



Dump It In: The Age of Mini-cruisers

“DUMP IT IN.”
“But I say Kid, isn’t that going it a little too strong?”

So begins one of my favorite bedtime-at-sea stories, Jack London’s “To the Man on the Trail,” a tale brief enough that I’d reach the end before my eyelids dropped and deep enough that I’d have something to think about during the dog watch, when I was roused out of bed in three short hours. In those days, my “Portable Jack London” lay just above the side-berth where I could grab it from my bunk.

All told, we had 11 linear feet of bookshelf space on *Tosca*. Most of those were novels, non-fiction travel books, and a couple of indispensable classics—“The Odyssey,” “Don Quixote,” and “Moby Dick” among them. Nav books went in a six-square foot locker under the nav station seat. A plastic bag full of paperbacks sat at

Food supplies crowd the cabin of Adam Correa’s International Folkboat Bluemoon prior to his departure for the Single-handed Transpac Race.

the bottom for the hanging locker.

Two stories in this month’s issue made me think of the books. The first one, obviously, was our annual review of good books for winter reading (pages 22-24). The second was a review of a boat whose design origins go back to 1939, the International Folkboat (pages 8-12). While researching the Folkboat article, I came across the story of young Adam Correa, who sailed an International Folkboat in this year’s Single-handed Transpac Race, the renowned race from San Francisco to Hawaii. Correa was kind enough to send us several photos of his boat, including the one on this page.

Dump it in, indeed.

No matter how big our boat is, there always seems to come that pre-departure moment of self-reflection when we realize how “stuffed” our lives have become. Clothes, food, pots and pans, spare parts . . . and books. Owners of micro-cruisers like the International Folkboat or its many relations are no doubt among the most creative packers on the planet. Few people can pack more stuff into a small space than owners of a Flicka 20, a Dana 24, or Nor’Sea 27.

The scene aboard Correa’s IF looks almost identical to the one I’ve seen

replayed in ports around the world as cruising friends prepared to cut loose—except for one noticeable detail. No books. Not surprisingly, Correa had piled all of his books onto his Kindle reader.

A few years back, we were able to dump all our music onto the iPod. Next up, the reading library. At last count, Google Books had scanned some 15 million books in 400 languages. Combine that inexhaustible resource with an iPad or Kindle reader and the networked system that Joe Minick describes (pages 17-21), and today’s cruising boats can have a virtual library in every cabin.

So here’s a toast to the man on the trail and mini-cruisers around the globe: Dump it in, my friend. If it doesn’t fit these days, then you surely don’t need it.

If you have some packing tips or suggested products for an upcoming article on stowing essentials like food, clothes, fuel, and water, please send me an e-mail at darrell.nicholson@belvoirpubs.com. And if you feel an urge to read “To the Man on the Trail” again, it’s free online at www.jacklondon.net/manontrail.html.

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Cover photo: *The International Folkboat Olivia braves the cut outside Lomma Marina near Copenhagen, Denmark. (Photo by Gert Damsby)*

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