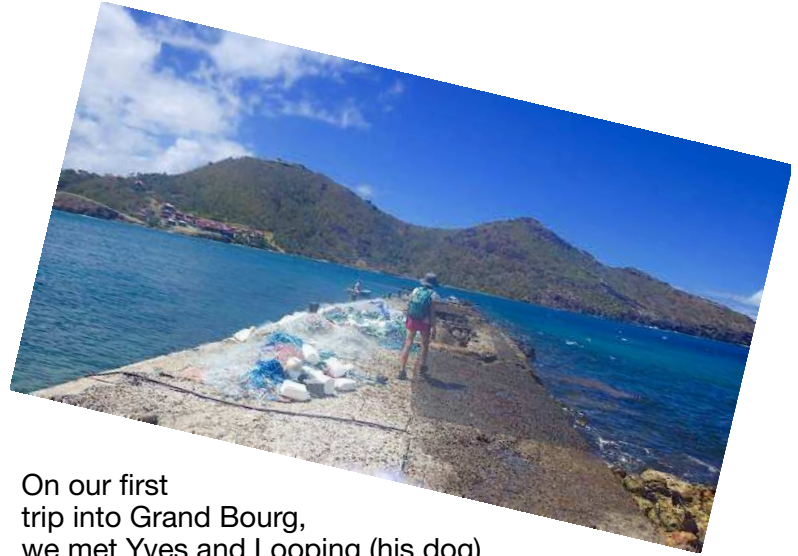


17 February 2019
Les Saintes, Terre-de-Haut

We arrived in la baie du Marigot to find our friends Antonio and Corinne on 'Forever' all alone in the bay. We anchored so close that they had to move....
Actually they had already decided to move further inside the bay because the wind was going to strengthen and change direction.



On our first trip into Grand Bourg, we met Yves and Looping (his dog) who we'd first met in the Canary Islands 4 years ago. He was just thinking that he recognised that yellow boat out there in the bay. We made a date with Yves to join him for a night hike, starting at 17.30 and heading to Pointe Morel, where we will see the sun set in the west and the full moon rise almost simultaneously in the east. We persuaded Antonio and Corinne to come along too, so we were a regular crowd. Rossana bravely came along having broken her shoe and tied the sole back together with string. Yves knows all the Saintes' hiking trails like the back of his hand, so we had the best guide. I was glad I'd brought my walking sticks as the terrain was steep and rocky at times and quite tricky when it got dark.



The Saintes Islands are picture perfect post cards, incredibly pretty. The volcanic archipelago, fully surrounded by shallow reefs, was a French colony from the mid 1600's, twice occupied by the English for a brief and then not so brief period in the 1700's to return to France in 1814.

Grand Bourg



Now it is an overseas department of France, part of Guadeloupe. The islands are not very big having a total area of 12.8 square km. The largest islands are Terre-de-Bas and Terre-de-Haut, also the only inhabited islands with a total population of around 3,000.

Christopher Columbus discovered the islands in 1493 and named them after All Saints day, which had just passed.

The Spanish soon abandoned Les Saintes as the islands have no precious metals or minerals.

Two views of the Baie de Pompierre



Rossana and I were so inspired with our night excursion that we decided, at Yves suggestion, to hike up to the highest point on Terre-de-Haut, Le Chateau the following afternoon. We timed it so we'd arrive at the 306 metre summit at sunset and just made it in time...



Kevin, the young man we met at the bottom, had told us it would take us about 20 minutes to get to the top.... It was a very steep climb.

It actually took us an hour or so...



In time to catch the sunset behind Terre-de-Bas



Triumphant!



The magnificent view over Grand Bourg



On the way down the winding road to town, up comes the full moon. Wow!





Up to Fort Napoléon for more fabulous views - that's Le Chameau over there!



Yves hasn't seen the last of us yet -now to Anse Rodrigue



Spot the giant lizards, they are well camouflaged. There are at least 4 in the picture! If it hadn't been for Yves we'd never have seen them.



Grand Anse where Looping is having fun trying to catch the kite surfer, without much success.





The lazy cemetery guards have a good life. Luckily Looping didn't see them...

The sundown view over to Grand Anse



and over Grand Bourg.



Rossana has been watching chickens run loose around the island with her mouth watering. She's suffering from withdrawal symptoms as we've become more and more loath to eat meat lately. We still eat fish, but have so far missed the fishermen here in Les Saintes. So tonight we've decided to find a nice local chicken and Rossana is cooking Pollo alla Cacciatore, Yves and Looping are guests of honour. We thought it would be easy to buy a local chicken, but French hygiene laws prevent the local butcher from being able to sell local meat and our 'local' chicken came all the way from France! Madness. Rossana's pollo alla cacciatore was delicious, a huge success!



Antonio and Corinne have left for La Basse Terre, Guadeloupe. They are anchored in Bouillante, where there is a hot volcanic river which is tapped for its energy at the geo-thermal power station. The water is then let out into the sea in a very fast flowing surge, at around 40 degrees centigrade. We are planning to join them tomorrow. I have realised that I have no photos of Antonio and Corinne, but I have Corinne alone from our hike in Martinique.



Bouillante turns out to be a tricky anchorage, the holding is not too good and these days without wind the boats are said to wander all over the place at night and meet each other....

We moved far away from everyone and were okay but it's true that later on we ended up much closer to our neighbours than we had expected... strange phenomena.

The hot bath in the sea experience was exhilarating, very strong current and almost too hot! Antonio and Corinne invited us for dinner, so Rossana and I went into town to find some inspiration for starters. Grocery shopping in Bouillante is very limited, but we found a nice melon and some Parma ham.

Now we're moving to Pigeon Island, just a few miles further north and home to the Jacques Cousteau reserve, which promises some good snorkelling. It's another tricky anchorage but we think we've found a good spot.

Our good spot turned out to be not so good because at dawn we were far too close for comfort to a very heavy American boat. Luckily we were awake and able to get the fenders out in time...



Next morning we took the dinghy to Pigeon island, the snorkelling area. After a colourful start with hundreds of bright blue/purple fish all around us we were a little bit disappointed. The coral is not looking in very good shape. However, there are lots of different types of parrot fish (eating it!). The sky was clouding over and the wind getting up...it's COLD! Time to get back to the boat.

The camera was not charged so no photos... Later we snorkelled along the side of the anchorage where the coral is in good condition- and there are lots of Blue tangs-





February 23

So its Rossana's last day and we're going on a hike to Point Malendure. We got to Anse feuillard and had our picnic lunch.



It was hot and muggy and not much of a view through the dry forest so we decided to head back to malendure beach for a nice refreshing drink.

The bananaquits seem to like our neighbour's cocktail-



Our favourite young French couple, Mikael and Aurore have arrived at the anchorage. We first met them in Gambia in 2015 and have met again in Martinique, Grenada and Carriacou. They are artists and organise a boat 'circus'. Mikael (actually an architect), is all excited with his new job as a 'virtual reality' cameraman and tomorrow he's going to show us what that means. By his description it sounds exciting!

Rossana has organised a taxi for tomorrow morning to the airport, with a stop in Pointe a Pitre to do some shopping.
So, buon viaggio Rossana and we hope you've enjoyed your stay on our cramped little boat!

