

Thorne Bay

55 40.63 N 132 31.85 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 25/06/2018

Thorne Bay offers wonderful shelter and almost limitless anchoring possibilities in its various arms. Depths throughout the bay are universally suitable for anchoring so you just need to pick a spot that suits you. Tides run quite strongly through the entrance and outer bay.

The outer bay has a number of interesting old float houses dotted around the shoreline whilst the inner bay has the small but thriving settlement of Thorne Bay on its northern shore. The town has a fairly extensive pontoon system as marked on the charts. There is also a new pontoon system, not shown on the charts, on the southern shore of the bay at 55 40.2N 132 31.3W with guest mooring on the outer side of the hammerhead. Reasonable 3G mobile phone signal throughout the bay.

Elfin Cove, AK

58 11.72 N 136 20.80 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Every account we read of Elfin Cove describes it as a charming "edge of the world" type boardwalk settlement. They are not wrong and it lives up to its hyperbole.

Visitor berthing is available on either side of a long well maintained pontoon in the outer harbour. The Navionics charts show obstructions on the east side of the pontoon but the local fishermen say both sides are clear and we tied up on the eastern side without problem.

There is no harbour master (or berthing fees!) and berthing is on a first come first served basis. This is primarily a fishing harbour and if the wharf is busy you should expect to have small trolling fishing boats rafting up with you. There is no water or electricity on the pontoons, although fuel and propane can be obtained from the jetty just to the south west of the main pontoon. The latter is only accessible to deep draught vessels at high water.

Whilst anchoring in the approach fairway would be theoretically possible, it is used by float planes as their runway 4 or 5 times a day in summer so it would be dangerous to do so. The inner harbour basin has private berths and it would be unadvisable to enter the narrow channel into it without local advice and guidance.

Ashore there is a charming pub serving a small range of remarkably good no nonsense food, a post office and a shop. The 6 or 7 luxury sports fishing lodges do not appear to offer any facilities for casual walk in guests.

South Inian Pass AK

58 13.50 N 136 21.30 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Tides flow strongly through South Inian pass with lots of swirling and violent back eddies. If winds are strong it would certainly be prudent to wait until slack water before transiting the passage.

Icy Strait AK

58 18.75 N 136 7.554 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Although not marked on the chart, there are heavy overfalls in the passages to the south and north of LeMesurier Island. These posed no significant problems in winds of 10-15 knots but local fishermen say this area can be treacherous in stronger wind over tide situations and there have been occasions when even the large Alaska Marine Highway ferries have been unable to transit the passages. The South Passage is said to be the calmer of the 2.

North Sandy Bay Cove

58 43.28 N 135 59.27 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

North Sandy Bay cove is probably the best protected anchorage in Glacier Bay, with high rocky mountains on its east side and small attractive wooded islands to the south and west.

The safest entry is from the north although there is a narrower channel into the anchorage just to the south of Puffin Island. The official NOAA and Navionics charts do not contain sufficient soundings to allow this channel to be navigated with any confidence by deep draught vessels or yachts. However the crowd sourced Navionics sonar charts show a bar at either end of the channel with a charted depth of between 1.5 and 2.0m and we did see motor cruisers using the channel at half tide.

Pleasant Island

58 22.96 N 135 37.37 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

The passage between Pleasant Island and the mainland provides a satisfactory fair weather anchorage and is a useful spot to anchor overnight if you need to sail into the Glacier Bay Visitor Centre in time for a mandatory 0800 orientation session the following morning.

In westerly winds anchor just to the east of the marked spit on the north side of Pleasant Island in 5-6m of water. Good holding in mixed kelp and thick mud. In winds with a northerly component you can anchor just off Gustavus, clear of the ferry berth and the moorings used by local fishing boats.

Both anchorages offer better shelter than the chart would suggest and are commonly used by local fishing boats.

Blue Mouse Cove

58 46.67 N 136 29.20 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Blue Mouse Cove is said to be the most popular anchorage in Glacier Bay. Anchor there on a clear day and it is easy to see why. The views across to the mountains and hanging glaciers of the Fairweather Range are stunning

Anchor in one of the coves of the main bay. Holding is reported to be poor in the bay although we found reasonable holding in mixed sand/rock in the southeastern most cove in approx 15 m of water.

The anchorage is said to be a good place to see Grizzly Bear and all we spoke to who had anchored there reported sightings. We didn't see a bear in the cove but did spot one feeding on mussels on the rocky shore to the NW of the cove.

Tracy Arm

57 55.31 N 133 32.90 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Tracy Arm, with the 2 Sawyer Glaciers at its head, is one of the scenic highlights of SE Alaska and some consider it to be more stunning than Glacier Bay.

Once over the terminal moraine bar there are no real navigational challenges in reaching either of the 2 glaciers at the head of the Arm, other than avoiding the floating glacial ice which litters the Arm, but never in enough quantity to seriously impede navigation.

However, you should not cut the corner on any of the blind bends or you could find yourself suddenly face to face with one of the 300m long cruise ships that make the journey to the top of the fjord. Whilst they transmit on AIS and make Securite broadcasts on VHF the slab sided high rock walls on either side of the fjord mean you may not be able to receive either.

Both Sawyer Glaciers are in serious retreat and the snouts of both glaciers are over one nautical mile further inland than the position shown on our Navionics charts. We got to within 0.5 nm of the new snout position in both cases without anything registering on our echo sounder, and the local tourist boats were getting closer still

Tracy Arm - South Sawyer Glacier

57 51.28 N 133 7.151 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

The attached screenshot from the plotter with a radar overlay show the extent of the retreat of the South Sawyer Glacier. The North Sawyer Glacier shows a similar pattern of retreat

Hoonah

58 6.276 N 135 26.14 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Hoonah is the largest T'lingit settlement in SE Alaska and was first occupied when the T'lingit clans had to evacuate from Glacier Bay in the 1700s due to advancing glaciers. The name Hoonah means "protected from the north wind" in the T'lingit language and the harbour is reckoned to be the safest and best protected harbour in SE Alaska.

The outer harbour has a single long pontoon with visitors berthing permitted on the outer side of it, but no other facilities. It is fine in calm weather but is exposed to afternoon sea breezes coming in from Icy strait.

The inner mole harbour is perfectly protected from all winds and swell with water and electricity on most pontoons and showers, toilets and laundrette in the adjacent harbour master's block.

The Hoonah Trading company operates a single supermarket and hardware store with a remarkably good range of stock and also run the fuel berth.

Whilst a new cruise ship facility has been built out at Icy Point, attracting over 100 cruise ships a year, the majority of cruise ship visitors don't seem to get too much further than the large visitors centre at Icy Point which has been built on the site of an old canning factory. Only a few hardy souls make it into Hoonah itself which benefits from the best of both worlds. It profits from the economic benefits of tourism since the Icy Point complex is owned and run by the local community, but its town centre is protected from the worst excesses of cruise ship tourism and isn't blighted with endless jewellery shops like Juneau and Ketchikan.

Instead the town centre is enjoying a renaissance of Tlingit art and culture. The cultural visitor centre is interesting and one can watch local artisans at work carving totem poles and dugout wooden canoes. You can hire a jeep and drive through the network of local logging roads where sightings of bear are common.

There is a modern shiplift facility in Hoonah with facilities to lay up ashore. Whilst this has been used by yachts in

the past to overwinter, the pricing regime has recently been changed to discourage laying up for long periods. Instead pleasure craft are encouraged to lay up afloat in the very well protected inner harbour over the winter and haul out for a short refit/bottom paint in spring. There is a boatwatch service operating in the harbour and those we spoke to who had used it whilst overwintering spoke in favourable terms about it. This is possibly the safest and most sheltered place to lay up for the winter in SE Alaska.

Petersburg

56 48.62 N 132 57.63 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Petersburg's Norwegian heritage is immediately apparent the moment this vibrant fishing town comes into view as you approach from Wrangell Narrows. The shore is lined with Rörbua style fish plants on wooden stilts set against a stunning backdrop of snow capped mountains on the north side of Frederick Sound, making it look like a typical Lofoten fishing harbour in spring.

The harbour has three large pontoon systems all controlled by the harbourmaster. Whilst they are primarily intended for the fishing fleet, pleasure boats are welcomed and the harbour master says it is almost always possible to find space for visitors. The pontoons have potable water and electricity, there are showers in the harbour masters block and a laundrette 5 minutes walk from the harbour.

For those not wanting to come alongside, it is possible to anchor on the north side of the harbour opposite the pontoons provided you keep clear of the main fairway which is used by the Alaskan State ferry and the many fishing boats passing through the Wrangell Narrows.

The town is interesting, compact and extremely well kept in keeping with its Norwegian roots. It has a small selection of high quality shops selling things the cruising yachtsman might even be interested in buying, in stark contrast to other SE Alaskan towns where the majority of the shops seemed to be geared towards the needs of the cruise ship market.

There is a small supermarket in the main high street which is perfectly adequate, with a much larger one 15 minutes walk out of town on the road to the airport. The latter, whilst not cheap, is without doubt the best supermarket we have come across in SE Alaska and a good place to stock up on luxury items that cannot be obtained elsewhere. One of the fish plants operates a small restaurant and shop outlet in the centre of town serving outstandingly fresh and tasty halibut, together with a wide variety of high quality vacuum packed halibut and salmon which are perfect to stock up the ship's fridge.

Cleveland Passage

57 13.20 N 133 30.40 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

If on first looking at the chart your intuition says that Cleveland Passage is likely to be a dubious anchorage, then trust your intuition. We didn't, and allowed ourselves to be beguiled by the Douglas and Douglas pilot which includes it on its "dream" itinerary tour of SE Alaska.

The most charitable thing that can be said of Cleveland Passage is that it is roughly equidistant between Petersburg and Tracy Arm, 2 must not miss places on the SE Alaska circuit, and splits the otherwise 70 mile passage into 2 easier legs. Beyond that, the anchorage has little to commend it.

Whitney Island takes the sting out of a westerly wind, but williwaws seem to come from all directions and combine with the stream flowing through the anchorage to produce an annoying wind against tide chop that will slap against your hull night long. Combine that with the swell that manages to creep in from both ends of the Passage, and the sound of your chain rattling across the rocky bottom as you swing around in the williwaws, and it is not a recipe for a peaceful night. To compound this the holding on the rocky bottom is only barely adequate and it can really only be described as a settled weather anchorage.

Unnamed Cove, Tracy Arm

57 48.60 N 133 38.13 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

The entrance to Tracy Arm could be challenging in the wrong conditions. The ebb tide can sluice through the narrow gap in the terminal moraine at over 3 knots creating heavy overfalls over the moraine reef.

The pilot cautions that the buoys marking the gap through the moraine cannot be relied upon as they are prone to be dragged out of position by the ice from the Sawyer Glacier. However there is now a very prominent back transit located on Harbour Island to guide you safely through the gap, and the line of icebergs grounded on both sides of the moraine reef can also provide a very visible indication as to where the gap is located. We could find no evidence of the forward transit shown on the chart

Once over the moraine, the only sheltered anchorage in Tracy Arm is in the small cove on the west side of the arm, approximately 1.2 nm north of the entrance buoys. Holding is only moderate on the rocky bottom but no real swell seems to get into the anchorage and it is perfectly safe and comfortable in settled weather. The views from the anchorage down Endicott Arm towards Terror fords and the Sundum Glacier are stunning

Reid Inlet

58 51.86 N 136 49.25 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Reid Inlet is one of the most popular anchorages in Glacier Bay National Park and must be one of the few places in the world where you can safely anchor within 0.5nm of the snout of a Glacier.

Whilst the view from the anchorage is spectacular, it is not the most peaceful of anchorages. Even if it is mirror calm outside, a fierce bitterly cold katabatic wind can blow down from the glacier across the Inlet kicking up a fair chop. The west side of the Inlet lies outside of the path of the worst of the katabatic winds and most boats seem to favour this side when anchoring.

Juneau - Auke Bay

58 23.72 N 134 45.25 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Juneau has 3 small boat harbours. 2 are immediately north of the city in the Gastineau channel but may be inaccessible to tall masted yachts who may not be able to pass under the harbour bridge at anything other than the lowest of tides. The third lies in Auke Bay, some 10 nm to the NW of the city centre. This is accessible at all states of the tide and appears to be the harbour of choice for larger vessels and an increasing number of super yachts.

As with most SE Alaskan harbours Auke Bay is primarily a fishing harbour and berthing is on a first come first served basis. At busy times when the fishing fleet is in harbour you will have to raft up 2 or 3 deep and there will not be enough electrical points to serve everybody. There are showers and a laundry but some distance away from the pontoons.

Although as SE Alaska's largest city Juneau has a good selection of shops, it is not a particularly convenient place to re-provision. Auke Bay only has a small convenience store and the city centre a vast array of shops aimed exclusively at the cruise ship market. The supermarkets and other shops likely to be of interest to the yachtsman are mainly located in an out of town shopping mall roughly equidistant between the city centre and Auke Bay and require a bus, taxi or hire car to get to them.

Auke Bay has a lively and very popular bar serving good Alaskan staples such as nachos and burgers, and an even more popular cafe serving truly exceptional coffee and breakfasts.

Russell Island Passage

58 55.47 N 136 48.24 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

A strictly fair weather, room for one boat only, anchorage on the east side of Russell Island in the bight between the Island and a small rocky outcrop. The anchorage is well sheltered from any seas but swinging room is limited and holding is poor on a hard rocky bottom. Anchor halfway between the westernmost rocky outcrop and the Island in 10-15 m of water.

However in calm weather this is a beautiful peaceful anchorage with fantastic views across to the alluvial fan and u-shaped valley of the now receded Rendu Glacier.

Pelican

57 57.41 N 136 13.56 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

Located halfway down mountainous Lisianski Inlet, Pelican is slightly off the direct line route for a SE Alaska cruise. However, like Elfin Cove, it is a charming boardwalk settlement, completely free from any cruise ship activity and is well worth the diversion.

The harbour has an extensive pontoon system with electricity and potable fresh water on the pontoons and a fuel berth adjacent. There is no mobile phone coverage in the settlement, but you can get a reasonable wi-fi connection in the library (open late afternoons only).

NW Chicagof Coast

57 24.70 N 135 56.59 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/07/2018

The NW Chicagof Coast between Lisianski Strait and the Khaz Peninsula offers some wonderful, secluded, wild cruising and splendid sheltered anchorages, along with a sheltered inland passage for some of the way.

However it is not an easy place to cruise. Unlike navigating the once glaciated waterways of the Inside Passage, where the dictum "if you can't see it, there isn't anything there" can almost universally be applied, navigating this stretch of coast requires a change of mind set.

Littered with thousands of off lying rocks and skerries, some of which extend as far as 5 miles offshore and with the inner leads similarly encumbered, it is much more akin to navigating through the rock strewn skerries of Norway with one exception - the latter are generally well marked but this part of the Chicagof coast is effectively completely unmarked.

Furthermore the area is poorly charted compared to other parts of SE Alaska, where the volume of fishing activity and more recently, cruise ship traffic, have provided an imperative for making the main routes extremely well surveyed and charted.

We read more than one account of cruising yachts that have come to grief on unmarked or incorrectly marked rocks in this area, and had an uncomfortably close brush with one of the latter ourselves. To compound this the GPS chart datums cannot be relied upon in this particular region and we encountered errors of between 100-200 metres in some cases.

One particularly dangerous rock is Olga Rock (57.24.6N 135 56.5W) which lies on the direct rhumbline route between the Khaz fairway buoy and Salisbury Sound. It is a completely isolated offlier, is , and is only really visible on the NOAA and Navionics electronic charts when zoomed in to the highest levels.

Kimshan Cove

57 41.32 N 136 7.066 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/07/2018

A perfectly protected and wonderfully secluded anchorage on the remote NW Chicagof coast where you are unlikely to come across many other pleasure of fishing craft.

Entry from the northwest is straightforward but if approaching from the southwest there is a dangerous rock which lies about 60m to the SE of the green buoy which supposedly marks it.

On looking at the chart, where the direction of buoyage is not clear, it might be tempting to leave the green buoy to starboard when entering from the SW so as to avoid this rock. However it should be left to port by about 100m in order to avoid the rock.

Furthermore the rocky shelf running along the N shore of Fitz Island at its western end extends about 4 times further out into the main channel than shown on either the NOAA or normal Navionics charts with a depth of less than 1.0m over it at CD. This narrows the navigable channel to less than half of the apparently navigable width as shown on the chart.

However, the extended shelf is shown on the crowd sourced Navionics Sonar charts which we found to be a very helpful aid to Navigation in this area which is less well surveyed than other parts of SE Alaska.

Sitka

57 3.338 N 135 21.19 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer V) - 27/07/2018

Sitka has a number of marinas all managed by the harbourmaster but visitors will normally be allocated a berth in the northernmost (Thomsen) harbour which has power and potable water on the pontoons and showers/toilets where the pontoon system joins the shore. Call the harbourmaster on Ch 16 for a berth allocation.

Alternatively it is possible to anchor in the harbour in the large area between the breakwater and Thomsen harbour either to the north or south of the main fairway. Anchorage is also possible to the south of the harbour bridge in an area south of Crescent Bay marina. Both are within an easy dinghy ride of town.

Many people consider Sitka to be the most pleasant town in SE Alaska and it is certainly the most convenient place from which to do a major re-provision or crew change. An excellent super market and liquor store are less than 5 minutes walk away, propane bottles can be refilled from the petrol station next to the harbour, and a launderette, hardware and marine stores are within 10 minutes walk. Sitka Sound Seafoods sells excellent vacuum packed Salmon, Halibut, Cod and Crab from a small shop attached to the fish processing plant. The airport has direct connecting flights to Seattle and is a very short taxi ride from the harbour.

Sitka (Halibut Point)

57 6.955 N 135 23.52 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer V) - 27/07/2018

There is a new cruise ship docking facility about a mile to the north of Halibut Point which is not yet shown on the NOAA or Navionics charts.

Cape Ommaney

56 9.245 N 134 40.29 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 27/07/2018

There is a significant acceleration zone on the west side of Cape Ommaney when the prevailing NW winds are blowing and winds strengths can suddenly increase by 10-15 knots in the space of half a mile as you approach the Cape from the NW.

Conversely the eastern side of Cape Ommaney can be mirror calm whilst it is blowing 25-30 knots a few hundred meters away on the other side of the Cape.

Little Port Walter

56 22.96 N 134 38.63 W

Clive Woodman - 27/07/2018

A perfectly protected anchorage at the foot of stunning mountains evocative of scenery from "Lord of the Rings". The outer bay is a shade too deep for anchoring but the inner bay has a steady 10-12m, with what is a rarity for SE Alaska, outstanding holding in thick mud.

The bar between the 2 bays has around 2.5 to 3.0m depth below chart datum so most pleasure craft should be able to enter on anything other than negative tides. Favour the NW side of the channel when entering. The rocks on either side of the bar are marked with kelp.

There is a NOAA research station located on the NW shore of the inner cove but this does not significantly detract from the beauty and peacefulness of the anchorage. Anchoring is prohibited in the SW half of the inner cove - white "no anchoring" signs on the research station buildings and on the shore opposite it denote the limits of the prohibited area. However there is more than enough space in the NE half of the cove for 4 or 5 boats to anchor comfortably.

Eastern Bay

57 9.095 N 135 26.44 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 29/07/2018

In settled weather the small islands on the eastern side of Eastern Bay offer a number of possible anchorages depending on wind conditions. The bay between the south easternmost Island and the slightly larger island to the west of it is very peaceful and secluded. Moderate holding in 10-12m over a mix of kelp, shells, fine sand and rock.

Yamani Cove

56 40.57 N 135 11.28 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 29/07/2018

Yamani Cove is a wild well sheltered anchorage which is used by local fishing boats. The outer approaches to Necker Bay has a number of rocks and islets with breaking seas which would be challenging in rough weather but once in the lee of Yamani Island the swell dies down.

Red Bluff Bay

56 52.37 N 134 47.88 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 29/07/2018

Red Bluff Bay is one of the most spectacular anchorages on the mountainous east coast of Baranof and whilst the scenery is outstanding you will probably not have this anchorage to yourself as it is a popular stop for commercial tour operators.

The Douglass and Douglass Pilot suggests there are 3 anchorages in Red Bluff Bay. The first is just off the ruins of a cannery on the northern shore at 56 51N 134 43W. However depths here did not get below 20m until we were a couple of boat lengths from the shore and we would not consider this a viable anchorage unless you used stern ties ashore.

The second anchorage is in a small indentation on the north shore about 0.5nm to the west of the cannery ruins with depths of 12-15 m on the protruding spit. This is a perfectly acceptable anchorage, and whilst not as scenically spectacular as the third site, does not seem to suffer from the same katabatic winds and may be a safer option in circumstances where the katabatic winds are blowing strongly.

The third anchorage is off the mud flats at the head of the bay. The pilot suggests anchoring in the NE corner of this bay where the Navionics charts show a depth of 8.8m. We found the depths to be significantly deeper than charted in this NE corner and the swinging room very restricted. However just south of the spit that forms this cove you can find depths of 10-15 m with good holding in mud. Alternatively bigger boats anchor in the middle of the Bay in around 20-25m of water with plenty of swinging room. The mountain scenery in this third anchorage is truly spectacular and bears can be seen wading on the mud flats at low tide but it is prone to strong katabatic winds - although these seem to die away at night.

Bay of Pillars

56 36.82 N 134 13.16 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 29/07/2018

Bay of Pillars is a long wild Inlet on the west coast of Kuiu Island.

The recommended anchorage lies 4.5nm from the mouth of the Inlet behind 5 small islets. Anchoring off the small cove between the 2 northernmost islets gives reasonable holding in 10-12m over shingle and fine mud, and excellent views over to the mountains of Baranof Island.

Although this anchorage is open to the prevailing NW winds the reefs to the north of it keep any fetch down, and it is just as sheltered as the coves on the northern shore, all of which look as if the bottom would be a mixture of rock and kelp.

Entering the anchorage is straightforward at half tide or below when all the reefs are clearly visible and those that are not are generally marked with kelp.

Baranof Hot Springs

57 5.307 N 134 50.01 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 29/07/2018

In our experience many hot springs can be a rather disappointing, smelly experience. Baranof Hot Springs is not such a place and is a not to be missed experience if cruising this stretch of coast.

There is a very modern, substantial well kept pontoon system at the head of the Bay with sufficient space for 3-4 yachts on either side of it and rafting up to 2 deep allowed. No facilities on the pontoon.

Ashore you have 2 options - a half mile walk up a boardwalk takes you to a series of natural hot pools in which you can bathe whilst overlooking a spectacular waterfall flowing from the lake above - there can be no better setting in which to indulge yourself.

Alternatively for those seeking a little more privacy there are a number of extremely clean spring filled bath tubs set in individual cubicles at the head of the pontoon system. These have windows looking out towards the waterfall and the pontoon together with a perfectly placed shelf on which to rest a can of beer or glass of wine whilst luxuriating in the bath and enjoying the views!!

The small settlement of Baranof Hot springs is enjoying a resurgence with a number of new very modern and tasteful summer houses having been constructed. It is understood that there are about 20 residents living there in the summer period with a single caretaker in the winter. Apart from the baths and a barbecue pit there are no other facilities and the settlement doesn't have a shop.

Ell Cove

57 8.277 N 134 51.97 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018

A classic anchorage on the east side of Baranof Island providing good all round shelter, ample swinging room, and depths of 10-12m for anchoring.

Mobile phone and data coverage in Alaska

61 0.726 N 147 39.79 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/06/2018

When cruising in the "lower 49" states have found Verizon offers excellent coverage and good value PAYG plans. However this does not extend to Alaska where those on a Verizon PAYG plan do not have access to shared masts and coverage is strictly limited to the larger towns and cities.

Rudyard Bay and Punchbowl Cove

55 31.86 N 130 46.95 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 25/06/2018

With towering rock walls on every side, Punchbowl Cove is one of the scenic highlights of the Misty Fjords National Wilderness. There is a single mooring buoy at the head of Punchbowl Cove and if that is occupied the only anchoring possibility is between the mooring buoy and the southern shore in around 20-25 metres.

Manzanita Cove

55 35.16 N 130 58.05 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 25/06/2018

A wild and scenic fair weather anchorage with spectacular views across to the Misty Fjords National Wilderness area.

The Douglass and Douglass pilot suggests anchoring in the cove immediately to the west of Wart Point. However the depths in the cove don't get less than 30m until you are very close to the shore, so unless there is a consistent wind blowing from a southerly direction, the only way you could safely anchor in this cove is by taking a line ashore or laying a kedge to stop you swinging.

The mooring buoy mentioned in the Douglass and Douglass pilot and shown on Navionics charts was not present when we visited in 2018, and neither was the Parks maintained pontoon which the pilot suggests exists in this cove.

The central part of the cove is too deep for anchoring but we anchored in the SW corner of the Bay in around 20 metres just off the mudbanks at the mouth of Manzanita Creek. The soundings on the Navionics charts are inaccurate as we dropped our anchor in 20m of water in a spot that according to the chart only had 0.9m.

Behm Canal

55 34.87 N 131 50.18 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 25/06/2018

The tidal stream predictions shown on Navionics charts for the eastern arm of the Behm Canal bore little resemblance to the conditions we encountered.

There was close to zero tidal stream throughout the cycle but instead a consistent southerly flowing current of between 1 and 1.5 knots. We attributed this to outflow from the Unuk, Leduc and Chuckamin rivers at the NE end of the Canal, a view reinforced by the fact the water became increasingly milky with glacial silt runoff the further north we went up the eastern arm.

The narrow passes at the top (north) end of the Behm Canal are prone to strong inflow winds and on a sunny afternoon we encountered 20-30 knot winds blowing from west to East on an otherwise mirror calm day.

The western arm of the Behm Canal is more tidal in nature with clearer water and tidal streams that appear to obey the predictions more closely.

Unnamed cove, Behm Canal

55 52.94 N 131 48.46 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 25/06/2018

The Douglass and Douglass pilot identifies Yes Cove as the anchorage of choice at the NW end of the Behm Canal. However, for those not wanting to make the 9 nm diversion up to the top of Yes Cove, the small cove in position 55 53N 131 48W makes a perfectly acceptable passage anchorage for those circumnavigating Revillagigedo Island.

Portage Bay

56 58.08 N 133 18.17 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018

Portage Bay is not the prettiest anchorage in SE Alaska but it is a good place to sit out a SE blow.

The entrance is narrow but straightforward and once inside you have acres of swinging room in 8-10m depth with excellent holding in thick mud. The NOAA pilot recommends entering and leaving at slack water. This is perhaps overly cautious and although a moderate tide flows in and out the mouth of the Bay, under normal conditions it should not pose problems for a powered vessel.

Meyers Chuck

55 44.43 N 132 15.49 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018

A cosy harbour on the eastern side of Clarence Strait. The entrance is narrow and more easily transited at low tide when the surrounding rocks are visible. The Navionics chart shows a dangerous rock in the entrance channel approximately 100m SW of the green channel marker. We could find no evidence of this rock.

Wrangell

56 27.87 N 132 22.91 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 15/07/2018

A busy fishing town with 2 harbours for visiting yachts. For those wanting to refuel, replenish gas cylinders, re-provision and do laundry, the northernmost harbour is the most convenient of the 2, with all of the aforementioned within 5 minutes walk of the pontoon.

There is a relatively new large boatyard facility in Wrangell, with 2 ship lifts, concrete hard standing, electrical power supplies ashore and a number of covered boat sheds. Whilst primarily intended for the fishing fleet it is possible for pleasure boats and yachts to lay up ashore in the yard over the winter. The facility is managed by the harbour office to whom any enquiries should be addressed. However, the area is subject to fierce winds in winter so laying up a deep fin keel yacht with mast up may not be advisable. When asked about this a local said "In Florida they give their storms names and call them hurricanes. Here 70 knot winds are just another winter storm!"

Coho Cove, SE Alaska

55 16.05 N 131 22.45 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/06/2018

A fair weather anchorage on the western side of Thorn arm close to the entrance with wonderful views of the mountains to the south.

Foggy Bay Outer Anchorage

54 55.88 N 130 56.58 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018

Most pleasure craft anchor in the inner cove at the NE corner to Foggy Bay.

However if this cove is full, and it often is at the beginning and end of the season when boats are arriving and departing from Alaska, then anchorage can be found in the SE corner. You need to go right in to the corner to escape from the swell, but once in there is reasonable protection from southerly winds.

Bottleneck Inlet, BC

52 42.50 N 128 24.21 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/06/2018

A stunning and extremely well protected anchorage with excellent holding in thick gelatinous mud. We sat out a southerly gale here with hardly a ripple on the water. Unlike some other anchorages in this area surrounded by high mountains on all sides, Bottleneck Inlet does not seem to be prone to katabatic or fall winds funnelling down from the mountains.

The entrance is not quite as narrow as it appears from the chart and we encountered a least depth of 2.6 above chart datum in the Narrows. No swell seems to reach the Narrows so most pleasure craft could negotiate the entrance at any state of the tide.

Klemtu Passage, BC

52 34.17 N 128 30.77 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/06/2018

Klemtu Passage is very scenic and worth transiting even if you don't intend stopping in Klemtu.

On paper Clothes bay, a mile to the south of Klemtu looks as if it should be a snug anchorage. However, a surprising amount of wind seems to funnel through from the south if the wind is in that sector. Furthermore at the time of our visit in Jun 2018 the bay was littered with semi submerged logs, embedded in the mud but protruding above water and we judged there would be a high risk of fouling an anchor.

It would be possible to anchor in the bay at Klemtu itself but it appeared slightly deeper than the chart suggests and a long scope would be needed.

Spicer Islands

53 45.11 N 130 21.66 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018

The cove between Spicer Island and South Spicer Island offers excellent shelter and an "off the beaten track" feeling since most boats taking the outer "Inside Passage" seem to take the Petrel Channel.

Enter the anchorage from Beaver Passage using the easternmost of the 2 passages between Spicer Island and Outhouse Spicer Island which has a depth of around 4.5m at its narrowest and shallowest Point. Rocky ledges extend about 15m into the channel from both sides of the Narrowest point so a mid Channel course is needed. Anchor in the inner bay in 6-8m with excellent holding in thick mud and some kelp.

The chart suggests it should be possible to enter through the channel about 150m to the west of the one described above which has charted depths of 3-4m. However, we found the depths in this channel to be less than 2.0m. The entrance to the anchorage from the Schooner Passage also looks extremely problematic.

Patterson Inlet**53 27.44 N 129 47.16 W***Clive Woodman - 24/08/2018*

A wonderfully sheltered anchorage on the east side of the Principe Channel. The entrance is narrow but deep and free of dangers. Once through the first set of narrows head for the second set of narrows and anchor in the northernmost of the 2 basins at the head of the Inlet. Excellent holding in thick clay in 10-12m of water with steep mountains on all sides. The southerly basin is very pretty but depths are a little too deep for comfortable anchoring.

Whilst this is a wonderfully protected and sheltered anchorage in normal conditions, the mountain topography and experience of anchoring in similar anchorages in this area suggests that it could be subject to williwaws and severe downfall winds in a strong SE blow.

Beaver Passage**53 45.26 N 130 18.88 W***Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018*

Tides flow strongly through the Beaver Passage and at springs can reach 4 knots or more between Spicer Point and Gurd Rock

Coghlan Anchorage, BC**53 23.64 N 129 16.87 W***Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 16/06/2018*

Although wide open to the south and south east, the anchorage is nonetheless tenable in winds from this sector since relatively little swell gets that far into the Inlet and the holding is excellent. In 2018 we anchored there in SE winds of up to 20 knots after emerging from the north end of the Princess Royal Channel and had a perfectly comfortable night.

Shearwater**52 8.763 N 128 5.193 W***Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 24/08/2018***RCC EYES ONLY**

Although Shearwater is the only boatyard for 250 miles between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy/McNeill, we cannot in all honesty recommend it for mechanical support.

In 2 successive years we have sailed into Shearwater with engine problems. In the first case they gave our engine a clean bill of health and told us the light knocking we could hear was "nothing to be concerned about", only to have the engine terminally seize 12 hours later as we were rounding Cape Caution.

Port Neville, BC**50 29.58 N 126 5.432 W***Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 02/06/2018*

A useful passage anchorage to sit out a foul tide when transiting the Johnstone Straits.

Anchor in the mouth of the inlet just off the public wharf. Average holding on rock and weed in around 6-8m. The tide runs at up to 2 knots in the inlet so you will probably lie head to tide rather than to wind.

Okeover Inlet, BC

49 59.46 N 124 42.64 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 28/05/2018

If you like eating excellent food served in a stunning location then a visit to the “Laughing Oyster” restaurant in Okeover Inlet is something not to be missed.

The Okeover Government wharf has a new outer breakwater, which is not shown on older charts, with alongside berthing on either side, 10-15m depths, and rafting allowed. No water, electricity or other facilities, but the views are exceptional.

Secret Cove, BC

49 31.66 N 123 57.17 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 28/05/2018

The Waggoner pilot describes Secret Cove as “notorious for anchor dragging”. However, we found the holding in the SE arm to be excellent, anchoring in around 7m, thick mud, just off the RVYC outstation pontoons. A very pretty and peaceful spot

Telegraph Harbour, BC

48 58.14 N 123 39.94 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 28/05/2018

The Waggoner pilot refers to “white restricted operations buoys marking the edge of the anchorage area”. We found no evidence of these in May 2018, but anchored on the west side of the entrance in 8m, clear of the fixed moorings and to the north of the BC terminal. Good holding in thick mud.

Westport Marina, Sidney BC

48 40.82 N 123 24.81 W

Clive Woodman (Cosmic Dancer) - 28/05/2018

If you need to spend some time alongside in Sidney then Westport Marina is probably one of the best value options. Although the washrooms and facilities are not quite as five star as some of Sidney’s other marinas they are perfectly adequate and represent excellent value for money.