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11 years all at sea and loving it

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They've been all at sea for 11 years and they couldn't be happier about it.

David (63) and Marcie (61) Lynn set out from the United States in their 14m cutter *Nine of Cups* in 2000 and it has been home ever since.

"We left 11 years ago this month and we've been living aboard since then," Mr Lynn said yesterday, cradling a coffee in the spacious teak-lined cabin.

"Ever since I was a little boy I'd always wanted to go to sea and see the world. I even joined the navy for six years, but I never got aboard a ship. I was always based on land," he said, chuckling.

"I'd never been on a sailboat, other than a tour boat, before that. So we took sailing classes," Mrs Lynn says.

"In 1997, I was diagnosed with breast cancer at a time when we were doing well in our careers and everything, but it made us think: 'Is this how we want to live?'," Mrs Lynn said.

With their children adults (now aged 34, 35 and 36) the couple decided to take the plunge.

"We signed the papers for the boat in March 2000, moved aboard in April and we were off in May," Mrs Lynn recalls.

"We sold our house and cars and all our household goods. Cutting that dock line is the hardest thing to do," Mr Lynn, an engineer, said.

"But there are no regrets at all. We had no idea how much we'd get out of it. We've learned a lot of skills along the way."

"There are dragons you need to slay," Mrs Lynn said.

"The first time out of sight of land, the first time you stay overnight, the first time on overnight watch

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[1]
David and Marcie Lynn aboard their home, *Nine of Cups*, at the Otago Yacht Club yesterday.



[2]
Nine of Cups. Photo by Peter McIntosh.

by yourself ..."

"We'd probably average one pretty good three-to-five-day storm a year," Mr Lynn said.

"Most of the storms we've encountered have been more uncomfortable than life-threatening. We've had waves going over the solar panels, but the boat does fine. Boats like to float.

"We just take our seasick medicine and park and relax and try not to look at the waves."

New Zealand had always been a dream destination, Mrs Lynn said.

"We got to know some Kiwi sailors in Patagonia, and one day they were comparing the fiords of Chile with the fiords of New Zealand.

"New Zealand is pretty exotic to us Americans. People back home go 'Oh my God! You've been to New Zealand?' It feels like a dream come true to be here," she said.

"We're loving Dunedin. Someone knocked on the hull this morning and it was a South African couple we met in Piriapolis, Uruguay, three years ago. That's just amazing."

"One of the wonderful things about cruising is you can stick around places and get culturally immersed."

"We've got a wine cellar under the bed," Mr Lynn said.

"Whenever we leave great wine countries like South Africa or New Zealand we make sure the cellar is full."

But there are hardships aboard, too.

"We don't have hot showers. Basically, you lather up and then rinse off. You don't have the water running," Mr Lynn said.

"It's certainly a different lifestyle. You're very conscious of energy consumption, fuel and water."

"And we have no appliances, so we make things from scratch," Mrs Lynn added.

"When I worked in marketing, I'd get up and get all dressed up and have my hair cut and nails done. I don't miss that life, but as soon as I get back to land and take a look in the mirror and think I've aged 20 years in two months then I go straight to a hair salon," she said.

The Lynns arrived in Dunedin on Monday having sailed down the west coast from the Bay of Islands, past Fiordland and Stewart Island.

"We ate blue cod and mussels and oysters and scallops and cockles at Stewart Island," Mr Lynn recalled with relish. And it is the world's remotest places that have captured their souls.

"The out-of-the-way places really stay with you. Like Tristan da Cunha, on the rum line between Uruguay and South Africa, where there are 300 people living on top of a volcano. Places like Easter Island and Pitcairn Island," Mrs Lynn said.

The couple often speak about their travels at ports and will hold a talk at the Otago Yacht Club next Friday called "Off the Beaten Track".

"People are fascinated about why we do it and they want to know more about it," said Mrs Lynn, who also writes a daily blog about life aboard *Nine of Cups* at www.sailblogs.com/member/nineofcups [3].

The Lynns plan to relax at the Otago Yacht Club marina until March 20, when they will "probably" head to the Chatham Islands.

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