

Bob Newell (North Carolina) Off the grid adventure for serious anglers

My brother and brother in law and I planned this adventure for 1/3 fishing adventure, 1/3 "fly in" adventure, and 1/3 off the grid excursion; we were not disappointed. We were assisted in planning by Jessica, aka, the Captain's daughter, Captain Tom, the 25 plus year veteran of the sportfishing boat, and his capable mate Gilberto and Ari, the "do it all helper" on the mothership, Mama Nido. The trip consisted of a fly in from Panama City on a twin engine Piper, landing on the grass airstrip at Coiba, once a Panamanian prison and also once a WW II training camp for American GI's, and being picked up on the Joker, a clean and well outfitted classic 31 Bertram. All of Tom's equipment is clean, in good order and first class. We are experienced anglers and told Tom we were there to try for Black Marlin, meatfish were simply a by-product for the dinner table. We caught and fought to release 2 Black's the first day in a little known area called Jicarita, about 25 miles from where the mothership was moored. The next day we fished the famous Hannibal Bank, each day we caught bonita for live bait and pulled(trolled) large "plugs or plastics" for marlin, these are excellent tried and true tactics the world



over. Tom was most accommodative and allowed us to customize the rig placement, and try a few of our own special tricks of the trade, he was there to please. We had plenty of action on the meatfish nonetheless, and caught tuna and dolphin(mahi) while focusing on the Marlin. Our 3rd day produced 2 sailfish



raised, but no hook ups, primarily due to the large tackle we were trolling not being conducive to sails. I think targeting sails there would be a good strategy as well. The only feedback I would have is to lengthen the leaders to IGFA standards(18 feet) so as to give the release process a more visual experience, as opposed to the quick "break off" that is

bound to happen when a 500 lb marlin is straight up and down off the transom with a 3 foot double line leader. This is a great trip, the Mama Nido is comfortable and the crew does a great job serving fine dinners, preparing a great bar set up for afternoon cocktails, sandwiches and drinks were all in order, precisely as we asked, no one was trying to skimp on good food and wine, Jessica is an awesome organized and cheerful Captains daughter! I can't say enough about how well the logistics came off, the pilot arrived to pick us up on Coiba on Saturday, he even treated us to a "fly over at low altitude" of the Joker making its way back to the mothership, we went over to Coiba for a eco-tour, hiked, Tom snorkeled, and local "policia" gave us lobster tails for fresh grilling. Tom knows them all, and this allows for a true in country experience, this experience is not for someone looking to go catching in a 5 star type environment, come here ready to help out and get hands on.



Marty and Bill Axlund (South Dakota) A true fishing adventure

My husband and I along with two of our adult sons (in their 30's), went on this fishing adventure in early January. Captain Tom's daughter, Jessica, provided all our pre-trip communication and was always enthusiastic and helpful. She called 2 weeks prior to the trip to tell us that due to the fact the



Panamanian government closed down the use of their cabin for guests on the Coiba Isle that they obtained an 88 ft mother ship for lodging. We were a little nervous about this last minute change but ended up being extremely pleased! More on that later - but first I want to mention that since our flights arrived late in the day we stayed overnight in Panama City at the Riande Aeropuerto Hotel which Jessica recommended. The hotel shuttle picked us up at the airport for the very short transfer. The hotel was very nice, no complaints at all. The next morning Tony picked us up at 6 am to for the half our drive to the commuter airport. This costs \$80. We then boarded a twin engine Piper for the hour and a quarter flight to Coiba Isle, with a nice landing on a grass airstrip. Captain Tom picked us up from there in his 31 ft Bertram and immediately the fun began! We fished the entire day before getting to the mother ship, the Mama Nido. I am going to let



my husband go in to more details about the fishing later in this review. What I will say is that my husband, sons, and I are all experienced sportsmen and anglers and we were totally thrilled with everything about this experience. Gilberto was the first mate and he and Tom worked together like a well oiled machine to do whatever it took to get fish on the lines. When we arrived at Mama Nido Jessica and her hard

working helper Arie greeted us with ice cold drinks. The top deck where we ate all our meals was comfortable and had a large canopy over the deck to protect from any rains. My husband and I had the private bedroom with a queen size bed. Cozy but comfortable. Our sons had their own beds one in an open area which was a walk thru area to get to the kitchen and one in a room with a slider curtain, but this did not bother them at all. There are 2 rooms for bathroom facilities - one had a sink and shower and the other had a sink and toilet. A big bonus for me was that we had hot water which wouldn't have been the case in the cabin. The AC worked great. Jessica and Arie cooked and served all the meals and everything was delicious! We had told them we wanted to eat the fish we caught and we ended up eating shark, red snapper, dorado, and tuna. The platters of fresh tuna sashimi was a real treat. It was great! One afternoon as we were heading back in the direction of the Mama Nido, Captain Tom stopped at one of the most beautiful beaches in the world so we could snorkel in the coral reef. We had brought all our own equipment. Snorkeling was amazing, we saw turtles, a reef shark, and tons of fish and beautiful coral. Another evening we kayaked across the short distance to a beach and did some exploring. I will end my portion of this review to say that Jessica and Tom made this a very special time together as a family.



Now for my husbands fishing report:

Upon arrival on day one we told Tom we wanted to catch lots of fish inshore. Tom had 24 rods & reels rigged & ready when he picked us up & we were fishing by 9:00 am. We fished 6 rods at all times rigged

with a variety of plugs, skirts & bait. The action was fast & furious all day long. We ended with catching 14 different species including a triple hookup & landing of three rooster fish all over 50#. All the fish were in the 10-50#+ size. On day two we asked to go marlin fishing. After catching a few Bonito for bait we spent the day trolling for either black or blue marlin. During the day we managed a double hookup on blue marlin. We were able to land the 300# one from the chair but the larger one estimated at 500#, had to be fought from the rod holder since the chair was busy, until after 4 twisting leaps it snapped the leader. But what a spectacular show. On day three we returned to Marlin fishing and my wife landed a 300# marlin. A second hookup turned out to be a 40# dorado. We closed the day out inshore & quickly picked up a half dozen yellowfin tuna. On day four we headed back out marlin fishing. Although we had 3 baits hit none resulted in a hookup. We ended the day trolling for dorado & picked up a 40+# cuberra snapper and more yellowfin. Day five came way too fast but we took our suitcases with us to maximize our fishing time. We fished right up until 4:30 pm and caught blacktip shark, dorado, snapper, needlefish & pompano. For the week we managed 18 different species, 2 fish at 300#, 4 over 40# , and more action than I thought possible.

These are a few of what I specifically liked about this trip: 1) it's your trip & you decide when & what to fish for. 2) the boat & equipment are all clean & well maintained 3) bait & lures are plentiful & constantly changed to optimize fish catching 4) you are welcome to help with all aspects of tackle management & hook your own fish. 5) you rarely see any other boats



& if you do it's at a distance. No crowds. 6) there is no clock watching. You leave at 7:15 am & are back by sunset but fish all day unless you decide differently. 7) this area is a fish rich environment. I've never seen better, 8) first mate Gilberto is constantly rerigging & trying something new. He is very knowledgeable & easy to fish with. If you want a first class fishing trip just for you; book this trip!!!!



Tom Sharpnack (Ohio)
"Black Marlin Fishing"

A FIVE star adventure—for many reasons. Captain Tom and his daughter, Jessica, pull out all of the stops. Capt Tom and his 31' Bertram put you on the Hannibal Bank to enjoy an awesome fishing experience. Five days of wild black Marlin fishing provide an unforgettable adventure. Nothing compares to reeling in a six hundred pound black Marlin—except doing it five times in five days!



Accommodations aboard the mother ship were outstanding! The food was fresh and well prepared. The air conditioned ship provided for a great night's rest.

Excellent yellow fin tuna, red snapper, dorado and pompano added to the thrilling adventure.

Definitely a redo and a can't miss week of fishing fun!"

