

The Simple Life

by Kerri Glynn

"Flight 412 has been cancelled. Call the airline to reschedule..."

My captain's dream had finally come true. We couldn't go home. Well, we could, but not for another couple of days. The fact that he had a case in court in the morning - in Manhattan- was almost irrelevant. He didn't have to leave the boat.

Of course, as soon as we returned to *Egraine*, I realized that we had thrown away our food. We had stripped the beds. We had disconnected the power cords. But so what? Life aboard a boat is simple. And that's what we all love about it.

In that eleventh grade classic, *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau urges us to a life of "simplicity, simplicity, simplicity." He tells us not to "fritter away" our lives by details, that we should have no need to "count more than with our ten fingers" or, in extreme cases, add our ten toes. He found everything he wanted to know of life on Walden Pond.

Isn't that like a boat? Your boat is a world of its own, and you are its only inhabitants. Needs are simple. Last summer I visited a classic wooden sailboat, probably dating back to the 1920s. It was a beauty: its long, low shape and narrow hull, its teak and mahogany gleaming. I was invited aboard, and immediately any dreams I might have had about trading in our 45-foot Hylas were dashed by the interior of this craft. All it had was a hard berth, a hotplate, and a pot to... You get the idea.

Kudos to the men and women who set sail in such things. But I won't be among them. Our sailboat has two heads (both ensuite), a queen-size bed you can walk around, two hanging closets, an oven

with three burners and broiler, a microwave, a water maker, and a washer/dryer. But to make my argument, let me be perfectly clear. Both heads are 'shoilets' - a combination shower and marine toilet. And as for marine toilets, let's just say that there is no elegance about staring into the bowl while you prime and pump, so to speak.

We can walk around our bed only if we bend over or we'll hit our heads, and we'd better not sit up abruptly or we'll bean ourselves on the low ceiling. The closets aren't large enough to hang anything longer than a mini dress. The water maker works only intermittently. And the washer uses up so much water (which would be fine if the water maker worked all the time) that we disconnected it and now use it to store our dirty laundry - an excellent use, and I recommend it.

So, life aboard is simple. And when we set sail, we plan simply. We just head out and wait for the winds and currents to take us somewhere. We usually end up in the same places anyway - Block Island and Cuttyhunk. Oh, we think we'll be ambi-

tious, but why not choose somewhere we've been before and know we like.

Down in the islands (British Virgin, not Long) we always thought that we'd head to St. Croix, the Spanish Virgins, St. Marten. Instead, we look at each other, and without a word head to Jost Van Dyke, Virgin Gorda, Marina Cay. Perhaps we're just boring, but we know what we like and where we're comfortable...as I said, a simple life.

On board we have just 12 dinner plates and 27 glasses, while at home we have 115 dinner plates (not counting luncheon and dessert plates) and 194 glasses (not counting the boxes of superfluous ones kept in the basement). On board I have just 15 t-shirts and four pair of shoes, while at home I have 115 t-shirts and 27 pair of shoes. You get the idea.

To be honest, the reason for this simplicity is threefold. There's limited storage space on a boat. When the boat heels over, things tend to fly across the room. That reminds us to keep our possessions behind closed doors. It is also true that if you can afford a boat in the Caribbean, you can't afford much else. I've been wearing the same clothes since September 2000. Occasionally I add a new shirt or mug, but I have to remove an old one.

But the most important reason is the simplest of all. We keep it simple because we can. In the morning, the only decision I have to make is which t-shirt to wear over which bathing suit. At cocktail hour, I have to decide whether to have a painkiller or a margarita.

Paris Hilton had it right..."the simple life."

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