

Latitude 38

VOLUME 530 August 2021

WE GO WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

**Singlehanded Transpacific Yacht Race
Rocket Scientists — Space Age Sailors
Baptism by Ditch — Cardinal Rule #1
Max Ebb — Classic Windows**

SIGHTINGS

a special class of crazy

We know the Bay breeds world-class sailors, hard-core racers, serious cruisers, and a whole lot of people who just love being out on the water, but there are some interesting hybrids out there. Loren Brindze is one of those: part racer, cruiser, surfer, high-tech engineer, solo sailor. Is it something in our water?

Loren brought his unique mix of talents to the East Coast, where he just completed the 1,270-mile Bermuda One-Two (Newport, RI, to Bermuda singlehanded, then return doublehanded). He placed third in class in his Hobie 33 *Topaz* and received the Perez Sportsmanship Trophy. It was his first solo race.

Though he learned to sail Sabots in Southern California as a kid, it wasn't until he moved to the Bay Area as a student at Cal that he really got hooked. Boats were cheap after the 2008 financial crash, and he thought it might be fun to live in the marina and sail the Bay — and beyond.

"It was fun!" he says. "The longest voyage I took in my Catalina 27 *Joy* was from Berkeley to Monterey. We had five of us, barely 20 years old, all packed on board. It was cramped, but we made it. Before the return trip, two crew jumped ship, so only three of us headed north. Pounding upwind somewhere off Año Nuevo, I lost one of the lower shrouds when the chainplate pulled through the deck. I decided at that point I loved sailing to faraway places, but wanted a boat that was a bit more mellow in larger seas."

Loren traded up to *Padelesha*, a 1964 32-ft Pearson Vanguard. After getting his BA, he headed out the Gate and turned left. He spent time

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the delta doo dah

As we wrap up this issue, we're looking forward to the next official event in Delta Doo Dah Lucky 13, a day of fun at Owl Harbor's Color Rhapsody in Isleton on July 31. The marina will host a fully packed house for the day's activities, starting with a dinghy poker run (with cash prizes!), followed by crafting projects, a BBQ dinner, and an evening movie outdoors. Learn more about Owl Harbor Marina at www.owlharbor.com.

There's still plenty of space for Delta Doo Dah boats at the final official event on August 14. Delta Bay Marina, also in Isleton, will host Doo Dah sailors for a BBQ and party on that Saturday afternoon. Newport Vessels will be on hand with free inflatable boat demos. Those interested in exploring the slough by kayak or SUP can rent them from Kokopelli Kayak Rentals (reservations and rental fee required; call 707-365-3865 or see www.deltakayakrentals.com).

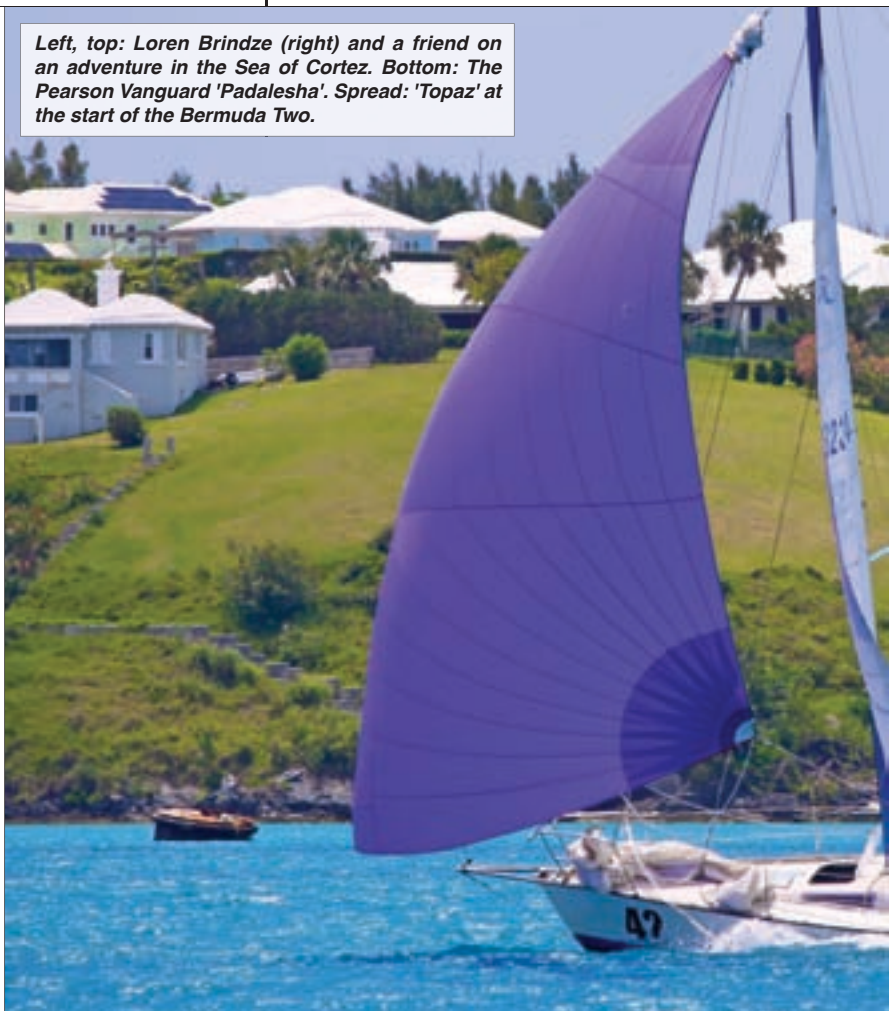
Delta Bay Marina is offering complimentary docking the week of August 9-16 for up to 20 Delta Doo Dah boats. This is on a first-come, first-served-basis, and advance

Left, top: Loren Brindze (right) and a friend on an adventure in the Sea of Cortez. Bottom: The Pearson Vanguard 'Padelesha'. Spread: 'Topaz' at the start of the Bermuda Two.

LOREN BRINDZE



LEE NELSON



goes to isleton

reservations are required. We'll share the link and coupon code via email with the Delta Doo Dah fleet. Learn more about Delta Bay Marina at www.deltabay.org.

There's still time to register for the Doo Dah at www.deltadoodah.com. It's free, quick and easy. Registration will close on August 31. Stories and photos from Delta ralliers are welcome; please send them to Doodette Chris at chris@latitude38.com.

— chris



Edward Stancil from Peninsula YC grilled burgers for the Doo Dah last year at Delta Bay Marina.



TOM CLARKE

crazy — continued

working as a dive instructor in SoCal and honing his computer skills to earn enough money to keep going. Without a partner interested in the voyage, he strapped his surfboard to the lifelines and headed solo down Baja.

Not surprisingly, he had a great time. He spent weeks on the outside, catching great surf between Abrejos and Bahia Santa Maria. Not only did he prove to himself that he could singlehand long distances, but cruising south also lit the racing fire.

"I informally raced some friends aboard a Baba 30 from Ensenada to Isla San Benito. I left 12 hours after they did but the anchorage was empty when I arrived. A few hours later *Vaaruna* sailed in. At that moment I knew I wanted to do the long-distance shorthanded thing, as I liked both the passagemaking and the competitive aspects."

After months of adventures crisscrossing the Sea of Cortez, Loren put *Padelesha* on the hard, then joined his cousin on the Cross 46 *Migration* for some doublehanded cruising through the Aleutian Islands before settling in Alameda, where he scored a job at Saildrone. He got involved with the J/105 fleet, then found a place on Steve Gordon's J/88 *Inconceivable*, on which he did two Rolex Big Boat Series.

So how did he end up racing to Bermuda?

"I was working and saving money, expecting to continue cruising Mexico in a few years. Then I met Ashley (who's now my fiancée) and followed her to Boston while she got her MBA. There weren't really that many East Coast solo distance races I knew of, and the Bermuda One-Two seemed like a unique and fun race. The only problem was I didn't have a boat. I'd been eyeing faster boats since racing on the J/88 and had a keen interest in ULDBs. I happened to find one of only a couple Hobie 33s on the East Coast. It was the middle of COVID, so it was nice having a big project to focus on. I bought the boat just 10 months before the race."

He had his work cut out for him: It's not easy to work on a boat during a Northeastern winter, and *Topaz* had been sitting on a mooring for 20 years. But despite almost losing his rudder during his 30-hour qualifying sail, he made the start.

Loren completed both legs with no injuries or serious equipment failures. However, that doesn't mean there wasn't drama. During the return with crewmember Alex Linz, Tropical Storm Claudette made a beeline for the fleet. "The race itself was quite challenging, especially being in the smallest, lightest (and wettest) boat in the fleet. At a certain point, it was no longer about beating the competition but making sure we were all safely out of the storm's path. Being able to help other boats near me with weather and progress updates kept me focused and calm in the face of what was otherwise a terrifying situation."

Loren was awarded the Juan A. Perez Sportsmanship Award given to the person "who best exemplifies the true spirit of the Bermuda One-Two." He'd come into the race as an outsider, never having raced solo, and on a boat he'd sailed for less than 40 hours. He didn't know a single other competitor. "This is by far the award I'm most proud of. It really made me feel I had made it into this odd community of shorthanded distance sailors."

Now that Ashley has finished her MBA, the couple and *Topaz* will be heading back to the West Coast. "I'm looking forward to some races where I can let the Hobie do what she does best: surf down waves. Not having to worry about lightning or waterspouts will be nice too!" It's a good sign that a Hobie 33 won this year's Singlehanded Transpacific Race, as that race is one of his goals.

Perhaps Loren is attracted to shorthanded sailing because it's in his blood — his mother is from France. "I like the endurance aspect and the challenge of navigating the ocean by myself. I enjoy that at the end of the day, my performance in these events comes down to my abilities on the water, but also my abilities to manage the numerous projects and preparations. Most of all I like the other people it attracts, who are all there mostly to challenge themselves and share what would otherwise be a lonely, isolating experience. And you get to be in a special class of crazy when you talk to other sailors."

— bruce balan