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2014

Annual Handbook of Offshore Sailing

**A guide
for planning
your 2014
voyages**

In-depth sections

**Bluewater Gear
Offshore Safety
Voyaging Skills**

**Interviews
with offshore
voyagers
describing
their gear
and techniques**

Ocean Almanac

Essential reference for the voyager

Voyaging Skills

Not even halfway around yet

Neville and Catherine Hockley voyage aboard their Cabo Rico 41 Dream Time. They departed the U.S. East Coast in 2007 and have sailed through the Caribbean, the Panama Canal and across the South Pacific to New Zealand.

The couple met in England in 1990 and married in New York City in 1996. The England connection comes from Neville, who was born in Southampton, England, and has lived most of his life by the sea. Neville studied graphic design at Parsons School of Design in New York City and Portsmouth College of Art & Design. In 1994, whilst backpacking around the world, Neville sailed from Australia to Italy and chronicled his voyage in "Dream Time," a book published by Vanguard Press in 2002. The book is now in its second printing. In 1997, Neville founded i&D, an advertising and design studio in New York. He continues

to work remotely from the boat with the support of business partners back in the New York headquarters, and clients with adventurous spirits that believe as long as he gets the job done, it doesn't matter where he is.

Catherine was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and after working as a nanny in England and Europe, and spending time as an Army reservist in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, came to the U.S. to work as a nanny for a Hollywood movie star, a position requiring her to have a concealed weapons license and to carry a firearm. After moving to New York, Catherine took real estate courses at NYU and worked in corporate real estate for Bertelsmann Inc. and Random House.

The couple purchased Dream Time in 2000. To prepare for their world circumnavigation they sailed two round trips from New York to Bermuda and cruised extensively in

Neville Hockley



the Long Island and Block Island sounds. In 2006, they both became licensed U.S. Coast Guard captains. Neville and Catherine have the support and sponsorship of a variety of companies, including Toughbook computers, Panasonic Lumix cameras, Steiner binoculars, North Sails and Tides Marine. They regularly write articles for a number of sailing publications, and donate all proceeds to Oceana.org — a charitable organization dedicated to conservation and protection of the world's oceans and marine life.

Read more about their cruising experiences at zeroXTE.com.

OV: What are top skills voyagers need to know?
NH&CH: The most useful voyaging skills, or qualities, are simple common sense, and the ability to leave your ego at the dock. Generally speaking, the most successful and happiest voyagers we've met over seven years

In This Section

- The right stuff
- Cents and sensibility
- Boat buying tips





of cruising, are rarely the most accomplished sailors, navigators, mechanics or meteorologists, but rather they're passionate about the cruising lifestyle, sail within their limits, whether coastal or offshore, know when to ask for advice, and never try and compete with Mother Nature.

OV.What is your planning routine prior to a voyage?

NH&CH.It's a combination of preparing *Dream Time* for the absolute worst conditions, while seeking the most sublime. We try not to compromise on either. Only when our boat is ready — all systems checked and gear secured, and we are fully rested, do we begin looking for the most favorable route and weather window.

OV.What is the most valuable skill you have picked up while voyaging?

NH&CH.In a word: flexibility, which after living a time-crunching, New York-paced lifestyle for a decade was a challenging adjustment, it took two years of voyaging before we really began to let go of our expectations and schedules. We recognize that ultimately we control very little, especially when at sea, so if conditions or

circumstances change, and it's beneficial to change with them, we heave-to, adjust departure dates, routes, even destinations to make our experience at sea more comfortable, after all, that's why we're out here. It's been extremely liberating.

OV.What skills do you most look for in a crewmember?

NH&CH.We prefer to sail as a couple and have established a routine that works with just the two of us. However, from past experience the best crewmembers are usually those who have a sense of humor, a calm rational demeanor, and a willingness to learn and work as a team. But before embarking on an offshore voyage with a new crewmember, take a trial sail first. People's behavior and personalities can change when under pressure and away from land, it's better to discover differences on a trial trip rather than a long passage.

OV.Do you think the experience of voyaging has changed now that voyagers can stay connected while at sea?

NH&CH.Yes and no. While communication technology has obvious advantages, conveniences, and can certainly increase safety, the physical experience of voy-

aging has essentially remained unchanged for centuries. However, even with satcom benefits, there are challenges and considerations: whether on a long offshore passage or a remote anchorage, sailors must acknowledge that *they* are responsible for the safety of their crew and vessel — satcom can give the illusion of immediate security, but conditions and situations must still be weathered by voyagers the old fashioned way, regardless of how good the signal is.

The second challenge is not to allow satcom to distract you from enjoying the sheer wonder, freedom, and spontaneity of exploring the world by sea. I have worked remotely for my New York-based design company for seven years on *Dream Time*, and satcom has made that possible. But it has taken discipline to balance my profession with the voyaging lifestyle so I enjoy the benefits of both, without one disrupting the other.

OV.Does the pressure to stay on a schedule sometimes contribute to you taking risks with bad weather?

NH&CH.We have the flexibility of a schedule-free voyaging lifestyle, so if conditions are

Left, Neville and Catherine hold up a chart showing their track through the SW Pacific. Above, the Hockley's Cabo Rico 41, Dream Time, at anchor in Fakarava in the Tuamotu atoll.



unfavorable, we wait, or even change destination entirely, to reduce risk and increase comfort. Only hurricane season and the winter season significantly dictate our schedule, and as we plan in advance where we want to safely spend either, and give ourselves plenty of time to navigate our way there, rarely do we have to compromise our safety. Not all voyagers have such flexibility.

Risks, however, can be minimized by researching weather patterns for the region you wish to sail, exploring and being prepared to travel alternate routes, but most importantly, allow yourself enough time to select a weather-window you feel comfortable with rather than an unfavorable one you feel pressured to take.

OV:What do you find most challenging about ocean voyaging?

NH&CH:Prolonged bad weather, either on passage or at anchor, is our most challenging and uncomfortable aspect of voyaging. We've experienced sustained gales at sea, intense high-latitude, low-pressure systems that generated 30-foot seas, even a tropical storm at anchor, but having confidence in our boat along

Left, Dream Time at sea. Right and below, Neville and Catherine while underway and enjoying a fire on the beach.



with procedures and equipment ready to employ, made these experiences valuable lessons and nothing more than rare inconveniences.

OV:How do you handle provisioning? Do you have a system for determining the amount of food and water needed for a voyage?

NH&CH:Our provisioning system is simple — fill everything to capacity before we set off on a long voyage: water, diesel and propane tanks, food lockers, fridge and freezer, as well as spare and replacement parts for our most essential gear.

As we like to anchor for extended periods in remote areas, we stock-up when we can as we're never certain exactly when we'll have the opportunity to do so again, or if our next destination will even carry the supplies we need.

OV:Who or what inspired you to go voyaging?

NH&CH:A voyage from Australia to Italy

literally changed the direction of my life. I was 24 years old, backpacking around the world, and found a crew position on a 44-foot sloop out of Sydney. I had zero voyaging experience, but six months later, when we arrived in Rome after a most adventurous passage, I had discovered my passion. After this voyage, for 10 years, Catherine and I worked towards a single goal — to one day sail around the world on our own yacht.

OV:What are your future voyaging plans?

NH&CH:That's simple: to continue exploring this magnificent world by sea, for as long as we possibly can, or as long as we continue to enjoy it. We don't know exactly what our voyaging plans will be next year, heck, we don't even know what they are next week! We set off from New York in 2007 to circumnavigate the world in seven years — we're not even half way around yet! ■

