Sail Freight Voyage: Holland, Norway, Portugal, Caribbean and Back

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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The Tres Hombres, the celebrated engineless 32-meter schooner brig owned by Fair Transport, is on her longest voyage yet. She set out from home port Den Helder in Holland on October 18, 2013. By way of Norway and Portugal, she has just arrived in Las Palmas, Canary Islands in the eastern Atlantic.

For the fourth straight year, Tres Hombres begins its trade-wind romp across the Atlantic. In a few weeks she will make landfall in the New World and begin once again the loading of high quality goods to sail -- with no petroleum power -- to northern Europe. [See map at bottom.]

Just as important as the voyage itself and the cargo successfully brought to market in the Netherlands and elsewhere, Fair Transport has been developing a trade network that will last into the post-petroleum age now dawning. For example, salt fish (clipfish) from Norway was taken on for delivery in Portugal, a previous international arrangement of long standing.

Before the current voyage the Tres Hombres received a refit. The top mast was replaced, enhancing safety. Numerous other repairs, replacements such as with sails, and recurring maintenance were undertaken successfully, with the help of enthusiastic volunteers who have from the beginning created and maintained the sea-worthy, speedy vessel. For details on the refit, view this gallery: picasaweb.google.com

Part of the staying power of Fair Transport and the exploits of its ship is the outreach and consciousness-raising of the three captains and the organization's staff and volunteers. Pictured is a poster from a fall tour done in the UK by Jorne Langelaan, one of the captains. Hearing is believing, but so is tasting: in addition to sail-transported rum, the ale sail-transported occasionally from Brixton is a convincer.

New Dawn Traders is a sail-transport advocacy group in the UK that has supplied two crew members on the current Tres Hombres voyage. The cook position is ably covered, by all accounts, and another New Dawn Trader jumped aboard in Lisbon. Read the inspired logs from New Dawn Traders and see alluring photos at newdawntraders.com. Without a ship, the group is doing as much for sail transport for tomorrow's sustainable world as any entity possibly can.

Although the Tres Hombres' flamboyant, musical Captain Longhair -- Arjen van der Veen -- set out from Den Helder on his ship, a new captain, Lammert, is the one guiding the ship to the "New World" and back. This explains how Captain Arjen was seen at the Rotterdam meeting of the SAIL consortium November 6-8!

The adventures of the Tres Hombres are increasingly seen as a serious thrust into world trade -- the more seriously oil and climate issues are considered. The difference between a noisy oil boat being pushed through the water -- like a building with a power plant -- and a graceful ship using wind-in-sails harmlessly, is like night and day. And it is a new dawn, traders!

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More ship logs and photos:
video of Tres Hombres going on its way, off to new adventures at sea! youtube.com

Las Palmas photo page

North Sea and Bay of Biscay photo spread from New Dawn Traders