

In 2007 Dean and I bought the original Random Wind, a 47-foot Vagabond made by Bluewater Yachts. It was Dean 's dream to sail around the world, and we thought we would do this on Random Wind with our two children. The plan was to run the business in St. Maarten for three years while we saved, so we could have plenty of money in the bank to use for sailing around the world - we wanted to be gone for seven years. About two years into the three, Dean and I split - he moved back to the United States and I stayed in St. Maarten with our two children, Nathan and Caroline, at that time they were eight and three years old, respectively. Just after Dean moved back to the United States, the receding US economy started to influence tourism in St. Maarten, and we struggled. Money was getting tight. The kids and I decided we would move onto the boat and try to make it through the hard times. It really was a great life being on the water; taking them to school each day by tender, many trips to the beach, lots of days wake boarding and waterskiing and hanging out on the boat with customers and friends. Here is a picture of the Random a Wind anchored off the famous airport as an airplane takes off.



Nathan started sailing in boats called optimists at the St. Maarten Yacht Club and he started doing quite well in races. We thought it was cute that he was winning races against other little children on the island and told him it was a very big world out there and if he wanted to really complete, he had to race in other countries. His first international race when he was eight years old was on the island of Anguilla and he came in first place in his age category. It was then we realized he was quite talented. He started racing in other countries as well as St. Maarten and after a few years we thought he really needed a higher level of coaching so we made the decision after he graduated from fifth grade that he and Caroline would move back to the United States and live with Dean in Yorktown, Virginia - which is surrounded by the waters of the Chesapeake; where there's lots of sailing. So, in 2013, both of the kids move back to United States to live with their dad, go to school and sail and dance. Nathan started sailing at the Fishing Bay Yacht Club in Deltaville, Virginia and both kids went to school public school in the area. Caroline started dancing competitively at the Academy of Dance. To this day, she competes in Jazz, Tap, Ballet, Hip Hop and Lyrical dance.

My plan was to sell the business and move back to Virginia to be with the kids and after a while I realized how much I truly love this business and this line of work and decided to hire a manager and full-time crew so I can move to the US and be with my kids and still keep this business. It was going well for four years until hurricane Irma hit St. Maarten on September 6, 2017. I was in Virginia at the time. That

is truly one of the saddest memories I can recall. For three days I didn't hear from any of my friends. I started to raise money to help people on the island - it was all I could do from afar feeling so helpless. On the third day my best friend Jackie called and said she was OK and little by little I heard from all my friends – although many were homeless and out of work – they were alive.

After six days I heard from the captain of Random Wind. Because it was so long, I had assumed the worst and was so relieved to speak with him and know that he was OK. The Random Wind at this point still had not been located. After 10 days she was found sunk near the dock of the restaurant from which we picked up our customers; in the Lagoon off the dock at Skipjack's Restaurant underneath three other vessels. The salvage company tried to raise her many times but she would not budge; eventually she was broken up and hauled off to a watery grave. After several weeks we had raised over \$45,000 and sent numerous boxes of food, tarps, medical supplies to the hospital, clothes.... whatever we could send to help people in need. It was all I could do.

Because the airport was ruined - I could fly into St. Maarten and the frustration started to build. I spoke with a colleague who was also trying to get there, and we ended up flying to Martinique and getting on a boat of a friend to sail up. The boat was the Belline II. Hurricane Maria had recently passed and devastated the island of Dominica. We decided to take donations in Martinique and deliver to Dominica. Our captain, a 26-year-old woman, told us we needed to sail through the night so when we got to the water surrounding Dominica we could watch for debris in the sea and how smart that was! As the sun rose, we started dodging trees, all kinds of other debris, Dead animals etc. It was truly crazy, when we got to Dominica there were military vessels from several countries including the United States there to help. We offloaded hundreds of gallons of water and milk and lots of supplies for the people there; it was truly wonderful. As we said goodbye we headed out to sea, the biggest school of dolphins I've ever seen greeted us with jumps and splashes as if to thank us for the Goodwill we had just imparted.

To celebrate, we opened a bottle of red wine. As we sat in the cockpit, I noticed my friends put their glasses down on the table, they were real stemware wine glasses. I hesitated and put my glass down as well and watched carefully expecting it to tip over as we were in the open sea. It did not tip over. I do believe it was at this moment I decided that my next boat would be a catamaran.



When got to St. Maarten, the devastation was something for which I was unprepared. People without toilets, showers, homes...it was awful.

In this picture I sit and mourn the loss of our home, our livelihood and for many years, a source of joy and safe harbor through many previous storms.

After endless tears and reunions with friends and distribution of supplies, helping where I could - knew it was time to head home to my family. A friend helped me with a seat on a private jet out of the French side airport in Grand Case.

After a few more weeks, I received my pay out and set aside some money on which to live and started looking for another boat. I drove to Maryland to look at boats. I drove to North Carolina to look at boats, I look at countless marinas near me. I spent days and days looking at boats online from all over the world to find the right boat. I found a catamaran called Camille who was in a marina on the hard in St. Maarten for the hurricane. She had been knocked off her keels during the storm and sustained considerable damage on the port stern. Camille had been a term charter boat with Trade Winds. I spoke with the broker and the owners and we made a deal. Camille is the identical sister ship to the Billene II. Then the money was transferred, we started the repairs...

Long story short, we started sailing again in April 2018. Once she was in the water we went back to the sunken Random Wind and performed the ceremony by which the gods of the sea and the ledger of the deep would no longer recognize her as Random Wind. Per tradition we gave good champagne to the sea and had some ourselves to the unnamed vessel. We performed the same ceremony on Camille and then another by which we renamed her Random Wind.

Now Random Wind is a 52 foot luxury catamaran with custom cushions, a Tarzan swing and a barbecue on the stern. We feel so blessed and have had such good times with customers who fondly remember the original Random Wind and new guests who come aboard on a regular basis. Just like in the original Random Wind, we keep a small boutique on board with island type souvenirs and gifts. The profits from which are donated to those who still suffer on St. Maarten. We live by and truly believe: We All Rise Together.

