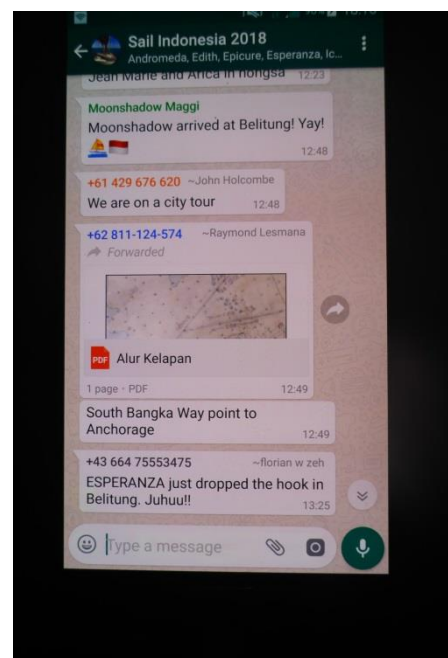


Sail Indonesia

We, Allure and the crew Edith and Patrick 2 Swiss, decided to sail through Indonesia with a Rally, with Sail Indonesia. There are 2 Rally's to choose from, the one we picked sails from Darwin. And the other group started from Cairns and sailed further north in Indonesia. Well at first we thought bad decision going further north lets you see more. But then again good decision we had to sail less and thus had more time. And yes time is a constraint. Everywhere there was just not enough time. Simply everywhere it was lovely and we could have dwelled longer. Even so we spent 3 month in Indonesia it was be fare not enough for this lovely country.



Why did we choose to join a Rally? We thought it might be easier to sail through Indonesia with a Rally. And yes it made it easy. Could it have been done without a Rally? I guess yes but one probably spends more time with officials, which with the Rally is no topic. Registering and clearing out in the country is a fib and wherever we went if we had to do with officials it was first of all a welcome and very little official. And other advantage we only learned during the time with the participants is the flow of info. We set up a big WhatsApp group and everybody was just adding what he/she thought necessary. Like this we always knew what was happening where, where is the best anchorage, where is it dangerous, where can you shop and much more. Simply, we knew what 50 other sailors new.



We don't have to describe the tour, you can look up in the internet. Whatever chosen by the Rally organizers, it is worthwhile a visit. We went to most places according the itinerary. But left out some places simply because we did not want to move that fast. And every time we missed out we felt sorry, because we missed out. And what we are absolutely certain. Travelling by yourself you will not see as much of the culture nor experience that much of the Indonesian people. Now if you think it is set up for the participants you guess wrong. Yes some events are for us and yes the people are there because of us. But sometimes we just pitched up some place by ourselves and we found the same welcome, the same smiles the same welcome mister. And out of the 9999 selfies, 4423 happened outside of the Rally functions.



So, what you could experience alone or with the rally is the kindness and willingness to help of the Indonesian people. But what you could not experience is the contact to the officials. I am not talking of customs, immigration, I am talking of the local Marie, the ministers and counsellors. And often we met their wives or children. And we could talk to them. Now English is a bit a problem. Our Indonesian is non-existent and few Indonesian master English. Most of the officials spoke quite well English so you could have a conversation thus get some ideas about the daily live of the Indonesians. Actually many of the younger generation mastered a basic English. And many were not too shy to use their knowledge. So all together we had often talks and lots of fun.

In Australia, Darwin, where we joined the Rally, we were briefed of how things work in Indonesia. And we were forewarned that things would not go straight. Well I can only say thing went smooth and easy. Not like a Swiss masterplan but quite efficient and seldom more than 1 hour behind schedule. In fact, often it was due to the participants individual wishes that the return time from a tour was delayed. The organizers went out of their way to let us have it our way. A stop here and a quick shopping there presented never any problem for our organizers and the chauffeur. From other rallies we gathered that the flow of information was suboptimal and often a guess where the final

anchorage was to be or which was the safest course to sail. Again we experienced nothing the like. Information given, AIS and WhatsApp left no doubt about the course to sail, dangerous points and final anchorage. In fact if you trust you GPS you could sail at night. We don't trust the GPS and we like to know what we are doing so for us it was mostly day sailing. And the FAD's, unlit fisher and strange contraption encountered while sailing made it clear to us that night sailing had to be kept to a minimum. Only shipping lanes allowed more or less safe sailing in the dark. Sometimes we arrived just after dusk. And then we were given plenty advise from sailors arriving earlier.



Here one strange contraption. And they were aplenty. No passing this place at night.

Raymont the Indonesian organizer of both Rallies was always at hand with good advise. Advise for sailing as well as advise of what and where locally. We found him at almost every major anchorage. So we can only say that we never felt lost during the rally. Obviously if one has never sailed offshore than yes one might be inclined to think that a bit more information would be helpful. But then again do like some others did sail with a buddy. Whatever the case whether neither rally organization nor your sailing buddy can take the responsibility off your shoulders. You must always remain the vigilant skipper. And vigilance is necessary in Indonesian waters. Although beautiful to sail there is danger aplenty. We encountered occasionally some squalls with wind around 30 kn. We encountered counter current which made the planning difficult. The charts for Indonesia are inaccurate to say the least. Just as an advise with respect to charts, best use satellite pictures which at least show the land mass accurate. And we already mentioned the fisher boats, the unlit nets, FAD's and other contraptions. Undoubtedly, sailing through the Indonesian archipelago is demanding and rewarding.

To summarize our experience with the Rally, we have spent the dollar for the costs of the Rally well. We have been given in monetary value as well in other values far more than we spent. The organization made the life easy for us. The Indonesian people we learned to know as well as their culture and their food all values we could greatly benefit through Sail Indonesia. So if you have the chance to visit this country either with the rally or by yourself, as a sailor or as a land lubber. And if you would like to know which of the many island, which region, are best, then we cannot be much of assistance. If we would have to advise you, visit them all, spend more time than we have. We think that some regions like Timor are less touristic and more authentic. The same goes for some of the smaller Islands off the beaten track. West Flores or Bali are more touristic and accordingly offer more possibilities especially if you travel over land. Sailors have the advantage to choose any island. By the way people were may be a touch less friendly in the touristic places, the remoter the island the more we found the Indonesian lovable.





Edith and Patrick from SV Allure October 2018