



Our back story...how we got here

## Description

I am a planner... I have been planing this trip in my mind since the winter Andy and I spent in the Caribbean aboard Kinship in 2002-2003. We met many live aboards, some with kids. Wouldn't that be amazing we said. And then we went home and had our own kids and sailing adventures were put on hold for a few years...

Flash forward to about five years ago when Mira started school. When would be the perfect age to take our children on a sailing adventure? We were told that you wanted your kids to be old enough to be independent, but not so old that they were teenagers and hated you. Middle school was out, so 3rd and 5th it was!

The next step in planning was figuring out how to afford a boat that could do the journey. Without selling our house and ever other worldly possession, we didn't stand a chance. But in true Liz and Andy fashion, we turned to the next best option...OPB. (Other person's boat). Mom and Dad to the rescue in the summer of 2012. We took them on an overnight on Kinship to Menemsha on Martha's Vineyard. As we sailed across Buzzards Bay in a perfect 15 knot South Westerly, Mom said to Dad, "I want a boat like this"! And so began the search for their next cruising boat. A few months later, they picked up the new Salmagal in Rockhall, MD and sailed down to Annapolis where Andy and I were racing with the Gut Feeling team at the J109 North Americans. I'll never forget their beaming smiles as they waved from their new (to them) Sabre 42.5. She was a beauty!

Three years of cruising later, Salmagal is the perfect boat for our family of four. Almost every system on the boat has been updated or replaced. She is not too big, not too small and is very safe. We are grateful for the use of her and happy that we will have a house to come home to in the spring!

The next step in planing was to invite all of my friends to join us. After a cocktail, (or two...), I graciously invited everyone at the Murray's Christmas party in 2014 to join us. Andy reminded me the next morning and asked me where my guests might stay while visiting us. Salmagal is just right for our family, but not for additional families. Oops!

The last six months have been the real planning. Applying for homeschooling (yikes!), finding someone to rent the house, (thanks to Andy's parents for connecting with the wonderful John and Mary Sweeney), and packing...

You don't need much down here in the way of clothes, and everything you wear gets trashed. So old bathing suits, long sleeve sun shirts, hats and sunscreen are about all we need.

We have new Kindles which have been especially great for getting Peter to read. It even tells us how

many pages and how long he has read!

One of the most interesting purchases I made through Amazon Prime (we are best buds with Brian the UPS driver in Padanaram as he delivered daily the last few weeks), was the Grizzly Bear spray. Pete, (from CV liquors), informed me that his friend who lives aboard, uses the stuff for defense. Pete said the islanders can be immune to pepper spray .(Too much hot sauce)? Another friend had suggested pepper spray, a taser, and handcuffs. Bear spray works up to 35 feet, much further than the pepper spray, so now we have two cans. One to keep up front and one to keep by the companion way. Praying I never have to break the seal...

Andy and I arrived in Tortola on November 9th after a blow out 40th birthday/ bon voyage party. Thank you to all of our wonderful friends who came to wish us well. It was really fun!

Dad met us to help put the boat back together. Andy's parents had the kids for another week of school. Mom had the job of bringing the kids to meet us.

Salmagal was in storage at the Nanny Cay Marina for the summer. She was dirty, had numerous projects to be completed, and we had three days until launch. No one feels badly for you when you are in the islands, but it was well over 100 degrees every day with little to no wind. We were filthy and exhausted, but thrilled when we finished the projects on time. We were the first boat to be launched Friday morning, but "no cash, no splash". Dad ran up to the marina office to pay the bill and get our ticket to freedom. In she went and no leaks!

That night we moved out of the hotel and spent our first night aboard. But we weren't the only ones...we had "crazy" ants that had climbed up the boat stands and into the hull. They had multiplied during our days in the work yard. Well, there were probably 10,000 by Friday night. Andy lifted up a floor board and found the mother-load. He also found our new friend Alphonse, Mr. Cockroach. Alphonse it turned out had family, and friends...We were infested!! And the ants bite...ants in the pants is no joke. Back to the hotel for a night. ?

So here we are a week later. The kids arrived with Mom on Sunday. We cleaned, killed bugs, finished a million more projects, provisioned, did laundry, and finally left the marina on Thursday. Heaven is being off the dock with fresh air and clean water. We currently sit on a mooring off Caneel Bay in the beautiful island of St. John. Mom and Dad got a room until they fly out on Sunday, so we are enjoying the amenities until then. (Hope we don't get them kicked out).

We will start homeschooling next week, (eek), and will get into a daily routine. Can't believe we are finally beginning this long anticipated adventure. A special shout out to our family, the kids teachers, and my besties for all of your love and support. XO

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## Date Created

November 21, 2015

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