



JAN-ERIC OSTERLUND

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Christina G on a path of enlightenment along Indonesia's Ring of Fire



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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Market	Index	Change
Asia	100	+0.5%
Europe	100	+0.2%
North America	100	+0.1%
South America	100	+0.3%
Africa	100	+0.4%
Oceania	100	+0.2%

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Market analysis and intelligence

OCEAN TRAVELLER

Eastern Indonesia

Christina G island hops from Bali to Sorong

THE VOLCANOES AROUND THE RING OF FIRE PROVIDE A PERFECT LANDSCAPE FOR THE INDONESIAN LEG OF CHRISTINA G'S EPIC ADVENTURE



Top: the journey begins in Bali, where old men while away time in conversation on the beach. Right: Pura Tanah Lot, a Hindu Temple on Bali. The temple has been a part of Balinese mythology for centuries and is now a popular tourist attraction. Above: *Christina G*



MAP: ADAM PRICE

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photography:
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The sun has just risen. To port, a large volcano, Gunung Api, rises through the water nearly 2,000 metres, and to starboard the volcanic island of Sumbawa. The previous morning we left Bali on our cruise east along the island chain that forms the Ring of Fire in Eastern Indonesia.

Christina G, the yacht I am on board, is a 34 metre motor cruiser built in China at the Kingship yard. Via the Philippines she has sailed south to Singapore and then east along the Indonesian islands. I am aboard as a guest of Gunnar Gillberg, for a short part of his and *Christina G*'s impressive voyage that will take them east from China via Singapore, Indonesia, Palau and Micronesia to Majuro and Hawaii, on to San Diego, then south to Panama and through the Canal, where *Christina G* will be available for chartering. Gunnar planned this voyage for a long time and we had talked about it on many occasions. The Indonesian leg took its final shape during a dinner we had on the banks of Singapore's old river.

Most of Indonesia has been formed by volcanic activity and the meeting of tectonic plates. The Ring of Fire, the series of active and dormant

volcanoes along the fault lines between the plates, starts with Sumatra in the west and continues via Java, Bali, Lombok, Flores and a series of smaller islands to the east before turning north via Tanimbar and Kai Islands to the Maluku (former Moluccas) and then via the Philippines to Japan forming a neat, nearly complete, ring of volcanic activity.

The volcanic eruptions have given birth to the a vast island chain of around 17,000 islands and the old lava fields provide a fertile soil that sustains around 240 million people.

Temples and rice terraces

I joined *Christina G* in Bali and spent a few days looking around the island. It had been nearly 20 years since I visited last. *Christina G* was tied up at the marina in Benoa, the main – and for superyachts the only – port in Bali. The clubhouse hadn't changed at all. Built in a fusion of traditional Balinese and old colonial style, it had no walls, just large pillars carrying the roof. It was still as inviting to have a gin and tonic on the veranda as I remembered from the early nineties.





Above: a local family coming home from work in their gardens. They had never been photographed before, which is why they look both happy and embarrassed. Below: village children saying goodbye. Right: Ili Api volcano gently puffing. Opposite page: a close encounter with a local on Komodo

Bali is an island of contrasts. Half an hour from the port is Kuta, where the waves break on to the beach creating exciting opportunities for surfers in the daytime, and in the evening brightly lit bars provide opportunities of a different kind. Just further north is Seminyak, where elegant villas, hotels and restaurants dominate.

But not far away is the real Bali, and it has succeeded in preserving its character and withstand the onslaught of tourists. Bali is mainly a Hindu island. People live in walled family compounds consisting of numerous houses, often with few walls, and with small temples. A visit to Bali isn't complete without a couple of days in Ubud in the centre of the country, sampling the arts and traditional culture. And for me the highlight was



the walks along the mountain ridges and in the river valleys, photographing and visiting village temples along the way.

Enter the dragon

We left Bali with a few cumulus clouds decorating the bright blue sky. The next day we passed Gunung Api, where I started my story, and steered down towards a protected bay on the eastern side of Komodo Island, where we anchored.

The next morning we were up with the sun and I ventured out with Erik, our Swedish chef, and a guide to go dragon hunting – or at least hunting with cameras. There are about 1,300 dragons left on Komodo, around 1,200 on the neighbouring island, Rinca, and a few on nearby islands; we were pleased to find quite a few. When I was here in the nineties, they were feeding the dragons once a day with a newly killed goat, but this bestial show has now ceased. Instead, some dragons were hanging around the caretakers' huts, hoping to get a free meal. But others were truly wild and are active killers.

Komodo has much more to offer than the dragons. The rain is sparse, so there are large areas without any real forests; more like savannah grass interspersed with occasional kapok trees and borassus palms. The dry river valleys are forested and support a rich bird life.

Whale country

Leaving Komodo we sailed east and passed Rinca island. The ring of islands separating the shallow and warm South China Sea to the north and the colder Indian Ocean to the south creates ferocious tidal streams in the passages between those islands. We experienced rip tides and whirlpools all over those sounds, but nowhere are they stronger than between Rinca and the island of Flores. The mixture of hot and cold

Above our anchorage, Ili Api was towering: a smouldering volcano rising 1,500 metres, and with a plume of smoke coming out of its cone. Lit up by the moon at night we ponder over the constantly changing cloud formations from the smoke



water is a breeding ground for plankton, which attracts large pelagic fish and makes the coral magnificent. I could easily envisage spending a week or two around these islands.

We sailed passed Flores, which has attractive villages and beautiful scenery inland, but we didn't have the time to make those excursions. Instead we headed for Lembata Island, one of the many islands in the Alor archipelago just east of Flores.

The smaller islands east of Flores – Solor, Lembata, Pantar and Alor – experience similar tidal currents as Komodo and Rinca to the west. Because of the abundance of plankton and fish, the whales congregate here during their migratory passages. We decided to anchor on Lembata, where the villagers still hunt whales with bamboo harpoons. The hunters are exempt from the ban on whaling and catch about 20 whales a year. They go out from May to October, when the seas are calm, and we arrived too early to see any whales being speared. To be honest, I was quite pleased, as it must be quite a gruesome spectacle.

Above our anchorage, Ili Api was towering: a smouldering volcano



rising 1,500 metres, and with a plume of smoke constantly coming out of its cone. Lit up by the moon at night we sit on deck and ponder over the constantly changing cloud formations from the smoke.

Spice of life

As we followed the Ring of Fire further east the islands got smaller. Anchoring can be difficult around the volcanoes so we decided to continue to the Tanimbar Islands.

In earlier centuries, spices were a sought-after commodity in Europe. Nutmeg and cloves grew only on a few islands in Maluku. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to learn about the location of the Spice Islands

Nothing had prepared us for the beautiful seascape that we entered. Rising up more than a hundred metres from the sea were needle-sharp formations and narrow ridges, and at sea level the waves had eroded the limestone bases



through their spies in Malaysia. Later the Dutch and the English would fight for control with the Dutch emerging victorious but not before the English had 'stolen' the seeds and planted them in the Caribbean, breaking the hegemony of the Spice Islands.

Tanimbar and the next island group to the north, Kai Islands, are on the outside of the ring and consist of raised limestone instead of volcanic material. They are, like Flores, mainly Christian. People are extremely friendly and helpful. On the small island of Pulau Moli in the northern Tanimbars we anchored at a welcoming bay to snorkel and swim. Soon we were invited to the nearby village by an official-looking gentleman and accompanied by a dozen people from the village.

Gunnar entertained his local visitors on board but I think he was a little disappointed when they were more impressed with the washing machines than the radar equipment and the engine room. In return we were guided around the island, entertained, given a chicken for dinner and presented gifts of ikat garments. They are made of hand-spun cotton, dyed in natural colours coming from plants and bark and then woven into neck-scarfs to signify that we were honoured guests.

When we left Tanimbar for Kai the sky was blue with fluffy white



clouds. Here we found the beaches were as white as the clouds and so fine it felt like walking in flour. The Kai island group must be unique with finest powdery sand on totally deserted beaches.

We anchored off one of the beaches and a driver took us into town for provisioning; the first since Bali! But the market was basic, and the shops even more so. We stocked up on fruit and vegetables, and we were close enough to a mobile phone antenna to make telephone calls and get emails. Outside Jakarta and Bali provisioning is difficult, and a yacht has to bring lots of frozen food. However, we had caught several tunas and dorados during the voyage to add to our cuisine.

Tropical paradise

We left Kai sailing northwest with a chain of islands on our port side and New Guinea, the second largest island in the world, to starboard. New Guinea is divided into two countries. To the east is independent Papua New Guinea and to the west is the easternmost region of Indonesia, now named Papua.

We kept to the outlying islands of Papua, which are renowned for the beautiful coral reefs. We arrived at an island group east of Misool, part of the Raja Ampat group, to the west of the main island of New Guinea. Nothing had prepared us for the beautiful seascape that we entered. Rising up more than a hundred metres from the sea were needle-sharp formations and narrow ridges, and at sea level the waves had eroded the limestone base. Surrounding the larger islands were small 'mushrooms' of rock formations covered in lush vegetation. Nowhere had I read or heard anything about this beautiful archipelago! Gunnar paddled his kayak, I ventured out with camera equipment in the tender, the crew tried to catch lobster and everyone went snorkelling.

The next morning we continued northwest among the Raja Ampat Islands. We anchored at the end of the deep Sagewin Strait in a bay, where they had substantial pearl farms. Gunnar and I were welcomed ashore to see the village.

A day later *Christina G* anchored up outside Sorong, on the westernmost tip of New Guinea, to clear out for the further voyage to Palau. I looked for a flight home, and succeeded via island hopping to reach Singapore. Looking out over the archipelago I could see *Christina G* at anchor waiting to clear out for the next adventure...



Right: fishing canoes at the beach in Papua. Above: boys having fun after a church visit. Below: dinner. Opposite page: Limestone rocks at Pulau Lenkfal. Trees have tried to establish roots wherever they can find a cracks with rainwater and some nutrients



FACT FILE Islands of Eastern Indonesia

words: Jan-Eric Österlund



CHRISTINA G

Launched last year, *Christina G* is a twin engine motor yacht designed by Vripack, Holland, and built by the Kingship Shipyards in Zongshang, China. She has four decks including an accommodation deck with four guest cabins. The owner's suite is located on the main deck, along with the galley and saloon. The sun deck includes sunbathing area and a spa pool. Once she reaches her destination she will be available for charter through **Edmiston** (web: www.edmistoncompany.com).

PAPERWORK AND FORMALITIES

In order to cruise in Indonesia you need a cruising permit. You must acquire the CAIT – Clearance Approval for Indonesian Territories – in advance. It can take up to a month to get the paperwork processed and it will be substantially easier by using an agent. *Christina G* used Indonusa (email: info@indonusa-marine.net). It was just over \$1,000 for its services and the fee for the permit itself.

You need to file a planned itinerary when applying for a permit and it is best to mention as many ports as possible in the application. All crew and guests must be named and again it is better to include more rather than less as it doesn't matter if not everyone is on board, but it is a hassle to add crew or guests to the permit.

FEES

Recently, Indonesia has also introduced a temporary import duty. For *Christina G* this was another \$2,350 plus an export duty/fee of \$650. This should be refunded upon leaving Indonesia.

At any large port you also pay fees for port clearance, apart from any marina

fees or similar. They were \$165 per large port. However, *Christina G* didn't enter any large ports apart from Bali, where we entered Indonesian territory, and Sorong, where we cleared out.

The crew and guests can normally get a visa upon arrival (valid for 30 days). If you intend to cruise in Indonesia for more than 30 days you have to apply for this visa in advance.

Any larger port requires the captain to report upon arrival and departure and in places where they don't get many visitors you will often find that a whole regiment of officialdom arrives complete with wives and friends who want to take a look at the yacht. In the smaller places the bureaucracy is replaced by the warmest welcomes you can imagine, when everyone in the village tries to take care of you and show you around.

PASSAGE PLANNING

Indonesia consists of more than 17,000 islands, most of them of volcanic origin, but also raised coral and limestone. It is not difficult to find anchorages and harbours, both close to villages or towns and far away from civilisation with just a deserted beach nearby. Like all tropical areas it is easiest to sail from east to west following the trade winds and this is best done in the winter season from June to September or October.

Sailing east is slightly trickier, but can easily be accomplished in the right season. The summer season from January to March is a good alternative for a sailing yacht. However, in summer the skies are more often overcast and there is a risk of cyclones, although those are more prevalent south of Timor.

The best period of voyaging eastwards is probably in the transitional autumn period of April and May, which was when *Christina G* undertook her voyage. Sailing north of the main island chain from Java to Alor the seas are moderate (or in our case, totally flat) behind the protected barrier of islands to the south, but this passage is most suitable for a motor yacht or a sailing yachts with reasonable engines and fuel tanks.

TIDES

The tides are moderate, normally between one and two metres, but can reach up to 5.4 metres on the southwest coast of Papua. Tidal currents can however be strong in the narrow north-south passages along the Ring of Fire from Bali to Alor. Sea currents follow the winds and run west to east in the beginning of the year and change direction when the southeast trades set in.

WEATHER

The Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) moves between 10° South in January and more than 6° North in July. It can extend a couple of hundred miles from north to south and is accompanied by cloudy skies and a lot of thunderstorm activity. However, we didn't experience many storms on *Christina G*'s voyage except the ones we saw in the distance. We passed the ITCZ on our way north near the equator.

The best chance of fair, sunny weather in the region we travelled in would be in June to October except around western Papua, where it can rain a lot during these months. But again, we were blessed with sunshine on most of our voyage in April.



LAUREN BECK Monaco

Give a cook a basket of assorted ingredients; they'll deliver an amazing meal. I stood by as chefs demonstrated their skills at the Monaco Rendezvous' chef competition, watching plate after plate being ushered to the table. I was only lucky enough to observe the preparation, however, relegated to catching mere whiffs of the tasty concoctions...

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OLIVER DEWAR UK

Appearances can be deceptive: retro-classic in her looks, the 32m *Akalam* has space and performance equal to much larger yachts. Hidden out of sight, there is some innovative design that allows an astonishing 26 windows in the yacht's hull.

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ANDREW RICE UK

The first event of the America's Cup World Series in Portugal is fast approaching. While established teams are keeping their keelboat personnel and retraining for a new format in fast cats, the start-up challengers are recruiting Olympic sailors. This new breed might have little experience of the Cup, but they have grown up racing high-performance boats. The AC45 catamaran is an obvious next step for this younger generation.

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While established teams are keeping their keelboat personnel, the challengers are recruiting Olympic sailors

JAN-ERIC ÖSTERLUND Indonesia

Bali touches all your senses. It is a peaceful Hindu idyll, where ceremonial dancers move to the mystical tunes of the Gamelan orchestra. Family compounds, with incense burning temples in their midsts, encompass generations. Rice paddies climb the mountains like the staircases of gods. This is where my voyage started.

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NIGEL SHARP Palma

A journey to Palma at less than two hours' notice and an almost sleepless night en-route were very small prices to pay for the opportunity to sail on the Wally 130 *Angel's Share*. Following an extensive refit she is now lighter, quieter and very much suited to her new owners' cruising plans. And naturally, she's very fast.

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JOHN LEONIDA UK

Most people in this industry are honest, but there are a few charlatans who push clients into unsound deals and others who will take a few sneaky envelopes to help someone jump a queue or get into a marina or worse, turn a blind eye to an unsafe yacht. The UK's new Bribery Act aims to put an end to all that... but to paraphrase Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, is this new law just 'words, words, words'?

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