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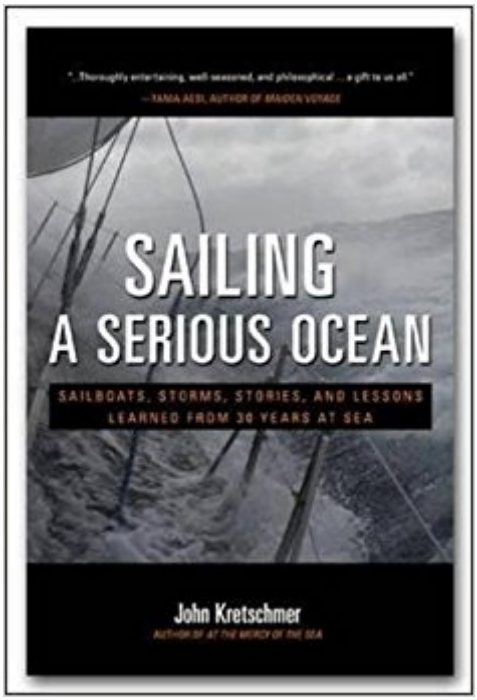
Sailing A Serious Ocean: Sailboats, Storms, Stories And Lessons Learned From 30 Years At Sea (International Marine-RMP)



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Synopsis

"I know you'll want to read more after you finish Sailing a Serious Ocean. And be warned, you'll very likely want to sail with John, perhaps across an ocean." -- DALLAS MURPHY, AUTHOR OF ROUNDING THE HORN After sailing 300,000 miles and weathering dozens of storms in all the world's oceans, John Kretschmer has plenty of stories and advice to share. John's offshore training passages sell out a year in advance and his entertaining presentations are popular at boat shows and yacht clubs all over the English speaking world. John's talent for storytelling enchants his audience as it soaks up the lessons he learned during his oftenchallenging voyages. Now you can take a seat next to John--at a lesser cost--and get the knowledge you need to fulfill your own dream of blue-water adventure. In Sailing a Serious Ocean, John tells you what to expect when sailing the oceans and shows how to sail safely across them. His tales of storm encounters and other examples of extreme seamanship will help you prepare for your journey and give you confidence to handle any situationÃ¢â ¬â ¢even heavy weather. Through his personal stories, John will guide you through the whole process of choosing the right boat, outfitting with the right gear, planning your route, navigating the ocean, and understanding the nuances of life at sea. Our oceans are beautiful yet unpredictableÃ¢â ¬â ¢water that is at one moment a natural mirror for the glowing sun can turn into a foamy, raging wall of fury. John knows our oceans, and he is one of the best teachers of taming and enjoying them. Before you set off across the big blue, turn to John for his inspirational stories and hard-learned advice and discover the serious sailor in you.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Kretschmer, a professional sailor and writer, has logged more than 300,000 offshore sailing miles, including 20 transatlantic and two transpacific passages. He is the author of At the Mercy of the Sea, Flirting with Mermaids, and Cape Horn to Starboard, all seagoing classics. He is longtime contributing editor to Sailing magazine, was a sailing/travel columnist for the Miami Herald for 10 years, and writes regularly for Southern Boating and Cruising World. He has weathered several storms at sea, and teaches aspiring bluewater voyagers in seminars, lectures, and training voyages. John lives in Florida.

Sailing a Serious Ocean is John Kretschmer’s memoir about 30 years of sailing as a delivery boat captain and off-shore passage instructor. Along the way, Kretschmer tries to teach about not just passage making, but also how to evaluate and buy a boat for such an adventure, what to do when the ocean becomes "serious", and recommends other books for deeper reading about storm tactics and so forth. But the real reason to buy and read this book is the stories, because while Kretschmer’s an experienced sailor and probably a good instructor, he’s a lousy technical writer.Every chapter of the book’s anchored by one or several anecdotes or stories. These are really exciting and impressive. When you set out specifically to teach off-shore passage making, your intention is to expose your crew mates (and yourself) to heavy weather sailing. The net result is that you’re intentionally making poor sailing decisions like leaving port as a storm is starting. While Krestchmer doesn’t go out of the way to tell you how harrowing the passage is, the events that happen tell the story. In every case, there’s at least one incident which causes a flooded cockpit. In some cases, the hatch into the cabin was left open so the living space gets a deluge of water as well. (Kretschmer provides good reason as to why this was the case, so he’s not entirely an incompetent skipper)In one story, he tells of a daughter whose father is swept off the boat by a massive wave, and she can do nothing but watch as he drowns as she is unable to pull him back aboard. With reasonable humility, Kretschmer observes that he was more lucky than good: the other boat simply was at the wrong place at the wrong time.It’s clear that Kreschmer has been everywhere, though this book focuses mostly on the Atlantic with a side-helping of the Mediterranean. While I’m unfamiliar with the Atlantic, I have sailed the Mediterranean, and I agree with his observations that you either get too little wind or too much wind, with nothing in between.There’s a significant bit of sailboat philosphy in the book, as Kretschmer tries to justify his love of off-shore passage making, which he knows is dangerous. Some of it is related to sailing:Fear leads to inaction and then finally to panic, and thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a deadly course to follow. The

majority of sailing disasters result from boats and crews taking passive approaches to storm conditions. Staying engaged with the boat and the situation is the single most important heavy-weather tactic. You made the decision to go to sea and you own your decision. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s your storm and you have to deal with it. You canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t just push the reset button.(Loc 2989-93)Some of it is related to life, and why he deliberately chose a "career" that's fundamentally kept him relatively poor financially but rich in experience:And time, the most precious commodity of all, far more valuable than gold, has been devalued as people are forced to squander it in a terribly backward equationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •trading it for money. Just how crazy is that? Who, when their allotment of time is all but spent, would not trade every bit of gold for just a fraction more time?(Loc. 1755-57)Kretschmer does note (and it's something that I've observed as well), that outdoor life and experience makes us all equal and honest. When you're on a sailboat with gale force winds coming down on you, it doesn't matter what your credentials or job title is, your life is on the line just as well as anybody else's is on the boat. You can't politically-maneuver out of storms, nor can you bluff your way down a mountain on a twisty windy descent. You either have the skills, mind-set, and ability to do so, or you don't. That's why those of us who regularly do outdoor activities have a more trusting and open mind-set than those who don't: when you regularly face natural disasters, more people are willing to help you with no agenda than when you're in the office facing the next performance review, and that can't help but spill over into the rest of your life as well.The weakest part of the book is on the technical side. Kretschmer tries to teach you what kind of features to look for in a boat with blue-water aspirations, but with his many years of experience and hanging out with people familiar with technical jargon, he's not only unable to explain things clearly, he fails to start with engineering principles behind blue-water sailboats. For instance, he talks about how pretty a boat should look with its line and beam, but doesn't explain that a wide boat with spacious living quarters wouldn't handle well in a storm because the high waterline would provide too big a surface area for wind to catch and thereby hinder control in high winds. Instead, he praises the Contessa 32 as a submarine with a mast attached, leaving the reader to extract the principle of boat design from that metaphor.Here's what I was able to extract from the book in that respect: you want a boat with the rudder amid-ships rather than at the end of the boat like performance cruisers have. The reason is when the boat's being pitched in steep seas, you'll end up with the rudder out of the water, which means you can't steer at precisely the most important time when steering is important. You want a boat with multiple sail plans, so sloops and cutters aren't that great, since roller furling head sails aren't very good when in a storm: chafing at the furling line could easily unfurl the sail at just the wrong time, and stay sails that are heavy and hank

on are actually more reliable. Finally, you want as low a waterline as you can find to reduce windage. He claims that design is more important than construction, but really should have emphasized that design and construction are both incredibly important.My biggest criticism of the book as such is that it appears Kretschmer has no experience sailing Catamarans, so he doesn't address that important topic. He also doesn't provide references to other books that would cover that gap. He addresses storm tactics in a fine and reasonable fashion, but again, those are mostly restricted to the boats he's delivered and owned. The diagrams in the book are nice, but of course, next to useless on the Kindle version. (He does explain the The Perfect Storm was riddled with technical inaccuracies and was written by a landlubber, but fails to provide explanations of how you could tell)All in all, the book's a fun read and enjoyable even if you're not a sailor, or even if you have no intention of ever making an off-shore passage. And if you do intend to make an off-shore passage, booking a passage with Kretschmer is probably a must-do.My one caveat with this book is that if you do intend to make an off-shore passage at some point, by no means should you allow your spouse to read this book. You will absolutely not be allowed to go if that happens!

While no real training is laid out , the book adds tips in stories . Great one liners " He was still in a leg brace that trip , one of my best crew was pretty limited . But No matter how rough it got ," he could make a sandwich & drink for anyone who may be steering" . One rich boat owner was found smiling at the wheel , as everyone came up from below ,hearing a loud grinding sound . " You said you are not a sailor till you run aground " .Never really pins down a favorite boat or manufacture . Sort of a 10 boat " these are OK " or " it's ugly , slow , but drifts well in heavy seas " . Not the best , but did 30K miles at sea on one . No real catamaran stories / details . Great book .

John writes with an easy-flowing style about his life on the sea. His knowledge, wit and humor shine through on every page.I love how he shows some of the real feelings of untying from the security? of land, the lessons learned on the sea and knowledge gained through some hard knocks. Taking responsibility for the errors of his crew shows he knows the place of a captain, yet he remains humble.Some good takeaways for me are the value of the stays'l, the ability to pull in a reef while off the wind, and in general the importance of high quality gear.Thanks for some good sea stories John! I hope to see you out there!Keith DezelleS/V Sofia, Tayana 42V, currently in Bocas del Toro, Panama

This is a must read for those like me who dream of buying a fast performance cruiser to sail the

seven seas. The book is an excellent account of heavy weather sailing with many sidebars about weather, the state of the sea's roughness, and an examination of what makes a good boat for heavy weather sailing. John Kretschmer is a great writer and has well over 300,000 miles delivering boats around the world, teaching would be world cruisers in the sailors arts, and conducting seminars on blue water sailing. John bought his current boat, a Kaufman 47, and has sailed the boat all over the globe. The book has impressed me in a number of ways, and I highly recommend it to would be global cruisers. John's writing puts the reader in the middle of the action.

John Kretschmer writes in a straight forward plain spoken manner about the great joys and great dangers of sailing across the major oceans of the world. 'Tis hard to put it down. Highly recommend it.As a charter boat captain and sometimes racer on Lake Michigan, my crews and I have experienced some serious storms but they were always over in a few hours. Kretschmer's storms would go on for days on end. His courage and resourcefulness are an example to us all.

if you have ever been caught in a squall you know sailing can go from leisurely to hairy in a matter of minutes.John lays out many advanced techniques for riding out storms woven in a very readable text.

There was some good advice but certainly not in my top ten helpful books on sailing. It was more of a tale one tells friends of a evening.

True knowledge really does only come by experience.....and always stay engaged.....two huge takeaways.....Very well done JK.....you're a fortunate and talented guy

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