



Happy belated New Year

## Description

A belated Happy New Years! Communication has been a bit slow (we have not had wifi for well over a week) but our adventures have been anything but slow. We have made new friends, caught up with old friends, and continued to spend A LOT of time together as a family. Two and a half months in, and we still like each other, that is good sign! The kids even put together a Christmas video to share their adventures, but we have not been able to upload it yet and there is already so much more to add.

We spent 19 days, including Christmas and New Years, around Antigua and Barbuda, and wow did it fly by. The kids have some fun posts coming along with more details, so here are some highlights. Big breeze was a common theme of our time in and around Antigua and Barbuda. Regularly we saw 25 – 30 kts of breeze, and sometimes up to 47 in the squalls. Big breeze also brings big waves and every sail was an adventure. We removed our first reef line and permanently put in our third reef! After we said good by to Peter, Meredith, Owen, and Sean Collins on December 19th, we headed out to Antigua's small rain forest and went Zip lining. Super fun, and stay tuned for Mira's post (and some



From there we moved up to the North East end of the

Island, to Nonsuch bay, where we planned to spend Christmas. What a magical spot. I only wish I was a kite sailor, as it is paradise. Nonsuch Bay is open to the East, and the next point of land you would reach is Africa. There is a huge reef that protects the bay from the ocean waves. So the wind rips in,

but it is flat water. Really cool. There are also some nice small anchorages you can tuck into to find some quiet from the howling wind as well. We fortunately were able to find a really protected spot our third night in tucked super close to the shore line with a second anchor keeping us just off the beach.

In Nonsuch, we met up with Peter and Sally's good friends, Chris and Bonnie Covington. Chris and Bonnie have a place at Nonsuch at the Mill Reef club and were there with their family, sons Reed (and girl friend Mel) and Grant. Chris immediately came down to greet us and signed us in to use any of the water equipment they have at their little yacht club. So we went laser sailing and did some tubing, not bad for Christmas week! Chris and Bonnie were also kind enough to invite us over for Christmas eve. We saw some caroling at the club and had a wonderful meal at their beach bar – we couldn't be more thankful for their hospitality. On Christmas day, in the afternoon, we took Chris, Reed, and Mel for a tour around Nonsuch Bay on Salween, highlighted with a swim at Green Island.

On the 26th we headed back to the boat



and get some supplies. But... it

was a holiday so nothing

was open so we stuck around and

got to work first thing in the morning on the 27th. We then headed to Deep Bay where we met up with the Babbitt's (Jib, Karen, Emily, Ike and Ike's fiancée Sarah and her mother June) who were chartering a boat out of English Harbor. Ike closely resembled Santa (not in looks) but in the fact that he had a bag of gifts – spare parts of all the things that were broken! For the first time on our trip, we had a working stereo and didn't need to rely on our small wireless speaker, and Zac Brown's Castaway sounded great blasting out of our cockpit speakers!

The next morning we were off to Barbuda following the Babbitt's who were flying along in their 57 foot charter boat. The sail was not our worst, because we were reaching, but the wind was up and the seas were pretty big which made it fairly uncomfortable. But we made it, and it was worth the trip. Barbuda was not originally one of the islands we were planning on visiting, but we are certainly glad we did as it is our favorite Island so far. We were anchored in Low Bay surrounded by 11 miles of absolutely gorgeous beach. Hands down, the most amazing beach I have ever seen.

On the other side of the beach was Codrington's lagoon making this area another sweet Kite Sailing spot as the wind whipped over the lagoon and Kites were again enjoying nice flat water. I really need to learn the kite sailing thing! One of our trip highlights to date, was our visit to the Frigate Bird Colony in Codrington's lagoon. Something like 20,000 frigate birds, and it was full on mating season. Amazing, but Peter has a post coming on that with more details so keep an eye out there! After the visit to the Frigate Bird Colony we had an amazing lobster dinner on the beach with the Babbitt's – great time with some great friends!

The next day the Babbitt's headed back to Antigua, and we decided to stick around Barbuda. We dragged our dinghy over the small beach into Codrington's lagoon and headed into town to rent bike's and explore the island. We made it over to two foot bay and climbed through a cool cave. A good day of exercise. On the 31st we sadly pulled out of Barbuda and sailed back to Nonsuch Bay in Antigua where we again met up with the Babbitt's. We had a potluck dinner on their boat with Rack of Lamb appetizer and a yummy Pesto Shrimp Pasta dish. After dinner, Emily lead the group in some funny group games called goggles on, thumper, start your engines, and bonus round – games that can only be played later in the night for sure. I can't thank Emily enough because Mira and Peter can't stop playing the games with each other (except they are group games and not meant for two, and they all have really annoying sounds!) Needless to say, our entire visit with the Babbitt's was excellent and is a highlight of our trip. Great to see faces from home and spend some fun times together! Sadly, of both boats, Mira was the only one who made it to midnight to see the fireworks..

From there we headed back to English Harbor to bid the Babbitt's farewell and prep for our next adventure, Guadeloupe. On January 3rd, we headed towards Guadeloupe, and it turned out to be our best sail of the trip so far. A nice reach in 20 – 25 kts of breeze with the seas smaller than they had been in the past – it was perfect. The best part, it got even better as we caught our first Mahi Mahi of the trip – Excellent! And then we caught another, bigger one a short time later! We actually have fresh fish for at least 8 family meals – yummy!

We pulled into Deshaies, Guadeloupe around 3:00 and wow, what a change and the beginning of our next chapter. For the first time on our trip we felt like we were in a foreign country as Guadeloupe is French, and we don't speak french. I wish my last French class was not 20 years ago! It is coming back in bits and pieces, but slowly at best. At 4:00 I went in to clear into the island while the kids had a swim. Communication was tough, but I eventually found the customs terminal tucked into a bathing suit shop on the main street.

The next morning we were on it, starting off the day with Chocolate Croissants from the Boulangeire, and then the kids spent some quality school time while I figured out how to Filet a Mahi Mahi. By no means perfect, but we were happy with the results. We are also on the look out for a better knife to help make the process a bit easier... And yes, we had Mahi for dinner!

On our second day we hiked up the hill to the Botanical Gardens. Another fun adventure which ended with our best meal to date at their restaurant. I could really get used to this French food thing! We finally left Deshais and headed down the coast for Pigeon cove and pigeon Island where we had some of the best snorkeling in the Jacques Cousteau sea park! From Pigeon we bumped down the coast a bit, and then today headed over to Iles Des Saintes (the Saintes) just to the south of Guadeloupe. The Saintes are part of Guadeloupe and are described as mix between Cuttyhunk and Marthas Vineyard. But we just got here, so a little school work and then we will let you know...

Our plan is to spend a couple days here before heading to Marie-Galante, another much quieter island off Guadeloupe, and then moving along to Dominica.

So many pictures to share, but they are very slow to upload so here are a few...

### **Category**

1. Antigua
2. Barbuda
3. Guadeloupe

### **Tags**

1. Antigua
2. Barbuda
3. Fishon
4. Frigate Birds
5. Guadeloupe
6. MahiMahi
7. Snorkel

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