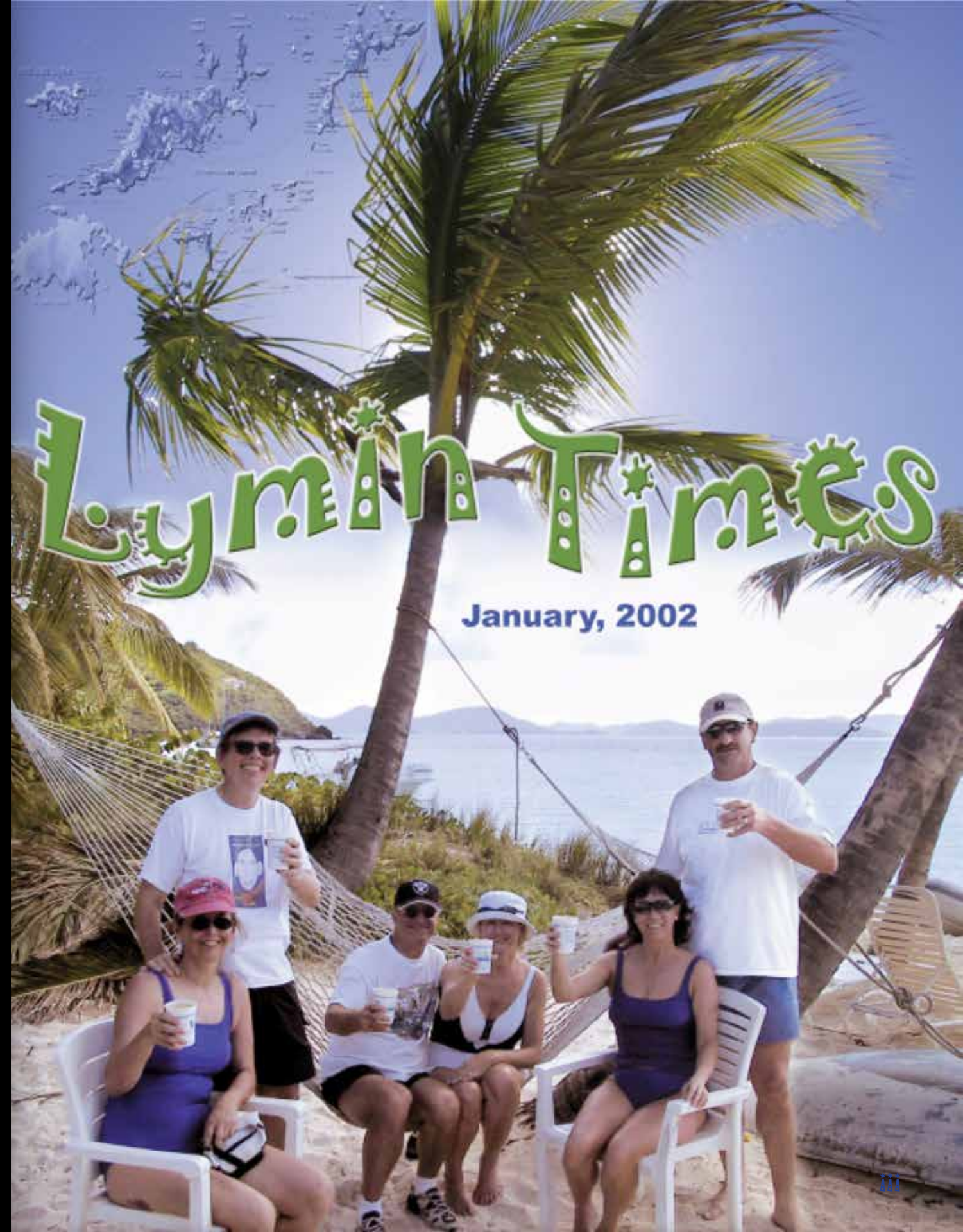
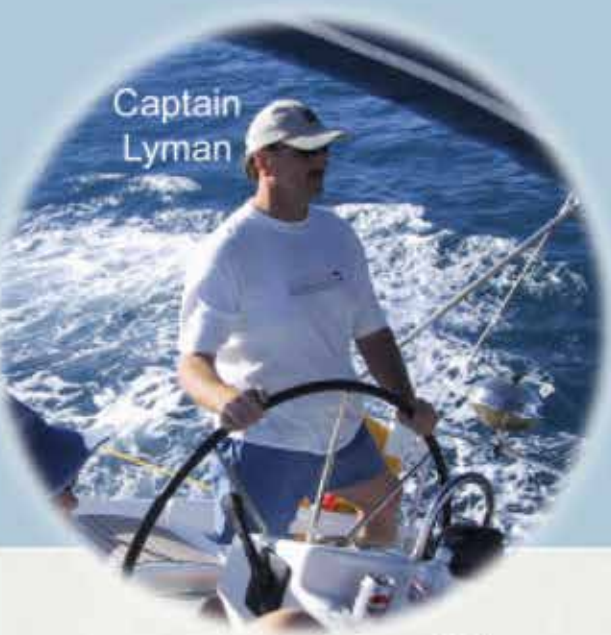


Montage
BioGraphics



Captain Lyman



La Papillon's Course

British Virgin Islands
January 6-14, 2002



KEY

- Maya Cove to Trellis Bay
- Trellis Bay to Gorda Sound
- Gorda Sound to Manchioneel Bay
- Manchioneel Bay to The Bight
- The Bight to Hawksnest
- Hawksnest to Great Harbour
- Great Harbour to Cane Garden Bay
- Cane Garden Bay to Brandywine
- Brandywine Bay to Maya Cove

Overnight Anchorage



Maya Cove, Tortola



Not every ferry continues to Road Town. Most of the time, passengers bound for the east end of Tortola must take a forty-five minute taxi ride across. Fortunately, this one *does* make the extra fifteen minute run (actually, it's more like half an hour, but then the taxi ride is probably more like an hour in reality, too). We hop back aboard to skirt the southern edge of the island disembarking at Road Town and taking a taxi van to Maya Cove, where Sunsail is based.

The office is open and they're ready to begin our slow-down-you-move-too-fast island indoctrination: the evening briefing we'd been promised to facilitate an early departure tomorrow morning has been cancelled. Something about too few people to warrant one. We're told it will be in the morning *around* 0930. Like true Americans, we are unable to accept the delay. A show of confidence based on having done this before convinces Roy, the Sunsail representative on the dock, that we can do without the briefing; they'll do a quick boat checkout at 0815 in the morning, and we can be off. Much happier with that plan, we examine our accommodations: a 40.5' Beneteau Oceanis named *La Papillon*. Supposedly, this boat is more stable than the Beneteau First. An important issue for the first mate.

Although they are a production boat, the Beneteau is well laid out and this one is brand new -- only out once before. It is in perfect shape, at least superficially, and it appears to have all the items promised in the charter materials. It even has a working refrigerator! This is a luxury we've never before enjoyed.



SUNDAY, JANUARY 6: *Maya Cove to Trellis Bay, Tortola*



La Papillon



La Papillon

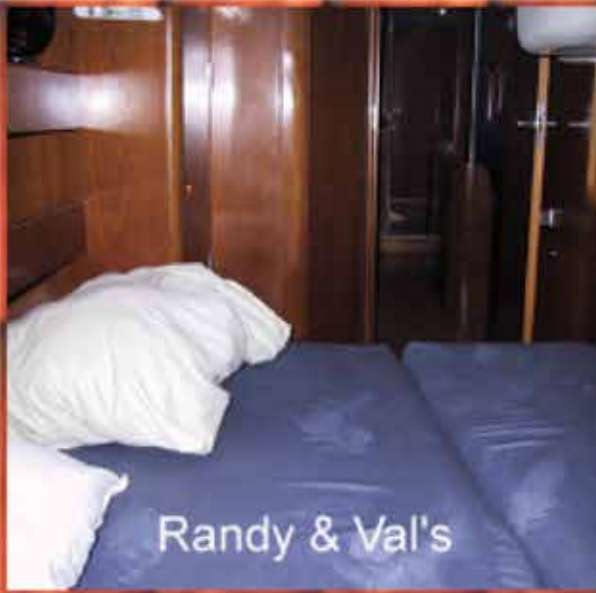
Although they are a production boat, the Beneteau is well laid out, and this one is brand new.



Mike & Susan's



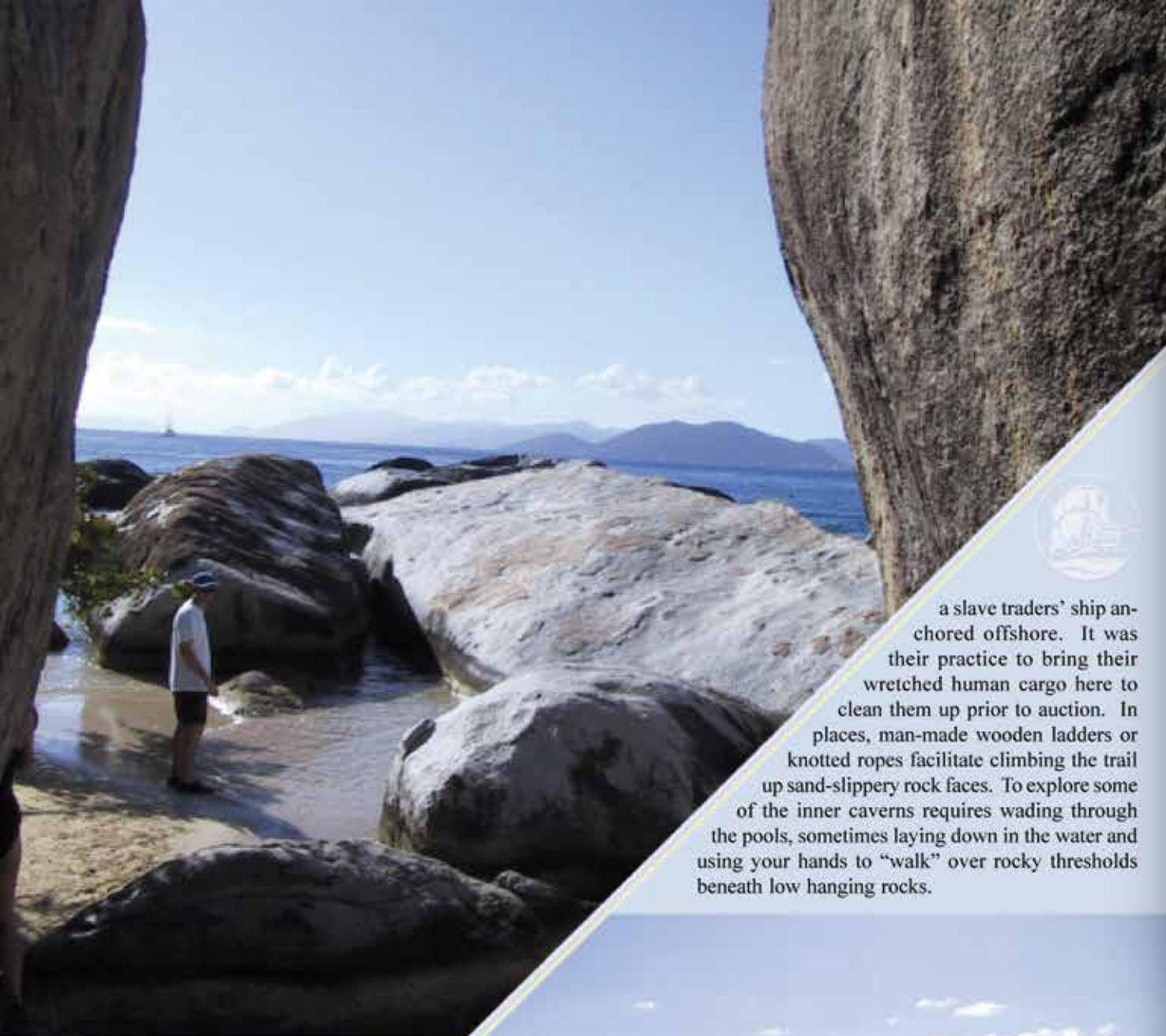
Lyman & Terri's



Randy & Val's



Cast Off!



a slave traders' ship anchored offshore. It was their practice to bring their wretched human cargo here to clean them up prior to auction. In places, man-made wooden ladders or knotted ropes facilitate climbing the trail up sand-slippery rock faces. To explore some of the inner caverns requires wading through the pools, sometimes laying down in the water and using your hands to "walk" over rocky thresholds beneath low hanging rocks.

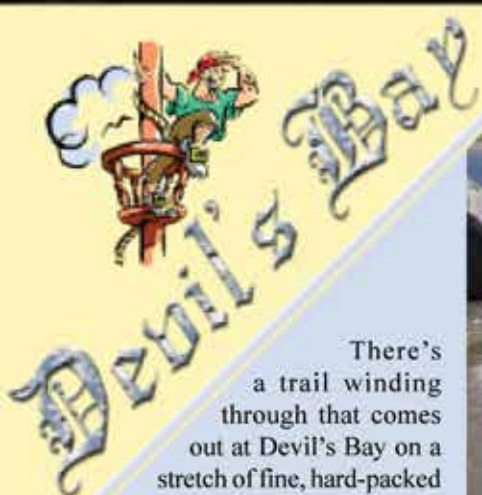


Randy toys with the idea, even getting down on the swim platform with his gear. But, in the end, he's just not ready to do it. It turns out to be a good decision. The surge is pretty powerful. Even though he's a good swimmer, why not wait for more benign conditions to test the water.

We circle the rocks, swimming hard to move through the surge. Sunlight sparkles off the fascinating reddish formations. Our masks are like windows to another world filled with colorful fish and spectacular coral heads.

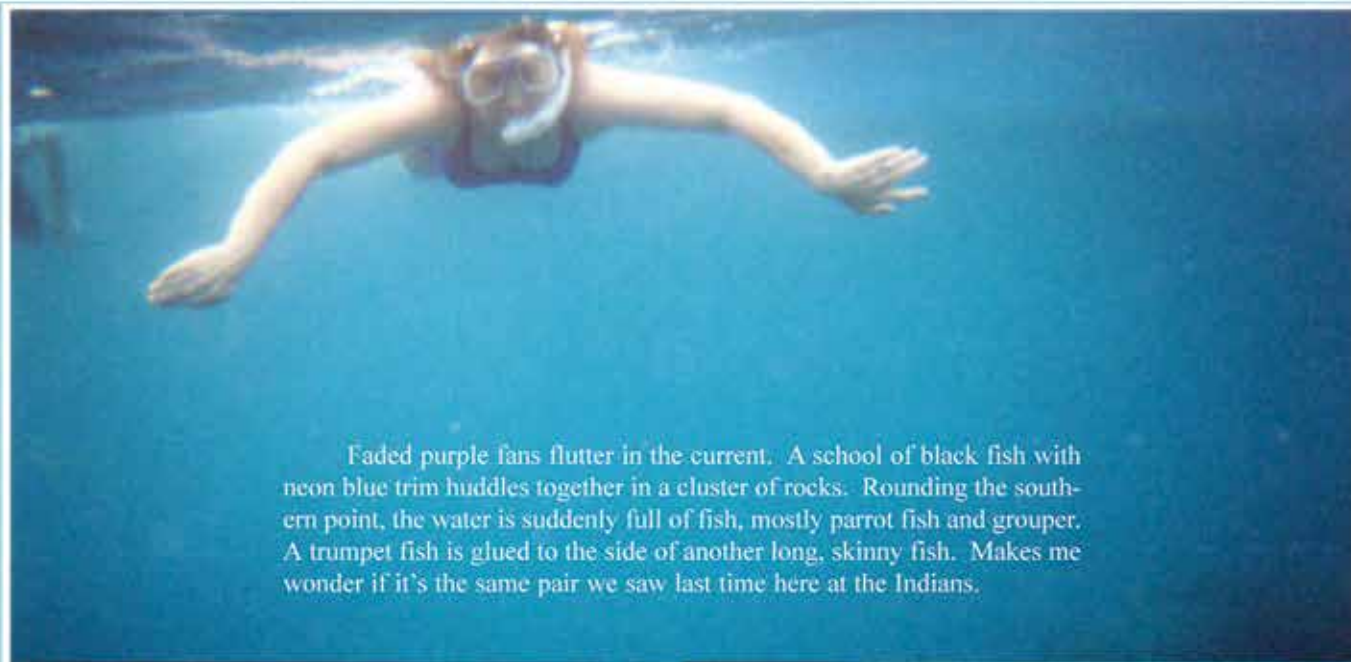
Dropping the line to the mooring ball, we put out full sail on a broad reach for Norman Island. It is a nice sail -- one jibe toward Tortola and one jibe back on a direct line to the Indians. It's another beautiful day with winds east/southeast. Snaring a mooring ball, we hurry into our snorkel gear and jump into the water.

The Indians



There's a trail winding through that comes out at Devil's Bay on a stretch of fine, hard-packed sand. In the glint of the sun off the water, you can almost see





Faded purple fans flutter in the current. A school of black fish with neon blue trim huddles together in a cluster of rocks. Rounding the southern point, the water is suddenly full of fish, mostly parrot fish and grouper. A trumpet fish is glued to the side of another long, skinny fish. Makes me wonder if it's the same pair we saw last time here at the Indians.

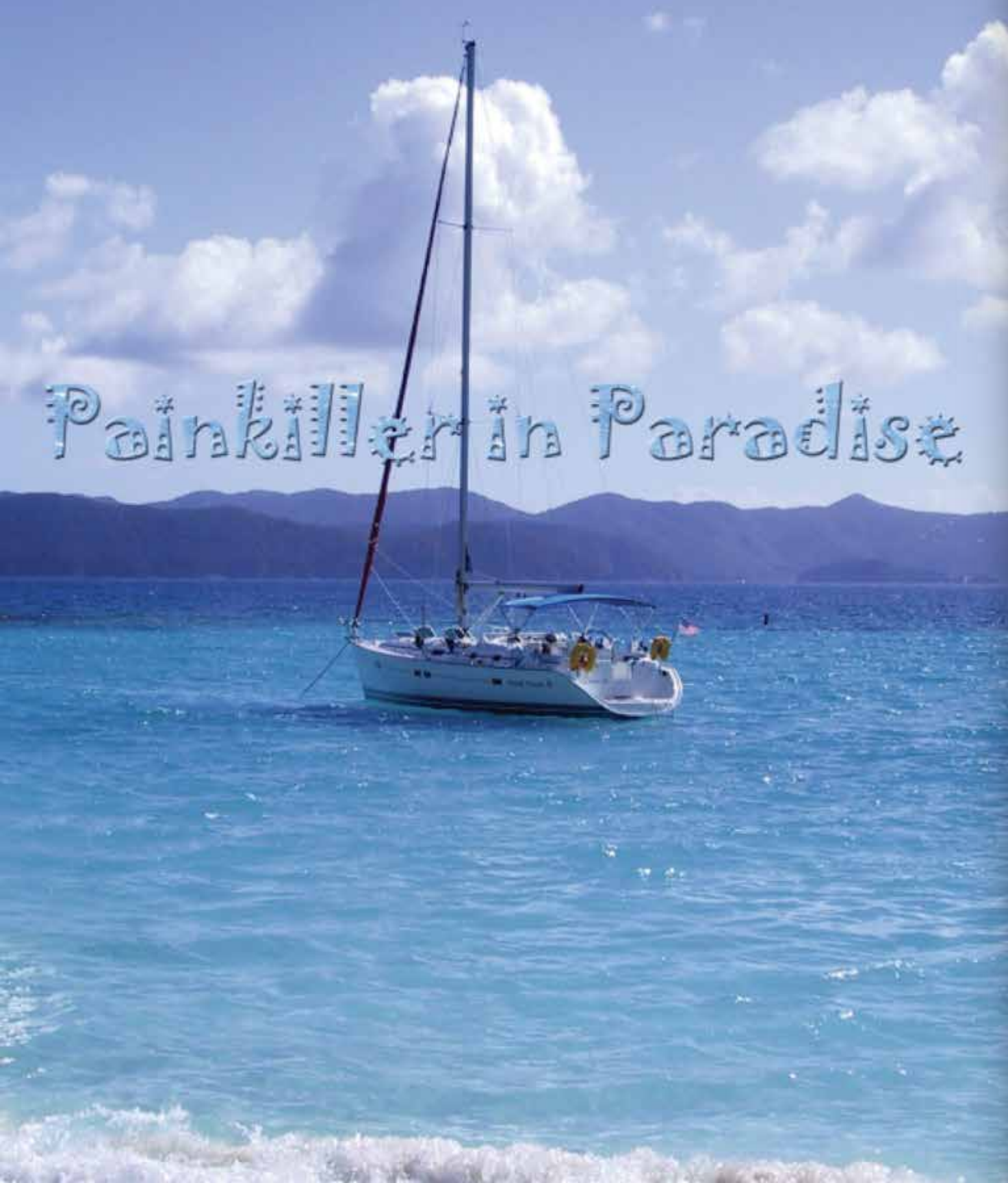


The Bight

Dropping the mooring line, we enter the Bight, a protected anchorage carved deeply into the west side of Norman Island. A hall really close to shore may help to mitigate the effects of the williwaws -- wind that runs screaming down from the hilltops. Our selection also puts us close to the *William Thornton*, more commonly known as the "Willie T." The schooner, a relic of the New York ferry system, is permanently anchored here as a restaurant. Lyman and I were lucky enough to have eaten aboard the original schooner the year before it sank. One version has it Hurricane Lenny sent it to the bottom in 1995, but a more believable version says the boat was in such disrepair it sank while they were in the process of moving it somewhere to sink it on purpose. They serve dinner aboard and are frequently the site of wild full moon parties.



The William Thornton



Painkillers in Paradise



The Soggy Dollar Bar

Then he gets two drinks from the Soggy Dollar Bar. Cradled in a hammock with a drink in hand and a double-page ad for the tropics come to life for a view, it's clear we've found Heaven. Sunlight glints off the water from here to the faded purple hills of Tortola and Great Thatch. They're not too distant: just a whole different world away.



Six Painkillers, please

A short while later, the others arrive, hot and ready for the obligatory Painkiller. It's a mixed drink of Cruzan rum and a mysterious punch with a touch of nutmeg. Invented and made famous here, they are now made at bars throughout the Virgin Islands. Lyman and I don't recommend them very highly, but feel everyone should try at least one and it should be the original. They turn out to be much better than we remember -- good enough, in fact, to have a second and a third.

One of the waitresses agrees to take our picture. When Lyman asks what the plastic bags filled with water hanging from the rafters of the bar are all about, she says, "You want the real story or the ones we made up?" We tell her we want them all. They're Caribbean icicles. They're to hold the roof on in a hurricane. It's their sprinkler system in the event of a fire. The reflection of light off the water in the bags is a deterrent to bugs. You guess which one is true.



The captain is checking the sail trim

As we round Sandy Cay, we get a glimpse of Sandy Spit and Green Cay. They look very inviting, but will have to be left for the next trip.

We arrive in Cane Garden Bay at about 1800. Our reservation for dinner at Myett's is for 2000. Getting out of the dinghy at the high dock is fun, especially for Val and I in our dresses. We climb the crumbling stone steps to the road, then find our way back down to the beach at Quito's and walk west in search of the restaurant.

