

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Tuesday-Wednesday, July 22-23, 2008



On Tuesday, yet another sunny morning greets our fleet, which is now scattered north and south, up and down the Queen Charlottes. Seagate and Lady Anne are leaving from Sandspit Harbour, with full tanks, headed south to rendezvous with the Wild Blue in Rose Harbour.

(← Nadine and Cam enjoy fair weather on Lady Anne's open flybridge.)

It's an 80-mile run down the east side of Moresby Island. This outside route is

usually a bumpy ride but today the ocean is most cooperative with flat seas and just a bit of afternoon westerly swell.

*(Employing the bow approach, Norm on Seagate uses boathook to snake line through mooring.)*



Seagate leaves at 5AM and makes VHF radio contact with Wild Blue by 1PM and hooks up to the empty park mooring by 2PM. Lady Anne goes for a morning provisioning outing, leaving later, but her superior speed has the boat in Rose Harbour side-tied to Seagate by 3PM. Both boat crews have enjoyed light winds and a low, following sea on their lengthy cruise.

(← Lady Anne side-tied to Seagate in Rose Harbour.)



*(← As Seagate neared Rose Harbour, this humpback came by to say hello.)*



*(← Must be some great krill fishing going on down below.)*

Meanwhile, on the same sunny Tuesday on Wild Blue after pancakes and bacon, Pat and Alex take the tender on a 6-mile, high-speed cruise to Anthony Island and the Ninstints Haida village. The landing at the Island is a bit precarious on the strong, rising tide and



*(Remaining standing poles in Ninstints.)*

swell, and kelp clogged waters, so Pat volunteers to handle the tender while Alex takes the tour. Pat obviously makes this sacrifice to support the Alaska Blog reporting.

*(← Detail of two funeral poles. The decedents body was mummified and placed in a box at the top of the pole, where opening is in photo. If there was no body, i.e. lost at sea, you got a memorial pole instead.)*

The Village of Ninstints on Anthony Island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site representing the only example in the world of the remains of a traditional Northwest Coast First Nations village. The site contains standing poles and the remains of massive cedar long houses. Past human occupation is evident in the form of caves, midden sites, upright and fallen poles, house pits and standing longhouse poles and beams.



(← Poles were placed in front of the large family home, where 30-40 family members might live. Kind of an elaborate house decoration.)

The Haidas began trading with the Europeans in the late 1700s. Then in 1791 the ship Lady Washington captained by John Kendrick killed about 50 Haida in a trade dispute.

*(A detail close-up.)*

Then came four years of retaliation by the Haidas who captured or killed the crew, and took over several passing ships which stopped to trade. But the Europeans got even by inadvertently introducing small pox in 1863, causing the death near 20,000 first nations people, leaving just 500 Haidas.



(← Our guide discusses the finer points of this funeral pole.)

Ninstints was last occupied in 1878 before being left

to pilfering and decay. It was finally rescued by the efforts of Haida artist Bill Reid with several others in 1957, and later with the help of the Canadian government.

Just based on the handful of Canadians, who we know and come in contact, many believe the government has spent too much on First Nations people, on their tax-free status, on their labor preferential treatment and on their hunting/fishing privileges. Similar issues also occur in Alaska, Washington State, and to some extent California. More than once, we found this subject matter makes for a lively discussion with your average north westerner!

After an informative tour at Ninstints, Alex met Pat who was patiently tending the tender. The small boat was re-launched through the swell and Alex, with just two boots full of seawater, zoomed back to the mother ship where a cocktail party was held aboard Wild Blue celebrating the arrival of Lady Anne and Seagate.



Later that evening the Wild Blue crew visited Seagate for dinner. The crew set a colorful table with real “Seagate” China. Norm was in his element preparing his pasta a la carbonara, garlic flat bread, and fresh, warm spinach and avocado salad. Afterward, a competitive game of Left-Center-Right was enjoyed, especially by Harriett who won all rounds.

(← *The bar is open on Wild Blue.*)



(← *Seagate is prepared for Royalty with its custom China.*)

Wednesday started slightly overcast but turned into another sunny day. This time the Seagate and Lady Anne crews were ready to see the Ninstints village. Alex served as guide and with both crews spread between the fast tenders, we sped off towards the village. As yesterday, the swell and kelp made landing difficult so Alex tended the tenders while the rest toured.

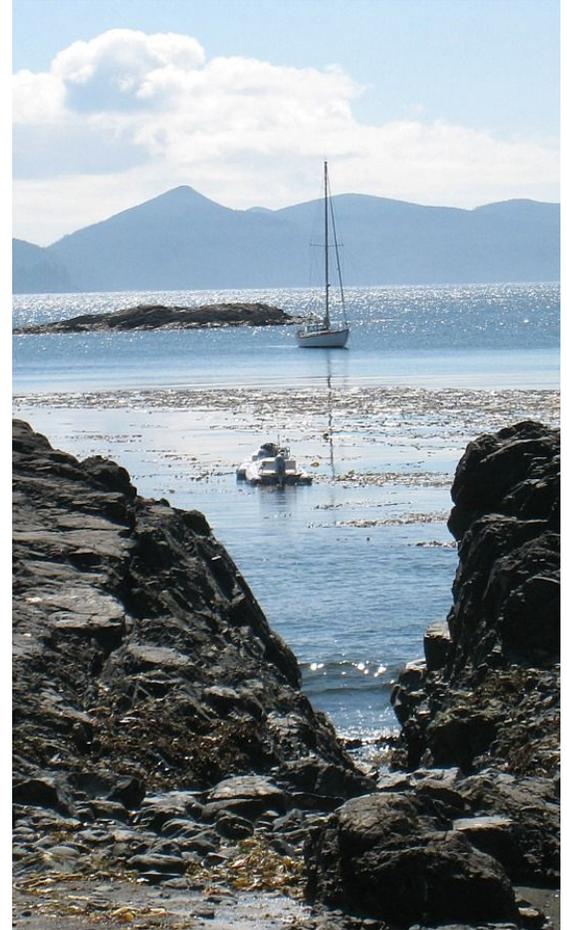


*(← Alex escorts Lady Anne crew Herb, Cam and Nadine to the Village.)*



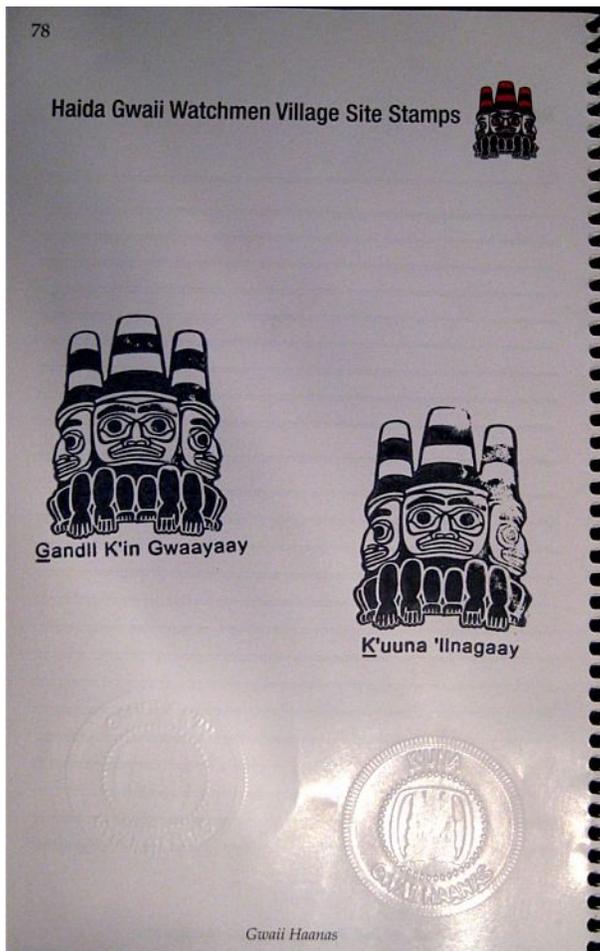
*(Not the best looking landing site, but this rugged crew was able to make a landing.)*

*(Chauffeur Alex tends the tenders. →)*



*(← In the still waters of evening, Seagate and Lady Anne look peaceful in Rose Harbour.)*

At the end of any Haida tour at any of the staffed Watchman locations, the guide offers to stamp and emboss your National Park Visitor Guidebook. This official action verifies that you visited the site.



(← A Visitor guidebook with two stamps with embossing.)

(Three-watchman logo is theme at each site.)



It's been a great visit to the Queen Charlotte Islands. We've learned quite a bit about the First Nations people and the area's history. Since the Islands are relatively remote, we most likely won't visit here again in our lifetime.

Tomorrow is one of the dreaded and "least popular" cruising days of the entire saga: a 98-mile open ocean crossing of southern Hecate Strait, from the Islands to the BC coastline. At 9 knots it will take 11 hours so we do plan to leave early, at the ungodly hour of 4AM. To make things a little dicier, Environment Canada has posted a gale warning for Hecate Strait tomorrow afternoon. We're hoping to be able to get some sleep. Good night.