



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHAT'S A "SALTWHISTLE"?

How many times have we been asked? Countless. Our usual answer is, "A beautiful little cove on the island of Mayreau in the Grenadines – Saltwhistle Bay - and our sailboat!"

"No, I mean a saltwhistle. What is a saltwhistle?"

"Oh, a saltwhistle - you mean like a - - a saltwhistle! Well, I dunno. I've never met anyone who did. But I guess the old British Admiralty cartographer knew. He put it on the chart."

With that, folks just shake their heads, shrug and give up - usually.

But for me it's been a siren call. A beckoning. A seductive, salty come hither whistle. Could it be that that's what a saltwhistle really is?

Genesis: 1978. Memory still vivid. First bareboat charter. A leaky old beat up, about-to-be-retired "Morgan Out Island" CSY boat named "Bequia", in the spectacular - then sparsely populated - St. Vincent & Grenadine Islands.

Hardly any other sailboats, friendly local folks, no beach bars, no loud music everywhere – or anywhere! – original old Admiralty charts, dead reckoning, no markers on the reefs and shoals, no cruise ships, no hundreds of white plastic deck chairs stacked under the palms awaiting the "deserted island" tour from the next cruise ship. Only six boats in the Tobago Cays.

All alone in Saltwhistle Bay. Nirvana! An idyllic, deserted, sand-beach, palm-fringed cove with such a strange, curious and romantic name! I remember laughing the first time I saw it on the chart.

It imbedded itself in my memory. "Someday I'll name a sailboat "Saltwhistle", sail away, and together we'll visit this slice of heaven on the way to who knows where!"

In 1989 the move was made from a beloved old classic Alberg 37 to a one year old Passport 40. She was to be "Saltwhistle". If you've got the boat, you've got the dream. Many don't give in to their dream. We did.

Finally, Lake Ontario was too small, the summers too short and the winters too long. On July 16, 1999, Fran and I and "Saltwhistle" departed RCYC and Toronto Harbour, singing along to our favorite verse from Lyle Lovett's song "If I Had a Boat". It goes like this:

Mystery masked man was smart
He got himself a Tonto
'Cause Tonto did the dirty work for free - -
But Tonto he was smarter
One day said "Kemosabe",
Kiss my ass, I bought a boat
I'm goin' off to sea!

And so were we.

We've moved slowly. The Caribbean is beautiful. We stay awhile when we find a place we like – and we've liked a lot of places we've been. The paradise of the San Blas Islands archipelago off the coast of Panama has been the ultimate.

Now we've reached a very emotional threshold – over the last three years we've fitted "Saltwhistle" out for a Pacific crossing, but it seems life is what happens while you're making plans - and priorities and families have a way of changing them. After ten years it's come time for something else. We'll sell "Saltwhistle".

Is the reality of cruising as good as the dream? No. It's even better - much better! If you have a dream, pursue it or give in to it, as your nature dictates. The clock of life is wound but once! Life is good!

Well, so then: What is a Saltwhistle? She's been our beautiful roaming home in paradise for 10 years – and maybe "a something else" too? Could she still be a circumnavigator? Could be. Anyone ready to pursue their dream?