

Finally Living The Dream

WATER MAKER - WATER ON TAP!

After much deliberation and 'should we shouldn't we,' we have finally decided to invest in a water maker for the yacht. Our time ashore probably nailed the decision as we have been living on collected rain water (which was usually brown as the cistern tank needs cleaning) and continually lugging 25 litre refill bottles of drinking water from the supermarket (not always easy if the dinghy was involved). At least we have been able to get refills of drinking water in Jolly Harbour - during our first year on board we hate to think how many 5 litre plastic water bottles we have dumped or given away for re-use. How wonderful to think that, once we have set up our new purchase, we will be self sufficient on the water front as we once again set sail.

The system we have invested in is from Australia and its called Rainman (<http://www.rainmandesal.com>). We first used the Rainman (<http://www.rainmandesal.com>) system on our 5 month trip from Australia to Vanuatu in 2015 and it proved to be very reliable, simple and efficient. When we were based in Grenada last summer, avoiding hurricanes, we met Gary who is the agent for Rainman (<http://www.rainmandesal.com>) in Grenada and he showed us the system working on his catamaran. Since then we had done lots of research into other systems, but kept getting drawn back to the Rainman (<http://www.rainmandesal.com>), particularly since the system will produce water that is good enough to drink straight from the tap (as tested on Gary's boat).

Once we had decided to proceed, our next consideration was the logistics of getting the system delivered to us somewhere in the Caribbean. Gary suggested we get it delivered to St Lucia as he has had others shipped there with no problems, using a customs clearance agent in the

marina at Rodney Bay. However, since we had first talked with him our yacht registration had changed from Antigua registered to UK registered, so we are now classed as 'a yacht in transit' in Antigua and therefore not subject to local tax – a big saving beckoned ! Mumblings about customs, airport freight and delivery problems were always in the back of our minds so we visited a couple of yacht service agents in Falmouth to set our minds at rest. We decided to use Group Island Yacht Services (<http://www.groupislandyachtservices.com>) having been told, very clearly, that the process was very simple and had a set fee of \$75 (US), which surprised us as we had been expecting lots of other charges.

We emailed the order through to Gary and paid via credit card on the 2nd April and received confirmation of the order by return. We were advised that the order would be shipped that day with expected delivery on the 10th April. We thought “well that will delivery into customs in Antigua so we will receive it some time after that date.” On the 9th April Steve was patiently waiting his usual hour in the queue at the bank when he received a message to say the package was 'on island' and could be collected that afternoon. Wow ! We had been told the water maker had to be delivered to the yacht so asked for confirmation - the reply came back that it would be delivered to the yacht around 3pm that day, and it was. All the mumblings and rumblings about problems with importing things seem to be , if our experience is anything to go by, and we are amazed at how easily and efficiently the whole transaction went.



The beer can helps with scale !



The system we have is 'stand alone' so it doesn't have to be installed in the yacht, which we were keen to avoid. There is a petrol driven 50cc Honda generator that provides power to a high pressure water pump which drives water through a pre-filter and then to two 21” tubes containing a reverse osmosis membrane. The system should produce 70 litres of fresh water per hour from sea water. Basically, we drop a tube over the side into sea water, run the system and

fresh drinking water runs out of a tube at the other end that we drop into our water tanks - simple !

There are several options you can have with the Rainman systems for power; you can have it wired into your electrical system, run it from an existing generator or, as we have, have a specific generator for the system . The size of the water makers varies between the 70 litres per hour system with 21" membrane to the larger 40" membrane which produces 140 litres an hour.



Inside view of the petrol driven generator



Inside view of the reverse osmosis unit

The system arrived quickly and meets all our expectations. It looks quite funky and is very neat and tidy to stow. The instructions are clear and simple so, having opened the cases and examined everything, fiddled with knobs, pulled out hoses, changed the transport cap on the pressure pump and read the manual, we are about ready to go ! All we need to do now is put some oil into the engine, make some space to store it on the yacht and then give a try next time we are anchored out somewhere. No more plastic bottles of drinking water, no more working out where we can fill up the water tanks and worrying about the quality, and no more cleaning of the decks with sea water as we don't want to waste fresh water. We will continue to be careful with our water consumption as living on yachts makes you very sensitive to the precious nature of water, but we are looking forward to the extra freedom the water maker will add to our cruising lifestyle.

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