

FALL 2016

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DESTINATION
QUADRA ISLAND

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STORM WATCHING IN
TOFINO

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DAY TRIP DIARY
PENTICTON

Photo
Contest
Winners
Revealed

BRITISH COLUMBIA

M A G A Z I N E

AIR

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Tantalus
Range

B.C. BY

Land & Sea
& Air

LAND

Hiking the
Sunshine
Coast Trail

SEA

Sailing
Through
Barkley
Sound

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SEA

PASSING TIME WITH PASSING CLOUD

BY RUGGED AND
NOTE: SAMPLE
AUTHENTIC AND
MAXING SLICE
B.C.'S WEST
T ABOARD THE
EATHTAKING
SSING CLOUD
SCHOONER
AM BURKHART

On in the morning and
s slanting through
house windows. The
made.
s a certain silence
ding us as we sit on
n Effingham Bay. It's
of silence you only
awn on the water.
en by the pattering
stling of Joel, the first
d biologist, as he goes
s duties at the bow
ip: washing some
dishes from the night
hecking the anchor,
g the Zodiac for the
id.

Devon, the cook, or should
I say chef—or magician—is
working too, preparing a
breakfast you'd be lucky to
find at any restaurant on dry
land. I climb out of the aft
berth into the pilothouse and
sit down at the table next to
Denis St. Claire, the resident
anthropologist and larger-

than-life character. He's read-
ing the paper and discussing
the delights of Viognier and
Belgian Gouda with the chef.

Devon brings me a cup
of coffee. "Milk and sugar,
right?" he confirms.

"Perfect." I reply, still half
asleep. A sip of coffee wakes
me up enough to notice

Captain Russ is at his helm
station going over charts and
the day's sail plan. The other
guests aren't awake just yet.
It's rare that I am up this
early, but I don't want to miss
anything on this trip.

This is the morning routine
aboard *Passing Cloud* as we
cruise through Barkley Sound

Passing Cloud sits
calmly at anchor
with Walsh Island in
the background.





Above: The cabin of *Passing Cloud*. Imagine yourself with a cup of tea and a good book.



in search of tranquility. I'm here for Outer Shores' Pacific Rim National Park—Ancient Civilizations and West Coast Wilderness' adventure, a five-day trip aboard a classic wooden schooner through the Broken Group, an archipelago in Barkley Sound. Barkley Sound is one of many large bays on the west coast of Vancouver Island and it forms the entrance to the Alberni Inlet. It lies just south of the town of Ucluelet, which was where *Passing Cloud* was moored when my fellow passengers and I arrived.

WE HAD TAXIED from the Black Rock Oceanfront Resort to Ucluelet Harbour. Once aboard *Passing Cloud*, we were introduced to the captain and crew, shown around the boat and given a very important lesson in safety: essentially, fire is bad, man-overboard is bad and not wearing a life jacket in the Zodiac is bad. Although once aboard and in the capable hands of the crew, danger felt like it was 1,000 miles away.

Our tour of *Passing Cloud* revealed an attention to

detail and level of comfort not found on even the finest yachts. We entered the cabin through the companionway that leads into the pilothouse. To the left, a hatch led down to the aft cabin—some agility required. To the right there was the small but fully-functioning galley. Forward through the pilothouse and down a set of stairs was the saloon or living quarters.

Everyone was blown away by the varnished wood, brass and beauty of the vessel. Bookcases piled high with historical tomes and nautical reference guides lined the port side of the boat. Cushion-covered chairs made this space incredibly cozy and the dining table was perfect for gathering together over fine food or for the evening's "chart chat"—an informal recap of the day's events that was held each evening.

Just forward of the main saloon were the forward staterooms. These cabins each had two spacious single berths complete with fluffy feather duvets, a private sink with mirror, a skylight, brass reading lamps and plenty

IF YOU GO

The 'Pacific Rim National Park—Ancient Civilizations and West Coast Wilderness' trip with Outer Shores Expeditions; \$2,995 for six days/ five nights aboard the schooner. For more information visit outershores.ca.

Pacific Rim National Park Travel Tips

• **Getting there by plane:** KD Air and Orca Airways fly twice daily from Vancouver (YVR) to Tofino-Long Beach Airport (YAZ). You can rent a car at the airport or take a taxi to Ucluelet, which is 30 kilometres away.
• **Getting there by car:** Driving from Vancouver is an

option, but it is a long haul. Ferries run from Horseshoe Bay (40 minutes north of Vancouver) to Nanaimo. From there it is a three-hour drive across Vancouver Island to Ucluelet.

• **Black Rock Oceanfront Resort** is a great pre-adventure accommodation option. Perched on the edge of the continent, this resort blends a luxurious ambience with a natural West Coast feel. Alternatively, check out the Whiskey Landing Hotel. Located right on Ucluelet Harbour, this hotel boasts a strong West Coast influence in both its design and construction. You'll be amazed by

the towering ceilings and exposed cedar woodwork. The views across the harbour are pretty stunning too.

• ***Passing Cloud*** is a classic, 70-foot schooner designed by William James Roué, famous for designing the legendary schooner *Bluenose*. Built 1974 in Victoria, B.C., *Passing Cloud* is has an elegant design, luxurious accommodations and safe, robust construction.





of storage space for your personal items. As we settled into our own spaces, *Passing Cloud* began motoring out of Ucluelet Harbour and into Barkley Sound.

ONCE IN THE SOUND, it felt as if we were in another world. We crossed an open section of water where the swells from the Pacific raised the boat up and lowered her down with a gentle rhythm that can't be experienced on a luxury cruise. Make no mistake, this cruise is luxurious—but it's also an adventure—and we were an active part of that adventure, controlling just how much of the action we wanted to take part in.

Want to help hoist or lower the sails? No problem! Want to go help drop the crab trap? No problem! Want to read your book in the saloon all day? No problem!

But I do recommend joining in with the activities. Daily excursions in the Zodiac took us to sandy island beaches and rock landings where we learned about First Nations history. Denis' knowledge of the original inhabitants of the coast was matched only by his oratorical authority and charm. He brought these sacred locations to life with his tales.



Eyes are always on the lookout for wildlife, unless you're posing for a snapshot.



EACH DAY TOOK on a pleasant routine. We'd rise in the morning and gather together for breakfast on the aft deck. We'd eat locally-produced eggs, sausage, bacon, fried potatoes and sautéed greens, all prepared to perfection by a magician in the most basic kitchen imaginable.

The itinerary was like a rough sketch that was constantly open to revision and interpretation depending

upon the weather, the desires of the guests or just the overall vibe of the day. That created a peaceful atmosphere aboard the boat, where the only commanding force was the tide.

Breakfast was followed by a short Zodiac ride to shore. We visited at least six islands on our trip, stopping to examine fascinating archaeological sites, including fish traps, middens (beaches

comprised of discarded and broken shells) and ancient Tseshah village sites.

Returning to the boat for lunch, we'd find another feast prepared and laid out on the aft deck table. Lunches consisted of soup or chili and freshly baked bread or muffins.

Even the menu was open to revision: "Just like any good sailor, I like to respond to the conditions as I'm cooking," explained Devon.

On the second day, we set the prawn trap in the morning. We returned to the trap in the afternoon and found it loaded with 40 delicious spot prawns. I learned the ins and outs of de-heading and shelling them—not for the squeamish—and they were added to the evening's menu. One day we collected oysters for dinner and another day we gathered gooseneck barnacles, which were cooked in a white wine and garlic sauce.



ON THE THIRD DAY it rained. After two days of blissful sunshine, it was only fitting that we experienced some rain. The area receives 3,350 millimetres of rain a year, although the majority happens during the winter months. Captain Russ handed out umbrellas and we loaded into the Zodiac in spite of the rain. With the umbrellas interlocked over our heads like a turtle's shell, we motored into an estuary at Equis on Vancouver Island, a place known for its black bears.

We sat in the rain, waiting. Time passed and some of us started to question our sanity. But Russ had faith, so we settled in and waited. What felt like hours passed, until finally the rain stopped and the clouds parted. "Now watch," he said, and moments later a black bear appeared out of the bush to forage at the river.



It wouldn't be the West Coast without some rain.



Only with such a relaxed schedule can these moments happen. It is part of what made this trip so special. Russ and his crew are in tune with the area and they run the boat effortlessly.

BEFORE THE TRIP, I had two main concerns. The first was seasickness. No one on my trip ever felt seasick, but there were motion sickness pills on the boat. The second was privacy. I shared the aft cabin with a total stranger, but by the end of the trip we were great friends. During the day there were plenty of places to find a little solitude, whether it was in your own cabin, in the salon curled up

with a book, on the aft deck or at the bow of the ship. My concerns were quickly dismissed as I was taken aback by the little luxuries aboard the ship and the kindness of the crew.

FIVE DAYS PASSED QUICKLY, but leisurely, as we charted a meandering course through the archipelago. On the final evening, I did my best to take it all in: the natural beauty, the cultural history, the camaraderie of guests and crew. It's hard not to feel sentimental. It's 6:30 in the evening and the sun is slanting through the coach-house windows. The tea is made... 🍵

GEAR GUIDE

The weather can change quickly on the West Coast so it's important to take the right gear. Here's a list of essentials:

- *Passing Cloud* cannot accommodate suitcases, so it's best to take a soft duffel bag or backpack that can be easily stowed.
- Waterproof rain gear, including a jacket with a hood and pants.
- Rubber boots (can be provided by Outer Shores).
- Warm clothing, including long underwear, wool socks and gloves.
- Sunglasses, hat and sunscreen.
- Swimsuit (if you're brave).
- Beach towel.
- Insect repellent (midges and mosquitoes can be abundant).
- Camera with extra memory cards and batteries (every moment is a photo-op).
- Extra layers, including underwear. There are no laundry services onboard.