs right there at the marina; they make sails and do major repairs at their main loft on the east side of the road from the Hôtel Bakoua to Anse Mitane; and West Indies Sail (Quai West PB 704, telephone: 63-04-80) is found on the west side of the

you have to find a phone that works, then have handy a stack of five-franc coins. Finally, you have to find the right code: the 1984 French code book, for instance, listed the British Islands code as 45; it is actually 49. So, the best deal in phoning we found was at the Hôtel Méridien, in Anse Mitan, whose operators are fast, efficient, and extremely friendly and speak English. Telexes can be sent from the Ship Shop, from the main post office, and by anyone you find who has a telex and who is in a friendly mood.

Public transport around Martinique is excellent. Some routes are covered by buses, others by public taxi—*taxi pays* or *taxi collective*. Just go to the taxi parking area by the fueling pier, look for a *taxi collective* with the destination you want painted on its side, and hop in; the ride is fast and cheap. When taking a *taxi collective* to a distant part of the island, though, be sure to note when the last one returns in the evening; if you miss it you could face a very expensive regular taxi ride.

Depending on the dollar-franc exchange, you may find renting a car in Martinique to be relatively inexpensive. You can spend a few interesting days exploring the island this way. A word of warning if you go swimming in any of the rivers: Flash floods sometimes rush down the river gorges, sweeping all before them; woe betide anyone in the water at the time. Friends of ours who are good swimmers very nearly lost their lives in one of these flash floods.

Among the sights to see in Martinique are the *gommier* races. The Carib canoes are about 30 feet long and carry a massive cat ketch rig. Spiritsails are set loose-footed on both masts, with the main overlapping the mizzen like a genoa jib. A crew of five men hang over the weather side on hiking poles (the sliding seat and the trapeze are nothing new to the West Indians).

According to experts, there are three types of boat referred to generically as *gommiers*. The original canoes were carved out of single logs; nowadays the bottom is a single log, with frames and planks added to provide the necessary freeboard. Basically there is no keel, but they feature a long ram bow. Apparently the original cat rig had one small sail forward—the long ram bow acted like a centerboard to keep the bow from blowing off to leeward.

A later version, called a *yole*, looks similar but is built up with a proper keel, frames, and planks. The newest addition to the fleet is the *petit yole* class, started in 1984. These are approximately 18 feet long (instead of 25 to 30 feet), carry the same rig, and are sailed in the same way—but by kids,

usually the sons of the men racing the big boats. The hope is to get the kids hooked on the sport early so they will keep it going in the future. (I am told there are also rowing races in *gommiers*.)

All these canoes are commercially sponsored and are raced with tremendous enthusiasm and skill, and they provide a real spectacle—if one can figure out the racing schedule. The schedule seems to be a military secret, but basically there are about twenty races a year, twelve of them occurring in July, August, and early September. I have been told that if you check with the Office du Tourisme, Borge Postal 520, Fort-de-France, you might be able to get a copy of the schedule.

I have never seen a race in Martinique, although I have spent the better part of twenty-five years chasing them; fate was always against me. But I did finally see the *gommier* races on Irish television, of all things. I happened to be in the Marine Hotel at Glandore, County Cork, having a pint of Guinness, and what should come on the “telly” but an excellent fifteen-minute color program featuring the *gommier* races in Martinique. The races are extremely exciting, closely fought with cash prizes to the winners, masses of people following from the shore and on the water—definitely worth watching one way or another.

Small-boat sailing in general is popular in the bay of Fort-de-France, which is ideal for it, as it is large enough to give plenty of room for exploring; the land to the east breaks any sea but is low enough so that it does not block the wind. Windsurfing is extremely popular and there are at least two schools where beginners may learn—one at the Hôtel Méridien and another on the open beach at Anse Mitane.

Martinique is one of the best-charted islands in the Caribbean. The American National Ocean Survey publishes four charts of Martinique (NOAA 25084, 25085, 25086, and 25087). The British have two (BA 371 and 494). The French, on the other hand, publish ten, all of which not only are fairly well up-to-date, but are also the best and most modern charts in the entire Lesser Antilles. This resulted from the fact that during World War II the French Antilles sided with Vichy France, and an aircraft carrier, numerous destroyers, and a cruiser loaded with all the gold from the Bank of France took refuge in Fort-de-France harbor. The U.S. Navy blockaded these ships from the time of the fall of France in 1940 until the Free French took over in mid-1944. The officers of the blockaded fleet had nothing to do, so they set to work recharting the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and did a superb job.

man who has spent ten years exploring the island.

Incidentally, make sure you have on board the latest Imray-Iolaire charts, because the French are continually adding new buoys, lights, and ranges. They are also in the process of switching *from the European buoyage system (green-right-returning) to the North American system (red-right-returning)*.

FORT-DE-FRANCE HARBOR

Baie de Fort-de-France is commodious, contain-



ing many anchorages and coves that will provide shelter in all weathers. If one of these becomes rough under certain conditions, you only have to move a short distance to a more favorable spot.

When entering the harbor at night, the course from Cap Salomon to the anchorage at the Savanne leads almost directly across the position of a large unlit buoy in the middle of the harbor. Keep a good lookout for it, because it is big enough to do substantial damage to your boat.

The principal yacht anchorage is off the town at the Anchorage des Flamands. Anchor southwest of the covered pier, due west of the north end of Fort St. Louis. Feel your way in with the lead and anchor at a convenient depth. The bottom shoals very gradually. If you are passing the night, keep an eye on your outboard. Some islanders find them exceedingly adaptable to their fishing canoes. The anchorage is satisfactory in normal weather; when the wind swings around to south or southwest, it is time to move along. When this happens, I would advise crossing the harbor to Anse Miton.

The advantage of anchoring off the Savanne is that it is only a short dinghy ride ashore. You can tie up to the fueling pier, where fresh water and ice are also available. You can also take the dinghy up the River Madame to the market for fresh fruit and vegetables; a supermarket is across the street, an ice house is alongside the fish market—everything is in one place. This way, you can load the dinghy and avoid the traffic jams at the other supermarkets.

BAIE DU CARENAGE

(II 1, A, B, A-30; Sketch Chart III-1)

East of Fort St. Louis, this is the home of a yacht club—a good shelter if you are willing to put up with the heat, the dirt, the odor, and the noise. The yacht club has a well-stocked bar, shower rooms, and fresh water. Boats drawing 6½ feet can moor stern-to for short periods. The smell is so atrocious that I can't imagine anyone's staying more than an hour or so. On the east side of the bay are the steamer docks and the main dry dock.

BAIE DES TOURELLES

(1, A, B, A-30; Sketch Chart III-1)

East of the steamer dock, Baie des Tourelles has a first-rate yacht yard that was run for many years by M. Jean Grant. Some charts of this area do not show that deep water now carries all the way up the mouth of the river just east of the yard. Favor the eastern shore.

Unfortunately, Monsieur Grant, a wonderful man whose yard had much to do in keeping *Iolaire* going in my early years of owning her, is no longer with us. Gabriel, who worked with M. Grant for fifty-five years (yes, for fifty-five years—he started working at age ten), has now retired but still lives at the yard.

Draft at the yard is limited to 6 feet, but at full high-water springs they were able to get *Iolaire's* 7'3" on the cradle. If you own a wooden boat, be aware that many of the old shipwrights who worked on *Iolaire* twenty-odd years ago are still there today.

There is a vast supermarket at Monoprix, within walking distance from Grant's; thus you can take your dinghy to Grant's, walk to the supermarket, do your shopping, get a taxi ride back, load stores into the dinghy, and be off. Alternately, take *taxi collective* Famentir from town, do your shopping, and take the taxi back to the dinghy landing.

ANSE MITAN

(II 1, A, B, A-30; Sketch Chart III-2)

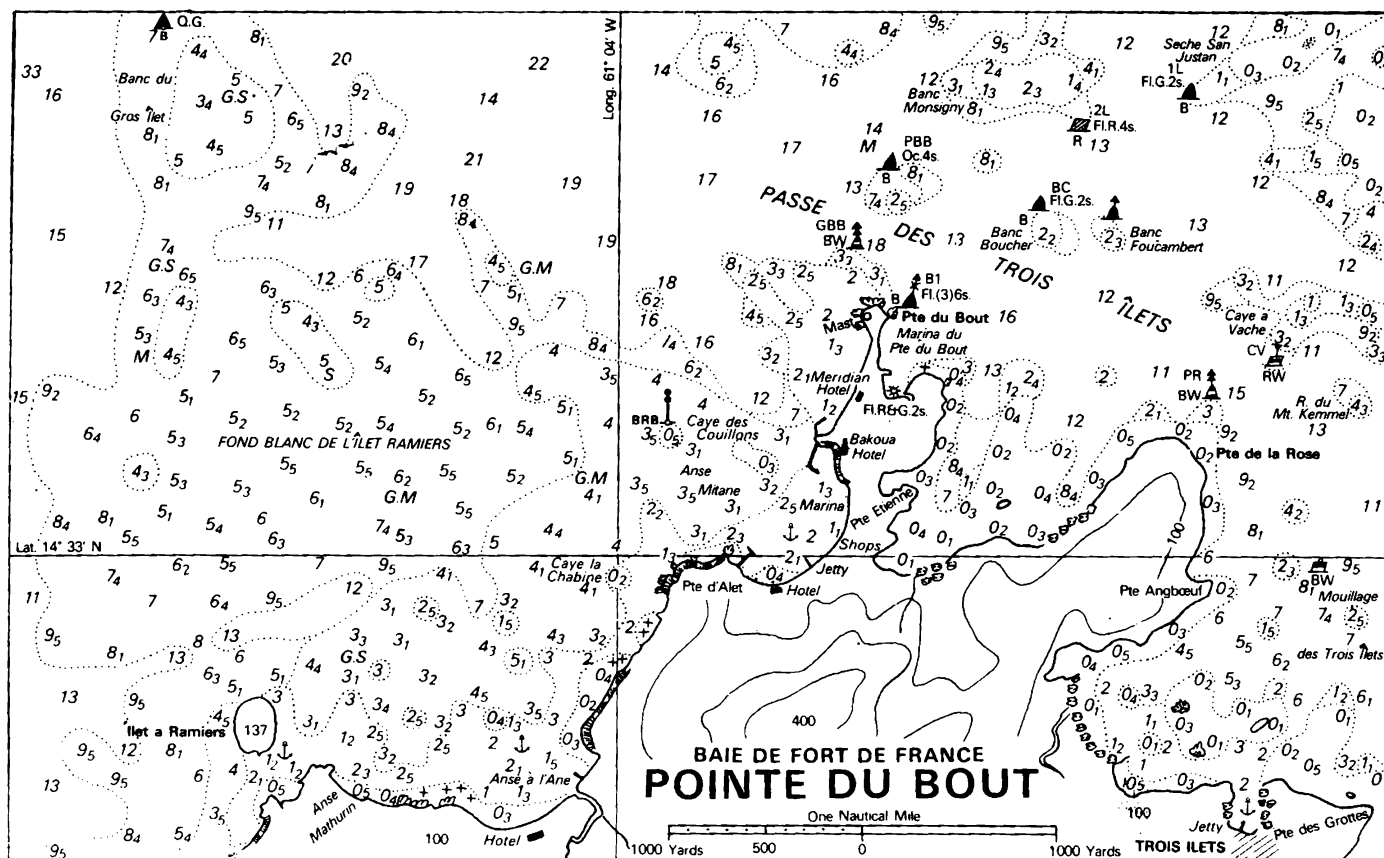
The chart lists it as Anse de Cocotiers; Anse Miton, the local name, is more commonly used. This is an indisputably fine anchorage and understandably popular with the French. It has one of the few decent beaches in the area within easy access of the town—a three-mile reach coming and going.

A word of warning to those sailing from the anchorage off the Savanne: Do not head directly for Anse Miton or else you will come to a resounding halt against the shoal that extends southwest from Fort St. Louis. Instead, keep west of the line bearing 210 magnetic from the Savanne pier. When the large flashing buoy approaches the port beam, head for the Hôtel Bakoua at the northern end of the anse.

Another hazard to be reckoned with on the way to Anse Miton is a shoal with coral heads about 500 yards due west of the hill on the north end of the beach where the Hôtel Bakoua is. You can avoid it by laying a course from the shoal off Fort St. Louis direct to Pointe du Bout and thereafter hugging the shore south to the Anse Miton anchorage.

So many boats have hit this reef, which lies right on the line from the Anse Miton anchorage to that at Fort-de-France off the Savanne, that the locals call it Cay de Cauillos, or Idiots Reef. In March of 1985 the reef was marked by a small yellow buoy. It may still be so marked—but don't count on it.

On the weekend, Anse Miton is inundated by



SKETCH CHART III-2 Pointe du Bout

the French from Fort-de-France. They love to tear around the bay at full throttle in their little hot-rod outboards. Swimmers take heed: If you want to get ashore, row.

Anse Mitan remains a good refuge from the crowded, dirty anchorage of the Savanne, with excellent ferry service both to the dock at Anse Mitan and to the Marina Pointe du Bout, from which it is only a short walk through the hotel to the anchorage on the beach.

Excellent meals are available at Anse Mitan. The Méridien and the Bakoua are first-class international hotels, sometimes with lavish entertainment. Elsewhere on the beach are too many restaurants to be listed here. A great occupation if you are staying at Anse Mitan for a week or so is to have lunch at a different restaurant each day and dinner at a different restaurant each evening; all are good—some are just better than others.

Happily, we discovered in 1985 that all supplies are available in the Anse Mitan area; there is a supermarket over in Marina Pointe du Bout, a bank (closed on Mondays but open on Saturday mornings), restaurants, a small marine store on the road that leads to the Hôtel Méridien, and a newsagent. Down in the middle of Anse Mitan, by

the windsurfer Pedalo establishment, an excellent patisserie sells fresh bread, sticky buns, and croissants at 0700 in the morning. Up the small road next to the *patisserie*, on the left-hand side, is an excellent greengrocer; further up you'll find a superb butcher and a nice little supermarket. One thing not available at Anse Mitan is block ice, but cube ice can be bought from the hotels or from the marina at the Bakoua, run by Charlotte Honnart. Here you can find water, fuel, bread, pastries, and books (including the Street guides and Imray-Iolaire charts).

You can get back and forth between Anse Mitan and Fort-de-France by two ferries: the Méridien-Bakoua ferry, which comes in to Marina Pointe du Bout, a big, fast catamaran that leaves town on the half hour and leaves the marina on the hour; and the smaller and more erratic Anse Mitan-Anse l'Âne ferry. This ferry leaves Anse Mitan sometime between a quarter and half past the hour, goes to Anse l'Âne and then back to Fort-de-France, whence it leaves on the hour.

About the only thing that seems to be lacking in Anse Mitan is a post office; the nearest one is at Trois Îlets. A bus goes from Anse Mitan to Trois Îlets on the half hour and returns on the hour.

TROIS ÎLETS

(II I, A-30; Sketch Chart II-2)

In the southwest corner of Baie de Fort-de-France, Trois Îlets is an out-of-the-way spot, difficult to reach by car and seldom visited by yachts. The anchorage (due north of town) is mud bottom and is frequently used as a hurricane hole. The holding is not too good, but if you drag there is only soft bottom to end up on.

When sailing to Trois Îlets from Fort-de-France, be careful of the numerous shoals that litter the eastern side of the bay. They are all buoyed and there is plenty of water between them.

A better idea is to anchor at Anse Mitan and take the bus to Trois Îlets. It's worth an afternoon's visit. La Pagerie, the museum of Josephine Bonaparte, is there, as well as a botanical garden. It's a nice, old-fashioned Martiniquais town with tiled roofs and boasts a number of small restaurants as well as the post office.

COHE-DU-LAMENTIN

(II A-30; French 5916)

In the northeasternmost corner of Fort-de-France harbor, this area offers the Port Cohe Marina, an excellent hurricane shelter. Draft in the channel is limited to six feet, though, and once there you are in the middle of nowhere, as the airport is two km away on a rough road.

I've never been there, and will rely on the directions supplied by Lachesnez-Heude/Noel: "Steer 100 degrees from the red-and-white buoy marked CAR situated in the middle of Cohe-du-Lamentin, proceed toward the entrance of the small channel, which is hard to see from a distance but identifiable once you draw near a grounded barge, which must be left to port." In theory, at least, the rest of the channel is marked by gas lights.

Leaving Anse Mitan for Fort-de-France, hug the shore until past the Bakoua, and then head for the buoy marking the end of the shoal off Fort St. Louis. If you are bound for Pointe des Nègres, again stay inshore until the Bakoua is abeam, as otherwise you may clip the 5-foot spot that lies on the line between Anse Mitan and Pointe des Nègres.

MARINA POINTE DU BOUT

(II I, A, B-30; Sketch Chart III-2)

East of Pointe du Bout there is a marina, perfectly sheltered, with ten feet and possibly a little

more water inside. It is entered from the north through a buoyed channel that, while narrow, is wide enough to accommodate the big, powered catamaran that runs the ferry service from the Savanne to Marina Pointe du Bout.

The marina provides a place to lay alongside, with showers, water, and electricity for the yachtsman who wishes to spend some time in Martinique but does not want to lie in the crowded and filthy waters of some of the anchorages. The marina is also completely landlocked, and would provide an excellent hurricane hole as well as a place to leave a boat in Martinique if you had to be away during the hurricane season.

Do not try to enter the marina without first anchoring at Anse Mitan or in the lee of Pointe du Bout and walking over to see if there are mooring slips available (there's barely room to turn around); every time I have looked at the marine it has been jam-packed, and people tell me there is a waiting list to obtain docking space.

I don't know anyone who has explored the eastern side of the Baie de Fort-de-France in a yacht, but if I were to do it, I would certainly have the detailed French harbor chart No. 5916 on hand.

In general, remember that Baie de Fort-de-France can be a veritable death trap if a hurricane passes over the island, or even if one passes north of it. This would build up a large westerly swell, which makes all normal anchorages completely untenable. Some boats try to hide in Cohe-du-Lamentin; but this is also a commercial anchorage and is likely to be loaded with freighters. If the marina is not filled, smaller boats can get up the creek to that haven, as described above. Trois Îlets, also mentioned above, is well-sheltered but a poor holding. The carenage east of Fort Royal would be disaster, as a strong surge pours back and forth through there, making it impossible to anchor or get secure to the dock.

If a hurricane looms, my advice is to get out of Baie de Fort-de-France and go to Cul-de-Sac du Marin; or, if you have time, get around to the east coast of Martinique and duck into one of the many excellent hurricane holes there.

ANSE À L'ÂNE

(II A-301; Sketch Chart III-2)

As you leave Anse Mitan and head for Cap Salomon and the mouth of Baie de Fort-de-France, you come to Anse à L'Âne. It is a real sleeper—

one of the more attractive anchorages in the area—and until recently was seldom used by yachtsmen.

It is quieter, with nowhere near so many people as Anse Mitan. Yet it has an attractive hotel at its western end and a number of restaurants along the beach. The easternmost one is a drinking man's delight: a classic *petit punch* for four francs; three dollars' worth would send almost anyone down in flames.

Another attraction of Anse à L'Âne is a hand-powered, carved wood carousel equipped with an amazing set of bearings: one shove spins it three full revolutions. Think how fast it could get going at fiesta time with a bunch of well-lubricated celebrants spinning it around!

Ashore at Anse à L'Âne it is only a short walk to a small grocery store and an interesting shell museum. The ferry dock is a good place to tie up the dinghy, but be sure to use the southwest side, since the ferry comes along its northeast face.

When sailing from Anse Mitan to Anse à L'Âne, pass outside the shoal due west of Pointe d'Alet. Then watch out for the four-foot spot out from the center of Anse à L'Âne beach. Both of these hazards had marks on them in 1985; don't count on their still being there. Incidentally, the reefs west of Pointe d'Alet provide excellent snorkeling.

A somewhat erratic ferry connects Anse à L'Âne with Anse Mitan, as described above; you can also make the trip by a perfectly pleasant dinghy ride in sheltered water.

In normal trade-wind weather, Anse à L'Âne is a well-protected anchorage. If the wind backs to the north, or a ground swell starts coming in from the northwest, it will definitely become uncomfortable (as will Anse Mitan)—but probably not dangerous, since the beach is flat. (Remember that you can tell when a beach is dangerous in north-west ground-swell conditions: It is always very steep-to, with soft sand.)

The rule of thumb for comparing the Savanne anchorage with those of Anse Mitan and Anse à L'Âne is the same as that for comparison between Basse Terre, St. Kitts, and Charleston, Nevis. If the anchorage is calm in the Savanne, it is likely to be choppy on the other side of the harbor; similarly, if the wind goes into the southeast, when Anse Mitan and Anse à L'Âne are sheltered, the Savanne will be rough.

If you have an exploratory urge, a lot of fun can be had with a dinghy or outboard in the various rivers and canals that radiate from the harbor of Fort-de-France. Many of them extend quite far inland to towns east of the harbor.

ÎLET À RAMIERS

(II 1, A, B, A-30; Sketch Chart III-2)

This is the little island at the southwest corner of Fort-de-France Harbor. The preferred anchorage is in the channel between the island and the mainland. Anchor in 10 feet of water over a white-sand bottom. Drop the hook when the dock on the island bears due north. This channel shoals to 6 feet east of Ramiers. Here, too, the swimming is excellent.

Unfortunately you are not allowed ashore, as the wonderful old fort that we used to explore in years gone by is now forbidden to visitors. When it was first closed we decided that at least it must be a secret missile site. It turns out that all the secrecy is merely to conceal a private club for the French military!

ANSE NOIRE AND ANSE DUFOUR

(II A-30)

These two small coves, which I have only looked at, are notable for the fact that although they are side by side, one has a white-sand beach, the other a black-sand beach.

In the winter, the ground swell would make them uncomfortable or even untenable. In periods when there isn't a ground swell, or in the summer, either of these bays could make a quiet, secluded anchorage.

At Anse Dufour, you'll find a white-sand cove, a fishing village, a small shop, a restaurant, and an excuse for a road leading up the valley. If you anchor too close inshore, the fishermen may ask you to move so that they can shoot their nets.

At Anse Noire, you will find, besides the black beach, the Coconut Grove, a thatched-roof restaurant with its own lobster tank. It's apparently a nice little place to visit.

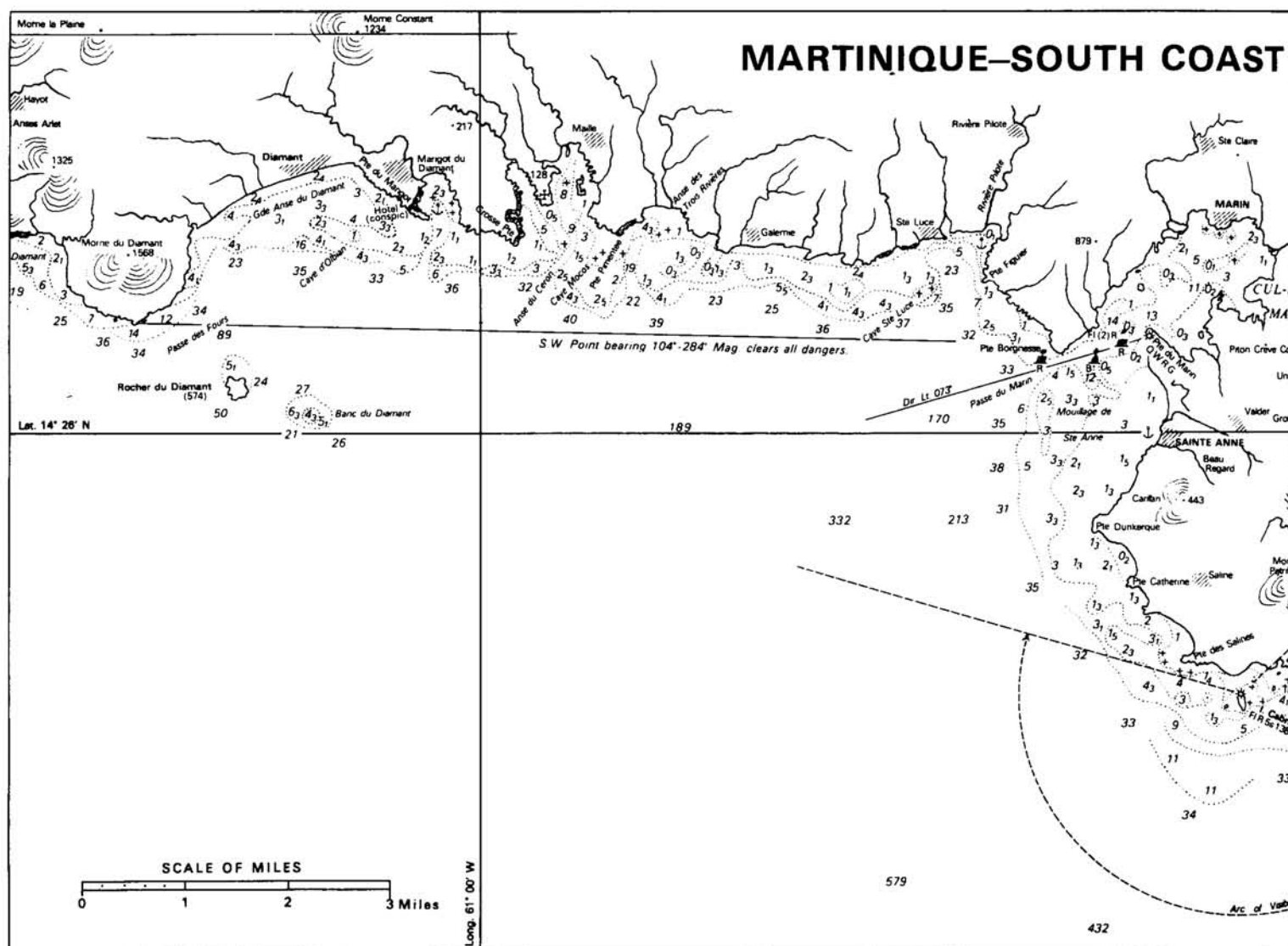
For a chart of these two coves and more specific directions, consult the Lachesnez-Heude/Nouel *Cruising Guide to Martinique*.

Southwest Coast

GRANDE ANSE D'ARLETS

(II 1, A, B, A-30; Sketch Chart III-3)

This is the first cove south of Cap Salomon and one of two good anchorages on the southwest coast. The bottom is white sand and good holding, with 2 fathoms in the southeast corner of the harbor. A slight roll is not too bothersome. The swimming is excellent.



SKETCH CHART III-3 Martinique—South Coast

What you want to do, ideally, is feel your way in to the extreme southeast corner and anchor in 2 fathoms, being sure to get your hook onto the edge of the shelf, since the bottom drops off steeply. But the fishermen shoot their nets here, as in Anse Dufour, and there has been friction between them and yachtsmen in the past. So it's wise not to get too close inshore. Stay about 200 yards off and you should be okay.

There is no real town at Grande Anse d'Arlets, only a fishing village with a variety of canoes, nets stretched out to dry, dogs, cats, goats, roosters, and bare-bottomed urchins running to and fro. As is usual in any small French village, there is a restaurant and bar.

At the north and south ends of the beach are some beautiful small cottages owned by wealthy citizens of Martinique, who come here in the summer to beat the heat of Fort-de-France. The

cove is likely to be crowded with local yachtsmen on Saturdays and Sundays.

PETITE ANSE D'ARLETS

(II 1, A, B, A-30; Sketch Chart III-3)

This is the next cove south of Grande Anse and not as sheltered, but it has the advantage of a good restaurant and ferry communication to Fort-de-France. Anchor off the town, but be careful of the coral bank at the northern end of the harbor; here, too, the bottom drops off steeply. The anchorage in the northeast corner usually avoids the swell. If you want to get away from town, a little cove to the south, Anse Chaudière, provides privacy, good snorkeling, and, in settled weather, a good anchorage in 2 fathoms. It's within dinghy distance of town. Avoid the sunken wreck south of the town dock.

The well-to-do citizens who come here from Fort-de-France used to travel by boat to avoid the kidney-busting roads. Now the roads are so improved that they commute by car. Still, the town has apparently kept its quaint character. Philippe Lachesnez calls this one of the best-preserved of the old Martinique towns.

PETITE ANSE DU DIAMANT

(II 1, A, B, B-30)

A small white-sand beach but not very good anchorage. I do not advise stopping here.

The most spectacular sight on the south coast of Martinique is the Rocher du Diamant or, as the British prefer, H.M.S. Diamond Rock—so called because in 1781 Admiral Hood somehow managed to establish a gun battery at the top of the mountain. The guns swept the channel between Diamond Rock and the mainland, closing it to all coastal traffic. Against the best efforts of the French, the British succeeded in holding out for some eighteen months. When they finally surrendered, the French arranged for their immediate exchange as prisoners, as it was felt that men so brave and resourceful should not be left to rot away in prison. How wars have changed!

How the French have changed! They have lost their sense of humor. Some years ago their navy was sending a squadron to Martinique to celebrate a national holiday. Two young Englishmen decided to have some fun. The night before the squadron's arrival, they scaled the cliffs of Diamond Rock and hung a huge white ensign, the symbol of the British Navy. In the morning as the French squadron sailed past H.M.S. Diamond Rock, the white ensign was clearly visible on the south face. The French admiral was apoplectic; he ordered a helicopter to lower a man on the rock to destroy the flag. The French complained through diplomatic channels, and before the dust settled, it had become something of an international incident.

For those who are interested in the history of the rock and its British occupation, the fighting, and the French recapture, there are two fine books: *Her Majesty's Sloop of War Diamond Rock*, by Stuart and Eggleston, is an extremely readable account of the affair. Dudley Pope turns the historical event into an excellent novel in *Ramage's Diamond*.

South Coast

This coast offers few really good anchorages until you get to its eastern end, and with the excellent

harbor of Ste. Anne beckoning from there, it would be my inclination to skip right on by the rest. Nevertheless, there are a number of small stopping places (which I haven't been in), and if you're a good reef pilot, have a small boat, and are into gunkholing, then these out-of-the-way spots might be a lot of fun.

A general warning, though: The water along this south coast is not so clear as it usually is in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the shoal water extends as much as a mile offshore in some places. (Cay Ste. Luce, for instance, which breaks only in heavy weather, is a full half-mile offshore.) To complicate matters, a strong westerly current works along the coast.

So although getting inshore on the shelf will get you out of the current, the water will be choppy as the swell comes up on the shelf, and will also be much harder to read. Basically, a safe policy is to tack offshore as soon as you see bottom. And keep a lookout in the bow and a chart on deck at all times.

Back bearings on the southwest tip of Martinique are a useful guide. If your bearing on the point under Diamond Rock is 285° or more, you should be in deep water. If the bearing gets less than 285°, watch out for shoal water. A good hand-bearing compass is a big help here.

The distance from Petite Anse d'Arlets on the southwest coast to Ste. Anne is only 13 miles, but it is best to allow the better part of the sailing day for the trip because of head winds and the strong westerly set. As you get closer inshore, the wind will get variable; play the lifts and headers for all they're worth and you'll save some time. *Do not* try to push on beyond Ste. Anne after 1100, because you will be unable to reach the east coast harbors before the light fails.

MARIGOT DU DIAMANT

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-3)

This is a proper little harbor, location of the Diamond Rock Hotel. Be careful of the reefs that extend out from Pointe du Marigot. A small dock under the hotel in the southwest corner offers fuel and water alongside. Do not go north of the buoys in the center of the harbor, since it shoals rapidly here. A good anchorage, in clear water, and sheltered in all winds except those from the south.

To the east of Marigot du Diamant, anchorage of sorts can be found at Anse du Céron (two little coves for the brave and careful), at Anse des Trois Rivières, at Ste. Luce, and at Rivière Pilote. All

are shown on Imray-Iolaire chart A-301, and on Sketch Chart III-3, but for these nooks and crannies, I highly recommend that you carry the *Cruising Guide to Martinique* by Lachesnez-Heude and Nouel; it has greater detail and a better scale.

Cul-du-Sac du Marin is a large harbor with numerous coves, many of which provide perfect hurricane holes. In fact, practically anywhere in the harbor provides good hurricane shelter if you have really good ground tackle.

When approaching the harbor, check the chart and the buoys, which by the time you read this *should be* "red right returning," i.e., green buoys on the port hand, red buoys on the starboard hand. Leave the buoy off Pointe Borgnesse to port, stay north of the next buoy, which marks a 4-foot spot, and south of the next marking a 3-foot spot; which many boats have hit despite its being noted on the chart. A bearing of 088 magnetic on Pointe du Marin will lead you clear of all dangers.

Club Med has an establishment on Pointe du Marin. Visitors are not welcome ashore unless they are members of the club—an attitude that will be made clear to you in no uncertain terms.

West of Club Med is not a good anchorage because the bottom drops off steeply down to 60 feet. You can find an anchorage near a white-sand beach on the shelf north of Pointe du Marin. Here you'll not only be sheltered from winds in all directions, but you'll also have excellent scenery ashore—the northern Club Med beach seems to be the one preferred by those who like to swim and sunbathe *au naturel*.

As you go on into the harbor, be careful. Most but not all of the shoals are buoyed. Eyeball navigation is the rule. There are too many coves to enumerate here. My advice is to anchor right inside the harbor off Club Med, get in your dinghy, spend an hour or so exploring Cul-du-Sac du Marin, then pick an anchorage that suits your taste. Some of the off-lying cays have good anchorages and there will be good snorkeling around the edge of the reefs. Other anchorages are tucked up inside mangrove coves and provide excellent fishing and birdwatching (of the feathered variety). The land east of Cul-du-sac du Marin is low—thus the trades are unobstructed, making the area cool and relatively bug free.

In the northeast corner of the harbor is Club Nautic, which seemed closed the two times I visited it. But I am told it is possible to get alongside the end of the dock to take on water; this could be important if you're going around to the

east coast because there's not much chance to get water there.

Looking at the number of boats stacked around Club Nautic, I imagine it would be a very active place over the weekend. That would be a good time to visit the club and find out more about Cul-du-Sac du Marin and the east coast.

If you're a serious oarsman, it might also be fun to find out who owns the lovely scull I came across there. She was of light clinker construction, had outriggers, a sliding seat, and a passenger seat—the only craft of its kind I've ever seen in all my years in the Caribbean.

The town of Marin has a Customs office, and the Customs officer has a job that I would love to have: He works on Wednesdays from 9 to 12 only. However, it's not much help to enter Customs in Marin, as you still have to do Immigration in Fort-de-France; so the best thing to do is to hop in a *taxi collective*, go to Fort-de-France, and take care of your paperwork there.

The town of Marin is not one of my favorites, as I almost died of thirst before I could find a bar. Nor are there many markets—but it does have four banks, whereas the neighboring town of Ste. Anne has none.

Cul-de-Sac du Marin is a good safe anchorage, an excellent hurricane hole, and a good place to practice small-boat sailing and windsurfing.

MOUILLAGE DE STE. ANNE

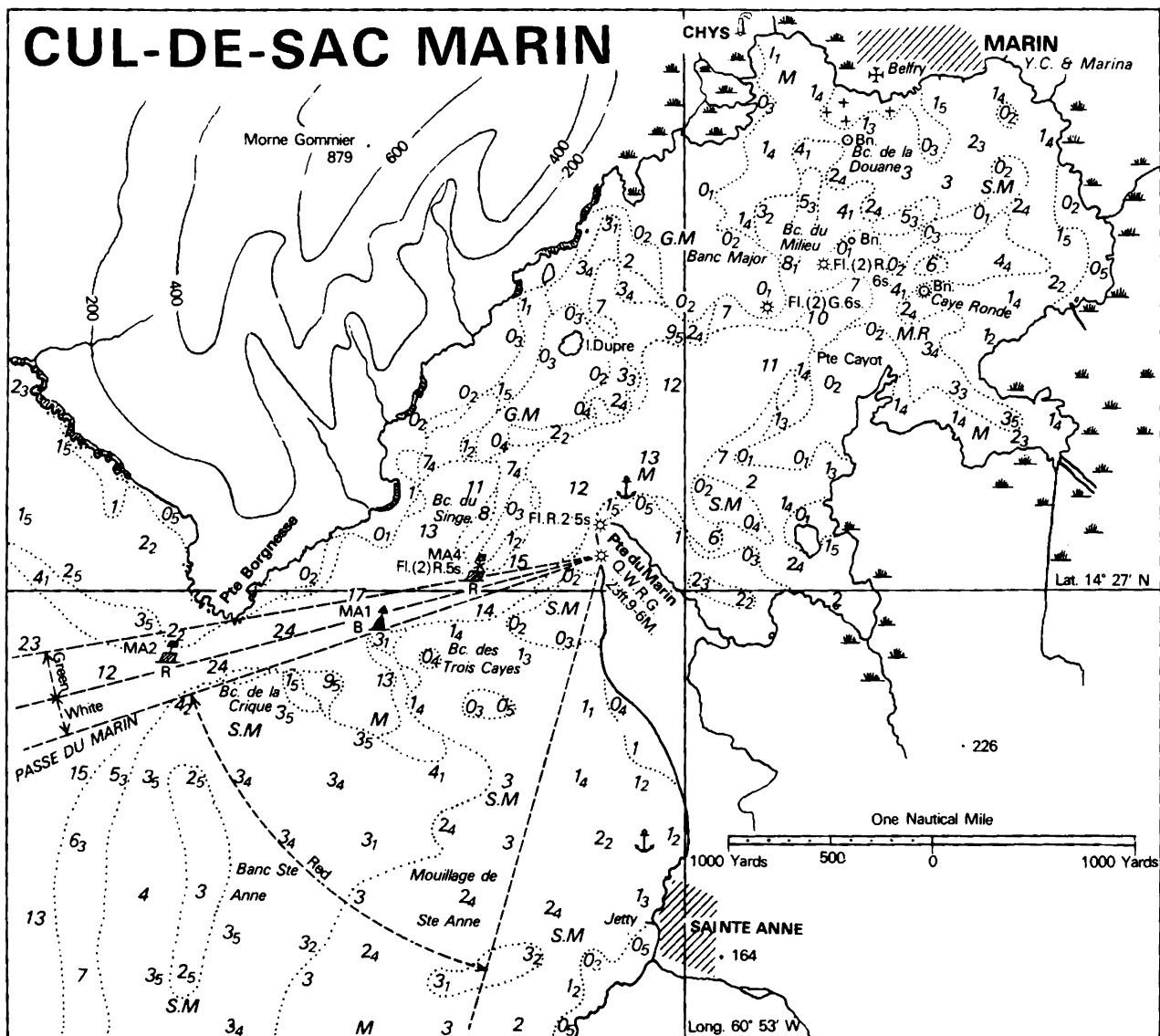
(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart 4)

This is one of the most attractive anchorages in the whole area. An excellent shelter in normal trade-wind weather, the entrance is simple and straightforward. Anchor west of town in 2 fathoms, feeling your way in; the bottom shoals gradually. Once there, you have easy access to the town of Ste. Anne.

This is basically a resort town, so the stores seem to be open seven days a week until late in the evening. A fish market, a small vegetable market, two or three unsuper supermarkets, a source of block ice, and a post office supply all the basic necessities—everything except a bank.

On the beach is the Filet Blue, with its glass dance floor. Underneath the floor are the lobsters you can have for lunch or dinner. Also along the beach are various small typical French seaside snack shops.

In town, the Hôtel Dunette has a pleasant bar and restaurant overlooking the harbor. A short



SKETCH CHART III-4 Cul de Sac Marin

walk south takes you to the restaurant Au Mahogany, which has been serving delicious meals to locals and visitors for a couple of decades.

In the next bay south is the Hôtel Caritan, a most hospitable place with boutique, restaurant, swimming pool, nightly music, and a helpful and efficient telephone operator. There is a pleasant, small beach south of the hotel.

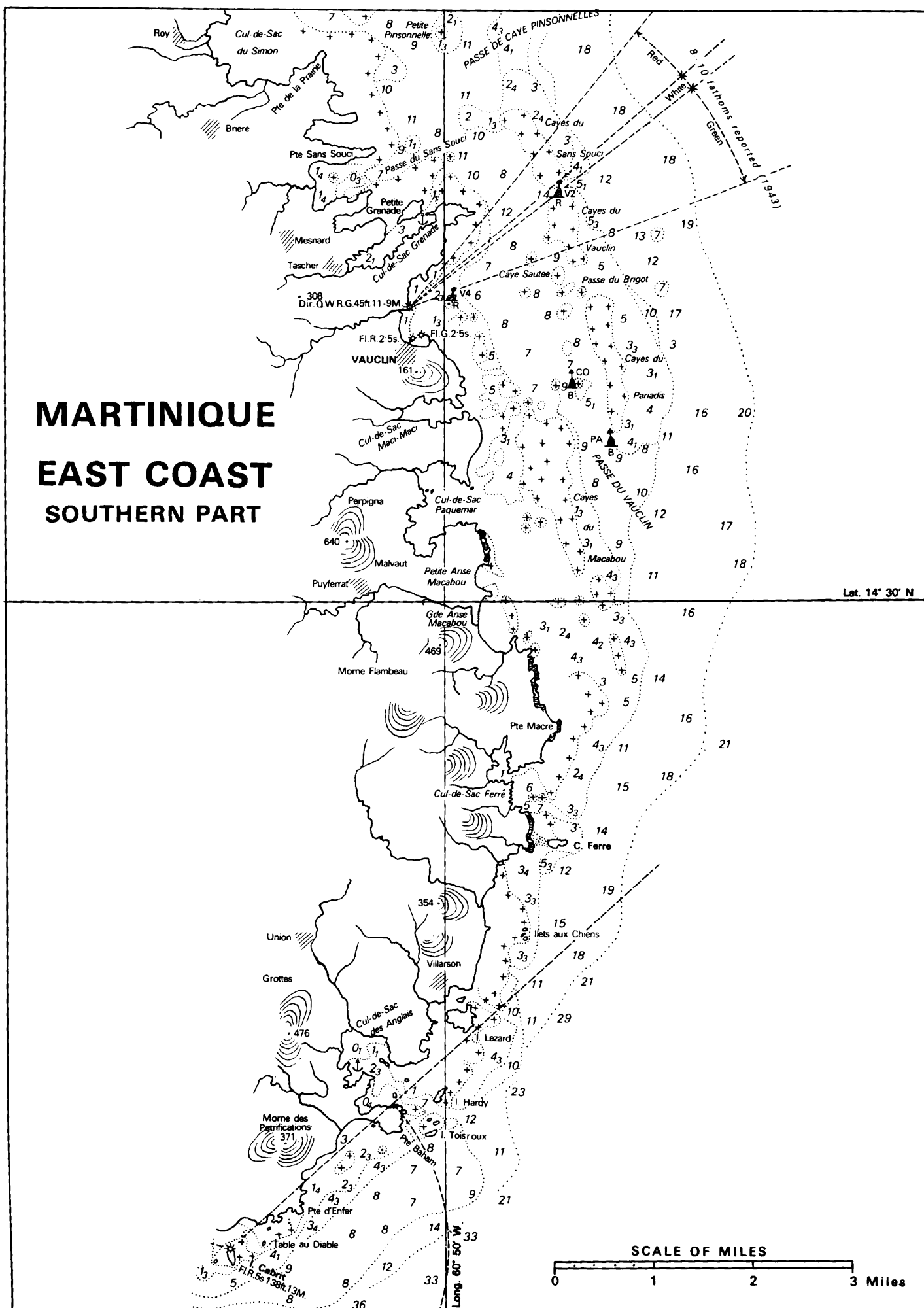
The anchorage in Mouillage de Ste. Anne extends over a mile and a half of very pleasant territory and is never too crowded with yachts.

East Coast

This coastline is thoroughly charted by French 384, 385, 389, and 390; and II A-30 and A-301. The east coast should be explored only by an

experienced yachtsman sailing a good, weatherly boat, a cruising guide in one hand, the appropriate French or Imray-Iolaire chart spread before him, and a man on the pulpit—or, better, on the spreaders. It offers wonderful cruising in an area where you are not likely to encounter many yachts. It may be rough or windy at times, but there are any number of harbors and coves that are completely sheltered and calm as a mill pond. At François, Robert, and Trinité, food and supplies can be bought. Lobster is plentiful and inexpensive. *Sudon*, the Caribbean cherrystone clam, can be found in the shoal water.

In planning a trip up the east coast, bear in mind that this is a lee shore with a strong current setting on it. Until you go through Passe du Vaucelin, there will be no protection from off-lying reefs. Once you get behind the reefs, they will dampen the



SKETCH CHART III-5 Martinique—East Coast—Southern Part

swell to give you a great sail. But you must stay on your toes as you thread through the reefs; looking back, it will not seem as bad as you anticipated.

Imray-Iolaire chart A-301 has all the information you need for normal cruising on this coast. Once again, though, if you're in a shoal-draft boat and have the time to explore every nook and cranny of the coast, I advise you have the Lachesnez-Heude/Nouel guide aboard. It is based on the authors' own experience and is not plagiarized from other guides.

I first cruised this coast in *Iolaire* in 1964, and believe she was one of the very first nonlocal yachts to do so. One other foreigner I know of to have cruised here in the early days is John Guthrie, who visited Cul-de-Sac des Anglais several times in his engineless Brixham trawler, *Pas de Loup*. But how he beat to windward out of that place in a Brixham trawler is beyond me. To tack one of those boats, you put the helm down, lash it, throw off the jib and jib-topsail sheets, leave the staysail sheeted, and go below and grab a cup of coffee; when you get back on deck, the staysail is aback, she has started to fall off on the other tack, and you are in time to unleash the helm and sheet in your headsails!

The French have always been very conscientious in establishing good buoyage systems, and Martinique's east coast is no exception. In fact, it's being expanded and improved so often that even the French charts are often out of date. The Imray-Iolaire charts are hand corrected to conform to the latest Notice to Mariners, but they, too, are sometimes not *au courant* with the latest developments. So be on your guard.

This coast makes a wonderful cruising ground, but it should be approached only in good light. Many leading lights guide local fishermen as they return home at night through the reefs, but no yachstman should try it after dark on his own.

Furthermore, I'd strongly advise against running dead downwind through any passes to get behind the reef. Better to approach from north or south and find a range that gets you through a pass on a reach.

If you're coming in from the north, pass to weather of Presqu'île de la Caravelle. Once Pointe Caracoli is abeam, bear off for Îlet de Ramville, or jibe around and head into Cul-de-Sac Tartane. The former course will put you to leeward of Loup Bordelais, the unbuoyed, northernmost shoal of the off-lying reefs. If you're heading south, just stay in blue water and you'll be all set.

In approaching from the south, stay well offshore in deep water until you pick up the buoys at

the south end of Passe Sud du Vauclin; then ease sheets and run up behind the reef. In heavy weather, don't even think about trying any of the passes through the reef between Vauclin and the pass east of Cul-de-Sac Frégate. It would be like running a New Jersey inlet in foul weather. On the other hand, once you do get behind the reef at Vauclin, you'll find comfortable sailing.

If you're coming from St. Lucia to explore the east coast, stop at Ste. Anne, check in, spend the night, and go around the next day. It is virtually impossible to get from St. Lucia to Passe Sud du Vauclin by 1200 on the same day; and if you get there any later than that, you will be running dead downwind into harbors with the sun in your eyes—a guaranteed way to get yourself into serious trouble.

When you leave Ste. Anne for the east coast, you've got to get around the corner. In the winter months when it's blowing hard, this can be a problem. In these conditions, beating around Îlet Cabrit (the southeasternmost part of Martinique) is to be avoided at all costs—the Atlantic swell shortens as it comes in on the island, humps up, and becomes horrendous.

Instead, stand south on a close reach after passing Pointe Dunkerque until you are in good deep water, then come on the wind and sail southeast. Tack north when you think you can clear Cap Ferré by a good bit (Cap Ferré looks like an island from distance). Do not allow yourself to fall down on the coast, as the sea becomes so steep and confused that it makes tacking difficult. Remember, too, that even after you pass Cap Ferré, the coast, and particularly its reefs, tends northeast for another 3 miles.

Once around the corner off Grande Anse Macabou, you can ease sheets and head for Passe Sud du Vauclin, which is well marked. Leave the red buoy to starboard and stand north inside the reef. Put a man in the bow or on the spreaders to help you avoid the various unbuoyed shoals north of the pass.

When it's blowing hard, I recommend that you go right to Cul-de-Sac Frégate and avoid all the harbors south of that—Vauclin, Anse du Sans Souci, Cul-de-Sac Grenade, etc. They are for gunkholing in calm weather.

General warning: When sailing on the east coast of Martinique, you must remember that almost all the entrance channels lead due west. Entrance should therefore be made before 1400; otherwise the sun will be in your eyes and eyeball navigation will be impossible. Similarly, when leaving harbors and heading due east, it is extremely difficult

to see the reefs before 1100, as the sun will be in the east and in your eyes.

CUL-DE-SAC DES ANGLAIS

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-5)

Tackling the entrance to Cul-de-Sac des Anglais in bad weather is, once again, like running a dangerous New Jersey inlet; furthermore, there's not much room to round up once you're inside. But in favorable conditions, the entrance is straightforward and the rewards are generous. This is an excellent anchorage, with lots of exploring possibilities.

Enter from the southeast on a course roughly northwest. Watch out for the rocks on the port side as you come in and round up under Îlet Hardy. Proceed as far north toward shoal water as your draft will permit, and anchor.

It is possible to take 7 feet up into Cul-de-Sac des Anglais. Its inner harbor is nothing more than soft mud with mangroves around the sides—good fishing, I suspect, and excellent birdwatching; peace and quiet in the mangrove and an enclosed anchorage. To do this, consult the Lachesnez-Heude/Nouel *Cruising Guide to Martinique* for detailed directions.

The dinghy can be taken northeast to Îlet Lézards, a mile away across reef-sheltered water and white-sand bottom. This area would be superb for windsurfing, as the wind sweeps unobstructed across the reef, while the reef breaks the swell completely.

A distinctive feature of this area is the fishermen who work from long, narrow bamboo rafts that they pole along just as if they were punting on the Thames. They sit on chairs secured to the raft; from three or four hundred yards, though, you can't see the raft, which is almost flush with the water. So all you see are men sitting on chairs in the middle of the sea. It's very startling.

The French chart shows an entrance between Pointe Baham and Îlet à Tois Roux. I am told that there is definitely no passage between these two islands. If you are coming up from the south and trying to sight Cul-de-Sac des Anglais, look for the black cliffs on Tois Roux.

CUL-DE-SAC FERRÉ; CUL-DE-SAC DU PAQUEMAR; CUL-DE-SAC MASSY-MASSY

(II 30, II 301)

These are all summertime anchorages for shoal draft boats. Consult the *Guide to Martinique* for details.

VAUCLIN

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-5)

This is the first town of any size that you will encounter going up the east coast. It is easily spotted from seaward by its church, which has a green roof. The chart shows a white, green, and red sector light that provides a nighttime range through the channel between Cayes du Sans Souci and Cayes du Vauclin. This is strictly for small-boat fishermen returning or for someone who really knows the area. It should not be attempted by yachtsmen under any circumstances; among other things, if you're running downwind with a big swell, steering control would be minimal.

The basin behind two breakwaters at the south end of Baie du Vauclin is strictly a small-boat refuge with 5 feet of water at its outer edge and 3 feet in the main part.

The bay itself is wide and shoal, and provides an anchorage of sorts; but there's no real shelter when the trades are up because the reef is so far to the east that there's room for a sizable chop to build up. There seems to be an anchorage due east of town behind the unnamed islet south of Baril de Beouf. On the beach south of town is a windsurfing school and a campsite; thus as you sail up the coast you will see windsurfers flitting across the flats south of town, a great place to windsurf, with white-sand bottom only 3 feet down.

CUL-DE-SAC GRENADE

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301, French 384, 385; Sketch Chart III-5)

Cul-de-Sac Grenade is not very well spoken of by the French, but I found it a delightful spot, a perfect anchorage, and a wonderful place to try out the sailing dinghy or explore with an outboard. In fact, with a dinghy one can stay inside the inner reefs and visit almost all the remaining east coast of Martinique, all the way to Robert, 10 miles to the north. Spotting the break in the reef that leads into Cul-de-Sac Grenade is none too easy unless you have someone high up in the rigging. In the spring of 1973, a Morgan 41 missed the channel entrance, hit a coral head, and sank. (In fact, put a man in the rigging when cruising *anywhere* on the east coast of Martinique.) The outer part of the channel is deep, with seas breaking on the reefs on both sides, giving a definite line of demarcation. Once you spot the break, the course is about southwest by south.

In 1963, I found the channel to have a depth of 9 feet, sounding with a lead line. In the late

seventies, a Gallant 53, drawing 7'9", got in and weathered a hurricane. However, I've heard that the channel has shoaled up in recent years. So I advise sending a dinghy in to sound the channel before you enter. Remember that if there is a swell running into the channel, the safe depth will be reduced to 6 or possibly only 5 feet.

Once you do get in, the place is indeed a perfect hurricane hole. Put anchors to the west, tie your stern to trees, and sit it out safe and sound.

As you pass between Petite Grenade and Pointe du Vauclin, you will notice a low spit of land to port; round up behind the spit of land and anchor. It is a beautiful cove with 20 feet of water right up to shore; you can put out a stern anchor and run your bow line to a tree. There is a beautiful white-sand beach on the point, but it turns out to be a great disillusionment—there are only 6 inches of beautiful white sand over soft, gooey, black mud.

There is a small fishing village at the head of the Cul-de-Sac, where a taxi could probably be obtained or a bus found for a ride to Vauclin.

Baie des Mulets, northwest of Petite Grenade, is a good deserted anchorage. Although there are few soundings shown on the chart, I found fairly regular depths of 8 feet through most of the bay, gradually shoaling when the inner edge of the reef was approached. I had no difficulty finding a break in the reef for the dinghy, allowing me to enter Passe du Sans Souci.

PASSE DU SANS SOUCI

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-5)

This is another good anchorage with plenty of water and no town or village of any sort. Anchor near the mouth of the pass, as the land is low and swampy at the head of the bay, where it would tend to be hot, airless, and bug infested.

GRANDE PASSE DU SIMON

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-5)

This passage is fairly open to the east. It is littered with reefs that are so steep you could round up under just about any one of them and drop your anchor right on it. If no contact with shore were desired, you could comfortably spend the night with the likelihood of a nice cool breeze.

On the south side of Grande Passe du Simon is Pointe de la Prairie, with a reef and shoal water extending quite far to seaward. You can work your way into an anchorage behind this curving reef.

There are also several tight little anchorages

behind bits of reef at the west end of Cul-de-Sac du Simon.

CUL-DE-SAC FRÉGATE

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-6)

Easy to spot and easy to enter. On the north side of the entrance is Îlet Thiery, a good landmark. On the island's northeast point is a large white house with a large veranda around the entire house. Also on the east side of Îlet Thiery is a black cliff with a large cave at the water's edge. When entering, sail between the two easily spotted reefs, which are always breaking. But before you ease sheets, make absolutely sure of your bearings: You should be looking down between Îlet Aubert and Îlet Long at a bearing of 260 magnetic. If, coming north, you bear off too soon, you can get tangled up with the 10-foot spot that always breaks in heavy weather. (Some of the gray hairs in my beard were caused by doing just this, many years ago, with the late Sam Lane on board. Fortunately he, an excellent sailor and good helmsman, realized our error and suddenly headed up and tacked without asking for orders.)

Favor the reefs on the north side of the channel; they are more steep-to and more clearly defined than the reefs on the south side. Once your position is definitely established, run on in and anchor in the lee of one of the many islands.

We found the anchorage off the house of M. Hayot the best. Run along the north shore of Îlet Long past the small cove with the fishing boats, give the point to the west of the cove a berth of 100 yards, jibe over, then harden sheets and round up in the next cove. There is a white house with a small marine railway to the east of it. There is plenty of water close to shore, so run in until the eastern point of the cove lines up with the western point of Îlet Thiery. This anchorage is perfect no matter what direction the wind blows, and the holding ground is good. If you would like to be nearer diving water, you may move the lee of Îlet Thiery; be careful of the detached coral heads.

Although the chart shows coral heads and no soundings, a draft of 5 feet may be taken between the western end of Îlet Aubin and the mainland. Go slow, keep your lead line going, and try to make some sense out of the private stakes placed by the locals to mark the shoals. Pass close to the western shore of the island, hold a course of west-northwest; you should spot two stakes that mark the channel. However, be careful and don't rely too much on local marks. There is also a dinghy

[illegible]

SKETCH CHART III-6 Martinique—East Coast—Northern Part

pass around the western end of Îlet Long into Grande Passe du Simon.

FRANÇOIS

(II A-313; Sketch Chart III-6)

A typical middle-sized French town of Martinique, at which full-scale tourism has not yet arrived. The town is especially attractive to the sailor, as there is a drainage canal that leads right to the edge of town, where you can tie up the dinghy among the French fishing boats. Here there is an active fish and vegetable market early in the morning. After making your purchases, walk to town, where you will find various markets that are more than adequate, and an excellent bakery. Buy your supplies, and if they're too heavy, grab a taxi at the main square. Halfway down to the dinghy landing on the north side of the street is a cold storage warehouse where block ice is available. There is also, of course, a post office, a telephone pay booth, and various small bars and restaurants.

This whole area around the towns of François and Robert is especially interesting, as many people live on the various islands and in little coves on the mainland that are not connected to the main roads; as a result, there is a continual flow of canoes to and fro, some rowing, some sailing, and some motoring, almost completely hidden by their great bow waves.

MOUILLAGE DU FRANÇOIS

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-5)

You can enter this excellent anchorage by either Passe du François or the channel between Îlets Thiery and Bouchard and the reefs to the northwest. If you use this southern entrance, be careful of the 7-foot spot north-northeast of Îlet Thiery. (A bearing aligning the eastern end of Thiery with the eastern end of Îlet Long extends right over this shoal.)

The northern pass leads between Petite Caye, which always breaks, and Cay Brigantine, which is now marked by buoys. A line between buoys F2 and F3 bears 033° as you enter; but the center line of the channel is more or less north-south, so it's a reach both ways. Even if the wind is around in the north as you leave, you can stand well to the eastern side of the channel and then easily lay the course out on the starboard tack. When entering, you can be sure you're on the right line if you keep the buoy on Caye Ronde (F4) between the other two.

I would strongly advise against entering François by the eastern passage, Passe de Caye Miton; it's dead downwind and unmarked.

Once inside the harbor, keep your eyes peeled for the various shoal spots. There are three coves on the south side of Mouillage du François. The first two west of Pointe Michel have picturesque fishing villages on their shores. However, I would not advise spending the night, as I think that they would tend to be hot, airless, and full of bugs. A better anchorage is in the third cove, where they have a yacht club with showers, a restaurant-bar, fuel, water, and what have you. Dockage is available or you can anchor out. On Sundays, Frenchmen from all over the east coast come here for an all-out three-hour banquet. The fact that there are few foreigners means that it must be very good indeed.

From here you can visit François by taxi or by outboard; if you go by outboard, take it easy—you may churn up mud at various points in the canal. And don't capsize: I don't know which would be worse—to drown in a Martinique canal or to be rescued from one. The canal is hard to spot; but if you continue southwestward alongshore from the yacht club, you will have no trouble picking it up.

Behind Îlet Lavigne there is an excellent anchorage with deep water right up to the shore. Swing around the south end of the island, sail north, and round up when the slot between the two hills faces east. You will have absolutely calm water, yet the wind will sweep across the hills guaranteeing a cool and bug-free anchorage. Do not be put off by the muddy water southwest of Îlet Lavigne—it is only a tidal eddy that stirs up the mud. Behind the island the water is clear and clean.

Swimmers can then take the dinghy and visit the outer reef anchorages and have a fine time snorkeling and spear fishing, though the latter will probably be unprofitable, as the area is pretty well fished out. With the aid of the sketch chart in the *Guide to Martinique*, a boat drawing 5 feet or less can explore probably a dozen anchorages in Mouillage du François.

CUL-DE-SAC DES ROSEAUX

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-6)

This is just north of François. I have not visited it. However, I did climb to the top of Pointe de la Rose and enjoyed a commanding view of the entire area. The main harbor of Cul-de-Sac des Roseaux is easy of entrance, but of course the shoal water

must be reckoned by eyeball. On the north side of the harbor along the south shore of Pointe de la Rose are two coves. The easternmost of these, Anse Coco, has deep water right up to shore, not too much vegetation to gather mosquitoes, and a narrow entrance through the reef; even the entrance channel is sheltered by offshore reefs. In short, a good hurricane hole or, in fact, a good stop at any time. Check the chart carefully, enter only with good light and a man on the bow or in the rigging. The western cove, Anse des Roseaux, is even more sheltered, as it has high hills on three sides and a good hurricane hole, but otherwise is likely to be hot, airless, and bug infested.

A path leads from a small dock up the hill to the road; the climb is well worth it—follow the road westward and you will come to the ruins of an old sugar mill from which you may survey the entire area.

There is another cove to the west of Pointe Chauve Souris, which has plenty of water. It makes a good hurricane hole and a nice spot to visit by dinghy. Don't spend the night. The hills rise vertically on three sides and no air reaches the cove at all. Looking down on it from the hill above the fishing village, I could not see a ripple in the water, although the trades were blowing so hard they almost blew me off the ridge. The western part of Cul-de-Sac des Roseaux is shoal at its head and you would have to anchor quite far offshore. There is little or nothing to attract one ashore.

This area is described in excellent detail and covered by good sketch charts in the *Guide to Martinique*. If the *Guide's* sketch charts should ever disagree with Imray-Iolaire chart A-301, proceed with extreme caution, but rely more on the *Guide*. Lachesnez-Heude and Nouel have done inshore work on places along this coast that I on *Iolaire*, with a draft of 7'6" and no engine, could not do justice to.

HAVRE DU ROBERT

(II 1 A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-6)

The largest harbor on the east coast and a sister town to La Trinité, Havre du Robert is beautifully shown on the French detail chart 390. This harbor is wide and easy to enter, with innumerable coves on both sides of the harbor. There is an anchorage at its head near the town of Robert. Robert itself is perched on the edge of a hill. A delightful open-air restaurant is located right next to the dinghy dock. The one difficulty with the restaurant is that they have no menu and they don't speak a word of

English; I can vouch for the *sudon* and *langouste*. As usual with French towns, there is plenty of bread, cheese, wine, fresh fruits, vegetables, and seafood.

The east coast of Martinique is so featureless that a stranger may not know exactly where he is. Some of the towns are not visible from the sea. Let me list the key Robert landmarks to look out for: Vauclin—church with a restored roof; Îlet Thiery—a large house on the northeast end with a veranda all around, and the black cliff with caves on its eastern shore; Cay Pinsonnelle—the reef always breaks and a wreck of a sunken steamer is visible at the south end; Loup Garou—a small, bleach-white sand island off the entrance of Robert.

When standing north toward the entrance to Robert, remember that the shoal water east of Pointe de la Rose extends well east of the Pointe. Even after you've passed this shoal, don't bear off until you are north of Îlet des Chardons. Then run down into the harbor, which has so many anchorages that you'll have to choose by throwing a dart at the chart.

The government chart gives ranges for entering Robert, but the ranges are for large vessels standing in from seaward and not for inside the harbor itself.

When running into the harbor, I would not pass much west of Petit Martinique, as the anchorage off the town tends to be choppy and the water is not clear and is not well marked. Just west of Pointe Cotterel is a new fish farm, and the natives do not appreciate having yachts anchor in that area.

The south side of the inner harbor is shoal and muddy. Stay out near the entrance and visit the town by dinghy. The bottom off the town is soft mud, with plenty of grass: all right for an old-fashioned fisherman anchor, but not good for a plow or a Danforth.

Behind Îlet à l'Eau, or northwest of it in the basin, an excellent anchorage is sheltered from the sea but has plenty of wind. I would imagine the snorkeling is good here since it has crystal-clear water.

Another excellent anchorage on the north side of Havre du Robert is behind Petite Martinique. Deep water runs right up to the shore, and you can literally run aground and jump off the low of the boat onto shore. Be careful, though, as the wind curves over the top of the hill and comes back from the west—even though it may be blowing 30 knots from the east on the southern tip of

the island. We discovered this to our chagrin while exploring here in April 1985; we ended up aground on a steep-to shore and had an interesting time getting off.

Another anchorage is west of the bluffs. An even better one can be had just west of the buildings on the north end of Îlet Duchamp (Îlet de la Grotte): deep water goes right up to the shore, with sand bottom, good holding, and no swell; it's breezy and bugless besides. The French chart is wrong: There is no passage, except for a dinghy, between Îlet Ramville and Îlet Duchamp (Îlet de la Grotte). But there's good snorkeling, and the area is a good place to teach children to swim—great sand flats with only 1 foot of warm water over them between the two islands. If you wish to visit Rocher de la Grotte, it is best to leave the dinghy at Îlet Duchamp and wade across from the island.

The cove of Îlet Duchamp (Îlet de la Grotte) on the south side of Îlet Ramville is shoal- and reef-encumbered. I would not advise entering it in anything but a dinghy.

The first anchorage on the south side of the harbor is to the west of, and in the lee of, Îlet des Chardons. There is deep water right up to the reefs on both sides, dinghy passages among the reefs, excellent diving, and lobsters galore. Very close to this anchorage is another in the lee of Îlet de la Rose. Deep water carries close to shore on the western side; a long arm of the reef extending out to the north and a solid reef across to Pointe de la Rose give complete protection. Both these anchorages are good and there should be plenty of wind to keep you cool and bug free.

To the west of Pointe de la Rose is Baie de Saintpée; be careful of Banc de la Rose when entering. Best anchorage is under the lee of the reef with the north end of Pointe de la Rose bearing due east. There is plenty of water all the way to the head of the bay, but the head is all mud flat and mangroves. Take a dinghy, tie it to the mangroves, and walk up the hill to the old sugar mill: a wonderful view, a cool breeze, soft grass, and a big spreading shade tree.

The next cove, unnamed, between Pointe du Sable Banc and Pointe Hyacinthe, is completely sheltered and deep. Watch Banc Guillotine when you enter; 4 feet could easily bring you to grief. The pond at the head of the bay is full of mosquitoes; I would advise mooring near the mouth of the cove, where there is a breeze.

East of Pointe Royal is the last noteworthy cove on the south side. It is easily spotted by an old sugar mill with a modern house next to it, a

number of old cannons pointing seaward, and three or four boats moored in the cove. There is never a problem with bugs and always a breeze in this perfect shelter. The house is used mainly as a summer residence.

(A word about holiday habits of the Martinican: Like the Frenchman, he takes his vacation in late July and August, deserts the city, and goes to the beach. The west coast of Martinique is hot, muggy, and wet, while the east coast not only is cool and dry but also has the sand beaches. Hence in the summer you will find the east coast heavily populated, but in the winter the various summer residences will be empty. The locals will tell you that it is winter and cold, even though the temperature is in the low eighties all day.)

BAIE DU GALION

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-6)

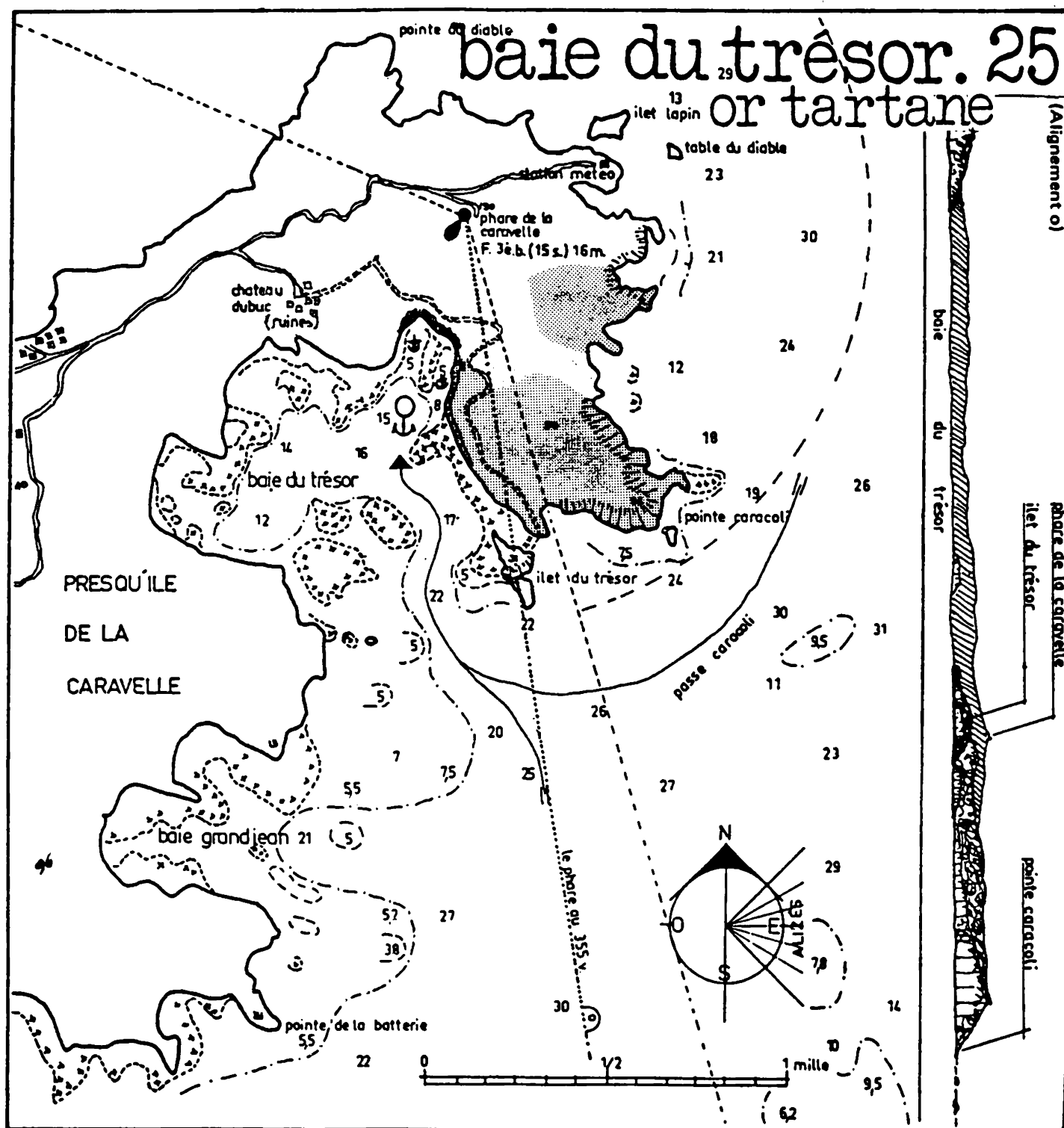
A large open bay with several anchorages but not much to warrant more than a lunch stop. A reef runs south from the mainland east of Pointe Brunet, giving good shelter from the sea. Moor close to the reef at its northern end as close to shore as you dare. This puts the boat out of the swell, but there is still plenty of wind sweeping across the reef. Another good anchorage is north of Pointe Brunet, off an old farm that is still in operation. There are numerous reefs in the bay; the water is none too clear, so be careful. I circled Îlet du Galion in the dinghy and found nothing of interest except to a mountaineer eager to practice belaying. I did not visit the village of Galion, but I did find an old jetty near the cane cutters' cottages on the western shore of Baie du Galion. The cottages are below the old sugar plantation. A landing can be made at the jetty; a short walk up the hill brings you to the main road, where there is frequent bus service to La Trinité. A taxi may be hired for the ride back; the driver will take you down the hill to your dinghy. If you speak French, it might be possible to get a tour of the sugar estate.

There are other small coves in this bay to be visited; again, consult the *Cruising Guide to Martinique*.

CUL-DE-SAC TARTANE

(II 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Charts 6 and 7)

Also referred to as Treasure Cove or Treasure Harbor, reputedly a pirate hideout in days of yore. It is one of the most beautifully sheltered harbors



SKETCH CHART III-7 Baie du Tresor

I have ever seen. We were there in September 1964 when a hurricane up north was kicking up a ground swell over 6 feet high along the east coast of Martinique, large enough for the seas to crest in 15 feet of water. Lying in the northeast corner of Cul-de-Sac Tartane, we felt not the slightest motion: it was as smooth as a mill pond, with a pleasant breeze hooking around Pointe Caracoli, and no bugs. The water is either shoal or very deep and

everywhere steep-to. I was able to lay *Iolaire* parallel to the shore so close that you could step from the port side of the boat into 1 foot of water. We put a tackle on the main halyard and heaved her down far enough to paint the waterline. Even so, there was water enough to dive between the sand bank and the boat's bottom and to come up on the other side.

When entering the harbor, it is easy to see the

reefs on both sides, as they always break; once in the pass, head for the lighthouse on the hill, skirting the western edge of the reef that will be in your path and rounding up north of the reef. Shoot across on the back side of the reef, drop your hook off the stern, snub up, and drop a bow anchor once you have actually reached the reef. Be sure to lay your anchor on the reef, or the beach. They are both a near-vertical drop into 50 feet of water. Make sure that your stern anchor is well set; when the wind drops at night, the current running out over the top of the reef will tend to shove you into shoal water.

In April 1985, when we revisited this anchorage, we sailed on in and literally ran the bow up on the beach, jumped ashore with an anchor, dug a hole and buried it, and ran a stern anchor out. Although it was blowing 20 knots outside, we had an absolutely calm anchorage with a nice breeze across the boat.

The whole area is a wildlife preserve and offers the birdwatcher a field day: the great heron, blue heron, turnstone, plover, yellow-legged sandpiper, and other types of birds are here.

There are numerous small fishing boats, all chasing squid, and I can vouch for the lobsters in the area—I caught one while checking the anchor. There are other anchorages in the western side of the bay behind the main reef. Although the northwestern corner of the bay is reef encumbered, it does provide some perfect hurricane moorings. The water is deep between the reefs; it is possible to place the anchors on top of the reefs and run stern lines to trees ashore. With hills on three sides and overlapping reefs at the entrance to the harbor, it would be hard to find a more ideal spot.

For those who like to explore, there are the ruins of an old estate, the Château Dubuc, which is also reputed to have been a pirates' or smugglers' hideout. It is high on a ridge but so overgrown that it is impossible to spot from seaward. It must have been quite a place in its day: it included a reservoir (now a mudhole) and a dam some 30 feet high that must have held a good-sized pond 200 years ago. Old bits and pieces of iron abound, some huge molasses pots known as people pots (what they cooked missionaries in), sugarcane machinery, an old power magazine—a whole morning could be spent rummaging about. To find the old castle, land the dinghy in the cove to the west of the middle point projecting out into the bay where a group of fishermen are always making fish pots or working on their canoes. From there a path leads up the hill to the ruins.

It's easy to see why this might have been a bad guys' paradise in the old days: A lookout posted at the top would be able to see all the way south to Cap de Ferré, and northwest to the northern parts of Martinique. Anyone coming to interfere with smugglers or pirates would have to come by ship, since there was no overland route in those days, and any ship would be spotted almost a full day's sail away (remember that square riggers were not very good to windward). If the lawmen came from the north, the bad guys could scoot south; if the danger was to the south, it was only a short beat out of the harbor, around the corner, and off to the north. A perfect setup.

Above the ruins you will find a road eastward to the Caravelle lighthouse. The lighthouse keepers are most happy to give you a tour. There is also a road west to the towns of Tartane and La Trinité.

North Coast

(III 1, A, B, A-30, A0301; Sketch Chart III-6)

Along the north coast of Presqu'île de la Caravelle there is a small cove east of Pointe de l'Étang, and the fishing village of Tartane. Both are strictly summertime stops for small boats. They are well covered in the *Guide to Martinique*.

Otherwise La Trinité is the only port worth mentioning on Martinique's north coast. It is an excellent harbor when the trades are south of east; in winter, though, the swell from the north makes the anchorage pretty roly. Witness the beautiful white-sand beaches on the south and east sides of the harbor, proof of a good surge.

When sailing from Treasure Cove to La Trinité, stand southeast on the port tack, then tack back to the north and pass between Pointe Caracoli and the 5-fathom spot southeast of the point—it can break in heavy weather. Head northeast, ease sheets, and pass outside Table du Diable. Continue north in the deep water, staying out beyond the 10-fathom shelf, as the Atlantic swell coming into shoal water can really hump up. Once you turn west, there are two choices:

1. Sail west until Îlet Tartane bears 230 magnetic, then run in on this line of bearing until the south end of Îlet St. Aubin bears 285 or you can line up the buoy on Banc Miton on a bearing of 278. Run west along either of these lines of bearing (don't sail *over* Banc Miton!) and then pick up the entrance buoys to La Trinité.

2. Alternately, pass north of all the shoals, staying in deep water until the center of the beach at the head of La Trinité harbor bears approximately

195; jibe over and run south on this line of bearing, which will put Loup Ministre on your starboard hand. When you get into the harbor, anchor on the eastern side, off the beaches.

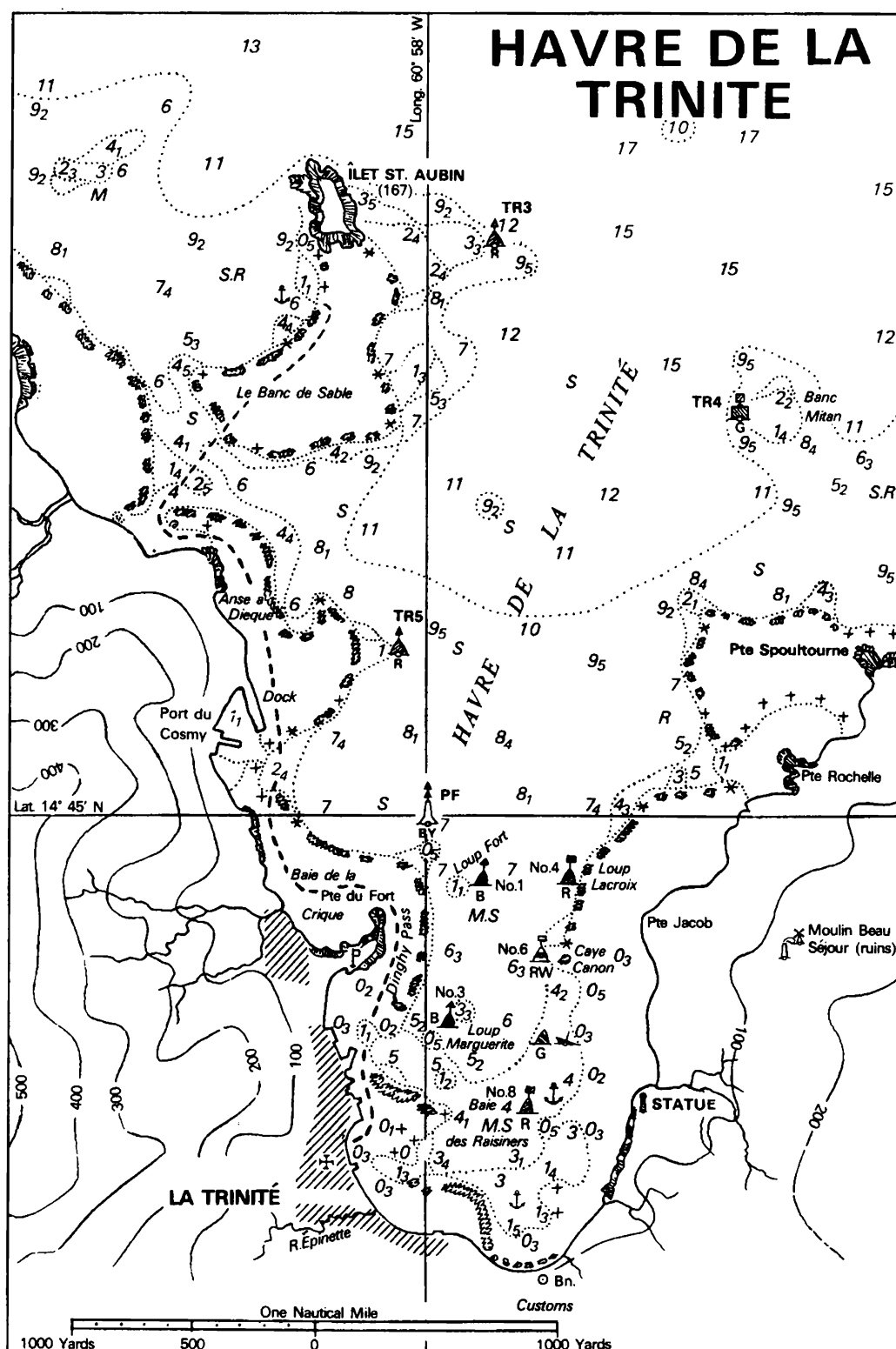
As for going the other way, from La Trinité to Cul-de-Sac Tartane, if it's blowing hard, I wouldn't. If you must, stand well north from La Trinité and do your windward work in deep water. The winter trades roil the sea over the shoals, making it very

hairy to tack safely through them. In spring and summer, though, when the wind is south of east, you can easily short-tack up the beach and stay out of the current.

LA TRINITÉ

(II, 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-8)

The town of La Trinité is much the same as the other towns on the east coast of Martinique, only



SKETCH CHART III-8 Havre de la Trinité

larger, with good road communication to Fort-de-France. La Trinité is a port of entry for Martinique but only for Customs. It is best to take a *taxi collective* into Fort-de-France to clear, a one-hour ride costing about \$3.00 U.S.

The harbor would certainly be more convenient if the dinghy landing facilities were better. There are two small docks. One is by the fish market, and is also near a vegetable market, a supermarket, an ice storage plant with block ice, a couple of small, friendly bar/restaurants, a phone booth, and a nice waterside park. Be sure, though, to throw out a stern anchor to keep the dinghy from beating against the pier. The other dock is 200 yards south; here there is a beach, and if your dinghy is light enough you can slide it up on the beach above the high-water mark.

While at La Trinité, it is worth visiting the Hôtel St. Aubin, a wonderful old turn-of-the century French Victorian hotel, which I admired from afar. I am sure it would provide a perfect setting for a good three-hour French lunch. Call the hotel and arrange for a taxi.

ÎLET ST.-AUBIN

(II, 1, A, B, A-30, A-301; Sketch Chart III-8)

I visited this place for the first time in 1985, and I feel we have discovered an anchorage that is not included in any previous guides. That this is a good anchorage was news even to Philippe Lachesnez, who has spent his lifetime cruising Martinique's waters.

Approach it from the east as you would La Trinité, swing around the north end of St.-Aubin, jibe around the island, head south, eyeball your way right up behind the reef, and anchor in 50 to 60 feet of water, depending on how close to the reef you want to get. If you anchor really close to the reef, I would strongly advise anchoring bow and stern, as I am sure that during the night, when the wind dies down, a change in tide could swing you against the reef.

The swell hooks around Îlet St.-Aubin in a great circle and catches the western corner of the reef, so it's best to anchor about a third of the way down the reef (where the anchor is shown on the latest Imray-Iolaire charts). You will be guaranteed privacy and a calm, bug-free anchorage with a huge area to snorkle and dive. The number of fish-pot markers on the edge of the reef suggests that there must be a fair amount of fish around.

One of the great advantages of this anchorage is that you are only 1½ miles by dinghy from La Trinité; almost the entire trip can be made behind

the reef, sheltered by the outer reef. (See the dinghy pass marked on Imray-Iolaire Chart A-30 and Sketch Chart III-8, plan of La Trinité Harbor.)

It is possible to sail south from Îlet St.-Aubin through the pass between the end of the St.-Aubin reef and the reef on the mainland; there is ample water and even room for *Iolaire* to tack in the passage.

West Coast

ST.-PIERRE

(II 1, A, B, A-30)

The town was totally destroyed by the eruption of Montagne Pelée early in this century. A museum commemorating the catastrophe is a spectacular tourist attraction. The anchorage is not good. For the most part it is an open roadstead; the swell usually runs in and the bottom drops off very steeply. Make sure that you are on the shelf before you let go the hook. Many a boat has almost lost its anchor when its depth gauge registered bottom—on the second time around the dial.

The best anchorage is off Pointe Ste.-Marthe, where there is a restaurant right at the water's edge, and a group of *gommiers* pulled up on the beach.

There is good diving on the wrecks of the ships sunk when the volcano blew in 1902—only one ship out of about thirteen or fourteen escaped destruction. The wrecks are plotted in the *Cruising Guide to Martinique*. Lachesnez recommends that you contact the Carib Scuba Club, Hôtel Latitude Carbet; they run regular diving tours to the area, know the wrecks, and are fully equipped to take you diving.

St.-Pierre is a good place to stop if you have had a rough trip from Dominica and arrived late in the day, and want to rest before heading south to Fort-de-France. Conversely, if you have left Fort-de-France at midday or later, then St.-Pierre is a good place to stop for the night prior to an early-morning departure for Dominica.

The weather conditions in Rade de St.-Pierre are variable—sometimes flat calm, sometimes blowing like mad, and other times with hard gusts suddenly dropping down off the mountains. Take care.

POINTE DES NÈGRES

(II 1, A, B, A-30)

This is an excellent shelter in normal weather. The only difficulties are posed by deep water and

the lack of swinging room. In the past, arrangements could be made to moor bow and stern to the dock; however, I am informed that this is now a private club of the French military and is closed to visitors.

In conclusion, I would say that Martinique is probably the most underrated island in the Caribbean for the average yachtsman. After having spent three years in the mid-1980s reexploring the Caribbean from Mona Island to Trinidad and Tobago, and having hit every island between, my wife and I have come to the conclusion that Martinique is our favorite. Do not judge the island by

the anchorage at Fort-de-France off the Savanne or the pleasant but crowded Anse Mitan. Go explore the other harbors, especially those on the east coast.

The only problem we found with the east coast is drinking water. After leaving the Fort-de-France area, the only place with even a possibility of getting water alongside is Club Nautic in Cul-de-Sac du Marin—and even that's iffy. So take a minimum of eight five-gallon, collapsible water jugs and be prepared to carry your water out in the dinghy.

Otherwise, the east coast is a cruiser's delight. Don't miss it.

3



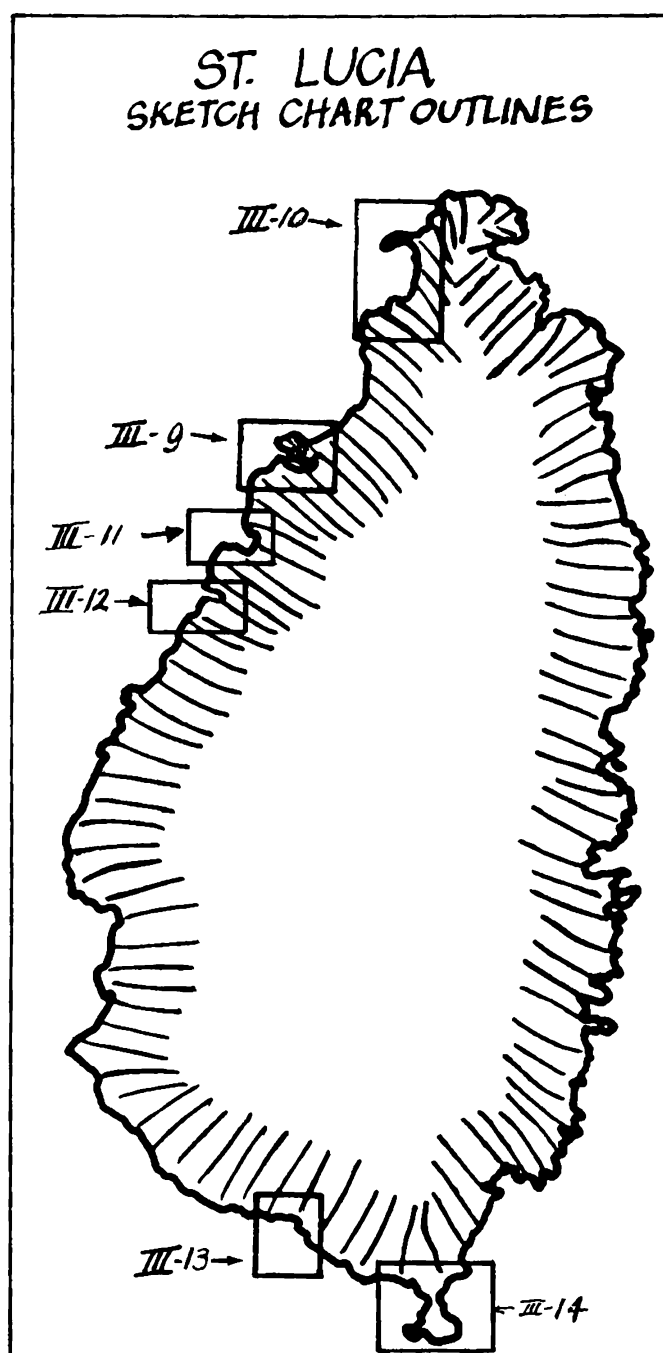
St. Lucia

II 1, B, B-1

St. Lucia, a semi-independent British affiliate, lies between Martinique to the north and St. Vincent to the south, and on most days it is visible from both these islands. There are two good harbors and sundry anchorages on its western side. The harbors were the cause of violent clashes between colonial powers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Castries, the capital of St. Lucia, was important to the British as a fleet harbor in the eighteenth century and as a coaling station in the nineteenth. It was continually built up and fortified until the early years of the twentieth century. During the 1920s, its importance declined with the passing of coal-burning ships, and the island fell into an economic depression. The activities of World War II and the establishment of a large American base at Vieux Fort revived the economy for a brief period, but soon after the war the air base was closed, and the island returned to third-world oblivion. In the very earliest colonial days the island had grown rich off its sugar; now a second economy based on sugar, bananas, and tourism is established, and St. Lucia is stirring again.

Because of its many hills and mountains, St. Lucia is one of the wet islands. During the wet season, it seems to rain almost continually, tapering off in the dry season to a couple of short squalls per day. Although the island is high, it is not the solid block of Dominica. It is more like a series of ventilated hills, and a breeze is usually to be found along the western coast close inshore.

The tides are so minimal that they are not listed on the tide tables. I found an old British chart that listed the HWF&C as "1 h 36m" (high water full and changed: the average interval between the transit—upper or lower—of the full or new moon and the next high water). The current north and



south of the island sets into the Caribbean at a knot or more.

Because of inaccuracies found in both the British and American charts, I recommend using Imray-Iolaire Chart B-1 exclusively.

St. Lucia has a number of good hotels and restaurants, although the island's restaurants open and close with great frequency. It is not a bad idea to ask the various marine operators which restaurants are currently the best.

Air communication into St. Lucia is excellent in that it is served by Island Air, LIAT, and Air Martinique, all of which "island hop" to St. Lucia through Vigie Field, which is right next door to the harbor of Castries. The old American World War II airbase near Vieux Fort is now called Huinora, and its runways have been extended to carry even the biggest jumbo jets. Now St. Lucia receives jets that fly direct from many parts of the world.

There is only one fly in the ointment. When it was decided that the old airbase would be St. Lucia's major airport, the British government financed a beautiful highway from Vieux Fort to Castries to reduce the driving time from three hours on a treacherous road to one hour on an excellent road. As part of the deal, a bus service was to have been installed from the airport direct to Castries, Vigie Field, and the hotels just north of the town at Rodney Bay. However, this has never come to pass. Thus St. Lucia is a very poor transfer point, as one flies in from Europe and then gets stung for a \$50 E.C. taxi ride to Castries, to the hotels, or to Vigie Field for transportation to other islands in the Eastern Caribbean.

There is a good open-air market in the town of Castries, as well as three or four stores where frozen foods, canned goods, and so forth are available. The yachtsman will have no problem securing all the normal food supplies.

A visit to Bagshaws, two miles or so out of town, is a must. Here you will find dresses, skirts, and decorative yet practical items for the home made of silkscreened cotton, silk, and linen. There are also lengths of material to be made up by the nimble-fingered, and the visitors are welcomed to the studio to see how it's done. Go by taxi and ask the driver to wait.

A very worthwhile excursion when visiting St. Lucia is a trip on Bob Elliot's *Unicorn*, a brig fully rigged to the royals—she looks like something out of the last century. Needless to say, she has a diesel engine, but given favorable wind conditions, Bob and his excellent crew really sail the boat. Even the most experienced ocean racer will get a

thrill and be extremely interested in the sail handling of the square rigger.

When approaching St. Lucia from the north, there are no dangers lying off the coast. Castries is easily identified during the day by the forts on Vigie Point, and at night by the lights on either side of the harbor entrance. Do not stop at Pigeon Island before entering Castries; wine smuggling is a great occupation here, and the authorities take a dim view of yachts that stop before clearing at Castries. (Or, alternatively, you can clear at Rooney Bay in the lagoon—depth 8 feet. Alert Customs and Immigration by calling on VHF channel 16.) When coming from the south, unless you are heading for Vieux Fort (a port of entry), head directly for the Pitons, which are very easy to spot at a great distance, appearing like two loaves of French bread standing on end on the southwest corner of the island. There is only one hazard. On the lee side of St. Lucia, off Grand Caille Point north of the Pitons, the rocks extend 200–250 yards offshore. They have only a few feet of water and a tide rip over them most of the time. Give them a wide berth.

Castries is the main port of entry to St. Lucia, but as of March 1985, Customs offices were also established on the west coast in Rodney Bay Marina and Marigot Bay (Hurricane Harbour Hotel). Contact them via VHF channel 16 to give advance warning before you enter. Vieux Fort, on the extreme southern tip of St. Lucia, is also a port of entry.

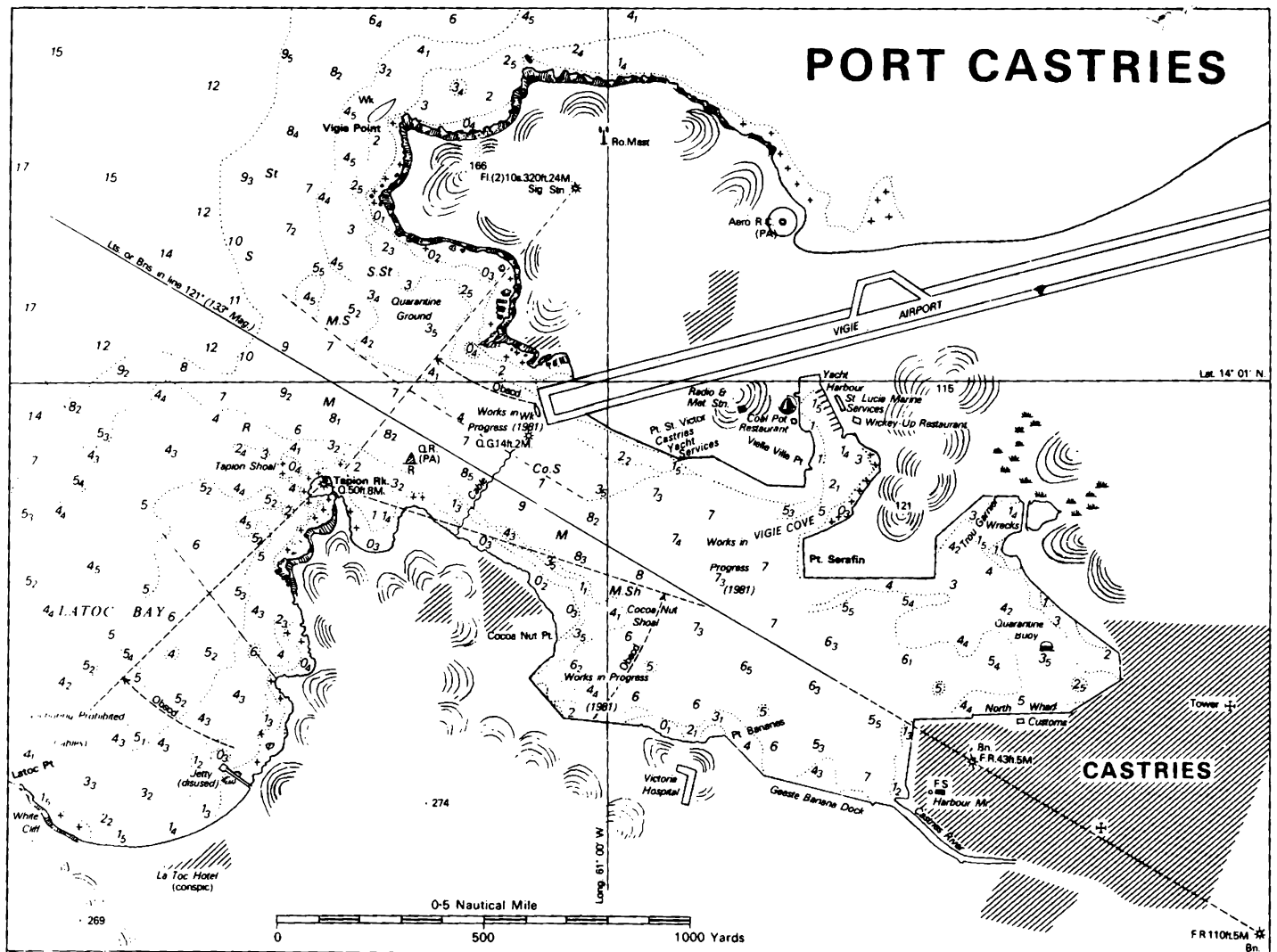
The good news is that you can now also get preclearance at Soufrière. Anchor bow to the beach and clear with the local police sergeant. His clearance will cover you until you get to an official port of entry. This welcome development is a vast improvement over the old days when there was no entry point south of Marigot Bay on the west coast. It meant that anyone coming to St. Lucia from the south who succumbed to the temptation to anchor at the Pitons or Soufrière along the way was illegal and in danger of incurring fines or even jail. (I'd like to think that my sounding off about this situation in earlier guides had something to do with the new rule.)

Beware, though. I hear through the grapevine that Customs *still* takes a dim view of yachts anchoring at the Pitons before clearing. Now, though, Soufrière is just a stone's throw away.

CASTRIES

(II B-1; Sketch Chart III-9)

The harbor is deep, well sheltered, and easy to enter. So easy is the entrance that during World



SKETCH CHART III-9 Port Castries

War II a German submarine entered after dark, sank a freighter along the dock, and departed, allegedly leaving an unexploded torpedo embedded in the soft mud under the town.

There is deep water up to fairly close inshore. As of March 1986, dredging and filling were still going on in Castries Harbor on the northern side on the Vieille Ville shoal southeast of Vigie Cove; in addition, a barge sunk off the end of the airport runway, supposedly lit, has not been moved. Exercise caution in this area.

If you must enter at night (I would advise against it) follow the range—two fixed red lights—right into the harbor. The range may seem to cast you very close to the south shore of the harbor, but this is correct and there is nothing to worry about except that the dredge companies are notoriously lax about lighting their equipment. In a contest of yacht against dredge, the dredge will win. Keep an eye out.

To clear Customs, anchor off the north side of

the east-west wall of the steamer dock. You may tie up alongside the dock, but this is not really advisable, as Castries has long had a reputation for having the most unfriendly, and foulest-mouthed, longshoremen in the Lesser Antilles. Their language will blister the paint right off your boat. Better anchor off the dock and row ashore in the dinghy to clear Customs and Immigration, which is right on the dock.

When anchoring here, stay clear of the turning basin; be sure you are positioned east of the white, unlit, quarantine buoy. If you are anchored in the turning basin, the pilot launch will tell you in no uncertain terms to move.

After clearing at Castries, if you're not ready to move on to Rodney Bay, Marigot Bay, or other more scenic spots, it's best you go back to Vigie Cove on the north side of Castries Harbor.

The harbor improvements have made trouble in Vigie Cove. The main harbor has been dredged right to the mouth of the cove, and the east and

northeast sides of the cove have been covered with stone riprap. Now the cove, which used to be a semi-hurricane shelter, has become untenable whenever the northwest ground swell comes in. The swell ricochets off the stone riprap and finds its way into the innermost reaches of Vigie Cove.

Furthermore, when you anchor in the mouth of the cove, you find an almost vertical slope, as the bottom drops off suddenly from 10 to 35 feet. If you let out enough scope, your swinging circle (the wind frequently dies during the night and comes in light from the west) is just too large; either use a Bahamian moor or anchor bow and stern. Also be aware that the *Unicorn* and the *Jolly Roger*, both big vessels, do day trips almost every day. Leave them enough room to maneuver.

At Vigie Cove one finds St. Lucia Marine Services, formerly known as Ganter's, where for twenty years Gracie Ganter took care of itinerant yachtsmen and charter skippers. She acted as fairy godmother to us all. Now Gracie is back in England; various people have taken over the operation, but no one seems to have established a first-rate marina. Still, St. Lucia Marine Services is useful for taking on fuel, water, and a fair selection of food supplies from their commissary. They also have showers. Eight feet can be squeezed into the docks.

More yacht facilities are available now at the Castries Yacht Center, newly established on the north side of the harbor, just east of the airport runway. They have a thirty-ton travel lift, and provide hauling and long-term storing facilities. (Box 120, Castries, St. Lucia; telephone: 809-480-9453 or 4253.)

To get bottled gas in Castries, take your bottles to the Texaco depot in town; it's a bit hard to find, as it is in a lumber warehouse about two blocks south of the western end of the commercial docks. Leave the bottles and they will be filled by the following day. (You can also get bottled gas in Rodney Bay, at Stevens Yachts, where Ian Cowan, with his usual efficiency, can fill your bottles while you wait; if a bottle is half full, he'll charge you for only what he puts in it.)

Ice on St. Lucia used to be cheap in 200-pound blocks; now it's available at the cold storage plant only in small ten-pound blocks, or at St. Lucia Marine Services by the bag in cubes.

Laundry services are extremely expensive, and the commercial laundry in town is a dead loss. It is best to find a local laundress—but check the price first. (Or, again, wait till you get to Rodney Bay, where Stevens Yachts has laundry machines.)

Near St. Lucia Marine Services is a small restaurant, the Wicky-Up, that serves drinks and short-order meals.

On the opposite side of the cove, facing St. Lucia Marine Services, is Bob Elliot's Coal Pot restaurant, where one can get superb food and wine in a lovely setting, with entertaining conversation from Bob Elliot, who has been in and out of the islands for more than twenty years. Reservations are usually necessary. The prices are not cheap, but it's worth it if you can afford it. It also has the advantage that you can come and go by dinghy. To sit on the Coal Pot's open porch hearing the water lap under your feet and looking at the moon over the tall masts of *Unicorn* makes for a memorable evening.

Elliot can also put you in touch with his brother-in-law, Mr. O. Alcé, whose Dive St. Lucia operation is on Vielle Ville Point (Box 412, Castries).

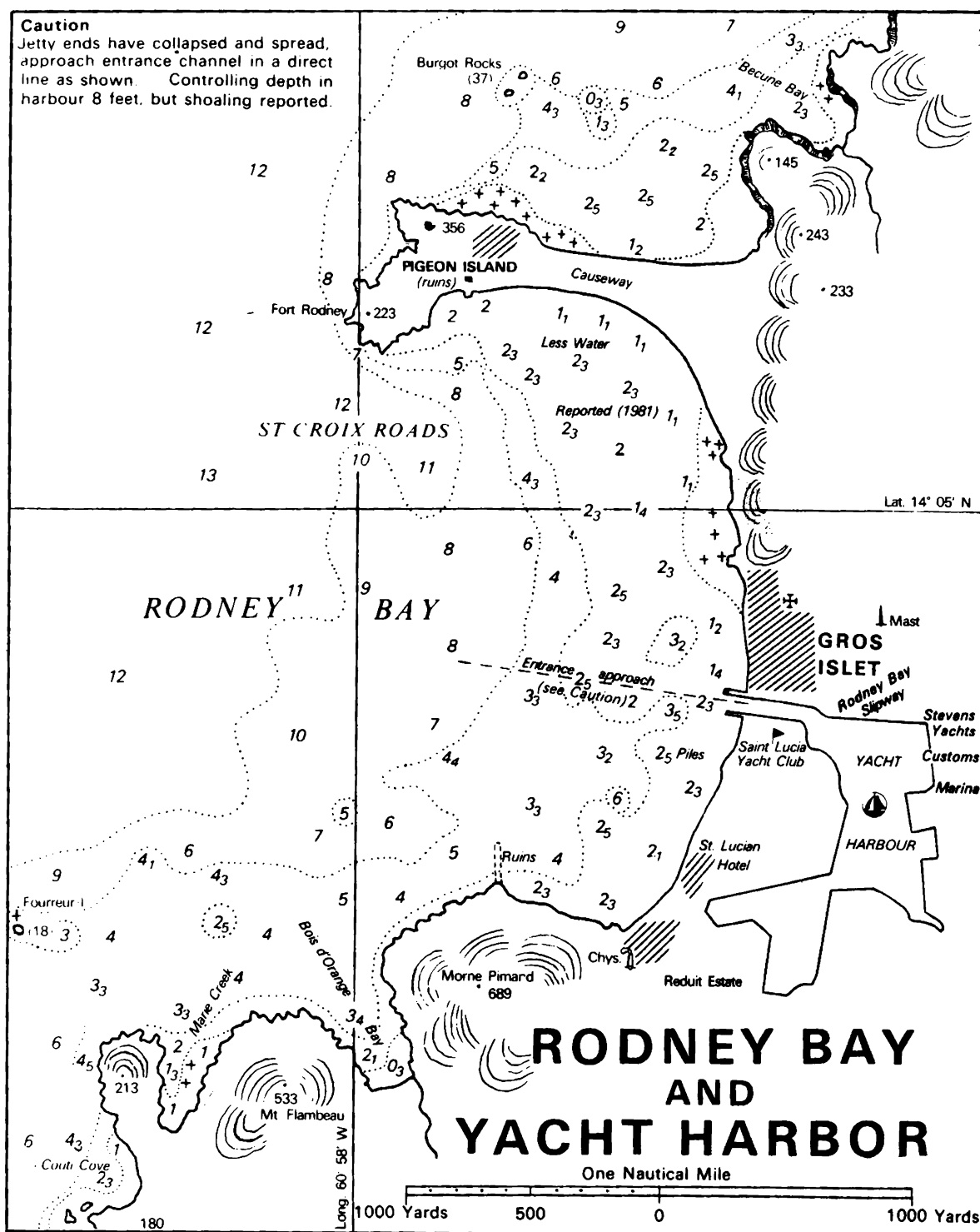
PIGEON ISLAND AND RODNEY BAY

(II B-1; Sketch Chart III-10)

An excellent anchorage for yachts. It is illegal to put in to Pigeon Island if you are coming from Martinique. You must clear through Castries, Rodney Bay, or Marigot Bay beforehand. Pigeon is an island in name only, as it has been connected to the mainland by a causeway. This gives full shelter from the sea hooking around the northern corner of the island, and the causeway is low enough that it doesn't block the wind, allowing for a cool and bug-free anchorage in 12 feet of water. The causeway has created a wonderful harbor, although it has spoiled the seclusion of Pigeon Island. The island was formerly a bird sanctuary, but I suspect the influx of cars and day-trippers has driven the birds away.

If you are approaching Pigeon Island from Castries, hug the coast. There are no hazards and you should be able to make it in one tack. Head for the thatched huts on the south side of the island, round up behind the causeway, and anchor about 200 feet offshore. But stay south of the dock on Pigeon Island, since the water shoals to 3 or 4 feet directly off the dock. Do not anchor too close to the east coast of Pigeon Island, as this can be a lee shore; but the causeway and the island of St. Lucia to windward will break any sea, although you may experience a small chop.

If you want a calmer anchorage, work your way up to the northeast of St. Croix Roads. (The American chart is wrong here—use Sketch Chart III-10.) In December 1978, we found an excellent



SKETCH CHART III-10 Rodney Bay Yacht Harbor

anchorage in 10 feet of water with the fort on an eastern peak of Pigeon Island bearing 315, a distinctive cliff north of the causeway bearing 035, and the breakwaters forming the entrance to Rodney Bay bearing 155 magnetic. Feel your way in with the fathometer and / or lead line.

Pigeon Island was formerly owned by Mrs. Josette Leigh, better known in yachting circles as Madame Snowball. Her thatched-cottage hotel on the beach vied with Mary Pomeroy's Beachlands on Nevis as

the most famous and hospitable hotel in the Lesser Antilles. Mrs. Leigh sold out some years ago and the hotel is no more. The thatched cottages still stand. Visitors are welcome to tramp about or visit the old ruins. A climb to the top of the watchtower at Fort Rodney is well worthwhile.

These waters may be the only place in the world where fish are still caught with rocks. Two or three mornings a week, about twenty-five dugout canoes assemble off the beach. Nets are strung out at right

angles to the shore and the canoes are laden gun-wale-deep with rocks gathered from shore. The canoes arrange themselves in a line some few hundred yards off, where the fishermen wait for a school of fish to come along. When the fish are sighted, the natives throw the rocks to drive the fish into the nets, which are then looped together and dragged ashore. This is a wonderful opportunity to take some good photographs, as well as to obtain fresh fish at reasonable prices. The fishermen are friendly and enjoy having strangers help them haul the nets.

South of the village of Gros Islet is the dredged channel to the lagoon of Rodney Bay Harbor, originally referred to as "Rotten Bay" by the charter skippers of the Stevens fleet who arrived in the early stages of the development when nothing much was there. Whoever decided to do the dredging did not do his homework, since it was dredged to a controlling depth of only 8 feet—there are *not* the 12 feet in Rodney Bay indicated in other guidebooks. Ian Cowan, general manager of Stevens Yachts, agrees that the controlling depth must be regarded as 8 feet. Admittedly a couple of the Swan 65 skippers who know and understand the tides can coax a Swan 65 into Rodney Bay Harbor on high-water springs, but that only gives them six days a month when they can get in and out. A day later in leaving means a ten-day delay.

In 1979, dredging was proposed again, and the talk was still going on in 1986. Rodney Bay will never be fully developed until the channel and the basin in the yacht harbor are dredged to 12 feet.

The harbor *does* finally have a full-service marina, though. It has good docks, water, electricity, marine supplies, a restaurant, and a specialty grocery store with goodies from Martinique.

Stevens Yachts has leased space in the marina, with Ian Cowan still in charge. Besides its charter business, Stevens also has a good sail loft, the best laundry facilities on the island, and the previously mentioned propane source. Ian Cowan, a man of many parts, helped me compile the Imray-Iolaire charts. He also stocks them and the Street guides.

Stevens has one of the better communications systems in the lower Caribbean: they stand by during working hours on SSB high-seas frequency 4139.5 from 1100 to 1130 and from 1500 to 1530, VHF channel 16 (address: P.O. Box 928, Castries; telex 333 Steve Yacht).

On the north side of the Rodney Bay yacht harbor the marina runs a fueling pier, hauling facilities with a fifty-ton travel lift, woodworking, fiberglass, paint, machine, and engine and electri-

cal shops with ample storage space to dry-store boats.

You must be very careful when entering the harbor: various storms have dislodged rocks from the breakwaters; if you are off to one side or the other of the channel, you're sure to hit solid rock. Stay absolutely in the center of the channel.

From the gate of the marina there is excellent, cheap bus service to town. Before you get in, though, make sure it is a bus: the buses and taxis look the same, but the bus fare to town is \$1 E.C. and the taxi fare is \$14 per person. Be careful!

Within Rodney Bay Harbor are numerous restaurants that jut out over the water; an evening's pub crawl can be done by climbing in your dinghy and visiting the various restaurants. Since there seems to be considerable turnover, you'd better get up-to-date local information about what's open.

On the south side of the entrance to the lagoon is the St. Lucia Yacht Club—typical of the West Indian yacht club in that although its sign reads "Members Only," it really means "and visiting yachtsmen." So don't be put off. The club is active on weekends only, but an afternoon with the local yachtsmen is time well spent.

Over Whit Weekend (Whitsunday is a movable liturgical feast), the St. Lucia Yacht Club hosts a three-day version of the fun and games of Antigua Sailing Week's Lay Day festivities. It is also couples with the WIYA match-racing championships. Member clubs send teams, and Stevens Yachts and the Moorings provide the boats for a Congressional cup type match racing series.

GRAND CUL-DE-SAC BAY

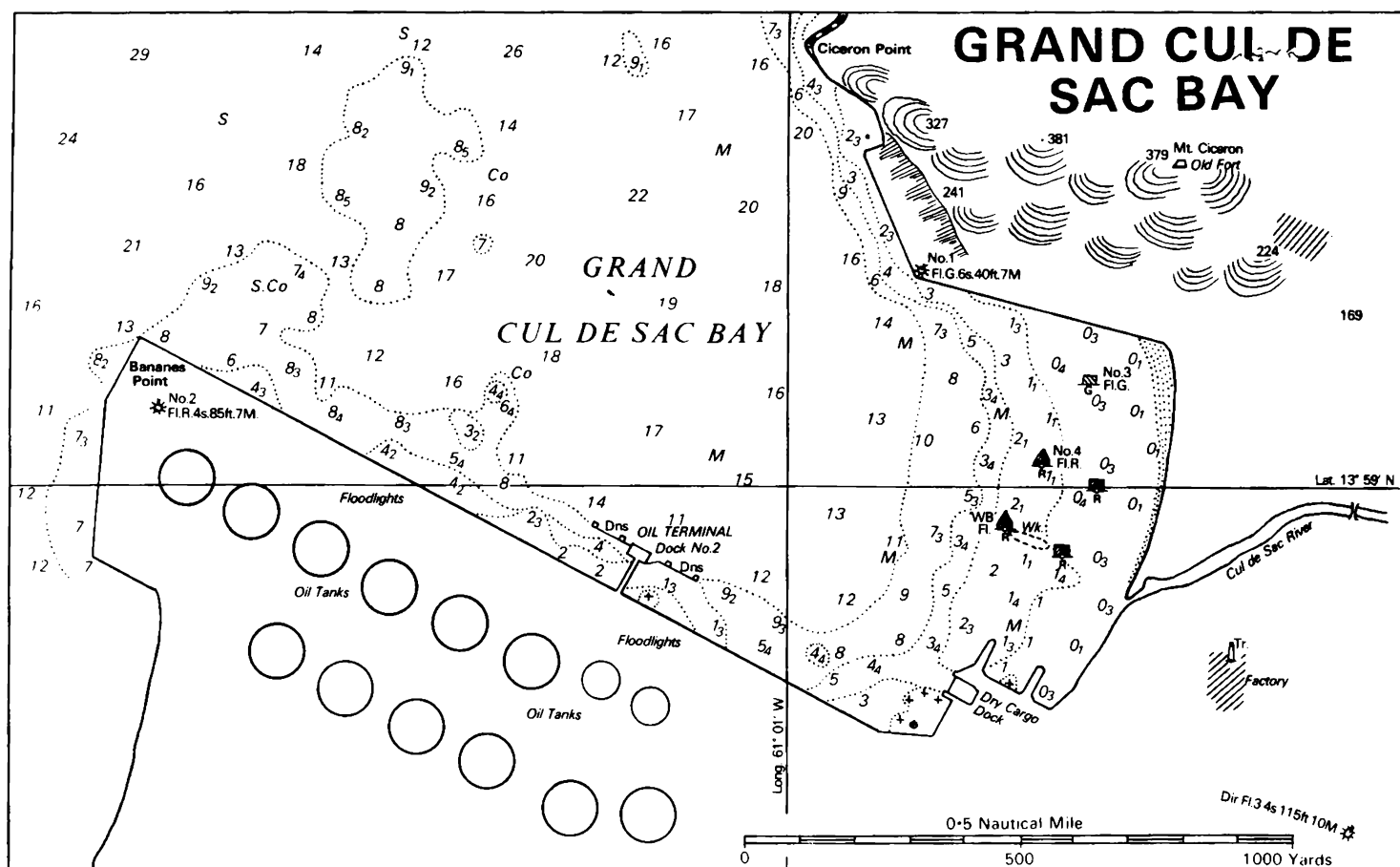
(II 1, B, B-1; Sketch Chart III-11)

Two miles south of Castries, this bay is not too attractive. It has become a deep-water oil port, where large tankers—300,000 to 400,000, possibly 500,000, tonners—come to offload their oil into storage tanks, which are then transferred to small tankers, mere 100,000 tonners. Obviously not a yachting anchorage.

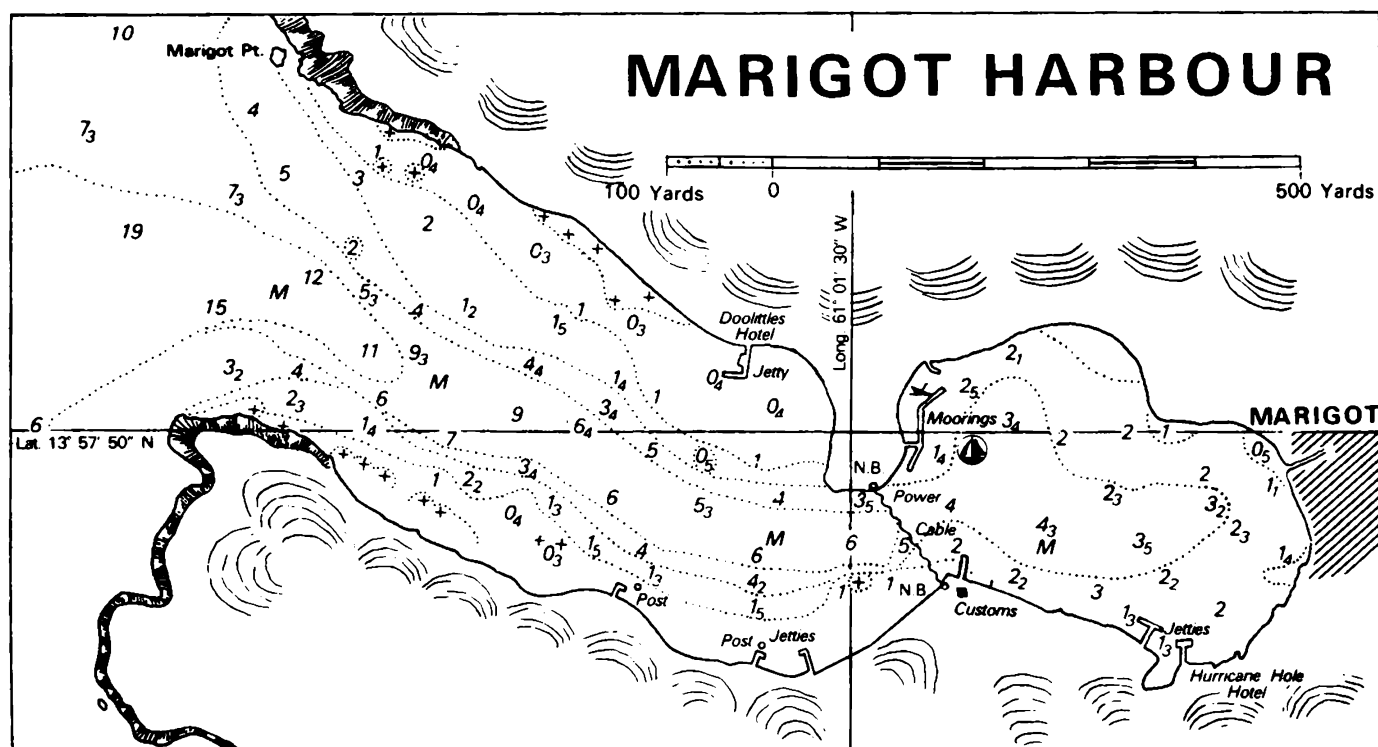
MARIGOT HARBOR

(II 1, B, B-1; Sketch Chart III-12)

Four miles south of Castries, this is a narrow, deep harbor. In years gone by, before the construction of the hotel and guest houses, yachts usually sailed right by Marigot without taking notice. Now it has become a popular anchorage. You will notice small cottages along the water's edge on the



SKETCH CHART III-11 Grand Cul de Sac Bay



SKETCH CHART III-12 Marigot Harbor

north side of the harbor, and a lot of new houses on the steep hillside forming the south side. Entering is easy: favor the south side of the outer harbor; shoal water extends 200 yards west by north from the southern tip of the palm-covered spit on the north side of the entrance. Shoal water can easily be spotted in this outer section of the harbor.

When entering the inner harbor, stay north of the line of bearing of 090 on the end of the Customs jetty on the south side of the harbor or you may come to a grinding halt (as *Iolaire* once did) on a rock with 6 feet of water over it a hundred yards west of the Customs dock. Otherwise, tacking through the narrow neck to the inner harbor isn't a problem because there is deep water close to shore. In fact, it is perfectly possible to lay a large vessel alongside the end of the palm-covered spit on the north shore and moor to the trees with plenty of water. If you do this, set an anchor out to the southeast to hold her off. The one disadvantage of palm-tree anchorages is mosquitoes. For this reason, I prefer the middle of the inner basin off the new hotel and dock.

On the south side of the harbor at the ferry landing is Customs and Immigration, ably run by Scotty, who, along with M. Le Breton in Fort-de-France in Martinique, is a friend of the yachtsman. Both men are cooperative, humorous, and helpful.

Marigot Harbor is sheltered in all weather, even in a hurricane. In normal weather it is always calm and peaceful. On the south side of the inner harbor is the Hurricane Harbour Hotel, with a bar, a dining room, dancing to steel bands, and a dock with moorings and water available. Water is not plentiful, as it is all catchment water; Marigot Bay has not been connected to the water main. For this reason, showers were not available to yachtsmen—but there is a freshwater pool.

Marigot is now the southern base for the Moorings, the Tortola-based bare-boat charter service, which has taken over Doolittle's hotel cottages and the sandspit on the north side of the island. The hotel is still called Doolittle's (it's where the Rex Harrison movie *Dr. Dolittle* was filmed) and has excellent meals at a reasonable price and also a beach bar, where you can swim between drinks. The only problem is that it has the most hungry "no-see-ems" I have ever encountered. After 30 years in the Caribbean, I am pretty impervious to them, but Doolittle's takes the cake.

Doolittle's has a small launch that shuttles back and forth to the landing stage on the other side of the harbor—the signal for the ferry is three blasts on a car horn. If you are anchored in between and

want to go ashore, the launch will oblige. There is an underwater power cable crossing the bay, running southeastward from the tip of the sandspit; and this is marked with warning signs at either end. Do not anchor on top of it.

While anchored in Marigot Bay, read *Ramage and the Freebooters* by Dudley Pope; part of this novel is set in Marigot Bay.

Between Marigot Harbor and Grand Caille Point there are a number of anchorages that could be used as daytime stops for a swim: L'Anse-La-Raye, off the village of that name; L'Anse Cochon; and L'Anse des Canaries. They might be interesting to investigate, but only under the right conditions. They are definitely not all-weather anchorages. In any case, you should anchor bow and stern. A ground swell would make the anchorages completely untenable. I also wonder about the wisdom of spending a night where you don't know the sentiment of the local populace toward yachtsmen.

Those who like to dive might check over Anse Mamin just north of Grand Caille Point. Here you'll find the Anse Castenette Hôtel, good diners, and a diving operation run by Nick Troobis-coff. Be sure to moor bow and stern, though, and be ready to move out if the ground swell builds up.

SOUFRIÈRE

(II 1, B, B-1; Sketch Chart III-12)

South of Rachette Point, north of Petit Piton, Soufrière is the second largest town on St. Lucia, and, although it is not a port of entry, you can get preclearance here, as mentioned above.

Anchoring off the town of Soufrière is virtually impossible, as the bottom drops off almost vertically and the dock, as of March 1985, was in a very bad state of disrepair. The only really possible anchorage in Soufrière Harbor is in the northeast corner, off the Hummingbird restaurant. Sail on in, drop a stern anchor, call on VHF channel 16, or sound a horn and Harry, the handyman and general factotum, will grab your bow line and tie it onto a tree. I am told that Joyce at the Hummingbird will provide a memorable meal at a reasonable price. Tucked in here, you are well sheltered by Rachette Point from the northwesterly ground swell. Moored bow and stern, the yacht should be perfectly safe under any normal conditions.

The major attractions of Soufrière are the sulfur baths and volcano. A taxi may be hired to take you to both spots. The baths are reported to be refresh-

ing and invigorating, something just short of a fountain of youth. The volcano is one of few in the world whose crater can be explored without a lot of mountain climbing. It is immensely popular, although some people may say that it is nothing more than a blowhole on a hillside.

ANSE DES PITONS

(II 1, B, B-1; Sketch Chart III-12)

A short way south of Soufrière is by far the most spectacular anchorage in the Lesser Antilles. On either side are the Pitons, towering about 2500 feet in the air. At the head of the bay in the northeast corner is an excellent anchorage, off the *Jalousie* boathouse, as long as you are able to find bottom. The only way to moor is to sail in close, drop a stern anchor about 50 yards offshore, luff up, and have someone jump off the bow with line to tie to a coconut tree. I have lain within half a boat length of shore and had plenty of water under the keel. Be sure that your stern anchor is well set, as hard gusts (back eddies off North Piton) can blow you down on the rocks to the south of the boathouse. Further, although it seldom happens, the ground swell can sometimes find its way into this northeast corner; if it does, you will have to get out fast before the stern anchor drags and you are high and dry on the beach.

In years gone by, one would usually have the Pitons all to oneself and nothing but the friendliest of locals on shore; inevitably times have changed, and nowadays you'll probably find eight or ten yachts moored bow-in to the palm trees and small urchins demanding money to tie you up to a tree. You'd better pay them, or they're likely to cut you loose at night.

This situation in the Pitons was really getting out of hand in the early 1980s, when Ian Cowan of Stevens and Bruce Cameron of the Moorings, with the aid of some of their St. Lucian friends, launched a massive education campaign to convince the boat boys that they would make more money by being friendly to the yachtsmen than by frightening them off. I am told the drive has borne fruit, and they are much more friendly ashore. Still, I advise you check with Stevens Yachts or the Moorings before visiting the Pitons.

Another hazard is that fishermen will often claim they cannot set their nets because the yachts are in the way—they demand money to compensate them for fish not caught. This is an absolute racket. Net fishing is never done in this northeast corner of the harbor, one reason being that the water is much too deep for net fishing. If you are approached

with this tale, tell the fishermen you are going to call the police on your VHF; this usually scares them off.

Ian Cowan has, in fact, presented the police in Soufrière with a VHF, so you might actually be able to reach the police if you call. I'm not sure it would do much good, though, because getting to Piton from Soufrière by road is none too easy. What these islands need, incidentally, rather than the big 70- to 110-foot patrol boats they are building, is a fleet of 35- to 40-foot police launches built to be fast, maneuverable, and indestructible. Police and Customs launches in the Eastern Caribbean seem to have a life expectancy of about three years, but "it is an ill wind that blows no good." The unreliability of the boats, coupled with the inability of the Customs and police to maintain their boats, does not help the yacht yards in the area.

Ashore you will find some most interesting ruins, and an old coconut plantation that has been bought by Colin Tennant. No one seems to know his plans for the place, but one of his first acts was to buy an elephant in India and hire an elephant handler, or mahout. Both were brought to St. Lucia, and now an elephant happily wanders through the estate munching grass and leaves. It is certainly a much easier life than pushing teak logs through the forests of India or Burma! (A word of warning: Evidently small boys have been teasing the elephant, and as a result the animal is not always friendly. Do not approach the elephant unless the mahout is around.)

If you enjoy exploring the countryside, my friend John Clegg says to take a cab down the Choiseil Road from Soufrière. Go about four miles and take the road to the right. It's not much of a road and the driver will probably protest, but take it just the same. Bounce along for another mile until you reach a group of houses. Although the inhabitants speak no English, for five or ten dollars one or two of them will guide you to Gros Piton. If the weather has been dry, it will be about a two-and-a-half-hour scramble. The route swings around the south of Gros Piton at roughly 600 feet and climbs the west ridge from there. At the top you will find yourself in the thick of a mahogany forest. Climb a tree and take a gander. The view will prove well worth the struggle.

George McLellan, who has also made this trip, recommends contacting Tonka Prosten, who can be found in Soufrière; ask at the Texaco service station in the middle of town. He can rustle up a taxi driver who will take you to the closest approach to Gros Piton, about a mile outside Soufrière; he knows the way up quite well. McLellan advises

setting out around 0700 so you get back down to town or the harbor by noon or so, before it gets too hot.

The hike to Petit Piton is another worthy struggle. Again, you will need a guide. The route goes up the col from the anchorage toward Soufrière to about 800 feet, then down again to about 200 feet before winding its way up the northwest ridge. For the most part, the trip is a pretty standard scramble through thorn scrub, with the exception of a 30-foot patch of rock, where some basic climbing technique may be required. The top of the piton is open and breezy. If you clamber down about 150 feet and climb a tree, you can get a good shot of your boat anchored at Jalousie. Allow about six hours for the entire trip up and back. Be damn sure to take some liquid refreshment.

LABORIE

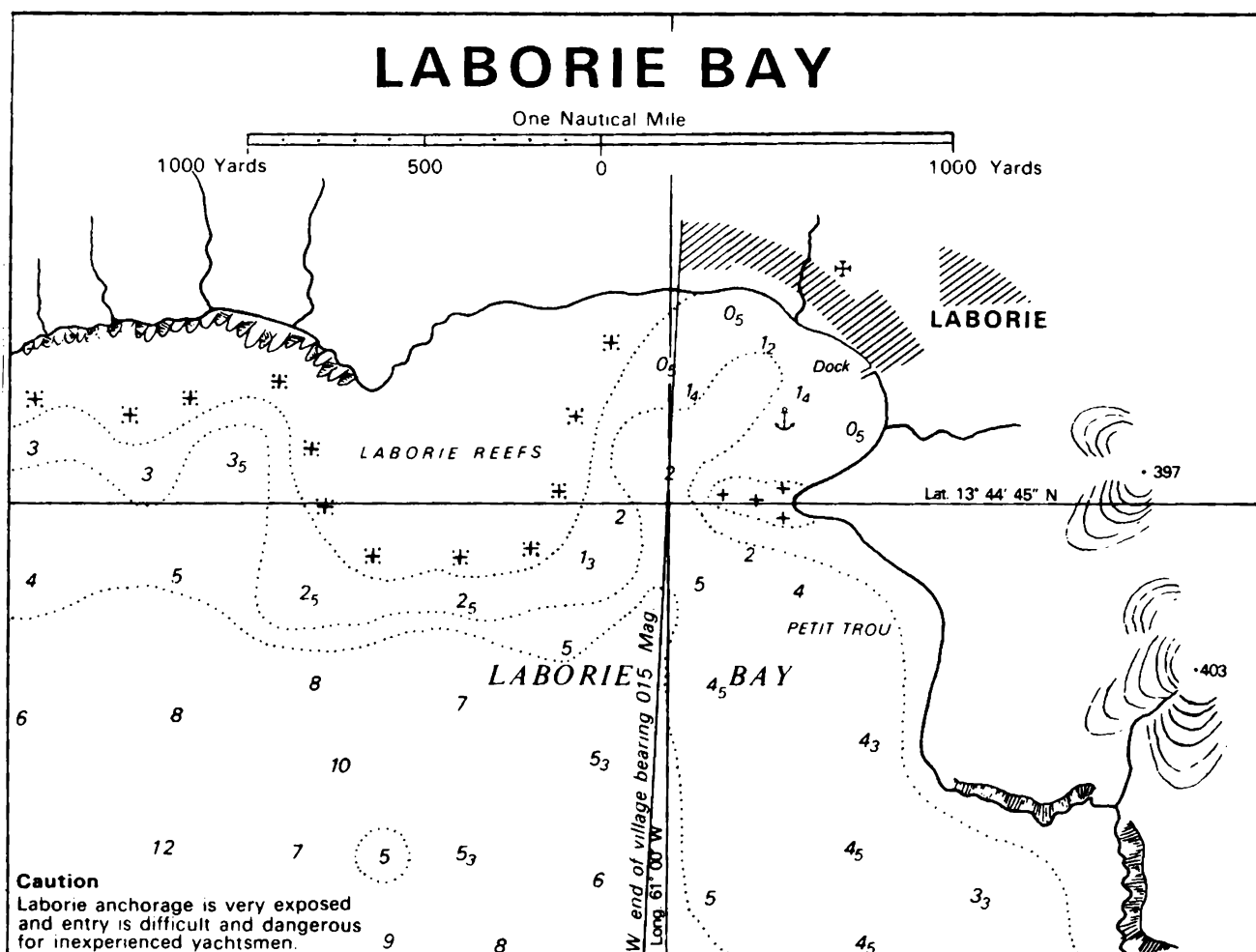
(II 1, B, B-1; Sketch Chart III-13)

Laborie, on the chart but seldom visited, is a most intriguing anchorage. This harbor should be entered only under ideal conditions with the sun high. The man who made the Admiralty chart

appears never to have seen the harbor. The reef on the eastern side of the entrance to Laborie Harbor is not as indicated on that chart, but extends at least 150 yards westward from the eastern point.

To enter, bring the houses on the western side of town to bear about 015 magnetic and keep a good lookout to starboard. Once the reef is abeam to starboard, head northeast toward the church, round up, and anchor wherever it is convenient. There are about 9 feet of water in the harbor.

Mike Smith of *Phryna* has warned to keep an eye on the rain clouds before entering Laborie. In heavy rainfall the stream that empties into the harbor spews out so much mud that it is impossible to find one's way in or out. Thus it might be wise to avoid this anchorage during the summer rainy season, or in periods of southeast winds. Phil and Joan Cardon of the Whitby 42-foot ketch *Glissade* report that they have made three visits to Laborie, enjoyed all the visits, found the people extremely friendly, and saw no other yachts. They pointed out, though, that a misprint in my 1974 guide resulted in a wrong range for this entrance. They favor the bearing, mentioned above, of 015 magnetic on the western end of town, which will keep



SKETCH CHART III-13 Laborie Bay

you close to the eastern edge of the reef. (It's always better in a channel to touch on the windward rather than the leeward reef.) If you'd rather be dead center in the channel, though, you might prefer a bearing of 020 to 025 magnetic.

VIEUX FORT BAY

(II B-1; Sketch Chart 14)

On the south end of St. Lucia, this is a large banana-loading port as well as a port of entry. Well to the east on the way north, it is difficult to lay from St. Vincent and is seldom visited by yachts. However, if you are disposed to visit Laborie and the Pitons without going to Castries first, you might do well to clear through Vieux Fort. In normal trade-wind weather this is a good anchorage. Use the area southeast of the large pier. (North of the pier is a prohibited zone.) When coming from the south, approach with Cross Hill (the hill north of Battery Point) in line with Morne

Belle Vue, bearing 035 magnetic. Go to the head of the harbor and anchor. Hoist your "Q" flag, go ashore, and find Customs.

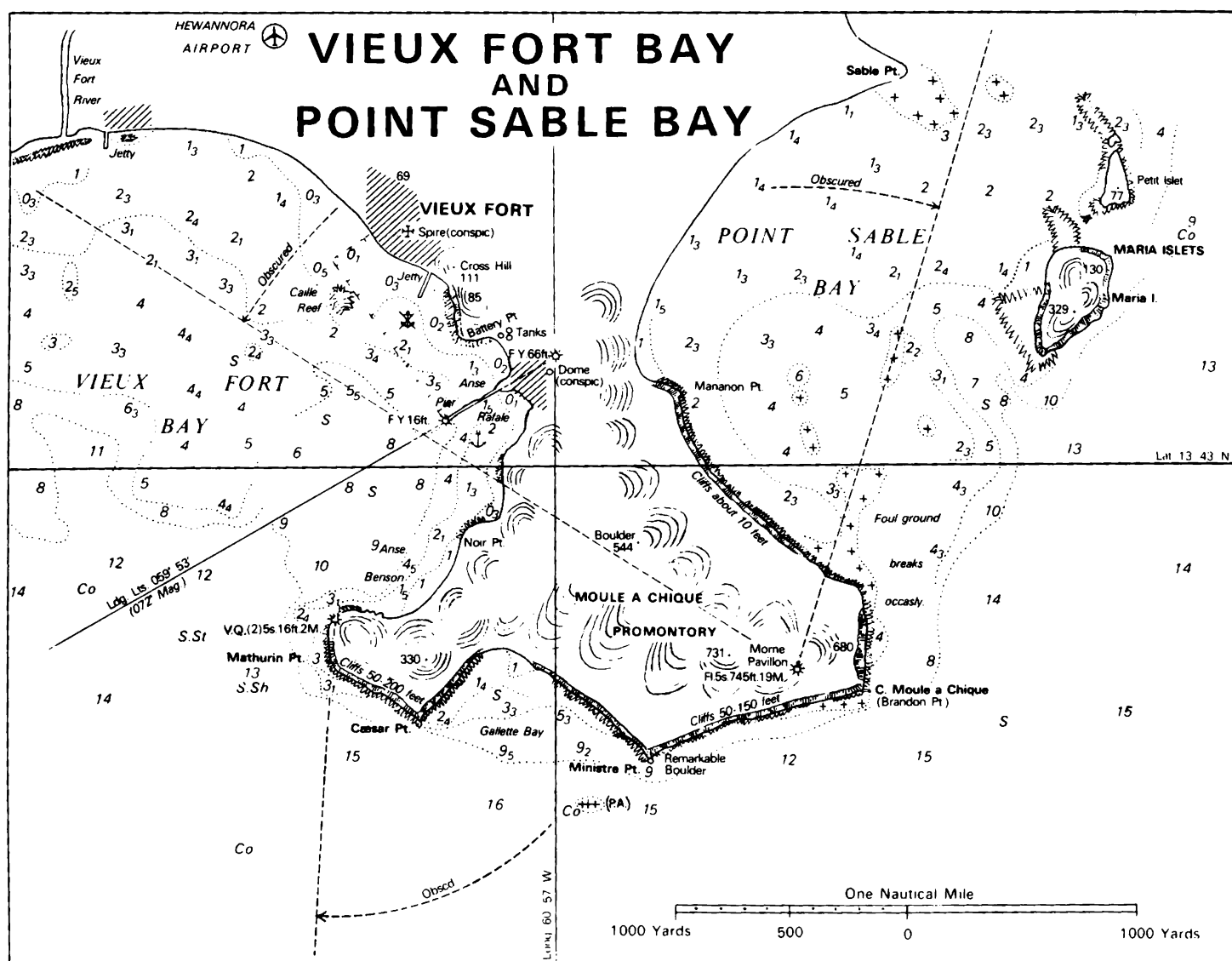
There is not too much else ashore at Vieux Fort, but there is excellent reef diving and lobstering thereabouts. If you are the lazy sort, lobsters are cheaper to buy here than elsewhere in the Eastern Caribbean.

One advantage of anchoring southeast of the main steamer dock is that it is out of the swell and is only 500 yards across the spit of land to Point Sable Bay. I am told that the beach of Sable Bay is a full mile long, has pure white sand, and is completely deserted: a well-worthwhile walk for those who really like beaches.

POINT SABLE BAY

(II B-1; Sketch Chart 14)

I have seen Point Sable Bay from sea and from the air, and it intrigues me as an anchorage—but I



SKETCH CHART III-14 Vieux Fort Bay and Point Sable Bay

haven't tried it yet, nor have I talked to anyone who has. It looks as though a good anchorage would be in the lee of Maria Island, with its northern hill bearing about southeast, tucked in behind the reef. Pure speculation on my part—but it looks like a good spot to get away from it all. Exploration of this anchorage should be done only by experienced sailors under *ideal* conditions.

The eastern shore of St. Lucia has some small coves that are used by the natives for launching

canoes, but there is nothing that can be really called a harbor. I know of no yacht that has visited this area.

One last word of warning: *Under no circumstances should one swim in St. Lucia's streams.* There is a parasite in the water that can enter the bloodstream and cause all kinds of trouble. This is the same parasite that plagues the upper reaches of the Nile in the area of the Aswan Dam.

4



St. Vincent

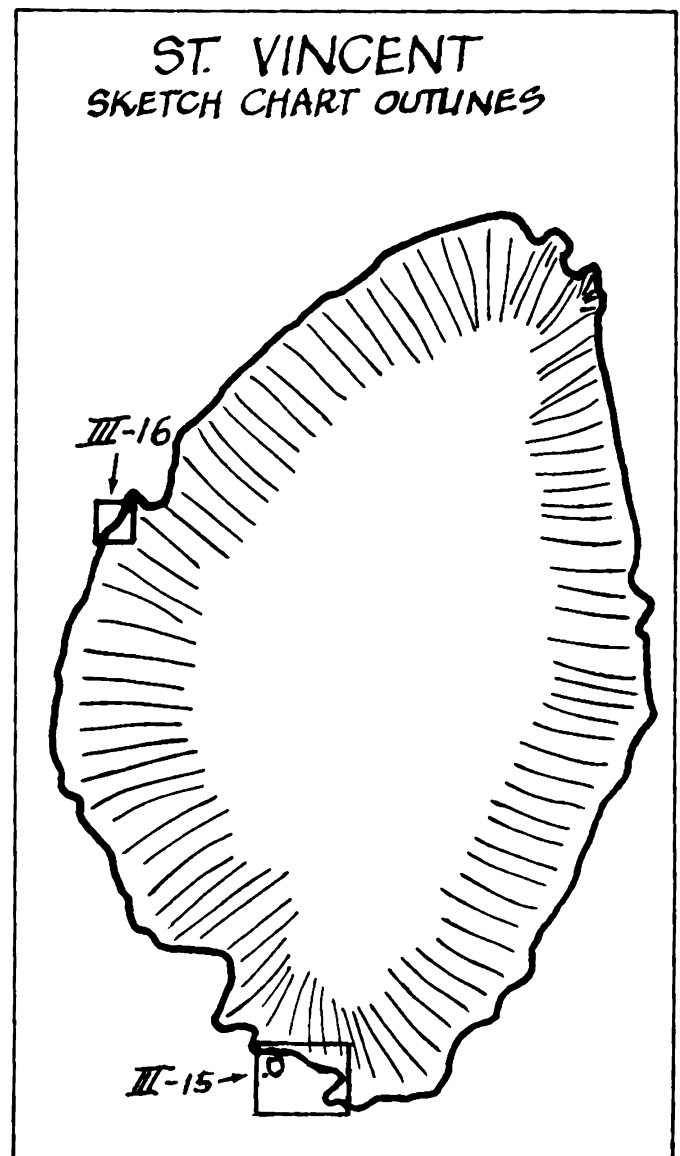
II 1, B, B-3, B-30

St. Vincent is somewhat smaller than St. Lucia, its neighbor to the north. It is a lush, wet island with peaks rising to well over 3,000 feet. Sections of it have been lavishly cultivated, the crops laid in neat green tiers reminiscent of the English countryside. From the sea, the town of Kingstown presents a pleasing aspect, nestled in a hollow with mountains rising around. The island was discovered by Columbus on his third voyage to the New World. Like Dominica, it had been populated by Carib Indians who resisted every attempt to colonize the island. Only when the Caribs became embroiled in their own civil war were the Europeans able to establish a presence on the island. In 1675, a slave ship bound from Africa went down off St. Vincent. Many of the slaves swam ashore and settled, producing through intermarriage the Black Carib of today.

The story of St. Vincent is one of continuous warfare. The Caribs entrenched themselves at the north end of the island while the British settled and fortified the towns of Kingstown and Calliqua. The Caribs were supported against the British by the French, who imported other Caribs as mercenaries from neighboring islands, primarily St. Lucia. These hired Caribs always landed on the northeast and northwest of the island, grouped, and proceeded south overland against the British. It is for this reason that many of the old fortifications on the island, such as those on Duvernette Island, Dorsetshire Hill, Richmond Peak, and Sion Hill, and the earliest ruins at Fort Charlotte, all have their cannons aimed inland.

When the Caribs were finally conquered, around 5,000 of them were placed on the island of Baliceaux and later shipped to British Honduras. How

they managed to cram 5,000 people onto an island the size of Baliceaux is very difficult to imagine, and I suspect the loss of life was heavy.



There are a number of good hotels on St. Vincent. The best thing to do is pick up a tourist guide to the island which lists all the hotels. They are varied, and you are sure to find a hotel to suit your taste and pocket.

The shopping situation, from a yachtsman's standpoint, is not too good. There is no really good big supermarket. Instead, you have to go from store to store and spend a day acquiring about half of what you really want. The open-air market is excellent and operates every day from 0800; if you want to get the best, arrive early. Ice is available at the ice cream factory. Fuel is obtainable by appointment with the Shell agent at Hazel's store, and arrangements can be made for it to be delivered at the steamer dock.

The dock was clearly not designed with yachts in mind. It is a miserable place to lie, especially when the ground swell is running. Unfortunately, this is the only place in Kingstown Harbor where fresh water can be had.

There is deep water all along the jetty. The best place to anchor at Kingstown, a port of entry, is around the northeast corner. Get your bow close to shore, drop anchor, and ease your stern into the dock right next to the steps where the small bum boats offload.

During Hurricane Klaus, in November 1984, a small freighter sank in the northeast corner of the harbor; it was in deep water and wouldn't have caused a problem except that its mast was sticking up to within six feet of the surface. As of January 1985, the obstruction was still there, marked by a tiny buoy that looked more like a fish-pot marker. The mast may have been cut off by the time you read this, but don't count on it. Once you have cleared, I would advise moving out of Kingstown to another anchorage as soon as possible.

I suggest you *not* spend the night in Kingstown—and so does no less a personage than the Honorable James "Son" Mitchell, premier of St. Vincent. He has told me that any yachtsman is crazy who does anything in Kingstown but clear and leave. The problem is that dinghy and outboard pilferage is rife, and the authorities so far haven't been able to do much about it.

One large yacht was victim of a particularly galling theft. Its St. Vincentian crew had a girlfriend ashore and he asked permission to take the dinghy and leave it tied up overnight to the St. Vincent Coast Guard vessel *Captain George McIntosh*. The yacht's skipper figured that would be safe and gave permission. Next day the dinghy arrived back, but the outboard was gone. The deck

watch on the *McIntosh* (which keeps a twenty-four-hour watch) gave the usual West Indian reply, "Me no know," and a shrug of the shoulders.

If you are coming from the north, I hardly think it worthwhile to clear through Kingstown at all. From Johnson Point it is a hard beat to the jetty in the northeast corner of the bay. Much time is lost in maneuvering your way safely to the jetty, and thence through Customs. Once cleared, you are required to leave, and from the jetty it is two and a half miles against wind and current to the nearest amenable anchorage, at Young Island. The better way by far is to take a beam reach from Johnson Point to Bequia and then a short sheltered beat up to Admiralty Bay. This is a fine (if crowded) anchorage where you may clear at your leisure and pass the night. If you then wish to visit St. Vincent, you can sail directly to the anchorage at Young Island or Blue Lagoon, thereby postponing indefinitely the suspect pleasures of the Kingstown jetty.

If, after all the above, you still decide to clear at Kingstown, call the lighthouse at Kingstown Harbor on VHF channel 16 and ask that a message be relayed to Customs and Immigration so they will expect you. The procedure then is to go alongside the landing stage on the northeast corner of the main ship jetty, not the small easternmost jetty used by the local schooners. There is usually a surge, so make sure you have plenty of fenders and strong spring lines. Customs is right there on the dock and they will usually get the Immigration officer by telephone. Otherwise, walk south along the front street; Immigration is found on the ground floor of the police department. Immigration nearly always insists on boarding the boat even if you are anchored out. They do so with boots that usually have gravel lodged in the soles—not too good for paintwork and teak decks.

One charter skipper had a solution to this problem—he always anchored out and dumped a couple of buckets of water into his dinghy before rowing ashore. When the police officers complained, he apologized, saying he had a leaky dinghy. By the time the officers came aboard, their shoes were somewhat cleaner and a bit squishy and somewhat less damaging to his paint and varnish. The next time the boat came in and he arrived with his "leaky" dinghy to clear, the officers, remembering their previous experience, cleared the boat without going on board.

Back in the early 1970s, St. Vincent levied a tax on all charter boats entering her waters. The tax itself was not too bad, but the precedent it set was scary. Since all the islands are semi-independent,

Eight feet can be carried to the old jetty just south of the club. The channel lines up with the jetty and should be sounded with the lead line.

The third yachting center is the Trinidad Yachting Association, located in Chaguaramas in Carénage Bay. The Association has a clubhouse, moorings, launch service, travel lift limited to fifteen tons, and so on. There is no charge for staying there, but there is a Catch-22 problem. You have to clear Customs before mooring at the Association, but you have to have an invitation from the Association before Customs will clear you to go there. So, what you do is take a bus from downtown to Chaguaramas, introduce yourself to the club manager and to some members, get invited to moor there, and then go back to Customs. The number of the Association is 634-4376.

Under the influence of the Trinidad Yachting Association, yachting has grown tremendously in Trinidad over the last dozen or so years. Marine supplies are now available for boats up to 50 feet from Peak and Company, 177 Western Main Road, St. James, Port of Spain. This is near Westmall. They stock Imray-Iolaire charts and Street guides.

Imray-Iolaire charts are also available from Landry and Company, Brenton Hall, Stanmoor Avenue, Port of Spain (Box 615). Landry and Company caters to the commercial ship market, so it is one of the few places in the Eastern Caribbean where you can get charts for Europe, the Panama Canal, and the Pacific.

Fuel is available not only at the Trinidad Yacht Club and the Texaco facility (but not the Trinidad Yachting Association), but also at Island Home, near the old Swan Hunter boatyard in Chaguaramas Bay.

Across the street from Customs and Immigration is the Seaman's Mission, which has all sorts of facilities: bank, swimming pool, showers, etc. Unhappily, the last I heard was that they have stopped letting yachtsmen use the Mission—only those with seamen's cards were allowed in. It's worth a try to see if the policy has changed again.

In the spring of 1985, prices in Trinidad had gone sky high. One old stand-by Chinese restaurant, Shey Shey Chiens, though, was still reasonable. The portions are huge; the best plan is to gather about fifteen people, go to the restaurant (any taxi driver will find it for you), set up a big table, order fifteen quarter-portions of different items, put them in the center of the table, and dig right in. Now, of course, with the devaluation of the Trinidad dollar, meals should be cheap in Trinidad.

For those with wooden boats, Dougie Myer, easily contacted through the Association or the Port of Spain pilot station, reports that Trinidad now has an excellent supply of timber.

Willie Pincero, the Ulmer agent at 40 Beechwood Drive, Goodwood Gardens, Trinidad (telephone: 632-0559), not only has conventional sails but also repairs the esoteric materials—Kevlar, Mylar—as well.

PORT OF SPAIN

(II D; Sketch Chart III-47B)

It is possible to go into Port of Spain and lie alongside the Customs dock, but this is not something I would want to do for more than a short while. Go in, clear, and move out to either the Trinidad Yachting Association or the Trinidad Yacht Club. Port of Spain is crowded, rough, and filthy. The same holds true of the anchorage at Pointe-à-Pierre.

CUMANA BAY

(II B)

Here you'll find the Trinidad Yacht Club, about 2 miles west of downtown Port of Spain. It's an open, bouncy anchorage, but the Yacht Club has sunk a couple of wrecks to make a breakwater, and now there's a marina inside that provides excellent shelter against the afternoon breeze and bobble. There is supposed to be 12 feet of water inside the breakwater, but silting may have made it less. If you've a deep draft, you had better send the dinghy in first to take some soundings.

Contact the Yacht Club on channel 68. Fuel, ice, and water are available. Outdoor showers used to be, too, but some French sailors, in town for Carnival, took showers stripped to the buff. The showers are in full view of the dining room. They have been disconnected.

If you want to lie alongside to have work done on the boat, you must, of course, make arrangements with the club. Contact the manager, Richard Taitt, Trinidad Yacht Club, Baphore Cocorite, Port of Spain, Trinidad (telephone: 637-4260 or 637-7945).

By law, the Trinidad Yacht Club is not allowed to sell drinks except to club members, so visiting yachtsmen must take out temporary memberships. If visiting yachtsmen do not get the red-carpet treatment here, incidentally, it is completely understandable, because foreign yachtsmen descend on Trinidad each year for Carnival and their behav-

ior has been known to be less than gentlemanly. One year they tore apart the Trinidad Yacht Club with overenthusiastic parties, and recently the club found itself stuck after Carnival with \$1,000 worth of bills for overseas phone calls not paid for by the visitors. As has been said elsewhere, quotation marks must often be put round the word "yachtsman."

CARENAGE BAY

(Sketch Chart III-47B)

The Trinidad Yachting Association is here, on the western side of Carenage Bay, just west of the former navy seaplane hangar, now used by the Trinidad government for storage and helicopter landings.

The Association has excellent sailing facilities, showers, launch service, ice, water, and electricity, but no fuel.

The anchorage isn't too good, since the afternoon breeze picks up in the Gulf of Paria and in turn kicks up a lot of bumpy water. Getting in and out of the launch or a dinghy can be tricky. As of May 1986, they were hoping to obtain a couple of old freighters and sink them across the mouth of the cove to form a breakwater.

The Association has an extensive sailing and racing program. The racing season lasts from November through May; in the summer they cruise up to the Grenadines, train racing crews, and work on their boats. An excellent junior program is run in the summer by two Canadians, who also teach adults.

Their fleet ranges from tiddlers to red-hot IOR, high-tech boats such as Dougie Myers' *Legacy*, a Soveril 43 that Doug built himself in Trinidad. The cruising class includes *Iolaire's* old rival, *Rosemary V*, and an ex-8 Meter, *Lara*.

The Association is devoted strictly to sailing. No motorboats are allowed. Only sailboat-owners can vote in the Association's meetings—it doesn't matter if it's a windsurfer or a 60-footer, but you have to own a sailboat. That's how they ensure that any proposals for tennis courts, swimming pools, or fancy restaurants invariably get voted down.

Otherwise, there is very little to recommend the Gulf of Paria. It is shallow, muddy, and, during summertime, full of jellyfish. No yachtsman wants to linger in this area unless he has business to conduct or friends ashore. There are, however, a few good anchorages scattered through the area. The cove on the south side of Gaspar Grande is

attractive and well sheltered. On Monos Island are two good all-weather anchorages. These are Morris Bay and Grand Pond (or Dehert) Bay. On the east shore of Boca de Monos is Scotland Bay, which is listed as restricted but is nonetheless used by local yachtsmen without anyone's fussing.

Relatively little cruising is done in the Gulf of Paria, even though there are some excellent anchorages on the Venezuelan Peninsula de Paria. Venezuela requires clearance at Punta Guiria, which is time-consuming and out of the way. Besides, the port captain can be downright hostile to yachtsmen. Most Trinidadians prefer the Grenadines and points north for their cruising grounds. The east coast is not suitable for overnight cruising. It is a lee shore with no viable anchorages.

North Coast

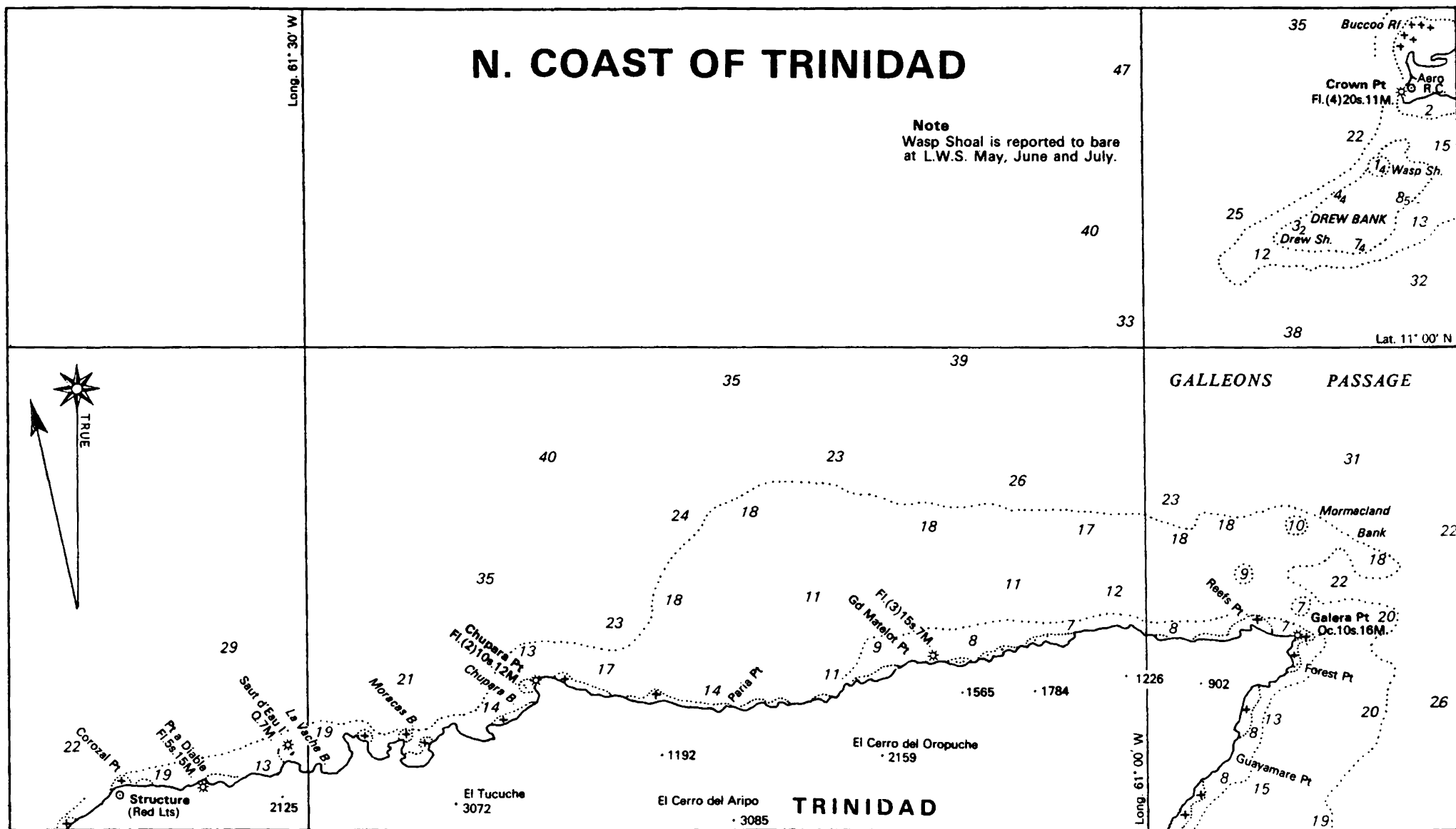
This area is seldom visited by yachts, as it is completely exposed to the northerly ground swells during the winter months, from late October through April. It is visited by fishermen, who tuck themselves in behind various headlands for some respite from the wind and sea.

During June and July, though, there are certainly some spots on Trinidad's north coast where you could find shelter while working your way east to Tobago.

A problem is that there are no detailed charts of this coast. DMA 24404 goes as far as Chupara Point, 20 miles east of Boca de Monos; DMA 24400 picks up ten miles or so east of that, but shows almost no detail. The BA chart is helpful but has little detail. The best thing is to get topo maps in Trinidad at the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, and Survey, corner of Richmond and Queen streets, Port of Spain. Without a topo map, it's pretty hard to figure out where you are on this relatively featureless coast.

If you're going from Trinidad to Tobago, I advise you to use the easternmost *boca*, Boca de Monos, just as the tide begins to fall, then work your way east along the coast. For two or three hours there should be an easterly-going current. The obvious course is to short-tack as close to shore as you dare; the coast is rather steep-to, with a few off-lying rocks, best shown on the topo maps.

One problem in navigating this coast is that the Trinidadians have one name for a bay or an island, the U.S. chart has another name, and the topo map has yet another. Ten miles east of Boca de Monos is Maravaca Island, also called Saut d'Eau



SKETCH CHART III-48 North Coast of Trinidad

Island, locally referred to as Sadau Island; do not try to pass between this island and the mainland. A bow-and-stern anchorage can be had in calm weather behind Medine Point, and there's good diving in the area, plus all sorts of caves at water level. The island is a birdwatcher's dream, as it is a protected area.

MARACAS BAY

During June and July, this provides good shelter and good beach. Best anchorage is, of course, in the southeastern corner referred to on the topo map as Tyrico Bay. With the high land to the east, the wind will come from all directions. The shore is quite steep-to; moor bow and stern. The south side of the bay has a great, long white-sand beach produced by the winter ground swells.

LA CUEVAS BAY

This bay is easily spotted from offshore by its long white-sand beach with two white houses on the beach, which are lifeguard huts; this is a very popular surfing bay during the winter, and obviously not a winter anchorage. In summer, though, you should be able to find good shelter from the sea behind Abercromby Point. Ease your way in with the aid of a lead line or depth sounder, and anchor bow and stern because of the variable wind.

CHUPARA BAY

This bay should provide shelter in summer. Again, a bow-and-stern anchorage, with a very small beach that should be partially sheltered by a reef that extends west from Chupara Point for half a mile. Give the point a wide berth if you are sailing into the bay or short-tacking up the beach.

East of Chupara Point there is no possibility of stopping before Matelot, a possible anchorage 14 miles away. Watch out for Machapure Rock, half a mile offshore off the eastern entrance to Blanchisseuse, which is spotted by the village of the same name.

MATELOT BAY

According to the *British Admiralty Pilot* book, L'Islette is joined to the coast by a small causeway or low sandspit and provides a sheltered anchorage for small craft to the west of the island off the town of Matelot. This anchorage is not shown on the

Admiralty or DMA charts and can be found only with the aid of the topo maps.

GRAND RIVIÈRE BAY

With the wind south of east in the summer, an anchorage should be possible off the village of Grand Rivière, six miles east of Matelot. It's the next to last anchorage before one goes off to Tobago.

TOCO

Toco, seven miles east of Grand Rivière Bay, is the easternmost village in Trinidad. It has a small jetty, and before the roads were built, it was connected to civilization by a coastal freighter, which anchored off and put supplies ashore, winter and summer. I am told that the boatmen, all from Carriacou, were the finest surf seamen in the world. In summer there might possibly be a half-decent anchorage off the town of Toco; it is a case of feeling your way in, as there are no charts.

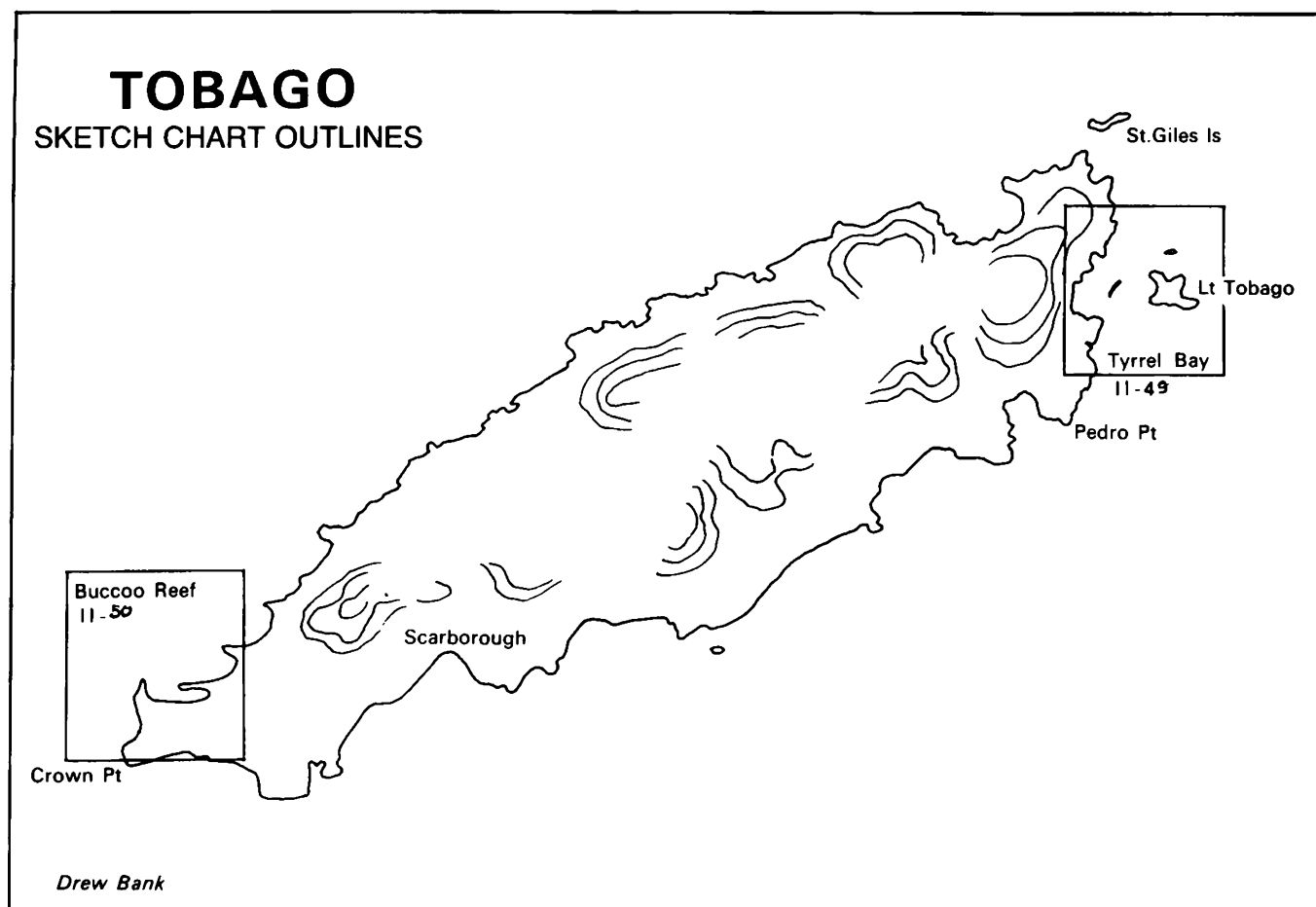
Remember that you can use the whole north coast only from late April to October, and even then only when the wind is south of east. You should be prepared to up anchor and get out if the wind goes north of east; and it can go all the way around to the north even in the summer months.

Tobago

Discovered in 1498 and settled in 1639, Tobago was neither zealously colonized nor jealously held; the island changed hands roughly thirty times before the British ultimately established control in 1814. In 1962, along with Trinidad, Tobago was made independent. Lacking good, deep-water harbors, it has never prospered commercially.

In 1963, the year after independence, a hurricane went through Tobago, knocked everything flat, and completely destroyed the agricultural economy that existed at the time. Relatively few of the planters tried to reestablish the farming economy, which they figured was going to die with independence anyway, since the Trinidad government looked to the oil industry as the salvation of Trinidad and Tobago: They dreamed of building an industrial nation with the profits from the oil industry.

In the years of high oil prices, this dream had a chance of coming true, but now, with the fall



in prices, Tobago's salvation seems to be in the field of tourism. The island is well suited for this, with its beautiful beaches, fair number of hotels, and superb scenery. It also has more birds than any other Eastern Caribbean island; the island was never plagued with poisonous snakes and thus escaped mongoose infestation. Mongooses were imported to other islands to eliminate the snakes; once the mongooses got rid of the snakes they started on the birds. Hence the relatively low bird population in most of the Caribbean Islands.

One of our nicest outings in recent years was in Tobago, where we rented a van and drove around the island. Well, almost; the road from Bloody Bay to within a few miles of Charlotteville and Man of War Bay is unpaved, and just before Man of War Bay the road was blocked by a fallen tree and a small washout. This was discouraging because the tree had been down for four months and the road still had not been cleared. It would have taken only a jeepload of road workers no more than a day to clear the whole road.

Tobago is very seldom visited by cruising yachtsmen because for most cruisers it is so difficult to reach.

The trans-Atlantic yachtsman who has made his landfall in Barbados, on the other hand, is all set:

He has an easy, broad reach of about 140 miles. However, he had better do his navigation very carefully as he approaches Tobago, since the current runs northwest at 2 to 3 knots; if allowance is not made for the current, he will find himself west of Tobago and may possibly miss the island altogether.

This northwesterly flow of the current is true not only around Tobago, but extends up the eastern side of the lower end of the Lesser Antilles as well. In March 1985, when we were heading from Martinique to Tobago, we were doing 7 to 7½ knots through the water, but with the current on the nose we were making only 5 knots over the bottom. It was not one of *Iolaire's* fastest passages.

If you are in the Lesser Antilles and are trying to get to Tobago, head north or south to Martinique, go around to Ste. Anne, then take off from there on a course of about 175 magnetic, if you can average 7 knots, or more to the east if you are slower.

If you are sailing from Trinidad to Tobago, you have a long tough haul. Even the sports fishermen think it is a rough run. For many years the sail from Trinidad to Tobago was seldom attempted—the Lazzari brothers of *Draconius* were among the few Trinidadian yachtsmen who

had successfully made the trip. With the advent of the modern IOR type cruising boat, yachtsmen have fought their way up to Tobago more regularly; in fact, for two years they had Spring Regattas in Tobago, although some yachtsmen objected on the grounds that it was too hard to get there.

If the wind is in the southeast, it is possible to stop along the north coast of Trinidad, especially from the end of March through mid-October, when the northerly ground swells are seldom encountered. (See the previous section for notes on the north coast of Trinidad.)

When heading for Tobago from Galera Point on Trinidad, it is imperative to avoid Drew Bank and Wasp Shoal. I am told by Jim Young and other divers who have dived on both shoals extensively that they are considerably shoaler than the charts show. Jim claims that at low-water springs in May, June, and July, when the water is lower in the Caribbean than it is in the winter, the coral heads on Wasp Shoal actually break water. Yet the British Admiralty and U.S. charts show a minimum depth over them of 12 feet. During the winter, when the wind is blowing hard, the entire area can be a seething mass of breakers. Under no circumstances should you allow yourself to get onto Drew Bank or Wasp Shoal; pass to windward or leeward of them, but do not cross them.

At this point, a discussion of the Tobago charts is in order. The new metric editions, 14 and 15, of the U.S. chart 24402, and the 14th edition of 24403, are definitely not nearly as accurate or useful as the charts they replaced. The soundings were switched from fathoms and feet to metric, many soundings were deleted, and the large-scale insert of Tyrrel's Bay was eliminated. An examination of the new charts makes one wonder what is happening in Washington, as supposedly these charts were compiled from information from the earlier editions, yet they are full of discrepancies. If you are sailing to and exploring Tobago, try to obtain the old 13th edition. Or else get BA chart 508 of all of Tobago, and 505, harbor plans of Tobago, although the old plan for the Little Tobago-Tyrrel's Bay area has been omitted and the Buccoo Reef area is singularly inaccurate. For these two areas, use the sketch charts in this book. By the time you read this book, a new Imray-Iolaire chart covering Tobago might be available.

All the U.S., British Admiralty, and Imray-Iolaire charts are basically drawn from the British Admiralty surveys of 1864 and 1865 plus colonial surveys of 1920 and 1955; as such, they must be viewed cautiously.

The only point of entry is Scarborough, and

foreign yachts must go into Scarborough even if they are coming from Trinidad.

SCARBOROUGH

(BA 508, 505; DMA 24402, 24403)

When approaching Scarborough, be very careful of the shoals in Rodney Bay to the west of Scarborough harbor, which now because of the ferry has been well buoyed; the buoys do not show on the U.S. chart, but are on the hand-corrected BA chart. Scarborough is not a particularly good anchorage, to say the least. The inner harbor is used by the Trinidad and Tobago ferry and local freighters and is therefore unavailable for yachts. Anchor among the fishing boats southeast of the harbor; moor bow and stern as far inshore as possible to stay clear of the entrance channel of the ferry—you'll be told in no uncertain terms if you are anchored too close to its route.

Once ashore, leave the dockyard and turn left: 600 to 800 yards to the west, just across the small river, you will find the Immigration office; you have to go back to town to clear Customs. I must say that in March 1985, the Customs officers were less than friendly. They insisted that our flare pistol be brought in from the boat and locked up in the police armory. (What were we supposed to do if we had a problem and needed to fire a distress flare?) They also announced that we were allowed to go to only Milford Bay and Man of War Bay; we could not visit the other bays on the north side of the island because the authorities could not guarantee our safety. Very puzzling for an island whose chief salvation is tourism.

Scarborough is not one of the great scenic towns of the Eastern Caribbean. You can do your shopping in one of the three small supermarkets in the village, or go to a new big Hi-Lo on the western end of the village, where you'll also find an ice plant (cubed ice only, no blocks). There is an excellent open-air market in the same area. Water is free—when you can get alongside the dock after the ferry leaves. Fuel is strictly a case of jerry cans.

Scarborough is a town to visit, enter, and then depart as soon as possible.

South Coast

Numerous small coves on Tobago's south coast can be visited by a small yacht drawing 4–5 feet and piloted by a good reef navigator. Like Anguilla, Tobago lies on a northeast-southwest axis, so that if the wind is in the southeast, most of the harbors on the south coast are uncomfortable or untenable,

whereas those on the north coast are okay—and vice versa. This means, generally, that in the winter months, when the wind is from the north and the ground swell is prevalent, you should visit the south coast; in spring and summer, spend your time basically on the north coast.

Interestingly, Pinfold Bay, behind Smith Island, was the original harbor and settlement on the island.

The anchorage behind Richmond Point, inside Richmond Island, might be worthwhile to visit to see the old Strong estate. Water for the estate's waterwheel was provided by an aqueduct more than a mile and a half long. It led back into the hills to various pools that were dammed up to provide water during the dry season.

KINGS BAY

(DMA 24402)

This is the first real anchorage on the southeast coast. It is described in the *British Admiralty Pilot* as the most secure anchorage in all of Tobago; the wind would have to go all the way to the south and blow hard to make it uncomfortable. The one problem is that the bay is very deep, so I would strongly advise a bow anchor on the beach and a stern anchor holding you off.

The tourism industry in Tobago has a long way to go, and the hotels could use some upgrading; but from the yachtsman's standpoint, the island has at least one very nice outstanding feature: On every beach we visited along the coast of Tobago we found little kiosks with bathrooms and showers. Kings Bay has such beach facilities, and, also, after a short walk up the river, a very nice waterfall, which is featured on almost all Trinidad and Tobago postcards.

The south equatorial current that pours up against Tobago at the rate of 3 to 4 knots splits offshore of Pedro Point. One leg bends north around Cape Gracias de Dios and in between Little Tobago Island and the mainland. The other branch swings west by Queens Island, then southwest along Richmond Island and down the south coast of Tobago. Note that in heavy weather Great River Shoal off Goldsborough Bay is covered with breakers; give the shoal a very side berth.

TYRREL'S BAY; GOAT ISLAND; LITTLE TOBAGO

(BA 508, 505; DMA 24402 and discontinued DMA 2440; Sketch Chart III-49)

This area is extremely interesting, but you must be prepared for a very strong current that runs

north inside Tobago Island at a solid 4 knots and causes heavy tide rips and overfalls off the north end of Little Tobago Island. The best approach is from the south, between Middle Rock and the mainland, where you probably have a 2-knot current under you. At this point you have three anchorages to choose from: in Anse Bateau off the Blue Waters Inn; or under the lee of Goat Island in Tyrrel's Bay; or, if you draw 6 feet or less and are a good reef navigator and conditions are perfect, inside the reef out of the tide in the small cove on the west side of Little Tobago Island.

Anse Bateau off the Blue Waters Inn is an easy entrance. Bear off and sail under Goat Island. Study the coastline with binoculars and you will discover a large waterwheel north of Speyside; sail north to the Blue Waters Inn, then run downwind into the cove. This is strictly eyeball navigation; round up and anchor in 12 feet of water, completely out of the current.

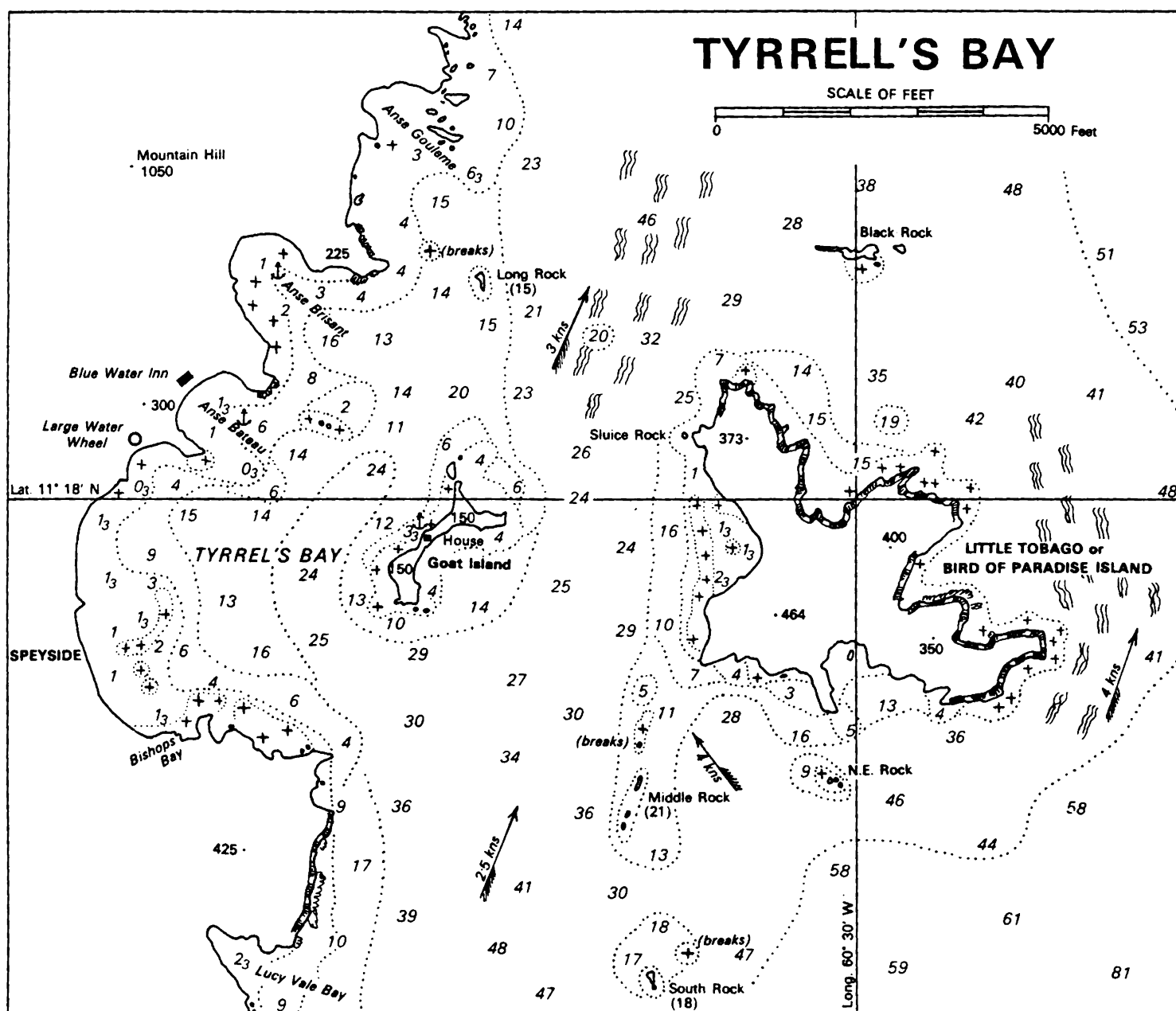
Jim Young, who owns the Dive Shop down in Pigeon Point on the southwestern coast of Tobago, has a boat permanently stationed here and runs dive trips out of the Blue Waters Inn. He can be contacted via the hotel if you wish to arrange diving trips.

If you are anchored in Anse Bateau northwest of Goat Island (Sketch Chart III-49), it is worth taking a walk over to the next bay to see the ruins of an old huge undershot waterwheel (perhaps a hydraulic engineer can explain to me why one builds an undershot rather than an overshot wheel); it is a magnificent piece of machinery built by W. A. Smith and Company, Glasgow, in 1871. Obviously the plantation economy was still going strong long after the end of slavery in 1839; otherwise, who would have spent a huge amount of money to build canals, aqueducts, and a very expensive waterwheel to grind sugar? Historians who claim that sugar became unprofitable immediately after the freeing of the slaves apparently don't know that there is old sugar-making equipment scattered throughout the islands with dates showing that the equipment was installed from the 1870s through the 1890s.

GOAT ISLAND

(Sketch Chart III-49)

Under the lee of Goat Island, an anchorage can be had right off the large white house. It is very deep water and the beach is steep-to; you will have to drop a stern anchor, power on into the beach, and literally jump from the bow of the boat onto the sand and bury your anchor. Most of the time



SKETCH CHART III-49 Tyrrel's Bay

the house is unoccupied, and I am told that the owners do not object to yachtsmen mooring bow-on to this beach. If yachtsmen behave themselves we will probably be welcome; let's hope a few don't ruin it for everybody else.

LITTLE TOBAGO ISLAND

(Sketch Chart III-49)

Little Tobago Island is of great interest to the ornithologist because it used to be the only home in the Western Hemisphere of birds of paradise, which had been imported from Varuna Island, off the coast of Borneo, in the early twentieth century. The chap who imported them also installed a couple of caretakers on the island to protect the birds.

Upon the owner's death, the island was sold and

resold and has finally ended up in the hands of the Trinidad and Tobago government. Now the birds of paradise have apparently died out completely—I am told that the last birdwatcher who came looking for them spent six months on the island and never saw one. However, it is still a beautiful island and very much worth exploring.

When passing north out of Tyrrel's Bay, favor the Long Rock side of the channel to avoid the heavy tide rip from overfalls off the northwest tip of Little Tobago. If you're going north, I would strongly advise passing outside of St. Giles (Melville) and Marble islands. Do not pass between those off-lying islands and the mainland.

If by any chance you are approaching Tyrrel's Bay from the north (which I advise against), remember that you will be bucking a 4-knot cur-

rent if you go south between Goat Island and the mainland. I would strongly suggest you not try it unless you have an engine and the boat is capable of doing 6 knots over the bottom. We did succeed in getting through with *Iolaire* but it put more than a few gray hairs in my beard. I urge that you pass fairly close to Long Rock to avoid the above-mentioned tide rip, and then run between Goat Island and the rocks to the west. Run in and anchor off the Blue Waters Inn.

Coming from the north and trying to anchor behind Little Tobago Island is almost impossible under sail because the island throws a considerable wind shadow. If you have an engine, hug the Little Tobago shore, use eyeball navigation, and pass between the north end of the reef and the shore; feel your way south behind the reef to the anchorage. This should be attempted only by very good reef navigators with boats drawing 6 feet or less under ideal light conditions.

West and North Coasts

When heading west from Scarborough, pass south of Bulldog Shoal off Rockley Bay, now well buoyed as of March 1985. You'll encounter a strong west-flowing current, but off Crown Point close inshore there is a strong east-going eddy; swing well clear of Crown Point and anchor at the south end of the beach between Pigeon Point and Sandy Point. Off the north end of the beach you will see signs for the cable that brings power to Tobago from Trinidad.

Anchor fairly far offshore here, as the fishermen shoot their nets early in the morning. Incidentally, anytime you are anchored in the vicinity of fishermen shooting their nets, do not use a Herreshoff anchor, as the fluke sticking out of the bottom is bound to catch a net; instead, anchor with the Danforth-type, Bruce, or plow anchor; then the net may drag across the top of your anchor and anchor line with a fair chance of not fouling.

In Milford Bay, anchor bow and stern; otherwise when the wind dies, the current will swing you beam to wind and you will rock and roll all night. Milford Bay is open to the ground swell, which can be encountered anytime from October to mid-March and occasionally through mid-April or early May.

Ashore, you will find the beach crowded on the weekends. Glass-bottomed boats excursion boats anchored off the beach will take you for a tour of Buccoo Reef. Roadside shops sell beer, *roti*, hamburgers, etc. Three large hotels will cater to every-

one depending on how much money you want to spend. Cars are for rent, and a good idea is to hire one and do a tour of the island, as we did; we put a big icebox in the back loaded with beer and wine and sandwich materials and drove off.

On the north end of the beach is Jim Young's Dive Shop. Jim is an experienced diver with an interesting heritage—he is part Chinese, part Carib Indian. He will be most happy to take you down by Buccoo Reef or anywhere along the north coast of Tobago. Your diving area, of course, will be determined by your experience.

BUCCOO REEF

(BA 505, 508; DMA 24402 [definitely use the 13th edition of the DMA chart]; Sketch Chart III-50)

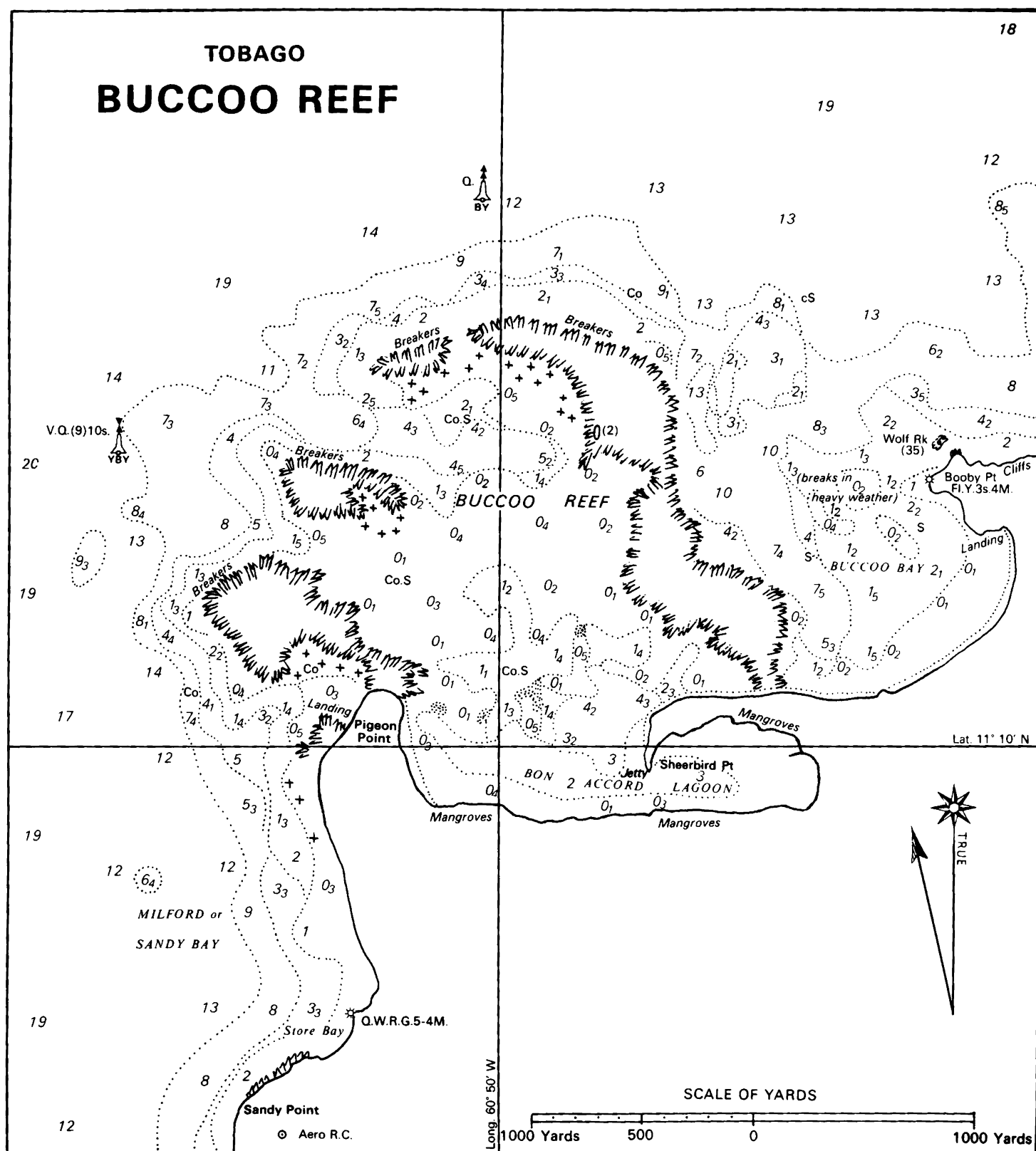
Despite what the 14th edition of the DMA chart shows, Buccoo Reef forms an excellent harbor. You can enter through the northernmost of the two entrances. Twenty feet of water can be carried well inside the reefs, where it shoals rather rapidly to about 8 feet. How far east you go to anchor depends on the time of year and your draft. When messing around in the Buccoo Reef area, remember that at spring tides there is roughly a 3-foot rise and fall of tide.

Once inside the reef, if you head approximately 150 magnetic, you will reach halfway to Sheerbird Point; then eyeball and zigzag until you get to Sheerbird Point, where you can anchor bow and stern off a white-sand beach. With care at high water 7 or 8 feet can be carried all the way in to the inner lagoon. Once off Sheerbird Point or in the lagoon, you'll have approximately 20 feet of water. When threading your way through the shoals inside Buccoo Reef, you will see white flags staked out on various reefs—a privately maintained buoyage system.

On the east side of the bay inside Buccoo Reef is Nylon Pool. I don't know why it is called that, but it is famous for the fact that it is about 4 feet deep and the water gets so heated up by the sun that it is practically the warmest water in the Caribbean.

Needless to say, the Buccoo Reef area provides extremely good snorkeling inside the reef for the inexperienced outside, the reef drops off suddenly and provides good snorkeling and diving for the more experienced.

Behind Pigeon Point there is an almost marina—I say "almost marina" because it seems that before independence in 1962, the swamp area was dredged out to build a large marina; then just before they



SKETCH CHART III-50 Buccoo Reef

broke through, the newly independent government of Trinidad and Tobago decided there should not be a marina in Tobago. This certainly hurt tourism severely. It is interesting to think about what would have happened had a large marina been built in Tobago in the early sixties.

BUCCOO BAY

(BA 505, 508; DMA 24402; Sketch Chart III-50)

Buccoo Bay has miles of white-sand beach, but it is strictly a May-to-October anchorage; ground swell from the north makes it completely untenable. Basically, this is true for all the bays, except

possibly Man of War Bay, on the north coast of Tobago. When entering Buccoo Bay, favor the Buccoo Reef side of the bay; using eyeball navigation, come south along the reef, then swing east in behind the shoals that extend west from Booby Point and anchor where you want.

IRVING BAY

Anchorage is available in behind Rocky Point. This is an excellent, steep-to beach, with nothing much ashore; use eyeball navigation, and anchor bow and stern.

PLYMOUTH

(BA 505, 508; DMA 24402, and discontinued DMA 2440)

Plymouth is reputed Tobago's second town, but it looks more like a village. A small gun battery sited on Courland Point hardly fits its description as a fort, but it provides a good view of the harbor. Best anchorages are in the northeast end of the harbor. Watch out for the shoals extending southwest from Courland Point. The nice white-sand beach has a hotel on it. West of Hawks Bill there is possibly a small daytime anchorage in calm weather, right under the Trinidad and Tobago golf course, which has an excellent reputation.

CASTRA BAY

(BA 508; DMA 24402)

Summer-only, bow-and-stern anchorage off the beach. Check immediately upon anchoring as to where the fishermen are likely to be shooting their nets. Shower and bathing facilities are ashore; there is a small village, but no charter boats.

ENGLISHMANS BAY

(BA 508; DMA 24402)

Three streams run into Englishmans Bay; if you follow the middle stream 10 minutes' walk, you find a very nice waterfall, which is great for showers and bathing. As with other bays on this coast, check with the fishermen upon anchoring to make sure you will not foul up their fishing.

PARLATUVIER BAY

(BA 508; DMA 24402)

Despite what the chart shows to the contrary, there is a shelf here, and you can anchor bow and

stern. Be wary of the reef on the north side of the bay. There's a beautiful white-sand beach, very little civilization, and excellent diving on both sides of the bay.

BLOODY BAY

(BA 508; DMA 24402)

A distinctive bay in that there is a white-sand beach in the northeast corner of the bay and a black-sand beach on the south side. We were told that during the wars between the British and the French in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a naval battle off Bloody Bay. The bodies of those killed ended up on the beach of what they call Dead Mans Bay on the western side of the harbor; somehow or other, due to the current, all the blood got washed over to what is now called Bloody Bay. The chart shows a rather large river, but when we saw it in dry season it was a mere trickle.

When sailing east from Bloody Bay to Man of War Bay, stay well clear of the Brothers and the Sisters, as they both appear to be improperly charted.

MAN OF WAR BAY

(BA 505, 508; DMA 24402 and discontinued DMA 24401)

This was a favorite stopping place for British ships in the West Indian fleet before World War II. Life was more relaxed then, and whenever a ship came in, parties would be organized by the various estate owners for the officers and crew. One of the high points of the pre-World War II social scene was the arrival of HMS *Hood*, later sunk by the *Bismarck* in a famous naval battle.

Today, Man of War Bay is a big empty harbor with plenty of fishermen. The best anchorage is up in the northeast corner, tucked in behind North Point, an area locally referred to as Privateers Bay. The new DMA Chart 24402 shows three small islands on the eastern side of the harbor, but they are not there. This is a bow-and-stern anchorage. Charlotteville is a small village with shops that can supply the most essential supplies. You'll also find Jane Boyle, a scuba diver who runs a diving establishment from Turpin Cottages on the western side of the bay; she is easily spotted riding around on her small motorbike.

If you're going east from Man of War Bay, do not try to pass between St. Giles Island and the

mainland; go north of Marble Island to avoid the worst of the westward-setting currents.

In sum, Tobago is well worth a visit, especially during the summer months, when the winds are

lighter, the danger of northerly ground swells minimized, and the danger of hurricanes almost nonexistent (there have been only two hurricanes there in recorded history). Customs officials may be difficult, but the people are extremely friendly.

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HARBOR CHARTS

Martinique

Rade de Fort-de-France
Pointe du Bout
Martinique—South Coast
Cul de Sac Marin
Martinique—East Coast—Southern
Part
Martinique—East Coast—Northern
Part
Baie du Tresor
Havre de la Trinité

St. Lucia

Port Castries
Rodney Bay Yacht Harbor
Grand Cul de Sac Bay
Marigot Harbor
Laborie Bay
Vieux Fort Bay and Point Sable Bay

St. Vincent

Calliaqua Bay and Blue Lagoon
Cumberland and Wallilabu Bays

Barbados

Bridgetown Harbor

Northern Grenadines

Bequia, Admiralty Bay
Bequia, Friendship Bay
West Coast—Mustique
Baliceaux and Battowia
South End of Canouan—Grenadines
North End of Canouan—Grenadines

Southern Grenadines

Carriacou to Canouan
Tobago Cays
Tobago Cays
Mayreau Island
Union Island, Clifton Harbor, and Palm
Island
Chatham Bay
Petit St. Vincent
Southwest Point of Carriacou
Tyrell Bay
Hillsborough Bay
Northeast Coast of Carriacou
Southeast Coast of Carriacou
Île de Ronde—Grenada

Grenada

St. George's Harbor
Morne Rouge Bay and Long Point
Southwest A and B Coast of Grenada
Fort Jeudy Point to Little Bacolet Point
Southwest Coast of Grenada
Great Bacolet Harbor
Marquis Island
Grenville Harbor
Northeast Coast of Grenada
Halifax Harbor
Dragon Bay

Trinidad and Tobago

Bocas del Dragon
Port of Spain
North Coast of Trinidad
Tyrrel's Bay
Buccoo Reef

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