

Book Currents

BY LYNNE BRANDON

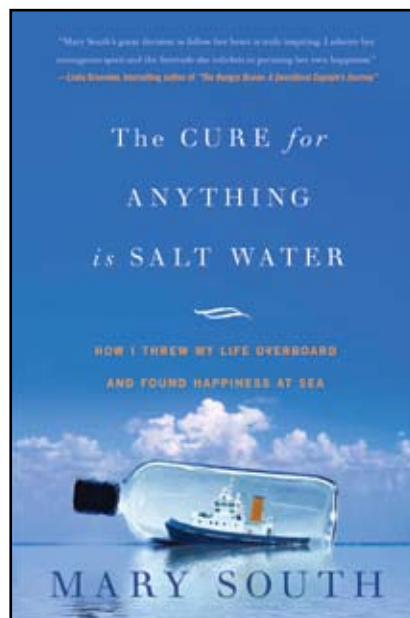
The cure for anything is salt water: sweat, tears or the sea." Isak Dinesen said this some time ago, but the words take on new meaning in Mary South's chronicle of life on the water, *The Cure for Anything Is Salt Water: How I Threw My Life Overboard and Found Happiness at Sea*.



The author with her beloved Jack Russell Terriers who accompanied her on the journey.

The former editor is everyone's hero for having the audacity to do what most of us only dream about – chucking the day job and living on a boat. The story goes like this: The corporate life was closing in on South, and one day she quit her well-paying job with benefits and perks, sold her house and all her belongings in Pennsylvania, and headed for the high seas and sisterly tributaries.

An intense nine-week seamanship course in Florida followed. South immediately headed out on the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) in



her 40-foot, 30-ton steel trawler named *Bossanova*, for her maiden voyage – a four-week journey up the Atlantic coast from Florida to Maine.

The travelogue takes the reader through Florida where Ormond-by-the-Sea and Flagler Beach are blurs. First stop, Jacksonville Beach; next day, Charleston Harbor, SC. Murrells Inlet, SC, gets the vote as one of the friendliest towns on the tour. Next on the course is North Carolina.

After the first night in North Carolina waters at Bald Head Island, the boat heads past Morehead City and Beaufort. On the way to Oriental, *Bossanova* runs aground. After their rescue, they make it to their destination and dock for the night with cheering onlookers making her feel right at home.

One of the finest moments during the journey occurs when the "little engine that could" reaches Ocracoke Island. A windy day made docking a challenge and it didn't help that people were gathered around to watch the inexperienced captain as she maneuvered into the dock. Once she was settled in, the charm of the town mesmerized South, who happened upon the island during their Independence Day firework celebration.

The first leg of the trip ends in Sag Harbor, NY, before the last push to Maine, and even the author is surprised by her accomplishment: "I had brought my boat all the way up from Florida in less than three weeks on \$600 worth of diesel, with no breakdowns and no disasters. We'd done it."

The Cure for Anything Is Salt Water is a tale of inspiration and determination worth reading whether you are planning to take the helm of a boat or prefer dry land. South is a hero to many for having the *chutzpah* to live life on her terms. Maybe if we could all take to the water instead of the road there would be a lot less road rage. 🚤

The Cure for Anything Is Salt Water: How I Threw My Life Overboard and Found Happiness at Sea by Mary South
HarperCollins, \$23.95

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