

Hauk Larsen Wahl &  
Morten Stødle



# THE DREAM OF THE WEST - INDIES



Four young  
sailors brave a  
long-distance  
voyage before  
the time of GPS



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OF  
THE WEST  
—  
INDIES**



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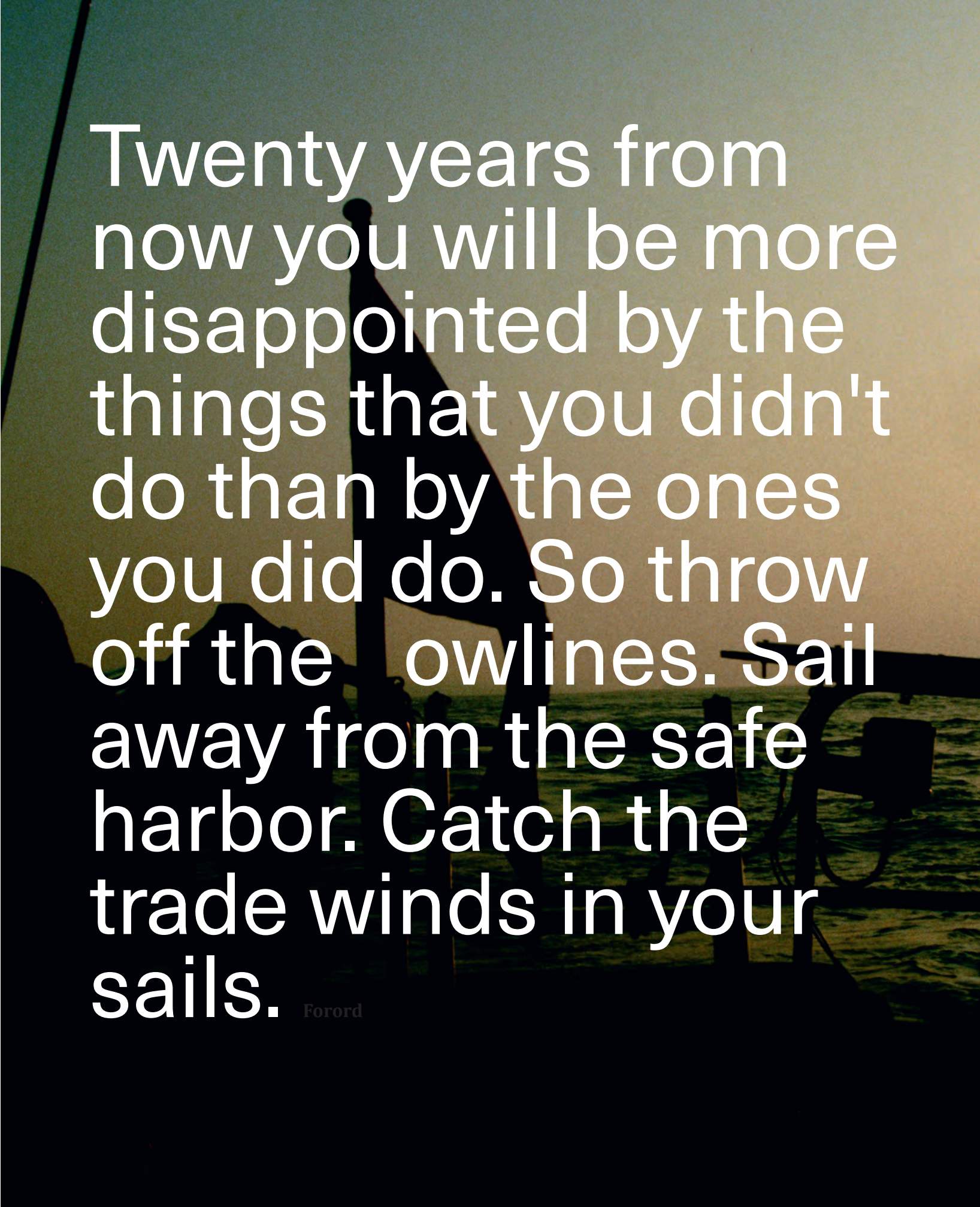
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A photograph of a person swimming in the ocean. The water is a vibrant blue, and the sky is a clear, deep blue. In the foreground, white foam from a wave is visible. The person is seen from behind, swimming towards the horizon. The overall scene is serene and peaceful.

**To our children**  
*Alexander and Cecilie*  
*Mattis and Sander*

A silhouette of a sailboat on the water at sunset or sunrise, with a large white quote overlaid.

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails.

Forord

A photograph of a boat's deck at sunset. The scene is dominated by dark silhouettes of nautical equipment, including a large circular lifebuoy and a vertical spar or mast with a pulley system. The background shows the ocean with gentle waves, and the sky is a warm, golden-orange color from the setting sun. The overall mood is serene and evocative of maritime exploration.

Explore.  
Dream.  
Discover.

MARK TWAIN



# Foreword

**BY PETTER LARSEN**

**I**n the summer of 1983, four relatively inexperienced, but brave and optimistic boys from Norway (Oslo and Bærum) agreed to sail to the Caribbean islands. They had a lot of courage, but no boat and little money, so surely it was impossible to achieve.

I had gotten my first boat, a 15-foot small 'Killing' when I was 15, and Hauk was the same age when he and his sister Linn got the same. Like me, he went on sailing trips with a friend from Tjøme in this shell of a boat where they lacked both an auxiliary engine and a toilet, slept on the teak deck and was gone for weeks without being heard from because the postcards from Smøgen (in Sweden) and Kragerø only arrived after they were back home.

The fact that they had almost gone down in the southern gale after questionable navigation at Rakkeboene seemed less dramatic when I heard about it afterwards than if the rescue company had called.

Hauk, Morten, Erling and Arne were barely of legal age when they launched the plan for long-distance sailing across the Atlantic; so, what does a father think and feel faced with such plans?

I had always dreamed of doing that trip and had few excuses not to have done it. So, my first thought was probably pride that my son and his friends would venture out on such an adventure. My next thought was of course some concern. Without having sailed across the ocean myself, I knew a good

deal from the many stories I had read, such as Carl Emil Pettersen's riveting travelogues. I thought that the most dangerous thing on such a sailing trip would not be experienced furthest away from home, but in the North Sea and over the Bay of Biscay, especially if one of the autumn storms hit them when they got there in October. When they finally managed to hire a 'suitable' boat and arranged for it to be transported to Portugal to start there, I was less worried than I had been during the summer weeks when the boys sailed Killing along the coast in Skagerak.

Today we communicate with the whole world via mobile phone or e-mail, and we easily forget that in 1983/84 we still used letters and postcards (which

took weeks) and calling home was not something the long-distance sailors would sacrifice a dollar for. So little did we know here at home about both the lovely sunny and warm sailing days in the Caribbean or the cold, wet and dangerous May days they experienced in the North Atlantic.

It was happy and relieved parents who welcomed the boys back on the Norwegian coast one day in May in 1984 after 8 months at sea. In retrospect, one must admit that one had not fully realized how risky the project actually turned out to be. That the four grew from boys to men in those months is beyond doubt.

HAUK 3 years old in  
the summer of 1966 on  
Tjøme



MORTEN fishing in  
Sandefjord, 5 years  
old, summer 1968



ARNE, 6 years old,  
on a sailboat in the  
summer of 1971 in  
Ny Hellesund



ERLING, 12 years old, scouts out  
to sea in the summer of 1975

# Introduction

This book has matured over almost 40 years since our sailing trip to the West Indies in 1983-84. We were four young Norwegians: Hauk Larsen Wahl, Morten Stødle, Erling Kagge and Arne Saugstad. Each of us dreamed of experiencing something special before university studies, work and the seriousness of life started.

We set out with three SLR cameras, two empty diaries and The New Testament, but most of all with a youthful courage. Some with KNS jackets and others with patched Levis jeans and knitted jumpers. We each had, in our own way, gained a relationship with the sea introduced through our parents; Petter Larsen and Anne-Lise Wahl; Trygve and Unni Stødle; Stein Kagge and Aase Gjerdrum; and Arne and Joy Saugstad.

The respect for our parents who supported us with positivity and wisdom before and during the trip has, over the years, come into a new light when we ourselves have started families and the next generation has a desire to realize their own dreams. It is all too easy to make exhortations and question important decisions in the lives of the younger generation.

The memories that were refreshed through the diaries and many pictures have helped recall additional experiences from this special trip. This means that the book has become a journey into the minds of two young people from the time the events happened.

We want to give an insight into how you can handle challenges without planning every detail, and how adventure, enthusiasm and a bit of luck help shape both the present and the future.

The book is also an invitation to take some chances in life and stretch the limits. We encourage taking the opportunities that come along that increase the likelihood of gaining remarkable experiences. The years go by so fast if you don't have any intense key chapters in your life like we had in 1983-84 and just choose the 'safe way' that is often expected by both family and society.

This has been the driving force behind the book about our diaries.

*Hauk og Morten  
Houston & Hosle  
August 2022*

# Wet Dream

## From Hauk's diary:

I had long had the dream of sailing my own boat from Norway to the West Indies and back, which became more concrete plans when Thor Bendik Weider and I worked around the world as deck hands on the Wilhelmsen ships Toyama and Barber Taif in 1981.

We drew up equipment lists, thought about crew and boat acquisition, financing, seasickness, palm trees, windsurfing, southern mermaids, calypso, and coral reefs.

I devoured the Lange-Nielsen book 'Ormen Stutte dit peppern gror' on a few winter nights in 1982 and really started to get an appetite for this adventure.

The project experienced sporadic periods of dormancy throughout the summer and autumn of 1982, and then at Christmas time, Thor Bendik withdrew in favor of business studies in the USA.

I contacted my skiing and sailing friend Erling Kagge in the spring of 1983 to ask if he was interested in joining me on a long trip, and he was.

From previous experience at sea, as 16-year-olds in 1979, we had sailed the family's

17-foot Killing 'Sexy' from Tjøme Norway to Strømstad Sweden, and on to Smøgen and back on a 3-week trip. With only sails, oars, and colorful headbands, we managed to get in and out of many harbors on the Swedish coast, where our ambitions for summer romances with blonde girls met a brutal reality in competition with the parties held aboard 40-foot motorboats with cabins, stereo and ice cubes in the Gin Tonic. That meant our optimistic collection of Durex condoms gathered dust that summer.

As a child, Erling had spent several summer holidays with two older brothers and his parents stowed aboard a small Hurley 22 sailboat, and a few years later the family's boat Kaptein Fritz was perhaps the one that transported the most wine and spirits per foot between Kiel in West-Germany and Oslo Norway in the month of July.

I was lucky to be exposed to sailing early on when I got an Optimist dinghy as a 6-year-old, then a Flipper dinghy, a Killing and had a couple of cold summers in a Maxi 95.

My father and grandfather were both highly skilled sailors in regattas in Scandinavia, with everything from Finnjolle, BB-11, Killing and Drake, to IOD, 5.5 meters and 22



10000 nautical miles with Jeanette VI September 1983 to May 1984

sq m Spissgatter. A few years later, my father sailed regattas with Yngling with my mother and a friend as crew. So, it was probably not surprising that I was also attracted to being on the water.

Erling and I considered boat purchases in England, and we also approached boat manufacturers and importers in Scandinavia with a view to testing their products on an Atlantic crossing, but there was, to our disappointment, zero response.

An advertisement was placed in the newspaper Fedrelandsvennen in Kristiansand where a rental price of NOK 60,000 was indi-

cated. We got 5-6 answers, but they were generally too small and impractical for a long trip.

A lot of free time was spent exchanging letters with various agencies in the Navy, as I had a wish to borrow navigation equipment. The commander at the Naval Defense Command (SFK) rejected the quartermaster's attempt to get freebies, but I had more luck in Marvika where the alcoholic lieutenant captain relieved the clothing store with four blue-bordered shirts.

In parallel with this, I tried to enlist colleagues in the military, but without success. It seemed that no peer was willing to invest a



A WORN out Ormen Stutte book read countless times over the past 40 years

year and NOK 40,000 on such an adventure.

It was then that Arne Saugstad, raised at Slemdal in Oslo, whom Thor Bendik and I had visited in Florida in 1981, appeared. Arne's father, Arne Senior, former doctor on the cruise ship Stavangerfjord, was the same age and boyfriend of my grandmother Mimmi. Despite his lack of sailing experience, Arne had a good combination of willingness to take risks, good humor, cooking talent, experience with converting tin soldiers into coins, and a general attraction towards mischief.

Morten Stødle from Hosle was a friend of Erling from the military service, whom I had not met before, but he showed a positive attitude and great interest in joining a long

trip even though his sailing experience was limited to windsurfing and frequent capsizing with a Flipper dinghy.

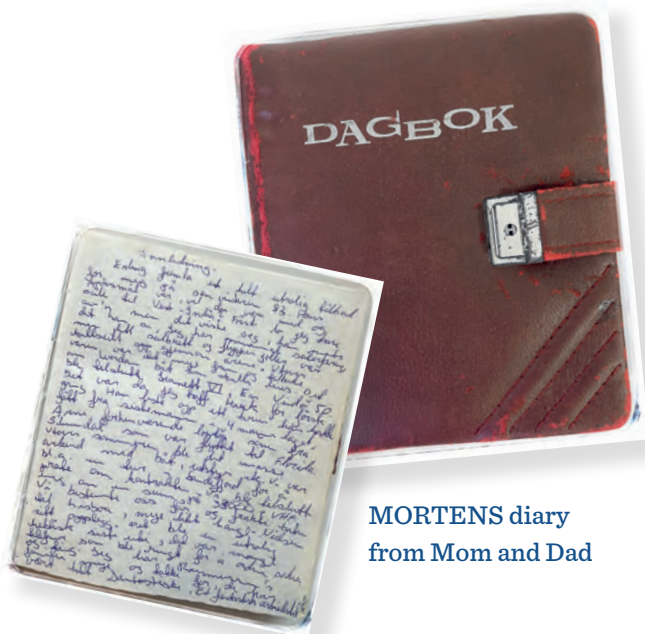
An advertisement was then placed in the newspaper Aftenposten which resulted in us being contacted by Jean Borelly Linaae, a wealthy and cheerful travel agency owner, and member of the Sandefjord Men's Club. He offered us his 35-foot sailboat Jeanette VI for NOK 35,000 for 8 months in exchange for an entitlement to 3 weeks of sailing in the West Indies with us as crew and demanded that we invest in a VHF radio with a so-called Selcall function. Jeanette VI was a beautiful Vindø 50 single master with aft cabin built at Vindøvarvet in Sweden.

The best alternative we had before Jeanette VI appeared was to rent a Beneteau 42 from Athens for 5 months for NOK 60,000, then we were offered a Comfort 34 from Peter Pan Yacht Charter for NOK 100,000, and finally Eder Lunde's sailboat for a staggering NOK 150,000.

So, we went with the offer for Jeanette VI, which turned out to be a floating piece of furniture in mahogany and teak, 7 berths and relevant navigation equipment.

But Jeanette VI was best suited for coastal sailing and not designed for Atlantic cruising, as it had a deep cockpit with small drainage holes, and a vertical mahogany door with open air slits down to the main cabin. But these were details that we did not worry about, at least not at that time.

My father, who was a shipping lawyer in Wilhelmsen, recommended that we include the wording "normal wear and tear shall be accepted" in the lease for Jeanette VI. That wording saved us a lot of financial worries eight months later.



MORTENS diary from Mom and Dad

The USS Jeannette was a 142-foot research vessel that sank 300 nautical miles north of Siberia in 1881 after being stuck in the ice for 2 years. Of the crew of 33, 20 men died of starvation and frostbite in the following weeks trying to get back to civilization. Perhaps it's a good thing we didn't know that story when we set sail with our Jeanette just over a hundred years later.

### From Morten's diary:

Erling presented me with an incredible offer in the late winter of 1983. His question was Would you like to sail to the West Indies? At fi st, I just laughed, but it turned out he was serious. I had minimal sailing experience, but the windsurfer and Flipper dinghy had been capsized many times over the years.

There was a lot of back and forth through-out the Spring about which sailboat we should rent. In the end it was Jeanette VI a Vindø 50. It was then that I met Hauk for the fi st time at his father's home at Jongskollen in Sandvika. There, Hauk read out a letter he had received from the last member of the four-man team, Arne from Slemdal, who had moved to Florida.

Over the summer, there was a lot of work with the boat, equipment etc. Among other things, we went on a trip to Sandefjord to talk to the owner Jean B. Linaae. It was with a



ULABRAND Båtforening. The home of Jeanette VI



**PARK Hotel Sandefjord** where we meet Jean B. Linaae for the first time under the Whalejaw-portal



certain humility that I walked through the gate of Ulabrand Båtförening in the center of Sandefjord just below Park Hotel. It was only then that I felt the dream of the West Indies begin to materialize. Now it wasn't just dreams and talk, now we were going to sign the contract and board Jeanette VI for the first time. This Yacht club and Park Hotel were synonymous with the wealth and class distinction in Sandefjord and I had many times walked on the wharves inside the horseshoe outside Park Hotel and seen the beautiful boats outside Ulabrand.

Dad had worked as a painter on Anders Jahre's suite at the top of the hotel in the late 1950s. Mom and Dad traveled down from Finnmark respectively Hammerfest and Indre Billefjord in 1958. The contrasts must have been great coming from a burnt down Finnmark and the reconstruction after the war to the paradise of Sandefjord where I was born in 1962 in Rådhusgata with the Whaling Museum as the nearest neighbour.

I still hadn't forgotten the trip with Grandfather Gunnar and my little brother Gunnar

when I was 12 years old, from Hammerfest to Berlevåg outside Nordkapp in a stiff gale. It had given me extra respect to feel the forces that gripped the trawler Rairo as we stomped off towards the north-east. The Barents Sea is no joke said my grandfather who had been sailing as a skipper and captain for 60 years at this point. It is part of the story that he never learned to swim, but as he said, if I fall in up here, it is better that it goes quickly than that it becomes a protracted battle. I've always wondered if he thought the same thing when they got a Soviet submarine in the trawl in the early 1950s. My grandfather's attitude to the trip was quite clear, 'you must seize this opportunity and remember you are old fellows. I was only 14 years old when I went on my first trip up to Bjørnøya as a deck boy. It shaped my life, and this trip will shape yours'. With those words in the back of our minds, we headed into the fjord outside of the town of Sandefjord on our first voyage with the boat's owner, Sjangen.

# Tjømebåen

## From Hauk's diary:

In the early summer of 1983, the crew of four, consisting of Arne aged 18, and Erling, Morten and me, all 20 years old, went down to Sandefjord to meet Jean (with nickname Sjangen) and take a test sail with Jeanette VI.

While we were docked at Ulabrand Båtforening, we were given a thorough review of the boat's details, from the sail wardrobe to the rig, cooker and Volvo Penta diesel engine. It was clear that Jean was a detail-oriented and tidy sailor who took good care of the boat he called his 'mistress' with a twinkle in his eye.

[This is duly commented on in the short film he recorded where he explained that he was going to the West Indies to visit a lady.](#)

We cast off, set sail, and then turned east past the Mefjorden, south of Lyngholmene, and then headed straight for Færder Lighthouse. With full sails up we danced away at 6-7 knots. All four had the opportunity to steer the boat and adjust sheets and halyards while Jean remained in command.

The wind picked up and we didn't quite know where we were on the chart when we suddenly observed a shoal reef barely 50 meters away.

Jean shouted 'Tjømebåen', and we

changed course abruptly to avoid running aground. The mainsail jibed and in the heat of the battle Arne lost his balance and the grinder handle fell overboard. 'Plupp' it said from the dark sea, followed by a mixture of juicy swear words from the skipper and restrained laughter from the crew. Then Morten had to take a leak from the foredeck, but he mistook windward from leeward, which meant that Jean had to dry his sunglasses.

With this starting point, Jean was probably not very impressed with our sailing skills to say the least, and probably wondered in his quiet mind if Jeanette VI would survive two Atlantic crossings. But the boat was insured well above the market value so it would always be financially profitable or Jean if we were to sink.

But Jean's concern about our competence in ocean sailing was a bit exaggerated, because I had taken a correspondence course in Navigation I+II at the NKS correspondence school while I was in the military; Morten had Televerket's VHF certificate, so he hopefully knew how a VHF radio worked and he had the latest model Walkman which we envied; Erling had been a PR manager at his school in Oslo, and one summer did 1,000 situps in one day with me; Arne could bake bread, had a sailing bag full of Bazooka Joe chewing gum, and liked The Doors and Pink Floyd, so there was an ideal combination of talents and drive in the gang.

# Preparation for departure

After the lease for Jeanette VI was signed and the boat insurance arranged, a lot of work was put in by all four to adequately equip the boat for a West Indies trip.

We received help from the Notto family who lent us a life raft, Berge Viking-style rain gear from Helly Hansen and robust harnesses. Then we got hold of survival suits, similar to those used on oil platforms, life jackets, and emergency beacons from Jotron, the necessary sea charts, almanacs, a cheap plastic sextant, 20-litre water tanks as a back-up if the main water tank on the boat were to run out or become contaminated, a solar panel, spare parts, first aid kit, a waterproof plastic container with prescription medicines, and much more.

Our own families, friends and employers were of considerable help during this hectic period.

Erling landed a sponsorship deal with a clothing retailer, and had specially made long-sleeved cotton jumpers for all four with the following text on the chest:

2 x TRANS-ATLANTIC  
with  
kagge wahl saugstad stødle  
and  
Marc O'Polo

Hauk secured a sponsorship agreement with several cases of free crispbread and fl t-bread from IDEAL fl tbrødfabrikk in Hamar, where his uncle Ola was the sales manager.

In mid-September 1983, we took over Jeanette VI in Sandefjord, and Erling and Hauk sailed the boat to Solvik boat association at Blommenholm, where we borrowed a berth from Arne's brother Per, while Arne and Morten drove home in Morten's old red VW beetle with a surfboard permanently stuck on the roof. Engine, sails and ropes were thoroughly checked, the boat outfit ed with what was on our long equipment list, and then it was prepared for transport on a Fred Olsen-owned cargo ship to Lisbon, Portugal.



**HAUK'S worn out sweater**

We decided to take this 'shortcut' to Lisbon inspired by Lange-Nielsen, as well as the fact that autumn had already arrived, with high odds of gales or storms in the North Sea and Bay of Biscay.

We installed a net in the ceiling under the cabin for storing fruit and vegetables.

To participate in more formal festivities during the trip, three of us brought blazers, trousers, black shoes, white shirts, and ties (KNS tie in my case). All Morten had was worn out denim trousers and the Norwegian Ski Association's jumper from the World Cup Skiing contest in 1982 in Holmenkollen.

Grandma Mimmi had sewn the doll Tobias for us, a small, blue, and gentle pirate

mascot with a gold ring in his ear, which was supposed to bring us good luck on the journey.

As a keen sports diver, Hauk had diving equipment stowed on board, consisting of 2x7.5-liter Technisub tanks, Spirotechnique BC, regulator, neoprene suit, lead belt, mask, snorkel, fins, and knife.

And as a final preparation for the dream of warm latitudes, Morten's windsurfer with rig and sail was strapped to the deck of Jeanette VI.

It tingled in body and mind to get going.

# D-Day

## 22. September 1983

### From Hauk's diary:

#### Midnight – 3:00am

Making the final touches to the boat before departure to Portugal with the 2,000-tonne 'Berby' belonging to Fred Olsen Lines.

Baker Hansen's Berge Viking bread mix is put away - large quantities of crisp bread and fl t bread from Ola at Ideal disappear in the draft. Personal equipment, map, sextant, emergency beacon, life raft, extra sails, Tobias, Norwegian beer and aquavit have arrived. The mast is down. There is an autumn smell in the night air and frost smoke. West Indies calling.

#### 8:00am

Picking up Arne at Slemdal. Erling and Morten will drive the boat into Oslo harbour. We prepare the boat crib and wait, wait and wait.

#### 2:00pm

The boat finally arrives. The guys had not managed to start the engine, and a mechanic had to be called who concluded that the



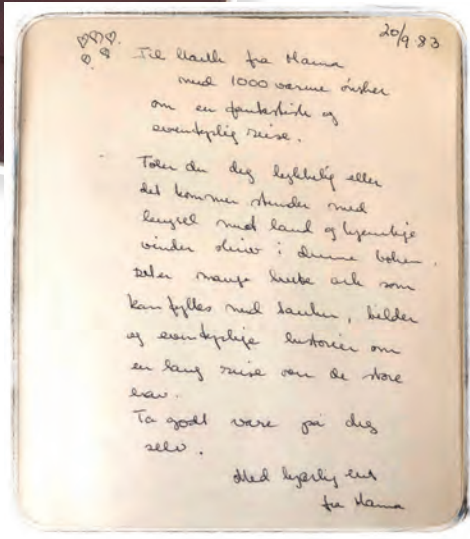
FACSIMILE: Cover of Time 19 of September 1983

## From Morten's diary:

This was D-Day for us, it was plotted into all the brain cells months in advance. This day was supposed to be departure for everyone and the boat to Lisbon. The day before we learned that only two could join. This made for a wonderfully stressful day for us; Erling and I stayed in Oslo to catch the plane down to Lisbon.' My red VW Beetle along with a leather jacket bought at a hippie market in Ibiza in the summer of 1982 was lent to Robin Vinter with wishes for luck.



**MORTEN'S** white Marco Polo shorts, which have now been passed down to Sander and are used to this day



**HAUK'S** diary

engine had not been serviced for several years, despite the fact that it was stated in the contract that it had been newly overhauled. The heart rate is at 200, but everything works out despite a number of 'now it's going to hell' periods.

### 6:30pm

MV Berby sets sail - Dad, Mom, Nicolai, Arne Sr, Per Kjær with family, Farfar & Else wave us goodbye. Erling and Morten will come after by plane to Lisbon. The feeling of freedom is the same as just over two years ago when I was working onboard Toyama. Jeanette VI stands safely under the deck and I'm happy.

# Knife fight on Berby

On the way out of the Oslo Fjord aboard Berby, Arne and I are each assigned a cabin, we eat dinner before going to bed after a long and tiring day.

## **From Hauk's diary:**

We will go non-stop Oslo - Lisbon in 5 days. Arne and I spend a lot of time onboard Jeanette VI, where it sits safely in the cargo hold on Berby. We tidy up, organize, and create a foundation for the solar panel, as well as get more familiar with navigation.

The cabins are nasty. Arne occupies Enrico's cabin, which is full of 3rd rate porn magazines and 10-peseta paperbacks. I live in an unsterile sick bay.

The trip is not without drama. On Saturday evening, everyone is drunk, and an argument develops between the 1st engineer and the steward.

The 1st engineer says condescendingly: 'Bitch - you have two choices - either you become my friend, or I'll spread you all over the deck like paint'. The steward is so provoked that

he pulls a knife. Arne, the chief mate, and I have to step in and twist the knife out of the hand of the steward who has murder in his eyes.

The next morning everyone is friends again, and the steward says that before the heart attack, he drank one to two cases of lager a day, but now he has reduced that to less than a case of Tuborg a day. We get two packs of goat cheese from the steward - they probably will have a short lifespan on the sailing trip.

On the last evening onboard, the Chief Engineer says with a grin that he will laugh when he reads in the newspaper that we have gone down in the North Atlantic on the return trip from the Caribbean.

I mutter 'you bastard' in my mind, trying to think positively.

Erling and Morten fly down with SAS on Monday 26. September, where they contact the Norwegian consul in Lisbon - Alf Amundsen - to be prepared for Berby's arrival the following day. In the afternoon, they check into the Capitol Hotel, and Alf recommends Restaurant Escorial, where they have an excellent dinner later in the evening.



MS BERBY the center crane was used to load Jeanette VI into and out of the cargo hold.

Photo: Fred Olsen & Co

Berby arrives in Lisbon on Tuesday 27. September in 30C and foggy weather, and Erling and Morten are waiting on the quay-side.

Jeanette VI unloads incredibly smoothly. Straps are used which seem far too thin to be able to lift a maximum weight of seven tones. With all our stuff, we probably weigh just under eight tones. Miracles have happened before, and they do now. Our home for the next 8-9 months is now alongside Berby; a Portuguese customs officer comes onboard but does not bother to check what docu-

ments we have with us, shakes our hands, nods, and strolls off. Then we head towards the yacht harbor at Torre de Belem.

### **From Morten's diary**

Erling and I came down a day before the other guys. It was the first time we had contact with the local population. A trip to the 'strip' and we were offered drugs five times (worse than Slottsparken) and it wasn't to be the last time either.



Will they find their way with a basic course in navigation and a sextant made out of plastic?



**TWO 40-YEAR-OLD** diaries are brought out of obscurity together with over 600 color slides to reveal the memories of an adventurous voyage of 10,000 nautical miles in a 35-foot sailboat in 1983-84. This is the story of four friends aged 18-20; Hauk Larsen Wahl, Morten Stødle, Erling Kagge and Arne Saugstad who, with limited experience and youthful courage, follow their dream of sailing to the West Indies before today's navigation and communication technology became available.

Outside which islands did Jeanette VI run aground?

Did they manage to bake bread in Cape Verde and what color was Mick Jagger's house on Mustique?

How did the Norwegian consul in Barbados end up in the doghouse?

Where did they follow in the footsteps of Ronald Reagan's fight against communism?

What did they get in return for a package of crispbread from a Norwegian multi-millionaire in Bermuda?

Did the Bay of Biscay live up to its ominous reputation one day in May?

Last, but not least, what reflections are made 40 years after the voyage?