

## Cruise Report

### Four Winds Marine QCYC Cruise

Apollo Bay, Apollo Bay and more Apollo Bay, 1 to 7 March 2009

### Ventura

Skipper: Jonathan Crockett

Crew: Sandra Crockett

Following Victoria's disastrous fires which included a fire burning out most of the northern part of Wilsons Promontory, it was no longer appropriate for the fleet to sail the planned route to Wilson's Promontory, Port Welshpool and Corner Inlet. Thus, the Cruise Director altered the plan to sail west to Apollo Bay and possibly then on to Port Fairy and/or King Island. In fact penalties for approaching Wilsons Promontory by sea were likely and smoke was reported to cover much of the area.

After a briefing at the club at 17:30 on Saturday 1 March we woke at 04:00 on Sunday and Darryl Morrison, Cruise Director called the fleet of 8 yachts with information on shipping and safety at 04:45. The fleet departed around 05:30 and cleared the heads by around 06:30.

The forecast was for 10-15 knot SW to SSW winds and a SW swell. The Swell proved to be significant and lumpy and wind was probably closer to 15 knot most of the trip to Apollo Bay. Hence all found it an uncomfortable trip and, whilst sails provided some power, most yachts motor-sailed in order to point high enough to make the necessary course. It took Ventura until 18:15 to tie up at Apollo Bay, a total of 12 ¾ hr. The crew turned in early.



Evening in Apollo Bay Harbour after the storm. Sapphire of London and Tiercel on the left.

Monday was fine and warm and Karisma left very early for Port Fairy. The wind was easterly. The rest of the fleet decided to rest in Apollo Bay and await a suitable day for venturing further. The forecast of a hot strong (55 knot) northerly on Tuesday morning to be followed by an unusually vigorous SW change also up to 55 knot, with combined sea and swell of 6 m, was not encouraging. Mooring lines were strengthened in anticipation of the strong winds and swell.

Fortunately the storm passed without incident but a Canadian Yacht, Falcon GT, arrived to take shelter and was greeted by customs. She had almost succeeded in making a non-stop trip from Capetown to Melbourne. Later in the week we heard the skipper of this yacht talking to ABC 774 about the trip as they made their way up from the heads. He was an Australian who had worked for many years in Canada for Ford and had worked on the Falcon GT design (hence the name of the yacht) whilst there. He was re-enacting a voyage by his grandfather from New York to Melbourne.

A booking was made for Tuesday evening at Cafe 153 for 18:00. It was a cold, drizzly evening but most

of the crews were kindly ferried by a local friend of a crew-member from Kinsale. The rain was welcome and the evening was a pleasant one. The Deputy Cruise Director, Malcolm Billings, presented the Cruise Director with an impressive book on famous yachts in recognition of his great effort in organising cruises.

Wednesday and Thursday came and went with strong winds and no prospects of leaving safely. Darryl organised evening get-togethers at the local golf club and showers at the surf life saving club.

By this time all had decided that sailing further west or east was out of the question as the first likely suitable weather was on Friday and time was running out. In the end all made their own decision on when to return to Queenscliff to get the best combination of wind, swell and tides. Gangajang and Nantucket left on Friday morning and had a fairly light wind. Tiercel and Extravagance III made a late decision to depart on Friday evening. Sapphire of London and Kinsale departed on Saturday morning and Ventura made a last minute decision to leave on Saturday midday, despite wind of around 20 knot, because of a forecast increase in the SW swell on Sunday.



Tiercel, Sapphire of London and Kinsale. Friday 6/3/09.

The trip back was fast, Ventura averaged around 6 knots when sailing before the wind with one reef in the main plus a jib and inner foresail. The mizzen was left furled. With the sea on the starboard quarter it was hard work on the tiller to keep a course and avoid broaching. It was also reassuring as we approached the heads to hear the pilot boat and a ship discussing what the “target” to the south west was doing. We assume they picked us up on their radar and could see our masthead light (we were motoring by this time) but could not initially see our lower port and starboard lights. We were back on our mooring by midnight.

Overall, whilst the sailing was limited, there were useful lessons learned. We also enjoyed some good conversations, walks and even a swim. We are not planning another visit by sea (or land) to Apollo Bay immediately though.



And so farewell to Cape Patton . The speedy return to Queenscliff on Saturday Afternoon, 7/3/09

#### ***Mistakes we made:***

- Leaving Apollo Bay harbour without checking the tide, then drifting off the leads due to tidal flow, then bouncing several times and at alarming angles on the sand bank to the west of the entrance. It really is very shallow here. People fishing were entertained and for a minute or so the skipper saw visions of Ventura bouncing on the sea wall with her keel broken off. We were lucky that the incoming waves had subsided to half a metre.
- Trying to set the cruising spinnaker with up to 20 knots of WSW wind almost on our tail. It was fun for a couple of minutes roaring in on a port tack towards Skenes Creek but the attempt at a gybe to clear Cape Patton did not come off. Skipper did his block at crew during the recovery of the slightly torn spinnaker and there was a long silence in the cockpit for the next hour or so.
- Dropping all sail and slowing down below 7 knots when 5 nm from the heads. We thought that if we arrived before 23:00, the flood tide (slack due at around 24:00) would still be too fast. We instead motored at 2 to 3 knots with the sea dead on our beam. Crew became queasy at this stage. In the event we entered the heads at about 23:00 with the flood still running and had a pretty smooth entry.

#### ***Some good decisions:***

- Keeping the motor on all the way down to Apollo Bay. It made Ventura look as though she was keeping up with the modern yachts.

- Double checking that I had entered way points correctly and that these were correctly marked on the chart.
- Cutting plenty of sandwiches and slices of cake and filling a flask before departure on both legs. The skipper ate most of these due to the increasingly delicate condition of crew's insides as each leg progressed.
- Following a slightly longer course back to Queenscliff generally only 2 nm off shore so we could see the coastline.



Ventura making 7 knots with one reef in the main (note the log indication). Off Aireys Inlet. Saturday 7/3/09.

- Sailing back and reefing at appropriate times. It was a good fast sail even though uncomfortable with the wind nearly behind us and a swell usually on the starboard quarter.
- Picking up our mooring in Queenscliff on arrival at 24:00. It is a lot easier than getting out all those mooring lines and fenders for one thing and we may not have been too popular with the sleeping crew on the yachts on the wharf as we bumped alongside and made noises with our mooring lines.

### Some Trip Statistics:

	Queenscliff to Apollo Bay	Apollo Bay to Queenscliff
<b>Distance on the chart</b>	55 nm	57 nm
<b>Distance Logged</b>	64.9 nm	56.8 nm
<b>Hours:Minutes Under Way</b>	12:45	11:35
<b>Average Speed</b>	4.3 knots	4.9 knots
<b>Average Apparent Current</b>	0.78 knots easterly	Approximately Zero
<b>Motor Hours</b>	12.0	5.4
<b>Fuel Used</b>	25 to 30 L (1.3 to 1.6 L/hr)	
<b>Leakage Rates on Completion of Leg (Ventura was built c1940 and suffers from some movement in seams)</b>	900 L/d (0.5 hr/day of bilge pump operation) (at this rate we would sink in around 6 days without the bilge pumps)	450 L/d (0.25 hr/d of bilge pump operation) (This reduced to 90 L/d or 0.05 hr/d one week later as seams took up the movement)