

Mir's First Sail

Join century-year old S/V *Mir* on her maiden voyage: A modern day tale of high seas, scorching heat, dust storms, pirates, and a commitment to making dreams come true.

By crew member **Sam Scott**.

After nine months of non-stop dedicated work, *Mir* was finally ready to begin her maiden voyage from Malta to Singapore. On 7 June, 2010, we cast the lines, raised the sails, and set off on our crossing of the Mediterranean Sea to Port Said, Egypt.

The Mediterranean weather was kind to us: light winds, low swells and dry skies – a perfect opportunity for us to work out the kinks and get used to *Mir's* new, untested systems. We arrived in Port Said ten days after departing Malta and spent a week doing small repairs and exploring Egypt before starting our two-day travel down the Suez Canal. Our 31-meter ship suddenly felt like a toy

boat beside the mammoth container ships we passed in the narrow canal.

Once through the Suez and into the Red Sea, we experienced our first strong weather on board *Mir*. On the short stretch of sea between the Gulf of Suez and Hurgada, Egypt, our next port of call, we were met with nearly gale force winds. It was harrowing and exciting, with waves erupting over the bow and the wind gaining in strength, but it all went well.

Our three-week voyage down the Red Sea was characterised by three things: wind, dust and heat. We skipped many planned diving stops because it was just too windy to anchor or dive safely. With the wind came the dust, which covered every surface on *Mir*. And the heat... wow! It was over 38 Celsius even at night for weeks. Despite the extreme elements, we had a beautiful voyage with some excellent diving. One of the best moments was being visited by hundreds of dolphins in the Red Sea. They never missed an opportunity to ride *Mir's* bow.

Our next leg was into the Gulf of Aden, which saw a recent rise in pirate activity off the coast of Somalia. Luckily we saw a lot more warships patrolling the waters than pirates. Two quick stops in Yemen and Oman for repairs and supplies, and then the Indian Ocean crossing. High winds and huge seas accompanied us all the way, but at this point we were used to it, and had a great trip to Sri Lanka.

Our voyage sure sounds like something out of an old adventure novel, but it's all happening right now; the first of many exciting chapters in the story about *Mir* and her crew. We are currently in Sri Lanka, and by the time you read this, we will finally be home at Raffles Marina. Come by and say hello! ☺



Please join PCRF in their mission: "To stop the destruction of the world's coral reefs by 2020 and restore their beauty, health and abundance within this century." www.pcrf.org , www.biosfirindonesia.org