

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Thursday, June 19, 2008

It was 4:30AM when we rolled out of the rack for the day's cruise to Elfin Cove. It's a 6 hour motor from Reid Inlet which we departed at 5:00AM. It is overcast today for a change and this is good as we are running out of sunscreen. Who knew?

Glacier Bay Dinner Menu

Opening15 over 15,000 Chevas or Jack
Salad Fresh Alaska Grown Arugula
1st Main Alaskan Moose Burgers
2nd Main Fresh Glacier Bay Halibut
DessertBaked Alaska & Klondike Bars
Beverage Glacier Iced Tea

Last night we celebrated by designing a special Glacier Bay dinner menu. It was a menu developed over the last several days based on our favorites. After that we had another favorite, BBQ steak and potatoes.

We left Glacier Bay National Park about 9:30AM carefully following the 1-mile offshore rule to protect this special whale reserve. Funny, we just viewed our first whale inside the Park in 3 days an hour earlier. Withing twenty minutes outside the park, it was whale city! Dozens of whales along the shore and in our way. Pat at Wild Blue's helm stopped the boat several times to avoid close contact. Could it be that these whales don't like the Park rules and regulations?



(Whales ouside Glacier Bay)



(There is a US Post Office in Elfin Cove where we posted our cards and letters. Wifi was limited so the Blogs were delayed.)



We entered Elfin Cove around noon and pulled up to the public dock. No water or power at the dock but a fine, if small community, whose main street is a boardwalk built on pilings.

(← The boats on the public dock in Elfin Cove.)

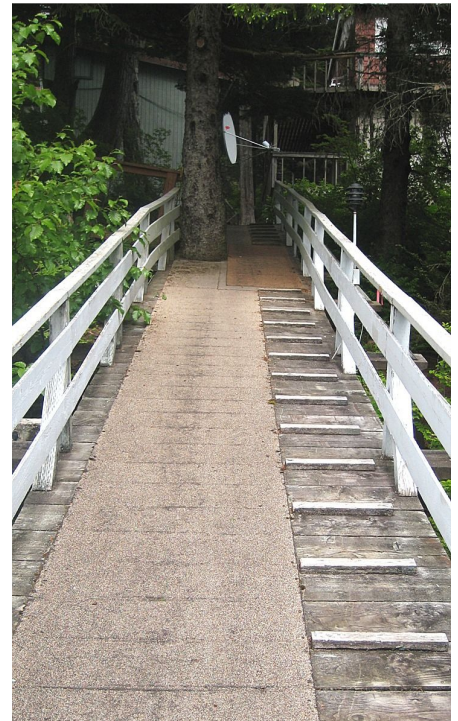
The town does have a diesel generator for it residents who are employed by the 6 fishing lodges, 3 bars, a gift shop, and tiny café. A prominent sign reads “Elfin Cove: a drinking town with a fishing problem.” The lodge boats arrived in the evening filled with salmon and halibut. The dock also included an Alaskan Fish and Game person



(Elfin Cove has a main street on pilings.)

(Off the main street are side streets, or ramps, up to the various residences and businesses. →)

measuring fish and checking licenses. The Wild Blue crew got the fish bug yet again and launched the tender to fish the local points. Arch and Richard fished, Pat and Janet shopped, Dick, Harriett, Denny and Lori walked the town while Bill and Alex blogged. Arch and Richard returned with a big halibut. Then Alex and Richard started angling in an ocean filled with jumping bait fish. They caught about a dozen good-sized rockfish of unknown variety and returned them.





(← Arch lands yet another halibut. The Wild Blue is inundated with halibut so more is transferred to Seagate. It was time to start vacuum packing and freezing the fresh catch.)



(← Bait fish dominate the surface just off Elfin Cove at Georges Island.)



(← We caught about a dozen of these rockfish which we think are Greenlings. We returned them to the sea. Jay Field: Are these keepers?)

Anchored just outside Elfin Cove was the cruise ship *Spirit Of Alaska*. As you may recall, this was the ship that ran aground in Tracy Arm on June 4th. We were surprised to see it in service, ferrying passengers to and from Elfin Cove. Alex asked a smart-looking crew member on the dock for the details and received this exclusive “Alaska Blog Special Report”.

The unnamed crew reports “The ship ran aground while exiting Tracy Arm Cove. We had arrived on high tide the night before and anchored. We exited on low tide and ran across the



(← Spirit Of Alaska anchored just off Elfin Cove. You can see passengers being loaded into inflatable boats for a trip to the dock.)

safely negotiating the “S” curve channel at the entrance. The crewman continues “We called in the divers which reported the hull was damaged but intact. The rudder was stoved up 3 inches into the hull and bent 20 degrees. The ship wouldn’t turn. Then we called for the underwater welders, who repaired the boat sufficiently to allow us to make Juneau and unload passengers.” He said he graduated this past May from the Merchant Marine Academy in California and that this was his first week on the job! Then they steamed non-stop from Juneau to Seattle at a safe speed of 7 knots. The ship was immediately dry docked at Fisherman Terminal on Lake Union. Welders worked non-stop for two days of repair and then the ship immediately sailed back to Alaska and placed back in service.



(Wild Blue way of high-fiving. Actually the cousins are counting off the 25-foot chain markings as the anchor is lowered in Reid Inlet.)

(← Bill shows off one of the bigger halibuts of the week.)

Tomorrow we head to Hoonah for two days while we exchange crew. It’s been the best week of fishing yet. The water is warmer and the great fishing should continue.