



YouTube **YACHTING**

The cruising life can look like it's all sunny sailing in tropical paradise from the outside, but ask anyone who's done it and they'll tell you there's a tremendous amount of work to be done before casting off. Four of the sailing community's favorite multihull vloggers weigh in on choosing their boats, making repairs and being brave when leaving it all behind.

By Lydia Mullan

Poly, Neel 50

Ania, Bartek, Kuba and Julian Dawidowski

In 1997, the 23-year-old Bartek dreamed up an alternative way of living, but did not yet have the means to realize it. Nearly 20 years later, though, thanks to his perseverance and his wife, Ania's, support, the project has now taken form as a stunning trimaran. The key was acquiring a concept boat from then-fledgling Neel Trimarans shipyard—the Neel 50—which presented some serious challenges as the boat was not yet ready for prime time. However they also saw it as an opportunity to buy at a deep discount and then fully finish the vessel exactly as they wanted it, according to a long list of specs Bartek had compiled in his years of sailing.

To this end, Ania and Bartek spent June of 2014 in Fort Pierce, Florida, checking off all the safety-related items on their list. Bartek then upgraded all the electrical and electronic systems himself, only outsourcing rigging jobs. Throughout this process, the two thrifty DIY-ers loaded up on discounted materials and equipment, mainly from the local boat junkyard, to make the dream possible. Finally, at the end of the month they sailed *Poly*, as they had christened her, to New York. Aside from an autopilot issue that Bartek fixed underway, it was an uneventful trip.

From there they continued to Poland, crossing the Atlantic comfortably in just 14 days. However, more repairs were on the horizon, and the next year proved to be the most challenging in their lives, as they disassembled the trimaran to bare superstructure and literally rebuilt it. Specific projects included new steering, rigging, repowering, a further update to electronics and electrical systems, and a completely new interior. All the while, Ania was running a company, Bartek was working as an airline pilot, and the family was growing as Ania gave birth to their second son. Nonetheless, the hard work paid off and when they left Poland a year later, it was aboard a completely new vessel.

In the years since, they have covered over 43,000 miles around the Atlantic, generally spending winters in the Caribbean, springs in the Bahamas and hurricane seasons in the United States or Suriname. They're planning for more Caribbean plus Europe and the Pacific in the next few years, but there's no pressure as they are exactly where they want to be in life.



Babies onboard! Ania and Bartek are raising their youngsters for the cruising life

Most important of all, they are absolutely in love with their little ship and say they would not trade their life's dream for anything. Among other things, *Poly* has proved the perfect platform for living the life off the grid in harmony with nature, while enjoying and bringing up kids in as much freedom as is possible. They live fully sustainable lives, mostly on anchor or mooring, powered by solar and wind energy.

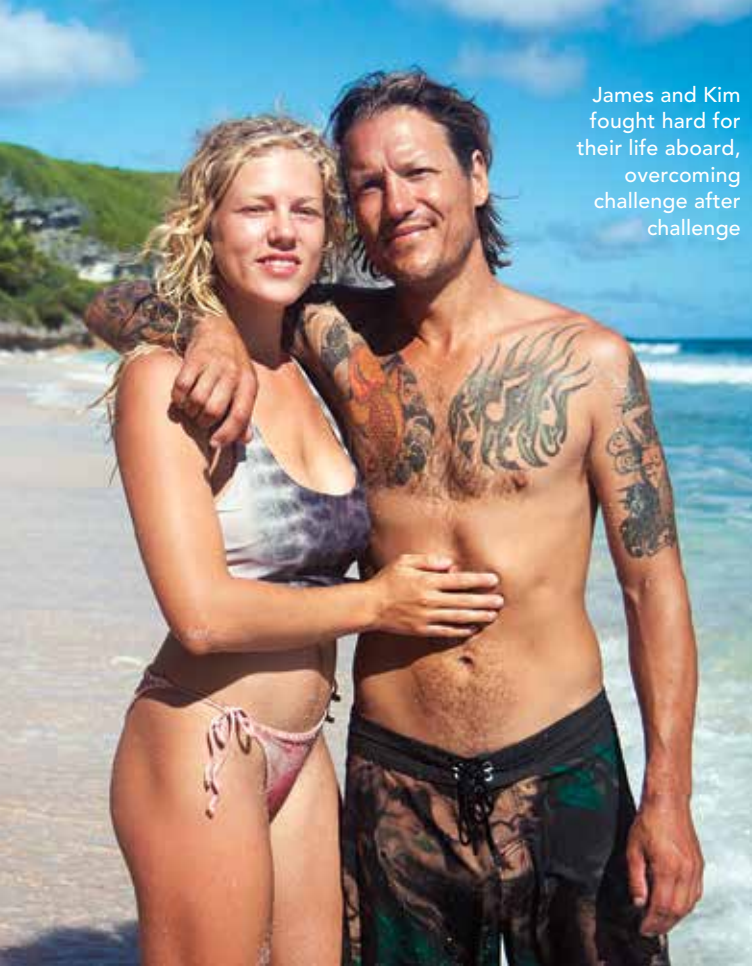
Last year they also started a YouTube video blog called SailOceans, which covers everyday life aboard. They share the amazing places, people and adventures they experience underway while promoting the sustainable lifestyle and conscious living through meditation and tantra. However, they consider their most important theme to be motivating others to discover their dreams and go after them no matter how impossible they may seem.

For more, see sailoceans.com



Poly's owners stay grounded by playing music onboard





James and Kim fought hard for their life aboard, overcoming challenge after challenge



a medley of technical problems.

“We had shackles explode and stanchions rip out and broke nearly every piece of our standing rigging. Now we start reefing at 15 knots,” he says. Then there were other disasters along the way—both rudders sheared off at the hull, the autopilot broke on the way to Easter Island with 2,000 miles to go and a broken latch caused a locker to fill with hundreds of gallons of water.

Still, the couple remained optimistic when confronted with each new problem. “It was tough in the beginning because *Zingaro* was a coastal cruiser her whole life,” says James. “When I bought her she didn’t even have a bimini or VHF radio. I spent a couple months refitting her for sea, but it’s hard to get that right the first time; it’s trial and error at that point. Pure evolution. We had to upgrade so many things that first year that we came up with the motto: Break it, bail it, fix it, sail it!”

Despite everything, *Zingaro* ended up being the perfect match for the couple’s cruising life. “Sailing is so much fun on this catamaran. Our fuel bill is less than \$60 per month, mostly because we can sail in 5 knots of wind.” James and Kim have been documenting their experience on YouTube since 2016, sharing their joy, frustration and knowledge with the world. It’s not always pretty, but they’re making it work.

If you want to learn more about their adventures, find them out on the Pacific or on svzingaro.com

Zingaro, 1984 Crowther Spindrift 38

James Evenson and Kim Jensen

When James was searching for his go-around-the-world boat, it was love at first sight with *Zingaro*, a homebuilt performance-oriented design by Lock Crowther. Only once did he look back. It was July, and the Tuamotu Islands should have been warm and moderate, but instead the entrance to the atoll James was aiming for—just 300ft from the boat—was quickly disappearing behind a wall of water. The 47-knot gusts made it impossible to steer the boat toward safety inside the atoll. “It was the only time I regretted being on a catamaran. I was cursing the windage of the catamaran,” James said. “A monohull would have made it through the entrance by motor-ing, but not us. Instead we had to run with the storm for several days.”

There was a steep learning curve for sailing the multihull. “I thought I was a pretty good sailor before I started cruising, but since *Zingaro* was my first catamaran I soon realized I had no idea. These boats are less forgiving of clueless captains than their single-hulled counterparts. We sailed way too fast the first year, not realizing the stress we put the boat through,” he says, which led to



It was love at first sight for James and Kim’s *Zingaro*

Nahoa, Lagoon 410

Ben and Ashley TK

Often life is defined by a few key decisions, a few moments of bravery. Ben and Ashley will be the first to admit they were scared when they quit their jobs, sold the house and then sank their savings into a boat. They were scared when they rode out their first gale, and ultimately terrified they had signed up for a mission to sail around the world. But after four years at sea and half of their circumnavigation, most things have become routine. Playing weather systems to their advantage and making overnight passages are often a weekly occurrence. What doesn’t become routine is experiencing new cultures or stumbling into the next remote village and being accepted into families all over the world.

But are they happy with the boat they chose? And why make videos? Living aboard longterm is a completely different scenario than a multi-month cruise through the islands. Your boat is all you have and your sanity depends on being comfortable and at ease.

Thinking back, they remember the many stories they heard about boat performance, seaworthiness and epic tales of survival at sea. Sticking to the tradewind belts above and below the equator keeps them, for the most part, pointed downwind. Upwind sailing performance is simply irrelevant. It’s less about speed and more about keeping the crew rested, happy and alert.

Nahoa is a production Lagoon 410 catamaran from 2005. She’s not the newest cat out there sailing, but she is more than adequate. Ben and Ashley strongly believe she is the perfect blend between comfort, performance and cost.

Sharing videos of their travels on YouTube has not only opened up a new way to fund their circumnavigation, but has also given them a voice to share the many different cultures this world has to offer. Most recently, while exploring the outer islands of Papua New Guinea, the *Nahoa* crew were shocked and excited to find trade to still be the primary method of exchange of goods and services. Fish hooks, clothing, rope and

Aboard *Nahoa*, the goal is experience, not speed



Ben and Ashley meet people from all over the world in their travels

light sail material were highly valued and exchanged for fresh fruit and vegetables. Relying on YouTube income has also forced them into situations and cultures that would have never been available to them before. It’s opened up a whole new world.

After 30,000 miles and over 30 countries, Ben and Ashley feel have just scratched the surface of what the world has to offer. Their adventure started in the Caribbean, took them through the Panama canal, across the Pacific and into the island nations on the western

side. With a stop in Papua New Guinea, they then sailed up to Palau in the Philippines and are now back down in Indonesia. What’s next? They have their sights set on the Indian Ocean and there’s even talk of a second lap to visit all the places they missed on their first. Their advice? Be Bold. Be Brave.

For more from Ben and Ashley, visit sailingnahoa.com.

Zatara's crew has been documenting their adventures on YouTube for years



The whole family pitches in to help sail Zatara

Zatara, Privilege 58

Renee, Keith, Anna, Jack, Finn and Kate Whitaker

The Sailing *Zatara* YouTube channel began when a U.S.-based family of six decided they were tired of the typical nine-to-five, monotonous way of life in the suburbs and on a whim, picked up their entire world and moved it onto a sailboat. With absolutely no prior sailing experience, they taught themselves as they went along. After three years on the open water, they are all now full-fledged sailors.

The first leg of *Zatara's* adventure began in July 2016. Having purchased their 55ft Beneteau monohull in Florida, the Whitakers spent three months moving onto the boat and then set off. Their first trip across the Pacific Ocean was wild, exciting, ter-

rifying and an all-around a huge life lesson. When they reached Australia in November 2017, they also decided that a monohull was just too small for them, and so they sold it there in New South Wales and purchased their next floating home in Greece—a 58ft Privilege catamaran.

The second year of the family's open-ended sailing journey began in June 2018 in the Mediterranean Sea. They had a wonderful time exploring Europe and then crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean. In February 2019 they set sail again across the Pacific, and as of this writing, are en route to their next destination, New Zealand. After that the goal is to explore southeast Asia and circumnavigate as much of the world as they can before they get tired—or until all the kids move out and they have no more crew, whichever comes first.

They started their YouTube channel to document their adventures around the world for posterity and to laugh at back on dry land. Renee (Mom) does everything video related: she films, edits and maintains the entire channel. Keith (Dad) is the captain of the boat, and their four children—ages 12 to 18—are all dutiful deckhands.

Sailing, the family says, has brought them all closer together than ever before. They also hope to educate and inform with their videos, introducing other people to the world of sailing and suggesting alternatives to and an escape from a land-based life. Nothing makes their day more than when they've been told they've spread life-changing inspiration to others!

For more from the Whitakers, check out youtube.com/sailingzatara



The Whitakers want to educate by sharing their adventures