

Roman and Antje's Island Quest - Episode #3

Dear Friends,

It's been almost a year since we left Los Angeles for our island quest. During our first eight months of travel in the South Pacific, we found many island locations that are absolutely perfect for the so-called Island Project. In the past two months however, we have been focusing on "THE TOOL" that will allow us to get the job on the island done... a boat.

None of the islands we are considering for the project are serviced by a ferry. Getting there sometimes represents a real challenge and we don't even want to mention how difficult it can be to leave the island, but that was usually not the part we ever complained about. Also, before being able to offer comfortable stays for guests, we will need to get seeds, construction materials and supplies over to the island first. Even though a powerboat would be considered by many as being more reliable and convenient, a sailboat by far fits the spirit of the project best. Sustainability comes first and doesn't it feel great every time we can let go of that damn oil dependency? So, without too much hesitation, we opted for a sailboat.

We started looking for sailboats during our stay in Fiji —first locally and then on the internet. We needed to find a solid boat that would also be big enough for cargo and guests. For both of us, a steel hull quickly became an absolute requirement. While visiting a remote island in Vanuatu, we met a Frenchman who had his sailboat thrown over a reef by a storm. The event happened on an island with barely any people on it, which means no travel lift, no cars and no other way to move the boat. It took him two months to get the boat back in the water by moving it inch by inch with chain hoists. Luckily, he had a steel boat and except for a few scratches, the hull was absolutely intact. A fiberglass boat would not have survived the accident. We took that story as a lesson.

At first, we were looking for used sailboats in the Pacific region until we realized that they were all twice as expensive as the ones sold in the US and on top of all of inferior quality. We are still operating on a small

budget for the island project and finding a boat that is at the same time big and affordable can be a challenge. We soon decided to open up and do a worldwide search on yachtworld.com. Our motto: If our future boat is not where we are, we will travel to wherever the boat is located. It took us two months of internet searching to find what we were looking for. We probably visited every single site that was advertising pre-owned sailboats on the web and we did so we don't even know how many times in hope of finding THE boat.

The boat that seemed to match our criteria the closest was located... on Utila Island in Honduras! At first, we thought what the hell are we going to do in Honduras. It is not exactly a country we would normally visit by choice (see state department warnings), but at the same time a 46 foot steel sailboat at a third of the market value is hard to resist. We contacted the owner and after the second phone conversation, he told us that he was willing to lower the price even further without us asking. After that phone call, one thought crossed both of our minds simultaneously: "We have to somehow make our way to Honduras."

Before spending a considerable amount of money on plane tickets, we asked our friend Larry Sarver, an experienced and life-long sailor, if he was willing to go to Honduras and check out the boat on our behalf. He needed a change of scenery, so to speak, and our proposal came at the right time. We asked Larry to show us the bad and the ugly as far as the boat was concerned. We wanted to know with what we would be confronted with —no surprises.

We knew that at this low price the boat would require some work, but we needed to know how much work. Larry got back to us after two weeks of thorough inspection and confirmed that the boat was extremely solid and the engine and transmission were just being rebuilt. Nevertheless, he told us about some rust issues inside the hull and that the cockpit would need attention as quickly as possible, the hatches were leaking and the sails department would need a serious refit.

Honky Tonk is a 46 foot steel boat with high aspect ratio, designed by naval architect Kurt Reinke in Germany and built in 1985 by Cochin Shipyard, India. Honky Tonk is a world cruiser, built up to Lloyds A100 classification standards. With 290 gallon of fresh water capacity and

250 gallon of fuel capacity, she can take any of the world's oceans and even the longest voyages. The boat weights about 30 tons with empty tanks. There are 4 tons of ballast in the keel, which give her an extraordinary stability and a comfortably smooth motion at sea. The first owner sailed her all the way from India to Texas for her maiden voyage. Later, she was sold to a Texan who used her as charter boat in Honduras. The last owner was Canadian. We decided that this was the kind of boat we needed for the project.

We took the plane from Fiji and after a brief stop in Mexico to take care of a coconut shipment for the US, we arrived on Utila Island, Honduras beginning of October. We purchased the boat about one month later.

Once the purchase was over we were confronted with the next challenge. We now needed to figure out how to get the yacht to Fiji. We are talking about 6,000 miles, a passage through the Panama Canal, a brief stop in the Galapagos, the next stop in the Marquesas after 45 days of sailing without any land in sight, then Tahiti almost a thousand miles South West, the Cook Islands two weeks later , Tonga and finally Fiji. All this could be done in a little more than two months, if it wasn't for the Pacific cyclone season and... oh, we forgot, the repairs on the boat. The Pacific cyclone season ends in April, which, how wonderful, leaves us a few months to complete the repairs and get the boat ready for the big passage. By the way, as far as we know, it will be the first voluntary Pacific passage in history made without cooking since the polynesian migrations. Anyways, there is no more stove in the boat, we donated it to a Honduran family shortly after the purchase.

Despite the fact that the engine was fully rebuilt, we could not start it because of missing parts. Utila does not have any repair facility and barely any supply in marine parts. In addition, we needed to lift the boat out of the water for a hull inspection, lots of welding and an overdue paint job.

The closest shipyard is located in La Ceiba on the Honduran coast and lucky us, La Ceiba is only 16 nautic miles away from Utila. We left Utila without a running engine on a beautiful sunny day end of November. We both had very little sailing experience, in fact close to none. We will never forget this first time we put up the sails and looked up the mast.

Words can hardly explain that unbelievable magic. Honky Tonk, a 30-ton boat, set in motion with as little sound as the wind and the water sliding along the hull, and no exhaust fumes whatsoever! For us, a new passion was born. What an amazing way to travel.

We had lunch with a great variety of tropical fruits in the cockpit and overall the trip was absolutely amazing. Larry taught us the basics of sailing, as much as can be taught in one day. We had very mild winds during most of the trip and Honky Tonk made its way at 3 to 4 knots towards La Ceiba. In the evening we encountered heavy tropical rain and the winds started piking up. Honky Tonk started heeling nicely and ended up reaching a considerable speed —what an experience!

We sure did get our first serious chills when we couldn't make it to the harbor before night fall and since we did not have an engine to make a safe entry, we decided to anchor close to the coast. The rolling waves did not give us much sleep that night. We still remember the 56 feet high mast swinging from one side to the other all night long.... In the morning, a boat sent by the shipyard came and towed us safely into the harbor. A few days later, we hauled out the boat, which is now on dry dock waiting for the repairs to be done before the next adventure begins.

By the way, once freshly painted, we intend to change "Honky Tonk" (meaning cheap bar) to "Paradise Builder" to clearly set the boat's new mission.

We already fixed the engine ourselves and it works perfectly. Overall, in order to save on expenses, we decided to do most of the work ourselves. Soon, we will be welding, sandblasting, painting, doing the wood work and much more. We can't wait to get back on the ocean... That truly will be the reward for all the hard work.

Already before the island will be fully setup for guests, we intend to offer rawfood cruises/charters, first along the Pacific coast of Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama any time before April 2007 and then later in the South Pacific by Summer 2007. The boat is well built for such events as it can comfortably host seven people in three separate sleeping area. Please contact us for further details.

To see some pictures of Honky Tonk (and of ourselves) we have a new photo link online: <http://www.genefitnutrition.com/htpics/htpics.html>

FIJI UPDATES: We are closely monitoring the latest developments concerning the political situation in Fiji. We remained in contact with the relevant governmental agencies during the entire time of political unrest. Our main contact person in the government reassured us that neither our project nor our collaboration with governmental departments will be negatively impacted: None of the ministers we are dealing with has been affected and they all remain extremely supportive of the project. A meeting between the governmental departments involved is scheduled to take place in the beginning of next year to finalize the paperwork.

We remain extremely positive for a project in Fiji. The issues that were brought up during these times of trouble are real problems Fiji needed to confront sooner or later. The social injustice originating from the tensions between indo-fijians and fijians is a reality nobody can ignore when visiting Fiji. The fact that some individuals have misused their position of power for their personal benefit has never been a well hidden secret either and despite all that Fiji is most probably the only country in the world where a coup d'etat can take place without any violence and without gun shots. For us, the way the recent events occurred, speaks for the peaceful nature of the Fijian people we enjoyed so much during our stay.

We still believe that we will find the Fiji we left a few months ago and what happens currently may in the end be overall beneficial for the project. We will keep our eyes on the next developments in Fiji. We hope that the dust will soon settle and that by April everything will be back to normal.

The Island Project will continue regardless of what the future holds for Fiji. We have several other island options in Fiji's neighboring nations to the point where we even consider working with several locations simultaneously, which makes the boat an even greater necessity. However, it is too early to give any details and we shouldn't get carried away. Please stay tune for the next episode...

For those who wish to learn more about the Island Project, please

download our project description by using the following link: <http://www.genefitnutrition.com/iga.pdf>

Much love to all of you and blessed holidays.
Roman and Antje

Roman Devivo and Antje Spors
GeneFit Nutrition, LLC.
30765 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 211
Malibu, CA 90265
Voice International: (1) 310-237-6456
Fax: (1) 310-424-7103
Web: <http://www.genefitnutrition.com>
Email: info@genefitnutrition.com
Skype: genefit