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FIRST PERSON

Alaska Adventure

BY STEVEN ARGOSY

Our entry into Alaska was uneventful. It was cool and rainy, and we did what most people do when they arrive by water — we anchored for the night in Foggy Bay. It is the designated anchorage within Alaskan waters for cruisers who have not yet checked in with customs and immigration. It's bland, but it's the best place to be prior to getting to the first major port, which is Ketchikan.

On this trip, my wife Carol's sister Tina was on board. We met up with her two sons, Steven and Shawn, in Ketchikan the day after we arrived. We wasted no time heading north. Our guests only had a week to spend with us, so we tried to visit as many places as we could.

We took an eight-hour ride out of Wrangell on the



COLD CRUISERS. Carol and Steven Argosy on Seabird.

Stikine River and saw our first glacier, but the highlight of this tour was the moose that passed right in front of the boat. We also cruised to Tracy Arm, a long, skinny inlet with a glacier at the end.

At Tracy Arm, we anchored overnight in a small bay near the entrance so we could leave early the next morning for the four-hour trip to the glacier. Shortly after everyone went to bed, we heard banging on the right side of the boat. Shawn opened the port to find an iceberg rubbing against the hull next to his berth! There was not much we could do other than watch it slowly meander past us.

The next morning, we left early, as planned. A friend who had recently cruised this area told us he brought his boat right up to the glacier wall and just had to nudge a few bergs out of the way. That's not what happened when we arrived. The ice field was dense. The bergs are deceptive; you don't realize how large and heavy they are, since most of the mass is underwater. When you hit one (even very slowly), it bounces downward and bangs along the bottom of the boat until you pass by. We never really got close to the glacier (maybe three-quarters of a mile) because it got to the point where I had few options as to where I could turn. We had some damage to our prop and to the cutters on our stabilizers, so rather than get into more trouble, we turned around and left.

STEVEN ARGOSY

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COOL SPOT. Seabird (left), the Argosys' Nordhavn 62, among friends (below) in Tracy Arm.

unnerving. We looked back afterward and saw the flat berg, now with a deep groove in the center! I will say we left a lot of red bottom paint on many icebergs in that area.

From there, we cruised to Juneau, where everyone saw seals, whales and a lot of eagles. The absolute highlight of the trip was the helicopter ride to the Juneau ice fields. We arranged with ERA Helicopters well in advance and what a thrill it was to land on the ice field and see the brilliant blue glacier lakes. That was the finale for Tina and the boys, something they will always remember. ❖



Just when I thought we were out of trouble, we heard a loud bang. Most of the icebergs are snow-colored at the top and easy to see, but some (I call them ice cubes) are clear and flat against the water, although they are big just the same. When we hit one of those, the bow of the boat went upward and banged down, bouncing off the berg for the entire length of the boat. The sound was very



ONLINE EXCLUSIVE. Check out additional photos of this Alaskan cruise on our website, motorboating.com.

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