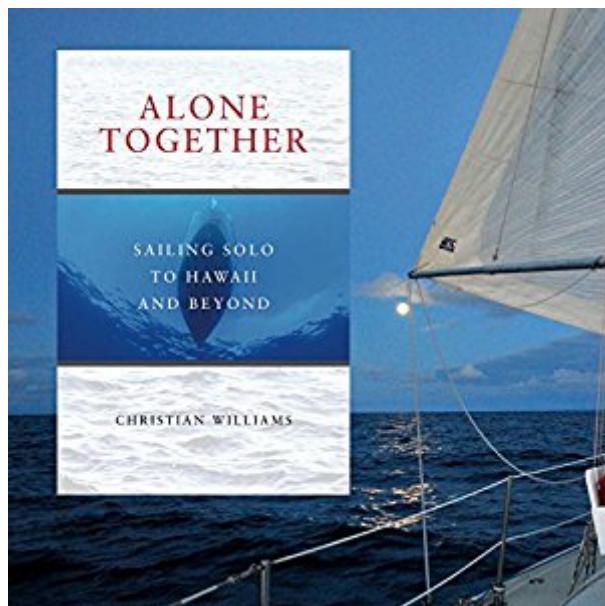


The book was found

Alone Together: Sailing Solo To Hawaii And Beyond



Synopsis

What happens when a man of today's overconnected world sets off alone across the Pacific at the age of 71? Christian Williams, a veteran sailor and writer, planned a 6,000-mile voyage as a test of his own seamanship and endurance, and to fulfill a lifelong goal. But he found his focus quickly turning from the surrounding sea to all of us. Is anyone the same person when no one else is there? Do we dare to find out? In a new world of soaring seabirds, violent storms, and majestic emptiness, Williams discovered answers to questions he had never asked about who we are, why we sail, and the universal fear of being alone. *Alone Together* is a complete technical course in offshore sailing technique and yacht preparation, and a philosophical inquiry into what it takes to be truly alive in the 21st century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I discovered Christian Williams when I serendipitously came across his video journal of his singlehanded sailing to Hawaii and back on YouTube. Being close to his age I related deeply to him, not only his love of sailing, but his love of reading and history. He is aware of and part of "The Great Conversation" as am I. Aren't we all, as he might ask? His narration is enchanting and real. His book doesn't go a step further than his video log, it plunges to the depths of who he is, what he is doing, and who we all are. His insights into the human condition are profound and he writes with a master's touch making the complex simple, the difficult manageable, and the meaning of who we are and what we do, (something so ethereal) almost touchable. He tells of his boat's diesel engine,

a converted three cylinder tractor motor, as a tractor motor "sentenced forever to plow an ocean that won't hold a furrow." He connects things in a charming and meaningful way. In this book he teaches us much about sailing, the do's and the don'ts. He is transparent with his mistakes and humble in his triumphs, which his journey, video, and book certainly are. As I read I so wanted to be with him and then I realized I was. Perhaps that is his point and goal. A lovely and meaningful read.

You don't have to be a sailor to enjoy this book because Christian has written a wonderful accounting of his voyage in a way that any non-sailor can also understand and enjoy. His story is more than about just sailing, which my wife also and I happen to enjoy. Just so happens that we even own that same make and model boat that he used to carry him to Hawai'i. So if you're a sailor you can relate to much in the story. Don't think for one moment that you'll read a chapter or two and then put it down to pick it up later either. You'll want to see what is over the next ocean swell with Christian because he invites you to join him for a wonderful, sometimes scary and in the end a life examining sail. I read it all over a short vacation trip and highly recommend it.

This is an absolutely wonderful, joyful, hilarious book with jokes on every page. Williams has created a new form -- taking the reader along on his trip and talking him through all the intricacies of sailing (which is incredibly interesting and fun to learn if you're not much of a sailor - and probably even more fun if you are) but also going on wonderful tangents on literature, philosophy and a lifetime of reading and experience. I have never read a book like this - closest I can come is Zen And The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, which was very important to me when I was younger. A word also should be said about the author's style - which is formal and friendly and very very funny. If you like Mencken, you will laugh a lot - though Williams is not as mean as Mencken and seems to have nothing but affection for his world. There are wonderful descriptions of loneliness, of storms, of battered masts, broken steering wheels and impending hurricanes - and hilarious accounts of just sitting in the ocean bobbing up and down. For those who know Kauai, his insights there are pretty joyful also. The book is a wonderful celebration of a great adventure. It makes you want to get off your ass and do something extraordinary, but it doesn't make you miserable if you can't muster the courage. Very generous, very funny. A wonderful achievement. Highly recommended.

Reading sailing books has long been my obsession. I bought "Alone Together" without much enthusiasm, as my current reading interests are now somewhat distanced from sailing. However, CW's book deserves a well earned-place in the "classic sailing" narratives. The book is outstanding

because of CW's keen observational powers on human nature and history. But the book is also an excellent manual of offshore sailing. CW's abilities as a sailor shines through. The book contains many useful tidbits of sailing knowledge. I wonder if Thelonius had a traditional topping lift. The mini-crisis that occurred when the halyard was lost could have been averted using the topping lift as halyard. Inconveniences when reefing etc are minor. At least until landfall. CW is also a polished wordsmith. I plan to read this book again.

Marcos Gallacher
Sailing Vessel "Mar Dulce"
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Christian surprises you en route. While he writes with a warm, sardonic style, you are convinced of his humility as he approaches even the simplest of tasks single-handing his first tack out of Marina del Ray. You empathize and feel with him because his style of writing is so personal, self-revealing, and utterly hilarious at times. You live with him from one can of peaches and rum to another, from broaching at sea, and ceaseless talking to himself and his imaginary literary figures aboard, along with his grimaces of stupidity to which every sailor can relate to. And yet, as he wages the final stages of his voyage, you discover his long and seasoned time at sea with well-known races and events to include the '79 Fastnet win which obviously had helped him for times in this voyage. I savored his YouTube video when it first came out, and purchased this book thinking it would be a re-hash of the video experience--hardly at all. An inescapable read which will go aboard my vessel to remind me firstly of how to write well, and secondly of how such stories stir those of us who sail yet dream of such a voyage beyond our lakes and shores. Hands-down, great!

After I wrestled the book away from my wife, I enjoyed it cover to cover. My wife and I sail. She truly enjoyed the humor and perspective that Christian provides. I thought he was spot on about life on a moving boat and all that it brings to light. Invaluable as a preparation resource for any voyage. Life lessons in each chapter. Buy, read, enjoy!

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