

SOLO FEMALE ATLANTIC CROSSING

Most of us will recall the recent record breaking crossing of the Atlantic by a 14-year old Briton recently, with BBC TV coverage of his arrival in Antigua. Almost completely unreported, however, was another apparent first – a solo crossing of the same ocean by a female!

Esperanza Perez arrived in St. Lucia on Dec.23rd on board the *ARCHIBALD*, a non-production 12-metre Caroff Exploration 40 steel hulled yacht. She told the local news that she got the idea following a Pacific crossing (with the Archibald's owner) when she couldn't find any evidence that there had ever been a solo female crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. The Archibald left Las Palmas on Nov.30th (4 days after the ARC) and had a pretty uneventful crossing, arriving at Rodney Bay Marina on Dec. 23rd exactly on the date that she planned to.

Feeling hungry on day one, she discovered that her meat had gone off; then her computer began acting up, but she was able to fix it with help over the radio; the wind pilot went down, followed by the auto-pilot that night in 25 knot winds, so she secured the boat and went to bed, 'sleeping soundly'! She was also able to contact ARC boats at 1000 hrs, had anxious moments when she was unable to, but that was soon put right. She also managed to fix the pilots once the wind dropped to 10 knots, and thoroughly enjoyed her crossing.

Esperanza, who hails from Cartagena, says she chose St. Lucia because she heard it was beautiful, is well promoted in Europe, and had all the support facilities she would have wished for on arrival. She would do it all over again, in the company of friends, but not too many.

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