



## "A Sailor's Perspective On The Family Islands"



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By Donald Walsh—  
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**W**HERE IN THE WORLD? . . .  
. . . Can you rent a car at the airport on a handshake?  
ANSWER: Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera.

On a recent visit to meet with John Spencer of Eleuthera Bahamas Charters in Hatchet Bay, I was recommended to Dewitt Johnson for a rental car. On arrival the first person I inquired of as to the whereabouts of Dewitt Johnson just happened to be Dewitt himself. I asked about a car for a day and he disappeared momentarily and returned with a black 1987 Buick complete with AC, power windows and a 1/2 tank of gas.

When I questioned Dewitt about the rental contract, he responded with "No Mon, Jus' Keep Lef' and I see you in the morning". While he did later check with John at EBC in Hatchet Bay to ask what my name was, the obligation I assumed with this type of Bahamian trust was far greater than the legion of clauses, provisos, stipulations and other barely-comprehensible language of a standard car rental agreement. Welcome to the Family Islands!

### Island Flavor Enhanced By Bahamian Charm

This vignette is only one example of the nature of the Family Islands of The Bahamas and it just happened to be Eleuthera. Boaters in their quest to explore ever more remote areas, and The Bahamas have many of these, naturally expose themselves to savoring such guileless charm. There are many destinations in the world that boast comparable beauty but few can match the essence that Bahamians in the Family Islands use to add a congenial flavor to the memories of your visit.

It is 7:50 AM and I am fresh off the 6:45 AM Bahamasair flight from Nassau to Governors Harbour, Eleuthera. I have arrived at the Rainbow Inn, halfway between the airport and Hatchet Bay where my first meeting is to take place later in the day, and parked Dewitt Johnson's big Buick in front of the office. Owner and manager Ken Keene was just preparing breakfast for himself and a pilot who had overnighted at the inn when I presented myself for "check in."

### WHERE IN THE WORLD? . . .

. . . Can you check in to your room just after sunrise and be graciously welcomed, shown to your room and served breakfast within 6 minutes?

ANSWER: Rainbow Inn—Eleuthera

Ken Keene and the Rainbow Inn, overlooking the Bight of Eleuthera, offer comfortable and friendly accommodations, along with an excellent restaurant, to many of the yacht charter clients arriving on the Island who wish to stay a day or so before and after their sailing vacations.

Many sailors opt to spend some time ashore prior to boarding their yacht and just after their sailing vacations, in the first instance to give themselves an opportunity to acclimatize physically and mentally, and in the latter instance to take one intermediate step before leaping into the reality of returning to life in the disciplined world of business.

### Enrich Your Bahamas Adventure

I offer these perspectives to the reader to illustrate the real care and concern that is generally expressed for the well being of the visitor to the Family Islands of The Bahamas. It is, however, only fair to caution the out island guest, that you should be prepared to sit back and relax and not expect things to happen in an



"Shoreside beauty—Dunmore Town, Eleuthera"  
Photo: Ministry of Tourism, Bahamas



"At Anchor in Eleuthera"  
Photo: Ministry of Tourism, Bahamas

instant. If things did happen that way, the flavor of these Edens would be lost or severely compromised. The quintessence of journeying to the Islands is to savor the experience of Mañana. Acceptance will enrich your adventure and you will find that everything really does get done and often in less time than you perceive to have passed.

So loosen up, mellow out, watch the sand shift, peek into the under-

*"After the Sail"  
Photo: Ministry of  
Tourism, Bahamas*



*"Underway to the  
Northern Exumas"  
Photo: Ministry of  
Tourism, Bahamas*



water paradise with your snorkel and mask, sail in the balmy breezes over crystal clear seas and enjoy the laid back ministrations of your Bahamian hosts.

*"Sailing in  
Company"  
Photo: Ministry of  
Tourism, Bahamas*



### **Sailing In Eleuthera**

While the Abacos offer the inland sea, the waters of Eleuthera and the Northern Exumas call for generally longer passages between safe and comfortable harbors and require a higher level of coastal navigation skills.

Let not this discourage the sailor from discovering the unique beauty of Rock Sound, Governor's Harbour and Hatched Bay among many other nooks and coves and crannies along the almost 100 miles of Eleuthera. Pass through current cut and the village of The Current with its miniature frame houses and on to the beautiful, almost landlocked, anchorage on Royal Island. A short sail beyond Royal Island lies Spanish Wells, whose name was said to have originated three centuries ago, when the Spanish declared the local well water to be the sweetest in The Bahamas.

Yachtsmen are strongly urged to take on a local pilot when planning to negotiate the passage to Harbour Island and Dunmore Town from Spanish Wells. You will be amply rewarded for the little extra effort required to visit one of the oldest and prettiest established settlements in The Bahamas.

*"Leisure sailing on  
a Seawolf 30 with  
the Boating  
Editor"  
Photo by Donald F.  
Walsh*



### **From Bight to Sound to Exuma Cay**

Those with the time and the desire can enter a whole new world of

*"A BYS 43 twin  
diesel charter  
yacht in The  
Bahamas"  
Photo by Donald F.  
Walsh*



beauty with a passage through the Bight of Eleuthera, across Exuma Sound and on to Highbourne Cay, Norman's Cay and the Islands of the Exuma Land and Sea Park. This park, founded by the Bahamas National Trust for yachting, skin diving and beachcombing, is to be preserved for all time in its natural state.

The deep blue of the sound is

brilliantly contrasted by the changing colors of the shoaling water and the blinding white sand beaches protecting many of the comfortable, secluded anchorages in the Northern Exumas.

The rest of the Exumas stretch south to Georgetown, beckoning the sailor toward months of exploration . . . but that is another story! ☞

Readers with recent news, changes in facilities or new developments in the boating scene in The Bahamas are encouraged to send their updates to me in Ft. Lauderdale:

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## Sept. 92 Ships Log

**\*\* Vacation Break USA** has had a ceremony on Grand Bahama in July to introduce the Port Lucaya Resort and Marina Hotel. This 200 room resort is being developed in a joint venture with the Port Authority of the Grand Bahamas. Vacation Break markets discount vacation packages and develops time share resorts and has recently launched a Boating Club under the corporate name of "Seamerica".

**\*\* George Town Yacht Services** in Exuma is opening a full service marina and yard complete with a 60 ton Travel-lift, one mile west of Georgetown. The yard and marina built by C.O. Williams Construction (Bahamas) Ltd. and managed by Don Allen answers the need for a full service repair and haulout facility for sailors in the Southern Bahamas.

**\*\* Duty On Marine Parts** is still scheduled to be reduced to 5% according to government sources. Your Boating Editor was recently reassured that the legislation was expected to pass into law by early this fall.

**\*\* A New Provisioning Service** for charter yachts is reported to be forthcoming to the Abaco's. Ample Hamper, an experienced yacht provisioning for many years in the British Virgin Islands, is expected to expand its service to The Bahamas this fall to meet the demands of several new and existing charter companies.

**\*\* Jet Sea** announced that they now have 13 boats ranging in size from the Edel Cat 35 to the Centurion 49 available in Marsh Harbour along with a crewed Privilege 49 Catamaran. Jet Sea also revealed that they plan to have 30 yachts including a fully equipped and tournament rigged Sport Fisherman available from their base by summers end. Recent dredging allows 6 feet along side at low water and a beach is being constructed at their Conch Inn base.

**\*\* Choice One** owned by Bob Wivott of San Francisco and based in Boat harbour, recently broke an extended bad luck fishing spell with the tag and release of a 300 pound blue marlin. Penny Turtle, Public Relations executive for Boat Harbour, quickly made up a special trophy to commemorate this event on his new \$1.5 million dollar Sport Fisherman. Mr. Wivott was visibly overwhelmed by this gesture, typical of Bahamian hospitality, when it was presented to him with dessert at Mangos restaurant in Marsh Harbour that night.

**\*\* The Peace and Plenty In Georgetown.** Great Exuma has purchased a 31 foot diesel ferry boat to operate between the hotel and Stocking Island Beach Club. This replaces the old outboard powered whaler and will provide dry and comfortable crossings of Elizabeth harbour. A new dock and gazebo bar is being constructed at the Peace & Plenty Beach Inn which will be ideal for dinghies from visiting yachts.

**\*\* Around 200 Yachts** will sail Columbus' route from Spain to San Salvador under the banner of "The American 500" this fall then continue on to Georgetown in the Exumas to spend a couple of weeks in Elizabeth Harbour.

**\*\* The Moorings** plan to operate at least 2 large crewed yachts, including a luxurious new Lagoon 55 Catamaran, out of their new acquisition on Stocking Island in the Exumas. Charlie Carey, Chairman of The Moorings and his wife Ginny, purchased the Twyman property in hurricane hole and are exploring the most practical use of the property from a personal and crewed yacht base point of view. This facility along with the new bareboat operation in the Abaco's will give the Moorings clients one way charter opportunities with turn around support at each end.

**\*\* October 17th, 1992** has been set as the date for a Quincentennial function at Great Abaco Beach Resort to celebrate the sailing and tourism ties between the state of New Mexico and The Bahamas. Lt. Governor Casey Luna of New Mexico and his wife Beverly along with the Yacht Club of New Mexico will host a New Mexican Chili Dinner for Mr. Baltron Bethel, Director General of Tourism, along with invited guests. Dan Reabuck, Commodore of the Yacht Club, will be completing the second week of the annual "Vacation with Education" cruise in the Abaco's and will be attending this celebration.

**\*\* Eleuthera Bahamas Charters** now has 15 boats chartering from Hatchet Bay, Eleuthera including a new Cruising Prout Catamaran. Their mixed management fleet ranges up to 47 feet chartering the waters of Eleuthera and the Exumas.

**\*\* Rich's Rentals** in Marsh Harbour now operate 19 company owned outboard power boats (140 HP to 170 HP) in sizes ranging from 17 feet to 20 feet for day charter, fishing, diving or just plain gunkholing. In the last two years, Dale Hill and Robert Sweeting have reacted to increasing demand for this type of charter vessel by substantially increasing the size of their fleet. The protected waters of the Sea of Abaco lend themselves to small boating throughout most of the year.

**\*\* A New Gallery** was opened by Pete Johnson of Little Harbour, Abaco on July 18th with a champagne party followed by a large pig roast on the 19th at this delightful and popular anchorage. The Johnson's are internationally known artists famous for lost wax casting in bronze along with ceramics and gold jewelry inspired by local motifs. Cruising and charter yachts seldom miss the opportunity to drop anchor in this beautifully small, fully protected harbour.