

TANDEM ANCHORING

Bill Salvo and Nancy Hearne

In our twenty years of full-time cruising and living aboard we have anchored in many hundreds of different places and conditions. *Cascade II*, our Jeanneau Sun Legend 41, displaces about 20,000lbs (9 tonnes) and carries four anchors – a Fortress FX-55 (15kg), a 20kg Delta, a Fortress FX-23 (6.8kg) and a 15kg kedge, plus two small dinghy anchors, one of them a Danforth. The 20kg Delta is our main anchor, which we have used in most anchoring situations with good results. Our goal is always to anchor in sand, and to avoid Posidonia weed* at all costs. Our chain is 10mm and we always anchor with a minimum of 5:1 one scope. We always back hard on the anchor once we have all the chain out that we intend for the depth, and a ‘chain snubber’ is deployed so as not to overload the windlass. Nancy always takes the wheel when anchoring.

In recent years we have frequently found ourselves in the Great Harbour in Siracusa – it is our favourite town in Sicily. But ... the bottom is mostly soft mud that I liken to chocolate pudding. Reversing at only 2000 rpm we can pull the Delta and 10:1 scope slowly through the mud – not an ideal situation – so we gave some thought to

a possible solution and came up with ‘tandem anchoring’, using the small Fortress with about 1.5m of 8mm chain shackled between the eye in the Delta and the shank of the Fortress. This simple solution with 5:1 scope has proved incredibly successful in Siracusa mud in all the winds we have encountered.

But the real test, as we discovered recently, was in an open bay off a little village near Augusta, Sicily, where there was not a speck of sand to be found. The Delta with the little Fortress

Both Delta and Fortress in stowed ‘underway’ mode

* *Posidonia oceanica*, also known as Neptune grass or Mediterranean tapeweed, is a type of seagrass endemic to the Mediterranean. Balls of fibrous material from its foliage, known as egagropili, are often washed up on nearby beaches.

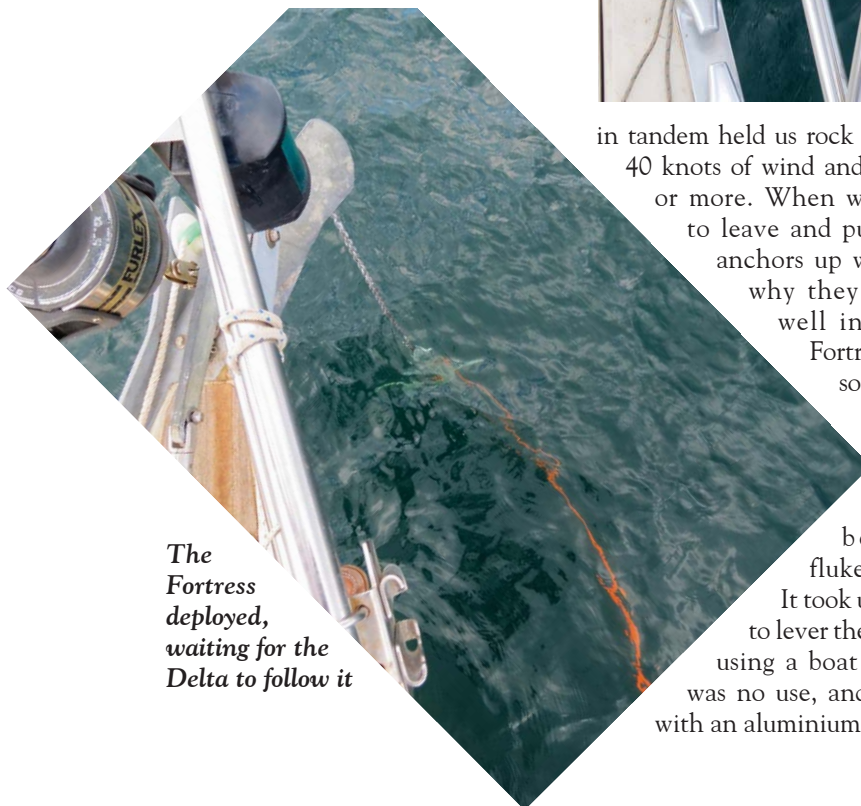




The Fortress nestled in its bracket on the rail with a polypropylene rope attached. The bracket is adjustable for wider 'fluke heads' (for want of a better term)



The Fortress still in its bracket but with the securing lines freed and awaiting deployment. Note the chain shackled to the eye of the Delta



The Fortress deployed, waiting for the Delta to follow it

in tandem held us rock solid in up to 40 knots of wind and waves of 2m or more. When we were ready to leave and pulled the two anchors up we discovered why they had held so well in weed – the Fortress had dug in so deep that the 'roots' of the weed were solidly wedged between its flukes and shank. It took us half an hour to lever the roots off, first using a boat hook, which was no use, and then a mop with an aluminium handle.



The Fortress deployed on the 'seabed', with the Delta ready to be set in reserve. Note the shackle on the former's crown, to which a tripping line would be attached

I should mention that we buoy the Fortress from its crown with a polypropylene line, so that we can recover it upside down after the Delta is almost in its chocks and place it in its bracket on the pulpit. When both anchors are deployed but before they hit the bottom we slowly reverse while paying out the chain, so as to orient them one ahead of the other when they hit the seabed.

Don't hesitate to e-mail me, Bill Salvo, at svcascade@gmail.com if you have any questions.

