



Pocket Cruising and Micro Adventures

A simple sailing life
- on a budget

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CONTENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER 1 WHY DO WE SAIL?

CHAPTER 2 MICRO ADVENTURES

CHAPTER 3 WHY SMALL IS GREAT

CHAPTER 4 SAILING ON A SMALL BUDGET

CHAPTER 5 CHOICE OF PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGY

CHAPTER 6 CHOOSE A GOOD BOAT

CHAPTER 7 ADVICE ON PURCHASING A 30-50 YEAR OLD BOAT

CHAPTER 8 TRAILER, MOORING OR MARINA BERTH

CHAPTER 9 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

CHAPTER 10 SECOND HAND AS FIRST CHOICE

CHAPTER 11 SAILS

CHAPTER 12 ENGINE

CHAPTER 13 UNDER WAY, IN PORT OR AT ANCHOR

CHAPTER 14 SELECTED EXAMPLES OF SMALL CRUISING BOATS

CHAPTER 15 MODERN POCKET CRUISERS

CHAPTER 16 MY POCKET CRUISER EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 17 FINDING MY WAY TO SEA

CHAPTER 18 INSPIRATIONAL SOURCES AND LITERATURE

PREFACE

Dear sailor,

The purpose of this book is to display, what possibilities lie in front of you for becoming a cruising yachtsman on a modest budget with special emphasis on the wealth of small cruising yachts from the 1960's and 70's populating the marinas of Denmark and Northern Germany or commonly seen in the UK.

I wish to inspire you and offer you valuable things to reflect on, when choosing how to sail or what path to the sea will fit you, making your first experiences as sailor, skipper and boat owner.

Minimalism is the founding philosophy of the recommendations of this book, which expressly translates into just how little boat you will need to fulfill a meaningful sailing life? But it is by no means meant as a dogma. Each and every one of us should find exactly the sense and level fitting our needs and temperament. So if you simply cannot live without an ice cube machine onboard your tiny boat, you are still entitled to call yourself a minimalist in my perception.

The purpose of sailing an ever so little boat is to feel free. Free as a human being and free of worry, anxiety, hustle and bustle. Free to experience the joy of being in nature by sailing and by being part of the companionship, being in the same boat will give you.

In the first chapters of this book, a series of recommendations of strategies for fitting out and using a

boat are offered. Including navigation, choice of engine, equipment, cooking, heating and water supply etc. This book is not thought of as a textbook on sailing, but as the sort of personal advice you would find at your local marina from experienced sailors. If you are new to sailing, you should therefore read one of the many proper textbooks on practical sailing, attend a sailing school and learn to navigate. But if you will benefit from some of my advice, my mission is completed.

The “pocket cruiser” is a modern concept, indicating that we speak about the smallest of boats. In America pocket cruisers are referred to as sailboats below 30-33 feet, which can seem just as meaningless as our self acclaimed standard of 26 feet (under the statute of the facebook group “Dansk Pocket Yacht Club”), when you consider that these boats of the 60’s and 70’s were thought of as regular family yachts and measured up to the 1/2 ton IOR offshore racing yardstick.

Just the same, the standard for a sensible first sailboat for a young family of today is negotiable or subject to a deliberate minimalistic choice for others.

My definition of a genuine pocket cruiser is a sailboat, you can cruise in and stay overnight. It is a boat you can sail and master on your own, get to your port of call - in both good or bad weather. The pocket cruiser should not be a statement nor a demonstrative deselection or denunciation of other ways of sailing but an expression of an active positive choice.

Hence, the selection of pocket cruisers on display in this book fall into two categories: The diminutive sailboats up until 22 feet and the smaller family yachts between 23 and 26 feet. There is an enormous selection of attractive

second hand yachts in the upper end and almost the same amount of the most tiny ones.

I have limited myself to a selection of boats generally available in Denmark. You will however look in vain for some boat types. It has to be that way.

Finally, towards the end of this book, I will share my personal pocket cruising experience and how I found my way to sea.



Simple living: Putting the kettle on in the cockpit on a simple camping stove at anchor.

And just to put the finger on it: This is how not to do it. Safety at sea should not be taken as lightly, as I did in this picture from 2001.



My wife constantly feeds us with hot coffee and chocolate 10 when underway.

1. WHY DO WE SAIL?

The essence of sailing

Why do we sail? That is the fundamental question. What parts of the essence of sailing do we pursue and cultivate? The simple answer is found in the latin proverb

“Navigare necesse est”

Sailing is necessary. A different answer might be: Because I can.

A common denominator for many small boat yachtsmen could be the freedom experienced in sailing, or it could be a variety of things we profit from sailing defining our individual approach at the essence of sailing. There are many aspects of sailing and individually we may see sailing as experiences in the framework of nature, as a personal development laboratory or something entirely different. Unlike any other leisure activity I can think of, owning and sailing a boat requires so many different competencies of us and there will always remain unexplored areas of competency to pursue.

Nature's room

Sailing is a marvellous opportunity to explore nature and the coasts, colours, scents and wildlife in the sea and along the coast. An opportunity to feel the earth moving physically and sensuously. The everchanging nature in all its beauty and uncompromising toughness. The water, the light, the wind, the clouds and temperature. From relaxing bathing holiday to sheer survival and back again in no time at all.

The development laboratory

Training to dare daring. Making decisions and living with their consequences, getting acquainted with your personal physical and mental potential for better or worse. I dare a lot more today, than when I first headed to sea in a small keelboat many years ago. I have become a “brave chicken,” in the sense that I retain the realism of fear when choosing my challenges.

“Nec temere. Nec timide!”

(Neither reckless nor timid - the motto of the Royal Danish Naval Academy, originally a quotation of admiral Niels Juel - 1629-1697)

The meditation room

Sailing is an activity of great meditative quality, which you can enjoy in your spare time. The challenge of the monotony of sailing is an aim in itself for emptying your mind, think of nothing and just being. The rhythmic patterns of the boat - much resembling music - is a fantastic catalyst to transcend to a meditative state just like long stretches, where conversations dry out and stillness take their place. When sailing alone, I love to stand at the helm with the tiller in my back and eyes closed, becoming one with the boat and its movement, while my footing becomes grounded and solid.

The play room

Fun playing trips with like minded grown up girls and boys, ready for some rough fun in fresh conditions. Up with the spinnaker, trimming, experimenting. Racing could be exactly that kind of playground, where we unfold and have great fun.

The navigation room

Navigation is both an intellectual challenge and almost an artform of existential and spiritual proportions. I like to perform it with a gps as well as manually with a paper chart, hand bearing compass and ruler, noting the escapades in the log for reading later so I can relive the cruises.

It is the room between navigation and seamanship. Knowing the strengths and limitations of your boat with the crew. Where things are taken into consideration and a route best making use of wind, weather, landscape and sea is planned.

The coffee room

Pottering about in your homely bay or estuary. Brewing coffee and telling yarns. Here the social capital is growing and with interest. Weekend trips with culinary peaks and fitting rations of redwine in the officers' mess. Even in the colder outer season, talking into the night. Sailing as a way of spending time together.

Team expeditions

Sailing can be a shared experience with a hand picked crew, where the journey is an expedition in its own right and the goal just a waypoint to round; knowing that we are homeward bound again. The best thing about long passages is when we tune into the rythm of the ship, which is the spirit a good crew creates and is the social and maritime frame of the journey.

Life onboard

I just love the life onboard after provisioning, bunkering and stowing away personal gear, books and charts down below and making it work as an independent selfsustainable unit

for days at sea without permanent power supply or fresh provisioning. Whether alone or with a friend or the family, I enjoy making my little ship work satisfactory under all conditions. Adjusting to the rythm of the ship and tuning into its movements in the swell.

Life in port

Lying in a cosy holiday port with new neighbours each and every other day. Driving your inner rythm down in a different gear than back home on dry land. Or literally going down to your home port and checking the mooring lines, fingering the sea charts or have a cup of coffee - or just sit and do nothing while staring in front of you. Clearing up and cleaning up to make a tight ship.



A successful cruise equals a happy crew. Especially in the early years, my wife Mette enjoyed port life as a reward for enduring the sailing. Now we both enjoy sailing as well as cosy time spent in port.

Fundamentally I love sailing as a happy dance, an elusive harmony, when everything falls into a higher unity, and the sheer joy and happiness enjoyed on your own or with a crew.

You need to figure out, which rooms fit your sailing perception or your sailing existence the best; Whatever floats your boat!

2. THE MICRO ADVENTURE

“If the whole is ever to gladden thee,
Then that whole in the smallest thing thou must see.”
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

When it comes to pocket cruising, the idea of minimalism fits the concept of micro adventures like a hand in a glove.

Under way you have an enormous amount of time for yourself. Your best friends are the binoculars. Everything out there in the horizon is interesting, when we have exhausted our energy and attention on sail trim and navigation.

My wife and I crossed the bay of Køge in the Øresund between Zealand and the Swedish coast in stinging heat and bothered by millions of annoying flies. “I want to see a seal” she suddenly burst out. “You cannot simply demand to see a seal,” I replied. “Why of course I can. See!,” she answered. I was already armed with the binoculars to keep a lookout for bouys and lights, so now I just had to add seals to my list! And half an hour later to my astonishment something dark was lying bopping on the surface a few hundred metres to port: A seal! Mette’s self confidence soared after this experience. Thus, we created content, joy and experience for each other on a day, which was easy to hate because of a long tedious passage under engine, flies buzzing everywhere and a relentless stinging sun.

The adventure begins just outside of the breakwater. We don’t have to circumnavigate the world. Micro adventures are created for us, who stay at home. We rejoice every time we see a harbour porpoise, and the first of the season is

always a party to celebrate. It is duly noted in the log at night, so that I can reread and relive the big joys in the little things in the comfort of my armchair during the winter.

Birds, ships, other boats, to greet and be greeted not to mention sailing close to a coast enjoying its distinct contours and landscapes. A heron in a corner of Svendborg Sound near Troense, which we always check out, or the cows on a hillside at the island Bjørnø, which I circumnavigate frequently.



My son Emil the proud fisherman after catching a Garfish. That was truly a great micro adventure for all the kids involved. About half an hour after the picture was taken, the fish was prepared and fried in butter on the ship's stove.

The shallower the draft of the pocket cruiser, the more possibilities we have for getting close to coastal nature experiences. Several small ports become accessible, that are otherwise denied to boats of more than 1.0-1.2 metres draft. You can explore shallow waters usually unattainable (with due consideration for protected nesting areas of birds

and wildlife). For a large part, Danish inland waters (the Baltic Sea) are for the majority rather shallow, so the world becomes significantly bigger for the smallest of sailboats.

I remember when my son caught a garfish in the middle of a fresh force 5 sailing trip. Later, when safely moored it was the most amazing experience for the five children aboard to skin, clean and fry the fish and sharing it in five small portions.

When lying in port with children aboard the best micro adventures are often catching crabs and the tiny ill tempered eel pouts, playing with them in a bucket before releasing them back into their natural habitat again. If we join them in their activity, it will also become an adult micro adventure. It is a privilege that we are allowed to experience the little wonders of nature, wher ever we encounter them.



Catching crabs in a fishing net is an instant adventure for every child when lying in port.

Visiting the numerous small islands of the Southern Funen Archipelago is a micro adventure, where you feel the clock has been turned backwards to the 1950's, and where a personal adventure of mine is to check that a simple farm house lamp is still in its place on the facade of a farm in the middle of the village at Lyø island.

Mette wasn't particularly keen on visiting the small island Hjortø. Only 6 people live there in each their farmhouse and the tiny harbour only offers cold running water, a toilet and electricity for visiting yachts. However, she was overly enthusiastic, when we managed to observe one of the very rare fire-bellied toads. I still recall the tranquility and beauty on a beach by the reef, where we sat and enjoyed reading a book.

Micro adventures have both meditative qualities such as indulging or immersing yourself in something, be it purely experiencing or of an augmenting natural presence. It is both healthy mindfulness, recreational and an experience. Wikipedia is your friendly travel companion. A wealth of interesting knowledge at hand, where ever we have mobile coverage.

Many years ago, my friend Jørn and I visited the island Samsø in Kattegat on our first cruise together with our two little boys in the Hurley 20 Tulle. We visited the minute Kyholm museum in Ballen and witnessed two old blokes in soldiers' uniforms from the 1850's giving a cannon salute. We visited Nordby by bus and got lost in the spruce forest labyrinth and followed in the foot steps of the vikings along the Kanhave canal. The highlight being resting for our lunch in the fields and a bull following us with only a most questionable wire fence between us.

It is a quite extraordinary experience of enjoyment to be able to drop anchor and eat a foodpack or anchor for the night in a place free from any manmade sounds - on your own or in the company of a dear friend. The silence is an adventure in itself.

Underway I sometimes close my eyes and feel the wind by turning my head from side to side, sensing the warmth or the chill, feeling the rain dripping on me or how I gradually get dry and warm again in the sun.

Also the lonely trips in the after season, where it gets really dark and chilly at night, can be an adventure. Often there are but a few other living souls in the ports in late August or September. There is no better reward after a fresh and even tough passage than getting into port, clearing up down below, putting the heat on, taking off your shoes and curling

up in a bunk. And then expectantly enjoying the smell of your supper simmering on the stove, while you reflect on the day's sail and the day to follow. I love these moments; letting the silence be replaced by a piece of jazz or classical music on my bluetooth loudspeaker, letting tiredness be replaced by the gratitude of feeling full after a meal and a glass of wine.



The digital logbook and app 'Keepsailing' was created for recording and documenting fun, cosy little adventures which can be relived enjoyed in the comfort of your armchair, writing down your experiences and sharing them with family and friends. Read more about the app at keepsailing.net. The trip shown covered 4.5 nautical miles from Lyø to Dyreborg.

On the first outing of the season, I notice how the boat heels over for in a gust of wind and how it reacts by charging forward with just light pressure on the tiller, accelerating from 1.5 to 3 knots and then suddenly 5-5.5 knots.

The quirking sounds from rig and sails vibrantly and enthusiastically telling me that she is in her element and just cannot wait to take off. Every year I need to get my

sealegs back and use the first outing to get accustomed to the boat's movements.

Come autumn, the days get shorter and the evenings pitch black and a micro adventure can be reading a book in the shelter of the sprayhood from the cold wind, feeling the warming signs that the sun is still in power, a life giving cup of coffee underway and having a good talk with my crew. Not to mention a heartening sandwich down below after putting into port and clearing up the ship.

Part of the philosophy of the micro adventure is to find it in the seemingly insignificant.



My son Oscar also wanted to go on an adventure with his dad and the autumn holiday included an overnight adventure onboard safely moored. We read a bunktime story in candle light and crept under a few layers of blankets into our sleeping bags and enjoyed a wonderful micro adventure. Getting to experience adventures seen through the eyes of small children is truly a gift. And just as fond a memory for me today as it was for him.

3. WHY SMALL IS GREAT

Small craft are easily managed. When having an overview, you get the sensation of being able to master the little beast. Also contributing to the overview is simplicity. The less you fill up your boat with, the better it can be managed. Economy adds to the overview. Small sailboats are often quite cheap to acquire and more apt to be used with cheaper alternatives to expensive marina berths or moorings like mud berths or stationed on a trailer. Sails are cheaper. Anti-fouling paint, cleansing and polishing articles and all that goes along with maintenance are proportionally more affordable. Insurance can also be a lot less costly.

I favour the idea of a boat you “can wear;” as an expression of feeling at one with your boat, sensing its motion in the swell and through the water. The idea that your boat becomes a small container of your whole world, where you have everything you need within reach. There is profound sustainability and healthy condition in maintaining a certain degree of self-sufficiency; food, roof over your head, a warm berth, as well as the wind and modest quantity of petrol to take you, where ever you wish to go. Keep turning to port and you will eventually circumnavigate the globe or your local small island. And you can do it even in the smallest of crafts. But you will also be able to experience the adventure right in front of you, just outside the harbour. Entrusted with yourself under the grace of weather and wind.

Manageable

When mooring, you can fender off with your hands or haul you and the boat forward with the help of poles and guiding

lines in a tight spot. Even the smallest outboard can push a small sailboat with ease. There are no heavy things or need for strong muscle in a tiny boat. On a 27 foot sailboat however, the big genoa alone is rather heavy when folded and packed in its sailbag. This is very different in smaller boats. The spring cleaning and preparation is less time consuming and demanding. Fewer square metres to clean, polish, wax and paint. Heating down below can be narrowed down to lighting the stove for 10 minutes with a lovely snug warm boat as a result. You can take it out of the water yourself in many places, using a self-serviced crane and towing it on a trailer. Low draft also makes it possible to beach it and wade on shore. A smaller anchor is also good for your backside. Sitting down below, you can reach almost anything from your position in the middle of the cabin. Mistakes are punished less severely and with manageable consequences still contributing to your learning experience.

Little people will have a positive experience, when they realise, that they can master a small sailboat. Small sailboats are quite simply more at eye-level for children; they can fish with a fishing net and bathe from the boat. Every rope or line to haul require less effort than on bigger boats.

Sailing should be for every one

It ought to be financially and humanly affordable for every one to go sailing. With lots of small old boats in the market it is more than ever a sport for the common man, and there is a renaissance tendency. Free boats and cheap boats everywhere. Often a bit stale and neglected, but rubbing beneath the sad surface, letting the high pressure cleaner and polish do their bit, genuine little gems reveal themselves as sleeping beauties, waiting for the love of their second life and rescuer and for new hope and glory.