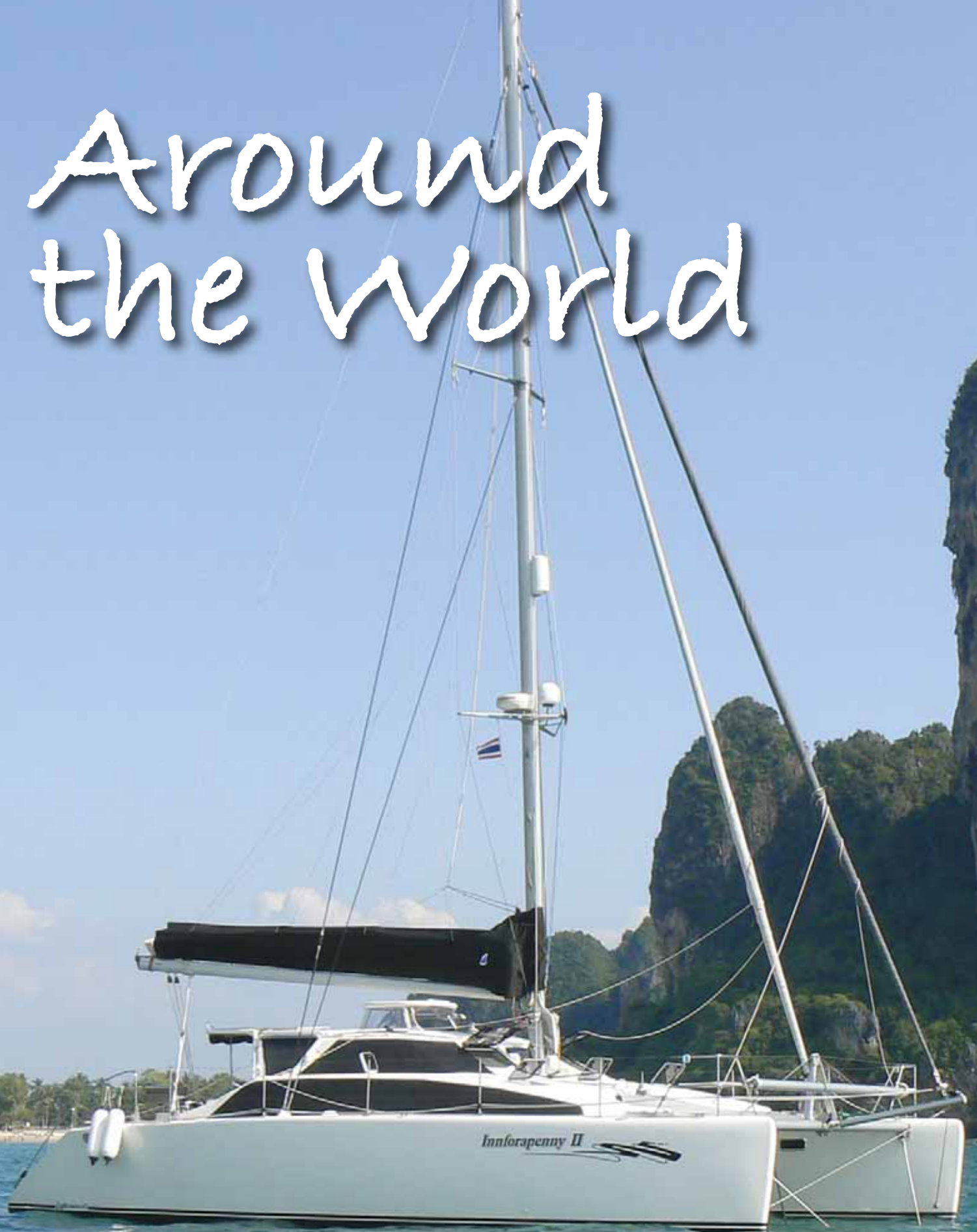


# Around the World



Peter and Penny Faulkner, LW45

*Innforapenny II*

Part one

■ by PETER FAULKNER

The dream was always to sail around the world and although I have had some experience coastal sailing along the east coast of Australia and in Western Europe the thought of a circumnavigation was a little daunting. On discovering that you could join an around the world rally it all seem so much easier, with it support network, established routes and stopovers and always knowing there was someone reasonable close by to help if required.

**T**HE RALLY is a bi annual event that is organised by an UK company Blue Water Rallies.

The sixth world rally started from Gibraltar in October 2005 and proceeded across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal and into the Pacific. Visiting Galapagos, Marquesas, Tahiti and the Society Islands, Tonga and Fiji before arriving in Cairns in August 2006 where we joined the rally to complete the second half of the circumnavigation with them.

On arrival in Australia there were 25 boats ranging in size and type. Hallberg Rassy was well represented from the smallest boat in the fleet, a Hallberg Rassy 352, to the largest a Hallberg Rassy 62, owned and skippered by the boat builder himself Christoph Rassy. The average length of the boats was 14.5m and in the case of the multi hulls there were three – a Catana 15.7m, Outremer 45 and a French designed steel constructed 13.7m catamaran.

Joining in Cairns and Darwin for the OZ-Med part of the Rally were three other boats – Dave and Jenny from Sydney in a Taswell 17.8m, Richard and Nancy from the USA in a Shearwater 39 and of course ourselves in our Lightwave 45.

The first part of the journey from Cairns to Darwin was reasonably straight forward, mainly because we had the security of still being in Australian

waters. The sailing was excellent with the strong south-easterly winds pushing us quickly up to Cape York and around to Darwin.

At the beginning of October we left Australian waters and headed for Indonesia, checking in at Kupang at the bottom of West Timor. There wasn't a breath of wind for the 500 mile trip and we had to motor all the way. This tended to set the pattern for our sailing or lack of until we got to Phuket in Thailand. Due to the difficulty in getting good diesel in Indonesia, the biggest problem for the fleet was carrying enough fuel. It often involved taking your 20lt cans to a local village and getting them filled up from the local service station. Fortunately with our 1200 litre fuel capacity and excellent fuel economy there was little problem. I think we were the only boat in the entire fleet that didn't carry extra fuel cans or had to fuel up between Darwin and Bali.

*"We  
cannot  
discover  
new oceans  
unless we  
have the  
courage to  
lose sight of  
the shore"*

Large container ship passing us in the Suez Canal.







Some of the rally crew in Egypt.

Even though the sailing was very ordinary we had a wonderful time exploring the islands of Indonesia. We visited the Spice Islands, Bali, Lombok, we saw the Komodo dragons in Rinca and the Orang Utangs in Borneo. Finally after two months it was good to get some good western R and R in Singapore, before heading up the Malacca Straights to Langkawi and Thailand for Christmas.

We had a lovely time exploring the islands off Phuket and certainly Malaysia and Thailand are two places worth coming back to visit. Anyway on January 2 we finally said goodbye to Thailand and headed for Sri Lanka. Here we experienced our best sailing to date the 1100 miles were done in less than six days. We could have done it in five, but we had to slow down as we didn't want to arrive in the middle of the night at

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Gale harbour. Most days we were achieving 200 Plus miles. During one period we managed to keep the cruising spinnaker flying for 48 hours, doing eight to nine knots on a broad beam reach with 12kts of breeze – fantastic sailing.

After spending three weeks exploring Sri Lanka we were off again for some more exhilarating sailing heading 1000 miles to the Maldives. Here we spent our time exploring the two atolls north and south of Mele, where we experienced some excellent diving and first class tourist resorts.

The next part of the journey to the Gulf of Aden and the start of the Red Sea was the most daunting. The waters between Somalia and Aden are known as Pirate Alley and in recent years there have been several reported attacks on cruising boats. The rally organised us into groups, relating to speed, of five to six boats and each group met at a pre determined point about 1000 miles from Djibouti, our port of entry and traveled in convoy maintaining strict radio contact and only communicating by sat phone. Fortunately all the rally boats got through unscathed although one of the groups did experience an incident that could have easily turned nasty when the slowest boat in the group was buzzed by a group of unfriendly men in a fast RIB,

but luckily the coalition navy was at hand who intervened and saved the day.

The Red Sea is 1400 miles long, but only 200 miles wide and the prevailing wind are north westerly. This tends to give rise to disproportionate steep seas. Added to that the occasional sand storm, an extremely busy seaway and being surrounded by politically volatile countries it certainly doesn't make for hassle free sailing. The first part went well with the southerly winds holding until we got to Sudan and then the northerlies kicked in and blew constantly for weeks. Your options are either to shelter in the Marsas, natural bays along the coast formed by sand spits, or bash straight into it. After 10 days sheltering we decided to take the later approach. Here the Lightwave seem to perform better than most as we pulled the sails down and motored straight into it. Although uncomfortable we seem to get to Port Ghalib in Egypt a lot quicker than the mono's who had to motor sail all the way and spend a couple of extra nights out in the trying conditions.

We stayed in Egypt for four weeks, visiting the Nile Valley and of course the pyramids in Cairo and then headed for Suez and then the Mediterranean. After a

The southern part of Red Sea with a 25kt southerly behind; we are just north of the Hamish islands.



## Large international entry for 2007-9 Round the World Cruising Rally



**F**OLLOWING the successful return of their 2005 Rally in June Blue Water Rallies announce the departure of the 2007-09 Round the World Cruising Rally from Marina Bay, Gibraltar on October 28. This is the seventh Blue Water Rally to start at Gibraltar and will be organised in partnership with Yachting Monthly Magazine.

This year the Blue Water Rally will be combined with their annual Rally Antigua, which crosses from Gibraltar to the Caribbean. Although Rally Antigua yachts will bid farewell and stay on in the Caribbean, more Blue Water Rally yachts will join there with the 34-yacht fleet being swelled even further by yachts joining in Australia to sail with the Rally back to the Mediterranean, arriving there in April 2009.

The Rallies are family-orientated and several young children are taking part. This year the youngest crew member in the fleet is three-year old Holly Padfield, who is sailing with her parents Paul and Morag on their yacht *Aqua Libra*. The oldest of the children are Bradley (12) and Elena (10) Cage who are sailing round the world with their parents, Jeremy and Pat, on their 42ft catamaran, *Hakuna Matata*. (As testimony to its family-friendly ethos the Blue Water Rally scored a 'first' in 2001 when participants John and Sara Coxon returned to Gibraltar with their new baby, Harry, who was born in Fiji on the way round the world!)

The Blue Water Rally and Rally Antigua also enjoy a truly international status and have this year attracted yachts from nine countries – UK, USA, Australia, Denmark, Holland, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden. Yachts range in length from a Rival 36 to an Aluboot 65, with the average around 40ft and there are three catamarans taking part.

Blue Water Rallies also organise their annual Yachting Monthly Biscay Triangle. Details of all their events, photographs and stories from the Rallies can be found on the Blue Water Rallies' website ([www.yachtrallies.co.uk](http://www.yachtrallies.co.uk)), which is proving to be one of the most popular sites of its type anywhere in the world.





Catching up in Thailand with Terry and Jan, Lightwave 38' Ridgee Didge.

## Oz-Med Rally 2008 Mackay Marina

**R**ALLY organisers, Blue Water Rallies, announce Mackay Marina as a new stopover for their Blue Water Round the World Cruising Rally 2007-9 and start point for the Oz-Med Rally 2008.

Although the Rally has enjoyed a long association with Cairns and the Yorkeys Knob Boating Club for their previous six world rallies, Blue Water Rallies have looked for the opportunity to extend their cruising itinerary in Australia to include the Whitsunday Islands. In August 2008 the Rally will now enter Australian waters at Mackay Marina, thus enabling the Rally fleet to visit the Whitsundays before cruising north towards Cairns and Darwin.

This change will also create a new start point for the Oz-Med Rally, which will form part of the 35-yacht Rally fleet drawn from nine nations as it sails for the rest of its circumnavigation to the Mediterranean. As in previous years the Oz-Med Rally has attracted considerable interest from cruising sailors 'Downunder' and several entries are expected to join at Mackay, or later in Darwin.

Rally Director, Peter Seymour, comments, "We are sure that our participants will enjoy starting their Australian cruise in the outstanding setting of Mackay Marina and will benefit from the wide range of shoreside facilities available, which include a boatyard for halfway refits. Mackay City and its Marina have already expressed a warm welcome to the Rally participants and we look forward very much to our first visit when we arrive 'Downunder' in August 2008."

Further details from the Blue Water Rallies' website [www.bluewaterallies.com](http://www.bluewaterallies.com)

brief diversion due to weather, we headed for Israel. We finally arrived in Crete for the Greek Orthodox Easter and the many organised parties put on by the rally.

We decided against going to Gibraltar the final port of the rally and headed for the cruising grounds of Greece and Turkey instead. We intend to spend two years in the Mediterranean before picking up the next world rally to complete the circumnavigation.

During the whole 10 months we were away, we didn't experience any winds greater than 35kts except for a couple of gust to 40kts. Probably worst conditions we experienced were in the Red Sea and then in the Mediterranean during the first week of April. I'm not saying it was all plane sailing as we did have our stressful moments. Probably to the worst was hitting a fishing net in the middle of the Indian Ocean during a very dark night, but fortunately we were saved by our son Richard who was with us at the time who donned the scuba gear and dived to free the propeller.

The biggest problem with all the rally boats has to be equipment failure, which happened, at one time or other to all the boats. It only becomes major if you haven't got the spares or the know how to fix it. This is where the rally came into its own as there was always some one within the group who you could turn

too. Many a time a dangerous situation was diverted with the intervention of another rally boat.

All in all the Lightwave performed magnificently and was an ideal boat for this type of tropical cruising. Although I'm a little bias, I felt the multihull was a much better choice for long term cruising it has more useable cockpit space, which gives a safe and secure platform for long passages and an excellent party platform when in port. Better accommodation layout and of course in most cases better performance. The Lightwave was one of the fastest boats in the fleet and with our large fuel tanks gave us a motoring range of over 1500 miles. I think a lot of the die hard mono sailors on the trip are now seriously considering changing camps.

We are often asked what the best part of the trip to date has been – which is difficult to answer as each place was so different. Probably we will remember Sri Lanka for its friendly people, Maldives for the diving, Malaysia and Singapore for the food, Borneo for the trip up into the jungle – but the thing that both Penny and I will remember is the amazing group of people we met on the rally and fun and fellowship with them over the 10 months we were together and the life long friendships that we have made.

I would certainly recommend the rally to any one as I pointed out at the farewell dinner in Crete "without the rally we would never have had left Australia".

You can follow Peter and Penny's travels at the CRUISING LOG on [www.lightwaveyachts.com](http://www.lightwaveyachts.com)



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