

Cruising

64 ICA passage-makers
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Photo: Martin de Ruyter\ The Nelson Mail

Socrates departs Nelson

BRAVE blue-water cruiser Jeanne Socrates has unveiled her plans to finally complete a solo circumnavigation during an unscheduled stopover in Nelson.

The 67-year-old, retired London maths tutor gained world-wide notoriety in June 2008 when she shipwrecked on a remote Mexican beach near Acapulco – just 60 agonising miles short of completing a 15-month, 25,500nm circumnavigation in *Nereida*, her Najad 361.

She has since upgraded to a new Najad 380, also called *Nereida*, and had hoped to lap the planet non-stop from Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. However, she was forced to pull into Cape Town for a new engine after water got into all four cylinders of the original motor.

The Englishwoman then headed for San Francisco for a second tilt at the single-handed TransPac race but further boat issues and the chance to visit her aunt in New Zealand for the first time saw her divert to Nelson.

Socrates, who lost her husband George to cancer in 2003, called *Boating* out of the blue to discuss her plans from Mana, north of Wellington, as she awaited a weather window to start her next voyage to Hawaii where she hopes to land at roughly the same time as the finish of the TransPac.

She will then head onto to Vancouver Island in Victoria, British Columbia which she intends using as the start-finish port in her next circumnavigation attempt.

www.svnerida.com



2010 ICA Pacific Circuit Rally

www.islandcruising.co.nz



The fleet departs Opuia

Photo: Adrian Payne

Paradise bound...

Barring one painful exception, the Pacific Circuit Rally got off to a relatively incident-free start on the passage up to Tonga last month. **Kent Gray** reports.

The Pacific Ocean produced a little bit of everything for the Island Cruising Association fleet heading to Tonga on this year's Pacific Circuit Rally.

The 1080-nautical mile passage from Opuia to Pangaimotu Island Resort started off briskly with a 25 knot sou-westerly, pushing 29 of the 31-strong fleet out of the Bay of Islands on May 1 (two other yachts tagged onto the rally from Tauranga and Picton directly).

Similar conditions over the next two days gave the fleet a "good shunt" towards Tonga before two light days, and a third when many motored, slowed progress.

However, the lack of puff wasn't to last as a massive low that had formed over New Caledonia slipped down and parked itself around North Cape. That produced a challenging 12-hour period of 30-40 knot easterlies for many of the fleet before 22

of the 31 boats gained some respite in the shelter of North Minerva Reef.

The majority of the fleet then faced 60-odd hours of 12-15 knot winds on the nose which produced a short, lumpy seaway for the final 240nm to Pangaimotu Island on the Doyles Sails-sponsored Big Mama's Yacht Club Tonga Rally.

"It was a medium one to be honest... pretty easy," was how ICA boss John Martin rated the passage.

"There was no major gear damage reported other than a broken dagger board on the Roger Hill catamaran *Catina* which was still the first boat in."

The only significant drama came



2010 ICA Pacific Rally

LEG 1

New Zealand to Tonga
Depart: Opuia
Clearance: Pangaimotu Is

LEG 2

June 28 – Tonga to Fiji
Depart: Vava'u
Clearance: Savusavu

LEG 3

August 7 – Fiji to Vanuatu
Depart: Musket Cove
Clearance: Oyster Is

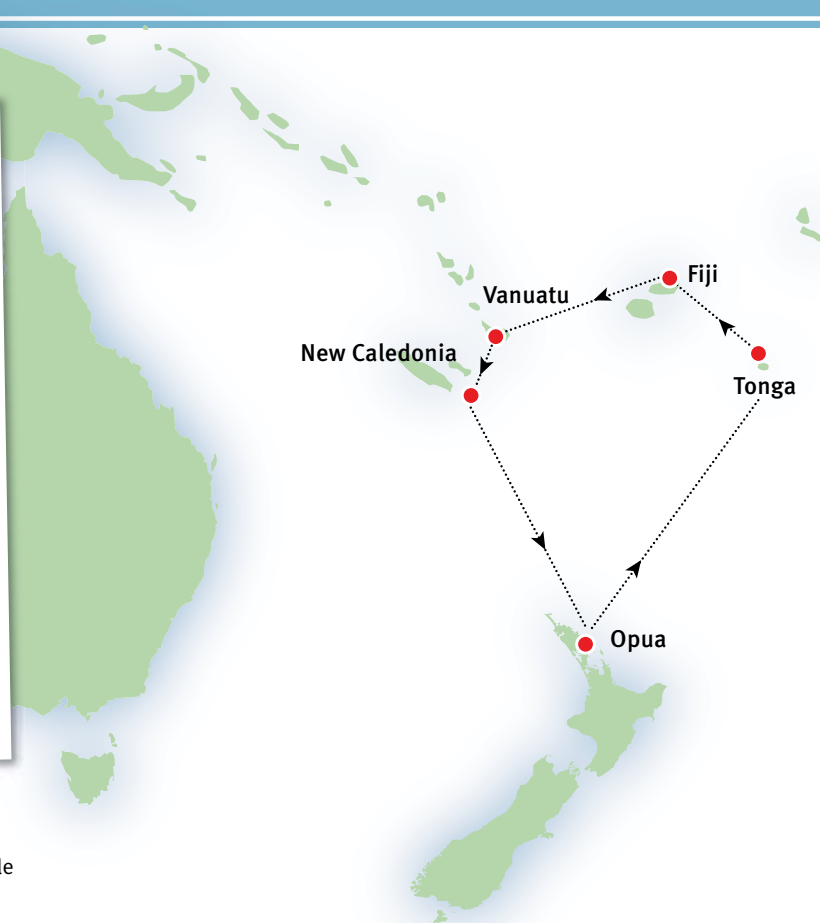
LEG 4

September 25 – Vanuatu to New Caledonia
Depart: Port Vila
Clearance: Ouvea, French Loyalties

LEG 5

October 30 – New Caledonia to New Zealand
Depart: Isle of Pines
Clearance: Opuia

All dates subject to weather



aboard the New Zealand-built Ganley 50-footer *Maamalni* piloted by US couple Suzan Nittleship and Michael Bell.

Their departure from Picton was delayed which meant they suffered the worst of the unusual low centred off North Cape.

“They had 30-40 knots for five or six days and unfortunately sucked water into their diesel via a breather. It killed the motor, their generator and water maker,” Martin said.

Things quickly went from bad to excruciatingly painful for Bell who was down below trying to revive the generator.

“Unfortunately Michael’s watch strap slipped onto the post of the battery which was effectively arc welded to his watch and wrist,” Martin explained.

“They had to cut it off with bolt cutters and it took a bit of skin with it. He’s got quite a nasty third degree burn two inches either side of where his watch sat.”

One of benefits of cruising in company is having help close at hand. Nurse Carole Neison from the yacht *Pericon* was able to administer first aid when *Maamalni* finally reached Tonga, thanks to the assistance of Martin who helped tow the stricken yacht through the reef-fringed entrance into Pangaimotu Island with a longboat



Pangaimotu is three-miles north-west of the main harbour in the Tongatapu group

borrowed from a local.

The crew of *Maamalni* were later presented two bottles of rum as the last to arrive by the crew of *Catina* – an ICA tradition – to kick-start the official passage prize-giving at the famous Big Mama’s bar.

The fleet – up from the 22 boats that participated in last season’s Pacific Circuit Rally – have since spread out around the Kingdom of Tonga. Many will reassemble to clear out of Vava’u for the second leg

of the ICA rally to Savusavu, Fiji later this month.

Over the next six months *Boating* will follow the adventures of five rally crews as they sail on to Vanuatu, New Caledonia and eventually back to Opuia in mid-November.

The crews – a young English couple, an Australian family of four and three Kiwi couples (one a rally returnee), are introduced over the next three pages.

New Zealand’s Northland Coast

BY DAVID THATCHER

CAPTAIN TEACH PRESS, 192 PP, HARDBACK

RRP \$80.00

This chart-based guide covers the area from Whangarei to Cape Reinga, including the Three Kings Islands.



It has been laid out with the Northland Coast divided into five main regions, with each region in turn further broken down into sections. Each section has its own chart which the text relates back to. A table lists the GPS co-ordinates of the main points of interest within each section – an excellent idea.

Navigating strange areas is predominantly about translating chart pictures into what one can see from the boat, and this book uses the official hydrographic charts from Land Information New Zealand to do this superbly. The many excellent colour photos assist that process, and make you think, ‘Gosh that looks nice, let’s go there tomorrow’.

The text lists which bay or anchorage to use in which wind condition, and the usual advice about seabed conditions for anchoring and navigational warnings.

It is a team effort between writer David Thatcher and publisher Tim Ridge from Captain Teach Press, and shows the pair’s experience in producing similar guides, with lots of high quality colour charts and photos.

This is the second edition of this guide (previously entitled the Northland Coast Boating Atlas) and its quality will make it an excellent planning aid. It belongs on the bookshelf of any boat cruising the Northland Coast. – John Macfarlane.