

**Plastiki** by David de Rothschild  
Reviewed by Tanis Roelofs

On March 20, 2010, the sailing vessel, *Plastiki*, set off from San Francisco, California to cross the Pacific Ocean with a crew of six: British skipper Jo Royle, co-skipper David Thompson, expedition diver Olav Heyerdahl (the grandson of Thor Heyerdahl), filmmakers Max Jourdan and Vern Moen, and expedition leader David de Rothschild. This fascinating book recounts the building of a vessel made entirely out of plastic bottles, the voyage across the Pacific Ocean, and the disturbing findings of the expedition. Each chapter is dedicated to a crew member which includes their profile, journal entries, and wonderful pictures of their vessel and voyage across the Pacific.

The boat's name is a play on the 1947 *Kon-Tiki* raft used to sail across the Pacific by Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl. This voyage roughly followed the same route.

The *Plastiki* is a 60-foot (18 m) catamaran made out of 12,500 reclaimed plastic bottles and other recycled PET plastic and waste products.

The craft features many renewable energy systems, including solar panels, wind and trailing propeller turbines, and bicycle generators. Vivid photos show pollution in *The Great Pacific Garbage Patch*, one of five ocean gyres that accumulate tiny bits of plastics as well as larger marine debris.

The expedition's research found:

- 80 percent of ocean pollution begins on land
- Every square mile of ocean contains 46,000 pieces of floating plastic garbage
- Each year, plastic litter in the oceans kills 100,000 turtles, dolphins, whales and one million seabirds.
- Nearly 75% of the world's fish stock is already fished up to or beyond their sustainable limit.
- For every one ton of plastic we recycle, we save almost 2,000 pounds of oil.

Crew members also researched environmental issues caused by global warming, for instance, the current sea level rise, ocean acidification and marine pollution.

On July 26, *Plastiki*, triumphantly sailed into Sydney Harbor. The team spent more than 120 days on a mission that would capture the world's attention of the ocean pollution problem and stir action.