

## Back to the Grenadines



Concluding a number of years of not visiting the Caribbean, I made landfall in Grenada recently. It is still reeling from Ivan, obvious from the many blue tarps hung like tapestries from the many homes that are roofless. My mission was to get to Carriacou to 'Illusions' an old buddy boating friend who died on board last August. His wife needed to 'go sailing' with crew, as well as a little single-handing tutorials and encouragement.

Waiting with a crowd for the high-speed ferry Osprey, I met Mary, off to Carriacou also, to take pictures freelance of the launch of one of these famous local wooden sail-work boats. Osprey was in repair and a much slower temporary ferry managed to get us there in record slow time against strong head winds and large swells. The destination was worth the journey; Carriacou is still the pristine cruising ground she was. Not inundated with the accoutrements of modern tourist 'necessities', the island is for islanders and cruisers. Getting from Hillsborough to Tyrell Bay is a short bus ride, apx. \$.75 US, in a packed van. The half moon bay is just as it ever was, but for a small eyesore. An investment group is 'in process' of building a large marina and condos, though most think it won't get completed. We sailed on Debbie Leisure's Island Packet 29 shortly for Saline Island, at the southern end of Carriacou. It's not in the cruising guides, a little nook, a couple of tight turns between a few high rocks, around the reef and you're alone on a private uninhabited as good as it gets, island. The beach and snorkeling and holding are the best. A few days there to unwind, and around the north end of Carriacou to Petit Saint Vincent and Petit Martinique, they share a harbor, but not much else. PSV is private, so bring money to visit, or go to slow moving PM and poke around, you may find something unusual. Its small population exists on fishing and smuggling. Needless to say, what you may find in the few small stores is 'different'. As always, caveat emptor. As the weeks go by, we return from sailing 'practice' for the captain, to Windward on Carriacou for the launching. Black sand, a loud wonderful local band, food and drink for all, and pulling ropes to get this forty-footer wet. After what I later find out is a short time to launch such a boat, 3 hours, some they say take days because of tides and possibly too much rum. It's the island and it's people at their best. Love and community bring this new baby, pretty as any yacht, sans rigging to be installed in Martinique later, into her world the way it has been for centuries. Jimmy Buffet

says when tourism comes, the people become slaves. Let's hope for the locals and the cruisers who wander in each day , \$2.00 US barbequed chicken and a bottle of rum, that these people stay free.