

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Monday, Cinco de Mayo, 2008

The Seagate crew did a “Cinco de Mayo” provisioning check last night in Port Hardy: limes, cilantro, salt, margarita mix, and tequila. We’re ready for a Mexican celebration deep into Northern BC, just gotta get there first.



The lights on Wild Blue and Seagate came on at 4:00AM today along with the radio tuned to VHF weather. “West Sea Otter Buoy, winds 8 Knots SE, Seas 1.1.meters,” says the Canadian Coast Guard weather announcer.

(← Last islands before crossing the Queen Charlotte Sound)

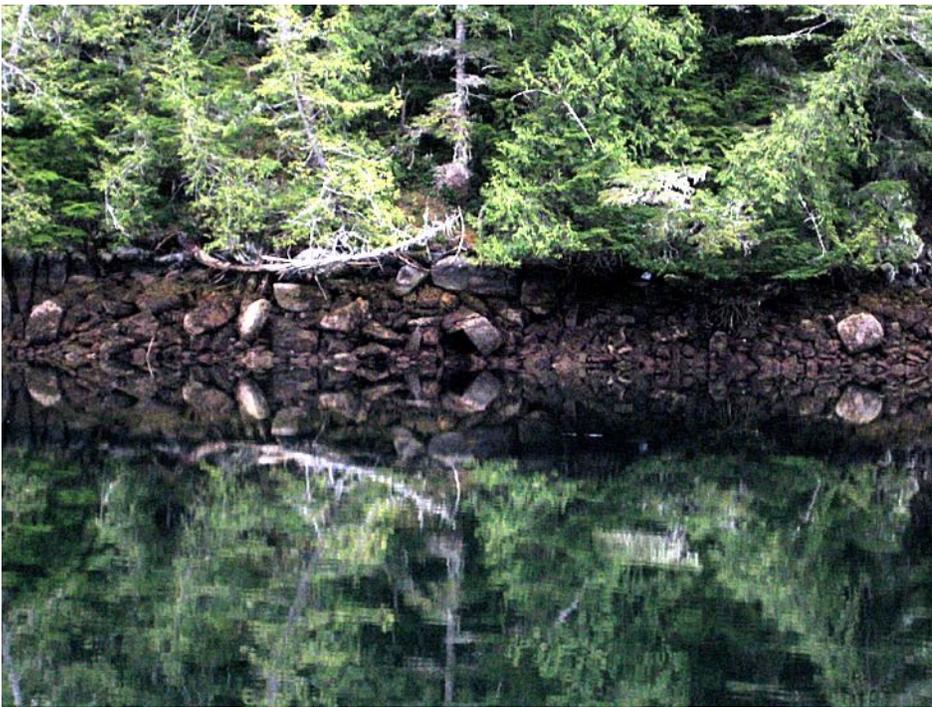
The rule of thumb is, if the 4AM weather report at the West Sea Otter Buoy indicates seas less than 1 meter, and wind less than 20 knots, then GO! At 5:30AM we did.

QC Strait was calm. No wind, flat seas. QC Sound, the 35-mile area above the tip of Vancouver Island that’s openly exposed to the Pacific was, we’ll say..... moderate. 3 to 6 foot seas at long intervals such that the active stabilizers, recently installed at great expense on Seagate and Wild Blue, were easily able to dampen the rolling motion of the swells.

Oh what a day! We easily cruised past Cape Caution, Egg Island lighthouse, Table Island, right up inside Calvert Island without any worries. In fact, progress was so good, we decided to bypass Fury Cove and continue up to Pruth Bay, a secure anchorage on northern Calvert Island. (Hey, just get on Google Maps and you can see the islands that we’re yaking about here!)

The only boats we saw all day were a tug towing two barges going north, a sailboat going south, and Tanu, a 150 foot Canadian Coast Guard ship cruising east out of Safety Cove on Calvert Island, that is until he saw us! Just when Tanu entered our 6-mile radar circle, he turned directly towards us! Dick on Seagate, called Wild Blue on VHF to point out that the Coast Guard is bearing directly towards us. Obviously he’s worried that the Coasties know of his Mexico arrest record! (Best to ask Dick about this in private, after several drinks). Anyway, we found out later, the CG checks all boat positions just in case they need to locate them in the future. Whew...relief!

At about 1PM we dropped anchor in Pruth Bay on Calvert Island after a 77-mile day. Just awesomely quiet with Seagate and Wild Blue the only boats around, until later when a small boat arrived.



(← *Calm waters of Pruth Bay, Calvert Island. The water reflections at the tide line turn into a chevron artwork.*)

The Seagate crew launched their tender and went ashore to investigate the “resort”. Willie and Walter on the Wild Blue had the need to “hunt and gather”, so the Wild Blue crew went fishing.

The resort is for fishing, sorry girls, no spa: just – 12 anglers, 12 cottages, 12 boats, 12 fishing guides and one great chef. It’s only open two months a year, July and August. Charter float place service in and out and quite expensive. The caretakers, two retired teachers, were quite friendly towards the Seagate crew. The crew enjoyed a nice walk to the west coast beach.

Willie’s fishing rule: you need to get to where the fish are. So we dinghy’d to a fishing spot a couple miles away, in the lee of a small island. After a solid hour, the fishing was mild, just five smallish rockfish. Willie began cleaning these back on Wild Blue, tossing the remains overboard. He dropped a line off the stern wedging the pole in a teak chair. Just then Seagate calls on the radio to invite all to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. “Oh s---“ hollers Willie, “Oh s---“ yells Pat from inside the salon as she watches her teak chair nearly sail overboard. Willie grabs the pole and chair and begins reeling in. He soon realizes he has a big fish and that the salmon

pole has light line, so he continues fighting with a loose break, hoping to wear the fish down before the line parts. It took awhile, and it took all of Walter, Alex and Pat to finally net the catch and drag it aboard.



(← *Willie fights while Walter stands ready to net*)

Thanks to Jay Field for completely outfitting both boats in quality fishing gear, to catch all sorts of saltwater creatures. (Also thank you Micki Field for getting Alex's passport on its way to the boat. It arrives May 8th with the next crew.)

(Finally, the happy hunter shows off his prize. A halibut, 48 inches in length, weight unknown, caught off the stern of Wild Blue while anchored →)

After that, all enjoyed multiple margaritas compliments of the Seagate crew, then the task of cleaning and packing halibut began. Another friend, Gerard Ages, suggested we get a vacuum-bagging appliance. Thanks, Gerard, we're putting it to good use.



(← Same fish, fillets removed.)

(Foodsaver vacuum-bagged fillets of halibut. No worries, a large portion is waiting for future crews in Wild Blue's freezer →)

