

Book Reviews

Latitude 38

We've often wondered why anchoring, one of the most common and important acts of cruising, is often done so cluelessly. One reason might be the stodgy and impenetrable tomes that have been written on the subject over the years. Thankfully, this isn't one of them. *Happy Hooking — the Art of Anchoring* is well organized, well illustrated, user friendly in its delivery, and even fun — authors Alex and Daria Blackwell even tell you the proper way to organize one of those round 'sunflower' raft-ups. Reading just a few pertinent chapters in this easy-to-understand book will not only 'clue you in', but help guarantee that your boat will still be there when you come back from a trip ashore.



Happy Hooking - The Art of Anchoring

By Capt. Alex Blackwell & Capt. Daria Blackwell

There has been much innovation in the design and materials of boat anchors in recent years, and lifelong sailors Daria and Alex Blackwell, known as "the cruisers" among their friends, realized sailors needed a new anchoring resource. "Anchoring a boat can be a lovely dance in a harbor, or a painful and embarrassing display of Homo sapiens' inability to plan or communicate," say the authors.

After researching gear and techniques and evaluating how the new anchors stack up against their proven predecessors, Daria and Alex created a seminar on anchoring at their club, American Yacht Club in Rye, NY, which was soon requested at other venues. Their first seminar at a Sail America boat show drew a standing room only crowd (actually, boaters spilled over into the hallway!), and the idea for Happy Hooking was born.

"We are currently experiencing major scientific advances in the design of gear and use of materials that make this an exciting but potentially confusing time for many boaters," Daria notes. "Whereas old anchors were of hook, fluke or plow design, many newer anchors tend to be digging anchors which bury into the substrate, with some radical exceptions. They inspire a different mindset relative to variables such as how to deploy these anchors. In fact, some challenge traditional thinking in many categories."

The book is divided into four parts: "Hooking Gear," a look at anchoring tackle, "Getting Hooked," a discussion of anchoring techniques, "Hooking Up with Friends," which provides practical advice for tying up and rafting, and "Hooking Rules," a primer on anchoring etiquette. "Just ask any sailor what is their favorite anchor and you are bound to embark on a lively discussion of anchors, rodes, 'memorable' experiences, and 'entertaining' stories," says Alex. "What we've tried to do here is to share some of these stories and experiences so that perhaps they can help others be better prepared." They've succeeded - Happy Hooking scores high for readability and there are plentiful

photographs and illustrations. Even if you've been boating for decades, you'll probably learn some new tips and tricks.

Daria and Alex Blackwell have been published in *Cruising World*, *Northeast Boating* (formerly *Offshore*), *Latitudes & Attitudes* and elsewhere...including *WindCheck*. They are the creators of a superb website called coastalboating.net, "the boaters' resource for places to go and things to know" about boating on the Eastern seaboard, and they're the founders of the *Sail4Kids Make a Memory Cruise*, an event hosted by American YC for patients of the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY and their families. The Blackwells left New York in late June aboard their Bowman 57 cutter rigged ketch *Aleria*, bound for Ireland via Newfoundland, "the first leg of what may turn out to be a world cruise." They're sailing with their "editor," a black cat named *Onyx* who anticipates frequent sushi dinners.

The authors say, "If you could only take one piece of advise from these pages with you on your travels, perhaps you will remember what Tommy Moran, an old salt in the West of Ireland, advised time and again: anchor as though you plan to stay for weeks, even if you intend to leave in an hour." *Happy Hooking* is a very worthy addition to your onboard library. It's available direct from the publisher via an online order form at coastalboating.net. ♦



Happy Hooking - Alex & Daria Blackwell

For those who sail, there is one thing that is pretty well a rule of thumb. You will have to anchor, and if you know the secrets, it isn't all that hard. The authors give you their insight into the secrets of anchoring in most situations, allowing you to avoid the embarrassing moments when your anchor doesn't do what it's supposed to.

Messing About in Sailboats

February 01, 2010

Anchoring in the Northeast U.S.

by Guest Author Stu Hochron



Stu Hochron is founder and author of the truly excellent sailing online newsletter [News From The Bow](#). Adam

Best Anchoring Reference

Before going any further, let me refer you what I consider to be the best available reference on anchoring, "[Happy Hooking](#)", by Alex and Daria Blackwell, Published 2008 by White Seahorse, Inc.

The Blackwells detail all aspects of anchoring in this inexpensive paperback volume, and include the newest technology in anchors and technique. If you read this book before you head out, and you will be better prepared for any anchoring challenge.

My BOATS Gear.com

Our Review

Capt. Alex Blackwell & Capt. Daria Blackwell have written this book about setting anchors from their countless experiences. Alex and Daria are the people behind CoastalBoating.net, an online community resource for the boater.

It is available direct from www.coastalboating.net and will soon be available on Amazon.com. happy Hooking has had very positive reviews in numerous publications including L&A, Latitude 38 SailWorld.com.

PRACTICAL Boat Owner

Anchoring Techniques – Further reading: June 2011

Happy Hooking – the Art of Anchoring by blue water cruisers Alex & Daria Blackwell covers all the techniques mentioned and more, with information on weather, etiquette and rafting, among other things.



SAIL-WORLD.com

AUSTRALIAN CRUISING NEWSLETTER

Happy Hooking, the Art of Anchoring - Book Review

If there's one thing that the cruising sailor needs to know well, it's how to anchor! When overnight at anchor, you'll sleep well if you know that the anchor is secured and you're not going to find yourself out to sea or, worse (the nightmare scenario), be woken in the dark by the noise of the rudder bouncing on a rocky shore.

So the answer is to have every skill at your disposal, and this new book by the Blackwells contains a wealth of information.

Apart from the many skills that can be learned, there has been much innovation in the design and materials of boat anchors in recent years, and the 'new generation' of anchors, as well as the those of earlier technology, are examined in detail.

Entering an anchorage already filled with anchored boats can also be a real test. 'Why is it,' asked a cruising friend recently, 'that the only time we foul up when anchoring is when there are twenty other boat around, all watching?'

Reading 'Happy Hooking' could be the answer to this question. 'Anchoring a boat can be a lovely dance in a harbor, or a painful and embarrassing display of Homo sapiens' inability to plan or communicate,' the authors have commented.

The book itself has grown from some seminars which the Alex and Daria Blackwell gave first at their local club, then, by request at others, then at the Sail America Boat Show. It was such a success that the idea of the book was born.

There are four parts to the book:

Part 1 is an analysis of anchors. Part 2 concentrates on anchoring techniques, covering a wide range of topics including emergencies and groundings. Part 3 is about rafting and its techniques for happy collaboration, and Part 4 concerns itself with anchoring etiquette. I wish this final part could become a set of worldwide rules for leisure sailors.

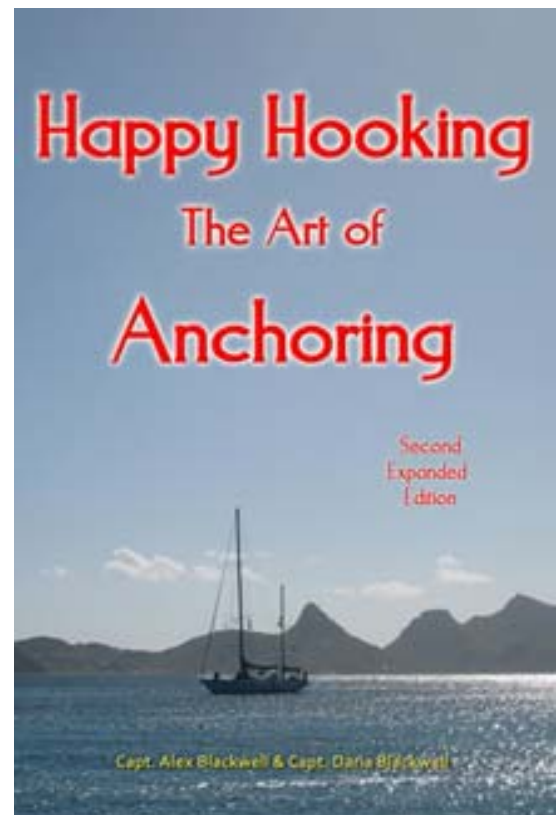
The book is readable and interesting, and has plenty of illustrations and diagrams. It might be compulsory reading for the new sailor, but even the most experienced will find much new material here.

Happy Hooking, the Art of Anchoring, by Capt. Alex Blackwell & Capt. Daria Blackwell. It's available for around from Amazon.com and Coastalboating.net

The second expanded edition of *Happy Hooking - the Art of Anchoring*, which is out now, features:

- More gear
- More photos
- More illustrations
- More independent reviews
- Experience from both sides of the Atlantic
- Personal anecdotes based on thousands of miles of sailing and countless times anchoring

Happy Hooking will be available in bookstores throughout the UK and Ireland as well as online from Kelvin Hughes (www.bookharbour.com), the authorized European distributor. *Happy Hooking* is also available direct from the publisher at www.coastalboating.net as well as from www.amazon.com in the United States.



About the Authors

Daria and Alex Blackwell are lifelong sailors and passionate cruisers. They have completed three Atlantic crossings and have spent years cruising the coasts of the Americas and Europe, as well as the Bahamas, the Caribbean islands, and the Atlantic islands, most recently double-handing on their vintage Bowman 57-foot ketch, *Aleria*. Alex holds a USCG Master's license with sailing and towing endorsements. Daria holds a USCG OUPV Captain's license. The Blackwells are members of the Ocean Cruising Club, Irish Cruising Club, Seven Seas Cruising Association, American Yacht Club, and Mayo Sailing Club. They are also the organizers of the SSCA cruising station for Ireland.

Daria and Alex have been published in *Practical Boat Owner*, *Classic Boat*, *Cruising World*, *Latitudes & Attitudes Seafaring*, *Offshore*, *Windcheck*, , and elsewhere. For many years, they wrote much of the content for www.AmericanYC.com for which they also served as the webmasters. They also created and manage www.CoastalBoating.net, the boaters' resource for places to go and things to know about boating on both Atlantic shores. As founders of Sail4Kids Make a Memory Cruise, the Blackwells were recognized with prestigious awards by both American Yacht Club and the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Racing Sailors. Alex's first book, *Oyster Delight by Jonathan Mite* (currently out of print), is a tribute to his lifelong interest in oysters, having launched an oyster hatchery in Ireland after being awarded a Master's degree in Fisheries Biology.

Alex and Daria conduct live seminars on anchoring and other subjects at boat shows and boating clubs. They also conduct online seminars (webinars) for Seven Seas University (SSCA) and have created an online anchoring course for NauticEd. They balance their time onshore with blue water adventures. Clew Bay in the magical west of Ireland is their current base.