



## 4. Saint Vincent 2016



by Johan Kjellander 2016



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines consists of 32 islands of which 9 are inhabited. Saint Vincent is the main island but we also visited Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Tobago Cays and Union Island.

Saint Vincent has an interesting geological relation to the island of Martinique. The big volcano on Saint Vincent, La Soufriere (Sv:soufre=svavel), seems to be part of the same underground structure as Mount Pelee on Martinique. Two hours before Mount Pelee had a big eruption in 1902 and killed 30.000 people, La Soufriere erupted and killed 2.000 on Saint Vincent. Latest eruption was in 1979, same year as the island became independent after 200 years of English rule !



We spent one night at anchor in the bay of Chateaubelair on the main Island of Saint Vincent before we continued to Bequia where we cleared customs. What we saw was wild nature and people living a simple life.



A lot of wild and beautiful nature. Everything seems peaceful but what we heard later confirms the picture of social instability which is common to the Caribbean.

## Bequia



Main town on Bequia is Port Elizabeth in Admiralty Bay. I was here almost 30 years ago on [S/Y Dilly Dally](#) but much has changed since then. More boats, more bars and more people but still very nice.

The biggest disappointment was the coral reef at the entrance to Admiralty Bay. When I was here in 1988 it was fantastically beautiful with big tree like corals in millions of colours but now it was shapeless and brown.





Boat building and sail racing still seems to be a tradition. The boats are very light weight, no ballast, no engine and the crews are very skilled.



There were many yachts in Admiralty Bay so the local businessmen had a lot to do. Some of them have boats of their own and offer their goods or services at sea. The yellow catamaran above is a floating service station with water, diesel, laundry and ice. Others sold fruit and vegetables or beer. Some offered taxi services.

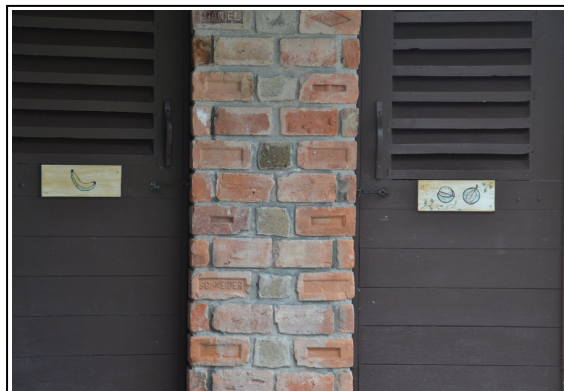
We counted the number of yachts and reached almost 120. One third of these were big catamarans (40-60 feet) from various rental or charter companies. These big boats are expensive to rent so you need to be a lot of people to split the cost between you. A Lagoon 52 for example costs 6.700€/week and has 6 double cabins. With 12 people on board the dinghy gets crowded when everybody wants ashore.



So far, we had not seen any Swedish boats since we left Martinique but now we met Roland on Octava. We knew Roland from Las Palmas the year before, so this was a nice reunion. We took a taxi together to see the island and visit a sanctuary for Hawksbill turtles.



Like many other sea turtles around the world the Hawksbill is endangered. Here they are kept for three years before they are released into the ocean. At that time they are big enough to have a fair chance to survive.



On our way back we stopped at the Firefly Plantation for a beer and found these toilet signs inspired by local fruit.



The young Agave fruit is a strange thing, isn't it ? It points many meters up into the air until it branches out and flowers. After that the entire plant dies. Common on Bequia.





One day I took a walk up to the ruin of Fort Hamilton. Not much left but as usual, there are interesting stories. The fort is named after James Hamilton, a Bequia immigrant from UK in the late 16:th century. He was the father of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founding fathers of the United States. You can find Alexanders picture on the front side of the American ten dollar bill.

Another story tells that one day a canon at Fort Hamilton fired accidentally and that the bullet landed on a small island on the other side of Admiralty Bay. The island was hit in the middle and split into two. The story must be true because when we left Bequia we saw the two small Islands there.

## Mustique



Mustique is probably best know as the "private" island where the very rich spend their holidays. According to Wikipedia, people like Paul McCartney, David Bowie, Mick Jagger, Queen Elizabeth II and other members of the British royal family have been regular visitors, but Mustique ia also an ordinary Caribbean island with white sand and colourful houses.



We took a buoy right in front of Lovell village and paid 100 East Caribbean dollars (approx: 30€ or 300 SEK) for 3 days of mooring. First thing we noticed was the shore in front of us which was covered with big sea shells. Local fishermen have used this spot for many many years, taken out the meat and thrown the empty "Conch" shells on the shore.



Iguanas (Sv:Leguan) are not uncommon in the Caribbean. These lizards can grow quite large and develop fantastic shapes and colors, specially around their head. I don't know if this little lizzard is a real Iguana but it is a beautiful animal.



A wooden boat with a steam engine was anchored right next to us. Quite unusual. A man came aboard and lit a fire under the boiler. After some time he drove away in total silence. The only sound was a light splashing from the propeller.

The boat seemed to be quite new. It must have cost a fortune to build. Could it be, that the man in the white T-shirt was one of the rich playboys on Mustique that was out with his toy ?





One of the attractions on Mustique is Basils Bar, named after Basil Charles who started the bar 30 years ago and still owns it. The bar is a favourite among the stars that come to Mustique and it is said that Basil himself knows more secrets about the celebrities of the world than anyone else.

Of course we had to have dinner at Basils, just think of all the celebrities we would meet ! Well, we didn't see any of those, but we did get a fantastic view of the ocean and a sundown with a beautiful green flash.

## Canouan



Next island in the Grenadines south of Mustique is Canouan. We stayed there only for the night but went ashore for a walk and a visit to the bar on the beach. Many bars in the Caribbean are simple sheds with a few tables and chairs. This one seemed to be built in less than a day with a furnishing that was gathered from local waste.



A big catamaran arrived and seven crew came ashore in the dinghy. They had a beer each but before they returned they went through a tough exercise program on the beach. One of them was a woman. We figured they might be American soldiers on vacation.



As the sun went down, we saw a fire on the beach. We asked the barman and he told us it was the Coast Guard burning a confiscated drug boat. Drug traffic is a problem in these waters.

## Tobago Cays





Tobago Cays consists of five small uninhabited islands, together forming The Tobago Cays Marine Park. A beautiful little archipelago that was very crowded by visiting yachts.



We saw a lot of big turtles in the water and when we climbed to the top of one of the islands we saw a relatively big Iguana.

## Union Island



Union Island is the most southerly of the Grenadines. We spent a night on anchorage in Clifton close to the small artificial Happy Island which is made up of Conch shells and houses a bar.



The main street of Clifton is a colourful view with many interesting shops. Clifton was our last port in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We cleared out with Customs and continued the next day to Grenada.



## End of Saint Vincent 2016

