

Puerto Santo Tomas



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Hold on a minute, because Dick is jumping up and down, laughing and singing, "We're cruising! We're cruising!"

Okay, I'm back. He's calming down. It's understandable. His elation has been building up over many months while our cruising life was delayed by a lengthy repair list for the boat and multiple business issues.

Very clearly, we are being taught patience by a higher power. Even before Dick and I were married, we decided our goal was to grow up and go cruising. Since then, we have moved through several different realities – different jobs, different homes and now different boats. We took possession of *Last Resort* in November of last year, trading in our Catalina 36 for a new Catalina 470, which my husband often tells me, is a real, live yacht. We took her to Ensenada, Mexico (via San Diego) and finally, here we are on March 1, 2007, finally cruising. (And, in actuality, until we sell our house in Scottsdale, we can't actually be totally cruising as we would like.)

But at least we are finally able to take an overnight cruise out of the Hotel Coral Marina, our six-month base at Ensenada. We have a delightful sail to a tiny (and I *do* mean tiny) fishing village off the west coast of Mexico's Baja California. There are less than fifteen tiny cottages lining the coast. On the road leading to the point is a peach-colored arch worthy of a Ben Hur movie, with the name

Puerto Santa Tomas emblazoned over a road leading to more tiny cottages. In the bay below town are anchored a dozen modest pangas painted in bright pastels.



Two familial groups are gathering mussels from the stony shore. They pause for the amusement we provide as *Last Resort* threads this way and that to avoid maze-like clumps of seaweed and drops her anchor once, twice, well...three times, until we are happy with the final location.

But thank God for my thorough captain! Even if it took forty tries, you know he'd get it right. We are tucked safe and sound in our cozy anchorage and have our brand new flopper-stopper out (doing God-knows-what). Uh, perhaps this is as good a time as any to mention we later lose this ingenious device due to a faulty snap shackle. (Cappy says we'll buy another one. Not to worry.)

So here we are relaxed, at last, when we hear, "Nothing." That's not good. We should be hearing our generator cranking out power. Seaweed has clogged its intake valve. We take about a ton of stuff out of a 3-foot by 4-foot space in the bilge underneath the Pullman berth and replace it with a sweaty, cursing captain. The whole evening passes in a blur as he grunts and groans and attacks the problem. All I remember is a studied discussion on which plug is most likely to prevent the boat from sinking. Once again, we are victorious. We watch "American Idol" in our nice warm cabin as our electric blanket is set on preheat.

A sunny morning finds no mussel-gatherers on the beach. There were no lights in the little village last night. Dick surmises there's no electricity in town. Whoa. Guilt trip. We had more electricity on our boat last night than the entire town, thanks to our generator.

We have a terrific sail in 18-to-20-knot winds. *Last Resort* handles the upwind sail beautifully, despite facing some big seas, sometimes up to 8-to-10-feet. We duck back into our cruising port of call as the sun begins to set. There's a lovely full moon and the beginning of Santana wind that promises warm temperatures

tomorrow. It may take some time, but I think we're going to become more and more accustomed to the cruising life.

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