



# FOUR WEEKS IN PARADISE

Some people dream of cruising into a Caribbean sunset. My dreams have always been more adventurous. To me, a place like Prince William Sound offers far more impressive memories—many of them created by nature’s paintbrush, and a good few built from the resilience and skill required to reach such a destination at all. This past summer, a crew of friends and I made it to this spectacular body of water on the southern coast of Alaska, where glaciers and fjords stand as a testament to the awesome power that lies within water, wind and earth. We cruised in a Fleming 65 whose name, most appropriately, is *Venture*, and we tried our level best to live up to it.

BY TONY FLEMING



WEEKS 1 & 2

## NATURE, PURE AND POWERFUL

The 500-mile transit across the Gulf of Alaska's tempestuous waters keeps most cruisers away from Prince William Sound. We arrived after a 26-day, 1,600-mile journey from Vancouver Island and found ourselves at the busy fishing port of Cordova near the breeding grounds of the famed Copper River salmon. The beauty of the place made it hard to believe how close we were to Snug Cove, where Capt. Cook anchored in 1778 to repair the *Resolution*, and how near our route was to the kinds of ice floes that forced the *Exxon Valdez* to divert into her catastrophic grounding in 1989. More than 150 glaciers here paint a beautiful natural portrait, but they make cruising a worthy challenge.





WEEKS 3 & 4

## A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE

Towering waterfalls and vertical cliffs make kayakers seem the size of insects in this place. The locals, however, are unfazed: Sea lions and whales consider Prince William Sound their playground. Orcas and humpbacks surrounded our boat as if we weren't there at all. We moved slowly, sometimes shutting down the engines, mesmerized by their beauty. Harbor seals greeted us at Chenega Glacier, where the ice floes let us navigate to within a quarter-mile of the glacier's face. Huge slabs calved with a warning crack and a thundering boom, then slid majestically into the water, creating swells that gently rolled our boat's bottom. It would be hard to imagine ever feeling more in tune with nature.

