

WHISTLING UP A PIG ROAST

A MAYREAU FEAST

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ELLEN BIRRELL



Black Boy serving it up!

It all started in 2011 when Willie and Mark Haskins of *S/V Liahona* fell in love—in love with Saltwhistle Bay, Mayreau. The spell was cast when they bonded with Black Boy and Debbie, owners of a casual and delicious beach restaurant there. Mark sprang the pig roast idea. All four were receptive. By winter of 2012, they put the word out to cruising friends.

Willie's brown bobbed hair and Mark's surfer blond curls, hip SSCA commodores, they got face-to-face with cruisers from Culebra to Antigua. Willie whistled the call using Facebook cruisers' groups. "Have you ever eaten at Black Boy & Deb-

bie's? It's the best," said Mark, adding, "I want this to work out well for the local people as well as all of our cruising friends."

From Morgan Jones' 60ft cat *Nirvana* to Anna-Karin Sundquist and Håkan Börjesson's 37ft sloop *Unicorn*, ketches and trawlers totaling 16 arrived in Mayreau like it was a destination wedding.

"We left Rodney Bay pressing to get to Mayreau in time for the pig roast," says Börjesson. "The wind was howling. Our sails were on third reef as we passed St. Vincent. I thought about going to bare poles. We arrived in Bequia only long enough to grab a baguette and clear in, got back

in the boat and sailed in squalls until reaching Saltwhistle.”

North-facing, the entrance to Saltwhistle Bay cannot be seen upon arrival. After a quarter mile of 30ft depths, a telescoping mast above the headland offers a clue. Twenty mooring balls (EC\$30 to \$60 depending on the season) and anchor space come into view. The smallest inhabited island in the Grenadines without marinas or fuel, a local resort's motto is: 'We're off the beaten path, but that's the point'.

On the day of the roast, Willie Haskins' regular morning aquacise class began with a dozen women and Chuck Shipley of *Tusen Tuk II*, karate kicking, bicycling, cross-country skiing and flying like Superman below the water's surface. With a BS in physical therapy, Willie gladly shares her expertise to everyone's benefit.

Three o'clock in the afternoon brought a flotilla to the dinghy dock. Posters and flags decorated Black Boy and Debbie's red, yellow and green wooden oasis of shade and sand. Libation in hand, guests visited and signed a commemorative burgee.

By 5:00pm cruisers buzzed out to their boats to grab their contributory side-dish. Black Boy graciously allowed our dishes to choke his wooden tables, trusting that bar tabs and generous tipping would compensate for his efforts. He concentrated on barbecuing. Two Vincentian 70lb pigs had been quartered, marinated for two days and then roasted



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A motley crew fat, dumb and happy



Pristine and panoramic – Saltwhistle Bay

over a large grill. In his bright yellow shirt, Black Boy marched through the crowded room carrying a large platter of roasted pig. With a whistling round of applause, we descended on the buffet table like squawking gulls over fish viscera.

To island music sprinkled with popular ballads, we danced, Willie's pale Puertorequeña skin against Black Boy's handsome ebony and Lilly of *Tiger Lilly* with eight-year-old Felicia. Twelve-year-old Leon cut the rug with Ellen from *Boldly Go*. Merry, wholesome, multi-generational and delicious.

The next day, as if whistling a call for a south bound exodus, *Liahona* threaded the mooring field followed by a navy ketch, a white catamaran and two white sloops. They

sailed to Clifton, Union Island, to clear out of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, followed by a short hop to Carriacou for Grenada check-in.

Called the Inaugural Pig Roast; will there be one next year? "Maybe, we'll see," Willie answered. 

Ellen and her partner Jim Hutchins have lived aboard their Sun Odyssey 40 Boldly Go for three years in the Caribbean. The cruising couple featured in a recent program broadcast on The Biography Channel. For more details, visit: www.boldlygo.us