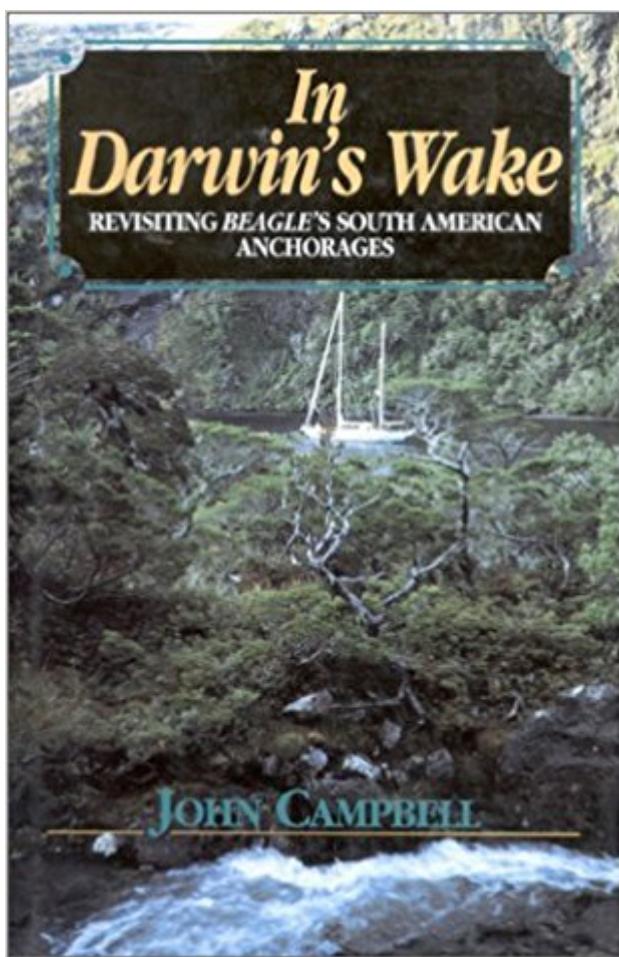


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In Darwin's Wake: Revisiting Beagle's South American Anchorages



Synopsis

While planning a cruise on Thalassi, an 83-foot ketch, along the South American coast and around Cape Horn, skipper John Campbell realized that his route would closely follow that taken by Charles Darwin on his historic journey aboard the Beagle. Thus was born a plan to compare the reality of those same places today with the descriptions and observations made by Darwin over 150 years earlier.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

...an engaging tale of adventure....Sailors, armchair travelers and readers interested in history will enjoy this book. (Publishers Weekly)Campbell follows the wake of the square-rigger BEAGLE and its most famous passenger, naturalist Charles Darwin. Sailing on his 83-foot ketch, Campbell covers the same ground off the South American Coast as Darwin, finding some things changed and some of the same. A personal reflection, the book is also a practical cruising guide to a challenging sailing region. (Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal)Sailing around Cape Horn, the island at the tip of South America is one of the pinnacles of the sailing life. The weather in those southern latitudes can be fierce and unpredictable and the long voyage into remote areas, which was once a major route for shipping, is undertaken by few today. When John Campbell and his wife Lana signed on as captain and first mate aboard the 83 foot yacht THALASSI, the owner had planned a circumnavigation of South America. The Campbells realized that they would be retracing much of the route followed by the BEAGLE on the voyage which was made famous by Charles Darwin. The opportunity to compare Darwin's observations and description from 150 years earlier was

undeniable, and this book is the result. The book is well written and has many good photos. The places visited and the details of the voyage are at times fascinating. Its merit lies in the vicarious experience of such a voyage that few of us will even have the opportunity to make or even want to undertake. (Coastal Cruising)

John Campbell has been messing about in boats since he was eight years old. He and his wife Lana met on board a brigantine in the Virgin Islands in 1975 and have been sailing together ever since. They built their own boat in England and sailed it to the West Indies, where they cruised for several years. For the last fifteen years they have run other people's boats for them and when not at sea live in a 250-year-old cottage in Mallorca, Spain.

John Campbell must be an interesting guy. Although tasked by a millionaire to sale his private yacht in the waters about South America, Cambell took it upon himself to, ostensibly, follow the course of H.M.S Beagle on it's historic voyage around the world. Although it accomplished only a very small part of that objective, those already familiar with Darwin's "Voyage of the Beagle" will nonetheless appreciate this book. It provides modern day photographs and descriptions of several key places, particularly around Tierra del Fuego and the Falklands. It was a modern voyage on a modern yacht with every conceivable luxury such as central air, dishwashers, daily showers - to say nothing of GPS and satellite radio. But still the voyage of the Thalassi in waters that were as dangerous today as they were then, was no "cake walk". Although Campbell has nothing really brilliant or new to say or add to the Beagle's voyage, he does acknowledge what must have been brilliant navigational skills and inspired seamanship of Captain Fitzroy. Interestingly, at least to me, was what Campbell - he like most men of our time or of any time - didn't say, or even what was said of the scenery and flora and fauna that passed by. It emphasized all the more how special the voyage of the Beagle really was; how special it's commander, it's crew, it's artists, and especially how special Darwin himself really was. That is how history is made.

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