

On the Smaller Side...Klein Curaçao

by Marcie Connelly-Lynn



A thatched hut provides the Visitors' Center for tour boat excursions.

A little more than midway between Bonaire and Curaçao, lies the little island of Klein Curacao, not much in the way of amenities, but a great respite from the hustle and bustle of the populated islands. There is a hut there with a couple of transient fishermen sometimes in residence and a couple of day-tour boats hit the beach with tourists once or twice a week, but time it right and it's all yours...a delightful little Dutch haven worthy of a day's exploration.

We had guests visiting us in Bonaire who wanted to sail, but the easterly trade winds would have made the trip back to the Aves a long, rough motor sail at best. The thoughts of visiting a remote little island sounded exotic to our guests, so we opted for a quick 27-mile downwind sail to Klein Curacao and hoped we'd have no trouble getting back.

The trip, under four hours anchorage to anchorage, was indeed fast. There are two large mooring balls for the tour boats and we anchored between them in 20' of clear, blue water. Our guests, anxious to start exploring, couldn't wait for us to launch the dinghy and dove off the side and swam to shore. We more subdued and less ambitious cruisers took our time, tidied up and made shore with the dink an hour later. After Bonaire, the snorkeling is less than exciting, but the water is clear and warm.

You can walk the perimeter of the island in about

an hour...three hours if you like to beach comb. The shelling was reasonable, the water was warm and the surf on the windward side was spectacular. There is an interesting wrecked freighter on the windward side laying on the reef, its rusted hull broken in two. The surf crashes through its middle as if to establish its ownership. Not far down the beach, another wreck, a Venezuelan fishing boat, its name on the bow "Carolina" of Pampatar, was a clear reminder of the how easy the reef and weather can claim even the most experienced of us.



Parted hull of a rusted freighter

The most remarkable structure on the island is an old, but still functioning, Dutch lighthouse. Its red painted walls are peeling and chunks of mortar lay haphazardly on the ground. Windows are missing and doorjambes and window casings show the results of weather and wind. Though dilapidated, it looked safe enough to attempt a climb. We skirted missing floorboards on the entry porch and gingerly climbed the circular steps, appreciating the views from each window as we gained height and lost confidence in the prudence of our venture. The last six feet was a vertical scamper via a rickety ladder to the top. Barely room for one, we took turns on the ladder and were rewarded with a magnificent view of the island and surrounding sea, a hazy Curaçao barely visible in the distance.

The night sky was glorious. Though the glow on

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the horizon distinctly showed the way to Curacao, without local ambient light, the southern sky was crisp and clear. Every star made an appearance for our awestruck guests and their first view of the Southern Cross was definitely a memorable one.

Countering the downwind trip, the return took eight long hours with 25 knot winds on the nose and 8 foot seas. I offered Stugeron all around, but I was the only taker and, curiously enough, the only one to get seasick. Green-faced and discomfited by my lack of sea legs after nearly four years as a liveaboard, I watched Fay happily reading below while munching cookies. I was reminded, however, that she and Doug had only a week to enjoy this little paradise before returning to a hectic life in the U.S...for us, this is everyday life. I'll choose paradise and a little seasickness any day.



Klein Curaçao lite – Though dilapidated, the circular climb up the steps of the Curacao lighthouse was worth the climb.

Author's Notes:

David and Marcie Lynn, along with their ship's cat, Jelly, have lived aboard "Nine of Cups", a 45' Liberty cutter, for four years. They are currently in Ecuador with plans to remain in South America before heading west to complete a 10-year world circumnavigation. You can check out their website: www.nineofcups.com.

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