

After a trip half way round the world (in a cat), Nathalie and Bruno have set off again. This time for the full circumnavigation!



Thetys, second departure around the world...

Multihulls World readers will remember Thetys, a Salina 48, cruising round the world with Nathalie and Bruno... We left them in New Zealand, where they sold their cat. Back in France, they bought another one and set off round the world again...

By Bruno and Nathalie, aboard Thetys

2nd departure, 1st year: Panama, a good place for a first assessment!

Born in 2012, the new Thetys grew up quickly. A first test run from La Rochelle to Cannes, crossing the Bay of Biscay and the Golfe du Lion, starting in August, allowed us to ensure its reliability and sort out a few details with the builder. In October, we set off again: leaving the Mediterranean, passing Gibraltar, a stop for the weather in the Canaries, and the first real stopover: Thetys discovered Cape Verde, in very good company. At the end of the year, the transat, Mindelo (Cape

Verde) - Martinique in 12 days, got us into the swing of things! Another technical stopover in Martinique, long enough to celebrate Christmas and New Year with its transatlantic companions, and Thetys set off again, fit and healthy, heading for Cuba and adventure. Two months later, the cat relaxed with a short crossing of the Caribbean Sea, heading due south, and tasted the waters of the San Blas islands, in Panama, an area where everything is possible (to cross, not to cross...).

9,000 miles covered in 9 months, the crew of Thetys seem slightly hyperactive?

During the Atlantic crossing, the sun put on an act... A sight which is always amazing!



A voyage in a boat: more than a passion, a way of life!

SO...HAPPY?

Yes, without hesitation! Thousands of miles, some nice stopovers – this new departure allowed us to quickly get used to our new travelling companion, the n°4 Nautitech 542. Thetys, the second boat to have the name, was by definition and after delivery, a very successful boat, the result of our choices and experiences (we have been sailing round the world since 2008: www.levoyagedethetys.com). All that remained for us to do was to check that our dream boat was suited to the reality of the voyage, the sailing, the anchorages - our life as round the world sailors. This was done, and these busy few months confirmed that we had achieved our aims.

The comfort/performance compromise and a few other criteria for satisfaction.

- the build quality is reassuring, and the lively passages have allowed us to test the structure's strength. AND, to make things even better: it is very pleasing to the eye; its attractive lines and the high bridgedeck pass through the waves very well without slamming and in complete safety.

- 54 feet really is the right size (if you have the budget, of course). The length allows good speed with very good behaviour at sea. And finally, the harbour manoeuvres are easy, thanks to its aft steering positions, which allow us to move quickly to the required side.

- the quality of the finishing: the number of lines in the specification relating to this point says a lot about our requirements. The result is impeccable, and the numerous modifications validated with the builder are particularly suited to our life aboard.

- liveability and load-carrying capacity: two important parameters for long term crui-



THETYS

You can follow Bruno and Nathalie's voyage on their web site, as well as by obtaining the book about the first part of their first voyage from Marseille to Panama.

'Le voyage de Thetys - de Marseille à Panama', available from the shop at:

www.multihulls-world.com
www.levoyagedethetys.com



The encounters, the parties with boat-friends – the voyage is also (and especially) this...

Since the first departure in 2008, the crew of Thetys have become specialists in the difficult art of underwater fishing...



The sails in Cuben Fiber are sublime, and offer an unequalled life span.



sing, but for which you have to be careful not to exceed the limits. Thetys's volumes are very comfortable for a crew of two, and we have not become slaves to the maintenance. We have enough space to stow everything, provisions, spare parts, toys, without overloading the boat, which can have a real effect on its performance and/or our safety.

- independence: a low consumption, high-performance 90 L/h watermaker, which is not very noisy, allows us to have as much water as we want. For the electricity, the 24V circuit organised around the bank of lithium batteries has given us complete satisfaction, both by its performance and the independence obtained. It's 'no limits' aboard: lights, music, microwave, washing machine, for cruising in comfort.

- speed: lightened options (carbon, lithium batteries, small generator) allow our boat to conserve its expected speed in 'round the world' mode. A record of 23 knots, surfing in the Atlantic, 212 miles covered in 24 hours, a reasonable speed of between 8 and 12 knots, depending on the sea and wind conditions – the figures speak for themselves. To this can be added several hours at the helm, at between 15 and 20 knots, without the ship's boy noticing anything. And at night, we have to glance at the speedo to realise that we are not stopped, at a steady 7 – 8 knots, whilst there is no noise in the saloon. It's really surprising!

- safety: Thetys is reassuring at sea, as it remains level. The wide side decks allow us to go to the mast foot safely, even in difficult conditions. Manoeuvres are easy, and apart from reefing, all the control lines are led back to the cockpit. A single electric winch provides precious but sufficient assistance for hoisting the mainsail, the rest is child's play.

MAINTENANCE: BREAKDOWN PREVENTION

We have once again confirmed that anyone can have a breakdown, whether the boat is new or second-hand. On the other hand, this second departure confirmed to us that experience and good preparation allow us to cope better with any future breakdowns. Of course the builder's guarantee is a real plus on a new model, but you will not be spared the time you spend stuck in the marina and the transport costs for the equipment.

On the other hand, whatever your boat, the following precautions will avoid you having to spend long, expensive days in the marina: embarking the right spare parts at the start, having someone competent available on the telephone in case of need, and very regular monitoring of the elements at risk. Preventative maintenance must be part of your daily schedule.

Aboard, we spend about an hour a day looking after our Thetys. This starts with cleaning the interior and exterior, made much easier by the use of carbon and textiles instead of all that stainless steel,

which unfortunately rusts so easily. Scraping the hull, regular engine maintenance, cleaning the seawater filters, small repairs as and when required, before the list grows too long, punctuate the week. And, taking advantage of our special 'high capacity' water-maker, we rinse Thetys after each sail or even during a passage, as we did twice during the Atlantic crossing.

Final rule aboard Thetys: it seems a good idea to plan a technical stop-over from time to time. After a long passage, such as the transat, for example. Or after spending a long time far from any civilization. This allows you to find competent people, shops with the right stock, and gives you an address to have equipment sent to, if needs be. Moreover anticipating these points, which can be prepared by e-mail with the marina or the boatyard, often allows you to save time and get back to the pleasure side of things sooner!

FOR THE PROGRAMME, FOLLOW THE GUIDE...

Our short return to France allowed us to realise more clearly that we are living a dream. The break gave us back some energy, opened our eyes and suggested new destinations. Because it's true that we get used to everything, including happiness.

So, after a short return to reality, sharing our voyage with the family, friends, landlubbers, we were once again ready to cross the seas towards new horizons, each as exotic as the others. Yes, but where to go? And why here rather than there?

It's important to have a programme. At least an outline. With two, four or five people aboard, everyone has a voice and their own ideas and dreams. Thinking about this allows you to project yourself and prepare, so in the end you can again and always go forward, which is the essence of travelling.

This second itinerary took shape by itself during the first trip half way round the world. The stories of our cruising friends, the choices made in 2008 and a few targeted

A FEW TECHNICAL DETAILS?

To sum up, we are very happy with our choices of:

- the Nautitech 542. Perfect for our programme, our needs and our expectations in terms of the speed/comfort compromise; we're not ready to sell it!
- the sails in Cuben Fiber, much nicer to handle than the Hydranet sails on our first boat, and longer-lasting. Obviously, the extra cost is justified by the life span, to be confirmed in a few years' time!
- the Lithium batteries, which fill up 'like a glass of water': no more floating charge, no more problems with deep discharge as you can use 50% of their capacity without risk, and very fast charging, compared with all other types of batteries. Not to mention the weight and space saving.
- and consequently, our little 8kVA Fischer Panda variable speed generator, which takes up a quarter of the volume of an equivalent generator, is half as noisy and half the weight. The best!

We are less happy with:

- our flexible solar panels, well integrated into the coachroof, but which give far from their maximum performance, despite long reflection with the manufacturer and the boat's builder. Apparently, it's a problem inherent in flexible panels, the output of whose total installation is very limited once the exposure is not optimal (clouds, sun angle, shadow of the boom or the sails over part of the panels), therefore most of the time.
- the Yanmar engines, which are more restricting than the Volvos, with shorter service periods.
- our battery chargers, which are not compatible with 110V. For long term cruising, they should accept 110/220V and 50/60Hz. Simple, isn't it?



Anachronistic pontoon neighbours, but isn't the essential thing to enjoy life at sea?

television programmes put some points on our chart of the world; we were wide open to all propositions. Cape Verde, the north and west of the Caribbean, with notably Cuba and Belize, the east and west coasts of North America, Brazil again (but now well-placed at the end of the trip), as well as Hawaii or Alaska, are amongst our coming waypoints.

A few essentials remain on the itinerary, such as Panama and its Atlantic – Pacific passage, or French Polynesia, which had marked us so much.

The grail, aboard Thetys, is the quest for an ideal anchorage. Even though we have already identified two or three stopovers.... But history has also taught us that returning to places which proved to be magical on the first visit can lead to

slight disappointment. Different weather conditions, missing boat-friends, the absence of the charm of discovery... There are so many new places awaiting us, sometimes a few tens of miles away, that it would be a shame not to take advantage of the opportunity to go and have a look a bit further on!

A few parameters not to be forgotten in a cruising programme: the weather and the time!

You always have to juggle with the seasons, notably the hurricane seasons, which determine a route as certainly as the months which pass on this calendar we tend to forget.

We travel to discover new places, societies which are distant from ours, different values, and to have encounters ashore or afloat which are as intense as they are surprising. Our secret...taking

the time to appreciate a country, a culture, and to have some real encounters. We therefore prefer to avoid changing anchorage every couple of nights. Or we don't hesitate to put off a departure for a few days to appreciate an encounter better, check that the grouper fish we saw the day before is still there today, or to let

some bad weather pass in a well-sheltered anchorage. From this point of view, the 'appointments' made with the family or friends should be managed sparingly and diplomatically, so that everyone can enjoy them.

The other important notion in the definition of an itinerary is alternation of the different types of stopover. We vary the pleasures, to increase them tenfold!

There are the 'holiday stopovers', such as Martinique, with 'boat-friends' after crossing the Atlantic. In relaxation mode, with snorkelling, a few touristy visits as an option, you take life easy for a few days or a few weeks, according to each person's rhythm.

But after a good (well-deserved!) rest, you may want an 'authentic stopover', such as Cape Verde, Cuba or the Gambiers – destinations which don't get many visitors, even amongst round the world sailors. They require good preparation (information from the pontoons, tourist guides, and of course cruisers' blogs on the internet). These are more demanding stopovers, where you won't necessarily find a chandlery within a radius of 1000 miles, where you could write a book about the concept of a 'marina', and where it is best not to make a mistake with the quantity of pasta or rice you need, to be self-sufficient. Here you won't meet many boats; you will be on your own as a couple or a family and will enjoy it in a different way.



"Happy the man who finds sweet journey's end, like Ulysses"

And when you really feel that you want a nice steak, it's time to head for the 'stopover ashore', to discover a country more intimately, see what is hidden behind the coasts which shelter us, take a break from life aboard the boat, quite simply sometimes just to get a breath of fresh air.

And then, because the encounters are one of the strong points of any voyage by boat, there are the 'friends stopovers'. Fishing for the whole anchorage, wind or kite surfing, or canoeing in good company, barbecues on the beach every evening, and generous turquoise waters which provide feasts cheaply. For these stopovers, the place isn't important as long as you have good neighbours and good weather!

Finally, the ultimate luxury, once all this information has been assimilated and noted in a little book, to be reviewed on a rainy day, is to have time to let yourself be guided by your friends, to be able to improvise a 100-mile detour to check what another boat has told you, to modify your itinerary for reunions of another dimension. Everything is a question of proportion!

Another intense time during a voyage by boat is the long passages, which, although statistically only occupying 10 – 15% of your time, in reality, and notably the first year, take on much bigger proportions, on all levels. The Bay of Biscay, leaving the Mediterranean, the west coast of Africa, and of course the famous

Atlantic crossing... It is important to be well prepared for them, both technically and psychologically, and that this knowledge is shared by the whole crew, both young and old.

Curiously, the youngest crew members easily appreciate this period of time between two stopovers, where they can watch as many DVDs as they want, thanks to a concern for peace and quiet which can easily be imagined.

For the adults, it's a bit more complicated. Weather, self-sufficiency, night watches, we never get completely used to these more or less comfortable interludes, where time is measured in ETAs and 'J minus...!'

But we can get used to most things, and even Bruno, who didn't particularly like long passages, now finds a certain pleasure in being at sea, making the boat go faster, hoisting more sail when the neighbours are playful, and even steering, a first in five years! For this, the boat which is comfortable and reassuring at sea is a real ally!

However, some new alternatives exist. Times are changing, and taking on crew, or embarking the youngest children, or Madame who doesn't like nautical miles, in an aeroplane, becomes a wise practice. There is no shame in this; it is just better management of the wishes and abilities of each person, so that the voyage remains above all a pleasure!

TIPS AND TRICKS

- We use Google Earth more and more, with its video recording facility. This allows us to spot in a different way with charts or cruising guides: particularly tricky pass entrances, crayfish spots, the overall arrangement of the islands... And sometimes even the direction of the swell, which is clearly visible in certain photos. Be careful, this remains an additional aid...

- Wi-Fi can now be found everywhere, cheaply (apart from at La Marin, in Martinique). So don't forget to equip yourself with a good amplified external aerial, bearing in mind that the most expensive systems (big aerial and kilometres of cables) are not always the best performers. However an aerial at the masthead has an advantage, when there is a forest of aluminium in the marina between your boat and the transmitter.

- prepaid cards: whether talking about 3G dongles or telephones, it is useful to leave France with unlocked versions of them both, because you can find prepaid cards everywhere. And in the case of a long stay, it's a good way of having the telephone and the internet aboard at the lowest cost (notably with the iPads, which are found more and more often on cruising boats). Unless you don't appreciate receiving your e-mails in Cape Verde, in a peaceful deserted anchorage, which is understandable...

The crew of Thetys, back in the Caribbean before heading for the Pacific again...

