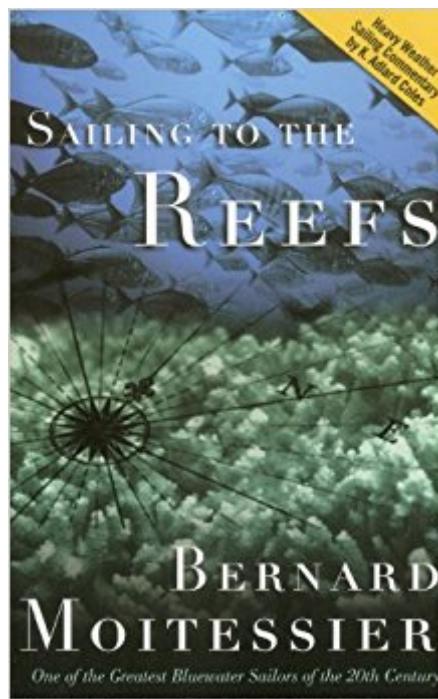


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Sailing To The Reefs



Synopsis

Perhaps the title of this book, Bernard Moitessier's first, should have been "Sailing on the Reefs"; for that is exactly what he did, almost unbelievably, twice. After finding his beloved Marie-Thérèse, a beautiful junk in the Gulf of Siam, he set off across the Indian Ocean for Africa and eventually the Caribbean. Eighty days or so into the trip, Moitessier and Marie-Thérèse found themselves on the reef at Diego Garcia. It took Moitessier just nine months to build Marie-Thérèse II from scratch in Mauritius with no boat plans or power tools. From her launch he sailed her down to South Africa. His observations during a stay of almost two years are as interesting as the people he met and the innovative boat improvements he came up with. Unfortunately, he and Marie-Thérèse II managed to end up on the rocks near St. Vincent in the Caribbean. In between these two heartbreakingly disastrous events is a tale of courage, resourcefulness, and creativity. It is told with refreshing honesty, in which Moitessier, still really an apprentice sailor, admits his blunders. And it is told with marvelous humor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Another good one in the blue-water sailing genre. This one ranks 5 stars because, with the exception of a few pages where he is actually explaining how something works, it is told in straightforward language with minimum sailor jargon. Much like an actual long-haul cruise, most of the book actually happens while the boat is in a harbor, out of the water altogether or ceases to exist (in this case, twice). Some of the anecdotes are hilarious, even those that are downright (but unashamedly) dishonest. Some of the inventions and workarounds he comes up with are

astonishing. If he had not been sailing around with no money, he would have had buckets of money, but then he would not have been sailing. Actually, the only thing missing from the book is: what happened to Joyce? For me, the book provides that superb balance between the joy of sailing free and the reality that sooner or later during an ocean voyage, there is an 80% probability that on this very trip the ocean is going to try and kill you ... and (even for some of the world-famous old salts) there is about a 50-50 chance that the ocean is going to succeed.

If not, read this, then read "The Long Way"- "Reefs" is an excellent prologue. Here is a younger Moitessier, who has no idea yet about a round-the-globe race, or does he? He has many theories of sailing, and only a little philosophy. For those who have read The Long Way, you can see the birth of Moitessier's most famous boat, the Joshua on the horizon, and with it the beginnings of Moitessier's sailing maturity. Touching, sad and funny, this book. Moitessier was not only an excellent sailor, he was an excellent story-teller.

Reading a Moitessier book is like reading a Greek classic; elemental and insightful. So very interesting to see how he gets through life, and comparing it to the struggles sailors have today. Plus the man takes DIY to the most basic level! Going offshore I realize what he's talking about, and it scares me a bit to realize there's a bit of Bernard in me also! Should be considered required reading for offshore enthusiasts, but then, all the ones I know have read all his books!

A great window into the beginning of the nautical life of one of the most famous single-handed sailors ever. Told with a dose of humor, just the opposite of some of the sailing books you'll pick up, where the author is intent on seeming courageous and important with the first sentence. The sea is the star in this book, and Moitessier just wants to be close to it.

Bernard is a frugal as they come, and it's fascinating to read about his imaginative ways to keep sailing without the use of money, around the world in a boat he built himself, in the '50's. I'm thoroughly enjoying the book.

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