



Cruising Vloggers

Financing your cruising dreams is
literally at your fingertips

By Barb Muir

Action cameras
like the GoPro have
changed the way
filming is done.





The better the equipment, the better the production value.

T

TECHNOLOGY AND BOATING HAVE

long gone hand-in-hand, so it should come as no surprise that with the introduction of Facebook, Vimeo, YouTube, Instagram and other social media platforms, more and more videos of the cruising lifestyle are popping up all over the internet. In fact, as long as you have a video camera, computer with editing software, internet access and an inkling of talent, you too could have a cruising video blog, or vlog.

EIGHT YEARS AGO, Brady Trautman cast off the lines on his brother's 53-foot Amel Super Maramu, *SV Delos*, leaving Seattle, Washington, for New Zealand.

At that time, they made simple and spontaneous videos of their travels and posted them to YouTube so their friends and family back home could experience their adventure along with them. Almost a decade later, the crew of *Delos* is one of the more financially successful cruising vloggers, inspiring others who share a similar dream to leave the dock.

"Everyone on this world has their own story to share and by us sharing ours it inspires people to get out and share theirs," said Trautman. "To inspire others to live a life they thought was impossible to live is the greatest reward for what we do and it has led to us meeting some amazing people."

CALM BEFORE THE SOCIAL MEDIA STORM It would prove difficult to write an article on cruising vloggers



without mentioning the forefathers of cruising documentaries, Paul and Sheryl Shard. The Shards, who hail from Ontario, have spent the previous 27 years sailing around the world, making seven transatlantic crossings, and producing numerous successful videos, including 130 episodes for their world-renowned series, "Distant Shores." Translated into 24 languages, it has been aired internationally in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, the Middle East, United States, Caribbean, Thailand, South America and most recently, in Russia.

The Shards warrant their successes

to their television show, not social media, having started their cruising video documentaries long before Facebook and YouTube.

“We get recognized because our television show has aired for many years in 42 million households,” said Sheryl. “It has been a great joy to us to meet fans of the show all over the world out sailing in amazing places having successful experiences because they watched Distant Shores to prepare for their own adventures.”

Nowadays the Shards have accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and post a few of their videos on YouTube, but the majority of their episodes are available for purchase via VHS, DVD or digital downloads (distantshores.ca).

RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA However, when you look at the numbers, it’s obvious that the arrival of social media brings with it exposure and popularity. The Shards, for example, who have seen success in more traditional methods, have an impressive 11,484 followers on their Facebook page.

Compare this to more recent up-and-

comers using mainly YouTube for exposure, SV *Delos* or Sailing La Vagabonde, who have 27,944 and 26,006 followers respectfully on Facebook, and you see what a difference a medium can make, at least in the virtual popularity contest.

Today’s society loves watching real people do tangible things, and make

“THE REALITY IS WHEN THINGS ARE GOING HORRIBLY WRONG WHILE SAILING, THE LAST THING YOU THINK ABOUT IS GRABBING THE CAMERA”

honest mistakes, while undergoing something many of us dream of experiencing—cruising to exotic places. With YouTube, you have a personal sailing channel with a cornucopia of entertainment. In fact, I’m totally guilty of spending not hours, but full days binge-watch-

ing sailing videos. From seasoned salts making dangerous passages to green-horns purchasing their first boat and discovering they have seasickness, they all have the same common goal—to be part of a select few who leave their land-lives behind to cruise parts unknown and come into contact with interesting people and cultures.

SV DELOS The crew of SV *Delos* have come a long way since Brian Trautman originally bought this bluewater cruiser in Bellingham in June, 2008. Actually, they’ve logged over 40,000 miles. Brian, and his brother Brady, after sailing to New Zealand, teamed up with new friends Josje Leyten and Karin Syren to sail on to Australia, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand.

Their videos first appeared on YouTube in 2013, but their popularity soon took off. When asked what continues to bring so much traffic to their videos, Karin attributes it to being real and having everyone contribute.

“We make the videos for ourselves first and foremost to laugh or to have a good memory,” Karin explained. “I think ▶

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Riley and Elayna, of Sailing La Vagabonde, had zero experience on a sailboat when a plan to travel the world was born.



people can pick up on that and can tell we really love what we do. When we started releasing videos more often and on a schedule, people started watching and following the series which has definitely increased our views and subscriptions."

From monkey bites and racy ping-pong shows in Thailand, to serene and exotic beach settings and distilling their own moonshine onboard, *SV Delos* is all about fun and truly embracing each culture they come across. The best part

of their adventure, according to Brian, is the people they meet up with.

"In Cape Town we got a little knock on the side of *Delos*. It was a sailor with a family and a dream of setting out on his own voyage," said Brian. "He brought a 12 pack of South African brew and a huge bag of fried chicken. We'd never met before but we invited him up onto *Delos*. We talked sailing, drank a few cold ones, and feasted on fried chicken from his family restaurant in town. And all because of sailing videos."

SAILING LA VAGABONDE One may think that prior knowledge of sailing or cruising and videography would be important. Not in the case of another successful pair of sailing vloggers. Riley Whitelum and Elayna Carausu, of Sailing La Vagabonde, had zero experience on a sailboat when a plan to travel the world was born. Now recognized as self-taught seasoned sailors, they are making landfalls in remote and exciting locations around the globe while the YouTube world watches their every move.



"I think our vlogs are so successful because of the fact we started sailing having literally no clue of how to sail and we taught ourselves through experience, which for viewers, I think, gives them hope for anything they themselves have been dreaming of achieving that seems so far out of reach," said Elayna. "If we can do it, why can't they? We aren't claiming to be professionals, we make mistakes, but we get the job done and have experienced many rewarding things from doing so."

GET VLOGGING Whether you follow a more traditional path like the Shards, or surf the social media wave with the YouTube generation, as with almost everything, money spent is money earned. Generally, the better the gear, the better the quality of the product. Many start out with less expensive equipment and once they gain in experience, talent and success, they are able to upgrade.

The first suggestion is to take lots of video footage. It is better to have too much video than to need to go back and film something over again. Karin, of *SV Delos*, said that to produce one 20 to 30 minute episode, they sift through eight to 10 hours of footage. Safety should always be the number one concern, but all three interviewed for this article commented on the need for more footage while sailing through rough weather.

"We wish we could show more of the hectic storms or the times when a sail blows out, stuff like that, but the reality is when things are going horribly wrong sailing, the last thing you think about is grabbing the camera," said Riley (Sailing *La Vagabonde*).

"People always want to see big storms at sea," added Sheryl (Distant Shores). "We do our best to cover these but since it's mostly just the two of us onboard, the priority has to be managing the safety of the boat."

Second, try not to act. Be yourself when you are on camera. A large part of the ▶

Equipment

The equipment required to produce videos depends solely on the commitment, skill level, and the amount of money available. However, higher end equipment will help in developing a higher end video.

For example, the crew of *SV Delos* use:

- Sony 4k FDR AX 100 camcorder
- GoPros with handheld Feiyu Tech gimbal
- DJI Phantom drone
- Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH4 DSLM camera with a Nauticam underwater case
- Software: Adobe Premier and After Effects
- MacBook Pro

Sailing *La Vagabonde* uses:

- Canon G1X Powershot
- GoPros
- Canon 6D with a 24-105mm lens
- iMovie

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One of the keys to success on any social media platform is projecting a life worth living.

dollars per episode.

SV *Delos* and Sailing La Vagabonde post all of their videos on YouTube permitting the public to view them for free. They also use Patreon, which asks people to become “patrons” and pledge a specified amount of dollars, to financially support them. Basically, if you enjoy watching their videos, and want them to continue to make and upload episodes, you are agreeing to finance this form of entertainment. As an incentive, some Patreon creators offer previews of their upcoming episodes, swag and even hold contests to join them as crew for passages along the way.

With the dawn of this new interactive platform, cruisers are finding a fast and furious rise in popularity, and with that can come money... lots of money. While many long-term cruisers return to land to fill their cruising kitty, the potential is there to make some serious coin through crowd funding sites, allowing them to keep their dreams afloat. At the time of printing, Sailing La Vagabonde has 720 patrons contributing to \$5,703 per video upload and SV *Delos* has 833 patrons with \$5,560 per video.

As one would expect, this social media market is quickly becoming saturated. Videos are being developed as a way to keep in touch with friends and family, for educational purposes, potential profits, or just for fun. Search “Sailing British Columbia” on YouTube and there are more than 58,000 results!

What could be preventing you from dropping your dock lines and setting off to fulfill your cruising dreams? Next time you take your camera out to catch a quick video, maybe it’s time to think bigger. Only time will tell if you are the next YouTube sensation. ☺



success of sailing vlogs is the feel of candidness; like you are onboard with the crew.

“Keep it real,” said Riley. “Look at how you can convey your unique perspective of what it is you are trying to deliver to your audience, be it educational, entertainment or your cat being cute. Be yourself whilst you’re doing it especially if you are the one on the camera. There is nothing wrong with doing a re-run if you make a mistake, but try not to act if you can.”

Finally, add in some graphics, voice-overs and music to help generate the overall look and feel of the video, but don’t go overboard.

Once the edited video is completed, there are many host sites you can upload it to, including, but not limited to, YouTube, Vimeo and Facebook. The biggest challenge, at this point, is finding internet fast enough to upload video.

CROWD FUNDING WEBSITES

While the Shards finance their warty lifestyle through more traditional methods of licence fees from television broadcasters, sale of their episodes and product placement and other sponsorships, crowd fundraising sites like Patreon are helping new up-and-comers finance their cruising dreams. In fact, some vloggers are making thousands of

Awesome Vlogs to Follow

To save time sifting through tens of thousands of shaky, poor quality videos that tend to go nowhere, here are some of the more popular cruising vlogs on YouTube (but not limited to):

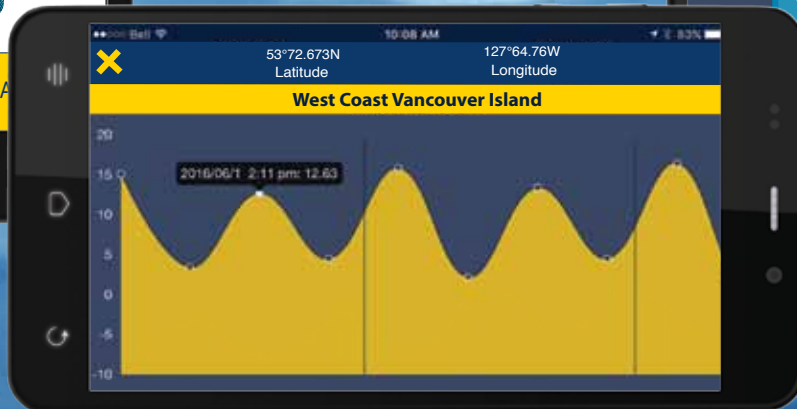
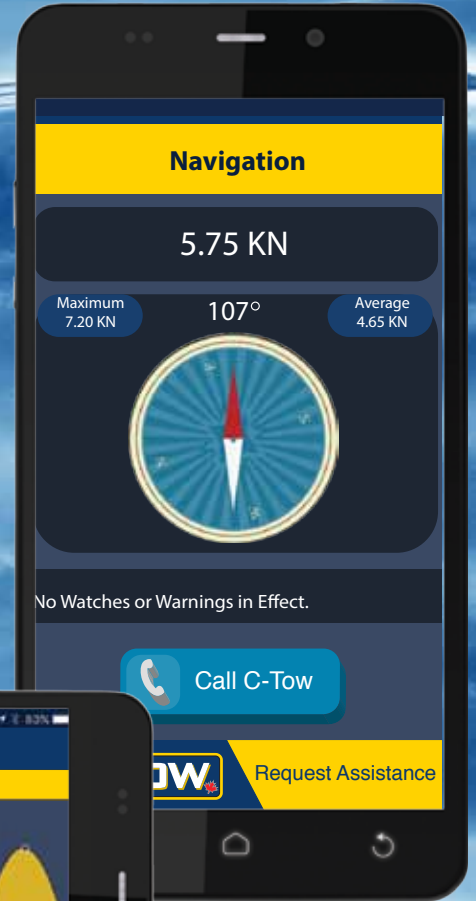
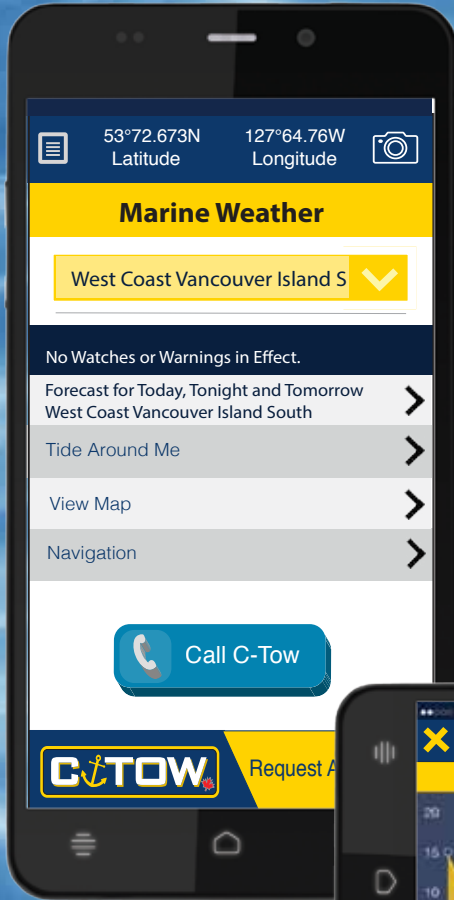
- Life is like sailing
- Shaun Schmidt
- Team Giddyup
- DrakeParagon
- Chase the Story
- Monday Never
- Sailing Vessel Priism
- Annie Ford
- WhiteSpotPirates
- Resolute Sets Sail
- Sailing Baby Blue
- Keep Turning Left
- Sailing Uma
- Distant Shores
- Accidental Sailor Girl
- Sailing Emerald Steel
- S/V Seawolf Sailing
- S/V Honeymoon
- Zero to Cruising
- Follow the Boat
- Wicked Salty

Peace of Mind Boating

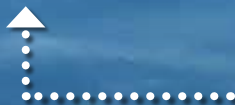


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