

Sunday, December 10, 2000
San Diego to Puerto Vallarta

Endless hours of motoring mark our passage from San Diego to Puerto Vallarta. We have spent day after day on flat water begging for a breeze. For the first few days any whiff of wind was an excuse to hoist the sails, but our fully battened main hates the light stuff. We searched for a configuration that would give us some stability and lessen the rock and roll of our "powerboat". We never did find it. The mizzen helped a bit but we had to give up on the main as a steadying sail. It flogged so violently in the absence of air that it sent little plastic sail slides skittering across the deck much to Sean's chagrin. Sean had initially vetoed the main because of the flogging but Jessica and I were so green and seasick that I had insisted on something to smooth the motion so up went the main and now we have broken sail slides everywhere so we can't sail even if the wind does come up. Sean is understandably a bit perturbed. We have to replace them and we do have spares onboard but it is a job best done at the dock and no one is exactly volunteering to fix them at sea.

We spent the eight day passage from San Diego to Puerto Vallarta reading, knot tying, star gazing, eating, drinking and day dreaming. It was a very laid back crew and except for the lack of wind we had few complaints. The complaints we did have though proved to be major. The engine was still unhappy and its performance was worrisome. We had started out running at 1800rpm but found ourselves constantly adjusting the rpm down because the engine was running hot. Clearly something is wrong with the engine and we all breathe a little sigh of relief when we finally dock in Marina Vallarta, Puerto Vallarta. We have been listening to the drone of the engine for so long that when we finally tie up and shut down the silence seems surreal, unnatural. Jessica, Ted and Mike tidy up the boat while Sean goes looking for the Port Captain to begin the laborious Mexican check-in process. After docking and going to check in with customs and immigration we fork over the first of what would be many \$100 bills for some bureaucratic bullshit and you know that you are in Mexico, "the land of check in and get gouged at every port". We have always liked Mexico, but after you cruise there awhile the BS just gets a bit overwhelming. The crooked customs officials, the ever changing rules, the countless hands outstretched waiting to be bribed. Most countries you check in to the first port you encounter and you're good to go. Some countries, like the BVI also require you to check out before you leave but most don't. Mexico though requires you to check in at every port you visit in the country!

I head below to pack for the plane I'll catch in a few hours. I am headed back to California to pick up Cole and McClain and the forty zillion other things we apparently forgot, already drank, already ate, can't live without or might need someday. Packing takes on a whole new meaning. I leave the boat with basically empty duffel bags rolled up inside one big duffel on wheels and return one week later laden with three duffel bags bursting at the seams accompanied by six boxes of wine, books, parts, clothes, food, half of a beauty supply shop and two children.