

the bumfuzzles are back

When Pat and Ali Schulte hit the cruising scene back in 2004, they made quite an impression on armchair sailors the world over. On their blog (www.bumfuzzle.com), the 20-something Chicagoans recounted their adventures — and missteps — after buying a Wildcat 35 catamaran almost on a whim and taking off on a circumnavigation. That these young whippersnappers had no clue what they were doing —



a fact they freely admitted — sent many old salts into tizzies, and the couple weathered a hurricane of criticism during their relatively easy trip around aboard *Bumfuzzle*, which ended in '07.

The next adventure the young travelers set out on was driving a '65 Porsche 356c cross-country in the Great American Race, followed by a two-year road trip in a restored '58 VW bus. Originally, the bus tour was to have lasted much longer but Ali discovered she was pregnant on the voyage from Argentina to Germany aboard a cargo ship. The 'Bums' sold the bus and made their

Ali, Pat and Owest — and 'The Bump' — Schulte, a.k.a. The Bumfuzzles, are setting off on another sailing adventure.

way to Puerto Vallarta to welcome their new family member.

"Signing a five-month lease on an apartment was the biggest decision of our lives," laughs the effervescent Ali. "Here I was, eight-months pregnant and I kept thinking 'What if we don't want to stay that long?' I never wanted to 'settle down' because, truthfully, once you do, you never go again." But these vagabonds didn't have to worry — their love of travel is clearly stronger than the lure of shoreside comfort.

Not long after baby Owest (pronounced 'West') was born, Pat and Ali were looking at boats again. "We thought we were done with boats," admitted Pat. "but when we had the baby, we started to think, 'What kind of life do we want for her?' and came back to living aboard." They explained that the traveling lifestyle is what's important to them, whether by Porsche, boat or motorhome. No matter their vehicle of choice, the 'Bumfuzzles' just want to keep on moving.

Their current vehicle, a Spindrift 43 pilothouse they bought in Rio Vista last July, is about as far from a flashy new catamaran as one can get, which they're quite happy about. "We wouldn't have bought another cat because that would've been repeating the same old thing," noted Ali. Pat agreed: "We want to learn something new, have new experiences and, of course, have something to complain about." (During their circumnavigation, Pat admits to writing about how "stupid" he thought monohulls were. "We get emails every day from people telling us they can't wait for us to see how differently this boat sails.")

Pat and Ali's original plan was to take their time outfitting the boat and leave this November for Mexico, but their departure date has been bumped up — baby-bumped, that is. Come August or so, this traveling family of three will become a family of four. "The baby isn't really changing our plans," said Ali, "we're just leaving a little sooner

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transpac

feet for the race, and is very close to having a replacement rig delivered after losing the original in March's Cabo Race (this despite Fauth's already having a new maxi under build — talk about commitment!). Also in the mix will be John MacLaurin's Davidson 70 *Pendragon VI*, which is just getting sorted out after a couple years of teething issues.

There are no fewer than seven ULDB 70s signed up for the race that spawned their type, plus a handful of TP 52s. Throw in some other designs that have previously proven successful in the race, like SC 52s, SC 50s, J/125s and Open 50s, plus some new ones like Laura

'Samba Pa Ti' was overall and Barn Door winner in the '09 TransPac. The boat won't be back this year, which leaves the field wide open.

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Schlessinger's brand-new Kernan 47 *Katana* and this year's overall and division wins should be pretty hard-won.

Bay Area-based notables include Chip Megeath's R/P 45 division-winner *Criminal Mischief*, Andy Costello's J/125 *Double Trouble*, Philippe Kahn's Andrews 68 *Pegasus*, Alex Mehran's Open 50 *Truth* (holder of the doublehanded record as Philippe Kahn's *Pegasus OP-50*), Wayne Zittel's SC 50T J/*World's Hula Girl*, and Bill Helvestine's SC 50 *Deception*. All of these boats could threaten for division or overall wins. For more info, check out www.transpacrace.com.

— rob

bumfuzzles — cont'd

than we thought."

For now, Pat and Ali just want to get the new *Bumfuzzle* — which they'd had yet to actually sail when we spoke to them — to Puerto Vallarta as quickly as possible and get ready for The Bump's arrival. But by the time the cruising season gets into full-swing this fall, Pat and Ali fully intend to head to the Sea of Cortez to start their cruise. "We'll bum around Mexico for awhile before moving on," said Pat. "We'll probably do another circumnavigation but that's not the motivation behind this trip."

Asked what their biggest fear was for this first leg, Ali said she was only worried that Owest, now 17 months, would get seasick. "Cleaning up puke isn't fun," she laughed. Indeed, after nearly a decade of constant travel, little scares these 37-year-old adventurers. "When people know too much, they get too worried," noted Pat. "Sometimes ignorance really is bliss."

— ladonna



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