

Let your spirit set sail



... one of the very finest

About a sailing trip from Saint-Martin to the British Virgin Islands

by David Bellows (words & images)

I have been sailing on windjammers for many years as passenger and crew, including a dozen of the old schooners sailing in my home waters of the beautiful coast of Maine, other schooners in the Caribbean, and a number of square-riggers, in various parts of the world including two Atlantic crossings. Of all these ships, my experience on Eye of the Wind was one of the very finest. The ship is magnificent. It is very pretty with its tanbark sails, teak decks, and lots of varnish.



More important, it sails very well. The relatively small sails are easily handled and she is fast and seaworthy. There are a number of factors that make the passenger experience very excellent. First, she only carries 12 passengers (on our trip we had 9) so the ship is less crowded and you get to know everyone. This may be more common on European vessels, but a Maine schooner of the same size would carry 30 passengers. As a result, the cabins are larger and more comfortable. It was nice that we had a comfortable place to sit and read, and it was wonderful to have our own head with a shower, something I have never had before.



The deckhouse with the galley and dining salon was great, both as a place to eat and as a comfortable place to sit out of the weather where you can see out and what was happening on deck. There are also a lot of comfortable places to sit on deck.



Most important of all, the crew was superb. Captain Moritz was low-key, with no haughtiness or heavy-handed authority, but everything worked, perfectly, showing that he was doing an excellent job. He handled the ship very deftly, sailing off the anchor, and in all situations. The crew are well trained and work very well together as a team without any apparent strain or friction. The three lead crew, Ofelia, Dagmar and Lea, are all very skillful and competent sailors. The trainees, Johan, Laura, and Luke, were of varying levels of experience and skill, but they worked well with the others. Laura and Luke were new, coming aboard with us, but were quickly shown the ropes and incorporated into the crew. I credit Moritz for a lot of the crews' skills, teamwork, and camaraderie. I must also mention Megan, who is an excellent mate, and Esme who cooked very well and coped superbly with my own and others' dietary restrictions. Jarek, the engineer, was rarely seen but must have been doing his job because everything worked.



I particularly liked that passengers were encouraged to participate but not pressured, a balance not easy to do. The crew quickly learned each passenger's interest and ability, assigned appropriate tasks, gave clear instructions, and coordinated well. Being able to participate added considerably to my enjoyment of the trip.

A contrast to my experience was that of my friend Al, who joined me without any experience on any sailing vessel of any kind. The crew accepted his initial reluctance to participate, but when after a day or so he started to get involved, they gave him the instruction and support he needed. Those who know Al well say they have never seen him so enthusiastic about anything. Before we ever left the ship he was pressing me to sign up for next year. So what do we have to do to reserve two places next year for the week sailing from Martinique down into the Grenadines?

In closing, I want to thank the office staff for answering our questions and coordinating everything.

The company that owns Eye of the Wind should be very proud of the ship and her crew and the job that they do. It should reflect back very favorably on the company.

Thanks again,
David

