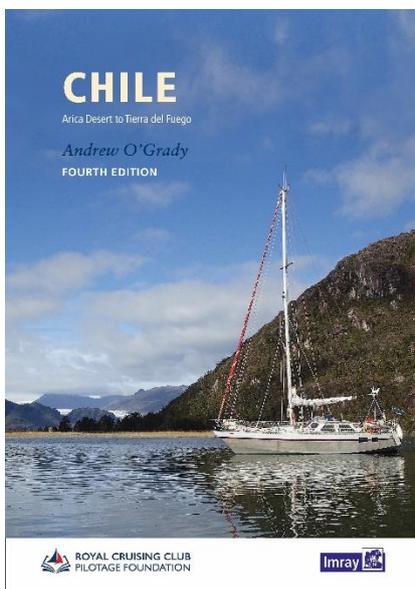


## Book Review

**Chile - Arica Desert to Tierra del Fuego – Andrew O’Grady. Fourth edition published, 2019**

Reviewed by Martin Westcott, Valdivia Yacht Club, December 2019. (Martin sailed with his father, Tony, on a 40’ cutter built by Skentelbery and Sons in Plymouth, England, and especially designed for Patagonia. They spent 25 seasons on *Equinoccio* in the channels before any cruising guide was available. Then Martin sailed around the world and back to Valdivia via Cape Horn and the Chilean channels covered in this guide “to arrive where he started and know the place for the first time.” (T.S Eliot.))



This practical guide deserves a place of honour both on *Equinoccio's* chart table, and on the chart table of any sailing yacht venturing to the Chilean channels or, as Bill Tillman referred to them, ‘the magical place of the unknown’. Thanks to editor Andrew O’Grady, Ian and Maggy Staples, and all the crews of anonymous yachts from Chile and all over of world, who have made it possible to explore this area in a simpler and less hazardous way. The Pilotage Foundation’s *Chile* cruising guide is densely packed with pilotage information, details of facilities and advice on where and how to anchor; all up to date and taken from the personal experience of sailors who have cruised there before. But the thrill of the unknown is latent and still lures us sailors in.

I was lucky to be on board *Teokita* with Ian and Maggy Staples in 1997 while they were researching the first edition of this guide. We had taken Ian and Maggy on board *Equinoccio* with my father, Tony Westcott, as captain before they ventured on *Teokita*.

Life before this guide in the 1970’s had the Tony Westcott approach of trial and error. Two out of three times *Equinoccio* ended on the shoals and every now and then on the rocks! Sometimes you could see your own anchor on the beach next morning, or a 7 knot current turned your yacht, coming about and around sending you back to where you came from. Few yachts ventured to the *canales* (channels) and fiords of Patagonia. Some, such as Justo Schuller’s *Lumaran*, came from the Valdivia Yacht Club: Some, like Willy de Roos on *Williwaw*, were foreign flagged: And some, like my father and Aird Cameron on *Equinoccio*, sailed from Algarrobo.

Andrew O’Grady has managed to combine all the contributions from past and present, giving this book great tradition and then updating and improving it. I agree with him that winter is the best time to sail the area if you are doing it properly. The book has a real feel of exploration and adventure, the work of decades, but with one great addition from modernity; aerial photographs - plus the charts to indicate from where the photograph was taken; a very useful addition, novel to this guide.

The introduction to the book is accurate, thorough and entertaining. Full of practical and up to date information that will help you prepare for a cruise in this still largely unknown part of the world, carefully highlighting all the elements that are unique about sailing in Chile; from dealing with the *Armada de Chile* famous paperwork, to anchoring securely for the fierce winds, know as williwaws, in the south, and the channels and fjords in between.

Each chapter starts with a chart marking all of the ports and anchorages mentioned, making them a breeze to find. This makes it very easy to navigate and plan the cruise. The pilotage information includes hundreds of detailed charts, which are combined with photographs and clear instructions as to how to approach and enter even at night, and recommendations for places to anchor. The photographs of the cruising ground not only provide visual back up to the numerous charts, clearly marking the position they were taken from, and indicating all useful features on the landscape, but they also serve to make the book visually attractive.

In such a review it is hard to cover all ports but all the ones I know were there, and better described than ever before:

Quintupeu 2.47 mentions WWI German Battleship Dresden; Puerto Gato 3.27 warns you about not anchoring too close to the beach (anchor on the beach situation); Bahia Welcome 8.30 warns you of what we named *Roca Equinoccio*, that left us "encallados" stranded on this exact rock for 6 hour, wondering how to get to Puerto Natales 8.26, the nearest civilisation hundreds of miles away. It was emotional to see Caleta Equinoccio 3.11 and Quitalco North Arm 3.25, where Ian and Maggy Staples caught that trout after the lamb *asado* at the Westcott's Hacienda in Quitalco. The beauty of Caleta Lynch 3.32 and Caleta Brecknock 10.12 all bring back memories and are accurately described. The same is true for the traditional Valdivia Yacht Club 1.35 and Micalvi Yacht Clubs in Puerto Williams 11.12, from where, for me, the voyage starts or ends. The beauty of Bahia Tic Toc 2.56 and Peel Inlet 8.1, where Tillman went in search of the unknown, are all present in this guide.

It does not mention the tinned steak pies we ate in Seno Amalia that cold night, huddled next to the Dickinson stove after that sail with us from Australia, nor the ice next morning, but each one of us sailors will add new stories that will become legends of the time when we sail in Patagonia.

The voyage can be done without this guide, but it would be a less rewarding and more difficult task. Either on your chart table or your armchair, this sailing book allows you to dream of future voyages and remember past ones.

Martin Westcott, December 2019.

Chile - Arica Desert to Tierra del Fuego – Fourth edition, 2019

Published by Imray at £45.00

ISBN: 9781786790200

**Link:** <https://www.imray.com/Publications/Imray+Pilots/Pilots+and+Cruising+Guides/IB0198-2/>