



Inside the Inside Passage: True Stories from the Land of the Spirit Bear

Capt Joseph Bettis

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As Sundown slips her dock lines, abandons the safety of the harbor, and points north once again, I leave behind the conventions and certainties of civilization. I begin another venture into the hard, crisp world of the fabled Inside Passage, through British Columbia to Alaska. I hear the call of grizzlies and eagles, salmon and halibut, and of tough, visionary people I have known and expect to see again. The unexpected and unknown also lies ahead, and that challenge also calls. Inside the Inside Passage chronicles my adventures on these journeys. It is a collection of true stories linked together by the spirit of adventure and the challenge of self-discovery. Seven of the twenty-one chapters sketch the trip from Seattle to Glacier Bay. It will appeal to boaters who are thinking about traveling the Inside Passage because it contains specific information about distances, anchorages, and provisioning. It will also appeal to armchair travelers, environmentalists, and lovers of good writing and interesting stories. Inside the Inside Passage builds on 30 years of traveling these waters, visiting countless Islands, and discovering quiet anchorages. Five boats carried me on these adventures. My favorite was Sundown, widely known up and down the coast as the "Mac and Mac boat", because earlier in her career she sold hardware for Mac and Mac Hardware from Victoria. Sundown navigated these waters before I was born and frequently I felt more like her temporary custodian than her owner. I feel the same way about the Inside Passage. The magic and mystery existed long before I arrived: it will continue after I leave. Unfortunately, financial exploitation has been part of the history of the Inside Passage. My stories tell of the destruction of the northwest wilderness, with alarming threats from over-fishing, clear-cut logging, fish farms, pollution, irresponsible tourism, and oil tankers. They tell about brave people, Native and non-Native, who have resisted these challenges, sometimes with satisfying success, sometimes in tragic failure. I invite you to share with me the joy and challenge of raw experience, and hopefully you will discover your own heart and voice.

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