

Merry Christmas from the Crew Imagine

Season's Greetings from Phuket, Thailand! Marc, Jane, Caroline, Grant, and Noah wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season. From New Zealand to Thailand, the crew Imagine has been blessed with a safe & healthy year of exciting and new experiences. We wish you & your loved ones a wonderful Christmas season & a very happy and adventurous New Year!

In 2010, we have enjoyed many adventures and incredible experiences, but by far our biggest highlights of the year were the times that we spent together as a family and the people that we have met along the way. Unlike 2009 where we spent a lot of time enjoying the islands and beaches of the Caribbean and South Pacific, this year we enjoyed the diversity of the scenery and people from New Zealand to SE Asia. We called this year our year of "Wow Experiences" and thought we'd share some of that with you in our annual newsletter of wow's & fun facts.



Angkor Wat, Cambodia – Dec 2010

2010 – A Year in Review - By the Numbers

- Miles Travelled:** 7,925 including a circumnavigation of New Zealand's North Island (unfortunately a lot of engine hours since Indonesia)
- Longest Passage:** 10 day, 1613 mile passage from Vanuatu to Thursday Island, Australia
- Best Passage:** 7 day, 1090 mile passage from Opuia, NZ to Suva, Fiji. Although many cruisers said that we were leaving too early in the season, we had an absolutely lovely sail on this notoriously rough track.
- Scariest Moment:** 4 to 46 mph. This was the instant increase in the wind speed when we were hit by a big SE Asia squall. Although the change in wind speed wasn't fun - it was the lightning storm around us that was the most frightening. It's not very comforting to have a 64 foot mast sticking out in the middle of the ocean with lightning all around.
- Nights at Sea:** 47 "wonderful" nights on passages
- Nights at Anchor:** 232!



Nights on a dock: 86 (ouch! fortunately many were free in Malaysia or fairly cheap elsewhere)

Countries Visited: 9 (NZ, Fiji, Vanuatu, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand)

New Kid Boats met: This year we've met **17 new kid boats with 38 KIDS!** Yes, we continue to be amazed (and happy) by the number of other crazy families out here.

Teeth lost: 7 (all by the kids fortunately!) Caroline 2, Grant 0, Noah 5 – the tooth fairy was busy!

Visitors from home: 6. We are a long way from home & thank all who travelled many, many hours & miles to spend time with us & share in our adventure. We feel very blessed.

Report Cards: 2nd, 4th, and 5th were the grades completed by Noah, Grant, and Caroline at School Imagine this year with only a few new gray hairs for the teacher. Congrats!



2010 Top "Wow" Experiences:

Mountains of New Zealand – Although we do love beaches, we were thrilled by the gorgeous scenery and beautiful mountains of New Zealand. For avid hikers, it is a paradise unlike any other. Although the whole country was a Wow, our favorite views were of Mt. Aspiring from our tent in the valley below and Mt. Cook which Marc vowed to return for a wee hike.

Snorkeling in Fiji – We love to snorkel and dive and make sure we check out the underwater world at most anchorages. This year, we were pleasantly surprised by the absolutely stunning coral and fish at the small island of Naviti in Fiji. So far, it is the best snorkeling that we have seen anywhere in the world!

Animal Encounters – 2010 brought many encounters with some of nature's rarest or most exciting animals. We are still in awe of the charm and curiosity of the orangutans of Borneo, the uniqueness of the Komodo dragon, and the size & strength of the Australian saltwater crocs. Kangaroos and the peculiarity of the proboscis monkey, and Elephant rides in Cambodia also make the list of new animal experiences this year.

Temples, Temples, Temples – With the primary religions of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism in SE Asia, we were fascinated by the many, unique & different temples. Old and new, huge and small they were all there for us to explore. Although we enjoyed them all, the awe-inspiring temples of Angkor, Cambodia blew us away.

Cities – I guess you can take the family out of Chicago, but not the city out of the family. We enjoyed visiting the urban centers of the Pacific & SE Asia. From Auckland, NZ to the Petronis Towers of Kuala Lumpur. Overall, our favorite city goes to the country of Singapore with its beautiful skyline & architecture, and ethnic neighborhoods. Also, their unbelievably clean and efficient public transportation system makes Chicago's 1800's era subway system look third world (a little public caning goes a long way here!)



Singapore Straits – Although not a “wow” moment that we’d like to relive, crossing the straits of Singapore was definitely quite a memorable experience. Notoriously known as the busiest shipping lane in the world, this 10 mile stretch of water was like playing “Frogger” with 1,000+ foot ships. The stress was enough to age the Captain and First Mate of Imagine but the rewards of Singapore were definitely worth it.

Lobster Fishing – Since our fishing lines have been somewhat bare due to the over fishing in SE Asia, we remember fondly the lobster fishing in Kandavu, Fiji. What an experience for the whole family to snorkel at night with dive lights to show us the way to our lobster dinner. Considering some of the lobsters were as big as Noah, it was quite a treat.

Heartwarming and Heart wrenching – We have met many wonderful people through our travels that have touched our hearts in many ways. But none have tugged at our heartstrings quite like the people from Cambodia. To hear the horrific stories of the tragedies that engulfed the country during the 1970’s and then to see the strength of the human spirit in the smiles of the children was quite an experience and touched us all.

Bali – The island of Bali was just one big “wow”. The chaos of the scooter filled streets, the beauty of the hills, the surf, the unique Hindu history, negotiating with the persistent hawkers make this small Indonesian island an assault on the senses. This more than made up for the dead cats/dogs floating by in the filthiest anchorage that we’ve experienced to date.



Massages around the world – Ok, we do take advantage of the cheaper prices in SE Asia. What better way to do it than to pamper ourselves once in a while with a relaxing massage or for the girls a pedi/manicure. At \$5-10 an hour it’s a luxury we all take advantage of – except for Noah (too ticklish). From Fiji, Bali, Cambodia, to Thailand, they are all good, but Bali wins for Grant & Marc....Maybe we need to try some more, just to be sure!

New Scuba Experiences – We have two new scuba divers on Imagine with Caroline and Grant. I think they are hooked as they described it as “awesome!” It was quite amazing, considering their first dives were in the crystal clear water of Komodo National Park. Noah was too small this year but maybe 2011.

And the #1 Wow Experience in 2010.....

Mt. Yasur Volcano in Tanna, Vanuatu



Absolutely amazing!!! Hands Down, all of us agree the coolest thing that we have experienced – so far – is standing on the edge of the active volcano of Mt. Yasur. A full on sensory experience! It was truly incredible to see the lava shooting above our heads, feel the heat and the ground shake, and hear the rumbling all around us. No guard rails or warning signs that you’d expect in the states (actually, in the US, they probably wouldn’t allow anyone even near the base of this volcano). It was just us, and a few other tourists & ‘guide/taxi drivers’ standing on the edge! It didn’t take long for Mom to “chicken out” and force everyone down the mountain, but this was definitely an experience that we’ll never, ever forget.



Favorite Greetings or sayings:

Every country we visit, we attempt to learn some of their language. It goes a long way to creating good will and developing relationships. Although, we have also learned that a big smile, a handshake or bow, and patience are just as important. Here are some of our favorite phrases:

New Zealand: *Sweet as* (I confirm that what you are proposing is good by me)

Fiji: *Bula* (greeting said loud & enthusiastically)

Australia: *No Worries, Mate*

Indonesia: *Selamat Pagi* or *simply Pagi* (Hello, good morning) and *Mister, Mister* (greeting screamed by every child for everyone – male or female)

Malaysia: *'Yes can...or No can'* & same same (meaning Your Welcome)

Thailand: Although we know very little of this complicated language yet – A big smile and a deep bow usually wins some hearts.

It's not all fun in the sun out here...Boat Projects in 2010.

A lot of you have asked about repairs since we've been out. Yes, we do a lot of "work" on Imagine also. Our new jobs consist of mechanic, teacher, engineer, chef, plumber, navigator, travel agent, captain, first mate, and many, many more. Our home requires a LOT of TLC, and unlike projects on shore homes – calling in a plumber or taking the car into the mechanic is just not an option. We are more often than not, on our own to trouble shoot & make the repairs. We do a lot of preventative maintenance, but have had our share of 'emergencies' as well. Fortunately, we carry spares for most everything – if not, there's always Fedex, and there is a lot of knowledge among other cruisers who are all willing to lend a hand....here is a sampling of boat projects for 2010. No, we NEVER get bored!

'Projects in Paradise'

Replaced Toilet discharge tube, Changed Fuel injectors on Volvo, Plastimo Danbouy - replaced CO2 cartridge & light & serviced, Replaced missing teak plugs on deck, Fixed forward head door latch, Replaced hand fuel pump for Racor's, changed bearings on Watermaker motor, Installed new Procon Pump on Watermaker, Repaired Bimini straps. Hauled out: Bottom painted - powerwashed, sanded, primed & painted, Zincs replaced, bow prop guard reinstalled, prop speed on prop, new engine thru hull installed, Replaced bulbs on running lights - repaired port bulb holder. Insalled LED bulb for anchor light, Patched UV Cover on Jib, Volvo Serviced: Oil Cooler housing removed, cleaned & new o-rings installed. Reverse gearbox transmission oil changed & filter cleaned. Turbo charger exhaust housing removed & carbon build up removed. Burped shaft seal & added blue lube to seal, Glass replaced on Barameter, Resealed shower drain covers, DINGY LEAK REPAIRED!!!, Volvo oil & oil filter Change - fwd racor filter changed. Air Cleaner rotated. Water intake cleaned, Volvo secondary Fuel Filter Changed, Generator - replaced hose connectors, Fuel Filter replaced on Generator, Capacitors replaced on Generator & replaced the exhaust elbow & spliced fuel line, and had exhaust elbow & manifold sandblasted, Mainsail stitching repaired, Volvo oil & oil filter Change - rear racor filter changed. Air Cleaner rotated. Water intake cleaned. Volvo secondary Fuel Filter Changed, Genoa - New UV cover, Serviced Windlass - Cleaned brushes & tightened power connection, Repaired thermocouple on Burner on stove, Replaced friction lever on master cabin hatch, Generator Oil & filter Change, Fuel Filter Change, Rewired 12V to LED light above sink, Replaced Reverse Gear Oil Cooler on Volvo, Volvo oil & oil filter Change - fwd racor filter changed. Air Cleaner rotated. Water intake cleaned. Changed Transmission Fluid on Reverse gear, Turbo water leak repaired, New Carpet installed. Changed Transmission Fluid on Reverse gear, New house batteries installed - 12V 150A AGM's, Installed 24V LED Lights above Nav/Freezer & Galley, Replaced Port Running Light. Cleaned the Air con units, Grill burner replaced, Fans repaired, new maserator pump installed in head & replaced the head outlet tube.....a real 'crappy' job!

Did you get all of that – if so, we're impressed! So as you can see we don't just sit on the back deck drinking Pina Coladas all day waiting for the sun to set! But despite all of the "work", we still have a lot of fun, and keep on sailing along



2011 – What's next for Imagine!

So as we bid farewell to 2010, the crew of Imagine prepares for the adventures of next year. The first week in January, we will say good-bye to Thailand and SE Asia and sail to Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Oman. From there, it is up the Red Sea to view the pyramids of Egypt and then into the Med. We plan to stay in the Med for the summer and fall season and then cross the Atlantic to celebrate "Christmas in the Caribbean" next year. As with all of our plans, they are written in sand (*at low tide*) but for now, this is our story and we're sticking to it.

As we finalize our shopping, bake our cookies, and prepare Imagine for the big guy in red, we will be thinking of all of you and wishing you a joyous and peaceful Christmas. May you relax and enjoy the beauty of the season and have a happy and prosperous New Year.

***Marc, Jane, Caroline, Grant, and Noah
The Crew of Imagine***

