



Welcome to Rott's Manor

Pete & Mary Clukey

Christmas 2006/New Years 2007 Trip Report

Windjammer's S/V Yankee Clipper, sailing from Castries, St. Lucia

http://www.windjammer.com/fleet_yankee.html

The kids are at the kennel and the house is shut down, let's go!!!

Saturday, December 23rd – Direct Delta flight from Atlanta (ATL) to St. Lucia's Hewanorra International Airport (UVF) at Vieux Fort. After clearing customs and picking up our luggage, we found St. Lucia Helicopters (www.stluciahelicopters.com). The helicopter took us to the smaller airport, George F. L. Charles Airport (SLU), which is closest to the ship but way on the other side of the island from where the larger international flights arrive. It took us 15 minutes to get there. Our larger luggage had to travel via ground and showed up at our hotel later that night. Once we landed we were transferred to a taxi that took us to Bay Gardens Hotel (www.baygardenshotel.com). The hotel looked lovely on our way to the room. Unfortunately the days travel caught up with Mary, she had a very bad headache and felt noxious from the twisty-turny taxi ride (Mr. Toad's Wild Ride). So, we stayed in and ordered room service while we listen to the "lounge band" that played in the outdoor bar just off our patio.

Sunday, December 24th – Today we are schedule to take an island tour with Shal. Mary is very excited about it because of the reviews from the regular Windjammer passengers. So, we go to the hotel lobby at 9am and wait for Shal to pick us up. At 9:30 we begin to make calls to his cell phone, but there is no answer. Knowing that we are on island time, we give him until 10:30 before we decide to make other plans. 10:30 comes and goes, and we decide to go next door to a grocery store & mall... the day before Christmas! Well, we shopped for about 30 – 45 minutes and didn't buy a thing. We return to Bay Gardens and have lunch at their restaurant. The front desk staff at Bay Gardens was wonderful. They tried calling Shal several times for us, and then when we gave up on Shal, they offered to set up a taxi driver for us.

Our taxi driver for the rest of the day was named Lawrence. He took us to Pigeon Island where we visited Fort Charlotte. From the top of the fort we looked down into the bay and saw another Windjammer ship, the SV Mandalay. From there Lawrence took us to one of the highest points in St. Lucia where there are million dollar lots of land for sale. From here we had gorgeous views of St. Lucia. One thing that caught our eye was a bay where people were kite surfing. So, Lawrence took us there next. We couldn't believe that he was driving on the road to this beach; it really looked like something only four wheelers should attempt. We found a lot of things interesting with this beach. There was a guy racing his horse up and down the beach, several guys kite surfing, and a piece of a rocket booster that had washed up on shore. From here Lawrence took us back towards Castries. Our next stop was to get a close up look at a huge banana plantation. Lawrence drove us up to an overlook surveying the valley below that was mostly banana trees. We still had time to visit Marigot Bay, where Dr. Doolittle was filmed. After a quick look around Marigot Bay (it was getting close to boarding time), Lawrence took us up to an overlook that had a view of Castries where the SV Yankee Clipper was docked. From there Lawrence drove us to the dock.

Soon we were boarding the SV Yankee Clipper, being greeted by the crew, and handed rum swizzles. After the necessary paperwork we were shown to cabin 16, our cozy home for the week. We plopped our stuff on the bunk and went up to the top deck to have a snack and meet our fellow passengers. Most of the passengers had a long day of travel and Captain Casey had warned us that tonight's sail might be a bit "lumpy", so most passengers (us included) called it an early night after dinner, although, Pete did go up top deck at midnight to watch the first raising of the sails.

Monday, December 25th Christmas Day – Well Casey wasn't joking; it was a lumpy ride last night... not many passengers slept very well. This morning we're in Admiralty Bay, Bequia (pronounced Beck-way). There is so much to do this morning, we have to get up for story-time followed immediately with a safety drill, then we've got to attend the dive meeting. We're looking forward to story-time today. Captain Casey has been off for over a year, this is his first week back and a friend of his emailed Mary asking her to place a Pepsi bottle with a little private note for Casey in an obvious place during the first muster. Mary looks to see that Casey is nowhere in sight before placing the Pepsi on the table in front of where Casey will be standing. Casey comes up and begins story-time with a big "Good Morning Everybody". The passenger's response is a very poor & disorganized "Good Morning Captain Sir" (it didn't get much better as the week went on). Casey began to tell us about the history of Bequia, not seeming to notice the Pepsi bottle. Sometime in the middle of story-time Casey notices the bottle, picks it up, reads the little note, chuckles, looks around and says "I'll keep this little secret to myself". He finishes his story-time and introduces Joanne, the activities mate and purser. He picks up his Pepsi bottle and walks off with a smile on his face. Mission successful! Joanne tells us that there are no tours today; it's just a day to enjoy the island of Bequia.

After story-time & the safety drill, we wait for the announcement of the dive meeting. There are about 10 divers and the meeting doesn't take very long. There are two opportunities to dive this week; tomorrow when we will be at Tobago Cays and Wednesday while we are at Mayreau.

Before we know it it's time for lunch. We eat a light lunch because we plan to go into "town" to have lobster pizza at Mac's. We spend a little time reading & unwinding on the ship before we take an afternoon launch to town. We see Joanne at the dock; she has a bouquet of fresh flowers in her hand. Joanne gives us directions to Mac's. We stroll along the waterfront and when we get to Mac's, they're closed! No problem, we just go to the restaurant right next door that is open. Instead of the lobster pizza, Pete has steamed muscles in garlic wine sauce and Mary has a lobster salad. Both were yummy!

After our snack, we stroll back along the waterfront towards the dock. It seems like only the fruit market is open, so we take the next launch back to the ship. Before we know it, it is time for snacks & swizzles. Around this time, Casey performs a wedding on the top deck. Ah, that's why Joanne was in town on Christmas day picking up a bouquet of fresh flowers. After the ceremony everyone gathers on the poop deck to watch the sun set, looking for the "green flash".

After the sun set, Joanne started to gather up the crowd to play battle of the sexes. Just then the sky opened up and it began to pour. Battle of the sexes was cancelled. The quarter deck became very crowded and we went to our cabin to get out of the rain.

Tuesday, December 26th – We got up for the morning sail to Tobago Cays. It was a pretty sail. On the way we saw the Mandalay. When we got to Tobago Cays, there were a lot of other boats in the harbor.

At story-time Casey tells us about the full day we have today. We are at Tobago Cays and we will be here until 3:30PM, after which we will set sail to Mayreau. At Mayreau we will have a beach BBQ for

dinner with the Mandalay passengers. Casey warns us about the “thieving” Mandalay passengers. After the BBQ, Casey will lead a walk up the Mayreau hill.

We had planned on diving today but the Pete wasn't feeling up to it. So instead, we stayed on the ship and relaxed. Mary had Sly, the First Mate, weave an anklet on her in the colors of the diver down flag (red, white, red). When it was just about lunch time, we went to shore and actually found a shady patch to set up our neat sheet “camp”. While we waited for our lunch to be set up, we were checking out the lunch being prepared for a flotilla of French chartered catamarans. They were having fresh grilled lobster. It looked really yummy. Soon our lunch was set up. Ham & cheese, turkey & cheese, or tuna fish sandwiches. OK, so most of us wanted to go “pirate” the lunch from the other end of the beach. As much as Mary wanted lobster, she will be the first to tell you the bread that is baked on the ships each day is better than anything from any of our home bakeries.

After lunch, we did a little exploring of the island... that took all of 15 minutes. Then we caught a launch back to the ship.

This afternoon we sailed to Mayreau to meet up with the Mandalay. As we neared Mayreau, Casey spots a foo foo (or as he calls them “assisted living”) cruise ship, the Blue Moon... the pirate flag is raised... the cannon is readied... battle music is played, then Sly fires on the eye sore. We wonder what the passengers of the Blue Moon think of us.

With the Blue Moon properly warned, Casey & Sly turn their attention to the Mandalay. The Mandalay fires, Sly fires... this goes on for a few rounds, then peace takes over. Mandalay is having a party with the children of Mayreau on board. Casey sets our anchor and it's time for snacks & swizzles! After snacks, we have crab races. It was a heated race with two crabs tying causing a sudden death run-off. Mary wages a few dollars, but loses.

Tonight's dinner of BBQ ribs & chicken is very tasty! It is, with out a doubt, our favorite meal of the whole week. We try not to eat too much, because we have the cultural walk tonight. Soon Casey calls out for any and all who want to join him up the hill. Now Mary wishes she spent more time on the treadmill. The hill is steep but we get to rest frequently. Tonight was Casey's first night on Mayreau after a year and a half Windjammer vacation. It seems like everyone has come out to greet him & give him a hug. It is very heartwarming to see the love given to Casey. We were very glad to be on this trip and able to witness this event. On the way to the top of the hill we stop at each of the watering holes. If you like reggae, the last stop at Righteous' bar is worth a good look around. The walls are covered with Bob Marley photos. We keep a close eye on Casey, since we don't want to miss the last launch back to the ship and we figure that if we are with him we will be fine. This night seems to go by way to quickly.

Wednesday, December 27th – We are still in Mayreau, Saline Bay... and who in their right mind wouldn't want to be here. It's a glorious day. Today at story-time Casey tells us that he will be leading another walk up and over the hill to beautiful Salt Whistle bay. We are signed up for diving (and we both feel fine), so looks like we won't be joining the hike today. Well, when Joanne gets up to give her story-time presentation she tells us that diving is cancelled for today. Yeah, we can go on Casey's hike... wait, it's over that steep hill. And then Joanne tells us that tonight's activity is going to be Sea Hunt (adult scavenger hunt) followed up by PBLT (costume night). Joanne looks for volunteers to captain three teams for Sea Hunt, when no one steps up she begins to select captains... and she picks Mary as one. After Joanne finishes her story-time, Mary jumps up and says she thinks that the captains should introduce themselves and state why anyone should join their team. So, Mary gives her speech.

Around 10am, we grab our water bottle and join Casey on the hike. People are still coming out to give Casey hugs on the way up the hill. We make it to the top of the hill and get a tour of the Catholic Church. Casey points out the “No Bull” sign. When the priest first got to Mayreau there were so many cows, and some would just wander into the church and leave a smelly mess. So, Father Mark put up a “No Bull Sh*t” sign. Casey & the Windjammer passengers got quite a kick out of a Catholic Church where no BS is allowed. Anyways, the priest since then has carefully scratch off the pile of “Sh*t” part of the sign, so now it is a “No Bull” sign. Beyond the Church, we are rewarded with a gorgeous view of Tobago Cays. From the Church it’s just a little bit more of a climb, before it is all down hill to Salt Whistle bay. We are hot and just about everyone on the hike decided to cool off with a swim. After the swim Mary contemplates taking a water taxi back to the Saline Bay, you know just for the different view of the island. Well, Pete wasn’t buying the different view story and talks Mary into the exercise. So, back up and over the hill we go.

When we get back to Saline Bay, lunch isn’t yet set up. So, we look for a shady spot to set up our neat sheet and wait. Soon lunch arrives and it’s pizza; one of Mary’s favorite foods. She goes back for seconds, justifying it with the morning exercise. After lunch, Pete reads a little and Mary takes a nap. Then we have just enough time to snorkel a little before last launch back to the Yankee Clipper. Casey told us at story-time that the snorkeling can be quite good here; and to look out for squid which often can found here. We saw an eel, two squid, and lots of other fish. Mary spotted a peacock flounder, but by the time she got Pete’s attention is was gone.

After snorkeling, we returned to the ship to prepare for Sea Hunt. We have our team name “Casey’s Marauders”. We have our chant “Twice around the anchor then we’re coming for you!”. If you’ve been lucky enough to cruise with Casey you probably heard the story about twice around the anchor, if not we’re not going to spoil it, you’ll just have to sail with Casey. So, we feel pretty good about our team except that our team isn’t very big, right now we have only 6 team members. We survey the team to find out who’s cabin is closes to the top deck and we begin to stage the usual sea hunt items in that cabin. Sea Hunt begins and Joanne had to redistribute team members to kind of even things out. Well, we weren’t worried since the only team with seasoned Windjammers was our team. Right away we pull ahead in the points with a little libation bribery, followed up with foot & back massages. We do pretty good finding the requested items too. One of the teams had children on it, so the items requested were not as “adult” as previous cruises. Soon we present our Miss Windjammer contestant, Miss Casey’s Kitten... that sealed the deal. Casey’s Marauders were triumphant, winning the Sea Hunt game easily. Although we must admit, the team with the children had a very competitive Miss Windjammer contestant, that poor kid... you know the picture of him in a coconut bra & grass skirt will show up in his high school year book.

With Sea Hunt over, it is time to dress up for the PBLT party. I’m afraid that we weren’t very creative this vacation and just came up dressed in our “pajamas”. At least we participated; there wasn’t a huge participation this week.

Dinner tonight is “carvery” buffet where they have roast beef, turkey, and ham to carve. As always the food is awesome. Following dinner was a limbo contest and some dancing. I’m not sure when we got to bed that night, but it was probably around midnight.

Thursday, December 28th – This morning we are at St. Vincent. We are signed up for the all day speed boat tour. We are told that there will be two boats since so many signed up for this tour. We choose to get on the second boat since the families with lots of children are on the first boat.

On the tour we speed along the coast enjoying the amazing scenery. The first stop is a “wet” landing at a black sand beach. It really is a wash out of an old lava flow. We swam ashore, the water was cold here. We then hiked back to the falls of Baleine. Before the hurricane a few years ago this was

an impressive sight (we're told). Now it is just a trickle, actually it looks like someone left a garden hose on. Regardless, we enjoyed a fresh water shower from the trickle. It was also very cold. After about a half and hour stop here, we swam back to the boat and headed on back down the coast to Wallibou. This spot is also a first-rate snorkeling spot and is nicknamed Sand Dollar Bay because of the profusion of sand dollars here. Mary was so chilled from the early swim that she just could not talk herself into going snorkeling. Pete jumped in and had a great time.

We left Wallibou and went to the set of the "Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl" for a wonderful lunch. On our way to lunch, our host serves up the rum punch. At lunch, Mary tried a sorrel. Sorrel is a favorite West Indian drink for Christmas and New Year. Actually it's more of a spiced, iced tea, as the juice is drawn from the red sepals of the Roselle plant (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) which is commonly called sorrel in the Caribbean. It was red and tasted a bit like cranberry juice. After lunch, we explored the set. The set is starting to fall apart so we're glad that we got to see it before it's gone.

After our exploration, we boarded the speed boat for the trip back to the ship. Our hostess brought out the famous rum punch. Our group went through the rum punch rather quickly and the hosts brought out the "fire water" to mix rum & cokes. We kept telling them that we needed to raid the other boat with all the kids on it, since their rum punch would not be drunk.

We arrived back at the Yankee Clipper just in time for snacks and swizzles. After snacks & swizzles, we are entertained by a towel folding class. It's amazing the different animals that they can make with towels. Early night tonight, since Casey warned everyone to expect lumpy seas as we head up to St. Lucia tonight.

Friday, December 29th – Casey promised mimosa's to all that woke up this morning and came topside around 6am for a sail around the Pitons. So, we get up. The Pitons are shrouded in clouds. Mary takes a few pictures and then goes back to bed. The Yankee Clipper continues north along the coast and anchors at Marigot Bay, just south of our starting point in Castries. We pretty much hang around the ship all day.

At snacks and swizzles Casey gives his famous toast; *"Here's to lying, cheating, stealing, and drinking. If you have to lie, lie to save a friend. If you have to cheat, cheat death. If you have to steal, steal the heart of the one you love. If you have to drink, drink with your friends."* Here's to you Casey, wherever you are!

Crew photos & passenger photos are taken. At dinner we have a great time. Turbo makes a great presentation out of the creation of the Caesar salad; we all "ooh" and "ah" on queue. After dinner we don't hang out too long, since we are diving in the morning. It's hard to believe that the first week of the cruise has gone by and we never went diving.

Saturday, December 30th – Today is going to be a really fun day. First we're going diving, and then this evening we've been invited to the crew party that's being held on board. The dive boat picks us up right up at the pier. We had two very nice dives. They had juice & snacks on board. After the diving we are returned to the other end of the pier near the big foo foo ship, this means that Pete has to pull our dive gear luggage quite a ways.

Oh, almost forgot... today we got to see the ship used in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie. It takes tourist out of Rodney Bay for a day sail down to Marigot Bay. Looks like fun, we might try to do this next Saturday.

Back on the Yankee Clipper at mid-afternoon, we get cleaned up and realize that there is no way we are going to make it to dinner without getting a snack. An interesting thing is that while in St. Lucia, the ship is required to have a customs official on board. So, we start asking where we can go get a snack and the customs official, DT, tells us to take a taxi to the red roofed market, go towards the back and that there are all kinds of places to get food... cheap. So that's exactly what we do. We return to the ship with two take-out boxes filled to capacity with food. We had no idea that there would be so much food. We took what we wanted and shared the rest with the crew.

Soon friends of the crew start arriving for the party. Then the DJ shows up. Mary discovers the killer rum punch that Oxford, the bartender, had created. Pretty soon the smells from the galley has our stomachs grumbling again. Then the food arrives. The crew won't even eat first at their own party; they insist that the passengers eat first. The food is amazing. We loved the curry. The food they serve during the week is wonderful, but it is not authentic island cuisine. Apparently, not every Windjammer guest would find curried goat tasty. After dinner, Sly gets us up on the dance floor. We party for a little bit with the crew, but leave before midnight, so that they can enjoy some time without us passengers.

Sunday, December 31st – Today is going to be another really fun day. First we're going diving again, and then this evening, the next set of passengers come aboard. First we have breakfast. There are trays of scrambled eggs, salted fish, and breads set out. So, we help ourselves. The chef notices and comes out to tell us that he will be happy to make us some scrambled eggs, this is crew food. We tell him not to go through any trouble; this food is just fine with us. We have determined that what they cook during the week is "Miami" food... little seasoning, crew food in between the cruises is more true to the island flavors, and we love it!

The dive boat picks us up right up at the pier. Well it's going to be an interesting day. There are two "groups" of divers and thus two dive leaders on board today. The first is a group going through their nitrox certification. So, we wait on board the dive boat for about 30 minutes while the nitrox group completes their deep water dive. Then we move to our first dive spot and dive for about 50 minutes. Then the nitrox divers do their second dive, while we do our one hour surface interval. Then we move to our second dive spot, and the nitrox divers wait for us in the dive boat. Today's dive, while very nice, were plagued with a comedy of errors. First the dive operator forgot that Pete & I were renting BCD's, so we had to pull into another operator where they borrowed gear. Then one of the other divers lost his snorkel over the side while he was cleaning his mask. This was followed up with one of the other divers losing the pin that held the mask & strap together. Lucky for him Pete carries a goodie bag with zip ties which we used to secure his strap to his mask. So his dive was saved. Then Pete gets into the water and is rinsing his mask when it slips from his hand; one of the other divers went down and got it for him. And if that's not enough, while setting up for the second dive, the dive operator realizes that they are short a tank. Our dive leader had to use a partially full nitrox tank (used by the dive leader of the nitrox group) on the second dive. The nitrox tank had a different connection than our dive leaders regulator, so the fitting had to be changed, but guess what... the dive operator didn't have the necessary tool on board to do this... again Pete reaches into his goodie bag and saves the day. They had the same juices & snacks on board as the day before. After the diving we are returned to the same place that they picked us up, so Pete did not have far to pull our dive gear luggage.

Back on board, we barely have enough time to clean up before it is time to get checked in with Joanne and go topside for snacks and swizzles and meeting the new passengers.

We socialize a little bit. After dinner a band is brought on board. We do a little dancing. And laugh a lot as Kervin steals the microphone from the band and takes over. Once all of the passengers are on board, the band packs up, and we pull out of Castries just in time to ring in the New Year. Casey is

looking at the GPS and gives us the 10 second countdown. We are about a mile off shore and the timing couldn't have been better. All up and down the coast of St. Lucia there are fireworks going off... pretty awesome. We call it a night shortly after that... we know it's going to be another "lumpy" night.

Monday, January 1st – Well, it was a lumpy ride last night... not many passengers slept very well. This morning we're arriving in Hillsborough, Carriacou (pronounced Carry-a-koo). There is so much to do this morning, we have to get up for story-time followed immediately with a safety drill, then we've got to attend the dive meeting. But first we have to arrive at Carriacou; it's not until 10:30 do we get the anchor set.

Buffet lunch is served on the top deck. Then there is just enough time to gather our stuff before we depart on our two and half hour island tour.

Our driver is Linky, he takes us to the very top of the island to the hospital. The site of the hospital was chosen because it isolates malaria stricken patients away from the rest of the population and because of the constant wind which makes transmission of malaria via mosquitoes unlikely. We enjoy this stop because of the view. One of the other stops is the location of a wooden ship under construction. We get to walk around and touch it as Linky explains the ship naming party that will be held when its construction is completed. Linky zips us around his island and returns us to the dock safe and sound. Normally the last stop on this tour would be to an art museum but today is a holiday and everything is closed. Not even one of the 100 rum shops is open. This island is famous for its Jack Iron rum. They say that one sip makes you lips and mouth go numb.

One reason that we stopped at Carriacou was to take on fuel. So, when we see Casey on the return launch to the ship, we ask him about the fuel. He tells the story that since today is a holiday refueling is a little complicated. He got everything all cleared with the harbor master for receiving the fuel. Then he was told that they had to wake up the refueling crew and that they are still drunk from the party last night (New Years Eve). Casey decided that a drunk refueling crew pulling along side his ship wasn't going to happen! We will just have to make it to Grenada on the fumes, ah... fuel that we have left.

After snacks and swizzles, Blaze and Sly give a knot tying class. We just watch. Tonight is a quiet night; most people go to bed early to try to make up for last night.

Tuesday, January 2nd– Today we wake up as we are pulling into Grenada. Way to go Andy, chief engineer, he got us here without running out of fuel. Today we are signed up for the all day island tour. At story-time Casey tells us of the US invasion of Grenada. Apparently at the time the Marine radios and the Navy radios didn't communicate with each other. So, some Marines were sent into Grenada to make a phone call to call in an air strike. Casey tells us that the call was made from the phone booth right across from where we are docked. Then Joanne starts her story-time. Tonight's activities will be Sea Hunt and the PBLT party. And everyone is to dress up, ask a cabin steward for a sheet to make a toga, at the very least. As she selects the captains for the Sea Hunt she tells Mary "don't worry I won't select you again". Mary says that we could be judges, to which Joanne agrees. Team captains are selected but there seems to be no enthusiasm for Sea Hunt this week. We leave to go on our all day Island Treasure tour hopeful that enthusiasm for Sea Hunt will grow.

On our all day tour, we visit a waterfall for a swim, a spice factory, a chocolate factory, and a rum distillery. At the waterfall Pete wades out to take some nice pictures. Mary sticks a toe into the water and says that's too cold for me. At the spice factory we buy some gifts. Then we have a lunch stop high on top the island. The food was very good. After lunch we went to the Grenada Chocolate factory (www.grenadachocolate.com). We sampled both the 60% chocolate and 71% chocolate.

Both were dark chocolate and very tasty, though the 71% was just a little too strong. After the chocolate factory was the rum distillery tour. Oh, the smells from this place would make a drunk go sober. We all were given a tiny sample of their 151 Rum. The whole group was shy, so Mary stepped forward for the first sample. Now this is no sipping rum, down the hatch it went with one swallow. Mary kept a pretty straight face and when asked how it was, she said that it was warm all the way down. Well, those that sampled after Mary didn't keep quite the same straight face. Some tried to sip it and could not finish their sample. We left without purchasing a bottle. After the rum distillery, our driver took us to a mountain lake the Grand Etang. On the way we looked out for the island's monkey population. We never saw any monkeys and we're not sure that they really exist. At the mountain lake our driver fed the fish. He tried to catch one with his hand but never could. Mary tried too without success.

When the tour ended we were returned to the ship where snacks & swizzles were well underway. After snacks and swizzles, we prepared for judging the Sea Hunt. Uh Oh, one team has already resigned since they couldn't find enough interest in their team. The only ones really interested in the Sea Hunt were the "kids" and only about a dozen people in total... Sea Hunt was cancelled due to lack of participation.

So, we make a quick trip to the town's grocery store to pick up a few things. We run into Sandy there. When we return to the ship, 20 minutes later, the tourist gates are locked. Sandy knows that we have to go down the street to the shipping and cargo gates to get back to the Yankee Clipper. Back on the Yankee Clipper we let Casey know that the gates are locked and not all passengers may figure out how to get back to the ship.

Dinner tonight is "carvery" buffet where they have roast beef, turkey, and ham to carve. As always the food is awesome. Following dinner, we were judges for the PBLT costume contest. Considering the lack of participation in Sea Hunt we didn't expect much for PBLT participation... boy, were we surprised. Just about everyone who was on board dressed-up. It was fun to be judges. Of course the winners, were two gorgeous, um, ladies?!?!? This poor kid, you know a picture of him in that grass skirt and coconut bra dancing with the beautiful blond bombshell is going to show up in his high school year book!

I'm not sure when we got to bed that night, but it was probably around midnight.

Wednesday, January 3rd – As we pull into Mayreau this morning, we see a big ugly foo foo cruise ship. Their passengers cover the beach like an invasion of an ant colony, not a speck of sand without a body on it. Today we will be diving. Mary is told that the drift dive here is great. Our dive is schedule to leave the ship after lunch. So, rather than go to the beach and fight the crowd this morning, we hang out on the practically deserted ship.

At noon, Mary goes to the saloon to inquire where we will the divers be served lunch. Turbo says the beach. Ah, Mary says that the divers are supposed to have lunch on board since we leave right after that on our dive trip. Apparently nobody told Turbo... but no problem, he fixed up plates of cheeseburgers and fries for the divers to enjoy in the saloon.

Slight delay the dive operator, Dive Grenadines, is running late, instead of a 12:30 pickup they will now pick us up at 1:15. No problem with us, that will give lunch a little more time to settle... though it might make us late coming back in time for snacks & swizzles.

The dive operator picks us up around 1:30. We won't go into the details here, but this was the worst dive operator that we have been with. We are writing a letter to Windjammer to inform them that they should no longer use this operator, as they are unsafe and unprofessional. The dives themselves

might have been nice if it weren't for the very choppy seas that stirred up the silt and made for poor visibility. We were returned to the ship in the middle of snacks and swizzles. And since this dive operator did not offer any snacks or drinks between the dives, we were ready for some serious snacking.

Tonight's deck activity was the crab races. Pity we had to miss it, because we wanted to shower and get cleaned up after the diving. We could hear the excitement from our cabin.

Tonight's dinner is served on the beach. It's the famous Windjammer BBQ ribs & chicken. Again, we try not to eat too much, because we have the cultural walk tonight. Soon Casey calls out for any and all who want to join him up the hill. Apparently there were some people who didn't see Casey last week, and they come out to greet him & give him a hug. On the way to the top of the hill we stop at each of the watering holes. We sit down at a table outside of Righteous' bar and speak with one of the locals, Shirley. Talk about the coconut telegraph. We haven't seen the news or read a newspaper in over a week now. Shirley gets us all caught up on the headlines. The biggest of which is Saddam Hussein's hanging. We keep a close eye on Casey, since we don't want to miss the last launch back to the ship and we figure that if we are with him we will be fine. This night seems to go by way to quickly.

Thursday, January 4th – This morning we're in Admiralty Bay, Bequia (pronounced Beck-way). After yesterday's dive experience we decide to stay on terra firma today. So, we signed up for the island tour. At story-time Joanne tells us that tonight instead of snacks and swizzles we will have a wine and cheese party. So, everyone go into town and buy a bottle of wine to share.

After story-time, we board the local safari style vans for this great little island tour. The first stop is at the "Old Hegg Turtle Sanctuary", retired fisherman Orton King is trying to preserve the endangered Hawksbill Turtle from extinction. Hatchlings less than 1 1/2 inches long, are collected from their nests before they get into the sea, Orton raises them in basins. As they grow, the turtles are transferred to a big pool until they are ten inches long or more and are then released into the ocean giving them a better chance of survival. Just by taking this tour we are helping these endangered turtles survive since part of the tours profits are to be used to improve the facilities at the sanctuary. Mary has Orton pose for a picture with his pet turtle "Busy Body".

Then we stopped at a pottery factory for some shopping. Pete went back into their work shop to look around. Their prices here were out of our budget, but we did enjoy looking around.

Next we stopped at Point Hill for a beautiful view down over Admiralty Bay. This neighborhood won the islands Christmas decorating contest. Mary took some creative photos of the Yankee Clipper through the Christmas decorations.

Our last stop was atop a hill where our driver talked about whaling traditions. His family still hunts whales. During the winter months, he walks up a hill and looks for whales passing through the channel. When he spots a whale he calls his family members who go out in a tiny traditional whaling boat. From atop the hill, our driver watches the race between man and animal. The whales win more than not. The island is only allowed to take four whales a year. And when they are successful in their hunt, the meat is divided up among all the islanders.

On the way back to Admiralty Bay, we drive by the fish market where one of the traditional whaling boats is parked. We are amazed at how small the boat is... We wouldn't even want to go out on one of these boats for a harbor sail, never mind go out in it to hunt a huge whale.

We tell our driver that after the tour, we are going to Mac's for pizza. So, at the end of the tour he drops us off as close to Mac's as you can drive. Everyone in our vehicle is hungry and they all agree that a lobster pizza sounds fantastic. So, the whole group of us strolls along the waterfront to Mac's. Mac's is busy but we find a table for six. We get the menu... and... no lobster. Apparently it's too expensive for Mac's to carry it right now. No matter, we all enjoy the food that we ordered. And we had a great time. Everyone had a few pieces of pizza left over, so instead of throwing it all away we decided to get it boxed up to take back to the crew.

After lunch, some of the group has to go to a bank. So, we split off from the group and go in search of a bottle of wine. We don't really drink wine, so finding a bottle of wine is a challenge to us. We figure if it's from California, France, or Australia and it has a cork, then it'll do. So, Pete picks out a bottle of red wine from Australia. With wine in hand we head back to the dock to send the bottle back to the ship. We have a little time before the launch arrives to take a quick snoop around the Bequia Book Shop. For such a little store, it has a lot of good stuff. We don't have enough time before the next launch to do it justice. So, we leave but intend to come back after dropping the wine & pizza off with the launch.

We get to the dock and find Joanne sitting on a park bench waiting for the launch. She offers to take the packages off our hands which frees us up to go back to shopping. So, back to the book store we go. Mary buys a bigger fish identification book to stuff in our dive bag. Pete buys a coloring book for our niece. Next we go to the model boat makers shop. Wow, the detail in these tiny little ships is just amazing. Soon it is just about time for the next launch back to the ship so we head off to the dock.

While waiting in the shade for the launch, a lady reading a book asks if we are on the Windjammer ship. So, we strike up a conversation with her. She read the book on the Fantome, a Windjammer ship that was lost in a hurricane. We need to find a copy of that book to read. She tells us that she and her husband have been sailing the Caribbean for a year and a half now...we're jealous. About this time the launch shows up, so we don't get to hear all about her adventure.

Soon the cheese & pate are brought up and the bottles of wine are opened. We sample several wines... none thrill us, although some seem to be enjoyed by the other passengers more than others. It doesn't take long before most of the bottles are emptied.

A lot of passengers had dinner reservations a shore so there was only one scheduled seating tonight. We hung out on the quarter deck waiting for the dinner bell to ring. Mary noticed some excitement around one of the crew members who had a fishing line off the starboard side. So, she went to check it out. There was an octopus swimming along side the ship. Just then the dinner bell rings, so off to the saloon we go. Pete tries to order the octopus tonight for dinner since he heard it was fresh, but alas it was not on the menu.

At dinner we have a great time. We noticed these little plastic dinosaur toys showing up all over the ship... some private message, maybe to Casey from a passenger? Anyways, one of these dinosaurs "attacks" Sandy and we snap a great picture capturing the moment. We become snap-happy tonight and take pictures of the staff serving us dinner.

We decide that after dinner we will go to bed early... try to get to sleep before the "lumpy" seas. Tonight we make the run up to St. Lucia.

On the way to our cabin, Mary takes Pete forward to the bridge for a peek. Sly is there and invites us in for a personal tour... cool.

Back in our cabin, it seems that we just get to sleep when the ship rolls and we wake up practically standing on the wall of our cabin... just for a second; the ship was heeled over that far. With hearts racing we lie there awake listening to the waves. Soon the rhythmic rolling of the ship lulls us back to sleep.

Friday, January 5th – Casey promised mimosa's to all that woke up this morning and came topside around 6am for a sail around the Pitons. So, Pete gets up enthusiastically... Mary is slower to rise. After a quick look and a cup of mimosas, Mary returns to bed. Pete stays up on top deck talking to Casey about last night's jolt... you know the one that left us almost standing up in bed. Well, just outside of Bequia a rogue swell hit the ship, rolling it over almost 45 degrees to it's starboard side (the side our cabin is on)... the launch hanging from the top deck almost touched the water.

Mary gets up for story-time because she has a mission to accomplish. Earlier we heard Casey say at snacks and swizzles that we have to get rid of this Skippy peanut butter and get some Jif. Well, we looked all over Bequia... no Jif to be found, instead we found a small jar of peanut butter that we took some white tape and wrote Jif on. So, Mary places the imposter jar of Jif on the table in front of where Casey tells his story-time. He gets a good chuckle out of the imposter and Mary tells him that some day when he sees the real thing to think of us. When we get back Mary will contact here friends on the www.jammerbabe.com/flotilla and ask someone there to bring Casey a jar of Jif.

After story-time we decided to hang out on the top deck reading our books and relaxing until lunch. We've been on board for two weeks and haven't been out in the widows net... shameful. No one else has been out there either. So out we go and we ask Sandy to take our picture. It isn't long before we have company and the thrill wears off.

After lunch, we took a launch into Marigot Bay. Marigot Bay is the site where the original Dr. Doolittle movie was filmed. While ashore, we tried to book that day sail on the Unicorn, the "Pirates of the Caribbean" ship but they were booked up. So, we did a little shopping and had a beverage at one of the local bars.

Of course we returned to the ship for snack and swizzles. Tonight Casey raises a toast. Then crew and passenger photos are taken.

Tonight's dinner is the Captains Dinner. Turbo makes another great presentation out of the creation of the Caesar salad; we all "ooh" and "ah" on queue.

Saturday, January 6th – Today we get up to see everyone off. We're using our extra La Mer night to stay on board one more night. And spend the rest of the morning lounging around the ship. We enjoy lunch with the crew, though they still treat us like honored guest, not letting us get our own drinks.

After lunch, we get a taxi to take us to the helicopter office. We've decided that instead of "Mr. Toad's Wild Ride" across St. Lucia that we would like to take a helo tour back to the other airport. After arranging our helo tour, we ask the driver to take us to Rodney Bay to Scuba Steve's. We have our dive log pages from last weekend that we want to get stamped. This was an adventure. We had to stop at a hotel to get directions. At Scuba Steve's, we get our logs stamped and buy a couple of t-shirts. Then it's back to the ship to hang out.

We have dinner with the crew. Oxford tells us that we should go to the fish fry tonight. We decide to stay onboard instead tonight and pack up the cabin.

Sunday, January 7th – Today is a sad day, we have to leave the ship. The helicopter operator is going to send a van this morning at 10:30 to pick up our heavy luggage. Our flight isn't until 1pm so we have all morning to hang around the ship. While we are hanging out on the quarter deck, Casey comes by to tell us that they will be running a fire drill this morning and that we don't have to participate. So, we go to the poop deck, figuring that we would be out of their way during this drill. From the poop deck, we look over and see that Mandalay is in Castries too. The alarm sounds and the announcement is made that the fire is in the engine room. Crew musters topside and four guys dress in fire suits and scurry below. Oxford mans the radio and checks off from a list the tasks that are radioed in. Casey was right about the Mandalay, at no time did the Mandalay radio over to help their sister ship. In no time at all, the fire is put out, the ship is saved yet again! About this time Casey comes up and tells us that they are about to have a crew only meeting and we can't be on the poop deck. So, we go hang out on the quarter deck. At 10:25 we try to quietly sneak past the crew (still having their meeting) with our luggage. Casey notices and asks a couple of the guys to help carry our luggage to the terminal where we expect the van to be any minute now. At 10:45, Mary goes back to the ship to call the helo operator... they're on their way. While waiting we are entertained with "Ice Age 2" on the television... and a thought comes to mind, we've been two weeks without a tv, a cell phone, or a computer... and some how we survived.

After we get back from dropping off the luggage, we sit on the quarterdeck and chat with the crew. Before we know it, it's lunch time. We have a great lunch and the crew still is treating us like honored guests, insisting that we eat first and serving us our drinks. Soon comes the sad moment of stepping off the ship for the last time (this vacation anyways).

The short 10 minute ride from the dock to the helo-pad made Mary glad that we did not opt for the 1 ½ hour taxi ride to the international airport. Within just a few minutes of arriving, we were whisked away in the helo down the coast and over to the Pitons, where we landed to pick up two more passengers. It was really cool to get this close up view of the Pitons.

At the international airport, we were reunited with our heavier luggage. Check in at Delta's counter went fairly fast. We had plenty of time to go upstairs to the restaurant/bar for one last cold one. One problem the upstairs bar is not very well air-conditioned... it's pretty hot and stuffy, so after one beer we decide to go downstairs and proceed through security in hopes that the lobby at the gates has adequate air-conditioning. Well, the air-conditioning is working, and so are the lungs of the children running around the terminal. We settle down dig out our MP3 players and listen to music until Delta calls our flight to board.

Boarding goes fairly smoothly... wish we could say that about the rest of the flight. The crew likes to make announcements every few minutes; Mary just about gets to sleep when they make another announcement. Just after take off the captain comes on over the intercom to tell us that we will be making up some time in the air and should be arriving a bit early in Atlanta. That sounds good to us; land at 7:30, clear customs, pick up our luggage, get to the car, and then off to a nice dinner. Mary manages to sleep most the flight away and is surprised when she wakes up around 9pm to hear that we are landing in Augusta, GA not Atlanta. There is some bad weather in Atlanta, we've been circling for a while now and we need to land to refuel. We sit on the plane for an hour and a half waiting for our turn to fly up to Atlanta. Finally we get cleared and land in Atlanta. We clear customs without a hitch, but shortly after we get to baggage claim the carousel that our baggage is suppose to come out on is jammed up and has stopped moving. An attendant come by and clears the jam, our bags come out and we're off to get in the car. It is now after midnight, we've had no dinner and really we are too tired to care. Not exactly how we expected this vacation to end, but they all can't end with a beautiful sunset, can they?

One final note to the bad flight saga, Pete lost his camera... He took some photos as we were flying away from St. Lucia and tucked his camera under the armrest. Mid flight Mary switched seats with him and didn't know about the camera. So, when we left the plane tired and hungry... we didn't see the camera. Pete went back to the airport to put in a lost item claim. But for now it looks as if he is in the market for a new camera... and all of our dive photos & some tour photos (St. Vincent, Grenada, & Mayreau) are lost.