

## *DOLPHIN RETREAT OCTOBER 2016*



*I YET AGAIN, HAPPILY FIND MYSELF ON THE BUS RETURNING FROM A WONDERFUL TRIP TO PONTO DO OURO, MOZAMBIQUE.*

*I AM FORTUNATE TO BE THE ORGANISER OF A RETREAT WHERE PEOPLE GET TO SWIM WITH DOLPHINS IN THE WILD, MEDITATE, DO YOGA, WATCH MAGNIFICENT SUNRISES AND SUNSETS, NOT THE MENTION THE AMOUNT OF REST AND RELAXATION.*

*11 GUESTS AND I ARRIVED IN PONTO FOR THE 5 DAY RETREAT TO BE MET BY GUSTY WINDS AND OVERCAST SKIES. REPORTS HAD IT THAT THIS IS WHAT THE WEATHER HAD BEEN LIKE FOR THE LAST WEEK. OII – NOT GOOD NEWS AS THIS WOULD MEAN ROUGH SEAS AND POSSIBLY CANCELLED LAUNCHES.*

*THIS HOWEVER DID NOT SERVE AS A DAMPER AS WE SETTLED IN TO OUR LITTLE OASIS LAR DO OURO. IMMEDIATELY ONTO SNORKEL PRACTISE FOR THOSE THAT NEEDED SOME PRACTISE AND THEN SHARED MANY A LAUGH AS WE TRIED ON WETSUITS. AVERAGE AGE OF PEOPLE ON THIS RETREAT WAS 56 SO I LEAVE IT TO THE IMAGINATION.*

*EVERYONE SEEMED HAPPY AND RELAXED AS WE SAT DOWN FOR THE FIRST OF MANY ENJOYABLE MEALS THEN EARLY TO BED FOR AN EARLY RISE.*

*THE WIND HOWLED ALL NIGHT WHICH MEANT THAT WE COULD SLEEP IN AS WE WAITED FOR THE WIND TO SETTLE DOWN.*

*OUR FIRST LAUNCH WAS AT MIDDAY SO AFTER THE VERY IMPORTANT SAFETY BRIEF WE WERE OFF TO SEE THE DOLPHINS. DESPITE THE WIND SETTling DOWN, THE SWELL WAS HIGH, THE SEA CHOPPY AND THE BOAT RIDE MADE AN ABSOLUTE ADVENTURE.*

*I HAVE BEEN OFFERING THESE RETREATS IN MOZAMBIQUE FOR THE LAST 9 YEARS AND THEREFOR HAVE COME TO TRUST OUR SKIPPER MITCHELL. IN FACT I TRUST HIM WITH THE LIVES OF MY GUESTS AND MY OWN, AND THAT IS SAYING SOMETHING AS I AM A NURSE AT HEART AND DO NOT EASILY DO THIS.*

*TO SAY THAT HE IS A SUPER SKILLED SKIPPER IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT. SO THROUGH THE SURF WE FLEW IN SEARCH OF DOLPHINS. ANGIE GULLAN THE "DOLPHIN LADY" FROM DOLPHIN ENCOUNTERS EVER WATCHFUL FOR HER FINNED FRIENDS. ONE OF MY GUESTS REMARKED THAT SHE SAW THIS AS A "DOLPHIN HUNT" WHICH LEFT ME THINKING HOW DIFFERENTLY WE ALL SEE THINGS. THE PARTICULAR POD OF DOLPHINS WE INTERACT WITH HAVE A HOMING RANGE OF 40KM SO ONE NEEDS TO GET OUT THERE AND FIND THEM, IF THEY WANT TO BE FOUND OF COURSE.*



WE WERE DELIGHTED TO FIND A POD OF DOLPHINS OF WHICH ONE WAS A BABY. SINCE POLICY DICTATES THAT WE DON'T SWIM WITH DOLPHINS WITH BABIES UNDER 1 MONTH WE SIMPLY SAT, WATCHED AND SMILED AT THE WONDERFUL SIGHT. THAT DAY WE SAW A JELLY FISH OF NOTE AND 2 TURTLES THAT QUICKLY DISAPPEARED ONCE SIGHTED.



THAT SAME DAY WE ATTENDED A TALK BY A YOUNG LADY NAMED CELINE, SHE COMES FROM ENGLAND AND IS DOING VOLUNTEER WORK AT DOLPHIN ENCOUNTERS. I WAS FASCINATED TO HEAR ABOUT THE WORK SHE IS INVOLVED WITH THROUGH AN ORGANISATION CALLED WCA (NET EFFECT) [HTTP://WORLD CETACEAN ALLIANCE.ORG/2015/10/15/NET-EFFECT/](http://worldcetaceanalliance.org/2015/10/15/net-effect/) AND [HTTP://WORLD CETACEAN ALLIANCE.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2016/07/ABOUT-THE-NET-EFFECT-CAMPAIGN.PDF](http://worldcetaceanalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/about-the-net-effect-campaign.pdf) WORTH RESEARCHING.

THEN AFTER ANOTHER YUMMY DINNER, IT WAS OFF TO BED FOR AN EARLY START. WIND STILL BELLOWING!

OUR EARLY LAUNCH ON DAY 3 WAS EQUALLY EXHILARATING. WE GOT TO DROP WITH A SMALL NURSERY POD. MANY A PREGNANT DOLPHIN BELLY TO BE SEEN AND AFTER THE DIVE ANGIE POINTED OUT THAT ONE OF THE MOMS SEEMED TO BE IN

EARLY LABOUR. WE ALSO SAW SOME MALE DOLPHINS BUT THEY WERE ON THEIR OWN MISSION SO WE DID NOT GET TO SEE MUCH OF THEM.

LATER IN THE DAY WE WATCHED THE WONDERFUL DOCUMENTARY CALLED "DANCING WITH DOLPHINS". A REAL MUST SEE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN AND WHO HAVE A LOVE FOR DOLPHINS.

DAY 4 CAME WITH CONDITIONS AT SEA BEING A LITTLE BETTER. WE SAW TWO PODS NONE OF WHICH WERE IN THE LEAST INTERESTED IN "PLAYING" WITH US. WE WENT IN SEARCH OF WHALES BUT ONLY HAD SIGHTINGS IN THE DISTANCE. THE MAGIC OF THAT DAY WAS THAT WE DROPPED OVER A REEF AND THOSE PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T CONFIDENT SEA SWIMMERS GOT TO EXPERIENCE THE OCEAN AND ALL ITS WONDERS. THERE REALLY IS A PARADISE IN THE OCEAN AND SADLY FEW EARTHLINGS GET TO EXPERIENCE THIS WONDERLAND.

LATER THAT AFTERNOON WE TOOK A RIDE UP THE COAST TO DO SOME PANORAMIC VIEWING OF PONTA DO OURO IN THE DISTANCE. THIS WAS FROM NINHOS ESTABLISHMENT AND THEREAFTER THE SUNSET SHACK IN PONTA MALONGANE TO WATCH THE SUN SET.



*DAY 5 – OCEANS STILL BUSY BUT NOT CRAZY, WIND SLIGHTLY SUBDUED AND ON THE OCEAN AGAIN. THIS DAY BROUGHT THE JOY OF 2 DOLPHIN SWIMS, WONDERFUL CLOSE ENCOUNTERS AND AS A RESULT MANY A HAPPY FACE.*

*BETWEEN ALL OF THIS WERE ALL THE OTHER ACTIVITIES OF HEALING SESSIONS, YOGA AND MEDITATION. A BUSY TIME INDEED, YET EVERYONE LOOKING RELAXED AND HAPPY.*

*I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE 11 PEOPLE WHO JOINED THIS RETREAT. THANKS FOR BEING BRAVE, DETERMINED, COURAGEOUS AND ACCEPTING. LET ME NOT FORGET TO MENTION THOSE LADIES THAT INDEED DID ENJOY THE NATIONAL DRINK OF R+R. NOT FOR THE FAINT HEARTED!*



*THANKS FOR ALL THE LAUGHS AND SMILES.*

*I DO HOPE AND TRUST THAT THE WONDERFUL MEMORIES WILL LIVE ON FOREVER.*

AND LASTLY BUT NOT LEAST A BIG NOTE OF THANKS TO:

**LAR DO OURO**

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