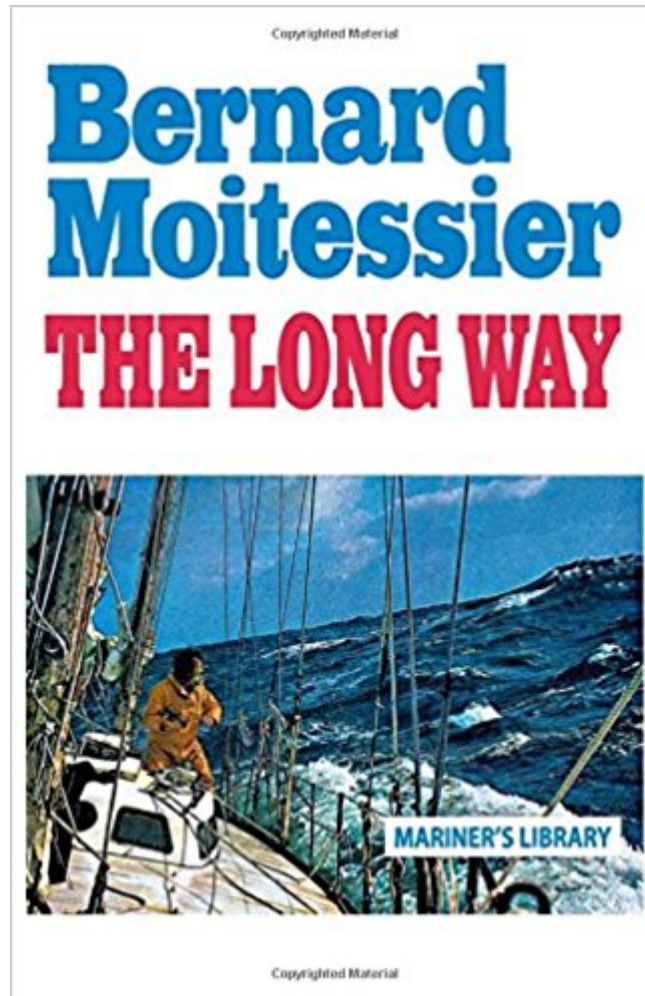




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The Long Way



Synopsis

The Long Way is Bernard Moitessier's own incredible story of his participation in the first Golden Globe Race, a solo, non-stop circumnavigation rounding the three great Capes of Good Hope, Leeuwin, and the Horn. For seven months, the veteran seafarer battled storms, doldrums, gear-failures, knock-downs, as well as overwhelming fatigue and loneliness. Then, nearing the finish, Moitessier pulled out of the race and sailed on for another three months before ending his 37,455-mile journey in Tahiti. Not once had he touched land.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Sheridan House; Reissue edition (January 1, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0924486848

ISBN-13: 978-0924486845

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 104 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #45,166 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #23 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Sailing #67 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports #160 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Nature Travel > Adventure

Customer Reviews

Moitessier is better known as one of the greatest ocean voyagers and was a legend in his time. Last month we reviewed the last book he wrote *Tamata and the Alliance*. This book is about his Round the World Race for singlehanded yachts. For Moitessier, the race finished in mid-Pacific after he had passed the three Capes and crossed his outward track, leading, and with the hardest sections behind him, he decided to forfeit the race and continue into the Pacific again, to anchor finally among friends in Tahiti. His actions were never explained by the news media; they could not have been, for the voyage had always been seen by Moitessier as something other than a sponsored, publicized, competitive event. It was on the ocean, alone with his boat, that Moitessier began to regard this as a voyage that could not end for him with the reward of those whose values were not his. (Sailing Inland & Offshore) One of the world's most famous ocean sailors, Moitessier had sailed for more than a year from Plymouth, England to the Indian Ocean when he inexplicably abandoned the lead in the 1968-1969 Round-the-World single-handed race. He sailed to Tahiti,

dropped anchor and dropped out. Until the publication of this book, only Moitessier and a few friends knew why. Most of the book is a diary of that voyage with philosophical side trips into modern civilization. There is also a 60-page appendix that can stand alone as a small reference volume of details such as route planning, sail repair, the problems of sail and line chafe, rigging and hull construction, self-steering, freak waves and weather, plus much more. Altogether a strange, fascinating, and informative book. (Boat U.S.)

Text: English, French (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I have read a number of nautical tales written by or about sailors who went around the world either in races or just for the challenge or interests of it, beginning with they were you the original one by Captain Joshua Slocum "sailing around the world alone. The thing that sets Moitessier apart is that he was a sailor first with an almost mystic connection with the ocean and his craft whereas others, I exclude Slocum, were adventurers first and true sailors second. In his account he never seemed to have been pressured to hurry, rather he maintained a rational and relaxed Pace with an emphasis on not making mistakes. Hence he finished well above else and in joy himself so much apparently they decided not to pick up the prize which he had won, handily, electing instead to stay on the ocean for another 10 or 12,000 miles. For anyone interested in sailing, there is a long section at the back of the book of advice and explanations of sailing lower, about equipment and every other important aspect that a knowledgeable sailor should understand.

Moitessier has received some less than positive reviews of this classic of sailing literature. A non sailor may ask what can be so absorbing about sitting for months in a boat rocking around to wind and sea. Bernard Moitessier conveys in a poetic manner just what that essence is of being at sea for months and the moment by moment intensity that can be experienced in a world that could seem rather dull and uninteresting to the uninitiated. Indeed it is his full immersion in the moment that comes across, his absorption in the complete world both superficial and at much greater depths. His heightened perception of life is drawn out through his experience and this is a journey into which we are drawn ourselves as we travel the long way. As a sometimes sailor myself i can perhaps appreciate all the more the little things that help us see the bigger picture and give us those moments of rapture and revelation. To the non-sailor who can let his/her imagination flow with the journey, comes the reward of insight into the beauty and majesty of the ocean world and the internal

trials and joys of the lone sailor. For Moitessier, the feeling of connection to the spirit of nature leads him to forgo the more worldly pursuits which are represented for him by the machinations of the European world, and leads him towards the Pacific Islands, giving him more time to experience this connection and take him to a world less troubled by the ingress of modern civilization. Sadly he finds that the concrete is rapidly replacing the greenery in Tahiti too. Some may scoff at what may appear as naive ranting and green fanaticism, calling it dated and over simplistic, however the message is as valid today as it was in the 1960's, probably more so as environmental destruction continues at a pace unheard of before. His dream that a simple life can lead to greater happiness and fulfillment for all are just as apparent and important now. Moitessiers' books are still a great source of reference, inspiration education and enjoyment to the sailing community the world over and takes us into the magic and beauty that is the world when seen through the lens of a purified mind. The down side of this paperback edition is that it omits the great photographs to be found in the hard back edition, i would have paid more had i known, and bought a better copy.

I waited too long to read this. I knew the story, but not his. I'd like to think that I see things a bit differently now.

I know: I'm in the minority here. For YEARS I've read about how lyrical and wonderful Moitessier's book is, but alas, I am underwhelmed. The good: not only is it an easy read, the book is full of useful (though somewhat dated and biased) information. The read was fast, and, while not riveting, pleasant, and the story interesting. Moitessier and I share the capacity for awe, for a sight that others might not swoon over to floor us with it's beauty and/or wonder. The bad: 1) Moitessier's capacity for awe, and his joie de vivre, however, do not translate into the achingly lyrical and enduring writing I'd hoped for. he turns a nice phrase here and there, but he's hardly a poet. His prose sometimes has nice evocative flashes, but he can't sustain or extend from these isolated little bits. 2) at the end, I felt Moitessier's need to 'make a statement', to 'say something important'. These ego-driven needs are the kiss of death to true creativity, so the end of the book becomes a labored and preachy rant about the environment, and the bulldozers destroying paradise. I say labored, because it is. It's not that I disagree with him, but he's just trying too hard. 3) But the WORST thing about his 'eco-manifesto' is that all through the book I was horrified to read about all the crap he was throwing into the ocean! Here's one example, from page 32. After throwing out some relatively benign things: wine bottles, jam, he chucks batteries, CANS OF DIESEL, and, most horribly, COILS OF LINE overboard! And this is not an isolated incident - there are several other

times in the book where he throws copious quantities of pollutants or objects that are inimical to marine life overboard with nary a thought. It seems that his experience of the ocean as being huge and vast has translated to seeing it as one giant toilet for his convenience. The massive irony, the ego and hubris of this man lecturing anyone on the environment or the ills of civilization is just too much. I'd been struggling with respecting this man who I knew had abandoned his family (sorry, but both inexcusable and dishonorable in my book - and barely mentioned in his book, except when he reassures himself that they'd understand), who'd been dumping anything he thought useless into the sea for his entire voyage. But his preachy lecture was just too much. He was a hypocrite of the highest order, and like many great artists, a singularly selfish narcissist. Unfortunately, he wasn't even a great artist, but merely a brave and intuitive sailor and a decent writer with a few bright turns of phrase here and there. It's worth a read, but it's also quite overrated.

Inspiring and lyrical account that combines spirituality and sailing. Reminds me of zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance. Enjoy!

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