

# Jess Lloyd-Mostyn

A boat out of the water is, well, like a fish stuck on dry land. Yet a haul out is an inevitable part of the sailors calendar. Life on the hard is anything but wasy for the liveaboard though

There is nothing more unnatural than a boat out of water. It seems to alter her proportions and scale. Afloat she is nimble and agile but once she's got slings wrapped under her hull or is positioned onto a trailer cradle even the most streamlined yacht is at once transformed into an awkward and lumbering beast. Out of her element the boat is suddenly like a beetle stuck on it's back.

Hauling out is an unavoidable part of owning a boat. And whether it's part of a planned routine maintenance cycle or in order to investigate or remedy an issue, the best tactic is always to get pulled out of the water as timely as is possible. However, cruising seasons, stormy times of year and local infrastructure all have a huge role to play when juggling a haulout as a global cruiser. Sailors crossing the South Pacific, for example, are well aware that jumping off from the western shores of the Americas means that yards set up to deal with any major repairs are most likely to be found in New Zealand, a minimum 6,000 miles away.

Yet smaller facilities are found in the most surprising places worldwide and boatfolk are a universally ingenious and resourceful breed. This means you're never far away from a tale of someone's boat being rolled up the beach on logs in Vanuatu or an intrepid chap with a tractor playing the tides to his advantage in Belize. We know folks who have had their rudders repaired in the Marquesas, or seized seacocks swapped out in Gibraltar, even a total re-rig in remote southern Chile.

Our most recent haul was equally impromptu as the pandemic forced our hands and closed all the country borders around us whilst our hull was growing increasingly green and barnacle-ridden, with every dive down to clean it revealing that there was barely any remaining antifoul. The nearest slipway was in Lombok, Indonesia and part of a hotel complex more geared up for weddings and events than boatwork, with no skilled workers available. However, needs must so they pulled us out on their huge German-built trailer and we prepped and repainted her ourselves. Certainly, we didn't do as good a job as the professional yards we'd made use of



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elsewhere, but it was enough to set us cruising faster through the water and get us safely into the nearest open country.

Life on the hard is...well, hard. When hauling it's always preferable to live ashore for the duration of the work but we're well-aware that it's not always possible. But the alternative, living aboard, is fraught with new difficulties. Everything seems wrong about your boat when it's on land. Climbing a ladder to get access, not being able to use the sinks or heads, even feeling the breeze coming from unusual directions as you no longer point into the wind is all incredibly odd to a liveaboard. The motion and sway is replaced by dead flat stillness and the continual drone of someone, somewhere using an angle grinder. And everything on land seems out to get you. Bugs,

dust, noise, more dust, and every job seems to involve a never-ending schlepping of tools up and down ladders. Meals become a chore, to cook, to eat and also to wash up afterwards. You also suddenly become aware of the sheer height of your boat and worry constantly about toppling over her lifelines, something utterly inconceivable at sea.

Then there is the inevitable growth to tackle. Not on the hull this time, I mean the growth of the jobs list. There are so many things that are easier to work on when the vessel is completely disabled this way that in the long run it really pays to tackle a bunch of them at once. However, it means that a few days can quickly spiral into a week, or several as there are always more things to be tinkered with, or spruced up. Plus there are almost always delays caused by getting hold of supplies, or labour or weather not playing ball. When you need to paint you can guarantee that it will either rain heavily or be far too hot; it's always too humid when you're working with Sikaflex or silacone so it will not cure; and the wind will kick up just as you have canvas spread out or sails to repair.

But sooner or later the hardstand purgatory does come to an end and you both shudder and lurch along the travel-lift then a rather spiffy-looking, elegant boat slides back into the water, good as new, and cuts lithely through the waves and you mentally note when you'll have to go through it all again.



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Jess and James left the UK in 2011 in their Crossbow 42 and have sailed halfway round the world, growing their crew en route. Follow their journey at [water-log.com](http://water-log.com)