

Sailing the Bay of Islands

GILLIE HUTCHINSON
Contributing Writer

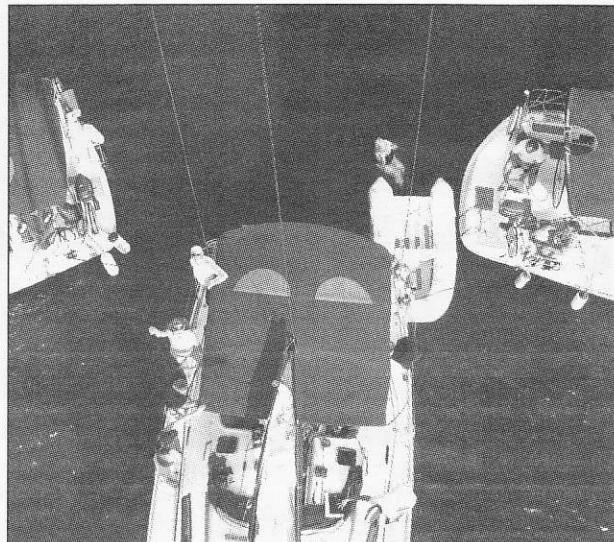
The Bay of Islands is a sailors' paradise. A three-hour drive north of Auckland, these 144 islands stretch around the very tip of New Zealand where the Pacific Ocean meets the Tasman Sea.

We are a group of 16 from B.C., our sailing jackets emblazoned with CA/NZ 2011, Canadian flags ready to fly from the stern poles. Warm, turquoise waters (24 degrees during this, their summer) envelop our flotilla of three 42-foot sail boats.

Scenic bays of golden

sands frequent the shoreline and golf course green headlands, dotted with tiny white sheep, roll and plunge down to the waters' edge. We sail to Hole in the Rock at Cape Brett, etched by wind and wave, and watch a power boat motor through its narrow gap. We crane our necks to peer up at the lighthouse on the sheer cliffs opposite, distracted by gannets diving vertically like shooting arrows into the blue.

We sail north to the tranquil Cavalli Islands and spy a flying fish skim the surface and circle our vessel. There are seals and tiny blue



GILLIE HUTCHINSON PHOTO

Three boats rafted on stern tie taken from the masthead on *Shard*.

penguins, and suddenly pods of bottle-nosed dolphins appear, criss-crossing three layers deep beneath our bow. My camera is in overdrive and my video footage full of squeals of delight at these mesmerizing animals performing joyfully in the bow wake.

Days on board *Shard* (think Chardonnay) begin with a fresh pot of coffee before a cooked breakfast on deck, and we are underway by 9:30 a.m. headed for a selected destination on the trusty chart. We cover from 20 to 30 kilometres daily, tacking and gybing in the steady, light winds under a full main, the tell tales on our big genoa foresail flying happily.

We drop the hook around 3 p.m. to swim off the boat or take the dinghy ashore to explore. We hike the hillsides, eager to stretch our legs, and stand admiring our three sailboats anchored below and the breathtaking panorama beyond. We discover tiny, rocky coves and clamber down to enjoy a private swim. I snorkel in the shallows, chasing silver-sided reef fish in the sandy fog, twisting and turning around the rocks, my underwater camera not quick enough to

capture their staring yellow eyes as they dart past.

We savour barbecued dinners on board and, after several glasses of chilled Sauvignon Blanc, dance on the foredeck to Cold Play under a starry, starry sky. We sleep like babes as the sea gently rocks and slaps the hull, and I dream of swimming with smiling dolphins in an endless blue.

Our two forays ashore include a visit to Kingfish Lodge in Whangaroa Harbour, a hidden gem celebrated by local boaters and fishermen, to enjoy the best rack of lamb I have ever tasted, accompanied by a Pinot Noir and serenaded by an endless throng of cicadas.

Then on south to the pretty town of Russell, once the capital of New Zealand and home to the oldest Anglican church in the land. Its past reputation for rough seamen and brothels is now replaced by a quaint promenade lined with small, bustling restaurants and bars overlooking boats nestled in the bay.

The setting sun casts swathes of bright orange, red and sienna across the horizon as my inward eye flashes and tucks the scene away.

WATERS
& enjoy!

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on, Raffle - March 17th

(Hiking or Shopping)
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Sunshine Coast
CREDIT UNION

CR11093235

Gibsons Seniors Society at Harmony Hall

ACTIVITIES
SCHEDULE

686 Harmony Lane, Gibsons 604.886.3919
gibsonsseniors@gmail.com www.gibsonsseniors.com
Welcoming new members 40 years old and up, \$12 per year

General meeting Monday, March 7th 1:30pm
Speaker on Real Estate

The monthly birthday lunch get-together is
Monday, March 21st at 1:00 pm. With a light
buffet lunch, cake (of course), sing-along, jokes,
good company, we always have a great time.
No charge, open to all.

Bingo every Thursday 6:30pm, doors open 4:30.

Saturday March 19th St. Patrick's Dinner Dance
Irish stew, Irish music by Katie and the Cornpones
Doors open 5:30, dinner at 6pm, proceeds to
Hospital Expansion Project. Tickets \$15, phone
Phyllis 886-1378 Catered, reservations cut-off
March 14th

See our website or the Coast Reporter's community
page for our activities schedule. Something for
everyone, small activity fee per session.

CR11093251

WEEKLY TIDE TABLE

Date	Time	metres	feet
04-Mar-11	5:38	4.4	14.4
	11:40	2.4	7.9
	17:13	4.0	13.1
	23:30	1.6	5.2
05-Mar-11	5:59	4.4	14.4
	12:11	2.2	7.2
	17:56	4.0	13.1
06-Mar-11	0:02	1.9	6.2
	6:19	4.3	14.1
	12:42	2.0	6.6
	18:40	4.0	13.1
07-Mar-11	0:33	2.2	7.2
	6:39	4.3	14.1
	13:13	1.8	5.9
	19:25	4.0	13.1

ries
1-888-BC-Ferry

Ticket Sales end 5 min.
before scheduled sailing
time for vehicles and 10
min. for walk-ons.

E • 40 min EARLS COVE - SALTERTY BAY • 50 min

T: SCHEDULE IN EFFECT:
H 31, 2011 SEPTEMBER 7, 2010 TO MARCH 31, 2011

BAY LEAVE EARLS COVE
7:25pm +6:30am 10:25am 4:25pm 8:20pm

Rotary 2011 Cash Calendar

MARCH
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