

## ■ LETTER

## Dear Editor,

I first enjoyed the great pleasure of sailing to Bali in 1981 in the inaugural Fremantle to Bali race. Since then, I have had some dealings with the lovely people of Indonesia, including as race director in the 1986 Fremantle-Bali Race. In the last three years, I spent 3 months cruising in my 34 footer around the Indonesian Islands. With this very idea in mind, I suggest there is another point of view on some of the comments made in the article, which I felt was surely written with the author's tongue in his cheek. ["Arrested if you do... brutalised and robbed if you don't", Letter to the Editor, BWB, February/March 2005]

It was unfortunate for Chris Packer to be arrested in Indonesia; however, the same could easily

occur in Australia if a foreign boat were caught with undeclared firearms on board.

Further, I would like to point out the sad loss of Sir Peter Blake, a great bloke, whom I had the pleasure of meeting and greatly admired. This took place in a vastly different area of the world, on a vessel carrying firearms.

It is not only the Australian law, but a basic international maritime creed that a skipper owes a duty of care to protect his crew. With a little thought and planning, a careful skipper does not put his crew in known areas of piracy. For instance, the Aceh area and the Malacca straits are recognised as areas of concern, so why take a boat near there? Whereas, from Jakarta across to West Timor, it is an entirely different story. All along these islands,


people are basically gentle and helpful to everybody. Even West Timor, where there were great problems is now safe for the average yachtsman, as long as you lock everything up.

After many discussions with custom officers and those who have sailed in this beautiful area of the world, I believe there is no point in carrying firearms on sailing vessels. If you are determined to travel through areas of piracy, keep well out to sea, because if they see you, they will be far better armed than what you would be carrying.

So I suggest this to anyone thinking of enjoying sailing around a beautiful area, meeting great people: Consider a trip to Indonesia. I know I can't wait to get back.



**Correction:** We would like to apologize for a mistake in the Technology Focus article of BWB June-July 2005, with the heading: "Anchor Chain Selection, Regalvanising and a Case of Caveat Emptor". In the eighth paragraph, the second sentence should read: "The second 2 metre sample was the "unused" chain found in our garage, it failed at 5.3 Tonnes" (not 3 T.)



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