

Cruise to the Gulf Islands and Princess Louisa by Ray Thomas, Cruise Captain

On May 17, eight boats (4 sailboats and 4 powerboats) departed for a seventeen day cruise to include stops at Stuart Island, Sidney, B.C., Ganges, B.C., Silva Bay, B.C., Pender Harbor, B.C., Egmont, B.C., Princess Louisa, Montague Harbour and Poets Cove. Cruisers included Roger and Janet Clark, George and Barbara Brown, Soren and Elizabeth Prip, Phil and Linda Walker, Torbin and Anita Blichfeld, Dave and Judy Spencer, Gary and Linda Yaruss and Ray and Sandy Thomas.

Departure weather from Sequim Bay was in our favor with less than 5 knots of wind across the Strait of Juan de Fuca (not ideal for the sail boaters). Customs check-in was in Sydney, B.C. where we spent two days of R&R'ing and provisioning our boats for the remainder of the trip.

At our stop in Ganges the weather report was indicating a major low coming in from the west and forecast of SE winds between 50 and 60 knots. We were glad to be in a harbor with boats secured for the evening. I don't believe the winds got as high as forecast but our vessels did the rock & dance all night.

We continued on to Silva Bay, B.C., a small village on the south end of Gabriola Island to overnight prior to crossing the Strait of Georgia. For a few of us, the journey across the Strait of Georgia and to Princess Louisa would be a first, although everyone in the group was excited about the journey ahead of us. We had a great dinner together that evening at the restaurant just above the docks.

The next morning the forecast for the Strait was for 10 knots. Crossing was very comfortable and traveling through Welcome Passage offered great views of the lighthouse and the mainland on the east side of the Strait. We overnighted at Garden Bay in Pender Harbour then continued on to Egmont, B.C. We were entertained with a beautiful sunset at Egmont that evening which provided a photographer's delight.

The next morning we were greeted with low clouds and rain showers for our final leg up Jervis Inlet to Princess Louisa. We were in hopes of having a high ceiling and some sun to enjoy the beauty of this day's leg. Upon our arrival at Malibu Rapids the clouds started to lift and rain had subsided. On the positive side the rain did increase the number of waterfalls and increased the flow of water. We planned to spend two nights at the docks in Princess Louisa which was a good idea as we were rewarded with blue skies and sunny weather the next day.

Chatterbox Falls was amazing! The water in the inlet was like glass and the Mountain Peaks were fully exposed for our viewing and provided us several photo opportunities. After two days of taking in all this beauty and socializing, it was time to start our return trip south. We overnighted at Egmont and Garden Bay, crossed the Strait of Georgia to Silva Bay for a night, and then continued to Montague Harbor for a two day layover for the Memorial Day weekend. While at Montague we explored the trails and beaches and some of us took the bus to the Hummingbird Pub for great food and fun.

From Montague we then traveled to Poet's Cove on South Pender where we stayed for 2 nights, then continued to Roche Harbor for customs before heading on our final leg back to Sequim Bay. Our cruise group now has a special bond from sharing together the amazing beauty, friendship and camaraderie. A cruise of a lifetime! If you haven't done it, I highly recommend you take it someday.