

Fleet Letter #1
Ahoy Puddle Jumpers!

Welcome to the 2020 Pacific Puddle Jump fleet.

This is the first in a series of Pacific Puddle Jump 2020 “Fleet Letters” that you’ll receive between now and June, all of which will include important fleet info. These letters will not be sent to offshore email addresses, i.e. Iridium, Sailmail, etc. unless requested, or if the subject matter demands urgent attention.

THE “PRIVILEGE” OF SOUTH PACIFIC CRUISING

The 2020 cruising season promises to attract a wide variety of boats from many different countries to the South Pacific. This year, in addition to French Polynesia’s timeless allure, the 2021 America’s Cup activities are expected to attract higher-than-usual numbers of boats to the South Pacific.

For nearly 25 years we’ve been encouraging adventurous sailors to explore South Pacific waters, as the cruising grounds here are truly among the most beautiful and culturally rich regions on earth. As such, we consider it to be a privilege and an honor to sail here. So please permit us to say a few words about our responsibilities as visiting sailors — especially since the number of foreign-flag boats arriving annually is slowly increasing.

As organizers of the Pacific Puddle Jump, and members of the South Pacific Sailing Network (SPSN), we urge all Puddle Jumpers to follow the lead of other cruising associations and “leave a clean wake.” That is, don’t screw things up for the sailors who will arrive behind you. And always show respect for islanders and their customs, rather than taking advantage of loose enforcement of regulations. For example, all land is owned by someone. So never assume that fruits and vegetables that are growing in abundance are simply free for the taking. To do so is considered very disrespectful. But ask first, and you’ll almost always be rewarded with a big smile and an armload of fresh produce. The same goes for anchoring in front of someone’s house in an undesignated area, or dumping your trash in an unmarked receptacle. Ask first, whenever possible.

We realize that there are probably a zillion tasks on your “to do” list, but please take a few minutes to download the free Stopover Handbook of French Polynesia from the homepage of www.pacificpuddlejumper.com. It contains a wealth of background info on regulations, facilities and cultural traditions, and it includes contact info for many important marine facilities, suppliers and government agencies.

DUTY FREE FUEL, BOND EXEMPTIONS & MORE

In recent years we’ve worked with the yacht agents at Tahiti Crew to bring Puddle Jumpers a variety of special services, including clearance in and out, repatriation bond exemptions and duty free fuel beginning in the Marquesas. This year’s Puddle Jumpers get 20% off fees for all Tahiti Crew services — whether “ala carte” or as a package. (Please see their [information letter](#) and [rate sheet](#).) We recommend Tahiti Crew highly, but you ARE NOT obligated to use them. The discount code for registered PPJ fleet members is emailed upon registration completion. Please visit their web site for more info at [Tahiti Crew](http://TahitiCrew.com).

FYI - Tahiti Crew has issues receiving email from Hotmail email addresses. If you are writing them from a Hotmail address, please send to tahiticrew@mail.com.

It's often pointed out with a smile that the French invented the word "bureaucracy," and there's no shortage of it in French Polynesia. One government policy that cruising sailors applaud, however, is the practice of offering duty-free fuel to visiting yachts at a savings of about 45% — if you've got the proper paperwork. Tahiti Crew can organize that for you, so that you can get duty free fuel after making landfall in the Marquesas. We should clarify that once you arrive in Papeete, you can actually run around and get a duty free certificate yourself, but many Puddle Jumpers avoid that hassle by using Tahiti Crew, and most don't reach Papeete until two months after their initial landfall.

French Polynesia is the only place we know of which requires a "repatriation bond" to be paid for every visiting sailor (unless they have a homeward air ticket). The cash deposit amount is equivalent to the cost of an air ticket to each crew member's home country, and although the fee is returned to you on the day you check out, it is given in French Polynesian francs (CFP), which then have to be converted to another currency that's spendable elsewhere. Again, please see the attached letter from Tahiti Crew for further explanation. And please note that organizing these services must be done BEFORE you set sail for FP.

PPJ 2020 SENDOFF & SOUTH PACIFIC BON VOYAGE EVENTS

We are currently firming up plans for several PPJ events in Panama (late February) and Mexico (early March). Look for specific info in our next fleet letter, in a week or two.

TMSR — Although not officially a Pacific Puddle Jump event, the annual Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous serves as a celebration of the fleet's safe arrival, as well as a showcase of traditional cultural through music, dance, sport and cuisine. Our longtime partners at Archipelagoes (Tahiti) have sent the 2020 date for July 3-5. Save the date. You won't want to miss it.

LATITUDE 38 AND THE PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP

We also want to make sure you are familiar with our original event partner, Latitude 38. The Pacific Puddle Jump was conceived by this California sailing magazine 25 years ago to celebrate this annual Pacific cruising adventure. Though the Pacific Puddle Jump is now a separate organization it works closely with the magazine to report on and promote the Puddle Jump. The magazine's primary focus is on covering 'the world of sailing through the eyes of the West Coast sailor.' Since 1977 it's been filled with the stories of West Coast sailors who have gone before.

Since most Puddle Jumpers are already out cruising, we know that Latitude 38 readers would appreciate hearing whatever information, inspiration and entertainment you may have to offer. If you have photos and stories to share, email them to editorial@latitude38.com. And when you have Internet access, please check out our online newsletter as well as the magazine here: www.latitude38.com.

That's if for now, but we'll be back to you again soon with more important fleet info.

— Andy

Thanks to our 2020 PPJ Sponsors:

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