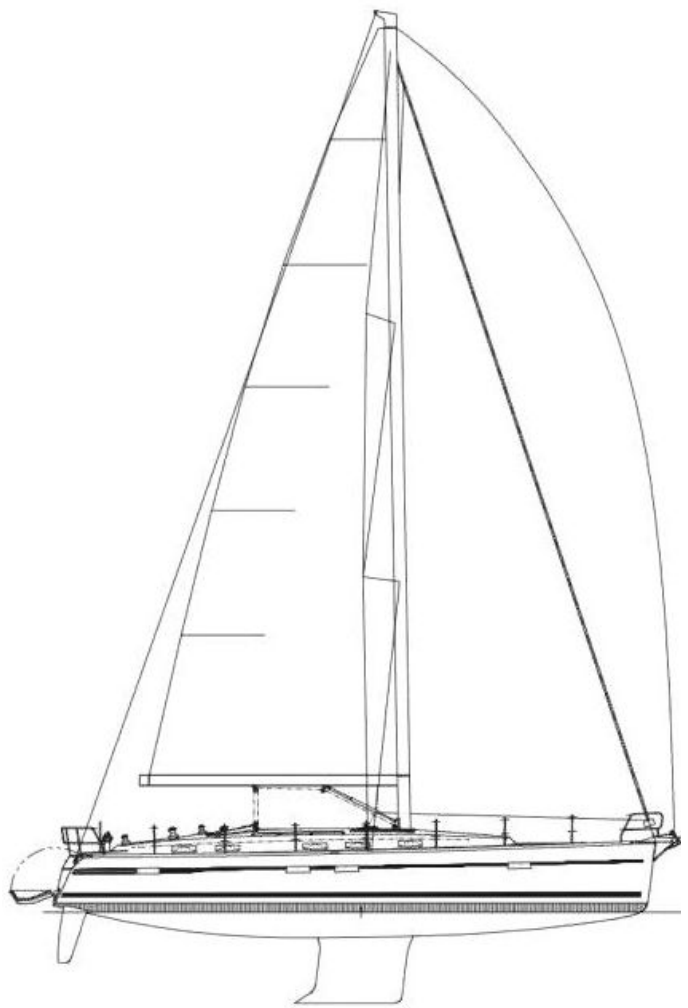


2021-2024

# SV Tanuki

Traveling the seas from Europe to Australia

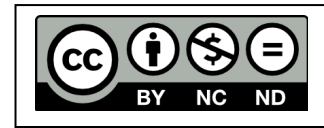


Prof. Dr. Richard Stoll and Sabine Lotz-Demare, Cairns (Australia)

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**Authors:** Prof. Dr. Richard Stoll & Sabine Lotz-Demare, Cairns

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## Preface

This is a private travelogue of the journey of a lifetime: a voyage by sailboat from Europe to Australia. This book is not intended for publication, but we do share it, in print or electronically, with our family and our many sailing friends, some of whom are still sailing the world's oceans. However, we are not the stars of this book. The true star of the journey is undoubtedly our sailboat Tanuki, which safely carried us across the world's oceans during this semi-circumnavigation and has become an important part of our family (Richard, Sabine, Cornelius, Larissa, and Max). During the voyage, we grew and were welcomed into the circle of bluewater sailors.

Bluewater sailors are a close-knit community, strengthened by their camaraderie. This is no surprise, as they depend on one another both at sea, battling the forces of nature, and in port, wrestling with technical issues. They readily offer help, knowing they might need it themselves at any time. There's no room here for snobbery or envy about who has the bigger or more beautiful boat. Asked or unsolicited, everyone lends their knowledge, skills, spare parts, food, beer, and hospitality without expecting anything in return. This is what we, as long-distance sailors, have come to value. Becoming a bluewater sailor isn't about passing a sailing exam or simply joining a crew. It's about taking responsibility as skipper for both crew and boat, successfully crossing oceans, and being accepted by the bluewater sailing community.

We – Sabine and Richard – have been living in Australia as immigrants since 2008 and 2010 respectively, and sailing is both in our blood and a part of our lives. So, going on a sailing trip together was a natural step. How did we come up with the idea of planning a semi-circumnavigation of the world lasting over more than two years?

The idea came to us in 2020. During a Sunday stroll on our local beach between Kewarra Beach and Palm Cove, as the Corona pandemic began, we jokingly considered taking early retirement to essentially take a break from everyday life. Not a typical sabbatical, but rather a significant transition between working life and retirement. This book is about our journey, the constant balancing act between exertion and idyllic vacation moments as a couple on a long trip, with sustainability and environmental awareness in mind.

The texts shown here are partly taken from our blog, partly from a revised version of our logbook, and all of it spiced up with our attempts at writing and additional photographic material. We therefore ask you to excuse the somewhat rough style and the (hopefully) few errors in spelling and grammar. It is said that retired university professors still have a tendency to produce long texts.

This book is written for non-sailors; we've made a real effort to keep the technical aspects to a minimum and avoid overloading the language with nautical jargon. A glossary at the end of the book is intended to offer some insight to the average landlubber. Should any sailors with similar plans read this book, we hope it will be helpful and provide some inspiration. In the appendix, we've compiled a list of our onboard literature and selected websites. It's important to note that this is not a textbook, but rather a description of our personal journey and our approach. Of course, there are many ways to improve upon it, but doing it with heart is better than nothing at all!

Otherwise, enjoy reading.



Fig. 1: Our local beach in Kewarra Beach (Queensland, Australia), one of the few small beaches north of Cairns. The idea for this trip was born here during a walk on the beach.

## 1. Preparation

We've made the decision. So how does one prepare for such a trip?

Let's start with our sailing skills. Sabine has some bluewater experience on the Indian Ocean as a crew member on a catamaran, while Richard has some coastal experience on the IJsselmeer, North Sea, and Baltic Sea. He had the opportunity to gain experience as skipper and boat technician with SV Pyxis, his own 30-foot steel boat, in the Coral Sea in Australia. For the occasional weekend regatta, we had SV Milonga, a small 26-foot racing boat on a trailer, which we rarely sailed because raising the heavy mast was always a major undertaking. So, we had some experience, but by no means sufficient for a longer bluewater voyage like an ocean crossing. So, after this reality check, it was back to the classroom.

Licenses held: a German official recreational boating license (coastal waters) for Richard and a partial recreational coastal skipper's license (only the practical portion was passed, the theory was never taken due to emigration), an Australian official boat license and an Australian radio operator's certificate for VHF and HF for Richard, who also holds a full amateur radio license (with the associated technical knowledge and some rusty morse code skills). Sabine only holds the Australian boat license.

Our research shows that the Australian "boat license" authorizes the holder to operate recreational boats of any size (!), even though the training, including the exam, was completed in a single day and was rather laughable for a sailor trained in Germany. So, check this point.

For Sabine's safety, it was therefore necessary to obtain a radio operator's license. This wasn't for legal reasons, but to learn and practise the procedures for a maritime emergency using the radio. A week-end later, and Sabine was licensed for VHF and HF maritime radio.

After that, we studied specialist books, websites, and blogs by successful sailors. At this point, we would especially like to thank the crews of SY Atanga and SY Lucky, from whose blogs we have learned a great deal and who didn't intend to earn money with their blogs (e.g., on Patreon). Other studies included:

- Boat technology in general
- Diesel mechanics of conventional ship engines
- Installation and use of radio technology in the VHF and HF ranges
- General boat electrics (12V and 220V), battery knowledge and solar technology
- Plumbing work involving water and diesel lines, tanks and pumps
- Navigation and celestial navigation GPS and sextant
- Network technology (especially NMEA2000) and on-board instruments (computers)
- Sailing knowledge and rigging knowledge
- Anchor technology, chain and anchor winch
- Behavior and strategies during a storm
- Behavior in maritime emergencies and person overboard situations
- Emergency technology, E-Pirb and AIS
- AIS and radar for collision avoidance
- Storage and cooling of food and beverages
- Control system, rudder and autopilot

We conducted these studies using books and websites; a list can be found in the appendix.

After a few months, it quickly became clear what kind of boat we wanted. A larger catamaran wasn't an option for us because we weren't prepared to invest the necessary funds. So, a monohull (single-hull boat) between 44 and 54 feet was the way to go. Large enough for two people to comfortably sail, with some elbow room ("room to swing a cat") and a bit of privacy, even though sailors know that space is always limited on such a boat. It also had to be affordable enough to fit our budget. We didn't want to make the mistake of investing all our money in a boat. So, not a new one, but a used boat that was stable and large enough to safely complete the ocean crossing. We therefore opted for a relatively recent production boat designed by a well-known boat designer. Our choice ultimately fell on a Bavaria (designed by Bruce Farr), a charter model due to its price. This is especially important because it allowed us to purchase a VAT-free boat, which we can later import into Australia at a reduced VAT rate since we are tax residents here. More on that later.

So, we opted for a 2013 Bavaria 50, for which we made a down payment at the end of 2020, with the contractual condition that the boat would be surveyed at the end of the 2021 season and that we could cancel the preliminary contract based on the survey results. Why this? Covid was rampant in Australia, and no one was allowed to leave or enter the country.

In response to the Covid crisis, we received all necessary and recommended vaccinations in addition to the Covid vaccinations and compiled a list of medications and first aid supplies with the help of our friend and doctor, Ollie. Both Richard (a dentist by profession) and Sabine (a first aid instructor and diving instructor) had up-to-date first aid knowledge, and Richard also packed a small collection of dental emergency kits.

Then we bought a few small things in Australia:

Radar  
On-board computer

E-Pirb (emergency beacon)  
handheld radio

Bad weather clothing  
Radio



Fig. 1.1: Our first boat SV Pyxis.



Fig. 1.2: Our second boat SV Milonga (coastal racer). A "MASRM 720"



## 2. Final preparations in Australia

What do people actually do with furniture and possessions in Australia?

We own a house in Kewarra Beach, north of Cairns. It's a single-story, sturdily built house, as we experience one to three cyclones per year in this region. The location is highly desirable, being just a three-minute walk from the beach. Therefore, we rent out the house.

Our brilliant idea was to use the small storage room next to the double garage as a storage space and exclude it from the rental agreement. No problem. So, we packed all our belongings into boxes and stacked them on a large shelf. Three broad-shouldered movers came to handle the furniture and played three-dimensional Tetris until all the furniture was stacked almost to the ceiling, including my 500kg billiard table. Packing the boxes took four weeks, setting up the furniture less than three hours. We detonated a "bomb" (automatic spray can against insects) and closed the door. We sincerely hope nothing gets mouldy, as we have tropical temperatures and high humidity here closed the door and locked it. Now we are staying at a friend's hotel in Palm Cove for a few days.

Both cars and the small boat have already been sold; the house is being rented out through an agency. Pensions have been applied for in both Germany and Australia. Sabine, a specialist lawyer in immigration law, will continue to advise a few clients online and then close her practice.

It's November. The university semester has ended, Richard gave his last lecture, all the students passed their exams this semester, and Richard is now officially retired. Our son Max quickly finished his Year 12 exams, and only the graduation ceremony remains. Our bags are packed: one suitcase, a large box containing the radar, four large sail bags, three carry-on suitcases, and three backpacks, mostly with boat bits (maritime equipment and spare parts). We've already exceeded the 90kg baggage limit (excluding carry-on) by 3kg, but we're optimistic.



Fig. 2.1: Richard's farewell lecture at JCU (James Cook University).

Are we allowed to leave now? Yes, but only after a lengthy tug-of-war with the authorities.

Australia is still closed due to Covid. We applied to leave three times, each time with a rejection, then they finally allowed us to leave because we assured them that we weren't just going on holiday, but that we didn't intend to return for more than a year.



Fig. 2.2: Our house suddenly looks so empty.



Fig. 2.3: My billiard table used to stand there...

Then it begins. We fly with Jetstar from Cairns to Brisbane, then continue with Singapore Airlines to Singapore, and from there directly to Frankfurt. This time, we don't have our usual option of a stopover in Singapore. And unfortunately, we also don't have the usual direct flight from Cairns to Singapore, which was cancelled due to Covid.



Fig. 2.4: Luggage...



Fig. 2.5: ...and even more luggage.

### 3. Flight to Germany

On November 20th, 2021, it finally begins. After five days in a fantastic hotel in Palm Cove, our flight departs at 11:00 AM from Cairns to Brisbane. Over 100 kg of luggage then has to be carried from the domestic airport to the international airport. Brisbane isn't very busy, so we're just marginally stressed trying to get the VAT refunded on our exported boat parts and catch our connecting flight. No problem, though; we're vaccinated against COVID and can also present a current PCR test (nose-picking) as required. Our luggage is initially flagged because we now have more than 10 kg of excess baggage. We speak with the head of the boarding crew, and probably because the flight is only half full, they eventually turn a blind eye. The luggage is checked through to Frankfurt without any issues. Huge relief. Then we board the sparsely occupied plane on time and leave the fifth continent. Our decision is now irreversible; there's no going back to Australia for us, at least not for the time being.

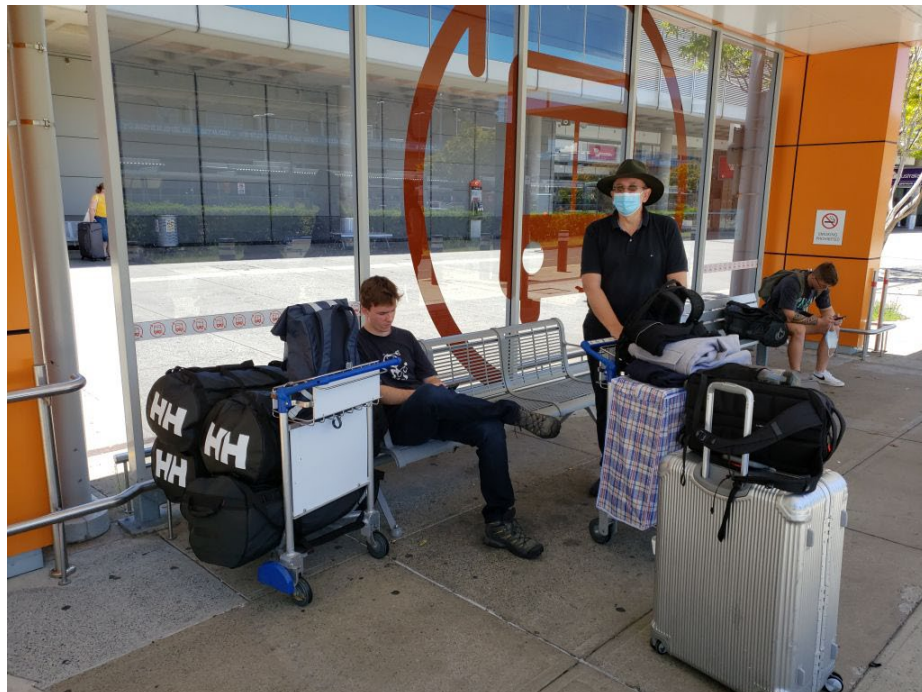


Fig. 3.1: Brisbane Airport, waiting for the bus to the international terminal.

An 8-hour journey to Singapore on a nearly empty plane. Singapore Airport, usually one of the best and busiest in the world, is deserted. Few passengers, all the shops closed. Covid is going around! Airport staff are wearing full-body suits, and we have to go to a counter where our Covid status is checked again. No fun!

Finally, we can board. The intercontinental flight departs directly for Frankfurt. Fortunately, there are so many empty seats that we can even sleep sideways across them. We feel like we're in first class.

Arrival in Frankfurt. It's 6 a.m., no checks, our passports are scanned by a machine. Covid status? Nobody wants to see it, and even customs don't check us. Good thing, we have some boat parts with us that might have had to be declared – we're not entirely sure, but we didn't want to complain. We head

straight to the car rental counter, and 20 minutes later we have our rental car, which Sabine specifically ordered after a detailed study of trunk space. We drive to Richard's mother's house in Trier, a quiet city with ancient cultural heritage dating back to Roman times, near Luxembourg.

Our son Cornelius is waiting for us there, and after sleeping off our jet lag for a few days, we'll head straight back to Frankfurt. We're flying to Trogir in Croatia to see our boat for the first time!



Fig. 3.2: Trier, our base in Germany: The Porta Nigra, an ancient roman city gate.



Fig. 3.3: Trier: The Basilica of emperor Constantine.



## 4. First contact Croatia

A week later: Back to Frankfurt and a flight to Split with our sons Cornelius and Max. Cornelius is a trained industrial electronics technician and, together with Richard, will inspect the boat's electrical system and plan improvements – it seems the affinity for electricity runs in the family. We drive straight to Trogir in a rental car, where our boat, still named SY Pomerol, is moored in Marina Baotic. There we meet Ante, the technical base manager of the Austrian charter company that has been managing Pomerol. After a quick look around the boat, we are quite satisfied with its condition.

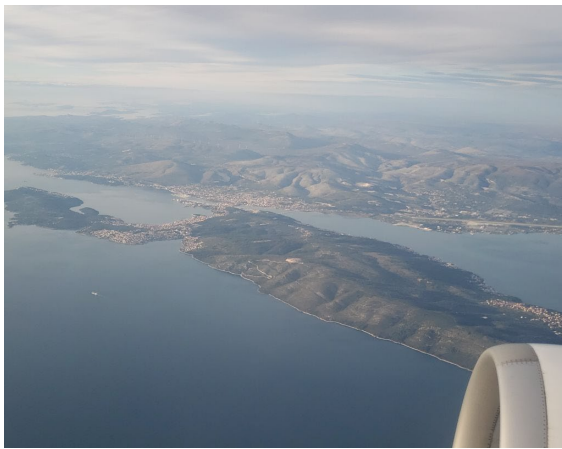


Fig. 4.1: Trogir from above.



Fig. 4.2: Trogir from below.



Fig. 4.3: The first step on board Pomerol. Ladies first.



Fig. 4.4: After the first step, on board.



Fig. 4.5: Break at the Marina Café; it's a bit chilly. Max, Richard, and Cornelius.



Fig. 4.6: Test sailing. Our first trip with Pomerol.



Fig. 4.7: Pomerol on the Hard.



Fig. 4.8: Underwater hull freshly painted, keel still attached.

We're sleeping in an Airbnb apartment and feel like we're on vacation. Richard and Cornelius are crawling through the bowels of Pomerol and discussing technical details with Ante.

The survey (independent inspection) by a local company in Split begins three days later. Two surveyors inspect the boat for several hours and then conduct a test sail. Result: Everything is fine so far, the rigging and sails are in good order (the genoa is like new and the mainsail is in good condition), the diesel engine starts immediately and purrs like a kitten. The hull is inspected a few days later, as the boat needs to be briefly taken out of the water for this. In the meantime, we visit the historic town of Trogir and look enviously at the other, much newer and larger boats. After a discussion with the expert, we receive a thumbs-up and decide to proceed with the purchase.

Back to Frankfurt and Trier with Air Croatia and preparations for Christmas.



## 5. Introduction of our boat



Fig. 5.1: Pomerol in its basic state as a charter boat.

Pomerol in its raw state is a Bavaria Cruiser 50 sailing yacht (built in 2013) with the following specifications:

### 1. Hull

LOA (Overall Length) = 15.57 m

Hull length = 14.99 m

Length at waterline = 13.86 m

Width (max) = 4.67 m

Draft = 2.25 m

Weight (unladen) = 14.1 t

### 2. Rig

Mast and boom (Selden)

Mast height above water surface = 22.35 m

Mainsail: In-mast furling

Foresail: Genoa I on furler

Sail area = 131 m<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Engine

Volvo Penta D2-75, 55kW/75PS

Diesel tank = 300l

### 4. Steering system

Twin rudder system with two steering wheels

Bow thruster

**5. Interior design**

4 cabins

1 cabin with bunk beds

3 toilets (2 with shower)

1x extra shower

Diesel heater (Webasto)

**7. Electrical**

House battery 2x 140 Ah

Batteries for starter and bow thruster

Charging distributor for all batteries

220V shore power connection

40A charger 220VAC to 12VDC

**9. Water**

3 water tanks with a total capacity of 520 liters of water

Automatic water pump

Hot water boiler 220V

**6. Cockpit**

Bimini and sprayhood

Outdoor shower

Motorized folding bathing platform

4 winches

**8. Pantry**

Gas stove with 2 burners

Small bar fridge with ice compartment

Cooler box

Microwave

**10. Anchor**

Plough anchor with 40m chain

Electric anchor windlass (Quick)



Fig. 5.2: Pomerol under sail.



Fig. 5.3: Twin rudder system.





Fig. 5.4: Pomerol with the bathing platform folded out.



Fig. 5.5: View into the cockpit.



Fig. 5.6.: The engine (Volvo D2-75).



Fig. 5.7: The deck.



Fig. 5.8: Interior living room and galley (kitchen).



Fig. 5.9: Factory layout (graphic: Bavaria Yachtbau).

## 6. Transport from Germany to Croatia

Hooray, we bought a boat! Our focus wasn't on the equipment, but on the stability of the hull and rigging. Everything else can be adapted to our needs. Pomerol was owned by a company, so no VAT was charged. We would have had to pay it now, if only...

As Australian citizens and residents, we are also tax residents there, meaning we don't have to pay VAT in Europe as long as we export the goods we buy here. To do this, we have to export Pomerol legally and then temporarily re-import it into the EU. Sounds complicated. And it is. A freight specialist handled this for us and is now waiting for us to sail the boat out of the EU. More on that later.

We're back in Germany and sorting through our belongings. The computer and credit card are working overtime as we buy everything we need for life on board and for the initial renovation of Pomerol – things that would be significantly more expensive in Croatia. Here too, we're trying to export everything possible later to save on VAT.

Regarding credit cards: We switched our credit cards to the **Wise debit card**. This card allows you to open individual sub-accounts for most currencies and convert them at favourable exchange rates. We thought this would be helpful. And it was.

Purchases were made:

- Sewing machine
- HF radio
- Plenty of electrical cable
- Pots and pans
- Bedding, bed linen (tour to Ikea)
- Hiking boots
- Clothes (that had to stay at home because of boatbits)
- Tools
- Screws and small parts
- Switches and electrical measuring instruments
- Computer monitor and printer
- TV
- Small petrol generator

Then it's off to our next Covid vaccination. Covid madness is rampant in Germany, and even to visit a restaurant, you have to show up with a mask and your vaccination certificate. The vaccination is free for German citizens. Since we still hold dual citizenship, it shouldn't be a problem. There's even a vaccination centre in Trier. So, we set off early in the morning and find the centre right away, just outside the city. There's a large parking lot and a police car out front. We're surprised.

After a short wait, we were called. The friendly employee was both reluctant and willing to help. The problem was, we didn't have German health insurance. So, the matter went to the manager, who looked at our passports and into our eyes before finally making the official decision that we were eligible for vaccination. We then moved along the queue to the vaccination doctor, who took our medical history. We casually asked why there was a police car parked outside. This immediately prompted a torrent of words from the genuinely nice doctor. She explained that anti-vaxxers had disguised



themselves as patients a few days earlier and, while not violent, had verbally harassed people inside the centre, threatening doctors and patients. Since then, the vaccination centre had been under police protection. We expressed our solidarity with the people working there and were then finally taken to a friendly nurse who administered the appropriate injection. At the very end, we received all the necessary documents for our vaccinations – both printed and digital. What service!

Onward to shopping! We're driving to Bremen to visit SVB, the largest marine equipment supplier in Germany. No problem, we still have the rental car and can fill up cheaply in Luxembourg. We set off early in the morning, arrive around mid-afternoon, and buy some boat electronics, an AIS transceiver, and life jackets. We spend the night in a hotel and take a stroll through the Christmas market to the harbor where we visit the Alexander von Humboldt. The next day, we head back to Trier.



Fig. 6.1: Sales area of SVB in Bremen.



Fig. 6.2: The Bremen Town Musicians, here depicted from a German fairy tale by the brothers Grimm.



Fig. 6.3: In front of the Alexander von Humboldt, a three masted barque.



Fig. 6.4: Historic house in Bremen.



Fig. 6.5: Richards Christmas presents, a bottle of rum and a skippers cap.



Fig. 6.6: New year's eve in the Rheingau (Max and our friend Birgit).

Christmas in Trier and New Year's with friends in the Rheingau region. Now, in the cold of January, we're finally off. How do we get all our stuff to Croatia? We have too much luggage for a rental car, and we can't fit anything on a scheduled flight. Shipping companies are expensive, and a rental van is out of our price range. Then we remember that rental car prices in Croatia are significantly lower than in Germany, even during the pandemic. So, we rent a van from a rental company at Split Airport – dirt cheap. Cornelius is back home, Max is being parked in Germany, and Richard and Sabine are flying to Split. Arrival at Split Airport. Down the stairs to the car rental!

The van is quickly picked up, the rental company confirms that we're allowed to drive it to Germany, and after buying drinks and some food, we set off, driving through Slovenia and Austria directly to Germany. We buy the necessary motorway vignettes for Slovenia and Austria. Good weather makes the drive easier, and our spirits are high.

Arriving in Trier – first things first: a good night's sleep. Then the van is loaded, literally to the brim. Max just barely fits. We continue on without a significant break. Meanwhile, the weather has deteriorated. It's not snowing yet, but it's bitterly cold. We drive south, reach the Austrian border during the night, and that's when the fun stops. Snow is falling so heavily that we can barely see the road. We hope we make it across the Alps without any problems. The highways are clear. We drive cautiously through Slovenia, and then comes the shock: the highway in Croatia is closed, and we have to drive on narrow country roads in the snow.





Fig. 6.7: Our rented van.



Fig. 6.8: Will all of this really fit?



Fig. 6.9: Highway in Croatia. All good so far.



Fig. 6.10: Country road through the mountains.

That hurts, especially driving through the night. Luckily, the roads were cleared enough that we didn't have to drive over a layer of packed snow. At daybreak, we set off on the country roads – very carefully. We arrive in Trogir at midday, and the weather has completely changed. Instead of alpine gloom, we now have brilliant sunshine. The marina lets us onto the premises with the van, and we drive near Pomerols jetty. Ante is already there and officially hands us the boat key. We unpack...



## 7. Boarding the boat and holiday days in Trogir



Fig. 7.1: The first boxes have been unloaded.



Fig. 7.2: Everything stored onboard.

Unpacking is faster than packing. We make two big piles of boxes and bags, now we can carry everything into the boat (like a human chain). Then the van has to be driven away again and we exchange it for a small car.

We've rented another Airbnb for a few days and are taking our time getting settled into the boat. Next up is our first shopping trip for groceries and drinks. Prices in Croatia are similar to those in Germany, but the selection is smaller. We're also visiting the historic town of Trogir and enjoying the local cuisine.



Fig. 7.3: Trogir. (Cathedral of St. Lawrence).



Fig. 7.4: The waterfront promenade in Trogir.





Fig. 7.5: Trogir. (Cathedral of St. Lawrence).



Fig. 7.6: Trogir. (Cathedral of St. Lawrence).



Fig. 7.7: Café in Trogir.



Fig. 7.8: Eating Mussels in Trogir.

Before we move into the boat completely, we have some demolition work to do. In the bow, we're removing the wooden bulkhead between the two cabins. It's not so easy; we have to saw and sand. But after about four hours of work and a pack of saw blades, we have a lot of scrap wood (good building material that we won't throw away) and a spacious owner's cabin with a large bed.

Finally, the time has come; we're definitely moving onto the boat. Everything is now tidy and the boat is stocked with food and drinks. A small induction cooktop from Ikea has been set up in the galley, beds have been made, and a small electric heater has been switched on because of the cold.

We have begun our nomadic life.



Fig. 7.9: Marina Baotic.



Fig. 7.10: Mediterranean birthday breakfast.



Fig. 7.11: The new owner's cabin after removal of the partition wall.



Fig. 7.12: New layout of Pomerol (Source: Bavaria Yachtbau).



## 8. Initial work on the boat

So what else do we need to do before our boat can leave the harbor?

First, the boat needs a new flag because, upon its sale, it was removed from the Croatian register. No problem, we're waiting for the Croatian confirmation, issued by the harbor master, which arrives within a week. With that, we apply for registration in the Australian shipping register. Here's a slight snag: the Australians require original documents, which must be sent by courier to Coffs Harbour. Still no problem? Wrong! War has broken out in Ukraine, and for some inexplicable reason, express mail to Australia suddenly takes two to three weeks. Still no problem—at first.

So, things are progressing. Over the last few days, Richard has mainly been working on the electrical system, while Sabine has improved the appearance. The team consisting of Sabine and deckhand Max removed all the old stickers and nameplates (using a heat gun, acetone, and boat polish). Max was put in the dinghy and bravely helped from the side.



Fig. 8.1: The boat after cleaning and removal of the old name stickers.

Thanks to the skipper's diligence, the somewhat older Garmin plotter has now found its place at the port helm. The cockpit table will be reworked in the next few days. Inside, the central electrical switch



panel has been expanded with an additional section for other devices, a switch for the 220V inputs (shore power/inverter), and displays for monitoring shore power consumption and battery.



Fig. 8.2: It still looks very tidy.



Fig. 8.3: Things have changed. On-board computer, new radio, second control panel, etc.

Life on board goes on. Things got exciting on Monday evening of the second week – the Bora wind caught up with us. The average reported wind speed of 7 knots was rather gentle, but in gusts it tossed us around at more than 35 knots. Luckily, we were safely moored in the harbor; it would have been truly thrilling in an anchorage. We spontaneously decided to buy a good quality anchor for our boat (and one size larger than recommended). Sailors say that the secret to a good night's sleep is a good anchor and a strong chain. We fully agree.

Once a week, we take a bus to Split Airport and rent a small car there for 2-3 days at about €15 per day. This allows us to visit Richard's favourite spots in Split (the hardware store and yacht supplies), and Sabine also finds plenty of shopping opportunities. Last week, one of these trips took us to a sporting goods store, where, in addition to some good Mares diving fins, she also saw an inexpensive electric scooter, which unfortunately was no longer available. After a quick internet search, we found it in Trogir at a branch of another sporting goods retailer, even a newer version, and bought it right away. Now we're equipped for shorter shopping trips, and the fact that it folds up very compactly is a real help on the boat.

The boat didn't come with an outboard motor for our little inflatable dinghy. Inflatable boats are notoriously difficult to row, so we'll have to retrofit one. To that end, we visit the yacht chandler in Split and realize that we probably won't be able to get the Yamaha two-stroke outboard we wanted. A lot of complaining ensues. It looks like we'll have to get a four-stroke, even though they're more difficult to maintain, which is something we'd rather avoid. For your information, four-strokes are cleaner and use less fuel than two-strokes, which is why these polluting engines were simply banned and are no longer manufactured by the companies. However, they are more prone to mechanical problems. The dealer makes us a good offer on a 6 hp Mercury outboard, so we order it without further ado (including delivery to the boat).

We ordered a new (significantly) larger anchor (Rocna, 33 kg) from another dealer at a good price, along with 100m of new 10mm anchor chain including delivery to the boat, and now sincerely hope that it will fit on our anchor roller.



Fig. 8.4: Television and on-board library.



Fig. 8.5: Washing machine.

We also bought a washing machine, which we fit into the old shower cubicle with millimeter precision. The skipper connected it in 10 minutes, but finding the right reducer at the hardware store took more than 40 minutes. There wasn't a suitable T-fitting for the drain, so we made a temporary solution with the extended hose in the sink. It works. The former shower cubicle now serves as a storage space for the washing machine and as a wardrobe for bad-weather gear and diving equipment. Below deck, we installed a television along with a small media player, so we have some entertainment.



Fig. 8.6.: Our new anchor (Rocna 33kg).



Fig. 8.7: Freddy, our new outboard motor.

The new anchor gear has now been delivered, and we moved the boat alongside a quay wall to install the parts. Big problem: the anchor winch isn't working. After some checking and searching, the solution came to us: the engine needs to be running to produce enough amps; the battery was apparently a bit weak. Oh well. So, we removed the old anchor chain, pulled the old anchor to the quay wall with a rope, and removed the chain. We cleaned the anchor locker and spooled in 100 meters of new chain. Beforehand, we installed the new anchor, and to our great delight, it fits on the roller! At the same time, the new outboard motor arrived and was placed on the stern rail, where it will lead a life as decoration for the time being. Done. After two hours of work, we returned to our slipway and (carefully) moored.

Life goes on: There was another Bora wind – no problem in the harbor except for the fact that the boats were rocking like metronomes. The god of wind (Boreas), who gave the wind its name, bestowed upon us the gusty fall winds (so-called "katabatic" winds, because they come down from the mountains) known here as "Bura," reaching gale force, this time up to 40 knots.

Over the past few weeks, Richard has been crawling into the small compartments of the boat, partly to lay cables, but also in search of the NMEA2000 backbone (the cable that transmits the navigation electronics' data). More by chance than by systematic searching, he made his first discovery yesterday: a connector block, which will help him continue the search for the end of the backbone. A huge relief.

Message also came from Australia. Everything's fine, but they still need an original document, which we first have to request from the previous owner. However, the requirements for affixing the potentially new name have already arrived (see next chapter). So, another courier to Australia and more waiting...

We've now completed the major installations and are focusing on smaller details and cosmetic improvements. For example, the grey teak in the cockpit, which was somewhat visually distracting.



Fig. 8.6: Teak before.



Fig. 8.7: Teak afterwards.

So we scrubbed it with teak cleaner and applied teak oil. At the same time, we polished the deck and accessible parts of the hull (deck cleaner and boat polish, several days' work), scrubbed the sprayhood with awning cleaner (a lot of dirt came out, but the result wasn't ideal), and polished the fittings with



stainless steel polish (they're shining again). Another attempt at correctly connecting the washing machine's drain line (the T-fitting still didn't fit). Yes – plumbing isn't exactly the skipper's forte.

Richard's skill lies more with electrical systems. A new FM-radio with Bluetooth and MP3 is installed, along with a remote control in the cockpit. Now the skippers just need to agree on a shared taste in music – absolutely impossible! USB ports are installed, the on-board computer is mounted at the navigation station, and a new VHF radio is fitted. Connection cables for the on-board data network are run, and a connection to the navigation computer is established via a bridge.



Fig. 8.8: Old battery bank (280Ah, lead-acid).



Fig. 8.9: This is where new batteries will go. Test fitting with cut-to-size cardboard boxes!

The 280Ah battery bank is very undersized. A larger battery bank is needed after we've more or less accurately estimated the boat's power consumption. So, batteries have to be purchased. We've opted for conventional sealed AGM batteries, which we order from Germany. Beforehand, we use cut-to-size cardboard dummies to check if the batteries will fit in the compartments we've designated for the new house battery bank. Better safe than sorry!

Unfortunately, electricity isn't available from the mains grid on the ocean, so it has to be generated somehow. Our environmental conscience and common sense dictate solar panels, which we order from the Czech Republic. The panels and batteries are specifically designed for solar power and are significantly cheaper than we had budgeted. Perfect! However, the solar panels need to be mounted, and for that, the boat requires a stainless steel gantry at the stern. This is where things get tricky, as it should be fabricated by a skilled craftsman. We can't find one in Croatia. Several people recommend a British craftsman in Greece. Since we plan to sail past there anyway, we schedule an appointment for May.

Navigation has also been improved. We've installed one of the most important tools of modern navigation: AIS. AIS is almost like radar, only much better. An AIS device constantly transmits its position, speed, and heading over VHF radio. Other boats can receive and analyze this and many other data points. This is particularly useful for collision avoidance in all weather conditions. We now also receive data from other vessels, provided they participate in the AIS service. The data is connected to our



onboard electrical system via cable and can be displayed on the screen of our navigation computer. Nevertheless, maintaining a proper lookout is always mandatory.



Fig. 8.10: AIS transceiver, quite inconspicuous in the corner.

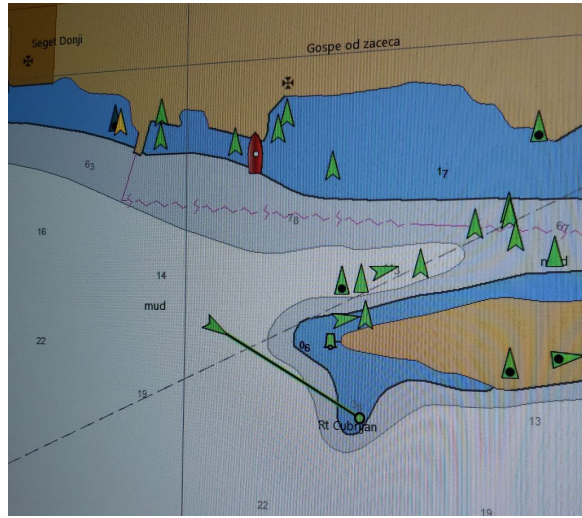


Fig. 8.11: This is what it looks like on the screen of our navigation PC. We are the red boat.

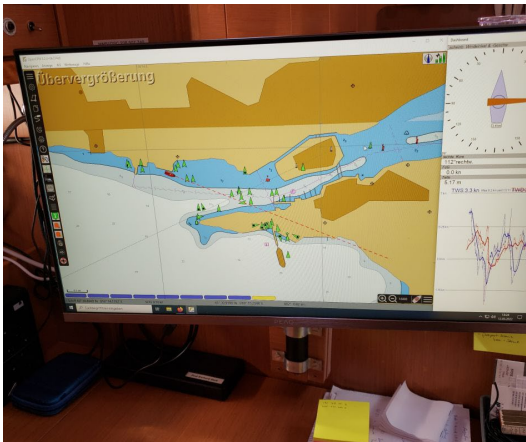


Fig. 8.12: Our navigational computer with Open-CPN.



Fig. 8.13: There was Bora again, with winds up to 47kt.

## 9. Boat christening

Message from Australia. Everything's fine, but the document hasn't arrived yet. So, we continue waiting.

We still want to rename the boat. The old name, Pomerol, is a type of wine, and although we both drink wine, we don't want to use that name. No problem. We try out about 50 different names and finally agree on Tanuki. That needs some explanation:

Richard worked as a visiting researcher at the University of Tokyo (Medical & Dental University) for a few months in the 80s, has rudimentary Japanese skills (well, he used to), and thanks to several years of Ju-Jitsu and Aikido in university sports, he's also very culturally minded towards Japan. Since Japan is just a stone's throw away from us and a cheap Jetstar ticket away, we spent two weeks in Kyoto before our departure and thoroughly enjoyed the Japanese cuisine. In Kyoto, we even visited a sake bar, and because it was still early in the evening, we were the only guests. We had a very lively discussion with the two bartenders and ended up with an exclusive tasting of almost ten different sakes. As is customary, there was a small figurine in front of the bar, which we had already spotted earlier in the Kyoto market: a tanuki.



Fig. 9.1: It began in a sake bar in Kyoto.



Fig. 9.2: Tanuki figurine at a market in Kyoto.

Tanuki (狸, たぬき) is the Japanese name for the raccoon dog, also known as the enok. The subspecies native to Japan is *Nyctereutes viverrinus*. In appearance, the tanuki resembles the marten or raccoon, although it is not related to either. Taxonomically, the raccoon dog belongs to the fox group (Vulpini). Originally from its range in eastern China and Japan, the raccoon dog was introduced to Eastern Europe for its fur and is now increasingly sighted in the wild in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland [Source: Wikipedia]. In the fur trade, raccoon dog fur is also referred to as sea fox fur.

In Japanese folklore, the tanuki is a magical mythical creature (yokai) called bakenanuki (化け狸). Similar to foxes, they possess shapeshifting abilities, but unlike foxes (kitsune), they are more often associated with masculinity. In modern Japan, they are considered lucky charms and are frequently

depicted as clay figures wearing straw hats (representing travelers or vagabonds) and holding a sake bottle (inviting passersby to join in the drink), displayed in front of shops and restaurants. These clay figures originated with the master potter Fujiwara Tetsuzō (1877–1967) and are produced in large quantities in Shigaraki (near Kyoto).

The Tanuki depictions have 8 distinctive features:

- The straw hat that protects against trouble and bad weather
- Big eyes to see well and make good decisions
- The sake bottle that signifies power
- A large tail to symbolize steadfastness
- An oversized testicle to indicate financial luck
- A promissory note in the other hand to show trust
- A large belly to show importance and determination
- A friendly smile

The eight attributes (the number 8 is also on the sake bottle) can also be interpreted to the disadvantage of the tanuki, e.g. the promissory note for the sake is never redeemed....

"Sea Fox" would already be a good name for a fast boat, but combined with the shorter name Tanuki and the tanuki's characteristics as a lucky charm and cheerful wanderer (with a penchant for celebration, singing, and dancing), we gladly chose the boat's name Tanuki. In particular, the name is short and easy to spell over the radio, and it can be easily pronounced by almost everyone on earth.

Stickers with the new name will be ordered in Split according to Australian standards, as will a prescribed metal plaque with the ship's data engraved on it.

So, we're now ready for the ship christening. But wait! There are some ancient and time-honoured rituals to consider.

As we've learned, the registration of ships with the sea god Poseidon is state-of-the-art, and we first have to have the old name removed from the divine register. That costs money! About half a bottle of good sparkling wine and the performance of a corresponding ritual. Beforehand, all traces of the old name must be erased, and a coin bearing the old name must be sent to the bottom of the sea (we used a large washer, inscribed with a felt-tip pen, and sank it). No problem so far.

The registration of the new name also involves a fee (same amount!) and the corresponding ritual, which the skipper must officially perform to comply with divine administrative regulations.

But anyone who thought that was all forgot that in the Greek pantheon there are also special gods for specific tasks. Here, the gods of the wind must also be invoked for consistently favourable winds. They are Boreas (north wind), Zephyrus (west wind), Eurus (east wind), and Notus (south wind). Here, too, some alcohol must be offered (though not as much as for the boss). After that, the celebration can begin, with the guests of the ceremony taking care of the remaining alcohol.

The entire procedure is therefore divided into different phases:

1. Delete all traces of the old name
2. Extinguishing ceremony
3. Ceremony for the new name
4. Offering (of course - alcohol)
5. Call of the Four Wind Gods (more alcohol)
6. A toast to the new name (guess what?)

Beforehand, it must be ensured that the new name has not already been affixed (alternatively, it must be covered). The exact procedure and the venerable text of the invocations can be found at:

<https://www.boatsafe.com/renaming-boat/>

So, we partially attached and covered the plaque and the new name decals, and immediately got down to business. The skipper acted as master of ceremonies, assisted by the lovely co-skipper. To celebrate the occasion, we treated ourselves to a fine Crémant from Alsace; neither Poseidon nor Co-Skipper Sabine complained about the brand.



Fig. 9.3: The old name before it was sunk. A washer serves as a replacement for a coin.



Fig. 9.4: The ritual is underway. Poseidon receives his invocation fee.

Then it begins. The skipper, Max, and various deities drink, the skipper reads the prayers. Done. The plaque is attached and the name decals on the boat are unveiled. We now have a Tanuki.





Fig. 9.5: The ship's plaque according to Australian law.



Fig. 9.6: The new name is emblazoned on the hull, ...



Fig. 9.7: ... at the entrance ...



Fig. 9.8: ...and at the stern.

## 10. Export from the EU

Logbook: Trogir – Split – Adria – Split

Date: 21.03.2022

Days at sea so far: 0

Nautical miles so far: 0

It's mid-March and we thought we'd never get out of Trogir, but then it finally happens. The Australian authorities have registered Tanuki in the shipping register and we're now officially allowed to fly the Australian flag. Which we do immediately.

Now that our registration has finally arrived, we leave Baotic Marina with a touch of sadness. We thank the Baotic Marina team and especially the Free Wave charter team (Ante and colleagues) for their friendly and often patient support, but after more than two months, we are happy to finally set sail. Before the journey truly begins, however, one last bureaucratic hurdle remains: customs.

We purchased Tanuki here in Croatia and should technically be paying taxes and possibly customs duties, even though we'll have to pay taxes again upon arrival in Australia. This isn't ideal, as the purchase price for such a boat incurs considerable costs. Fortunately, as Australian tax residents, we can avoid this by formally exporting the boat from the EU. We hired a professional export manager who handled all the paperwork for us (exclusively in Croatian). However, this won't exempt us from paying taxes in Australia.

The procedure is simple: we have to take the boat to customs in the port of Split and clear out. Our agent will be waiting for us there to submit the paperwork. Then we have to sail the boat out of Croatian waters, under close surveillance by Croatian coastal radar. The recommended destination is an area about 15 miles offshore called "Split Pocket," a small indentation in the boundary of Croatian waters. This is the closest point recognized by customs. After that, we have to return to Split to officially clear back in. That's the plan.



Fig. 10.1: The Australian flag is waving!



Fig. 10.2: Goodbye Trogir.

We depart on Monday at 9 a.m. with hardly any wind. We sail around the island of Ciovo and then set a direct course for the port of Split to check in at the customs quay. The journey takes about three

hours, and we arrive around noon. The port police stamp our crew list, a list of crew members with their passport numbers, and our export manager meets us to submit the paperwork to customs. We receive a sheet of A4 paper in Croatian confirming the export and then have to leave the country as quickly as possible. So, off we go! Estimated travel time: approximately four to five hours.



Fig. 10.3: Split harbor ahead.



Fig. 10.4: Sabine and Tanuki at the customs quay.

The weather is actually quite kind to us. Hardly any wind, we're motoring, and occasionally we hoist the headsail to stabilize the boat a bit. Outside the shelter of the large islands, there's an unpleasant swell (waves) coming from the Adriatic, which is conducive to seasickness (only mild symptoms) and is shaking the boat quite a bit. We reach international waters around 5 p.m. and then turn around.



Fig. 10.5: Split Pocket reached.



Fig. 10.6.: At the pier in Grabule.

Now that the boat has been exported from the EU, we can temporarily re-import it tax-free as guests (a so-called "Temporary Admission"), which will be granted to us upon re-entry into the EU. Therefore, we will raise the yellow flag upon entering Croatian territory. This flag from the international flag



alphabet (letter Q for quarantine) must be raised to indicate that the boat is not yet officially registered with the authorities. We must therefore return to Split.

The wind and sea are picking up. It's becoming increasingly uncomfortable, and Tanuki has to work hard. We finally realize that there's no way we can reach Split in daylight, so we head for a small town harbor on Drvenik Veli, where we can moor alongside the pier for the night free of charge. The skipper makes a joke, replacing the Australian "free beer" with "free pier." So, around 10 p.m., we arrive in Grabule on Drvenik Veli in the dark and tie up at the dimly lit pier. After a pleasant and restless night, we wake up at 7 a.m. and immediately set sail again. Officially, we're not allowed to go ashore yet.



Fig. 10.7: The yellow flag is flying.

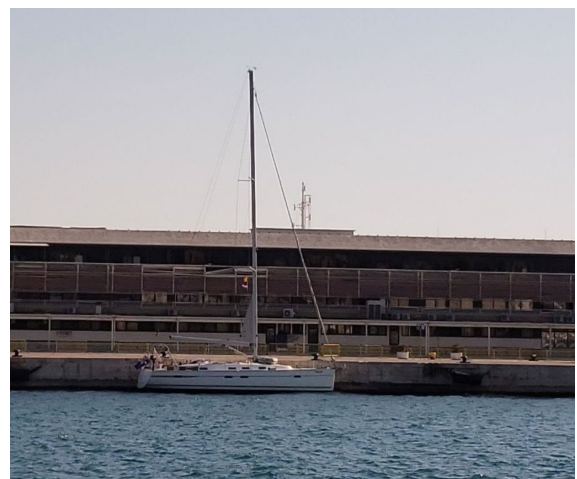


Fig. 10.8: Customs pier Split, the second one!

We continued on to Split and found ourselves back at the familiar customs pier. Here, the crew list was checked and stamped again. The customs officer asked for proof of our departure. Forewarned by our agent, we had taken photos of our navigation instruments to confirm our position in international waters. Customs was satisfied. However, we knew from a reliable source that our voyage had likely been closely monitored by radar and AIS. With that, we were back in the country, and Tanuki was officially, albeit temporarily, admitted to the EU. Next, we went to the harbor master, who charged us 800 Kuna for the cruising fee, critically examined all our documents, and entered them into his computer system with the occasional curse. Apparently, Australian boats aren't all that common here. We were allowed to stay at the customs pier for a late lunch and then began our journey south. We decided to anchor in a nearby harbor of **Strozanac**. It's less than half an hour away, and we drop anchor in the middle of the harbor basin at a depth of 5 meters for a pleasant night with little wind and swell. Our Rocna anchor lives up to its promise! Since the tides in the Adriatic are not very pronounced (tidal range approximately 0.8 meters), the water depth is not a problem.

On the one hand, we feel a bit tired from the last two days, but on the other hand, very excited because our journey has now truly begun. A delicious dinner is cooked on the gas stove (since there's no shore power) and we sleep like logs.



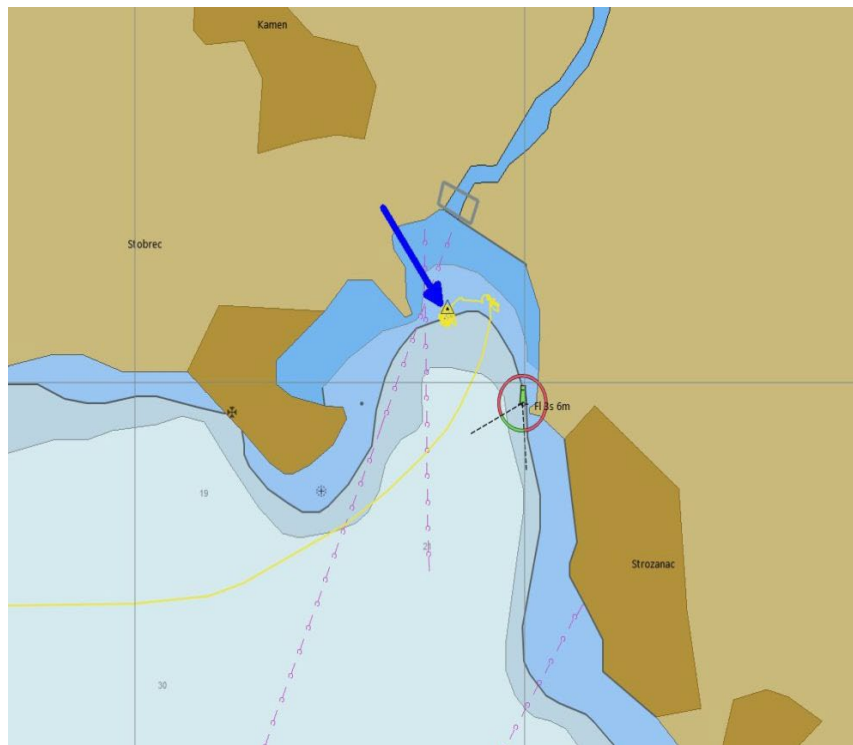


Fig. 10.9: Our anchorage in the harbor basin of Strozanač.

## 11. Through the Croatian islands

Logbook: Strozanac - Dubrovnik

Date: 23.03.22

Days at sea so far: 2

Nautical miles so far: 44.7

At 8 a.m. we weighed anchor in Strozanac, the anchor coming out of the mud willingly. Nothing else noteworthy happened during the night, except for the occasional very loud motorcycles, which you hear almost everywhere in Croatia at night. Our first leg took us from the mainland past the island of Brač through the Bracki Channel to the eastern tip of the island of **Hvar**. There was little wind, a bit of a crosswind in the afternoon, not enough for proper sailing, but we hoisted the genoa, which was nicely set. Tanuki motored (at 1800 rpm, a little over 5 knots) and was accelerated to over 6 knots by the slightly set genoa. We motor-sailed. In the afternoon we rounded Sućuraj (unfortunately a bit too shallow for us as a harbor) and immediately encountered about 20 knots of wind on our nose. So we headed for anchor in **Uvala Rasovatica** bay on the south side of Hvar. The bay is small, deep in the centre and steep towards the shore, so we anchor in the centre of the bay at a water depth of about 15m.



Fig. 11.1: From Split to Hvar.

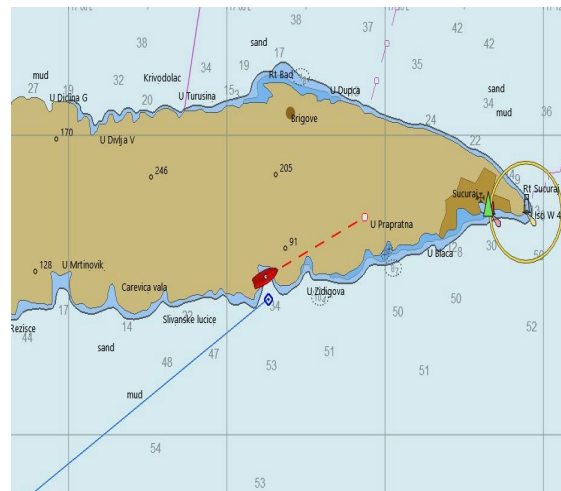


Fig. 11.2: We anchor in Uvala Rasovatica.

We let out a little over 35 meters of chain and trust that our anchor will hold well in the mud. And it does. The bay offers us sufficient protection from the southwest wind, but is open to swell from the south. The boat is rolling, and the crew is unhappy about the disturbed sleep. The skipper checks the position and the anchor until about 2 a.m., as the shores are quite close and we have a swing circle of approximately 70 meters. This needs some explanation: Once the anchor is dropped, the boat naturally heads in a certain direction due to wind and current, tensioning the chain. If these conditions change, the boat can assume a different position within the circle formed by the length of the chain. This process is called "swinging." The swing circle therefore has a diameter of twice the length of the chain and should be positioned so that the boat cannot collide with shallows or other objects (or boats). Often, the boat will move within this swing circle over time (usually at the edge). In our case, we positioned the swing circle quite precisely in the small bay, leaving little room for error. The result: The skipper's

wife slept poorly, the skipper kept anchor watch until 2 a.m., calmed the crew, and everyone woke up exhausted in the morning. Only the anchor was fit; it had done its job well. Shortly before sunset, a few fishermen visited us, who, after a friendly greeting, moored outside of our anchor perimeter, laid out a few fish traps and kindly drew our attention to them.

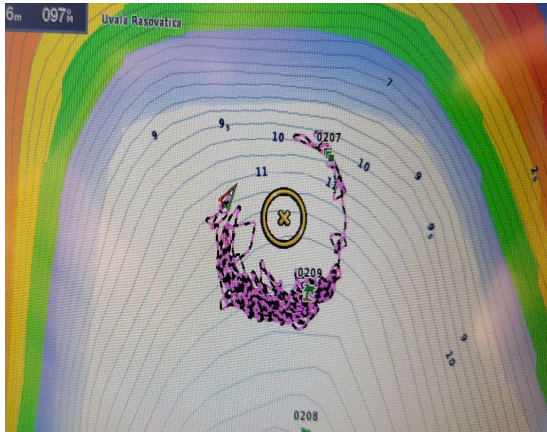


Fig. 11.3: Our swing circle around the position of the anchor (cross) during the night.



Fig. 11.4: We continue early next morning.



Fig. 11.5: Our route to Korčula.



Next stop: the island of **Korčula**. The crew is dissatisfied, and to prevent a mutiny, it's decided to spend a quiet night in the ACI Marina in Korčula. The journey takes about four hours and ends with a passage through a channel between the islands of Pelješac and Korčula. Around midday, we arrive in the beautiful town of Korčula, where we moor alongside the ACI Marina and a friendly marina attendant takes our lines. Finally, to our relief, electricity and water are available again.



Fig. 11.6: Tanuki is moored alongside in the ACI Marina of Korčula.

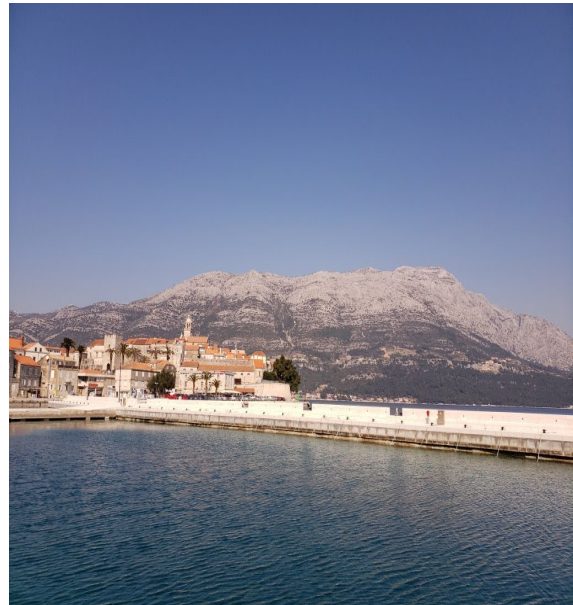


Fig. 11.7: Korčula as seen from a boat.



Fig. 11.8: St. Mark's Cathedral of Korčula.

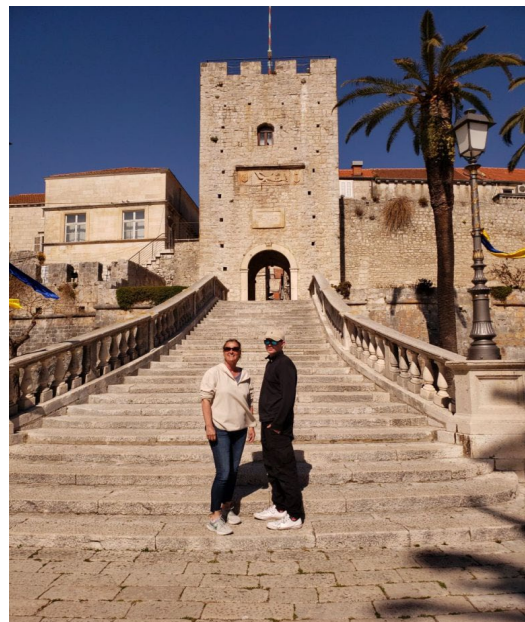


Fig. 11.9: Historic city gate of Korčula.

Korčula is a Dalmatian island, approximately 46 km long and 8 km wide, with about 17,000 inhabitants. The main town, Korčula, near the eastern tip of the island, has about 4,000 residents and, along with Vela Luka in the west, is the largest town. Worth seeing are the fortifications and St. Mark's Cathedral with its altarpiece by Tintoretto. The town's most famous son is Marco Polo, whose (alleged) birthplace can be visited here. Or rather, could be – because unfortunately, it was closed.

We've now (Saturday) spent two nights at the ACI Marina, moored alongside. The crew is doing well again, and we're planning our onward journey to Dubrovnik, which shouldn't be too difficult. However, the weather forecast is a concern, predicting storms in the Adriatic for Wednesday and Thursday. Since bad weather is not something to take lightly, we've decided to plan our arrival in Dubrovnik for Tuesday, ensuring we'll be safely moored in the marina on Wednesday and Thursday. We're planning our departure for Dubrovnik for Saturday or Sunday.

So, we needed to kill some time and decided to spend the weekend in a suitable anchorage. After studying the charts, we chose a bay north of **Lumbarda**, a small harbor in the southeast of Korčula, just half an hour from the capital. We set off from the ACI Marina at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning after paying what we considered an overpriced bill of 1,700 Kuna (€225) for two days and headed south. Conveniently, we passed a gas station and filled our tank to the brim with 150 liters of diesel. We carefully navigated the narrow passage before Lumbarda, with its shallow water of only 5 meters, at 2 knots and then turned into our chosen bay. It was large enough, and the anchor dropped to 7 meters with 30 meters of chain in a sandy area. There was hardly any wind and good shelter from the swell. The water is crystal clear and we're spending the most peaceful nights at anchor so far (well, except for the ever-present motorcycles...) and a lazy Sunday. Holiday vibes are definitely in the air!

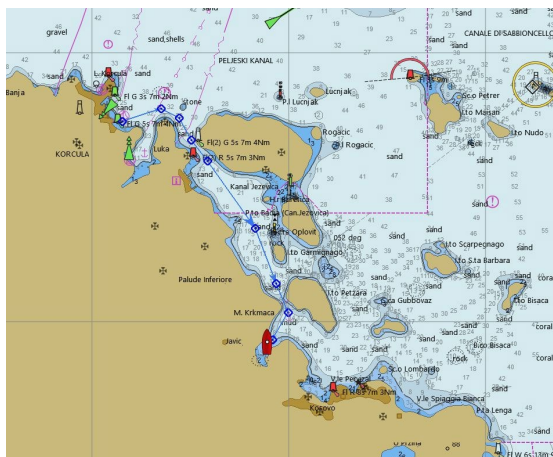


Fig. 11.10: From Korčula to Lumbarda.



Fig. 11.11: View of Lumbarda from the boat.

On Monday morning at 8 a.m., we weighed anchor from the island of Korčula to the island of **Mljet**, the penultimate leg of our journey before Dubrovnik. We could have sailed directly to Dubrovnik, but with plenty of time to spare, we decided to head for a marina or anchorage early enough to ensure sufficient daylight. So, we chose a lovely anchorage (**Okuklje**) on the northeastern tip of Mljet, which we reached after five hours.

Mljet is known for a nature park at its western tip and the legend that a certain tourist named Odysseus—likely also a sailor—spent an extended holiday on the island of Ogygia in ancient Greek times

with the nymph Calypso (and probably a few children), while his family and dog had to wait at home (quite audacious!). It's just a legend, of course, or to quote Al Steward, one of Richard's favourite singers: "A whisper in the ear of Homer." The Greeks aren't entirely convinced that Mljet and Ogygia are one and the same island, but the Croats certainly are. For our part, we're happy to let the Croats have their say, because the nature on this island is truly beautiful, and the idea that a beautiful nymph Calypso might have lived here in ancient times is quite conceivable.

As it turns out, the small, picturesque harbor of Okuklje is very well protected. We drop anchor in 9 meters right in the harbor entrance and let out 30 meters of chain. It's been windless all day; we motored at 5 knots instead of sailing and don't expect any wind or significant swell tonight either. After dropping and setting the anchor, we enjoy a peaceful, undisturbed time. A little later, a German catamaran arrives and moors at the small pier – which is fine, given its shallow draft. Dinner is lasagna, prepared by the skipper. Sabine calls the marina in Dubrovnik to let them know we'll be arriving the next day. We're treating ourselves to what's considered the best marina of its kind in all of Croatia to wait for our weather window to Montenegro and, of course, to visit King's Landing. For those who haven't recognized it – Dubrovnik was the filming location for the capital city in the HBO series "Game of Thrones."

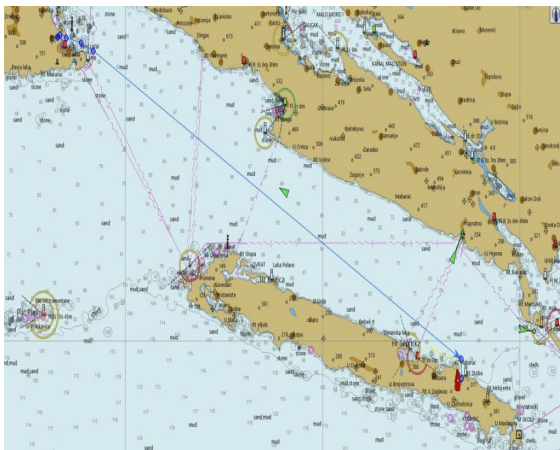


Fig. 11.12: From Korčula to Mljet.



Fig. 11.13: View of Okuklje from the boat.



## 12. Dubrovnik

Logbook: Mljet – Dubrovnik

Date: 29.03.2022

Days at sea so far: 6

Nautical miles so far: 123.7

We arrived in **Dubrovnik** on Tuesday, one day before the forecast of bad weather, and immediately moored in FRAPA Marina. A friendly marina attendant took our lines, and the skipper was relieved that none of the mooring lines had gotten caught in the propeller (phew!). FRAPA Marina was recently voted the best marina in Croatia and is undoubtedly luxurious and correspondingly expensive. However, winter rates are still in effect...



Fig. 12.1: Tanuki in the FRAPA Marina Dubrovnik.



Fig. 12.2: At the entrance to the marina....



Fig. 12.3: ...there is a charming little konoba right next door.



The marina is special because the jetties are covered and illuminated in different colours at night. The marina buildings and sanitary facilities are modern and clean, and right at the entrance, a small konoba (Croatian "cellar restaurant") awaits us. We're not going to miss that!

The marina is just around the corner in the Gruz district, and we take a taxi to the Old Town. Dubrovnik was known as Ragusa in earlier times. The Old Town is a fortified complex with well-preserved city walls and a wealth of sights. We start on the main street (Stradun) and visit the Cathedral of the Assumption of Mary, the Church of St. Blaise, and enjoy a good view of Lovrjenac Fortress from the city gate. The Old Town is full of shops selling tourist souvenirs, cafes, and restaurants, and teeming with tourists, many of whom arrive by the busload. Unfortunately, the climb up to the city walls is closed due to the off-season.



Fig. 12.4: The fortress walls of Dubrovnik.



Fig. 12.5: The main street (Stradun).



Fig. 12.6: The Ploce Gate.



Fig. 12.7: The Church of St. Ignatius.

It's common knowledge that Dubrovnik was a filming location for the HBO series "Game of Thrones" (GoT), and this is heavily exploited for tourism. While we are fans of the series, we're not so obsessed

that we get caught up in the hype. The sets for King's Landing and many other filming locations are everywhere. We're thrilled. Dubrovnik's Old Town is definitely a highlight of our trip.



Fig. 12.8: The fortress of Lovrjenac. In GoT, the "Red Keep" and in front of it, the bay of Black-water.



Fig. 12.9: The Jesuit Staircase. In GoT, the staircase leads to the "Great Sept of Baelor" and serves as the backdrop for Cersei's "Walk of Shame".



Fig. 12.10: "Winter is coming" - Game of Thrones everywhere.



Fig. 12.11: GoT memorabilia and merchandising.

On Wednesday, a low-pressure system over the Alps will bring southerly winds, reaching gale force (gusts up to 40 knots) and rain on Thursday. We're staying in the boat and are glad we've docked safely. The high price of the marina seems a bit more reasonable now.

Due to rough seas (over 2m) and rain, a departure on Friday (as originally planned) is out of the question, so we're extending our stay a bit. The weather situation would be manageable, but there's no need for a stressful journey if it's not absolutely necessary. Originally, we wanted to sail straight on to Greece. However, new information and conversations with other sailors are making the idea of a detour to Montenegro increasingly appealing, so we've decided to go ahead. We're sailing to Tivat.



## 13. Montenegro

Logbook: Dubrovnik - Bar

Date: 4. 04.2022

Days at sea so far: 7

Nautical miles so far: 172.5

Now that the weather has improved, we're heading out of Croatia, the country where we've spent almost three months. In short: stunning scenery, great food, and friendly people, but also extremely expensive marinas. We ate the best pizza of our trip here, along with delicious fish dishes, the latter being on the pricier side. The people are friendly, but occasionally seem a bit grim, which can be explained by the general economic situation putting them under pressure. We don't know if this will improve with the upcoming introduction of the Euro. In any case, you rarely see a smile on the streets.

We set off at 6:45 a.m. for the customs quay directly opposite our marina and moor alongside just five minutes later. Two friendly people took our lines, and we had to wait 30 minutes, apparently because of a watch change. Then came the harbor master (5 minutes), customs (1 hour due to a critical review of our tax-free forms), and the police (15 minutes, because there were apparently software incompatibilities again because of our Australian flag). Sabine smiled, the border police officer smiled back, and it worked. See? It can be done!

It's already well past 9 a.m. when we can finally set sail. Anyone thinking we're about to actually sail is mistaken. We're facing a headwind. Once out on the coast, we can hoist the genoa for half an hour and motor-sail, occasionally even reaching 6 knots, but mostly only 5 knots or less. Unfortunately, we have to sail out immediately and leave the coastal waters (because we've already checked out). The friendly harbor master, however, said – contrary to some rumours among sailors – that 1-3 nautical miles from land is sufficient, as long as we don't get caught between the islands and the mainland (that would cause trouble). We sail past Dubrovnik, unfortunately not close enough to admire the fortifications up close from the sea, but we are surprised how long one can enjoy this view while sailing by (well, with binoculars).



Fig. 13.1: The customs quay of Dubrovnik (note the letter Q).

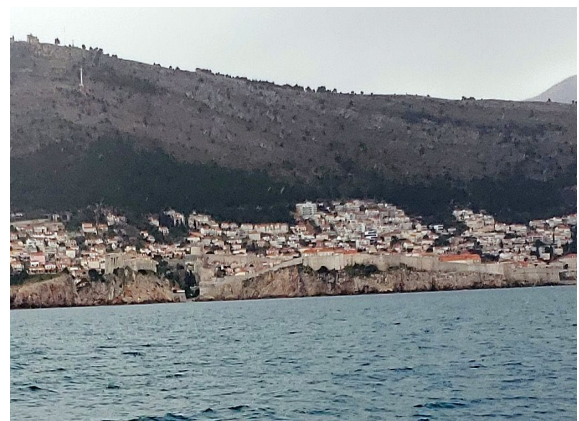


Fig. 13.2: The fortress again from a distance.



We continued past **Cavtat** to the border with Montenegro, reaching it around 3 pm, feeling slightly chilly. Then it was a sharp left turn into the Bay of Kotor and Montenegrin waters. So, we lowered the Croatian courtesy flag and hoisted the yellow Q flag and the Montenegrin courtesy flag. A final check ensured the double-headed eagle on the Montenegrin flag was upright – some officials might (justifiably) take offense at this. With the wind on our side, we were able to motor-sail for another half hour with minimal speed gain, until we had to turn to port and faced the wind again. We navigated through a narrow passage and maintained a 90-degree course towards **Tivat**, where we were already moored in the Porto Montenegro marina.

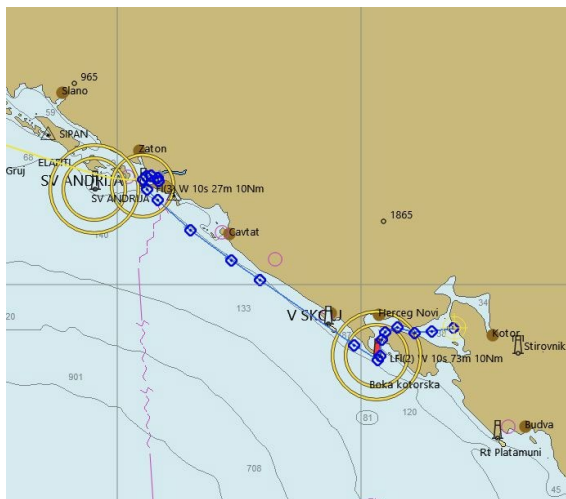


Fig. 13.3: Day trip from Dubrovnik to Tivat.



Fig. 13.4: Approach into Tivat.

The marina responded promptly on channel 71 and directed us to the customs quay at the northwest end of the marina. A delegation of officials was already waiting there. They took our lines and greeted us warmly. A marina agent explained the clearance process and accompanied the skipper to the various offices. As usual: harbor master (5 minutes – we paid for the cruising vignette), the agent's office where he prepared copies and applications for us, then customs (1 minute of friendly conversation), then the police (5 minutes for passports and crew list), then the tourist office where we paid a tourist tax of €10 per person, and that was it. The agent's advice and services were free of charge because he was acting on behalf of the marina. Excellent service! Other sailors had to hire independent agents for around €100.

Now things get hectic. We reverse out of the customs dock using a spring line (a boat manoeuvre to get the stern away from the quay) and, speechless, sail past the second largest sailing yacht in the world, the Black Pearl. The marina radios us our slipway number (K24), and we carefully and slowly enter the marina and navigate the correct turn. Thankfully, there's very little wind. Then we quickly plan the manoeuvre to switch from forward to reverse (we have to reverse into the berth) and frantically search for our spot. A marina worker waves us from the neighboring boat, and then it's time to manoeuvre a 16-ton yacht into what seems like a much too small slip. Very slowly – barely any throttle – adjusting the boat with the bow thruster, aiming, just a little reverse, stopping, and we're in. The fenders squeak on both sides, but we've done it! We have a fender's width of space to the side and enough room for our stern platform. The marina attendant smiles benevolently, the crew including the

skipper are exhausted, and the owners of the neighbouring boats, who had been watching critically, are relieved that nothing happened. That's how it should be!



Fig. 13.5: Passing the Black Pearl.



Fig. 13.6: Tanuki moored in the narrow berth. The Black Pearl is almost next door.

All hands on deck, a celebratory drink (Croatian beer reserves), and a quick look around: snow-capped mountains frame the bay, the marina's architecture is strongly reminiscent of Dubai, and looking around at the other boats on the docks, it's clear that with our Tanuki, we're considered to be among the less affluent yacht owners. Next to us lies a brand-new Amel; we're absolutely amazed. Especially when we see the marina bathrooms. No toilet cubicles or postage-stamp showers here – each cabin has a spacious, modern bathroom, only the gold-plated faucets are missing.

We look at the other yachts moored here. Nothing under the million-dollar mark is on display. Black Pearl alone cost approximately US\$200 million and, at 106 meters, was once the longest sailing yacht in the world (now Yacht A, at 143 meters, is longer and holds the title). For those interested: the annual operating and mooring costs of such a superyacht are roughly 10% of its original price. Black Pearl has been in the marina for over a year now, after her Russian owner sadly passed away from Covid. We can admire her directly at the dock opposite. And spoiler alert: we'll see her again later in the Caribbean.

A few jetties further on lies another superlative yacht, the racing yacht Skorprios, which, at only 42.5 meters, isn't quite as spectacular and cost only around 40 million euros. However, it can reach speeds of up to 30 knots downwind (and still around 13 knots upwind), making it the fastest (non-foiling) sailing yacht in the world. Co-Skipper Sabine was there immediately and had a nice chat with the crew of Skorprios.

In the evenings, we stroll through the Dubai-esque buildings, admire the displays of luxury shops, find a cozy restaurant with moderate prices in Tivat's old town outside the marina, and go to bed early, satisfied. Speaking of prices: The mooring fee here in Tivat is only about a third of the cost (winter rate) of our last marina in Dubrovnik, yet the facilities here are more luxurious than we have ever seen in any other marina, and we don't expect to see anything like it again anytime soon.



Fig. 13.7: Tanuki at the jetty, the neighbouring yachts are still intact.



Fig. 13.8: Just one jetty further on: Skorprios, the fastest sailing racing yacht in the world.



Fig. 13.9: Sunset with Black Pearl.



Fig. 13.10: Nighttime illumination of the Black Pearl.

We've been in **Porto Montenegro** for five days now, waiting for a weather window to allow us to continue our journey. We had originally planned to leave for Bar on Sunday, but after checking the latest weather reports, we decided to leave on Monday. To make up for it, we rented a car today (Saturday) and are exploring the Bay of Kotor. While we could have done it by boat, we want to be more flexible, so we're taking the car and leaving Tanuki safely in the port.

Our first stop is **Kotor**, which boasts a picturesque old town with numerous walls and defensive lines. The walls not only encircle the medieval old town centre but also extend up the mountain to a fortress



perched high above. We walk along the walls surrounding the old town and then venture into the labyrinthine alleyways.

First impression: Kotor is a cat lover's paradise, with cats everywhere. Does this have anything to do with the name Kotor (Kot = cat in Slavic languages) or its Italian name Cattaro (Gatto = cat in Italian)? We don't know. But there are little shops everywhere selling pictures, magnets, T-shirts, and mugs with cat motifs; there's even supposed to be a cat museum here. Location seems to matter here, too, as a café latte costs three times more than in Croatia. We're now realizing where the hordes of tourists come from. A really big cruise ship is docked right in front of the old town, coughing up people at a rapid pace.



Fig. 13.11: Kotor as seen from the fortress above.



Fig. 13.12: Market and city wall from the outside.



Fig. 13.13: Cathedral of St. Tryphon.



Fig. 13.14: Cat motifs are everywhere.

The Bay of Kotor consists of more than three parts; Kotor lies at the southern end of the two innermost "fjords," framed by high mountains. In the afternoon, we drive north along the coastal road and find the small town of **Perast**, situated directly on the coast, amidst fish and shellfish farms.

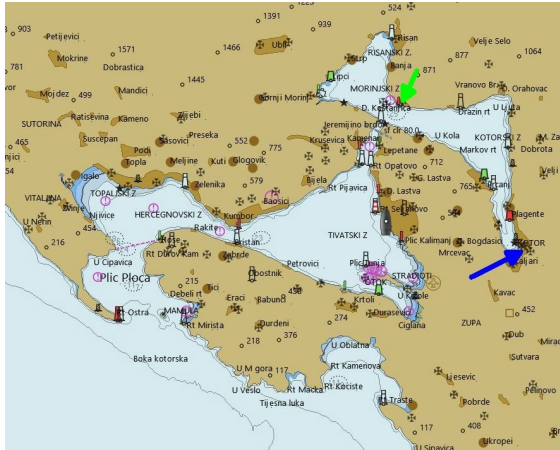


Fig. 13.15: Bay of Kotor (blue) and Perast (green).



Fig. 13.16: Perast with the church islands.



Fig. 13.17: Perast seen from the shore.



Fig. 13.18: Perast with a view of the narrow passage.

We head home in the late afternoon, enjoying some peace and quiet, and do some initial shopping for our early Sunday morning departure. As someone living on a small boat, it's always nice to have a car available for shopping.

Finally, a weather window with light winds (well, less strong winds, to invent a new term) for our onward journey to Greece. The southernmost check-in point for Montenegro is **Bar**. No! Not the bottle display in upscale bars, but the city of Bar. So, we prepared, and as fate would have it, on Sunday there was a fierce Bora wind. The crew voted and decided to wait until Monday. So, back to the marina office to pay for another day, get the boat ready again, and during the night, with the Bora whistling, we



meticulously planned our departure manoeuvre. It might sound a bit lacking in confidence, but in the first few meters after casting off in strong winds, a boat with limited rudder control is confronted by numerous other boats and mooring lines in the water, which can easily be caught with the keel or, even worse, the propeller.

A crew of friends from England asked us if we could bring an anchor to Corfu for them. Of course – sailors help each other out – so the clean (!) 33kg anchor was stowed away in the guest berth. It's the same one we have; no wonder, the New Zealand brand Rocna is very popular among sailors.

The next day, Aunt Bora was still whistling down from the mountains, but we waited for a calm spell and sailed safely out of the marina, unaffected by the gusts. Out on the open sea – well, close to shore – there was hardly any wind. So, we motor-sailed south for about seven hours towards **Bar**. Entering the marina proved quite exciting, however, with strong gusts of wind that made mooring at the fuel dock difficult (even sailboats need a drink of diesel now and then). With all our tricks and a spring line, we managed to get the stern alongside the dock and filled up the tank. The very friendly marina security guard assigned us a berth alongside, which we gladly accepted, and after a few tense moments, we were finally moored in the Marina Bar (even though it's a bit of a joke, there really is a "Marina Bar"). We then visited the harbor master to pay the cruising fee for another day. The friendly employee stamps our forms and gives us the documents for clearing customs the next morning – very kind, as sailors always want to get an early start. A visit to the grocery store, the crew decides to eat out, and this plan works out well. At the restaurant, our dishes are brought to us, having been photographed beforehand by a professional photographer. Surveillance and documentation? No, they're working on a new menu for the upcoming season.



Fig. 13.19: Beach promenade in Bar.



Fig. 13.20: Tanuki on the jetty in Bar.



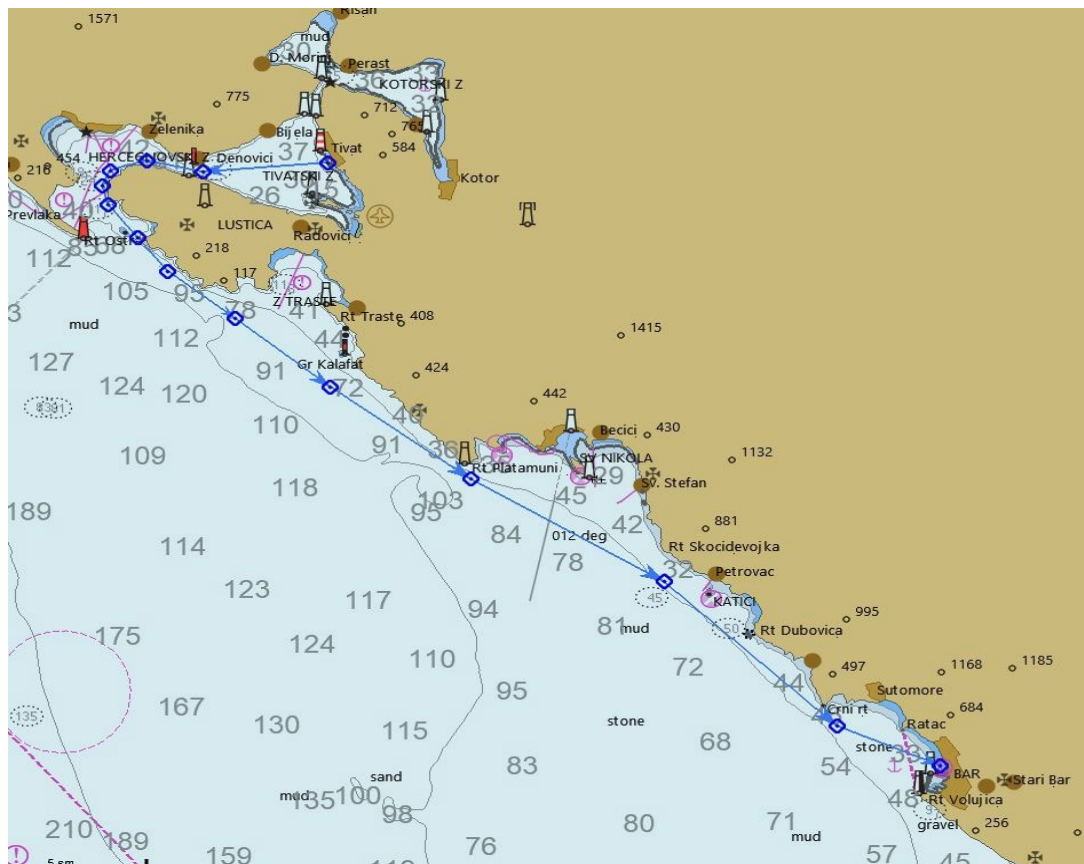


Fig. 13.19: Tivat to Bar.

Bar has a completely different feel compared to Tivat. The Soviet-era apartment blocks and remnants of the communist era are still clearly visible. However, a charming beach promenade more than makes up for it and is popular with locals. Restaurant prices are reasonable, and you get decent value for your money.

Clearing out of Montenegro takes place at the customs quay. At 6:45 a.m., Tanuki motors alongside in light winds, and the friendly border officials stamp and check our documents – in other words, they do their job efficiently. One official even accompanies us to the boat and wishes us a good trip. We leave the harbor and the country, passing the traditional ship of the Montenegrin Navy.

## 14. Greece – Corfu to Nidri

Logbook: Bar – Corfu – Nidri

Date: 13.04.22

Days at sea so far: 9

Nautical miles so far: 207.8

We want to continue south. Albania lies south of Montenegro. Clearing customs there is supposed to be a bit of a hassle (or so we've been told), so we're heading directly to Greece. At about 160 nautical miles, the route is a bit long for a day trip, so it will be an overnighter, meaning we'll sail through the night and see when we arrive the next day. Under optimal conditions, our navigation program predicts a sailing time of 27 hours, but as a German poet once said, "But the conditions, they are not so." We're expecting wind speeds between 0 and 10 knots, so nothing for speeding across the ocean under white sails. Instead, we'll mostly have to rely on our iron sail. Plan A is to sail straight through and dock directly in Gouvia Marina on **Corfu**. Plans B and C involve first visiting anchorages in the north of the island; the skipper has already prepared the navigation for this.

Off we go! We quickly reach the Albanian border and keep a safe distance from the land, as many areas are still marked as sea minefields on the chart. A lucky breeze gives us momentum, and we motor-sail south at 6-7 knots. The momentum fades around midday, and our speed drops to 5-5.5 knots. Sail configurations are "headsail only" and full sails. We continue through the day until dinner (pre-cooked chili con carne) and then the first night watches. We've opted for a three-hour schedule: 7-9 (Richard), 9-12 (Sabine), 0-3 (Richard), 3-6 (Sabine), and 6-9 (Richard), followed by breakfast together. After a stunning sunset, we head out into an uneventful night. A very fast motorboat annoys the co-skipper a bit because it came dangerously close (Sabine had the right of way), but otherwise, the night is calm with little wind. Greece came into view around midday; we looked at one of the possible anchorages (occupied), but then decided to sail on to Gouvia and into the Ionian Sea. The Greek courtesy flag and the Q flag were hoisted high on the starboard side.

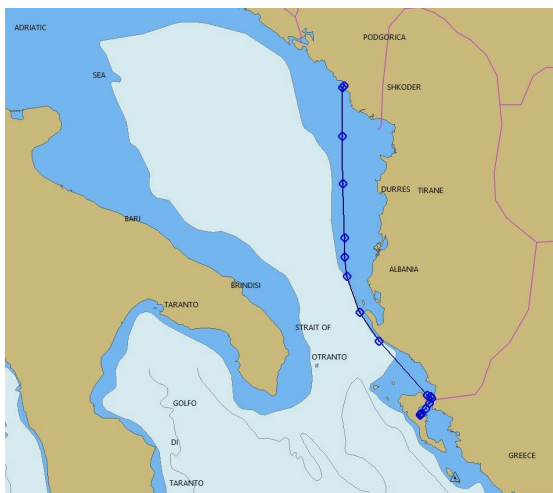


Fig. 14.1: Bar to Corfu.

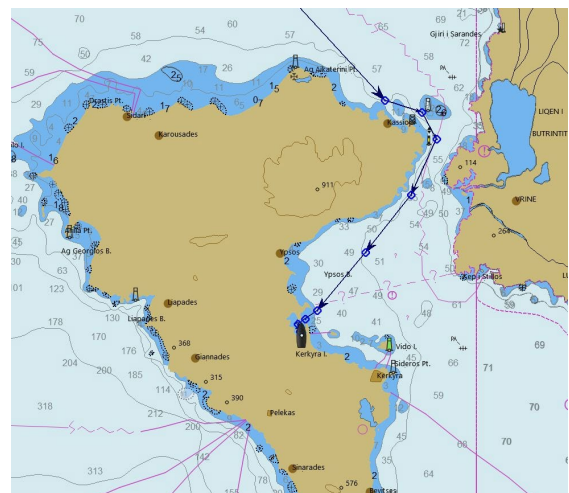


Fig. 14.2: Approach to Marina Gouvia.

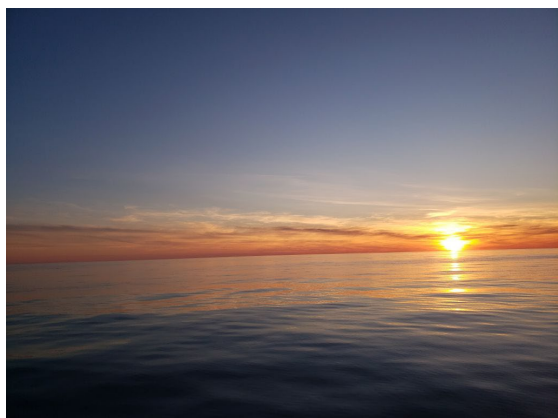


Fig. 14.3: Beginning of our first night sail.



Fig. 14.4: Corfu in sight.

We arrived at **Gouvía** around 5 p.m., radioed in, and then sailed into the small bay after racing a British boat – we lost, it was only under motor after all. What do you call it when two sailboats are sailing in the same direction? A regatta!

At the entrance, a dinghy with a marina attendant greets us and points us to a berth in a rather narrow channel. So, we pull forward a bit and reverse the boat in. On the first attempt, the skipper miscalculated slightly and caught the neighbor's mooring line in the keel. No problem, we're going at a snail's pace anyway. We stop, pull forward a little, and try again: Perfect! First impression: the Greeks are more laid-back than the Balkan people. The marina office is already closed and won't reopen until 9 a.m. the next day. There's no mandatory customs quay here, so clearing in can wait until the next day and can be done in the capital without having to present the boat. First, we need to get an adapter for shore power; a friendly owner of a yacht service lends us one, and then, after the obligatory celebratory drink, it's off to bed.

The next morning, 7:30 a.m., time for breakfast. The (expensive) shop in the marina has fresh bread, and the skipper is in luck – there are several types of fresh feta cheese and various olives.

Afterwards, a long shower and a visit to the marina office, where we paid our fee and bought some fresh water (1,000 liters for €15). Then we packed our documents and took bus number 7 to the capital, Corfu Town (**Kerkyra**). From the bus stop, we walked through packed streets (Corfu Town is a tourist hotspot even in the off-season) to the ferry terminal and first to the harbor master's office. Sabine, a master of bureaucracy, had already printed everything out, especially the receipt for the cruising tax (eTEPAI), which we had already paid in advance for three months. Then we were sent to immigration and customs, which are located about a kilometre further north at the end of the ferry terminal. Immigration was quick, customs took a bit longer, and there we also received our logbook, which is mandatory in Greece – you have to get a stamp in every port. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the second building right away and ended up walking what felt like more than 3 kilometers searching, as there are two terminals and a customs office at the first one as well. The sun is now blazing and it's hot. Back to the harbor master, first entry in the logbook, €15 harbor fee (even though Tanuki is not even in the



harbor), and then after more than two hours of walking, we're finally done. Ugh. Meanwhile, Tanuki is safely moored in the marina.



Fig. 14.5: Harbour master's office in Corfu Town.



Fig. 14.6: Ferry terminal with customs and immigration.

Lunch break at a taverna by the harbor with fish and a mixed grill. A visit to a yacht chandler (sailing gloves for our deckhand Max), a kettle found for Tanuki's galley, and then on to downtown Corfu. There, we first checked the internet situation and found an offer for unlimited internet for €9 a month at a WIND provider store. Deal! Max can now watch Netflix, the skipper can do research and check the weather, and the skipper's wife can work professionally. A coffee in the upper town and back on bus number 7 to Gouvia. At the bus stop, there's a large department store that's significantly cheaper than the shop in the marina. So, we quickly filled a few bags.

The next day: we hand the anchor over to its new owners and immediately arrange to meet for dinner. Otherwise, it's laundry and shopping day. The boat is cleaned with fresh water and minor repairs are made.



Fig. 14.7: Lunch at the harbor.



Fig. 14.8: New country, new beer.



Fig. 14.9: Crew in front of the Theotokospilaitissa Cathedral.



Fig. 14.10: Old British palace with statue of Frederick Adam.



Fig. 14.11: Cat procession!



Fig. 14.12: Fortress as seen from the sea.

We had dinner at a nearby taverna and made preparations for our departure. We would have liked to stay a little longer, but we had an appointment in Nidri.

Three days in Corfu, not much, but we have a rendezvous further south. So, we set sail at 7 a.m., avoiding all moorings and sailing past Kerkyra, as Corfu is called in Greek. Our destination is **Paxos**, a small island south of Corfu, which will welcome us for the night. Off we go, past the fortress of Corfu, heading south with a bit of wind. Why do sailboats always seem to have either too little or too much wind? A philosophical question!

We motor-sailed south and arrived at 4 pm in the bay of **Ormos Mongonisi** on the southeastern tip of Paxos. Another boat (French?) was already anchored, but the bay was large enough that we didn't get in each other's way. Our anchor dropped to 8 meters and we let out 30 meters of chain. The bay was well-protected, the anchor held, and there was little wind to disturb our sleep. Nevertheless, we kept an anchor watch until about 11 pm, just to be safe. Anchor watch here means going into the cockpit



every 30 minutes, looking all around, checking the depth, and looking at the plotter to make sure our anchor was holding securely and not dragging on the bottom. No problems!

The bay is largely quiet, although the smell of sulfur springs flowing into it is somewhat bothersome, but not enough to disturb the sleep of tired sailors.

We left the cozy anchorage at 7 a.m. the next morning and continued on to the Greek mainland. The weather forecast was mixed, predicting winds of 15-17 knots, exactly 90 degrees to our direction of travel. We were hoping for a good and productive day of sailing at last. No such luck!



Fig. 14.13: Anchoring in Ormos Mongonisi.

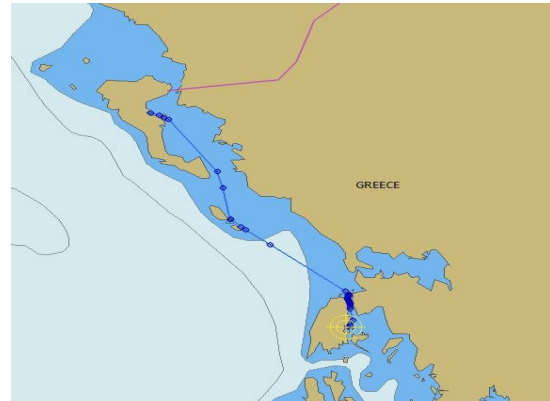


Fig. 14.14: Route from Corfu to Nidri.

Around 10 a.m., a light headwind picks up, just enough to keep our jib up. Around noon, the wind shifts to a forward headwind, and we can only manage 3-4 knots under engine power, bearing away slightly to cover ground. During the afternoon, we measure up to 27 knots of headwind and unpleasant waves. The co-skipper shows the first signs of seasickness but bravely perseveres. We navigate our way to **Levkas** with reefed sails and reach the start of the **Levkas Canal** in the late afternoon.

The bridge over the canal only opens on the hour, which we unfortunately missed by 10 minutes, so we moored at a thankfully empty quay, startled a fisherman (to whom we sincerely apologized), and waited with another boat until the next hour. At 6 p.m. the bridge finally opened, and we entered the infamous Lefkas Canal. No problem, the canal is wide enough for four boats, and we decided to fill up the tank again in Lefkas. Another tricky docking manoeuvre with an offshore wind. 180 liters of diesel had to go into the tank, the departure maneuver went awry, and we lightly touched the gas station dock – no harm done.

And so, we continued through the canal into the Ionian Sea. We were now worried we'd arrive in **Nidri** very late, and there wasn't a suitable anchorage along the way. We were determined to avoid arriving in unfamiliar waters in the dark! So, full throttle and we pushed on. We emerged from the canal around 7 p.m. and set course for Nidri. There were two anchorages there that suited us. We rounded the bend near Nidri just before 8 p.m. and discovered that the first anchorage (**Tranquil Bay**) was completely full. We weren't about to compromise on anchoring here and continued on to the inner bay called **Vliho Bay** (Plan B). There was plenty of space there, and we dropped anchor at 7 meters with 35 meters of chain. Calm and peaceful, the perfect anchorage. A quick dinner (tortellini with tomato sauce) and then off to bed.



We received a message from Conny, an employee and dock manager at Skorprios Charter in Nidri. Unexpectedly, he had a slipway available for us at his dock, which he offered at a special rate for 4-5 days. We've never agreed so quickly, and the next morning we weighed anchor and headed for Conny's dock. It was easy to find, and communication via VHF channel 14 was excellent. Conny professionally waved us into a comfortable slipway at his dock. A secure berth and good toilets/showers – it couldn't have been better. Conny is a true North German character who, as he told us, has found his happiness (and his wife and family) here in Greece. We're so glad we had the chance to meet him and can highly recommend his business to all sailors and charter guests.



Fig. 14.15: Vliho Bay, Nidri in the background.



Fig. 14.16: Tanuki on the Skorprios jetty in Nidri.

Later that afternoon, "Stainless Steel Phil," the undisputed master of all stainless steel yacht construction in the Ionian Sea, visited us. He was going to give us a quote for a solar panel for our Tanuki and immediately took measurements of the situation. We were hoping for a good offer and high-quality workmanship (for which he is known in the sailing community).

At 7 p.m. we're going to the taverna for a Greek dinner and then to bed. I forgot to mention that Easter is celebrated a week later in Greece. We've decided to adapt and follow the local traditions. So we're looking forward to Greek Easter next week.

We're spending Easter moored at the Skorprios dock, tidying up and organizing things. We're particularly pleased with the well-stocked yacht chandlery, which is less than a 5-minute walk away. We also rented a car (a smoky old clunker that could only be locked with some tricks) and drove to Levkas to visit their yacht chandlery.

Our upcoming projects include:

### **1. Gantry**

Phil had arrived and given us a quote for a computer-designed stainless steel structure. After visiting his workshop and looking at samples of his work and welds, Richard was convinced, and after some haggling, we accepted his offer, which still exceeded our budget. Richard was also a bit disappointed because the rack can only hold three solar panels instead of four. However, Phil will mount the solar panels on the rack, and we can have them delivered to his workshop. An additional post will support our radar antenna. The delivery time for the rack is four weeks, which we'll just have to manage in Nidri. A quick chat with Conny. Now that it's the off-season, we can stay a bit longer. Great!

### **2. Solar panels**

We purchased modern 1x1.6m solar panels, each with 330Wp, from a Czech solar company. Phil will install three of them, giving us a total of 990Wp. This capacity is pure luxury for a boat our size and would have been virtually impossible 10 years ago. As a special feature, each panel will have its own charge controller, so we won't have any major problems with shading and there will be sufficient redundancy in case of failures.

### **3. New batteries**

The energy harnessed from the sun needs to be stored somewhere. Our current battery bank of 280Ah lead-acid batteries isn't sufficient to comfortably power more demanding appliances. The biggest energy consumers on a boat are typically the refrigerators (we have two: a box refrigerator and a small one with a mini-freezer compartment). Next comes the autopilot, followed by the navigation electronics with radar, onboard computer, and radios. We've calculated a maximum daily consumption of approximately 350Ah for our boat and are therefore planning on a 1,000Ah battery bank. We deliberately haven't yet opted for the newer lithium batteries (LiFePO4 technology) but are relying on conventional AGM batteries, of which we will be installing four 260Ah units. After researching prices in Germany, we ordered the batteries from Offgridtech, as the total price, including delivery, was lower than ordering from Greece.

### **4. New dinghy**

Our dinghy is designed for two people and is getting on a bit. It still works quite well, but we don't dare put three of us in it. So we need a new model for at least four people, one that can be easily powered by our small Mercury outboard motor. Our outboard, which we bought in Croatia, purrs like a kitten and we've named it "Freddy"!

We're getting a suitable dinghy with a plastic floor directly from local suppliers. However, the prices vary considerably, sometimes even reaching four figures. We opted for the cheapest offer (for the same product) and are now waiting approximately 10 days for delivery.

### **5. New Spreader**

We've since discovered that our port spreader has a slight kink. It probably hit the spreader of a neighbouring boat in one of the Croatian marinas during a Bora wind.

Spreaders distribute the forces of the standing rigging and are essential for safe sailing. After consulting a professional (rigger), we decided not to take any risks and had it replaced, which isn't particularly

difficult for the rigger; the mast doesn't even need to be taken down. The waiting time for the replacement part, which has to be ordered from Selden in Spain, is approximately four weeks. Perfect!

## 6. New plotter

Charter boats are very sparsely equipped, and this is also reflected in our electronic chartplotter. We have the Garmin Echomap Plus 60 model, which, in terms of function and size, is more of a fish finder than a serious navigation system for a seaworthy sailing yacht. Therefore, we prefer to plan our routes with OpenCPN, a PC-based program. It works quite well, but the co-skipper is asking for more redundancy and integration, so we decide to purchase modern chart plotter. The lack of system compatibility between manufacturers is a bit of a problem (there isn't any!), so a modern Garmin plotter is out of the question because it wouldn't be compatible with our radar. Therefore, we're going with a device from B&G (Vulkan 9FS), which we're ordering from SVB. The prices in Greece are sometimes 40% higher than buying them in Germany, including shipping. We're also getting a new electronic chart of the Mediterranean.

## 7. New fuel gauge

Our fuel gauge is every motorboat enthusiast's dream; it almost always shows "full." Unfortunately, while that's very optimistic, it's not very informative. We actually want to know when we need to head to the gas station. So, we bought a new gauge in Nidri (€25, significantly cheaper than the original Bavaria part). It needed to be installed, especially since the old one had clear signs of corrosion on the mounting ring. So, we removed the fuel level sender, tested it (0-190 ohms), and removed and scrapped the old gauge. We installed the new one, and lo and behold, it works perfectly (you can simulate the fuel level by moving the sender). We closed the tank and were delighted with the improved appearance and reliable function. Total time: 1 hour.

Life on the jetty in Nidri is therefore somewhat busy, but at the same time, a holiday atmosphere is now setting in. We'll spend the waiting time after Orthodox Easter relaxing and exploring the nearby Ionian Islands for five days.

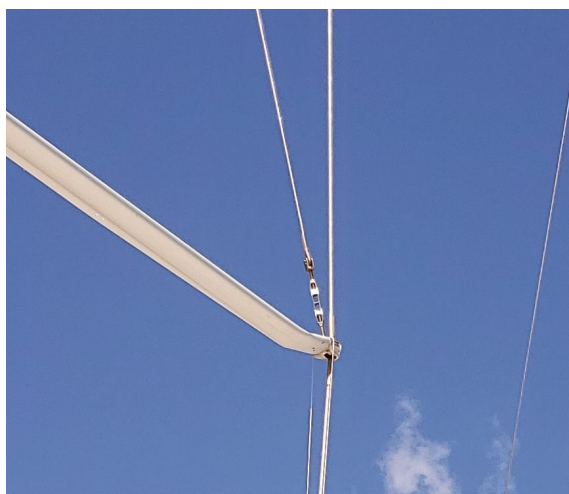


Fig. 14.17: Our bent spreader, a souvenir from the Bora in Croatia.



Fig. 14.18: Engine instruments from the rear. In the middle is the fuel gauge to be replaced.



## 15. Round trips Ionian Islands 1 & 2

Logbook: Nidri – Ionian Islands – Nidri

Date: 27.04.2022

Days at sea so far: 13

Nautical miles so far: 421.2

We survived Easter. It wasn't too difficult, and we were surprised that the shops were open except for Easter Sunday and Easter Monday, even though Easter is taken very seriously here. We did our shopping on Tuesday and got everything ready. We want to get out and go sailing. Well, very carefully, because of our dented spreader. We've planned a short five-day trip around the Ionian Islands.

We set off on Wednesday, leaving the island of Skorprios to port, motor-sailing towards **Meganisi**, the next island but one, and exploring the bays on the north side. The bays of Spilia and Vathy have medium-sized harbors with moorings, but we initially forgo these comfortable options. We continue to the northeastern tip of the island with its three deep bays. The latter two are particularly inviting for anchoring. We check out Ormos Ambelaki and are tempted to anchor in one of the side bays, but after a test, we decide to move on. In the next narrow bay (**Ormos Atherinos**), we find a small harbor at the very end with enough space for us. The anchor drops to 12 meters, and a short while later, the bay is full of three other boats. It's a good thing we arrived early. The night is calm with little wind, and the anchor holds perfectly.

It's still the off-season, yet many anchorages are already packed with boats. We hardly dare imagine what it's like here during the season when all the charter boats are out in force.



Fig. 15.1: Swimming in the still very cold water of Ormos Atherinos.

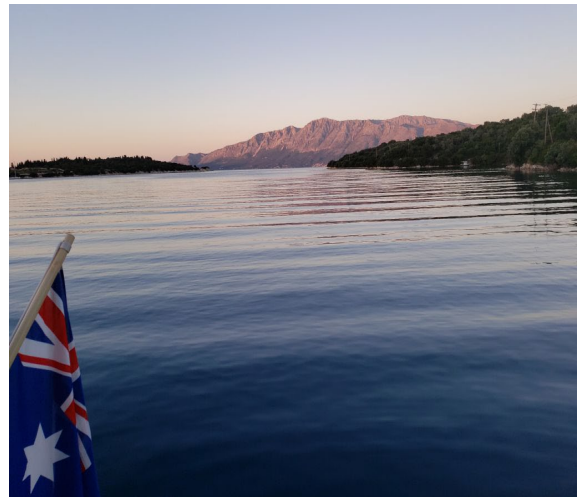


Fig. 15.2: Sunset.

The next day, we were the second-to-last boat (with a 5-minute head start) to leave the bay. We now understood why the anchorage was so good: the anchor came up with a large clump of mud and had to be cleaned with a boat hook. But off we went east to the next group of islands. We motor-sailed to **Kalamos** and circumnavigated the island clockwise. Shortly before reaching the town of Kalamos, we turned off and explored the east side of **Kastos**. Here we found a beautiful beach, which we chose as

a shallow anchorage for the night. It was the third anchorage from the north and open to the east. No problem with a westerly wind. We found a sandy spot free of seagrass (*Posidonia*) at a depth of 6 meters and dropped anchor. The anchor held. An excursion boat with tourists was moored on the beach. We watched each other, and after the boat left an hour later, only the few goats roaming the island remained.



Fig. 15.3: Bathing bay on Kastos with tourist boat.



Fig. 15.4: Wonderfully clear water (Kastos).



Fig. 15.5: To the shore by dinghy.



Fig. 15.6: Windmill without sails (Kalamos).

The night wasn't great; there was some swell in the bay, but the anchor circle on the chartplotter looked perfect. The island at least provided shelter from the westerly winds. Around 6 a.m., in the first light of dawn, the wind shifted! The skipper was the first out of bed and raised the alarm. An easterly wind of 13 knots was blowing into the bay, pushing Tanuki towards the shore. The anchor held, but the situation wasn't pleasant, though not particularly dangerous. We weighed anchor for safety and felt much better. Having slept poorly, we had an early start to our sailing day and rounded the northern

tip of Kastos to explore the south side of Kalamos. We passed the harbor of Kalamos and headed southwest, impressed by Port Leone Bay with the abandoned village of Kephali. We plan to anchor there next time.

We continue to the southern tip of Kalamos and round the **Formikoula Reef** to set course for the island of **Kythnos**, located at the southern tip of Meganisi. From there, we return to the island of Lefkada and enter **Ormos Syvota Bay**. We sail into a deep bay that cuts into the island, offering perfect protection from wind and waves with its natural harbor. After a brief radio exchange, we moor at the jetty of the "12 Gods" taverna.

In many Mediterranean harbors, restaurants offer free berths if you dine there. This was also the case for us; we were given a berth with a lazy line, free water and electricity, as well as showers and toilets. Dinner was delicious, the co-skipper enjoyed her fish, and the night at the dock was quiet and long. This model is clearly profitable for the restaurants, as several tavernas in the small town of Syvota have installed floating docks and follow the same marketing approach. We calculated that our dinner wasn't overpriced and believe there's a financial balance between the provider and the customer that doesn't disadvantage the customer. For comparison, we pay about €10-15 per night in a town harbor and about €30 at a floating dock with all services. Costs in official marinas are significantly higher.

At the Twelve Gods pier, the boats of a charter company offering so-called flotilla charters are moored next to us, busily being filled with charter guests. This model involves a pre-planned route for a small fleet of boats, along with a lead boat with a skipper and a technician on standby. Everything is orange! The boats are packed with Dutch tourists and a large crew of Dutch staff. We are surprised that the crews in this model encompass all age groups and by the relaxed atmosphere at the pier.

We left the Twelve Gods around midday and planned to anchor for another night in one of the northern bays of Meganisi. There's a small marina with lazy lines in Vathy that we had in mind. Unfortunately, no one answered the phone or radio. So, off we went, through the channel between Lefkada and Meganisi in beautiful weather. Many boats were out; we occasionally counted double digits and enjoyed ourselves with a southerly wind of about 12 knots. We rounded the northeastern corner of Meganisi and reached Vathy around 3 p.m. When we called Odyseas Marina by radio, they first informed us that the available berth was very uncomfortable due to swell and traffic, and then offered it for €70. We thought the price was a bit steep and politely declined. Our next plan was to try the familiar anchorages on the northeast side. Unfortunately, around 4:30 p.m., we discovered that all the bays were already full of boats. Well, we're running late and the season is just around the corner. So, we head to the next larger anchorage, which is our favorite, **Vliho Bay**. Back northwest, past Vathy, we raced another boat and almost simultaneously took down our sails to turn at Nidri (our maneuver was considerably more elegant), and finally through the narrow passage to Vliho. The anchor drops in 6 meters (almost the entire bay is 6-7 meters deep) and we spend a pleasant evening. We have penne carbonara and a peaceful night. The next day we return to the Skorpios Charter dock for another week's break. Conny personally guides us into a very tight spot, and with millimeter-precise maneuvering and a bit of wiggling, we finally squeeze in. Back again!





Fig. 15.7: The “12 Gods” taverna in Syvota.



Fig. 15.8: Tanuki squeezed between Flotilla boats with Dutch guests.



Fig. 15.9: It wasn't easy to get in there because of all the ropes and other obstacles.

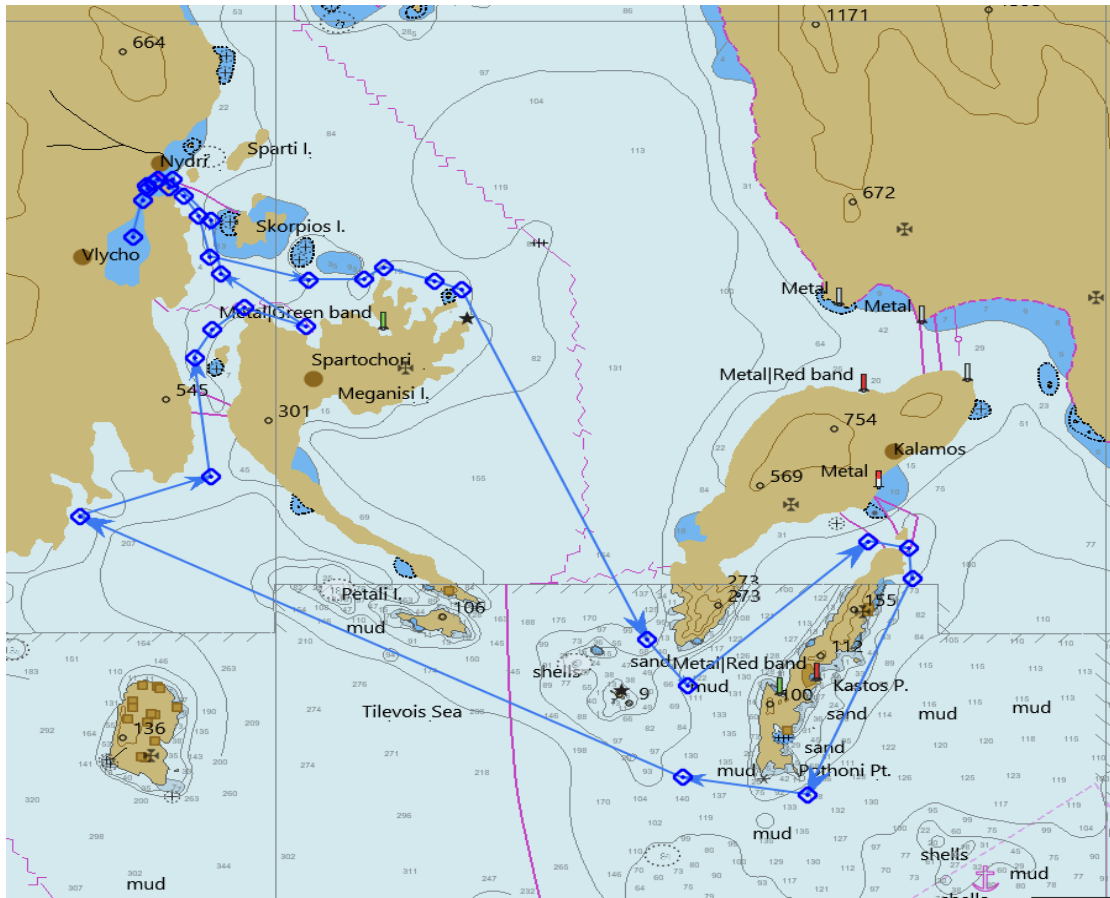


Fig. 15.10: Ionian Islands tour, the first round.

## Ionian Islands: Round Two

Since there are still many islands in the Ionian Sea worth exploring, we've planned a second cruise. It's scheduled for eight days, and for the first time, we'll also have landlubbers on board. In sailing terms, landlubbers are those who don't actively participate in sailing the boat—in other words, they have to become sailors first. In this case, “landlubber” is actually a statement and no offense.

Henning and Birgit are from the Rheingau region and are old friends. We were invited to their New Year's celebration, and now we're returning the favour with a short cruise on our yacht.

The trip begins with boarding the boat and provisioning – a day in port, as many charter crews do here. Beforehand, Sabine picked them up from Athen’s airport in a rental car. They cast off on Monday for a short cruise from Nidri to the island of **Ithaca**, the home of our ancient sailing idol Odysseus.

We chose **Polis Beach** on the west side of Ithaca, in the strait between Ithaca and Kefalonia, as our anchorage. With little wind, it was a pleasant four-hour sail. We anchored in 8 meters of water. Despite the low water temperatures, Henning and Birgit went for a swim in the deep blue waters. After a delicious dinner, we spent a peaceful and undisturbed night in ideal wind conditions (i.e., no wind).

The next day we continued on to the local harbor in **Kioni** on the east side of the island. We arrived early in the afternoon and actually managed to snag one of the few available berths, where we



anchored stern-to. This harbor doesn't have any mooring lines deployed forward; instead, you have to secure the bow with the anchor. So, you position the boat at a right angle to the quay, about two to three boat lengths from the shore, then drop the anchor and slowly back towards the quay stern-first while letting out anchor chain. Finally, you run two stern lines to the shore and tighten the anchor chain. If everything goes well, the boat will be secure against crosswinds, and the anchor chain will be parallel to the chains of neighbouring boats without crossing them. Otherwise, you'll end up with the ever-popular tangled anchor.



Fig. 15.11: The city harbour of Kioni.



Fig. 15.12.: Tanuki lies "Roman Catholic" with bow anchor at the Kioni quay.



Fig. 15.13: Crystal clear water in the port of Kioni.



Fig. 15.14: We meet Olive, a boat from Trier!

Kioni is a small, welcoming village that could be considered a prototype for Greek island towns. There's moderate tourism and small shops where you can buy everyday groceries. Mooring at the quay is free, but there's no electricity or water for the boats. Space in the harbor is very limited, and we see many boats that have to sail away again after a quick look around. Especially for our guests, we've decided



to alternate between anchoring and entering a harbor. We spend a peaceful night and wait until almost noon the next morning, partly to make sure we don't get caught in some kind of anchor tangle (two anchor chains crossing over each other, with the anchor caught under the other chain), which promptly happens to our neighbouring boat. Before that, we meet a boat from the skipper's hometown (Trier) and make friends with the skipper of the Olive.

The next morning, we can cast off without any stress and collect our correctly positioned anchor chain. Furthermore, our next anchorage is only about a 90-minute sail away, so we'll arrive in **Filiathro Bay**, located a little further south on the east side of Ithaca, with plenty of time. The anchor drops to 8 meters, and we politely agree with another German boat, which anchors a safe distance away. The beach is inviting for a swim, so the swim platform is lowered, and Freddy, our outboard motor, is attached to our new dinghy. Everyone goes for a short trip in the dinghy and enjoys a swim in the crystal-clear water (well, the skipper has to stay with the boat). Shortly before dinner (risotto with mushrooms), a catamaran anchors in the bay, and after a while, it's only 10-15 meters away from us. The co-skipper gives them a stern look and requests a new anchorage, and the catamaran's owner complies without further ado. Our guests take advantage of the romantic setting to get engaged (with the skipper as master of ceremonies), and so the entire crew gets to enjoy a glass of champagne.



Fig. 15.13: Entrance to Filiathro Bay on Ithaca.



Fig. 15.14: Oops, that's tight!

The next day we head to another port, Vathy, just around the corner. It seems to be a popular name, as there's also a port with the same name on the island of Meganisi. Vathy (here on Ithaca) is a bit larger than Kioni, and we easily find a spot at the quay. So, once again, we use the traditional "Roman Catholic" docking maneuver with the anchor. No problem. The town is at least three times the size of Kioni and well-developed for tourism. There's even electricity and water (€15), and we have to pay a mooring fee of €16. In return, we're moored in a quiet and safe spot and can sleep comfortably.



Fig. 15.15: Tanuki at the quay in Vathy (of course: Roman Catholic with anchor).



Fig. 15.16: On the left, the newly engaged couple Birgit and Henning!

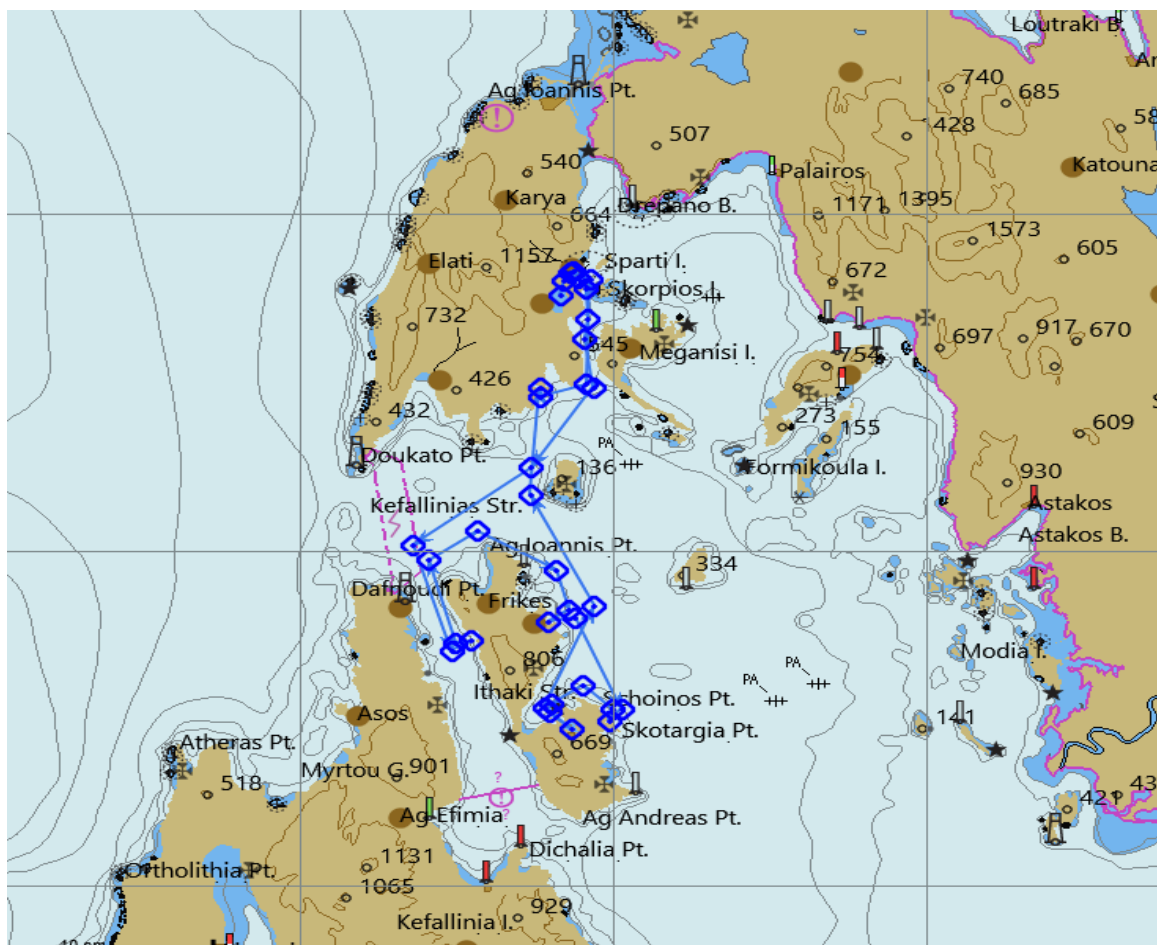


Fig. 15.17: Ionian Islands tour, the second.

Before we set sail, Olive from Trier arrives, and we help them dock because Olive is having trouble reversing (for the sailors out there: she has a long keel, which makes manoeuvring in reverse very difficult). We have a great time, but we still need to leave before noon because we have another 3-4 hours of sailing in the afternoon. A bit of wind picks up, and we motor-sail back to the south coast of Lefkada, passing the island of Arkoudi, which we leave to starboard.

We're heading back to a harbor for another night, this time to Syvota. This time we're not moored at the Twelve Gods marina (it's unfortunately full), but at the brand-new dock of the Ionion Taverna. We're assigned a berth alongside. The skipper is a bit worried because the water is alarmingly shallow, but the boat docks without any problems, and we're right at the end of the newly built dock. Once we've arrived, we refill our water and electricity tanks and had dinner at Ionion. The cocktails we enjoyed afterward were also very pleasant. The less pleasant news is that we can't get a berth at the Skorpis Charter dock until the day after tomorrow. No matter, we'll just go to the town harbour in Nidri.



Fig. 15.18: Tanuki on the jetty in Syvota.



Fig. 15.19: Double rainbow upon arrival in Vliho Bay!

The next morning: We cast off around 10:30 a.m., but nothing happened. Our boat was stuck with its keel on the bottom. So, a quick look at the helpful tide tables online. It was low tide. High tide was at 4 p.m., and we had to pick up the rental car for our guests' return transport by 5 p.m. A slight panic set in. So, we waited until the water level rose (by a whole 40 cm). Around 2 p.m., the boat's movements changed, and the keel was freed. So, we cast off! It worked.

A fresh breeze is blowing, and we sail and motor to Nidri, where the town harbor is, of course, completely full (we're running late), so we anchor in Vliho Bay, where you can always find a spot. Dinghy out, Freddy on board, and off to Nidri to pick up the car. No problem. A peaceful night at anchor in Vliho, and at 7 a.m. we head to Preveza Airport with our guests. Meanwhile, we receive word that our equipment carrier is ready. Great excitement!



## 16. Refit in Nidri

Logbook: Nidri

Date: 12.05.22

Days at sea so far: 22

Nautical miles so far: 612.8

Big things are on the horizon. Our equipment gantry is finished, custom-made for us by our stainless-steel specialists Phil and Dimitri in Nidri. This equipment carrier (also called a solar array or, in English, a gantry) is a tubular steel structure designed to mount solar panels high on the stern of the boat, minimizing the amount of shade cast by the mast and sails.

Furthermore, such equipment carriers can also mount antennas as high as possible and provide mounting points for the dinghy at the stern.

Phil Thomas, the local expert for such stainless-steel structures and responsible for the planning, prepared a design sketch after an in-depth discussion with us and a precise measurement of Tanuki's stern. He then entered this sketch into his CAD program to check the structural integrity and attachment points. The computer design can be seen in Figure 16.1. After a waiting period of approximately three weeks for its production, we received confirmation that work will begin this week. At the same time, our son Cornelius will be visiting; he and Richard will be planning and carrying out the electrical wiring.

### 1. Gantry



Fig. 16.1: Isometric representation of the design. (Image courtesy of P. Thomas, Steelmarine, Nidri).



Fig. 16.2: Tanuki with bare rear.

**Day 1:** We are preparing Tanuki by dismantling all the old railing structures (outboard motor, lifebuoy, stern light) and removing the steering wheels. We have made the mounting points on the ship accessible by clearing out the two aft cabins.

**Day 2:** The rear railings are removed (Fig. 16.2) and the mounting holes are enlarged to accommodate the larger diameter of the stainless-steel tubes. The equipment carrier is then lowered into position

from the main mast (Fig. 16.4), the feet of the structure are precisely cut to length with millimeter accuracy, welded to the mounting plates, and reinforced from below with strong screws. Screws are attached. The solar panels are being mounted.



Fig. 16.3: Just a moment ago the construction was lying on the transporter...



Fig. 16.4: ...and now it's already erected at the stern.



Fig. 16.5: Gantry attached to the hull and solar panels mounted.



**Day 3:** The radar, antennas, and shortwave tuner are installed, and the stern railing sections are welded on. Finally, a high-gloss polish is applied. The main cables are pulled through the vertical tubes into the hull and await the electrician. Done!

A nice little anecdote: After everything was assembled, we set about putting our nearly 35kg outboard motor back into its resting position at the stern. Since it took two of us a lot of effort to move it, Dimitri came to our aid, effortlessly lifting the thing with one hand and placing it on its mount. We were amazed by this display of strength.

To complete the entire construction, the bimini only needs to be shortened slightly. In conclusion: A stable construction that both aesthetically complements our boat and functionally performs exactly as we expect.



Fig. 16.6: Almost finished. Wired, radar mounted and rear railing welded on.



## 2. Batteries

Phil has a slightly heavier package waiting for us. The new batteries have been delivered from Germany. Our new power bank consists of four 260Ah AGM batteries, totaling 1,040Ah with an available capacity of 520Ah, because these batteries should only be discharged to half their capacity to ensure a sufficient lifespan. AGM batteries (AGM = Absorbent Glass Mat) contain the acid not as a liquid, but in gel form, and the battery electrodes are separated by a glass mat. AGM batteries are virtually maintenance-free; no fluid needs to be added, they can be installed in any position, and they are sealed and leak-proof. The AGM battery is significantly more resistant to deep discharge and has a higher cycle life than a comparable lead-acid battery. We purchased our batteries as special solar batteries from OffgridTech. The only drawback: each battery weighs approximately 70kg, which can only be moved by two people (Dimitri is no longer available).

Cornelius, the electrician specializing in high-voltage systems, plans the wiring, cable cross-sections, and fuses, while Richard diligently saws, glues, and screws to build foundations for the batteries using marine plywood (salvaged from the dismantled wall between the forward cabins). Two batteries on each side will be mounted under the beds in the aft cabin to ensure Tanuki's balance isn't compromised. The batteries will then be secured against shifting with wooden supports and straps.

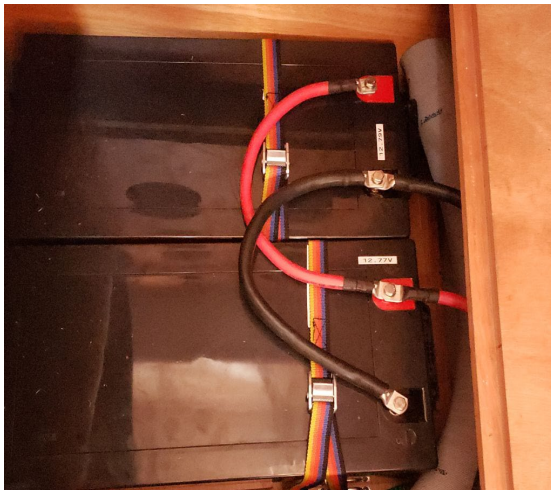


Fig. 16.7: Two batteries in the starboard cabin...



Fig. 16.8: ...and on the port side with many cables.

We drive to **Lefkas** to buy cables, fuses, and switches, then we get started. The men begin pulling cables and crimping cable lugs. Switches, fuses, and a current meter (shunt) are installed in the circuits, and cables are run to the control panel.

The batteries are connected with 90mm<sup>2</sup> cables and protected by a 300A fuse. A main switch is installed on the positive branch and a shunt on the negative branch. A shunt is a current measuring device that, together with a computerized controller, will later display the battery's charge level. Each positive and negative branch is followed by a terminal, which allows the circuits to be split.

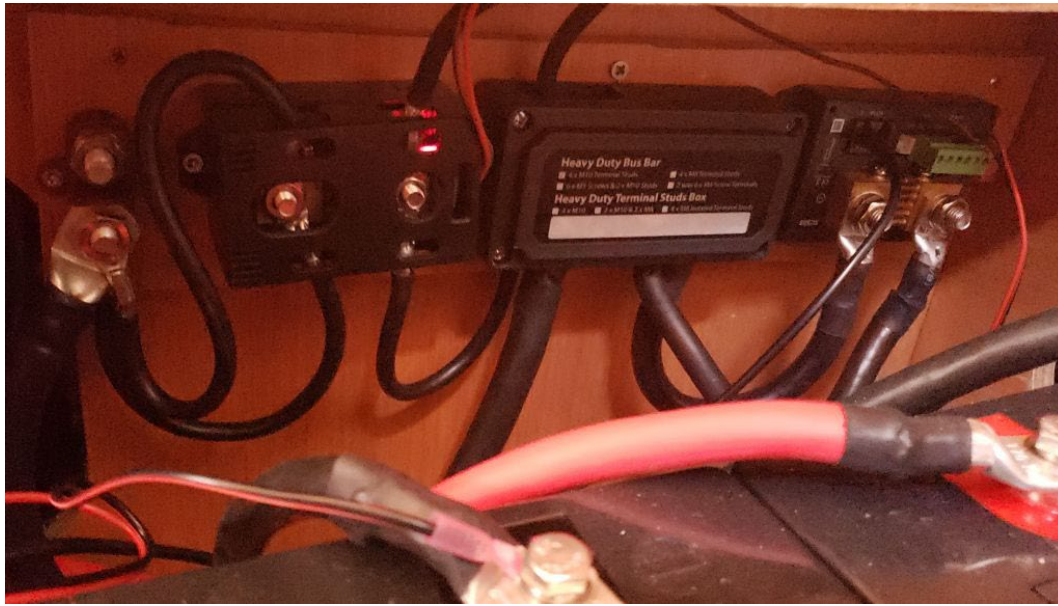


Fig.

16.9: The negative busbar with two shunts for battery charging and solar power.



Fig. 16.10: The positive busbar with fuses.

### 3. Solar panels

Solar panels are currently the best way to generate green energy and become as energy self-sufficient as possible. To avoid supporting Chinese products (working conditions unclear), we opted for panels manufactured in Canada.

The reason for this is that solar panels have become increasingly affordable and are capable of collecting ever-larger amounts of energy. This development has accelerated significantly in the last 5-10

years. We route the output voltage of the three panels (3 x 330 watt-peak) separately into the boat and feed it into three individual charge controllers. This is to avoid losses due to shading and to create redundancy. In other words, if one panel or charge controller should fail, the others will still function. The output voltage of the three charge controllers is connected in parallel and fed into the battery via a shunt, a fuse, and a switch.

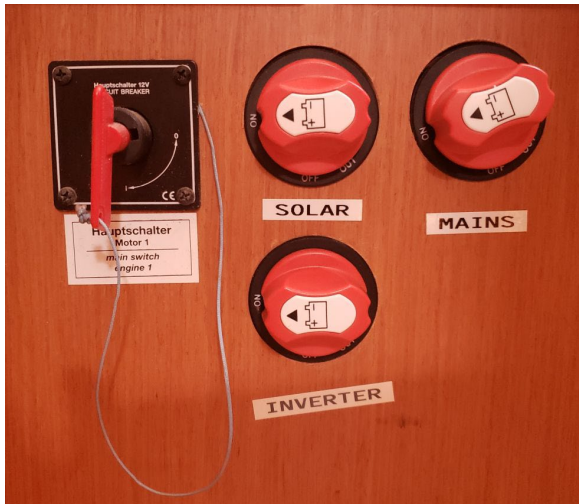


Fig. 16.11: Main switch.



Fig. 16.12: Impressions of the cabling work.



Fig. 16.13: The three solar charge controllers.



Fig. 16.14: Measuring device for the solar charging current.

#### 4. Inverter

Battery power is fed into an inverter as needed, also using 90mm<sup>2</sup> cable, a fuse, and a switch. The inverter is an EP-Ever unit with a power output of 3kW, which corresponds to an average shore power connection. An inverter (in this case, a true sine wave inverter) converts direct current (DC) to 220V alternating current (AC) and feeds it into the onboard electrical system. A combination switch on the navigation station allows us to select whether our appliances are powered by shore power or by the inverter. Simultaneously, the switch ensures that the battery charger (converting 220VAC to 12VDC) is



disconnected when the inverter is in use, as otherwise an unfavourable circuit (battery to inverter to charger to battery) would occur.



Fig. 16.15: The 3kW inverter for AC power supply.



Fig. 16.16: Switch for shore power/inverter and measuring instruments for direct current (12V) and alternating current (220V).

It's important to remember that the engine's alternator also charges the batteries. This energy is distributed via a charging distributor to the main battery bank, the starter battery, and the bow thruster battery.

An electrical and mechanical stress test (test run) shows our system is functional and will allow us to run the refrigerators while sailing on sunny days. If needed, a small induction cooktop and the hot water boiler can even be operated via the inverter. We have three measuring devices available for monitoring consumption: a 220V power meter, a 12V battery monitor, and a simple shunt with current/voltage display for the operation of the solar panels.

We hope that we are now equipped for long voyages and can sail with a bit more energy independence, without being too reliant on the engine.

Many thanks go to our Cornelius, who, with his expertise as an industrial plant electronics technician, significantly helped to ensure that this project was built safely and professionally.

## 5. New dinghy

Our new dinghy has also been delivered. We now have a larger inflatable boat, good for four to five people. Unfortunately, it's incredibly heavy, and we've only just realized that Tanuki doesn't have an additional halyard (line running from the masthead downwards) to winch the dinghy up. That needs to be fixed. For now, we'll make do with block and tackle on the equipment rack, which will also lift the outboard motor.



Fig. 16.17: New dinghy with "Freddy" our outboard motor.



Fig. 16.18: Pulleys to hoist the dinghy up the equipment carrier.

## 6. New Spreader

Finally, the new spreader has arrived from Spain. Delivery time, including the Ukraine surcharge, was four weeks. That's what kept us in the Ionian Islands for so long. We've hired riggers from Waypoint in Lefkada to install it and carry out the repairs on the standing mast.

So, let's get started. All the sails are taken down, the halyards are attached to stabilize the mast, and the shrouds are loosened on both sides. The topping lift (the halyard that holds the boom up) is removed and used as a safety line for the rigger, who climbs the mast to the spreader. He detaches the end of the spreader and can then pull it out of its mounting on the mast. The new spreader is installed in a few minutes, and the shrouds are tightened again. Done!

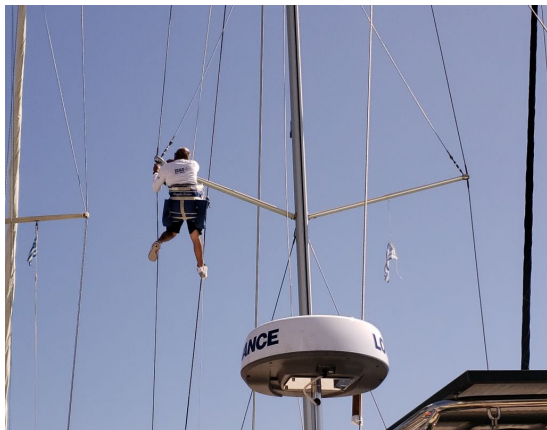


Fig. 16.19: The rigger pulls off the end part of the spreader.



Fig. 16.20: The spreader is being removed.



Fig. 16.21: New spreader on. Done!



Fig. 16.22: The old part. Unreliable!



Tanuki has a furling system for the mainsail in the mast. The main control is a plastic pulley that can be rotated in both directions by a rope and clamping action. Our pulley was slightly worn on the inside, so it slipped easily. We therefore ordered a replacement pulley and also had the internal mast mechanism overhauled. No problem for our professionals.



Fig. 16.23: Clamping disc of the main furler.



Fig. 16.24: Somewhat worn inside. Will be replaced!



Fig. 16.25: Our Furlex. Somewhat weathered but mechanically in good condition.



Fig. 16.26: The upper part of the roller system.

Maintaining the furler for our genoa is something the skipper can tackle himself, especially since the headsail is already removed. The ball bearings of both furlers are checked and sprayed with special lubricant.

## 17. Ionian Islands 3

Logbook: Nidri – Nidri – Zakynthos - Kalamata

Date: 05.06.22

Days at sea so far: 22

Nautical miles so far: 612.8

After installing the new electrical system, we're now testing its functionality with a third, shorter cruise through the Ionian Islands. Cornelius is still on board, and we want to give him a few days off after all his hard work.

Departing from Nidri was straightforward, and we entered the strait between Ithaca and Kefalonia, where the port of **Fiskardo** is located at the northern end. Fiskardo has few berths at the pier, but more than 15 anchorages with shore lines. Anchoring with shore lines (also known as land anchoring), which we consider the pinnacle of anchoring, is a slightly modified Roman Catholic mooring technique. The difference is that the two stern lines are not attached to a pier, but to fixed structures on the shore, such as trees or rocks.

For this, we use long, buoyant lines, approximately 50 meters in length, one or preferably two of which are deployed at the stern. The trick is that one of these lines is first secured ashore with the dinghy. Then, as the yacht reverses with the anchor dropped, it meets the dinghy halfway along the shore and takes over and secures the (initially windward) shore line. This manoeuvre requires practice and, for us, initially only managed with difficulty and without any elegance. Then the second (leeward) shore line is deployed, and the manoeuvre is complete. The reward is a safe and peaceful night without any movement of the boat. Since the dinghy was already set up, we take the opportunity to go ashore for a wonderful dinner.



Fig. 17.1: Our longlines (50m, buoyant).



Fig. 17.2: Windward line deployed.

One of our cruising guides highlighted a beach on the west side of Kefalonia. Kyriaki Beach, for example, was described as one of the most beautiful beaches in Kefalonia, and of course we wanted to see it for ourselves.

We set off early in the morning. We hauled in the leeward shore line, cast off the windward shore line and hauled it in with the dinghy (we used a light, buoyant line for this). After weighing anchor, we collected the dinghy and hoisted it up to the davits of the radar arch at the new anchorage. Five hours of motor sailing to Kyriaki Beach. We arrived to a heavy swell from the west; the boat was rocking violently, and the beach was overcrowded and looked very touristy. We anchored briefly for lunch and then decided we didn't want to stay overnight under these conditions. Plan B was to return to Fiskardo, as there were no promising anchorages on the west coast. So, back we went.

We arrived in Fiskardo late in the afternoon; almost everything was full, but we still found a spot and once again practiced the anchoring maneuver with a shore line. This time it went perfectly because everyone knew their role. It was easy with four people on board. With just two, it would have been a bit tricky. We had a peaceful night, even managing a bit of a swim. Just so you know, the anchorage isn't in the harbor basin, and the water is really clean.

We set off early in the morning between Kefalonia and Ithaca, heading south. The road acts like a chimney, deflecting the wind to the south. Today is all about sailing fun, and we're sailing downwind (wind at our backs) south, finally with the engine off. We're not going into the port of Sami, but anchoring in the neighboring bay of **Ormos Antisamos** at a depth of 12 meters. The bay has a lively beach area, and from late afternoon until the evening there's techno music. After that, though, it's quiet.

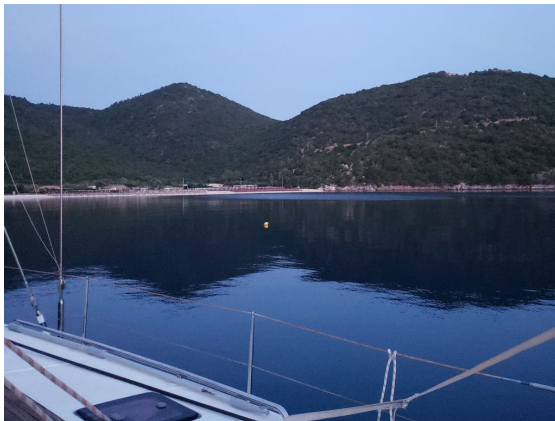


Fig. 17.3: The beach of Ormos Antisamos.

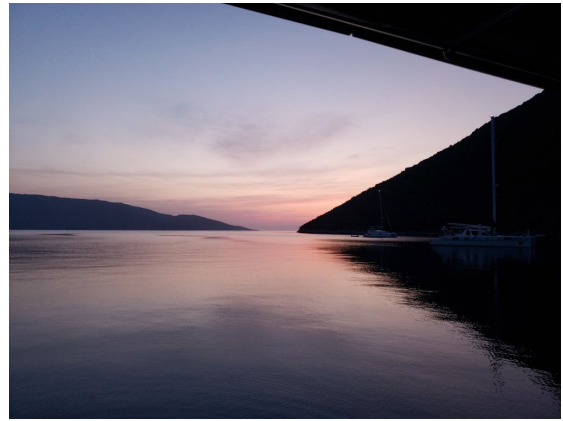


Fig. 17.4: Sunset.

The next day, we set sail at 9 a.m. and head back to Nidri along the east side of Ithaca. Our visitor needs to catch his flight in Preveza the following day, so the rental car needs to be picked up early. We'll then motor sail north and arrive in Nidri around 3 p.m.



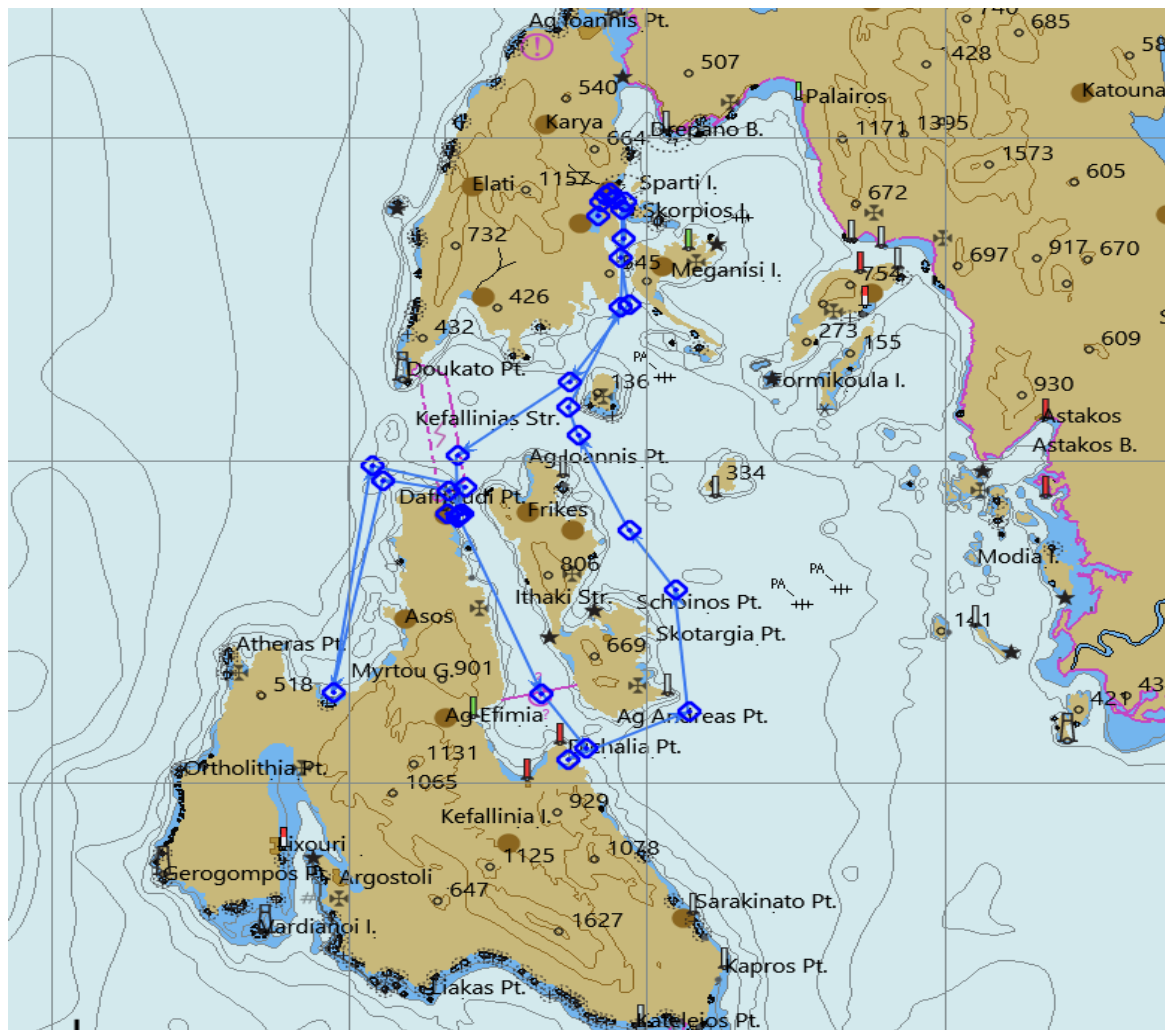


Fig. 17.5: Round trip of the Ionian Islands, the third.

## 18. Peloponnes

Logbook: Nidri – Zakynthos – Kalamata – Ormos Limeni

Date: 11.06.22

Days at sea so far: 26

Nautical miles so far: 704.5

We've lingered in Nidri far too long, enjoying the luxury of a jetty with toilets and showers. Now that we've finally completed all the renovations and repairs, it's time to head south (and to the Aegean Sea).

It's a rather hectic departure. Since we had a rental car from Cornelius for the airport transfer, we do a big shop (at the German discount store in Lefkada) and get everything ready. The weather forecast predicts bad weather and strong winds in two days. The skipper even receives a text message from the Greek government on the mobile phone, warning of this weather situation. So, we set off immediately the next morning to ride out the worst of the weather further south in a more sheltered harbor.

Our first stop was **Vathy**, a comfortable and safe harbor where we stayed for two days. Bad weather? No problem – we were securely moored to the quay with a bow anchor. In retrospect, it wasn't so bad after all, but you still wouldn't necessarily want to be out at sea in those conditions.

We continue cautiously for now; the next stop is **Ormos Antisamos**, which has been described here before. Although we arrive there on Saturday, the noise from the beach resort is rather quiet, and so is our sleep.

The next morning: We weighed anchor early, planning a longer trip south to the island of Zakynthos. Our first stop was the famous Blue Cave at the northern tip, which we intended to explore from the port of **Agios Nikolaos**. We set off, sailing partly under full sail and without the engine. In the early afternoon, we passed the caves for a quick look. Then we headed into the harbor. What chaos! There were no designated berths at the piers, or they were all occupied. The only options were to anchor or grab one of the many buoys, but we couldn't figure out which ones were available. The entire harbor was a chaotic jumble of tourist boats, rental boats with some rather erratic driving styles, three yachts circling aimlessly, and tourists in kayaks and on paddleboards. We were confused and frustrated, and after a thorough circumnavigation of the harbor, we reluctantly decided to scrap the Blue Caves from our itinerary and head south to the island's capital, Zakynthos Town.

In **Zakynthos**, the yacht berths are managed by the company Isala, for which you pay a moderate fee per night (around €15 for Tanuki). However, when docking, people in blue T-shirts approach us demanding double the price. A strange business model, and not for us. We tell these so-called "blueshirts" that we booked directly with Isala and pay the lower price there. Zakynthos is a lively (meaning noisy) harbor with many shops and tourists. We don't have water or shore power, but that's okay; our tanks are full and our solar panels are working great.



Fig. 18.1: Approach to Zakynthos.



Fig. 18.2: At the quay of Zakynthos.



Fig. 18.3: We are located directly on the harbor promenade.



Fig. 18.4: Market square of Zakynthos.

The next day we continued on to **Kolpos Lagana**, a wide bay with a nature reserve where the rare loggerhead turtles nest. We arrived in the early afternoon, entered the open Zone A, and dropped anchor off the village of **Keri**. It was bustling with tourists, and once again, they were navigating the anchorage somewhat erratically. Apparently, you can rent a boat with a 30hp outboard motor without a valid license or any marine experience. Not a turtle in sight, but a packed beach and many boats on the island of **Marathonisi**. We thought to ourselves that we wouldn't necessarily want to be here if we were turtles, and we felt the same way.

There was a bit of a swell in the anchorage during the night, and we were so tired in the morning that we even skipped the next item on our itinerary (Keri Caves) and continued sailing. Zakynthos remained behind us, and we headed towards the mainland (Peloponnese).





Fig. 18.5: Our anchorage off Keri.

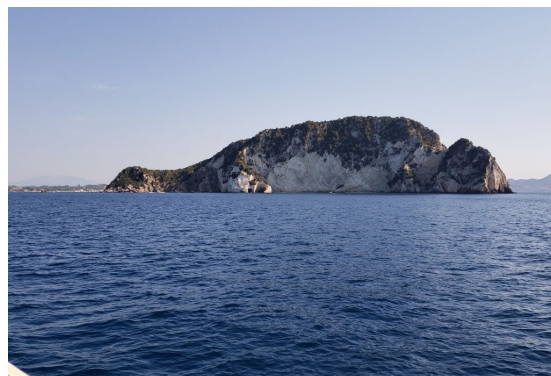


Fig. 18.6: Behind us is the island of Marathonisi, which offers only limited protection from waves.



Fig. 18.7: Our route from Vathy to Kolpos Lagana (Turtle Bay).

After spending a long time in the relatively sheltered weather of the Ionian Islands, it's now time to head to the central Greek islands. Our plan was to sail around the Peloponnese, first to Crete, and then, after a short stay in Turkey, visit the Cyclades from the east. (Spoiler: That didn't work out. More on that later.)

The first leg of the journey leads from Zakynthos to the mainland. The Peloponnese (Greek: Island of Pelops) is a peninsula and therefore belongs to the Greek mainland.

Our first destination is **Katakolon**, an unassuming town with a far too large harbor, serving as a port of call for cruise ships. The town itself doesn't have much to offer; entering the harbor is tricky due to shallow areas, but after a spirited approach, Tanuki is safely moored at the bow against the western harbor wall. Exactly two cruise ships can fit at the opposite quay, and these berths seem to be always fully booked. Around dawn, the ships arrive, disgorge tourists, and pick them up again in the afternoon. Departure is then in the evening with a loud blast of horns. The small town has adapted to this, and as usual, we are amazed by the number of restaurants and souvenir shops. A supermarket would have been preferable, but those are only available further inland.

The real reason for coming here lies 30km further on: the ancient city of Olympia, where the Olympic Games were held in antiquity. We rent a car for €35 and drive there the next morning. First impression: the small town of **Archaia Olympia** (ancient Olympia) is pleasant, not overly touristy, but rather understated. We park the car and first visit the archaeological museum and then the excavation site. We actually see not just individual stones, but columns, masonry, and the outlines of the ancient sports venues and temples. Awe-inspiring! After some marvelling, taking photos, and running around, we can say that we've already successfully run the 20m in the ancient Olympic Stadium.

We head back in the afternoon, filled with new impressions to ponder. Is this really more than 2300 years old? Amazing! We find a supermarket along the way, and then it's back to bed.



Fig. 18.8: Olympia Museum. Interests vary.



Fig. 18.9: Olympia Museum. Interests vary.





Fig. 18.10: A few columns are still standing (again).

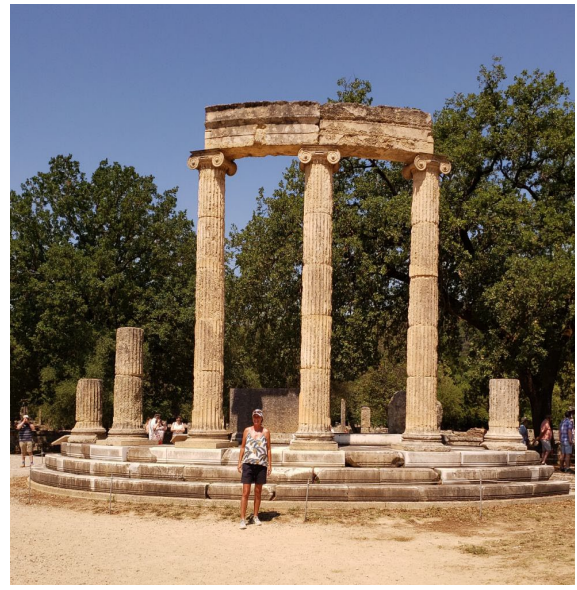


Fig. 18.11: The Philippeion from the front with skipper.



Fig. 18.12: The tourist guide in Ancient Greek.

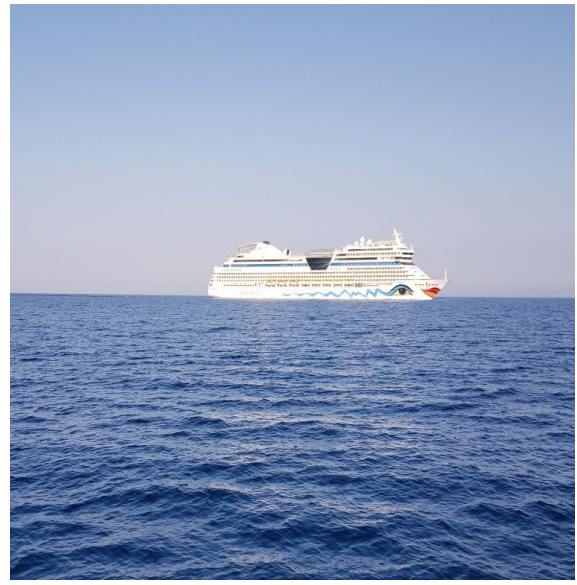


Fig. 18.13: Tanuki sails out and the (nightmare) dream ship comes in.

We set off after sunrise. No tangled anchors; as we head out, we encounter a large cruise ship. They dock, and we continue on to Kiparissia.

**Kiparissia** is a small port about a day's sail south of Katakolon. We're leaving early and arriving early; there are still places available to moor alongside the pier. We'll do that.



Otherwise, it's a typical tourist town. We ate in a small taverna and went to bed early. A peaceful night with a good night's sleep.



Fig. 18.14: Tanuki at Kiparissa pier.

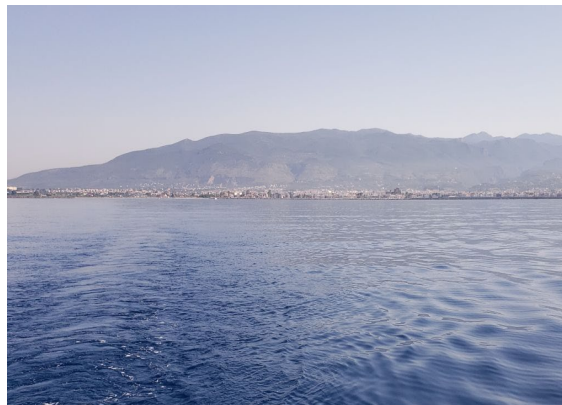


Fig. 18.15: Kalamata seen from the sea.

We continued south. Our original plan was to anchor in the large and well-protected bay near Pylos (Navarino Bay). However, after arriving early thanks to a favourable wind, we decided to sail a little further to **Methoni**. Lacking suitable mooring options, we anchored in the harbor basin at a depth of approximately 5 meters, along with four other yachts.

Despite moderate winds, a swell still enters the south-facing harbor. Furthermore, bad weather is forecast, so as Plan B we will first circumnavigate the western peninsula of the Peloponnese and head northeast to the port of Kalamata.

**Kalamata** is famous for its olives: the black ones with the "dent in the head." You can even buy Kalamata olives in supermarkets in Australia. Do they actually come from here? No matter, we can always say now that we bought olives in Kalamata.

We arrived there in the early afternoon and went into the marina where we waited out the bad weather south of the Peloponnese for three days. Winds with gusts up to 25 knots accompanied us at the end of the day's trip, and we breathed a sigh of relief when the wind dropped to about 15 knots within the harbor basin. Docking was quite a drama; an incompetent and overwhelmed marina attendant tried to park us in unsuitable positions that were either impossible due to our draft or our manoeuvrability (twin rudders). Only after a lengthy discussion did we get a berth at dock C that was halfway decent. This involved crossing a spot that, at 2.50 meters, was only slightly deeper than our draft of 2.25 meters, resulting in a somewhat nervous skipper and a panicky, beeping depth sounder. But we managed in the end and quickly joined another German boat, the SY Calypso, which was moored opposite us at the same dock.

Kalamata, unlike the cities we've visited so far, isn't quite as touristy, and the harbor area has definitely seen better days. The harbor police were also unfriendly, initially refusing to stamp our departure papers because our insurance didn't exactly meet the new requirements (even though we're actually over-insured according to them...). No problem, though; our insurance agency (Preuss Yacht Insurance) obtained the necessary document for us that same day, so we were finally able to set sail. The day after the bad weather, we continued sailing south along the middle peninsula of the Peloponnese.

We sail south along the coast of the second peninsula and need an anchorage for the night. We see the best opportunity in **Ormos Limeni** Bay, where we arrive around midday and anchor in the north-eastern corner with just a few other boats.

This works quite well against the wind, but not against the swell from the previous bad weather, which tossed us around to no end during the night. A sleepless night and a disgruntled crew. The anchor, however, holds perfectly, and we are eternally grateful to our Rocna and the co-skipper's anchoring skills. As a small consolation, we are presented with a pleasant weather window for the crossing to Crete.

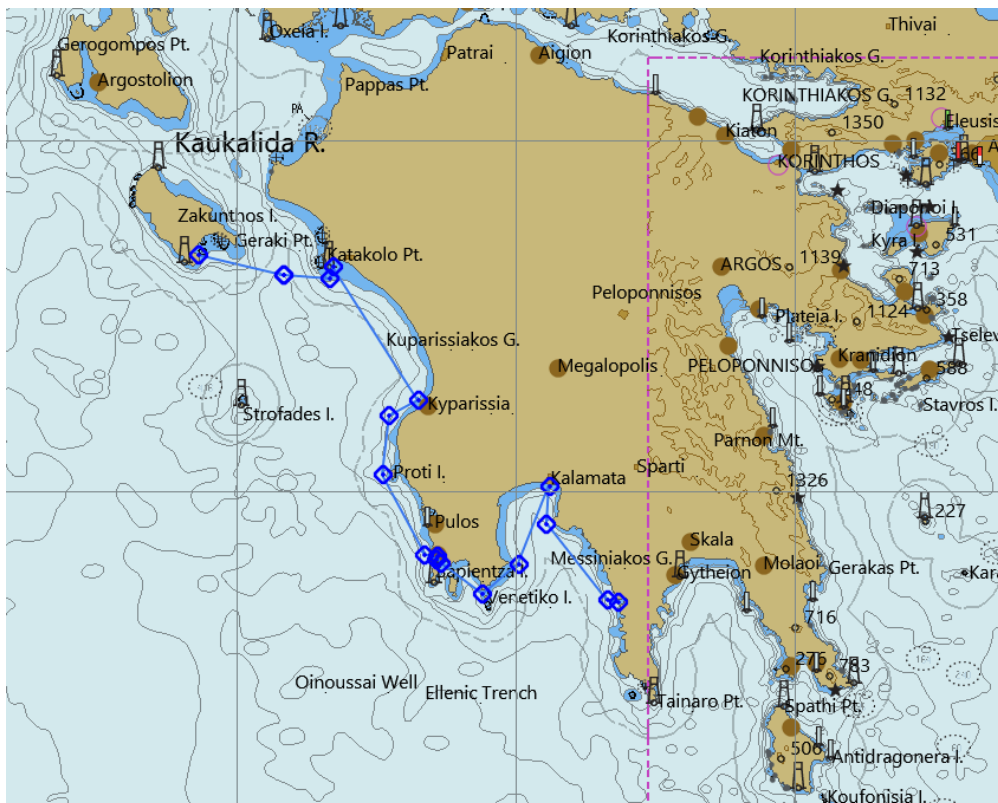


Fig. 18.16: From Zakynthos to Ormos Limeni.

## 19. Crete and back

Logbook: Ormos Limeni – Agios Nikolaos – Chania

Date: 24.06.2022

Days at sea so far: 33

Nautical miles so far: 948.7

The crossing from the mainland to Crete is tricky because strong Meltemi winds often sweep across the Aegean Sea in summer. This predominantly northerly wind is further intensified by cape effects at the edges of Crete and can cause gale-force winds and seas up to 4 meters high. We were lucky and had a good weather window, so we sailed the route in two legs. The first leg took us past the southern cape of the middle peninsula of the Peloponnese and to the southern tip of the island of Kythera.

### 1. Kythera

We reach our harbor for the night in the late afternoon. **Capsalion** is a small town near the island's capital, Kythera. The harbor has a long quay where yachts can moor either alongside or with a bow anchor. Fairness dictates choosing the bow anchor option, as this allows for optimal use of the space for more boats. As we enter, we see a yacht moored across with a bow anchor, and we'd like to moor next to it. Unfortunately, we realize very late that this yacht has long lines running alongside, preventing us from mooring alongside. So, Plan B: we moor a little further along the edge of the quay. First come, first served...

A little later, a motor yacht arrives and, in coordination with us (!), also ties up alongside, at which point the quay is completely full. Shortly before evening, a sailing yacht arrives and, due to lack of space at the quay, anchors in the middle of the harbor basin. After a long day of sailing, we treat ourselves to dinner at a local taverna and have a good night's sleep.



Fig. 19.1: Tanuki moored alongside the pier at Kapsalion on Kythera.



Fig. 19.2: Flipper drops by.



## 2. Gramvousa

The next day, an early start is in order; we leave the harbor at 5:30 a.m., just before sunrise, together with our neighboring boat. The wind picks up and reaches 10-15 knots by late morning, shifting from right ahead to abeam. Ideal sailing weather; we make 6-7 knots under full sail.

On this stretch of the route, we also encounter our first dolphins, who swim alongside us for 10 minutes, shamelessly showing off their tricks. It seems like every sailing blogger writes about their dolphin encounters, and as a reader, it gets a bit boring. For us, however, it's a first, and we're absolutely amazed. At the first sighting, we react with a loud shout of "all hands on deck!" and pay our utmost respect to the "Flippers."

The route passes **Antikythera**, a slightly smaller island roughly halfway along the way. Antikythera is world-famous because in 1900 a sunken Roman ship was discovered there, containing, among other treasures, the so-called Antikythera Mechanism. This was painstakingly examined and identified as an analog (mechanical) calculating machine used to determine the positions of the planets known at the time. It was executed with astonishing precision and craftsmanship. Incidentally, the mechanism also features prominently in the latest Indiana Jones movie.

Off the island, the wind picks up (likely due to a wind effect around the island and its headlands) and reaches over 20 knots, with clearly visible white spray crests on the waves. We quickly reduce the sail area to the size of a towel.



Fig. 19.3: The southern tip of Antikythera.



Fig. 19.4: The northern tip of Crete.

And on we go to the northeastern tip of Crete, which we reach in the late afternoon after more than 10 hours of sailing. Our plan is to spend the night here in a sheltered anchorage.

**Gramvousa** is a small island that forms a sheltered lagoon off the coast of Crete. The Meltemi wind, still blowing at 10-15 knots, is noticeable, but the bay is well protected from swell. To explain: Meltemi is a local wind pattern that describes a northwesterly wind, sometimes reaching gale force, over the Aegean Sea.

We anchored next to a small jetty where three tourist boats were moored. Tourists were visiting the beach in front or hiking to the fortress above, a popular viewpoint. A short time later, we were shoed away by a boat twice our size, which also wanted to dock there. We were polite and moved our anchorage to the other side of the shipwreck "Dimitrios P," which lies on the shore and gives the beach its name. There we lay comfortably and watched the colorful activity of the excursion boats. Crowds of tourists were let ashore and swarmed up the hill like ants. The boats honked loudly to collect the bathers later, and then cast off to make room for the next boat. Around 6 p.m., the commotion finally subsided, and only a few smaller boats arrived. We moved our anchorage again and found a spot as sheltered from the wind as possible, close to the beach. We lowered the dinghy, and the skipper and our son rowed ashore and completed the tourist activities, although without swimming (the water was too cold). The wind continues to blow steadily; according to the weather forecast, it should die down around 9 p.m. Think again!



Fig. 19.5: Gramvousa Beach with the old fort and the wreck of the "Dimitrios P", already somewhat rusted.....



Fig. 19.6: At 7 p.m. – nothing's happening anymore!

Since we anchored creatively close to shore in 3-4 meters of water, the night wasn't ideal. The wind blew until the early hours of the morning, but the anchor reliably did its job, though it still needed to be checked every now and then. The skipper and his wife slept in shifts, taking turns checking the situation without any prior coordination. This didn't bother the anchor in the slightest; it simply held. At 7 a.m., we headed out for a special excursion. Directly opposite in the bay is **Balos Beach** and the shallow Balos Lagoon. We had decided to visit it for breakfast, so we motored for 5 minutes to what is probably the most photographed beach in Crete.

From our anchorage, it's not particularly impressive, but it's certainly a popular tourist destination. Even before 8 a.m., there are already bathers there (I wonder if they're reserving sun loungers?). There are no hotels here, as it's a nature reserve. Around 8:30 a.m., the first excursion boats arrive, and when several jet skis start making a terrible racket, we decide to move on.



Fig. 19.7: The beach of Balos.

### 3. Chania

We sailed around the northwestern tip of Crete and headed for the port of **Chania**. We briefly spoke to the harbor master, who advised us to simply sail in and secure a free berth at the quay with 50 meters of chain. He would then come at 7 p.m. to take care of the formalities.

We were quite surprised when we approached the harbor; an old lighthouse greeted us along with what felt like hundreds of small boats, glass-bottom boats, and even small submarines. We quickly found the quay for the yachts, and an inviting gap as well. Unfortunately, the fast small boats proved to be an obstacle, as they seemed to have no understanding of our anchoring and approach manoeuvres. The skipper was annoyed, but somehow, we managed to get into our spot on the first try, and friendly people took our stern lines. The distance to the quay was just small enough for our gangplank to span. So, balancing was the order of the day to avoid falling sideways into the harbor basin.

We're moored right on the harbor promenade. We've been there before, but the number of tourists here is countless. Spiros, the harbor master, comes by and takes the skipper to the harbor office, which is located in a former hammam. He's brief but very friendly. We pay about 30 euros for two days, don't need electricity, and only book 1,000 litres of drinking water for an additional 3 euros to fill our tanks. Next stop is the harbor police, and lo and behold, they're friendly, which we greatly appreciate after our recent experiences. The nice lady in the office seems impressed by our preparation and the fact that we've already printed copies of all our documents for her. No problem. We briefly discuss the possibility of the military closing off the area, and then we get the stamp in our logbook without any trouble. Then it's dinner at a taverna and a good night's sleep. No problem, even with the loud and



peculiarly tonal local music from the taverns on the promenade (in our case an electronically amplified duo of lyre and guitar with vocals).



Fig. 19.8: Chania. The footbridge is located on the harbor promenade.

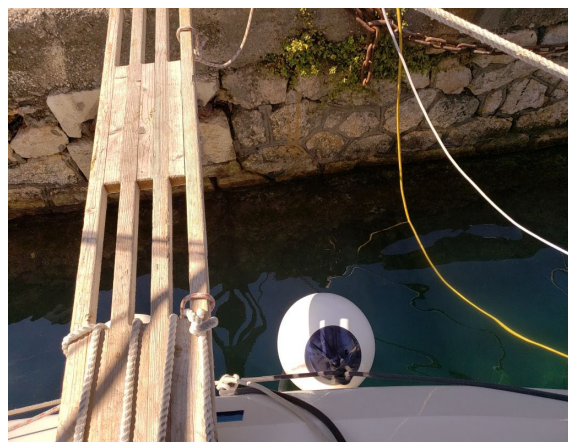


Fig. 19.9: The harbor water yawns to the left and right.



Fig. 19.10: Agios Nikolaos, a church with a minaret.



Fig. 19.11: Small bar in Chania. The artist's model (dog) is lying in front of it.

Chania's harbor is Venetian, dating from the 14th century, while the lighthouse (and the old hammam) clearly shows Ottoman influence. The Church of Agios Nikolaos even has a former minaret in place of its right-hand bell tower.

We like it here and spontaneously decide to stay another night.



Fig. 19.12: The Venetian harbor at sunset.



Fig. 19.13: Tanuki on the quay (middle).

We continued eastward. Since there were no suitable anchorages along the way, we set course for Rethymno, the third largest city in Crete, a short 6-hour sail, sometimes with the engine, sometimes without. It also has a Venetian harbor, though somewhat smaller than the one in Chania.

### Rethymno

We passed NAMFI, a large NATO facility in Souda Bay, a firing range for land-to-sea missiles. This facility regularly closes off the sea area for firing exercises, so we checked with the port police in Chania to see if there were any problems. During firing exercises, virtually all coastal traffic heading east is blocked, which leads to reprimands for recreational boats from warships and coastal stations. We were lucky; today they weren't firing at us, but northwest of Chania, which allowed us to continue east. Lucky us!

**Rethymno** is a small harbor with a marina that also has a few berths for yachts, but with a truly local version of lazy lines. Here, they're not long and attached to the dock, but rather to a buoy just in front of the bow. When reversing into the berth, the skipper has to be careful not to run over the buoy, and the foredeck crew has to fish it out with a boat hook, lift it, grab the two lines, and secure them to the bow cleats. This isn't possible at the speed the wind conditions demand (strong wind = quick entry) and creates stress, especially since the buoy with the attached chain is heavy. We had wind! With two crew members at the bow, it was just about manageable, but woe betide anyone with only one (weaker?) person up front. We don't really want to imagine it, and there are horror stories circulating online. After three attempts, we somehow manage it; the marina attendant remains calm and friendly, and we're "in." Time to relax (the whole crew is on an adrenaline rush) and for a big onshore beer.

The next day, it's time to pay the small mooring fee to the friendly ladies in the office and go to the harbor police to have the logbook stamped. All documents are checked meticulously; a name transposition in the crew list was (rightfully) noted, and then we continued our journey.





Fig. 19.14: The red buoys of horror, here seen on other boats.



Fig. 19.15: The small lighthouse at the Venetian port of Rethymno.



Fig. 19.16: The Neratze Mosque with minaret.



Fig. 19.17: This wine merchant makes big promises!

## Heraklion

Heraklion (also spelled Iraklio, named after Heracles of Greek mythology) is the largest city on Crete and the fourth largest in Greece, boasting a bustling international airport that brings huge numbers of tourists to the island. The harbor (also known as the Venetian harbor) features a marina and a city quay. We sailed with a strong, helpful north-westerly wind and reached the harbor entrance in the late afternoon after a 7-hour voyage. A swell of 1-1.5 meters hit us at a right angle to the coast and our course, causing a very unpleasant rocking of the boat. Seasickness set in – quite unpleasant. It only improved after we passed through the harbor entrance.

Unfortunately, the harbor isn't very sailor-friendly. The marina is full of permanent berth holders, so there's no chance of getting in. The town quay, right in front of the harbor police station, is our only option. We drop anchor about 60 meters from the quay wall and head towards it in a strong crosswind.



Friendly neighbours take our lines, and we discover that the harbor wall is 3 meters high, and there's no way to attach a standard-length gangplank. So how do we get ashore? We postpone the problem and sleep in for the night. Gusts of wind and ferry traffic (the ferries dock about 200 meters away) make the night uncomfortable.

In the morning, we lowered our dinghy and rowed to a ladder on the quay. The standard procedure was followed (a visit to the harbor police, who also collected the mooring fee). Today, the bureaucracy in the harbor was rather relaxed; hardly any documents were checked, and nothing was found to be wrong. Speaking of wrong: In every harbor so far, there have been inspections to some extent, and usually, something was always found to be amiss. On our self-invented scale of 0 (Iraklio) to 10 (Kalamata – where we were even prohibited from leaving port), many different variations have occurred. It was almost always a different document that was flagged, but we were usually able to resolve the situation with openness and friendliness.

The place is large, but Tanuki is very inconveniently located and it's not a pleasant experience for us, so nothing is keeping us here and we decide to move on.



Fig. 19.18: Tanuki on the high quay wall.



Fig. 19.19: Small fort at the harbor entrance.



Fig. 19.20: Church in the old town.



Fig. 19.21: Small café in the old town of Heraklion.

### Agios Nikolaos

In the small town of Agios Nikolaos, almost at the eastern tip of Crete, lies the only decent (i.e., highly regarded) marina on the island. We arrive there after about 10 hours and have to contend with the swell from the Aegean Sea (waves around 1.5 meters), the steadily blowing Meltemi (15-20 knots), and, in the last part of the journey, cape effects and increased gusts up to 30 knots. It's good sailing weather, with sails in various reefing stages. We enter the marina and, with a crosswind of 20 knots, carefully maneuver into a thankfully relatively large gap. After two attempts, we finally manage it, and the calm marina attendant helps us dock. The skipper now has (well, always has) a healthy respect for docking with a crosswind in a narrow slip. Later, however, we witness other skippers also having problems in this situation, but also how local skippers operate. Timing and a feel for the wind drift are extremely important here.

The marina is medium-sized, the sanitary facilities are first-class, and the prices are affordable. We plan to stay here until a good weather window opens up for crossing to Rhodes. The Meltemi wind is sweeping around the eastern end of the island and intensifying to gale force with waves up to 4 meters. Not for us, so we'll wait and see. Our neighbours on the dock are saying we'll probably have to wait until September, but we're optimistic.

We're moored on Finger B and are relatively well protected. Nevertheless, we get daily gusts of up to 30 knots; the wind howls through the masts and reminds us of the Croatian Bora. Poor sleep!



Fig. 19.22: The Marina Agios Nikolaos.

One week later. We're still in Agios Nikolaos and blown in. Oh dear!

The Meltemi is blowing, bringing us a constant north-westerly wind with gusts of 20-30 knots in the harbor! The wind is also deflected and intensified on the east coast of Crete, resulting in heavy seas. No weather window for crossing to Turkey is opening up. Neighbouring boats are advising us either to "grin and bear it through the night" or "wait until September." We don't want to do either. We've already been waiting for almost two weeks and have finally pulled the emergency brake in a crew meeting. So, we've decided to forgo our stay in Turkey and sail directly to Italy. However, our options are limited. Sailing north to the Cyclades is only possible against the strong Meltemi, and sailing west also puts the wind against us, forcing us to search for weather windows. These usually open at night, so night sailing is the only option.

### **Emergency brake, we're sailing back – westward!**

With a bit of luck, we quickly found a weather window for rounding Cape Ioannis Point, and in the evening, with winds around 15 knots and waves of less than 1 meter, we rounded the northern tip. Afterwards, we sailed through the night to **Rethymno**, arriving in good spirits the next morning. Due to the headwind, we motor-sailed with a bit of jib and no mainsail, enjoying a calm passage. We took a break in Rethymno. Because of strong gusts, we were allowed to moor alongside the harbor quay without having to repeat the stunt with the red buoys. The skipper was pleased, as he could play a game of French billiards in town that evening (a long time since he'd played, but one doesn't forget so quickly).



Fig. 19.23: In Rethymno at the harbor quay.





## 20. Peloponnese and Zakynthos

Logbook: Chania – Zakynthos

Date: 12.07.22

Days at sea so far: 42

Nautical miles so far: 1301.1

### 1. Back to the mainland (Elafonisos Beach)

We set sail in the early evening under good weather conditions with little headwind. The crossing was expected to take about 17 hours, and we made good progress with calm seas. Our destination was **Elafonisos beach**. We arrived in the early afternoon and dropped anchor in 6 meters. First things first: a good night's sleep – the skipper stayed up for a few more hours to keep an eye on the anchor. The skipper's wife complained that the chain length markers were no longer clearly visible – that went on the "to-do" list. The anchor held, and the next morning we were greeted by brilliant sunshine and a well-developed sandy beach. There were about eight sailboats and three superyachts anchored in the bay, one even with a helipad. Almost all water sports (kiteboarding, water skiing, stand-up paddleboarding, etc.) were being practiced with little regard for the anchored boats. The crew of Tanuki promptly unpacked our newest toy, a stand-up paddleboard, and plunged into the fun. After two days of swimming and enjoying the water, we continued our journey.



Fig. 20.1: The bays of Elafonisos. Tanuki is located on the far left.

## 2. Bay of Navarino

Anchorage opportunities are scarce on the "fingers" of the Peloponnese, so we're once again embarking on a longer overnight passage. Our destination is Navarino Bay on the west coast, famous for a major naval battle between the Turks and the British in 1827 (the British won). The large bay is sheltered from the open sea by a long, narrow island (Sphaktiria), offering ideal and well-protected anchorages. We head for the anchorage in the north of the bay, well protected from swell. Unfortunately, gusts of wind are blowing in from the shore, making for a less than restful night's sleep (only a 6 out of 10). Here, too, there's plenty of water sports and curious tourists. The anchorage has about 12 boats, and the next day strong gusts begin. For the first time, our anchor fails us; we drift 50 meters, which is clearly visible on the plotter. We probably didn't let out enough chain, which seems to be the case for all boats, as the water gets shallow quickly here. No problem, we re-anchor and everything was fine again in less than 10 minutes. Then there's a flurry of activity in the anchorage; suddenly everyone is checking their anchors on the foredeck and the windlass is whirring almost everywhere. So, we're not the only ones with problems, but we're certainly the fastest. No matter, this time our anchor holds until the next day; the trusty Rocna is just fighting to maintain its reputation as one of the best anchors in the world.



Fig. 20.2.: The anchor field in Navarino.



Fig. 20.3: View of the beach in Navarino.

## 3. Kyparissia

Due to the unfavourable wind conditions (headwinds and strong gusts), we set off again at 4 a.m. after extensive weather analysis. No problem, the moonlight was good, and we successfully navigated around the small reef in the bay and the southern tip of the island of Pylos. We headed north with little headwind and calm seas. Unfortunately, once again, no sailing, just the consumption of good diesel.

We arrived in **Kyparissia** around 11 a.m., by which time there was wind and gusts. The quay was full, so we dropped anchor in the harbor basin until an Australian catamaran finally departed. No problem, we waited for a calm moment and moored to starboard. The wind pushed us away from the quay, but we remembered a handy trick and secured the midship cleat first. This allowed us to use the engine to move the stern towards the quay, and everything was fine. First, we went to sleep, and then the crew went into town for dinner.



Unfortunately, the weather forecast is not good, but the skipper still gets up at 4 a.m. the next morning. However, strong gusts of wind make sailing so unattractive that a day in port is quickly decided upon.

#### 4. Katakolon

The next day looks much better. Gusts from 5 pm to midnight, then heavenly calm. Tanuki casts off at 4 am with a spring line and off we go. Five hours under motor and we're back in **Katakolon**. Two cruise ships are already there, the usual daily routine. We moor stern-to with a bow anchor, the skipper visits the harbor police for the necessary stamp in the logbook and then orders a rental car for the next day. No, we've already been to Olympia; we simply want to go shopping. In Katakolon, you can park your car right at the dock, and there's a Lidl in the next town (Pyrgos). Two trips later, Tanuki is stocked up again. We continue on towards Zakynthos the next day after we snagged an old anchor in the harbor basin with ours. It was so rusty, though, that we just left it there.

#### 5. Zakynthos

In Zakynthos, we moored stern-to at the quay. Sailors from the neighbouring boats (both flying American flags) helped with the lines, and no one in the harbor master's uniform tried to charge us (they already knew us). We went straight to the harbor office and paid €16 for two days. At the harbor police station, we completed the departure formalities. We were instructed to hand in our logbook to customs. We did so at 9:00 a.m. on our departure day. Unfortunately, it was closed. After a short wait, an employee arrived and, after some chatting and phone calls, accepted our logbook and that of an American boat (the Americans also wanted to take advantage of the good weather). Next, we went to the police station for our passports. It was open, but the officer wasn't there, and we were told to come back the next day with the warning not to leave without a passport stamp. What to do? We took a taxi to the airport and spoke with the immigration officer. He explained that we didn't need a stamp at all and could leave immediately. We somehow had the feeling we were in the American section, which turned out to be incorrect. The two boats to our left and right were indeed flying American flags, but the crews were from Brazil. We were puzzled. So, it was finally goodbye to Greece (Antio Hellada!!)



## 21. Italy

Logbook: Zakynthos - Calabria (Rocella Ionica)

Date: 24.07.22

Days at sea so far: 47

Nautical miles so far: 1516.8

Long-distance sailing is on the agenda. We're heading straight from Zakynthos to Italy, and the weather conditions are perfect. The boat is in the harbor, the larder is fully stocked, and the co-skipper has been to the hairdresser. We've checked out and returned our logbook, so we're definitely ready to go. One last Greek meal, and then we're off in the morning around 11 a.m.

### 1. Crossing

The weather analysis took a little longer this time. We studied weather data from three different sources (Greece, Windy, Predictwind) and downloaded the latest GRIB data. Our navigation program used this data to calculate a course that would provide us with optimal sailing conditions during the crossing (so-called "weather routing"). This is somewhat complex, as wind direction and strength change constantly over the course of two days. We marvel at the benefits of technology. Safety lines were attached, life jackets were laid out, safety equipment was checked, and the boat was made seaworthy, as we were sailing a stretch across the open Mediterranean. Cast off!

First, we sailed up the coast of Zakynthos, following an American yacht we had briefly met – they had set sail about an hour before us. Then it was time to head as far north (upwind) as possible to get a better angle to the wind. So, we sailed close-hauled towards the coast of Kefalonia. Shortly before reaching the coast, we tacked (a bit too early; our buddy boat was smarter and continued sailing about 3 nautical miles upwind) and finally set course for Italy. Initially, we had to contend with waves over 1 meter high and gusts of 20-25 knots, but the wind died down a few hours later, giving us good sailing conditions for our first night. Three-hour watches were assigned, and we sailed through the night in a pleasant 10-12 knot wind. Our destination was the "sole" of Italy. Course and weather conditions were constantly monitored, and the weather routing was recalculated every few hours. We reef the sails for safety during the night to minimize sailing maneuvers. We have prepared chili con carne for dinner.

The next day we sailed towards Calabria. Things were quiet; the sails occasionally needed adjusting, and when the wind became too weak, we motored for a while. Checking the weather and wind data every few hours kept us entertained. We had lost internet reception, and new weather data arrived via shortwave radio. Fortunately, the weather was stable, and the wind was blowing steadily from the north to northwest out of the Adriatic. We were surprised that we were able to complete the passage with only two tacking maneuvers (one already done, the other pending). The second maneuver came in the evening. We changed course from southwest to northwest and tacked. The onboard computer had calculated the optimal point for this tack, and soon the sails were hoisted, setting the new course. Our destination was the small marina in Rocella Ionica, where we planned to recover from the rigors of the crossing.



## 2. Rocella Ionica

After a peaceful night, we reached our destination the following midday. It was siesta time. The harbor master asked us to wait two hours before entering, but we managed to negotiate it down to 90 minutes and decided to visit the conveniently located gas station again. Two boats belonging to the dreaded Italian Financial Police (Guardia di Finanza) were moored there, taking their lunch break. A pleasant chat ensued between the crews and the skipper (Australian boats are apparently a rare sight here), and the astute officers promptly checked our documents, which, after thorough discussion and evaluation of the legal situation, were accepted without objection. We received a record of the inspection, and the officers received a completed inspection in their logbook—virtually without any effort on their part. Everyone was happy. Tanuki refueled, and a little later, a friendly marina attendant took our lines for a berth alongside the pier. We were officially in Bella Italia!

Official visit: marina office, harbor master of the coast guard, no problems. Tanuki gets a quick wash with fresh water to rinse off the salt. There's a pizzeria in the harbor, which we "raid" in the late afternoon, and then it's off to our bunks to catch up on sleep.

## 3. Anchored off Spropolo

Anchoring in Italy is somewhat different than in Greece. On the one hand, there are strict regulations, for example, a distance of at least 200m from the beach must be maintained. However, the main problem for us is that there are practically no safe anchorages. So you anchor directly off the beach and are exposed to wind and waves from three directions.

We set sail after another day in port and motor-sail along the coast to our first anchorage in **Spropolo**. There, the anchor drops in 6 meters and we spend a somewhat rocky night. Oh well, we've had worse nights. Spropolo is already at the "toe" of Italy, and we catch our first glimpse of Sicily through the haze.



Fig. 21.1: At anchor near Spropolo.



## 22. Sicily

Logbook: Spropolo - Taormina – Strait of Messina - Vulcano

Date: 29.07.22

Days at sea so far: 51

Nautical miles covered so far: 1781.1

We set off the next morning and crossed the narrow strait between the mainland and Sicily. Traffic was moderate; occasionally a large cargo ship passed by, and we were able to sail through without any collisions. Even here, the traffic through the Strait of Messina was already becoming apparent.

### 1. Taormina

We sailed into the bay of Taormina, a picturesque tourist resort on the east coast of Sicily, around mid-afternoon. Much earlier, we had been greeted by the view of Mount Etna, and we gazed in awe at the summit of this active volcano. The bay was chaotic, so we decided to moor at a paid buoy and were welcomed and secured by an eager marina attendant. We took the dinghy towards the beach, found a friendly boat rental place, and then hopped on a bus into town for an early dinner. Taormina clings to the mountainside, connected to it by a narrow and winding road leading upwards. It was a nightmare for us, but the bus driver seemed more relaxed, navigating the tight bends with acrobatic manoeuvres and occasional wild gestures. While we had already been surprised by the sheer number of tourists thronging the harbors in Greece, here we saw almost three times that amount. We enter the city through an old city gate and are swept up in the wave of tourists until we finally find a restaurant. Compared to Greece, the prices are about twice as high, but the quality of the food is also significantly better. We return to the boat by bus and dinghy.



Fig. 22.1: The buoy field off Taormina.



Fig. 22.2: View from above of the bay of Taormina.





Fig. 22.3: Old theatre and Mount Etna in the background.

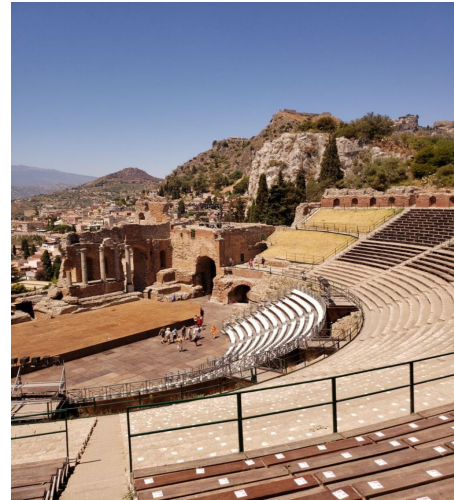


Fig. 20.4: The ancient theatre of Taormina.



Fig. 22.5: A smoking Mount Etna in the background of Taormina.



Fig. 22.6: Mount Etna at night.

The next day we got up early and took the dinghy and bus back to the town of Taormina to visit more sights. We visited the ancient Roman theatre and realized that in many of our photos, the gently steam-ing Mount Etna was "photobombing" the scene. We took another stroll through the town and had a light lunch. Afterwards, we returned to the boat and enjoyed a relaxing afternoon. We waited for George to collect our mooring fees, but nothing happened. No matter. We continued our journey the next morning.

We want to pass through the Strait of Messina, the narrow passage between the boot of Italy and the football-shaped Sicily. It lies just above the Sicilian city of Messina. Between 50 and 100 large freighters pass through this narrow passage daily, and their traffic must be coordinated to avoid critical situations. Therefore, a traffic separation scheme (TSS) has been established here, mandating separate lanes for

oncoming traffic. The Messina VTS (Vessel Traffic Services) control centre monitors this area and coordinates passage. Adding to the challenge are strong tidal currents in the strait, which can reach speeds of 5-6 knots, making them almost impossible for Tanuki's engine to overcome. Optimal preparation is therefore essential to account for wind, currents, and traffic during the passage.

## 2. Anchoring off Gallico Marina

The Italian website that displays the tides in the strait, after some study, indicates 6:00 AM as a favourable time for a northbound passage. The wind conditions are also suitable at that time, so we set 6:00 AM as our passage time. The passage takes approximately 90 minutes during which the conditions don't change significantly. A suitable anchorage just before the TSS (Traffic Separation Scheme) is quickly found: the beach at **Gallico Marina**.

We sail north from Taormina and first register with the traffic control centre, informing them that we intend to anchor before the TSS and pass through at 6:00 a.m. the following morning. Since anchoring is not permitted everywhere in the vicinity of the road, we inquire and receive permission to anchor off Gallico Marina, as it is well outside the TSS does not begin there.

If you're wondering why we contacted the VTS Messina so early, it's worth noting that registration with the VTS is mandatory, and failure to comply can result in hefty fines. We want to be on the safe side and are following the procedure meticulously because we know it's both nautical and responsible, and because a potentially unnecessary call won't cause any harm.

We arrived in the afternoon and quickly found a suitable anchorage in 5 meters of water. Initially, a fire department helicopter flew noisily past us every 5 minutes, scooping up water. There must be a fire somewhere. Around 5 p.m., it was quiet, except for loud music from the beach resort, which continued until 4 a.m. There was also a beach firework display. No matter, we couldn't sleep well anyway and woke up at 5 a.m. for a coffee and a quick wash. We hoped that the skipper's tide planning, based on the Italian current forecasts (Fig. 22.08), was accurate.



Fig. 22.7: Beach fireworks in front of Gallico Marina.

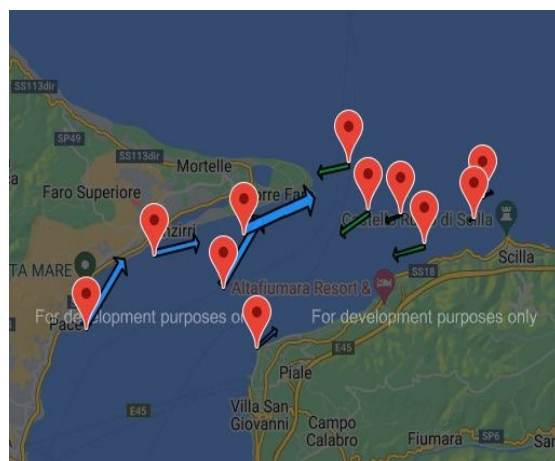


Fig. 22.8: Tidal flow pattern in the Strait of Messina for our passage.

### 3. The Strait of Messina

We set off under engine, dutifully check in with Messina VTS and receive instructions to start at the far edge of the right lane. We do so! The current is initially with us; we're doing 7 knots and pass Villa San Giovanni without any problems. The ferry traffic, which is permitted to cross the VTS here, is heavier than the regular traffic in the road. The VTS is Z-shaped, and we soon make our first course correction to starboard. From now on, there's a slight current against us (about 0.5 knots), and we still make good progress. An American boat passes us, without AIS and on the wrong side (a ghost boat?). If they're caught, they face fines of several thousand euros. Never mind. We soon make our final course correction to Port and finally leave the VTS. We check out with Messina VTS by radio, and because we're being polite, we also let them know that we're now turning northwest towards the Sicilian coast.



Fig. 22.9: The Strait of Messina with the world-famous lighthouse at its northern end.

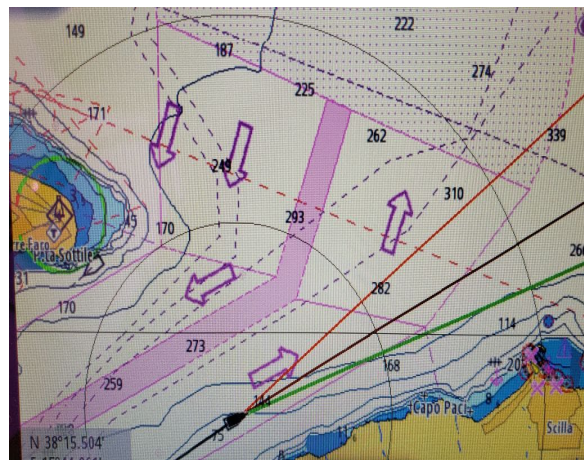


Fig. 22.10: The northern end of the TSS. Tanuki is the boat shown in black. The lighthouse is on the far left.

**Conclusion:** We followed the rules, the traffic control center was friendly and helpful, and our preparation was spot on. We had no problems with strong head currents or eddies, and the traffic was minimal. We're justifiably proud of ourselves.

### 4. Marina Poseidon in Milazzo

We continued on our way and planned to spend another night in a marina to replenish our water supplies. After studying the map, we chose Marina Poseidon in **Milazzo**, another four hours from the Strait of Messina. No problem, we called, someone answered in Italian and hung up immediately. Huh? We called ten more times and no one answered. Didn't they want to make any money (marina fees around €100)? We got closer and closer to the marina, and just before we arrived, we tried to contact them by radio. They told us they didn't speak English and that we should leave. What now? The skipper was furious, so we sped towards the marina and gestured to the marina attendant on the pier, who finally understood what we wanted and waved us in. We got a berth right at the end with friendly Italian neighbours who immediately took an interest in us. Checking in at the marina office involved a combination of hand gestures and Google Translate. Then it was time to fill up the water, hose down Tanuki, and eat pizza. The next morning, well-rested, we continue our journey.



## 5. Aeolian Islands – Volcano

We're off to Volcano, the southernmost of the Aeolian Islands (Isole Eolie). It's very popular with sailors because of its beautiful anchorages and the Star, a more or less inactive volcano with a fantastic trail around the caldera. Sabine, the trekker, is already looking forward to it.

We sail for about 5 hours, see Stromboli (the northernmost island) in the distance, and anchor in the southern anchorage, **Spiaggia del Asimov** (is it named after the famous science fiction author?). It's crowded – at least 20 boats of all sizes are anchored here. We're lucky that a boat leaves the area and we can squeeze in. It takes us three tries before the skipper is satisfied. The anchor is on seagrass. Deckhand Max dives down to check and – oh no! – the anchor is upside down. Max turns it by hand, and the skipper drives the engine into the seabed. Another dive – perfect, the anchor is in. We have delicious chicken involtini with potatoes and beans for dinner. By 9 p.m., only 4 boats remain at anchor. Unfortunately, sleep is rather restless due to a swell from the south.

We're amazed that Italian boats can anchor so effortlessly in such tight spaces. They come in, circle the anchorage once, and then the anchor drops with lightning speed, leaving the yacht precisely in a suitable spot with just the right distance from neighbouring boats. And they're not all professional skippers; almost everyone here can do it without shouting or multiple attempts. Is this a general characteristic of Italian skippers, or why can't other nationalities (without mentioning the usual examples) do it at all? Since then, we've internally referred to precision anchoring in tight spaces as "Sicilian anchoring."

The next day we sailed to the northern tip of the island and peered into the northern harbor (Porto di Levante). Three ferries crossed our path, and we decided we didn't want to go there. We continued around the northernmost point to the northwestern anchorage (**Porto di Ponente**). It was also narrow there, and we accepted the challenge of precision anchoring in 5-6 meters of water. Three attempts later, we were in – we weren't quite as adept as the Italians yet. The anchor dropped onto sand and held immediately. A quick check by the diver – all good.

A picturesque bay with several hotels; the guests are mostly Italians, friendly and completely relaxed. The water is clear and pleasantly warm. A holiday atmosphere sets in. Unfortunately, the volcano is closed due to gas emissions; we see fumaroles steaming yellowish. So, no hike to the summit. But plenty of fun in the crystal-clear water. We stay for three days; we like it that much.



Fig. 22.11: Southern anchorage of Volcano.



Fig. 22.12.: Don't worry, the volcano is only steaming slightly.



Fig. 22.13: Passage between Volcano and Lipari with grotesque islands.



Fig. 22.14: The northern anchorage (Porto di Ponente) at dawn. Sicilian anchoring!

## 6. Anchored in Cefalu

Our holiday on Volcano is over; we're heading west back to Sicily, to the town of **Cefalu**. We want to drop off our third crew member, Max, in Palermo. His gap year is over, and he has to return to Australia to apply for university.

Cefalu is one of the most picturesque places on the north coast of Sicily and has a popular swimming and anchorage bay a little further east. We anchor there, once again in typical Sicilian fashion, meaning close to other boats, and spend a somewhat restless night because of the swell coming into the bay. We also don't manage to go into town to renew our internet subscription. Everyone's unhappy! No internet is a terrible situation.

As consolation, we are allowed to experience the panorama of the place upon departure the next morning.

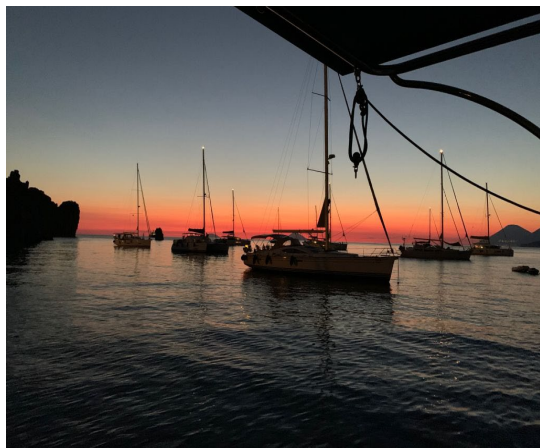


Fig. 22.15: Anchoring off Cefalu, it's tight.....

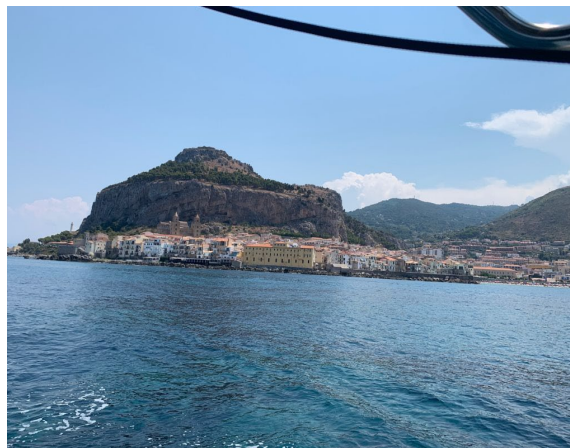


Fig. 22.16: Around the corner is the town of Cefalu.

## 7. Termini Imerese

In the evening, we trade beauty for functionality. We anchor next to **Termini Imerese**, a purely industrial port a little further west. There, we and two other boats are protected by the outer breakwater, and we spend a calm and very restful night without any rocking. The view is a bit dreary, but that doesn't bother us while we sleep—well, almost. Around 4 a.m., a fisherman with engine trouble chugs by and wakes the skipper...

## 8. Palermo

Next stop: **Palermo**. We managed to snag a berth in a small marina (Marina Salpancore). Not exactly cheap, but with direct access to the city centre. Mooring is no problem; we're moored near the outer harbor road (Via Francesco Crispi) in "La Cala (Porto Palermo)."

Rinse off the boat, enjoy a beer on the dock, have dinner, sleep in, renew your internet card – the crew is happy again. Max is driven to the distant airport in the rental car, and on the way back we raid a Lidl and arrive back at the boat with a fully loaded car.

Despite several attempts to get the official travel document (Constituto) stamped at the harbor master's office, we were unsuccessful. We were told to simply hand it back at the last port. It seems the officials aren't taking this very seriously. Our time in Sicily has come to an end; we're now heading to Sardinia!





Fig. 22.17: The second largest theater in Europe...



Fig. 22.18: The cathedral is also imposing.

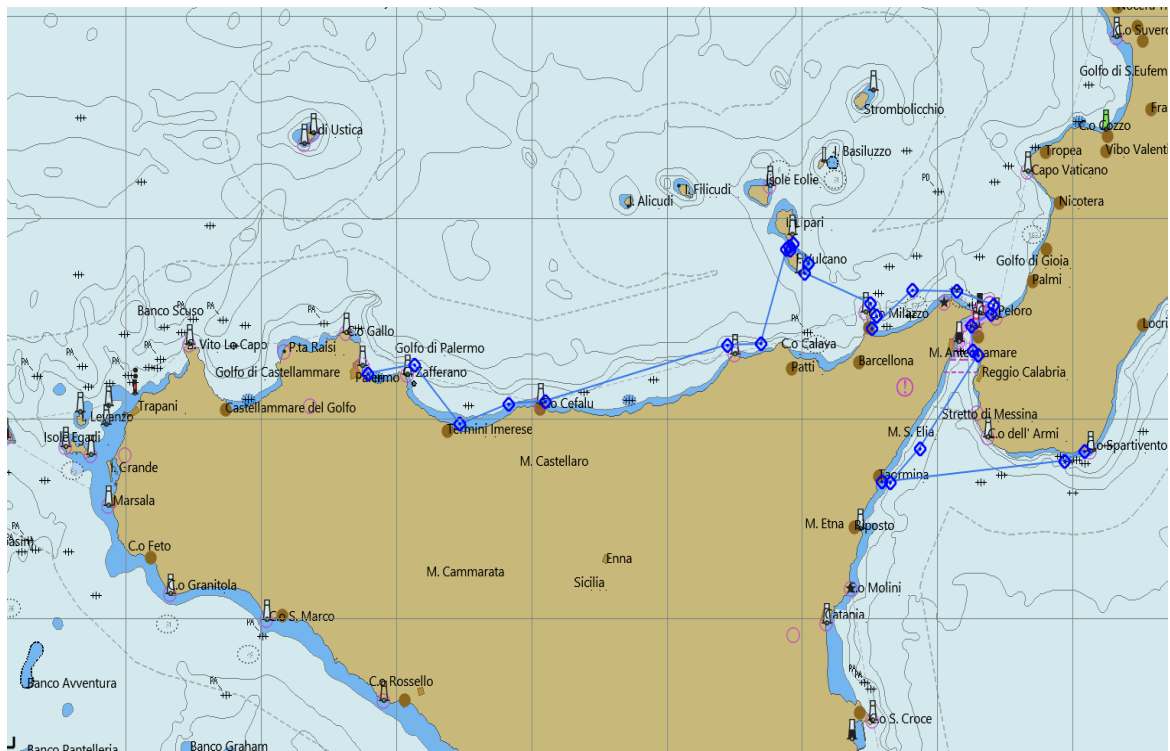


Fig. 22.19: Our journey along the coast of Sicily.

## 23. Sardinia

Logbook: Palermo - Olbia - Porto Torres

Date: 12.08.2022

Days at sea so far: 59

Nautical miles so far: 1947.7

It's time for another crossing. This time, the crossing is planned to take 48 hours, and the wind conditions aren't favourable. We'll set off from Palermo at 10 a.m.

### 1. Crossing to Sardinia

We sail past Cape Santo Vito and then out into the open Tyrrhenian Sea, heading northwest. The weather forecast predicts we'll just barely be able to sail. But it doesn't work out that way. Shortly after Cape Santo Vito, the sky clears, and the wind is blowing directly onto our bow. What now? Tacking! That only works to a limited extent. So we tack with the engine running, occasionally without. During the day with appropriate sails, at night with reduced sails. The day drifts by, and after a magnificent sunset, we spend the night in three-hour shifts. Every 10 minutes, we do a thorough 360-degree check; otherwise, the radar is running, warning us about the fishing boats that don't transmit AIS. On the second day, the sea state and, unfortunately, the wind also weaken somewhat. The following day is rather uneventful; the night is again divided into watches, and around breakfast time the next day, we see land, which had already been announced earlier by internet reception and modern electronic navigation.

We are approaching our destination, Porto Corallo.

### 2. Relaxation in Porto Corallo

**Porto Corallo** is a small marina, and after notifying the marina by radio, we can easily enter. We'll spend two nights here to recharge our batteries and wash the salt off the boat after the crossing. Then we'll continue north.

### 3. Marina Santa Maria Navarrese

We're sailing straight through, meaning we have a long way to go before stopping at the next port. Arbatax, a popular spot with sailors, unfortunately doesn't have a berth for us. They could have told us that a bit earlier, but once again, we didn't get a reply to our emails. So, plan B: we're going to the next marina, about 40 minutes north. **Marina Santa Maria Navarrese** has space for us; it's a bit more expensive, but cozy. We don't have a choice, as we have to pick up our daughter from Australia in Cagliari by rental car, since she wants to spend a few days with us. So, we take the bus to **Arbatax** (or rather, to the small town of Tortoli) – well, we don't. The bus driver won't let us on because we're not wearing Covid masks. Nobody does here, except on the bus. Our own fault. The next bus isn't for a few hours. By then, we'll have gotten some masks.

We pick up our small rental car and drive to Cagliari. A quick stop at the chandlery (boat supply store) to buy a new outhaul (the line that tensions the mainsail aft), and Larissa – our new crew member – is

already in the car. Back to the marina. A superyacht has now moored sideways in the harbor basin. Boats can hardly get in or out. To make this possible, the marina staff have loosened our moorings. Oops! The corner of our stern hatch has made unpleasant contact with the dock and broken off. Not our fault, and after some back and forth, we get a substantial reduction in the mooring fees.

At the same time, a little further north, a strong Mistral (north wind) had stirred things up in northern Corsica. Yachts had to weather gusts of up to 50 knots, resulting in fatalities and damaged boats. The effects of this weather pattern also made things unpleasant for us. We decided to stay in the harbor for another day. Fortunately, we were moored in a relatively well-protected area, and the troublesome superyacht finally cast off to the applause of all the smaller boaters.

#### 4. Cala di Luna and La Caletta harbor

We cast off and sail north, passing some of Sardinia's most beautiful bays: Cala Goloritze and **Cala di Luna**, where we stop for a swim. In the afternoon, we continue to the small harbor of La Caletta. Here, we have incredible luck. The harbor has a free mooring for transfer passengers, and we manage to snag a spot by chance. We saved money and enjoyed heavenly peace and quiet without any swell.



Fig. 23.1: Cala di Luna (swimming break).

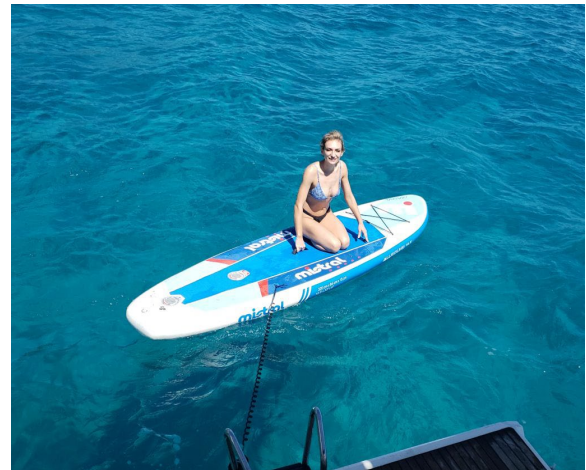


Fig. 23.2: Daughter Larissa on our SUP board.

#### 5. Olbia

Onward to Olbia the next day. The wind has picked up (still the Mistral from further north) and we occasionally encounter somewhat unpleasant waves. The discussion about seasickness tablets continues.

We stumbled upon a secret (!) phone number given to us from the neighboring boat (cost: a can of beer) and snagged a spot in the Marina Circulo Nautico. No problem, our mooring went perfectly, with the ideal distance from the dock. Batman even passed by on the Bat-Ferry.

Crew member Larissa disembarks to return to the airport. We stay for two days and then decide to move on to get west as quickly as possible.



The skipper is relaminating the missing corner of the swim platform. Luckily, we have a pack of West System epoxy and fiberglass mats in our toolbox for repairs like this. First, the epoxy needs to harden, then the core will be coated with gelcoat (a white, fiberglass-free material for a smooth surface).



Fig. 23.3: Batman now has a bigger boat.



Fig. 23.4: Small market in Olbia, giving us good navigational information to get back home.

From Olbia, our plan was to sail along the north coast of Sardinia and then west through the Strait of Bonifacio (between Corsica and Sardinia) towards the Balearic Islands. We would soon discover that this was not a simple weekend trip, but rather fraught with difficulties.

## 6. Costasmeralda and Porto Liscia

We set off from Olbia in the morning, refuelled, and then headed north in winds up to 20 knots from the northeast and waves up to 1 meter high. Fortunately, it calmed down a bit after rounding Cap Ferro and entering the lee of the northern islands. The sheer volume of traffic, however, was quite something. Hundreds of motorboats, sailboats, and superyachts of all sizes were cruising around, creating some rather dangerous situations with overtaking maneuvers, often at inappropriate speeds. A small superyacht nearly rammed a sailing catamaran in front of us, giving us quite a scare. The sheer number of boats flooded our navigation screen with data, and the skipper had to keep a constant, focused lookout ahead and behind him, as the motorboats were sometimes hurtling through the channel at breakneck speeds producing a lot of wash to shake smaller boats.

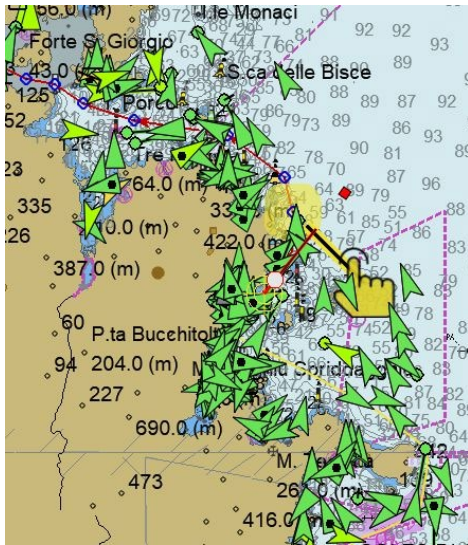


Fig. 23.5: How many AIS boats fit on our navigation screen? The skipper is getting confused



Fig. 23.6.: The anchor field in Porto Liscia!

The anchorages are full, and harbors cost a small fortune. Superyachts are moored side by side by the dozen. We continue on beyond the western border of the Costasmeralda (Palau) and anchor in the bay of **Porto Liscia**, where we spend a peaceful night with little swell. Only in the afternoon do we receive a visit from a few windsurfers from the neighbouring surf school.

## 7. Porto Torres

The next morning, we continued through the Strait of Bonifacio, with the rocky coast of Corsica to starboard, and turned southwest into a long, sweeping bay. We decided against the anchorage we had originally planned for off Isola Rossa, as we had been offered a good deal on a berth in Porto Torres, which we much preferred. So we sailed straight on, especially since the wind conditions were exceptionally favourable; a speed of 6-8 knots allowed us to arrive by late afternoon. A friendly marina attendant waved us into our berth, and we spent two nights there to recharge for the long crossing. Porto Torres is somewhat off the beaten tourist track and therefore quite peaceful.



Fig. 23.7: 8kt without engine, Tanuki is putting in the effort!



Fig. 23.8: Docked in Porto Torres.



Fig. 23.9: From Sicily to Sardinia.



## 24. Balearic Islands

Logbook: Porto Torres – Mahon – Port Soller – Port Andratx

Date: 27.08.22

Days at sea so far: 67

Nautical miles so far: 2310.4

### 1. Crossing to Menorca

The favourable weather conditions allow us to continue our journey. We plan to sail west through the Fornelli Passage. This is a narrow channel between two islands to the north and is only navigable to a limited extent, as the depth is very shallow at 3-4 meters (note that this is only within the navigable area of just under 100 meters). Furthermore, about 20 boats are anchored in the passage, requiring us to navigate a bit of slalom. Maintaining our concentration, we navigate the passage without any problems and reach a coastal area where we encounter another 17 knots of wind and an unpleasant 1.5-meter swell. We briefly discuss whether we should head for the next harbor. The crew decides to continue, and it proves to be a good decision. After only 2-3 hours, the waves subside, and we sail comfortably through the night.

The next day also passes without incident; we have lost contact with the mobile network, but can still access weather data via shortwave radio. The last night at sea is also pleasant, and we reach Porto Mahon on Menorca, and thus Spanish territory, as planned in the early morning. The Spanish courtesy flag is hoisted.

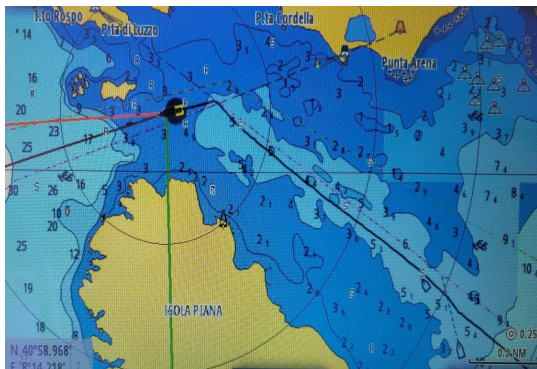


Fig. 24.1.: The Fornelli Passage. Shallow waters.



Fig. 24.2: Fornelli Passage, reefs lurk.

### 2. Mahon

After our crossing, we arrived in the bay of **Mahon** (Mao in Catalan) on Menorca around 8 a.m. Too early to get a marina berth immediately. Since marinas in the Balearic Islands generally don't take reservations during peak season, we had to make some last-minute phone calls, but luckily, we got an offer starting at 11 a.m. So we anchored in the only permitted anchorage, **Cala Taulera**, for a few hours and got our berth around noon. The bay is a long, narrow inlet, and our marina is located right at the end. Fortunately, we got an outer berth, which requires less maneuvering in a confined space, and we could relax after docking. Our first appointment was with the authorities, specifically customs. We

asked if any registrations were required to enter Spain. A friendly official explained that we didn't need to do anything; we had officially cleared into the Schengen Area, and our boat was subject to temporary import regulations, so everything was fine. Next on the agenda is a visit to a tapas bar (cervceria) and the purchase of a Spanish internet SIM card. Then off to bed.

The next day, Tanuki is cleaned and we refill our water tanks. There's a gin distillery nearby, which we visit and sample extensively. We buy a bottle and a fridge magnet as souvenirs.

The next day we continued on to our first anchorage.

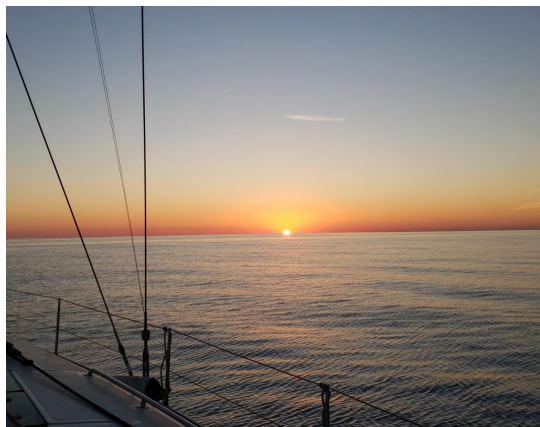


Fig. 24.3: Sunset on our passage.



Fig. 24.4: The elongated harbor of Puerto Mahon.

### 3. Puerto de Soller

We sailed along the south coast of Menorca and had planned to anchor in the bay of Santa Galdana in the afternoon. No luck, it was full. Not surprising, since we were a bit late at 6 pm. Plans B and C (neighboring anchorages) were also full or didn't appeal to us. So we quickly decided to turn our day trip into an overnight passage and head straight to Mallorca. We sailed along the north coast of Mallorca. Port Soller was our destination, and we arrived relatively early, which was fortunate, as the anchorage area in this otherwise safe harbor was rather small, and many yachts were vying for a spot. As we entered, we had a little race with a Belgian boat (which we lost). Since the Belgians seemed rather indecisive, we sped past and spontaneously grabbed one of the last good spots. It was tight, and we recalled other close calls, but we're used to it by now. The anchor dropped to 8 meters with 35 meters of chain. It held!

There's a slight swell in the harbor, and the boat is rocking gently. Throughout the afternoon, more boats arrive, and dramas unfold during the sometimes-incomprehensible anchoring maneuvers. It gets more crowded, and the chain length of the newly arriving boats gets shorter and shorter.

In the evening, we saw a thunderstorm approaching in the east. No rain, just a few flashes of lightning. Suddenly, a violent gust of wind hit us without warning, reaching 28 knots. All the boats scrambled, tossed about, and we saw several adrift, their anchors having failed. Ours held, but a wooden ketch was blown against us. We wanted to start the engine as a precaution and were shocked to find it wouldn't start. The problem was quickly identified: the battery had died (Murphy's Law?). The skipper then removed the bow thruster battery and installed it as a temporary starter battery. It worked.

Fortunately, we didn't end up needing the engine. But the ordeal had left its mark. The next morning, we fled this inhospitable anchorage at 7:00 a.m. and continued on our way. The temporary starter battery worked well. However, we were now without a bow thruster. Tight maneuvers in marinas are now impossible, or only achievable with very basic tricks from our repertoire. It's important to remember that Tanuki is 15 meters long and also has the disadvantage of a twin rudder, which makes tight reverse turns more difficult.



Fig. 24.3: "Sicilian anchoring" in Puerto Soller.



Fig. 24.4: This battery was broken!



Fig. 24.5: The Cathedral of Palma.



Fig. 24.6: The cathedral from below.

#### 4. Puerto de Andratx and Palma de Mallorca

We have an appointment with family members who live near Palma de Mallorca, so we're spending a few days in the **Port Andratx** marina. Docking proved tricky, as we don't have a bow thruster and the marina attendant's assistance was rather unprofessional (too slow). But we're in. We desalinate Tanuki, Sabine takes her scooter into town and buys a new battery, which the skipper installs. We take the bus



to Palma and are captivated by its splendour, the architecture (cathedral) and the tourist crowds around it.



Fig. 24.7: The beach of Palma de Mallorca.



Fig. 24.8: Architecture in the city centre.



Fig. 24.9: The courthouse.



Fig. 24.10: Family reunion needs to be celebrated.

## 5. Crossing to the mainland

We had originally planned to make a brief stop in Ibiza, but then decided to sail directly to the mainland. We set off around midday and, thanks to favourable weather conditions, had an uneventful crossing.



Fig. 24.11.: Departure from Mallorca. Goodbye Balearic Islands!

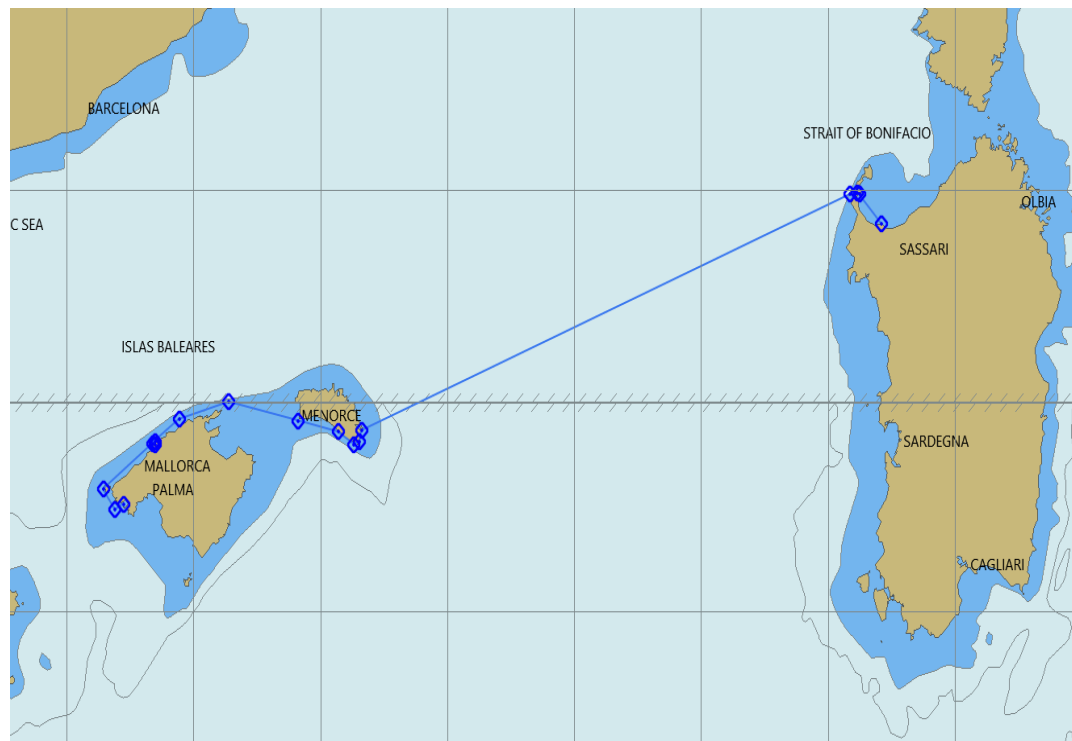


Fig. 24.12.: From Sardinia to Mallorca.

## 25. Spain (Mainland)

Logbook: Port Andratx – Calpe – Cartagena – Almerimar

Date: 04.09.22

Days at sea so far: 71

Nautical miles so far: 2605.6

### 1. Crossing to the mainland

Due to favourable weather conditions, the crossing was uneventful.

We arrived on the Spanish mainland around 8 a.m. and still hadn't found a marina. We emailed four marinas, but only received a reply stating that reservations weren't possible at this time of year. So, we had to make some phone calls. Of the four possible marinas (Altea, Greenwich, Moraira, and Calpe), we got a reservation directly at Calpe and changed course immediately.

### 2. Calpe

At first glance, **Calpe** is a tranquil place with a small mountain (rock?) called **Ifach** towering over it. However, this description doesn't take into account the opposite shore, which consists of about 3 km of high-rise buildings and a crowded beach with off-season tourists. Anyway, we walk into the small marina and get a berth at the first jetty. No problem, we tie up and catch up on some sleep. To explain: Each of us does two 3-hour watches per night, with hopefully 3 hours of sleep in between. But that doesn't always work out, so in reality, our sleep time is considerably shorter. After the night shift, we're usually tired and unrested, especially if we only have a short crossing and no chance to get into a sleep rhythm. In any case, we're definitely tired when we arrive.



Fig. 25.1: The Ifach, the star of Calpe....



Fig. 25.2: ...from every direction..

In the evening, we have a glass of wine and go to one of the many fish restaurants. The next day, we take care of Tanuki. Although we had only planned to stay two nights, the weather forecast suggests a third, so we book it. Well, reality hits us here; we have to vacate our cozy berth for the last night and



move to a spot in the inner harbor opposite the slipway. It's going to be tight! We're quite apprehensive, as we'll have to practically turn on a dime and maneuver into the gap with pinpoint accuracy. Oh dear! So, the next morning, we cast off. Hooray! There's hardly any wind, and Tanuki obediently turns into the new position with plenty of bow thrust. The skipper can be proud and gets a glass of sangria in the evening!

### 3. Cartagena

The next morning, we continued on to **Cartagena**. We got out of our berth without any problems and filled up with a few liters of diesel, which would be cheap later in Gibraltar, so we tried to arrive there with an almost empty tank.

We motored through a calm night, full moon, no wind, and a mirror-smooth sea. We were only kept on our toes by the radio, which every 30 minutes announced a "Pan Pan," also broadcast via DSC (similar to a text message on a mobile phone). This distress signal triggered a loud warning signal on our radio, exactly as it should (really annoying, but distress calls are important and must be heeded). The radio control centre instructed all ships to keep a sharp lookout for small boats with an unknown number of occupants. We realized this meant refugee boats, also trying to take advantage of the good weather to cross the Mediterranean to Spain. We did as required, the moonlight helped, and we kept the radar running all night (even though it didn't promise much success). We were afraid of collision risk. Anyway, we didn't see a single refugee boat.

At daybreak, a large coast guard vessel overtook us just before we entered the harbor. Many people sat huddled together at the bow, wrapped in thermal blankets. They had survived the crossing, but what awaited them was uncertain.

The marina in Cartagena has reserved a berth for us, so no stress. We decide to take advantage of the good weather and continue on to Almerimar the very next day. In the afternoon, we add some variety to our meals and walk into town for an aperitif before visiting a highly praised Indian restaurant. Curry Corner offers a good selection of Indian dishes, and we sample our way through the menu.



Fig. 25.3: The marina promenade of Cartagena.



Fig. 25.4: City centre of Cartagena.

#### 4. Almerimar

We set sail the next day. The skipper quickly repaired a door lock (typical Bavaria: a broken spring) and off we went. We got out of the harbor without any problems, the wind shifted from almost directly ahead to broadside, and we sailed a few more miles until the wind died down again and had to be replaced by Volvo. Meanwhile, we received word from **Almerimar** that a berth was reserved for us – finally! Around 5 p.m., we caught a glimpse of a few dolphins, but since we were motoring, the animals kept their distance – what a shame!

We arrived in Almerimar in the early morning, cruising around a bit. We kept our engine on half power for a few miles before arrival so we'd be there by 9:00 AM, when marinas usually open (well, they're supposed to be open 24/7, but you can't always rely on that in the Mediterranean). Our radio call was answered after 15 seconds, and we were instructed to dock at the Almerimar lighthouse to check in. A marina attendant helped us, and a little later we met Fumi, one of the front desk staff at Almerimar. Fumi is Japanese, having emigrated to Spain many years ago, and apparently has a knack for languages. He speaks at least four languages fluently, but admits that his French isn't so good. He was also thoroughly amused by the name Tanuki (which is from his home culture) and even took a photo of us with Tanuki for his website. We are assigned a good spot at the jetty and the marina attendant, whom we already know, hurries over to moor us there in the Roman Catholic style (i.e., as is usual in the Mediterranean, with the stern facing the jetty).

Almerimar may be a small tourist town, but you could also say that the town and marina have formed a unique symbiosis here. Besides a jetty for larger boats, there are three harbor basins (darsenas) that extend deep into the town and all belong to the marina. After a hearty post-dock beer (so early in the morning?!), we explore the town and finally feel at home and settle in for a longer stay. We're off on vacation now. Really?



Fig.

25.5: Approach to Almerimar. The small lighthouse and the marina office are visible.



Fig.

25.6: We sail along the southern coast of Spain to Almerimar.



## 26. Refit in Almerimar

Logbook: Almerimar

Date: 11.09.22

Days at sea so far: 76

Nautical miles so far: 2906.1

We've now been in **Almerimar** for six weeks. The marina is clean, the marina staff are friendly, and only the washing facilities are in need of some updating. Almerimar is interesting in that the marina extends into the town like a comb, meaning smaller boats are moored directly in the town, while larger boats are moored at the three long jetties that jut out into the harbor. We're moored at jetty number 1 after registering at the lighthouse.



Fig. 26.1: The Almerimar Marina. A synthesis of city and port (Image source: Puerto Deportivo Almerimar).



Fig. 26.2: The individual harbor basins (Darsenas) extend deep into the town.

Almerimar is one of the more affordable marinas and boasts a large shipyard with ample berths and moderate prices. Experts are available for almost every trade, and the town's two or three chandleries are well-stocked. Furthermore, orders and packages arrive quickly and cheaply, as delivery times and shipping costs are a nightmare for sailors in remote areas. Almerimar also offers a Volvo dealership, doctors, pharmacies, restaurants, and a well-stocked supermarket (Mercadona).

Especially for boats crossing the Atlantic or returning from it, Almerimar is the ideal marina for a rest stop. Therefore, many boats planning to cross the Atlantic gather here in autumn to prepare their vessels for the voyage. The German offshore sailing club Trans Ocean alone has more than 10 boats moored here.

So we also want to get Tanuki ready for the journey and transform our boat into a proper bluewater yacht.

We're totally surprised because we were able to organize all the necessary repairs and maintenance work within three days. This includes scheduling a crane appointment and securing commitments from

two freelance mechanics for the work on the engine and bow thruster. We can also work on some projects ourselves at the shipyard. So, we'll get started first thing Monday morning. No vacation!

We had booked for 8 a.m., so we chugged off at 7:45 a.m. and were actually the first ones at the crane. Tanuki reversed into the crane station and was expertly lifted ashore by the large crane, maneuvered precisely into the parking space, and placed on wooden supports. We were so excited that we forgot to take pictures...



Fig. 26.3: A boat is lifted out of the water by the travel lift (it is not Tanuki).



Fig. 26.4: Tanuki on land, seen from outside the boatyard.

The hull looks good, not too much marine growth, and the keel and propeller are still attached. After a quick rinse with a pressure washer, Tanuki is clean and needs to dry. The shipyard ground has dark sand, presumably containing decades' worth of accumulated toxins. We don't want to live on the boat in this condition, so we're moving into a small apartment we rented cheaply (since it's the off-season). It's much more comfortable, especially since we'd have to climb a 6-meter ladder just to get on the boat.

## 1. Hull

The next day, we discussed the upcoming work with Chris, the shipyard manager, a unique Englishman who speaks surprisingly good German. We wanted to completely rebuild the hull, something the surveyor (the yacht expert) had recommended to us last year. This required completely removing the old antifouling, a mammoth job that we didn't want to do ourselves due to the toxicity of the material. We did, however, plan to apply the various layers of the barrier coat and the new antifouling ourselves. Chris offered us a significantly better price for the materials than the local suppliers and also suggested that one of his guys spray-paint it for us, again at a sensationally low price. We immediately accepted, thus outsourcing this entire task to the shipyard.

When it comes to antifouling, many boats want a long-lasting material like Coppercoat, but for cost reasons, we opted for a conventional product from Hempel, which we chose in a dark gray to match the design of our Tanuki. Underneath, we applied four coats of osmosis barrier and a primer. While we

don't have any problems with osmosis, we wanted to apply the protection preventively, as the timing is favorable (Tanuki will be sanded down to the gelcoat). (Explanation: Osmosis occurs when moisture penetrates the plastic hull and can cause blisters. It's unsightly and expensive to repair.)

Sanding off the old antifouling takes more than three days, including breaks. Tanuki disappears under a protective film, and one or two people wearing respirators wield the sanding tools. Finally, the underbody shines in the smooth white of the plastic hull.

The new coating is sprayed on again under protective film in several phases.



Fig. 26.5: The old antifouling is being sanded off (first day).



Fig. 26.6: One side finished (second day).



Fig. 26.7: Christo was there. Spraying is taking place.



Fig. 26.8: Finished so far.





Fig. 26.9: Tanuki in her new undergarment.

## 2. Polishing

The above-water hull needs polishing, partly to protect it from UV radiation, and partly to give it a beautiful shine. We're doing this ourselves. We're polishing in two stages with a professional polishing machine. Polish 1 is a bit more aggressive, polish 2 is finer and contains UV protection. We complained to the shipyard manager, Chris, until he finally provided us with a scaffold on wheels for the weekend.

Polishing is quite a strain on our not-so-strong arms (neither of us are Schwarzeneggers), so we take turns. It takes a total of 2.5 days until Tanuki is gleaming. Before that, the skipper has to fill in some gelcoat damage (that's the boat's top plastic layer). No problem for a trained dentist.

A small scratch is located in the area of a decorative stripe. Werner, a friend and master painter, helps us with this. His boat (also a Bavaria) was moored right next to ours, and he often met with the skipper to play chess. The Tanuki Grey color is mixed from black and white paint and applied with a small spray gun.



Fig. 26.10: Sabines turn to polish.



Fig. 26.11: Reward for the efforts. Tanuki shines.

In parallel with the hull work, work is now beginning on important onboard systems and the engine.

### 3. Engine

Our engine is a Volvo D2-75, which has faithfully served us so far, but with 5,000 engine hours, it's seen some use (not a problem for a robust diesel) and we want to do something good for it. We book Paul, a busy mechanic, for an inspection and lo and behold, the engine needs more than just some oil and a little TLC to purr happily again.

The exhaust manifold is rusted through and the turbocharger is irreparably clogged with soot. In addition, the gearbox is leaking and needs an overhaul. Ugh – this is going to be expensive, but it has to be done. So, the engine is lifted slightly, the saildrive (the underwater part with the propeller attached) is removed, and the gearbox is taken out. This goes to a specialist who completely disassembles it, installs new bearings and seals, and curses a blue streak about previous, improperly executed repairs. The turbocharger goes to a specialist workshop but is deemed beyond repair, meaning a new one is needed, which is ordered from England. The same applies to the exhaust manifold.

Since the saildrive was already out, we also replaced the saildrive rubber boot. Unfortunately, all these tasks took time, and as a result, we were stuck at the shipyard for a full four weeks until Paul put everything back together. Now the Volvo is humming along again!



Fig. 26.12: The rusted-through exhaust manifold of our Volvo.

#### 4. Through-hull fittings

Seacocks are located behind the underwater through-hull fittings. If these become brittle over time, there is a risk that they will break off and water will enter the boat. Hundreds of boats have already sunk because of this. Our valves are stiff and no longer inspire confidence. We have decided to install new ones for all underwater through-hull fittings. This is the skipper's responsibility.

The metal parts are sanded down and removed from the outside. We opted for plastic parts from Tru-Design. First, after a test fit, the through-hull fittings are installed, followed by the valves and the hose connections. This is simple in principle, but tricky because there's hardly any space in the compartments, and the installer sometimes needs to be adept at boat yoga just to reach them with one hand. We're replacing seven valves; it takes three days. The co-skipper is appalled by the curses and swear words uttered by the skipper during the installation.





Fig. 26.13: Seacocks from the inside. Heavily corroded.



Fig. 26.14: Through-hull fittings from the outside. Already sanded down.



Fig. 26.15: The old seacocks removed.



Fig. 26.16: New valves during fitting.

## 5. Bow thruster

Our bow thruster has served us well so far, making docking in tight marinas much easier. Unfortunately, it was leaking slightly, and we had to remove a few liters of water from the bilge about once a month. An inspection by a professional (Chris from the shipyard) revealed that the bow thruster tube had been improperly installed. Since we didn't feel qualified to handle this ourselves, we instructed the shipyard to properly secure and seal the tube. This was quickly accomplished by relaminating it.



Fig. 26.17: The leaking inlet into the bow thruster tunnel.

## 6. Back into the water

After most of the problems were resolved, we finally had a crane appointment after four weeks. We arrived promptly at 8:00 a.m., but were the last to be lifted, as the watertightness of the hull installations had to be verified first. Tanuki was lifted from the wooden supports by the large travel lift and gently driven to the crane station (this time we took pictures) and then lowered into the water. The crane slings remained attached. While the crane crew took their lunch break, the skipper inspected all the new seacocks and the bow thruster tunnel. Nothing was leaking; everything was watertight. A huge weight was lifted from the skipper's shoulders. After a short wait, Tanuki was freed and moved to her new berth at dock 2.



Fig. 26.18: Tanuki in the slings....



Fig. 26.19: ...half a turn on the spot.



Fig. 26.20: ...and Splash!

It's November 11, 2022, and we're still in Almerimar. Almost all of our orders have arrived; we're just two packages short, and the riggers will be here next week. The traces of our time in the boatyard (toxic sand and all sorts of dirt) have finally been removed. We spent about two and a half days scrubbing, vacuuming, and cleaning inside and out until the dark dust was finally gone. After that, the work will continue.

## 7. Polishing the deck

All vertical surfaces on deck and all plastic surfaces in the cockpit are polished with polishing paste and wax, a process that takes approximately two days. To explain: Besides achieving the desired effect of a glossy surface, the main purpose of this process is to protect the surface. A boat hull consists of several layers; in simplified terms, it's a composite material made up of plastic and fiberglass mats, which provide mechanical stability. The problem is that over time, water can penetrate between the layers of fiberglass and weaken the material. Therefore, the hull is additionally protected with a layer of pure plastic. This layer is colored white (or another color) and initially polished to a high gloss. Unfortunately, this so-called gelcoat is exposed to the sun, and the high-energy UV rays can attack the surface. In this case, the surface layer deteriorates and becomes chalky and opaque, as is often seen on older boats. Just like with car paint, the gelcoat surface must be cleaned and freed from microscopic UV damage. This is achieved by polishing with a mildly abrasive polishing compound. In the next step, the now-treated surface is coated with a protective layer against UV rays. This is done by polishing with a



minimally abrasive material containing wax for UV protection. As you can see, the polishing is not solely for aesthetic reasons.



Fig. 26.21: Polished cockpit sides.



Fig. 26.22: Top surfaces polished, fenders cleaned.

## 8. New Sprayhood

The sprayhood is essentially the windshield in the cockpit. Our old sprayhood was at the end of its lifespan; the fabric was faded and dirty, the windows fogged up and barely visible. Therefore, we decided to have a new sprayhood made by a sailmaker. Colin, the sailmaker, also reworked our bimini (sunshade) so that it perfectly matches the new design of our radar arch. He also added a few sun visors on the sides and stern.



Fig. 26.23: New sprayhood.

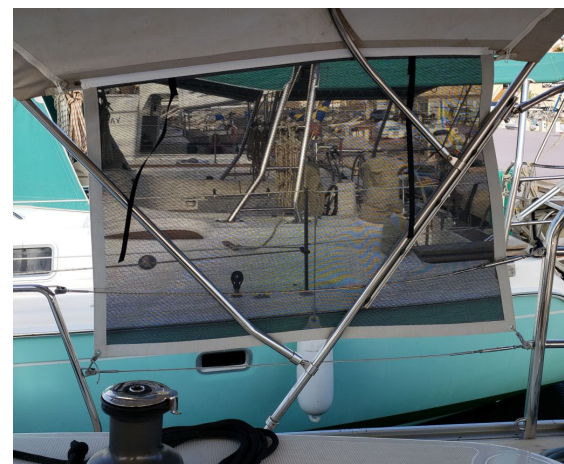


Fig. 26.24: Sun shades for the cockpit.

## 9. New railing wires

Our railing wires were undersized and, with their worn and yellowed protective sheaths, no longer aesthetically pleasing. So we had new ones made, using a slightly thicker stainless steel wire.

## 10. Polishing stainless-steel structures

We used the time while the new sprayhood and the modified bimini were being fitted to polish all the stainless-steel fittings by hand. This effort, which took about two half-days, wasn't just for aesthetics. Stainless steel can also corrode, especially from salt deposits and metallic dust particles on the surface. Polishing with a special compound was intended to remove such deposits and incipient corrosion, thus preventing more extensive corrosion damage.

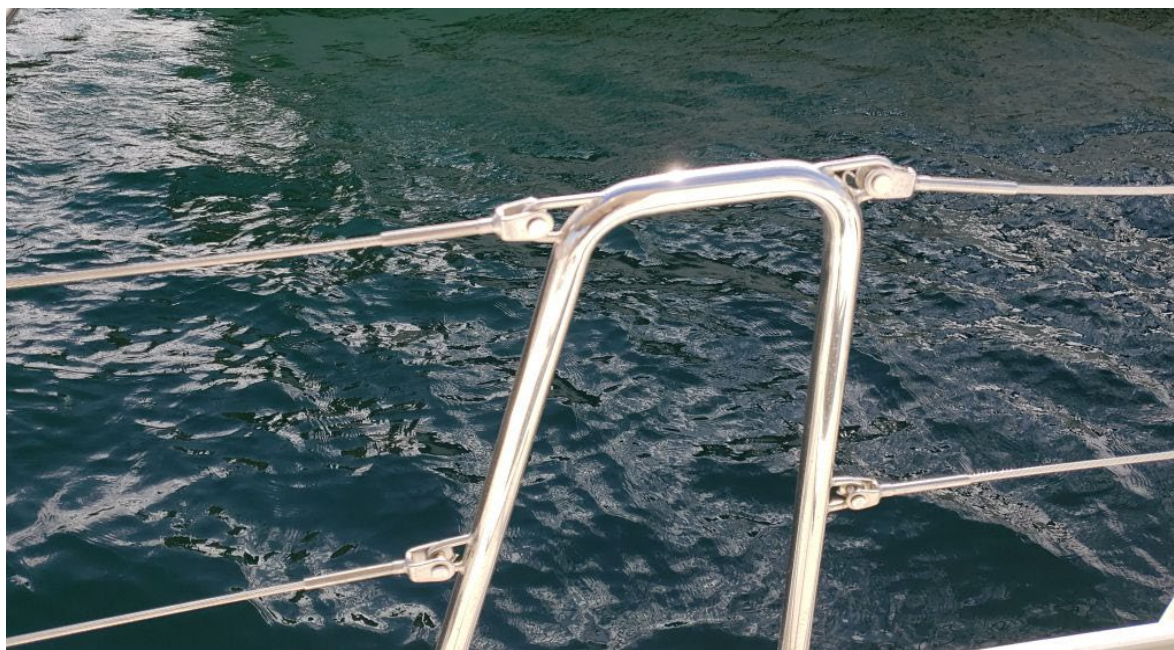


Fig. 26.25: New railing wires and stainless-steel parts polished.

## 11. Watermaker

One of the larger expenses was the installation of a watermaker. A watermaker consists of a high-pressure pump that forces clean seawater through a semipermeable membrane at high pressure. This process removes the salts and impurities, resulting in clean, salt-free drinking water. This process is called reverse osmosis. The process requires energy, which we can obtain in sufficient quantities from our solar panels.

We purchased the components for this system as a complete assembly kit from AquaTec in Hamburg. Since the skipper isn't very skilled at plumbing and we didn't want to get our feet wet, we enlisted the help of a professional plumber. The high-pressure pump, the heart of the watermaker, is installed next to our hot water boiler, after we moved the latter slightly to the side. We installed the membrane and filters in the same compartment, and the control panel is located in the aft cabin on the port side. Our



expert, Marco, installed all the hoses, and with this system, we will be able to desalinate approximately 45-50 liters of water per hour at sea.

We deliberately chose a purely mechanical watermaker here, as these are not quite as energy-efficient as the newer electronically controlled models with energy recovery, but are significantly easier to repair, meaning they are more suitable for areas far remote from modern civilization.



Fig. 26.26: The control panel of the water-maker.



Fig. 26.27: The high-pressure pump next to the boiler.

We're still in Almerimar and facing a storm. Our instruments are showing winds up to 36 knots in the harbor. We've finally finished the last of the boat work and are waiting for a weather window to open up before we reach Gibraltar and for a final package containing some spare parts. Last week's work mainly involved rigging and preparations for crossing the Atlantic.

## 12. Preparation and inspection of sea rescue equipment

The worst incidents that can put a boat in distress are capsizing and man overboard (MOB) situations. Thorough maintenance of the rigging and navigation instruments helps prevent the former. The latter should be avoided altogether. While training for the relevant sailing licenses teaches how to bring a yacht back to the overboard person using more or less complex manoeuvres, this only works in calm weather and low seas. On the open sea, with wind and waves, the chances of getting back into the boat decrease considerably. Modern aids can help somewhat, but contribute only marginally to success in these situations. Therefore, going overboard should be avoided at all costs.

Tanuki has the following safety equipment on board, among other things: automatic life jackets with built-in AIS transmitters that display the overboard persons position on its instruments and alert the crew via radio. The life jackets also serve as safety harnesses, meaning they can be attached (secured) to the boat with a line. It's standard practice on ocean-going yachts to always wear a life jacket in heavy weather, and it must always be secured. We also have a rule that a crew member may only go forward if another member is watching from the cockpit. When going forward, the life jacket is attached to long lines, allowing for safe movement. These lines were newly made for our Atlantic crossing.



In case we sink, we have two lifebuoys (so-called E-PIRBs) on board, which are taken into a life raft. The life raft is new, as is the boat's main E-PIRB. We also have a handheld radio and signal flares. In an emergency, documents, food supplies for 3-5 days, and the emergency safety equipment are packed and taken into the life raft (so-called grab bag).

Our life raft is a somewhat older model that we no longer trust. So, we're getting a reasonably priced Italian model for 6 people. We're giving our old 8–10-person life raft to a diving school, which in exchange will service the skipper's (Sabine is an avid diver) regulator.

We plan and practice our procedures in the event of a maritime emergency (including radio distress calls).

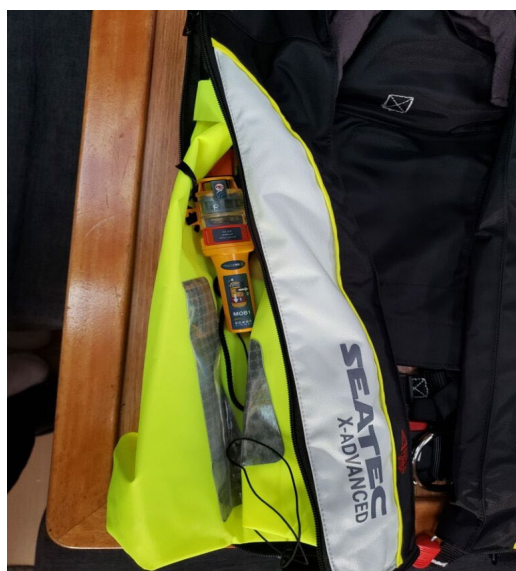


Fig. 26.28: AIS transponder in life jacket.



Fig. 26.27: Rescue buoy (so-called EPIRB).

### 13. Assembly of the mast slide for our Whisker pole.

Sailing downwind, as is common on the Atlantic route, is complicated because the sails only set correctly when sailing on a very precise course to the wind. To simplify this situation, we will pole out the headsail, i.e., fix it in position. This is done with an additional boom (whisker pole or spinnaker pole) that is also attached to the mast. We didn't have one on Tanuki, but our rigger found and installed a boom and a track for our mast.



Fig. 26.28: Mounting of the mast track.



Fig. 26.29: The new spinnaker pole to be stored on its mast track.

#### 14. Reorganization of our halyards

On the recommendation of our riggers, we reorganized the routing of our halyards (control lines for sails and boom), retrofitted a missing halyard, and replaced the somewhat too short and worn main-sheets with new lines.

#### 15. Rigging of preventer lines

Booms on a sailboat must be secured, especially when sailing downwind, to prevent them from getting out of control due to wind shifts or steering errors, which can cause serious damage to the rigging and injuries (keyword: accidental jibe). All booms, meaning the main boom and spinnaker pole, are therefore secured at the top, bottom, bow, and stern with lines. The line securing the main boom is called a preventer (from the English "to prevent"). The preventer secures the boom tip forward and runs to the bow, then back to the cockpit or the stern cleat via a block. We have two of these preventers, one on the starboard side and one on the port side.

#### 16. Purchase and organization of reserve canisters for diesel and gasoline

We bought four yellow jerrycans for diesel (20l each) and one jerrycan for petrol and strapped them to the railing to have some reserve in addition to our 300l in the tank.



Fig. 26.30: Organization of the halyards.



Fig. 26.31: The infamous preventer, a lifesaver on downwind courses.



Fig. 26.32: Reserve canisters.

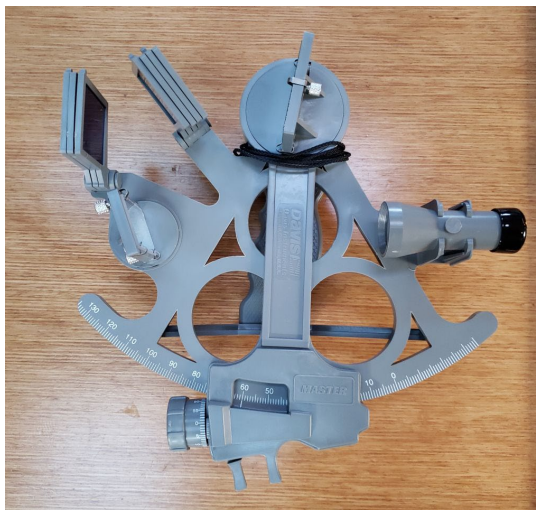


Fig. 26.33: How did that work again? Our emergency sextant. Looks complicated.

## 17. Back to school (astronavigation)

In total, we have about eight GPS devices on board to show us our position to within a few meters (four mobile phones, an AIS transceiver, a plotter, a GPS receiver for our laptop, and a handheld VHF radio with built-in GPS). Nevertheless, the skipper wants to familiarize himself with celestial navigation, just in case, so he can also calculate a position using the sun's position. Therefore, we have a simple plastic sextant on board and, instead of tables, a computer program that provides the astronomical data for determining our location. It's a somewhat older method, but of interest to every bluewater sailor and still relevant! For practical purposes, we also have a paper chart of the Atlantic (Amray 100) on which we will plot our midday position daily.



Now it's time to hit the books; terms like declination, Greenwich angle, azimuth, and zenith need to be understood, and calculation methods need to be practiced. It's a big project, but not so bad for a mathematically inclined skipper.

### **18. Final check of the ship's first-aid kit**

Our travel medicine kit is necessarily a bit more extensive than one for the average traveller. Besides painkillers, antihistamines, and antibiotics, we have many other medications on board. The list was compiled by our family doctor, Oli, based on suggestions from other boats, and he also wrote us prescriptions. Unfortunately, we couldn't buy all the medications in Australia (we didn't dare), so we purchased many of them in Germany. In the end, it added up to quite a lot, and the pharmacist who was looking after us even verified the skipper's (dental) license with the medical association. In a final inventory, we checked and documented the number of tablets and doses. We updated this documentation (inventory) for every border crossing.

We also have emergency supplies such as plasters, bandages, and sutures, as well as a basic set of dental instruments (a matter of honour for the skipper). In addition, we have basic medical equipment (blood pressure monitor and pulse oximeter).

Okay! We've lived in Almerimar long enough. We're already late in the year with regard to crossing the Atlantic and finally want to move on.

## 27. Gibraltar

Logbook: Almerimar – Estepona – Gibraltar

Date: 20.11.22

Days at sea so far: 76

Nautical miles so far: 2906.1

Sunday morning, we're setting sail. Up at 6 a.m., leisurely breakfast until 7 a.m., and then we'll go through the departure checklist. The crossing should take a little over 24 hours, so it will be an over-nighter. The weather forecast indicates a storm front over Gibraltar on Monday afternoon, but otherwise headwinds of acceptable strength. So, it shouldn't be a problem to reach Gibraltar in time to avoid the storm front. We will have to use the engine, though.

We had already cleared the boat the previous evening, so we started the engine to warm it up. John, our neighbour, came to say goodbye, and then we hauled in our lines to cast off. A quick radio call to the harbor master to check out, and then we were off. The swell behind the harbor breakwater was heavy, 1-1.5 meters high, but after about fifteen minutes it subsided, probably because we had reached deeper water. We headed west. We motorsailed on a beam reach and made good speeds of 6 to 7 knots. The new turbocharger, besides sounding great, also provided good power; we were happy and full of gratitude to our competent mechanic. It was chilly, though, so warm clothing was a must. Sails up, sails down, sails to the other side—that's how we spent the day, making good progress. For lunch, we had curry left over from the previous evening.

Towards evening, the wind stabilized and picked up. As we've come to expect, it was blowing directly against us, slowing our speed to 4-5 knots. Dinner consisted of dry bread and hummus. The wind continued to increase, and between Motril and Malaga, there were gusts up to 35 knots, which is a brisk Force 8 on the Beaufort scale. Even with full power, we were only making about 2 knots and crawling towards Malaga. At that speed, it was taking forever. We monitored the two other boats still sailing with us on the AIS and looked for areas with slightly less wind. Around 5 a.m., we reached Fuengirola. From there, the wind decreased, and we continued at about 5 knots. Meanwhile, our water pump, which supplies fresh water from the tank to our taps, had given up the ghost. No cooking or washing up. It's easy enough to fix, we have the spare part somewhere, but not in this awful weather. Well, if it's wobbly, you don't necessarily have to wash dishes or take a shower.

### 1. Estepona

A quick calculation by the skipper: we had a chance of reaching Gibraltar around noon, but according to the weather forecast and wind chart, the bad weather would start shortly after. Good advice was hard to come by; did we want to take the risk? Of course not! We looked for an accessible harbor. We chose **Estepona**, a safe marina with sufficient water depth directly on our course. Since it was still very early, we sent the marina an email and were pleased to see that Estepona had a guest berth. So we simply motored on. Around 8:30, we approached, waved to a water police boat that eyed us curiously, and called the marina: Too early – the office wasn't staffed until 9:00 (of course!). With 28 knots of wind, we simply sailed into the harbor, circled a few times, and then tied up at the guest berth. Success!

The office is now open and the skipper is taking care of the paperwork. We'll have to move Tanuki, but we negotiated that we can stay moored until next day. The guest berth is really only meant for registration, but with a steady 20 knots of wind in the harbor, they were not being too strict. The weather

forecast predicts bad weather for tomorrow as well, so we're planning to continue our journey on Wednesday.

The skipper's wife is already in bed, while the skipper quickly installs the spare water pump (45 minutes; it took longer than expected to dig the thing out of the deepest sediment in our compartments). Hooray for the manufacturer's simple clip system for the water hoses! Quick test: works better than before! No sleep in sight. Around noon, we negotiate the mooring fee with the marina. The co-skipper, now awake again, takes over and negotiates relentlessly. We have to pay 70 euros for the comfortable and wide berth, but in return, we get the registration slip for 20 euros. While still expensive for southern Spain and the off-season, it's nowhere near the Italian or Croatian levels and acceptable to us. A walk to the discount supermarket follows; the skipper has a craving for cauliflower with schnitzel and white sauce. It's contagious. Just as the storm begins, we're back on Tanuki and manage to get a bit of sleep.



Fig. 27.1: The port building of Estepona. The marina office is in the tower.

The next day, we moved Tanuki to her new berth. Unfortunately, Tanuki was running quite low on diesel, as we had to motor a lot on the last leg of our journey and already had very little in the tank. To our dismay, we discovered that the gas station in Estepona only serves fishing boats; diesel is tax-free here and cannot be sold to private individuals. No problem, the next gas station for cars is only about 1 km away. We visited it twice, each time transporting a 20-liter jerrycan back to the boat with our little trolley. That's enough to reach the gas station in Gibraltar if we can't sail. It looks like we'll be able to sail most of the way south with a steady northwest wind. Unfortunately, there are still strong gusts, but the forecast is for better weather on Thursday, so we're planning to depart Thursday morning. We had dinner at an Italian restaurant, where we were treated to the fastest and most competent service in the Mediterranean. The food was delicious, too!



Wednesday, finally a chance to sleep in. We pay our bill at the marina, pleased that the price has been reduced to €55 (probably due to the skipper's complaint), and take another stroll through the old town. Afterwards, the skipper quickly hops on her scooter and heads to the discount supermarket. They don't have any canned beans for the planned chili con carne, so we soak some dried beans. I learn that the equivalent of a 300g can is about 80g of dried beans. Great! So Sabine cooks chili con carne for the crossing to the Canary Islands in a pressure cooker on our induction hob. Incredibly energy-efficient!

## 2. Gibraltar

Thursday, finally good weather. We cast off at 7:45 a.m., just before sunrise. No wind. Our neighbour even gets up to say goodbye (odd – we always have very nice neighbours). A marina attendant comes by to collect the power adapter and return our deposit of a whopping 90 euros. Lines cast off, we're underway. First under motor, then under sail after sunrise. Fantastic sailing on a beam reach, the breeze freshens to 14 knots and we're making 6-7 knots. Three hours later we're already off the Rock of Gibraltar and sailing through the freighters anchored there. We were warned about Punta Europa, the southernmost point of Gibraltar. Due to nasty katabatic winds and heavy seas, we were advised to give it a wide berth. We do so with great respect. The detour puts our bow through the wind, and we take advantage of this to lower the sails. We enter the bay, navigating through heavy traffic and between anchored boats.



Fig. 27.2: The Rock of Gibraltar from afar...



Fig. 27.3: ...and a little closer.



Fig. 27.4: Punta Europa at a respectful distance.



Fig. 27.5: Finally moored in the Alcaidesa Marina.

Our marina (**Marina Alcaidesa**) is located slightly above the runway of Gibraltar Airport. We radioed in, were instructed to briefly dock at the harbor office, and after completing the formalities, went straight to our slip. Here, you moor at the finger pier. We had to moor with the finger pier to windward. After an unsuccessful attempt with the boat sideways in a 16-knot crosswind (a real harbor spectacle – how embarrassing!), we tried again, and thanks to two friendly marina staff, we finally managed to get in with a bit of muscle power on the lines. The mixture of exhaustion and adrenaline was exhilarating. Furthermore, the hull is about 1.60 meters above the finger pier, and we couldn't get on or off without assistance. A fender hung across the pier ultimately served as our step. A clever trick!



Fig. 27.6: The airport runway must be crossed on foot. A plane is taking off here!



Fig. 27.7: The main road in Gibraltar.

The adrenaline rush quickly dissipates after the celebratory drink at the marina, a quick lunch combats the fatigue, and feeling refreshed, we decide to visit Gibraltar that very afternoon. Our marina is located on Spanish territory (La Linea), so we walk for 10 minutes to the border, leaving the EU (Schengen Area) and entering Great Britain. A friendly border guard stamps our passports with the required information, and we're finally in VAT paradise (well, Gibraltar doesn't have one). Alcohol and diesel are tax-free here. It's also amusing that we have to cross the airport runway before reaching the city centre – where else do you get the chance to do that?

A visit to the petrol station without the boat. It looks good, has space for 2-3 boats, and also sells alcohol. Then shopping at Morrisons department store to buy curry pastes and Vegemite. They mainly stock goods from the Commonwealth, including many products we already know from Australia. Afterwards, a leisurely stroll along the main road is in order. Tired, we take the bus to the border, walk the 10 minutes back to the marina, and because we're hungry, we eat half of our chili con carne – with fresh bread from Gibraltar.

Our weather window for the Canary Islands has now closed; a storm is forecast for Monday and Tuesday in the area around Essaouira. With heavy hearts, we've decided not to set sail the next day, but to wait at least another day or two. The term "fair-weather sailor" comes to mind, but without any guilt. If you get caught in bad weather at sea, you just have to take it as it comes. However, we think it's irresponsible to knowingly sail into predicted bad weather.

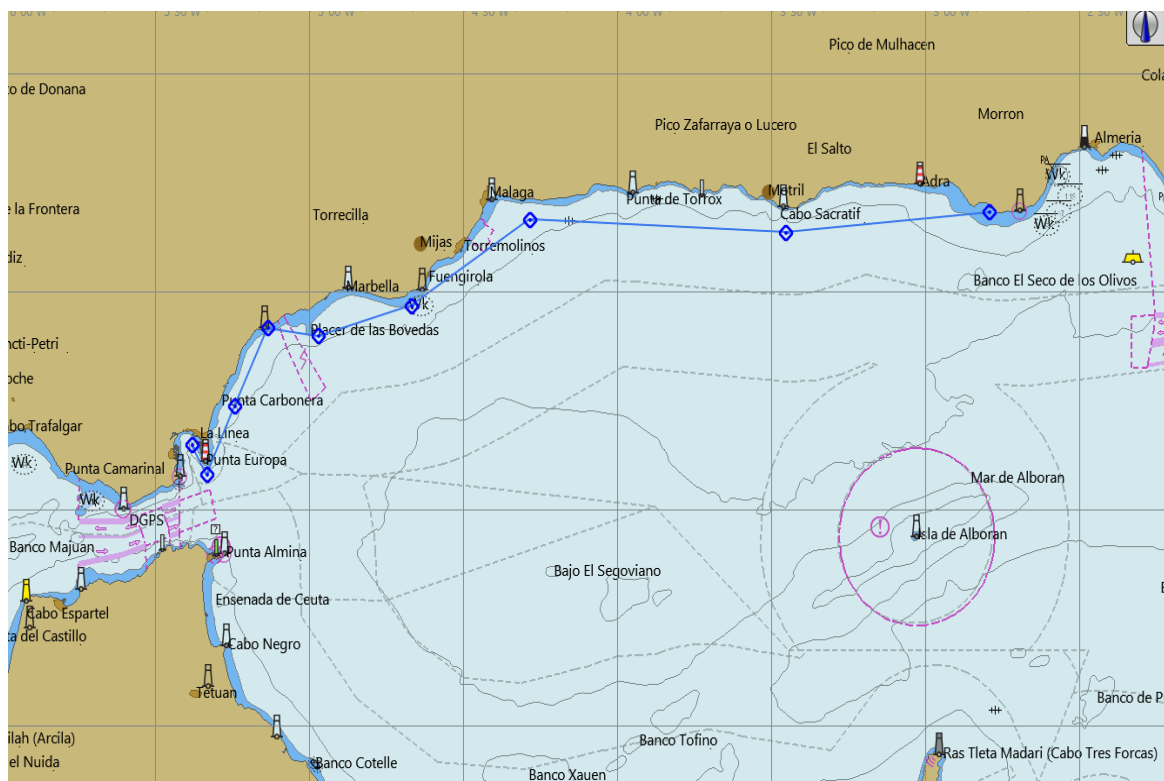


Fig. 27.8: From Almerimar to Gibraltar.



## 28. Crossing to the Canary Islands

Logbook: Gibraltar - Canary Islands

Date: 27.11.22

Days at sea so far: 79

Nautical miles so far: 3040.7

We considered making a detour to Morocco, but received word from a friend's boat from New Zealand that they were blown in in Ceuta and couldn't get around the bend. Crew decision: With heavy hearts, we plan to sail straight on to the Canary Islands.

Sunday finally arrived! We not only had great weather in Gibraltar, but also a good weather window for the passage to the Canary Islands. We had a late breakfast, the skipper went to the marina office to check out, and a little later we motored out of Marina Alcaidesa in brilliant sunshine.

### 1. Refueling in Gibraltar

First things first: a trip to the petrol station. Diesel is incredibly cheap in Gibraltar, since there are no taxes. So, we sail around the runway into British territory and visit the Cepsa petrol station. We don't even need to register, as the Gibraltar government tacitly tolerates a quick petrol stop. We dock in the very narrow harbor basin with a perfect manoeuvre, accompanied by expressions of respect from the friendly petrol station attendants, performing a 180-degree turn. We fill the almost empty tank and all our reserve canisters with cheap diesel. The skipper uses the last few GBP to buy a bottle of rum for the crew and some tea ("to bring us sugar and tea and rum" as requested in an old shanty<sup>1</sup>), and then it's time to cast off again and cruise out of British territory.



Fig. 28.1: Exit from the British area, on the left the runway with a departing aircraft!

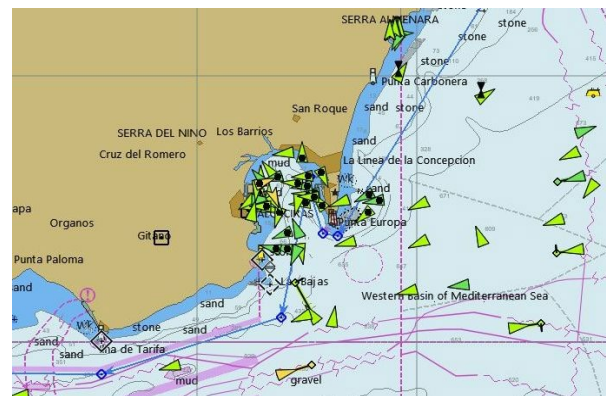


Fig. 28.2: Exit from the Bay of Gibraltar on the plotter; there is a lot of traffic approaching the TSS.

### 2. The Strait of Gibraltar, the gateway to the Atlantic Ocean

We had originally planned to set off around 4:30 pm, as high tide in the Strait of Gibraltar occurs at 5:30 pm. The Strait is famous for its strong currents; there's a powerful deep current flowing from the

<sup>1</sup> Nathan Evans, Wellerman (Sea Shanty)

Atlantic to the Mediterranean, as well as surface currents that vary depending on the tide and wind direction. Most sailors usually recommend departing from the Bay of Gibraltar about an hour before high tide, as the current can otherwise be up to 3 knots from west to east, and there might also be an unpleasant wind blowing from west to east. We experienced this wind situation last week, with wind speeds well over 35 knots (forces 6-8 on the Beaufort scale). Such a wind towards the Mediterranean is called a "Poniente." If the wind blows in the opposite direction, it's called a "Levante." In the centre of the strait, the wind can be much stronger due to a funnelling effect. Furthermore, the road is designed as a TSS (Traffic Separation Scheme), meaning it has designated lanes, similar to a motorway, in which hundreds of large ships travel daily. Not an easy place for sailors.

We're in luck. Today there's a Levante wind with little wind, so we decide to keep an eye on the tide but leave earlier, disregarding the rule of leaving one hour before high tide. We motor out of the bay, round the bend, and then sail along the edge of the TTS (Traffic Management Zone). As a small sailboat, we don't need to register with the traffic management centre; we can simply sail along the outermost edge of the TTS (actually in the so-called coastal traffic zone). We're lucky; with the wind at our backs and a maximum 1-knot current against us, we glide smoothly through the strait, pass Cape Tarifa, and continue west to the end of the TTS. Only there do we cross the shipping lanes, juggling our speed through the gaps between the very fast-moving giant ships (we at 6 knots, they at 12-16 knots), and finally, we've made it—rounding Cape Espartel (the northwestern tip of Morocco). Here we hoist the sails and head southwest along the Moroccan coast.

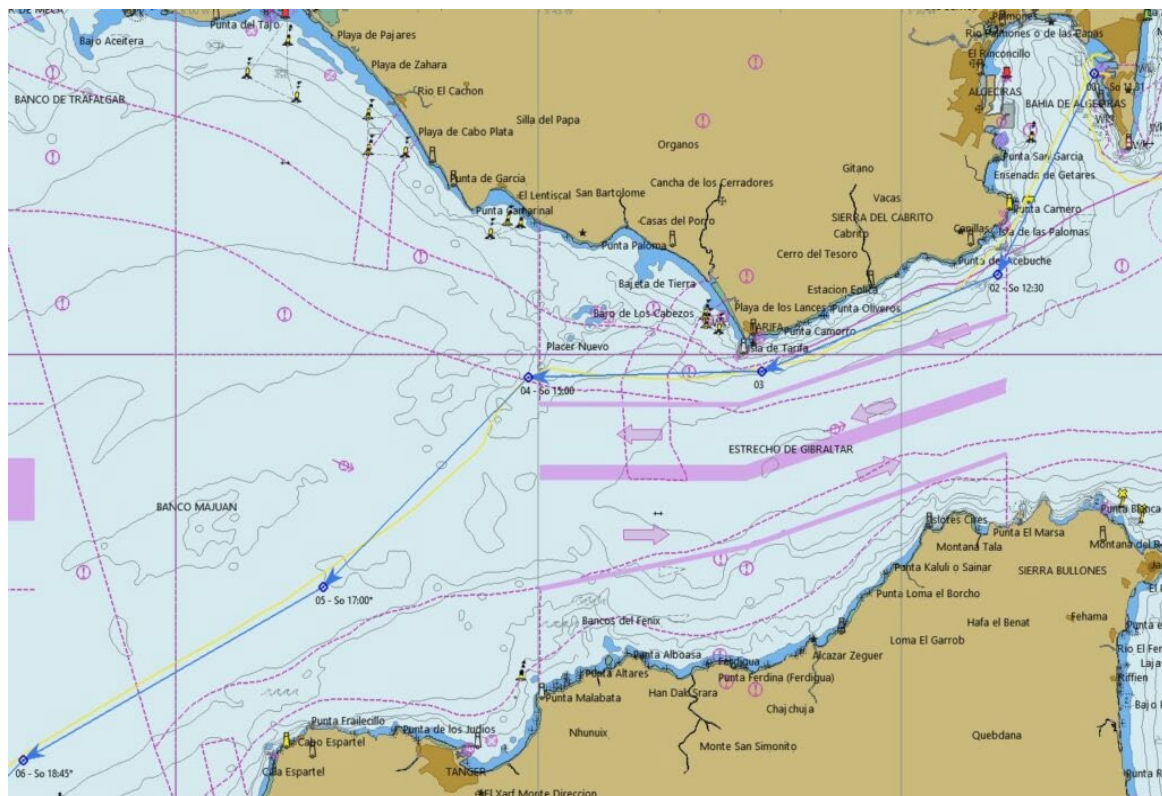


Fig. 28.3: Tanuki's path through the Strait of Gibraltar.

### 3. Danger from orcas

At one point, we think with a slightly uneasy feeling about the pod of orcas that harass small ships off the southwestern tip of Portugal by biting the rudders of sailboats, sometimes causing significant damage and even rendering them unmaneuverable. This pod's territory extends to the Strait of Gibraltar, so there's a (albeit small) risk of encountering them. Recently, a yacht was so badly damaged that it sank. We keep a careful lookout (which is always advisable when sailing through the strait anyway), but thankfully, we don't see any orcas. Apart from this one pod, we generally welcome the usually friendly marine mammals.

We now have a 2-meter swell and are being tossed around a bit in the middle of the strait. The skipper is holding on, the skipper's wife is taking a seasickness tablet. The situation improves slightly beyond Cape Espartel.

The route to the Canary Islands is relatively straightforward. Just follow the coast of Morocco and turn right at some point. After successfully navigating the Strait of Gibraltar, we're taking it a bit easier now. We're setting sail. We may have plenty of power under the hood, but we are, after all, a sailboat and we care about the environment.

### 4. Moroccan coast from Cape Espartel

We want to maintain a distance of at least 25 nautical miles from the coast due to the expected fishing vessels, and of course, respect the boundary of Moroccan coastal waters, although this doesn't seem to bother the other boats. We sail relatively close to **Cape Espartel** and eventually increase the distance to the desired range, which we reach at approximately the latitude of Larache. It's now Monday at 3:00 a.m., change of watch. Then we continue more or less parallel to the coast. We sail downwind with a reefed mainsail and initially a full genoa, then reef that as well to achieve a cruising speed of about 5-6 knots. Night watches are set for three hours each, and so we continue into the morning. We hardly see any fishing boats, but we do see many freighters, which apparently had the same idea regarding the distance from the coast. The wind is now coming from behind, and we are experiencing the joys and sorrows of downwind sailing. Directly behind isn't good because the sails constantly luff (flap, which isn't good for the material); a bit from the side is better, then the sails set more nicely. We're playing around with the sail trim and course. The sea is still high, about 2 meters, a long Atlantic swell. Towards evening, we've had enough and head closer to the coast. It doesn't really help. The swell is coming from the side and rocking us around quite a bit. Not fun at all. The situation lasts a total of 36 hours; the co-skipper feels like she's dying of seasickness. Shortly before she voluntarily jumps overboard, it gets slightly better. However, we fear that the dishes and glasses have been irreparably damaged by the rocking.

We reach Rabat around 6:00 p.m.. I remember a song title, "The Fires of Rabat" by Mike Batt, and keep an eye out for it, but no fires in sight. Early next morning, we sail past Mohammedia and **Casablanca**. This gives me a chance to gaze deeply into the co-skipper's eyes and quote Humphry Bogart (iconic, one of my favorite movies!). Around noon, we pass **El Jadida** and turn a little further south, always careful not to infringe on Moroccan sovereignty. We're still cleared into Spanish customs, so we're still flying the Spanish courtesy flag. Around midnight, we're sailing at the latitude of Safi and continue south.

On Wednesday at midday, we pass **Essaouira**, the point where we plan to turn right towards the Canary Islands. The course changes from 199 degrees to 245 degrees, and we say goodbye to Morocco.



## 5. Trouble with the autopilot

Around 3 p.m., Tanuki suddenly went out of control. We disengaged the autopilot and steered manually for a while. A quick check by the skipper confirmed our initial suspicion: the autopilot had failed. The old trick of switching it off and on again didn't work (after all, the autopilot is just a computer.).

The first thought is that the control unit driving the hydraulic pump is broken. Luckily, we have a spare on board. The skipper crawls into the bowels of Tanuki and replaces it (only four connectors) – advanced boat yoga, indeed. No luck. The autopilot's independent compass is showing the correct heading, so that can be ruled out. Next suspect is the hydraulic pump. There's enough hydraulic oil in the tank, the pump whirs when switched on, so there's power, and the thrust arm moves slightly but is at its limit. This leads to the next idea: the position sensor that electronically reports the rudder's position. The sensor works, but the bolt that connects the autopilot arm and the position sensor to the starboard rudder quadrant is broken, probably a fatigue fracture. There's no suitable replacement on board, so we're in a bind. Switch off the autopilot and steer manually, 24 hours a day with a crew of two? It would theoretically work for the remaining two days of the journey, but we only want to resort to that in an absolute emergency. The skipper simply reattaches the thruster with a few heavy-duty cable ties. It's a more or less inadequate emergency solution, but better than constant manual steering. No matter – it works, gets us through the night, and we'll improve it properly the next morning (more cable ties, better positioning).



Fig. 28.4: The bolt that connects the autopilot's thrust arm to the rudder quadrant is broken. Fatigue fracture?

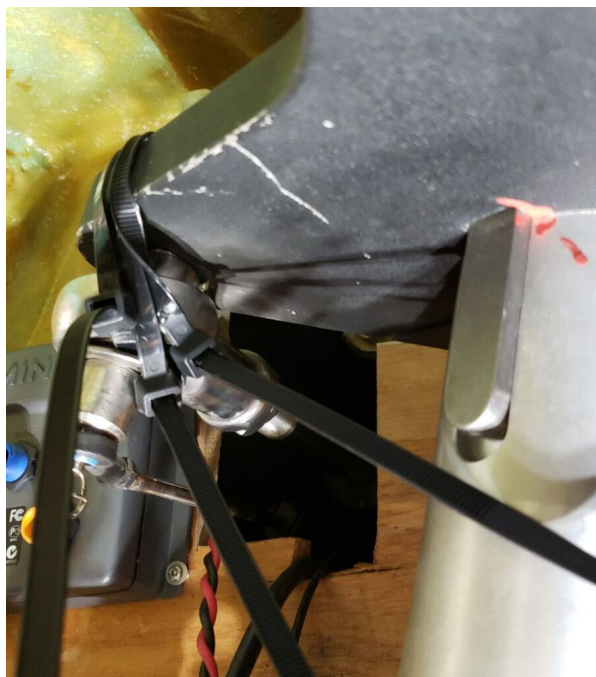


Fig. 28.5: Quick fix with cable ties. McGyver would be proud of us.

## 6. Onward to the Canary Islands

We continue southwest, still with the wind at our backs. The winter sun is no longer strong enough to fully charge our batteries via the solar panels, so we occasionally run the engine for a few hours to top them up for the night. The nights have gotten cold, and our diesel heater is only working intermittently. The skipper will have to take a look at it when he gets a chance. It later turns out that its burner only ignites when the engine is running. Problem partially solved, at least. However, our toilet is clogged; the blackwater tank is full and won't drain. It needs fixing, so we're using one of our other two toilets for now. No big deal.

Wednesday at 8:45 PM, a fleet of 20 fishing vessels is on our course. The skipper changes course to pass through a safe gap. The fishing boats are drifting along at 1-2 knots, so we start the engine again and speed along at 6 knots.

A look at the navigation and the nautical charts. The estimated time of arrival is now in one day and 16 hours, but our navigation software's calculation is only a very rough estimate since the software can't know how fast or how far we'll be sailing. Nevertheless, I quite like the estimate; we would arrive in Arrecife on Lanzarote on Friday morning and would then have the option of continuing on to Marina Rubicon if there's no more space for us in Arrecife.

The wind has almost died down, the true wind is only 6-7 knots, from which we have to subtract the wind from our boat's speed, leaving an apparent wind of about 2 knots. That's not enough to fill the sails, so they're complaining. What to do? First, we'll motor through the group of fishing boats, then see if we can sail.

## 7. Continue towards the islands

We need new weather data. The skipper switches on the shortwave radio and orders new wind data via email. Five minutes later, we retrieve the data and integrate it into our navigation program. Unfortunately, there are no cell towers for reliable internet access here on the Atlantic, but shortwave radio helps, especially since there's a relay station in the Canary Islands (EA8URF) that connects the internet to our shortwave station (VK4WRS). With the fresh weather data, the onboard computer now calculates a route that optimizes wind utilization. The purple wind arrows in Figure 28.9 show the calculated wind direction and speed for each point and time along the route.

At 10:20 p.m. the wind shifts to NNW, making sailing with the sails, already reefed for the night, much more pleasant because they are now taut and no longer flapping around. Tanuki sneaks through the gap between the fishing boats. The makeshift autopilot mounting comes loose again. No problem – we still have plenty of cable ties.

Thursday, 3:00 a.m., watch change. Wind and sail trim unchanged, the sea has calmed down, we're on course and making 5 knots. The fishing fleet has disappeared; it probably wasn't a good night for fishing.



Fig. 28.6: Tanuki drives a slalom course through a fishing fleet.



Fig. 28.7: We are catching a few flying fish. From now on, there will be a daily fish patrol to remove these from the deck.

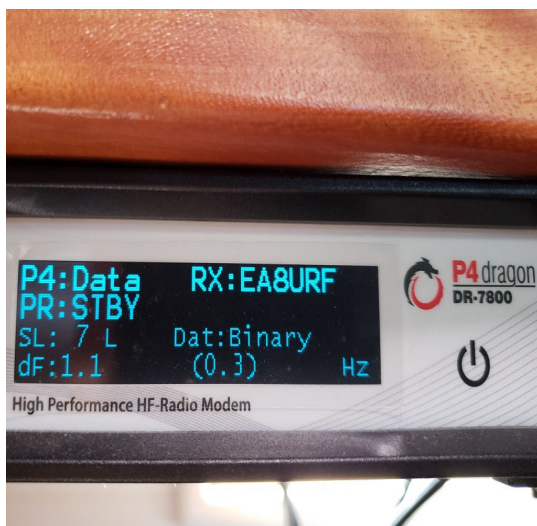


Fig. 28.8: Weather report via shortwave radio. Data connection to the station EA8URF.



Fig. 28.9: Our computer turns this into a weather route (pink).

About 7 nautical miles behind us is a Canadian sailboat; the AIS says 12x7m, probably a catamaran. Further behind us are a freighter and a superyacht. A glance at the autopilot – it's holding up bravely and doesn't need any fresh cable ties yet. Good! I'm in the cockpit, looking at the radar screen, the horizon, and the stars. Time to think. Unlike last night, it's not cold; the thermometer reads 19 degrees. A quick log entry and a quick look at my email. Watch change is at 6 a.m.

The next morning around 10 a.m. local time, the autopilot is dutifully doing its job. The co-skipper has gotten up and is drinking two cups of latte, which means she's feeling better. No wonder, the swell has dropped to about 1.20 meters, but there's very little wind from the side, so we can just barely manage to sail with the sails sheeted in tightly. It's still no use, though. The new wind forecast promises force 3 in the afternoon; we'll see. We're motoring. During the night, we had a visitor: a flying fish landed



on our deck and quietly passed away. Now we've finally arrived in the Atlantic and have to check the deck daily (fish patrol...), otherwise the little creatures will start to smell.

Around 1 p.m. the wind picks up. Engine off, we sail close-hauled. Mainsail reefed one way, jib one way, we're making between 5.5 and 6.2 knots. The sun is shining, the cloud cover is breaking up a bit. 24.5 degrees Celsius in the cockpit. We're getting closer to the Canary Islands and eternal spring.

## 10. Final approach to Lanzarote

Thursday evening, 10:00 p.m.. The wind has shifted slightly and is now blowing from the side. Ideal for sailing; it's blowing at 13 knots of true wind and pushing us towards the Canary Islands. The weather situation is now in line with the forecast. That happens occasionally. We're surprised.

The skipper has almost fully unfurled the headsail and adjusted the course slightly, as we can now luff up with the new wind direction. Sailing upwind was on the agenda for the afternoon, and we had to adjust our course to suit the wind direction. About 10 more hours of sailing, and the autopilot is still holding up. The sea state has increased, but it's still moderate. Still annoying, though.

We sailed through the night in our tried-and-tested 3-hour watches. Nothing much happening. Around 5 a.m., we saw lights ahead, and we got cell service around 6 a.m. Oh, we still need to set the clocks to local time. The marina in Arrecife, which we called around 8:30 a.m., turned us down; they were fully booked. Plan B: we sailed to the southwest end of the island and contacted **Marina Rubicon**. They let us in, but not until noon, as they needed to free up some berths. So, we sailed along again. At 11:30 a.m., we reached the entrance, and the friendly lady on the radio invited us in, where we first had to moor at the guest berth to complete the paperwork. Two (!) marina staff were waiting for us there, and they competently, quickly, and according to OUR instructions, secured the lines. A perfect docking maneuver. But we still had to wait a bit. Fifteen minutes turned into 30, and we were finally allowed into the office and greeted warmly. Here, we got the feeling that they were genuinely happy to welcome us. The same applies later when we drive from the guest berth to our slip. We discuss the maneuver beforehand with the marina attendant, as a 12-knot wind is blowing in the harbor basin, which could push us sideways. We plan to reverse into the slip. The marina attendant voluntarily offers to accompany us in the dinghy, just in case the wind should push us sideways (as happened in Gibraltar), and we gratefully accept. With this preparation, it can only work – and lo and behold, the manoeuvre is indeed successful on the first try without any assistance from the dinghy. The marina attendants smile; we are tired and happy to finally have a break.

Update 7:30 p.m.: We had pizza for dinner. After inspecting the facilities, we think Marina Rubikon is the cleanest, most modern, and best-organized marina we've ever seen. Unfortunately, we couldn't remove the lower part of the broken bolt. We'll probably have to seek professional help. First, we'll let WD-40 do its work. Now, off to bed to catch up on some sleep.



Fig. 28.10.: Land Ho. Lanzarote in sight.



Fig. 28.11: Passing Punta del Papagayo.

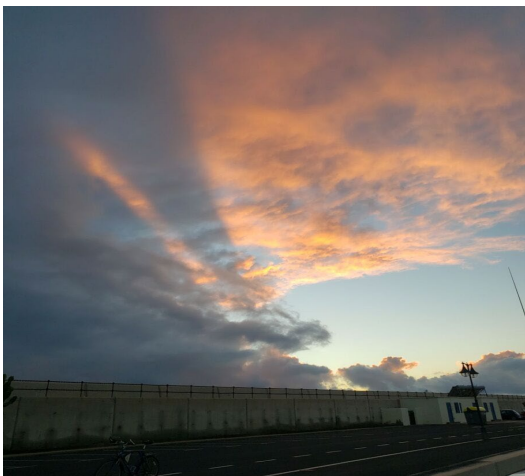


Fig. 28.12: Sunset in the Marina Rubikon.

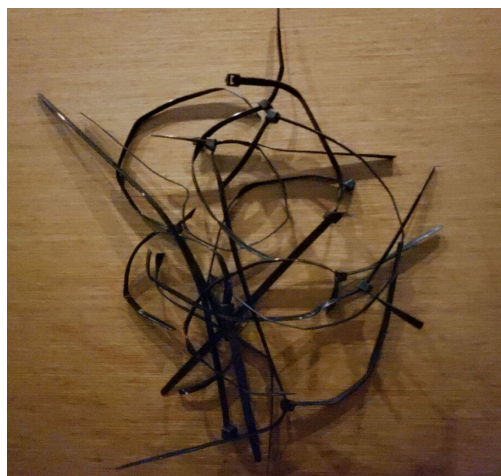


Fig. 28.13: These brave cable ties fought to the bitter end to keep our autopilot alive. May they rest in peace.





## 29. Canary Islands

Logbook: Lanzarote - Tenerife

Date: 01.12.22

Days at sea so far: 88

Nautical miles so far: 3570.8

So, we've finally arrived in the Canary Islands. Marina Rubicon on Lanzarote had space for us, and we're comfortably moored at the dock with mooring fingers (the days of Roman Catholic-style mooring with mooring lines are apparently over). First, a good night's sleep, then we'll take care of the issues that need addressing.

### 1. Arrecife. Broken bolt.

Well, our autopilot is broken, and that's because the bolt on the quadrant has snapped. A quadrant is a metal disc on the rudder that transmits the force from the steering wheel and converts it into rotation. The autopilot's control rod is also attached here. This bolt broke, and we've taken everything apart (thanks to our neighbour Burkhard for the help). The bolt had already been repaired with a weld, and it's no wonder it broke, considering that it's subjected to a force of about half a ton while underway. The owner of the local shipyard suggested we weld it again. We politely declined. The bolt is a turned part, and we figured it would be better to have a completely new one made. We're learning some new Spanish words: a lathe is called a "torno" in Spanish, and a lathe operator is a "tornero." Armed with this knowledge, we're heading to the capital, **Arrecife**, on Monday and asking around. After three hours, we find the only workshop on the island with a large lathe (Hermanos Borges, near the marina) and persuade the master lathe operator to remake the part for us in stainless steel. It takes two days, as Tuesday and Thursday are bank holidays. So, we get the replacement part on Wednesday. Luckily, we have a rental car until Thursday, a cute little Fiat 500. It also carries a load of drinks to the boat: water, sparkling water, and milk.

### 2. Island tour

Lanzarote is special because the northwest of the island was shaped by the volcanic eruptions of 1730. So, like almost all tourists, we head to **Timanfaya National Park**. There we see the inhospitable and surreal desert of black volcanic rock. First, we go to the visitor center, then to Montañas del Fuego, where we take a bus tour through the most severely affected areas. Our day trip concludes at the house of **César Manrique**, the playboy and artist who shaped the island with his artwork and still commands great veneration and respect from the inhabitants.



Fig. 29.1: Timanfaya National Park.



Fig. 29.2: Volcanoes everywhere.



Fig. 29.3: Tierra del Fuego. Desert made of volcanic rock.



Since we enjoy the occasional glass of wine, we visit a winery. They offer us a visit to the wine museum and a tasting. We try two local wines in the mid- to upper-price range. Both have a typical aftertaste, likely resulting from the challenging terroir (soil). On Lanzarote, grapevines are planted in holes that reach down to the topsoil, topped with a layer of volcanic rock, which helps retain moisture. To protect the vines from the wind, a small wall is built around the planting. In some fields, the vines also grow in rows and are protected by a long wall. We decided that the local wines weren't necessarily to our taste.



Fig. 29.4: Winery by the road.



Fig. 29.5: Vines with protective walls.



Fig. 29.6: Our rental car.



Fig. 29.7: Pool at Cesar Manriques house.



### 3. Arrecife again

We picked up our bolt from the tornero. Luckily for us, the result was absolutely professional. The craftsman turned the bolt by hand without CNC or programming. Perfect! It cost 70 euros, much less than regular spare parts. We're happy. More visits to various discount stores. Yesterday it was general merchandise, today it's wine and fresh meat.

We've also made some friends. Next to us is a TO boat (Trans Ocean club) called "Boaty Mc Boatface" with Wolf and Rolf as crew. A little further on is Burkhard with his Nessaya, also a TO boat. Nearby is Thalassa, rumour has it that this is Bobby Schenk's old boat. We don't know the owners; we're only mentioning the boat because of its notoriety.



Fig. 29.7: AP-bolts, broken versus new.



Fig. 29.8: Tanuki next to Boaty McBoatface.



Fig. 29.9: Our new bolt, already installed.



Fig. 29.10: In the supermarket. We already know this wine (see Fig. 29.4).

#### 4. Repair and further preparations

Thursday, the second day of the holiday. The bolt is installed first thing in the morning; the skipper has already procured the appropriate wrench (20/21). No problem, just a bit of boat yoga. Everything fits, everything is tightened in no time. A quick check – it works.

We planned to continue our journey on Friday, but – oh dear – all the marinas were full and wouldn't accept any more boats. We didn't want to anchor. Luckily, after a bit of a phone-shopping spree, we found a marina in Tenerife that offered us a reservation for Sunday. So we stayed another day and rested a bit.

We can't imagine why all the marinas are full. We can understand that Marina Las Palmas is always packed with ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) participants, but then again, there aren't that many trans-atlantic sailors. So it seems that many boats have simply escaped the bad weather in the Mediterranean and are spending the winter here.

We've decided to make the final preparations for our big trip in Tenerife. Only the small **Marina Radazul**, south of Tenerife's capital, has a berth for us, so we're heading there. It's only 130 nautical miles, so about a day's sail. We're doing an overnigher. Tanuki is fully fueled, and we set off at midday after the usual preparations and checklists. We radio in, the marina staff wishes us a safe journey, our neighbors help with the lines, and off we go.



Fig. 29.11: Goodbye Lanzarote.



Fig. 29.12.: Flipper is swimming in our direction.

#### 5. Rubicon to Radazul

The journey is going smoothly, the weather and wind are good, we hoist the sails as soon as we leave the land cover, unfortunately there's not enough wind for a good cruising speed, so we run the engine for stretches. A school of dolphins swims past, this time not in a showy mood and keeping a bit of distance from Tanuki.

The night passed calmly and smoothly, with no signs of seasickness. We arrived in **Radazul** in the early afternoon. We navigated a very narrow entrance and stopped first at the guest parking area. There wasn't a marina attendant in sight to take our lines. So, we approached slowly and carefully brought

the boat to a stop. The co-skipper executed a perfect lasso throw, and we tied up alongside, centered. The marina attendant appeared a few minutes later and assigned us a berth right next to the fuel pontoon, which we used beforehand to top up the few liters of diesel we were missing from our tank. Tanuki cast off, moved forward 20 meters, then reversed into the gap. No problem for us. We were moored stern-to against a floating dock, and tied alongside to the concrete dock of the fuel station, where we were comfortably and securely moored. The marina office was closed for the weekend, but that was no problem, said the marina attendant, "Mañana!", that is the philosophy of life in Spain.

**Radazul** is a small town built on a mountainside with steep, meandering streets. We quickly find a good-quality pizzeria and go to bed early. The next morning, we visit the marina office. The friendly woman there gives us a good price and explains that there's no rental car agency in town; we'll have to take the bus to Santa Cruz (only an 8-minute ride). There's no Chandler either. When we ask her to check the customs procedures, she promises to speak with the relevant police officer.



Fig. 29.13: Auditorio de Tenerife, Santa Cruz. Australia can do better!

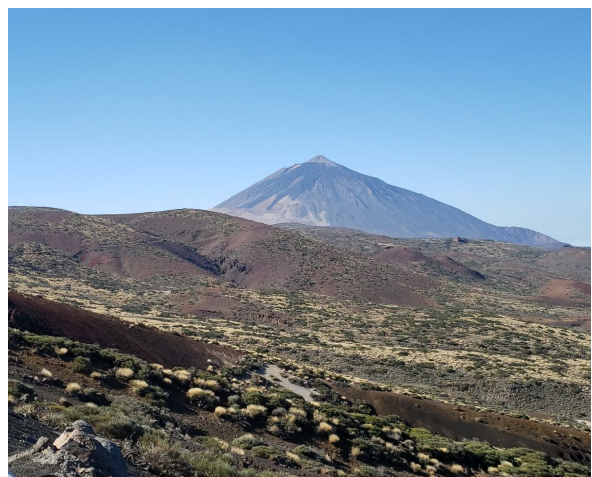


Fig. 29.14.: Su majestad el Teide!

## 6. Santa Cruz.

So we took the bus to **Santa Cruz**. The bus stop is right at the marina exit. The departure times were available at the marina office. No problem, we arrived at the huge bus station (Estación de Guaguas) near the **Auditorio de Tenerife**, a concert hall that reminded us somewhat of a similar-looking building in Sydney. I wonder why?

We drove past the local marina and into town. We checked out a few shops selling diving equipment and finally found a car rental agency where we quickly agreed on a price. Then we headed back to Radazul, where we parked the car in a legal parking space right in front of the marina. We had dinner on the boat. Suddenly the phone rang, and a man who didn't speak English said there was a problem with our rental car. The skipper immediately went to the car, and a friendly police officer explained that roadworks were to be carried out overnight and we had to move the car. Hadn't we seen the warning signs? Of course not. He had looked up our phone number through the rental company and called them. No ticket, and a friendly and helpful police officer—we were impressed.



We visit the local sights, drive to the highest mountain (Teide) for lunch, visit San Cristobal de la Laguna, a charming university town where we sample local wine and island specialties, and on the way back stop at a discount supermarket to further stock up Tanuki's pantry. Back to Radazul, this time to a more suitable parking spot. We compare the prices for diving equipment with the small dive shop in Radazul and are stunned. Much cheaper! Here too, we quickly agree on a price and buy two BCDs, another regulator, and weights.



Fig. 29.15: View of the sea from the slopes of Mount Teide.



Fig. 29.16: San Cristobal de la Laguna.



Fig. 29.17: Dragon tree in the same location.

The next day. We returned the rental car to Santa Cruz, but first we made a quick stop at the shipyard to buy a spare part. We strolled through the Mercado Nuestra Señora de Africa market, grabbed a sandwich, and then took the bus back to Radazul. The receptionist had already called the authorities and clarified the situation: we didn't need to do anything, just leave port and everything would be fine. Nice! We figured the authorities already had our information and tracked and monitored everything electronically. In any case, we were glad we didn't have to make multiple trips to government offices. It certainly helped that we had already cleared customs in Spain with our German passports.



Fig. 29.18: Mercado Nuestra Señora de Africa.



Fig. 29.19: The pantries are full to the brim.

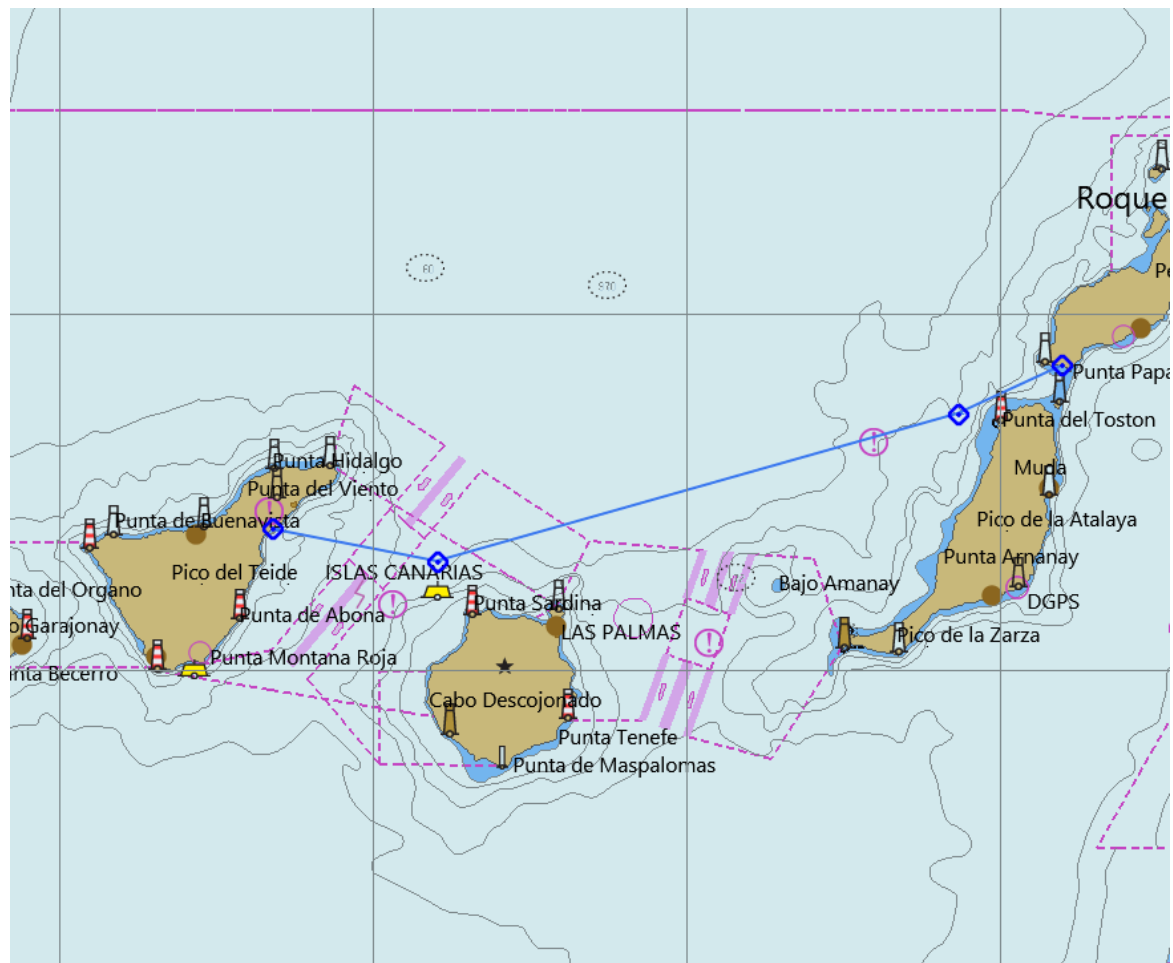


Fig. 29.20: Our route through the Canary Islands.



## 30. Cape Verde Islands

Logbook: Radazul - Mindelo

Date: 15.12.22

Days at sea so far: 90

Nautical miles so far: 3796.7

It's finally starting! Checklist completed; we're casting off. The "turning in a tight space" manoeuvre works, and we get out of the harbor smoothly. The weather is beautiful, light winds, but we're in good spirits. Tanuki seems to be enjoying herself too; we glide gently through the few waves, well aware that this will soon change. We have the sails up, but we're still in the lee of Tenerife and will have to motor south for a few hours. Then things will really get going. The trip is planned at about 850 nautical miles, and depending on the weather, it will take us about 6-7 days. The forecast predicts force 3-4 winds. We'll see.

### 1. Day One. Tanexit! (December 15, 2022)

We're emerging from the lee of the land, the wind is picking up, and so is the swell. A queasy feeling in my stomach; the co-skipper takes her first seasickness pill; the skipper isn't hungry. It's rocking. We hope it's just the wind accelerating around the islands, but we know the Atlantic is now in play, and it's rough. Leaving the 12-mile zone, we realize we're also leaving the EU, and certain perks (like free roaming) no longer apply. So, goodbye EU! The skipper makes a funny pun about combining "Tanuki" and "exit." Oh well! Otherwise, a quiet night.



Fig. 30.1: Goodbye Radazul and EU.



Fig. 30.2: The Atlantic map is hanging.

### 2. Day Two. (December 16, 2022)

It's rocking. Wave height about 2 meters. We're sailing, the wind is from astern. As a sailor, you'd normally be happy about that, but the sails aren't, because with the boat rolling, the jib often flips to the other side. Not good for the sails. The skipper is eating some of the pre-cooked chili, the skipper's wife has made herself a pot of dal. We still have some bread from Spain. We realize that the solar panels are once again failing to recharge the battery bank during the day. No wonder, we have three

refrigerators running, which, together with the autopilot, draw about 20 amps per hour. It's winter, the sun isn't high in the sky, and the solar panels only produce about 30 amps per hour during the day for approximately 8 hours of sunshine. So we occasionally have to use the engine to charge the battery bank. For the Atlantic crossing, we need to manage the energy consumption a bit better; we'll probably have to shut down one of the refrigerators.



Fig. 30.3: It wobbles, but not too badly.



Fig. 30.4: Fish patrol. A fat flying fish, now grounded.

### 3. Third day. (17.12.22)

It's rocking. The Atlantic swell is increasing. Flying fish occasionally visit us, but unfortunately, they don't survive on the deck of Tanuki. We now just call them limp flying fish.

The swell is manageable in the cockpit, but below deck it feels like the inside of a washing machine. The nights are particularly difficult. We've run out of bread. The skipper gets out the bread maker and bakes a dark loaf. Delicious! Thanks to the bread mix from Lidl.

### 4. Fourth day. (18.12.22)

The skipper tries trolling. No luck. The waves have now reached 2.5-3 meters. It's not too bad, though, because they're coming from astern. The wind is picking up to the mid-20s. Our sails are trimmed as far as they'll go; we're still doing 6 knots with what's practically a towel-sized sail. We're aiming for a slightly lower speed, though, because it's a bit easier on our stomachs. It's probably due to the speed and the wavelength.



Fig. 30.5: 2-3m waves, but long.



Fig. 30.6: Clumps of Sargassum grass.

### 5. Fifth day. (December 19, 2022)

Schools of flying fish whiz past Tanuki. We marvel at the distances these fish cover in the air (more than 100 meters) and that they seem to instinctively fly against the wind, which makes aerodynamic sense. We see our first Sargassum seagrass drifting past us in small balls. We have finally arrived in the Atlantic.

### 6. Sixth day. (December 20, 2022)

The desire to arrive is growing, and the skipper is getting annoyed. The skipper's calculations, however, are based on seven days, so we'll just have to hold out for another day. We miss the comfortable sailing in nicer weather. Suddenly, the autopilot fails. Our brand-new bolt has broken again. No problem, we now know how to make a temporary repair. It only takes ten minutes; we still have plenty of cable ties. We're still disappointed that the bolt didn't hold up. During the night, we have a visit from a somewhat disheveled little bird. It was so exhausted that it just lay apathetically in the cockpit. We offer it our hospitality with some bread. After twenty minutes, it was gone again (see the next day).

### 7. Seventh day. (December 21, 2022)

We're heading for Cape Verde. The skipper promises a portion of rum for the first sighting of land<sup>2</sup>. It's taking its time; it's hazy. We hope the wind (27 knots) and waves (2.5 meters) will improve somewhat near the islands. Our hopes are dashed; it only gets worse. There's a wind acceleration zone between the northern islands. The skipper wins the rum ration. We sail into the strait between the islands. A sailboat approaches us. They head into the wind and immediately turn around, heading back to the harbor.

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<sup>2</sup> In the Navy, this order is called "splice the mainbrace" [Source: Wikipedia]





Fig. 30.7: Cape Verde in haze.



Fig. 30.8: Our route from Radazul to Mindelo. Almost a straight bee-line.

Unfortunately, we made a mistake. We didn't check if our plotter had the correct chart. As a result, the Mediterranean chart from C-Map only goes as far as the northernmost island of Cape Verde (!), and the Atlantic/Caribbean chart doesn't show the port of Mindelo at all. Hey C-Map, you really need to fix this. Omitting a major port on one of the busiest routes is just shabby, especially when honest people like us have already spent a considerable sum on the charts.

What now? We hitch a ride behind the returning sailboat, which is obviously heading back into the marina, and see the marina in the far-left corner. Problem solved. We call the marina (where we have a reservation) on the radio; the answer comes after 10 seconds. We slowly manoeuvre in, look for the marina attendant—a bit difficult to spot. We finally find him and head for our assigned dock. The water depth is now 2.5 meters (our draft is 2.3 meters)—it's going to be tight. But it works out well. We stop in the channel, reverse in using the bow thruster to steer us, and we're in! We tie up with stern lines and a mooring line. So, it's again the Mediterranean method of docking after all.

Upon opening the tailgate, stowaways were revealed: a fat flying fish (sadly deceased) and a disheveled bird (still exhausted) that had hidden there. One of the smiling mariners took the bird and promised to take good care of it.

A celebratory beer for the new arrivals! We check into the marina, pay a good price for 5 nights, and then head over to the ferry terminal to clear customs with immigration and the port police. Another beer and some tapas at the marina bar, then we collapse into our bunks and sleep for 10 hours straight.

The marina has docks for hundreds of boats, and we're moored near the well-secured entrance (meaning "Roman Catholic"). Electricity is available, and the water at the dock is supposed to be potable. We don't trust it, though, and prefer to buy our drinking water from 5-liter containers or use the water from our watermaker, which we fill into the same containers. This doesn't work with the harbor water, which, while clear, is otherwise unreliable. Watermakers are really only meant for use on the high seas. So, to avoid jeopardizing the health of our membrane, we're using the approximately 30 liters of water we have in jerrycans, which will last us a few days. Besides, reliable drinking water isn't expensive.

The marina in **Mindelo**, once somewhat disreputable, has developed enormously in recent years. Since the ARC-Plus (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) started making a stop here, there's a well-stocked chandlery (marine outfitter and spare parts shop) and plenty of tradespeople who can fix any boating problems. We're staying here over Christmas and for a few relaxing days before we set off on our own big voyage.



Fig. 30.9.: The marina in Mindelo.



Fig. 30.10: View of the city from the marina building.

Mindelo is the capital of Cape Verde and offers a wide variety of shops, markets, and restaurants. The commercial life is reminiscent of Africa; in fact, the inhabitants are a good mix of white and dark-skinned people—Africa has never felt so close on our trip. There are no supermarkets, but there are weekly markets, a large market hall for vegetables, a fish market, and a few butcher shops. Everywhere you hear people laughing and the local music "Morna," reminiscent of Fado, accompanied by images of its main performer and veteran star, Cesaria Évora. The skipper, who otherwise has a more South American taste in music (Tango & Salsa), reveals himself to be an enthusiastic fan of Morna. The connection to Fado is no surprise, as Cape Verde was under Portuguese administration until the 1970s, and Portuguese is spoken there. Since then, Chinese traders have also arrived and opened numerous shops selling Chinese goods (not the porcelain, though). The deep blue Caribbean water at the picturesque beaches in the area is clean and inviting for swimming.

We celebrate Christmas Eve in a nearby fish restaurant (fish dishes are relatively inexpensive here and make the co-skipper happy) and in our lightly decorated saloon. The many restaurants offer tourist fare like pizza or burgers, but also local specialties, including a very extensive selection of seafood, as well as dishes like Buzio or the local Cachupa Rica. Live music from local musicians is also very common.

We find a chandlery with an attached workshop. The owner looks at our broken bolt and offers to turn a new one for us on his workbench. We're delighted and want several. Unfortunately, he's short on stainless steel, and it's only enough for one attempt. Then the skipper remembers an idea that had been slowly taking shape in his mind. We order a second one in conventional steel. The idea is that regular tool steel is softer and more malleable than stainless steel and can therefore absorb impact loads better. So, studying materials science has paid off. (Addendum: the stainless-steel bolt didn't hold up, while the ordinary steel bolt is still doing its job on Tanuki).



Fig. 30.11.: Mindelo city center.



Fig. 30.12.: The market hall.



Fig. 30.13: Christmas dinner with live music.



Fig. 30.14: Mural showing Cesaria Evora, the most famous singer of "Morna"-music.



Fig. 30.15: Tanuki is also in the Christmas spirit.



The day before, there's a party with our friends from Coconut and Teulu. Coconut's skipper, Mark Sinclair, is a world-famous sailor from the Golden Globe Race, and we spontaneously arrange to meet up again in Auckland. Teulu and his crew, well-known YouTube bloggers, are even moored right next to Tanuki.

Then comes the day of departure. We pay our marina bill, quickly download the latest weather data, and let the Teulu crew help us with the lines. They cast off right behind us and are also behind us at the fuel dock. They, too, are heading to the Caribbean.

Out of the harbor and off we go into the vastness of the Atlantic. It's about 2,000 nautical miles to Barbados, our destination in the Caribbean, which means about 15-20 days, depending on the wind.

Our navigation system has calculated an optimized great-circle route (orthodrome) on which, according to the weather forecast, we should have good weather and a following wind. To explain: Orthodromes are the shortest possible routes on the curved surface of the Earth (opposite: Loxodrome).



Fig. 30.16: Goodbye Mindelo.

## 31. The Atlantic

Logbook: Cape Verde - Barbados

Date: 29.12.22

Days at sea so far: 90

Nautical miles so far: 4639.5

The transatlantic route is the first hurdle on the path for the aspiring bluewater sailor. Sailing from east to west is usually easy, as consistent northeast trade winds make the route technically straightforward, and the Atlantic Equatorial Current also helps in the direction of travel. So, in theory, you just need to wait long enough, with or without minimal sails, to eventually arrive. Of course, we didn't do that. Our goal of approximately 100 nautical miles per day is only achievable with a truly optimized sail plan.

The route is nonetheless demanding for the boat and its equipment, as some aspects are not ideal. Sailing downwind is strenuous because a wind directly behind is difficult to control, and the waves from behind make it extremely challenging for the human or electric pilot, as each wave pushes the boat off course, resulting in strong forces on the rudder. Therefore, one usually steers to keep the wind a few degrees to the side, essentially sailing tacking with the wind, while paying close attention to wind direction and strength.

Be that as it may, we set sail with optimism. Here's an excerpt from our logbook:

**Day 1 (29.12.22):** Departure around 11 a.m. local time. Wind around 22 knots, high waves up to 3 meters. Steering difficult, the autopilot occasionally malfunctions in terms of producing error messages. Our resolve is to handsteer above 25 kt windspeed and to balance the boat using the sail configuration.

**Day 2 (30.12.22):** Wind calms down to 8-10 knots, waves drop to about 1 meter. Daily run (distance from noon to noon) 102 nautical miles. Calm night, 7-12 knots, we get a good night's sleep, but we're cruising along at about 4 knots on our course. Two hours of engine time to charge the battery a bit.

We're feeling a bit better now, and we're already thinking about eating solid food again. The first few days on a passage are always a bit more difficult because you have to get used to the boat's movements. Some call it "sea legs," but the skipper tends to call it "sea stomach."

**Day 3 (31.12.22):** Calm conditions. We've deployed the whisker pole (boom for the headsail) and secured the boom with a preventer. Daily run: 106 nautical miles. We spot our neighbouring boat from Cape Verde, Teulu, in the distance. The wind picks up to 25 knots at 5:00 a.m. local time. We occasionally have to steer manually. Our autopilot can't keep up above about 25 knots and beeps for assistance.

**Day 4 (1.1.23):** Wind around 10-12 knots. Teulu radioed us that they had seen a whale, which was apparently heading in our direction. Unfortunately, we couldn't see it. Daily run: 108 nautical miles.

**Day 5 (2.1.23):** Wind over 20 knots, very roly. We've shortened the sails considerably. Daily run: 103 nautical miles. 4 flying fish (deceased) found on board; sea burial initiated.

**Day 6 (3.1.23):** Wind 12 knots, sails fully reefed, only making 4 knots. Daily run 101 nautical miles. Cast our line, a large fish bit relatively quickly and dragged our bait away. No sushi. After that, only clumps of sargassum "caught". Boring! See Teulu 12 nautical miles away, they're overtaking us! Two sailboats on the same course equals to one regatta!

**Day 7 (4.1.23):** Wind 20 knots and more, autopilot occasionally cuts out. 3 engine hours for battery charging. We're learning to better balance the sails so the autopilot doesn't have to exert so much power. 2m waves from behind, daily run 116nm.

**Day 8 (5.1.23):** Wind 22 knots. Autopilot overwhelmed, steering manually occasionally. Terrible night, hardly any sleep. Daily run: 107 nautical miles.

**Day 9 (6.1.23):** Wind 22-26 knots, confusing waves from behind and to the side. Must steer manually. Daily run: 117 nautical miles.

**Day 10 (7.1.23):** Wind 22-24 knots, gusting up to 30 knots. We have to steer manually in 1-hour shifts. Around midday, we found a sail configuration where the autopilot works. Daily run: 124 nautical miles. It's the co-skipper's birthday! We're celebrating the halfway mark for her birthday!

**Day 11 (8.1.23):** No change in the weather; apart from a few hours on autopilot, we steered manually. Daily run: 108 nautical miles.

**Day 12 (9.1.23):** Weather slightly better, the autopilot is working. Crew happy. Daily run: 103 nautical miles. Manual steering is awful because it's very taxing on the helmsman. We're taking turns in one-hour watches, which also leads to a sleep deficit. A day like this on autopilot is good to replenish our energy reserves.

**Day 13 (10.1.23):** Wind 12-16 knots, gusting up to 39.5 knots. Occasional hand steering required. Squalls (isolated rain clouds bringing strong winds) around us, but we can see them on radar and occasionally navigate around them. Daily run: 96 nautical miles.

**Day 14 (11.1.23):** Calm night, autopilot at the helm. 8-15 knots of wind. Light seas, somewhat choppy during the day. Daily distance: 91 nautical miles.



**Day 15 (12.1.23):** Wind 12-22 knots. Tacking required. Daily run 107 nautical miles. Sargassum carpets are drifting against us, even more so as we approach the Caribbean.

**Day 16 (13.1.23):** Wind 15-20 knots. Tacking with 4-5 gybes per day. Daily run 105 nautical miles.

**Day 17 (14.1.23):** Light winds, sailing under full sail. Daily run: 81 nautical miles.

**Day 18 (15.1.23):** Light wind, small waves. Daily run: 105 nautical miles.

**Day 19 (16.1.23):** Land sighted around 5 a.m. The skipper was just winning the rum ration while on watch. Sailing around the northern tip of Barbados with engine assistance. Heavy rain for an hour. Docked in Port St. Charles around noon.



Fig. 31.1: Our genoa (here heavily reefed) is poled out at port with the whisker pole.



Fig. 31.2: Our fishing rod is waiting for a fish.

We didn't catch any fish; someone stole our bait! Most days we were more occupied with the ship's command and ourselves. There weren't any real calm days. We saw many flying fish, in large schools, some of which even hit the skipper while on watch (no joke). These were then released alive back into their territory, even though flying fish are considered a delicacy in Cape Verde and the Caribbean.

What did we eat? Not much for the first two days. We're not prone to seasickness, but our bodies need to adjust to the boat's movements, and we don't have much of an appetite. We force ourselves to drink enough fluids and have a few snacks. Later on, we can cook a meal. We're not big breakfast eaters; the skipper likes a bowl of muesli and tea, even during the day, while the skipper's wife is happy with one or two cups of caffè latte. We don't cook lunch, but we do have a communal dinner. We have frozen meat and fish. Spaghetti Bolognese or any variation of Indian or Thai curry is quick to prepare. We bake bread every few days in the bread maker we bought in Spain. Rice comes from the rice cooker,

and legumes from the pressure cooker. Stir-fries and egg dishes are also no problem. The skipper's wife did complain that we only have two gas burners, but we don't need any more for the crossing. Only the small IKEA induction cooktop and the electric kettle are taking a break; they consume too much energy. Speaking of energy, we've put one of our refrigerators on pause to save energy. Now only our bar fridge, stocked with dairy products, is running.



Fig. 31.3: 3-4m wave but benign.



Fig. 31.4: Almost there. We're raising the yellow flag.

The conclusion is that a 19-day crossing is just about average, or even above average. We're not racing sailors; we want to arrive comfortably without putting undue wear and tear on the equipment. Accordingly, we didn't have any major breakdowns. Our autopilot doesn't handle waves coming in from behind very well and can't keep up in winds above about 20-25 knots. A more powerful combination of hydraulic thruster and engine might help here.

In Port St. Charles, we initially had a very uncomfortable and wobbly berth at the customs dock, but were allowed to stay there for one night free of charge before finally getting some proper accommodation. We had to make up for our lack of sleep first. Good night then.

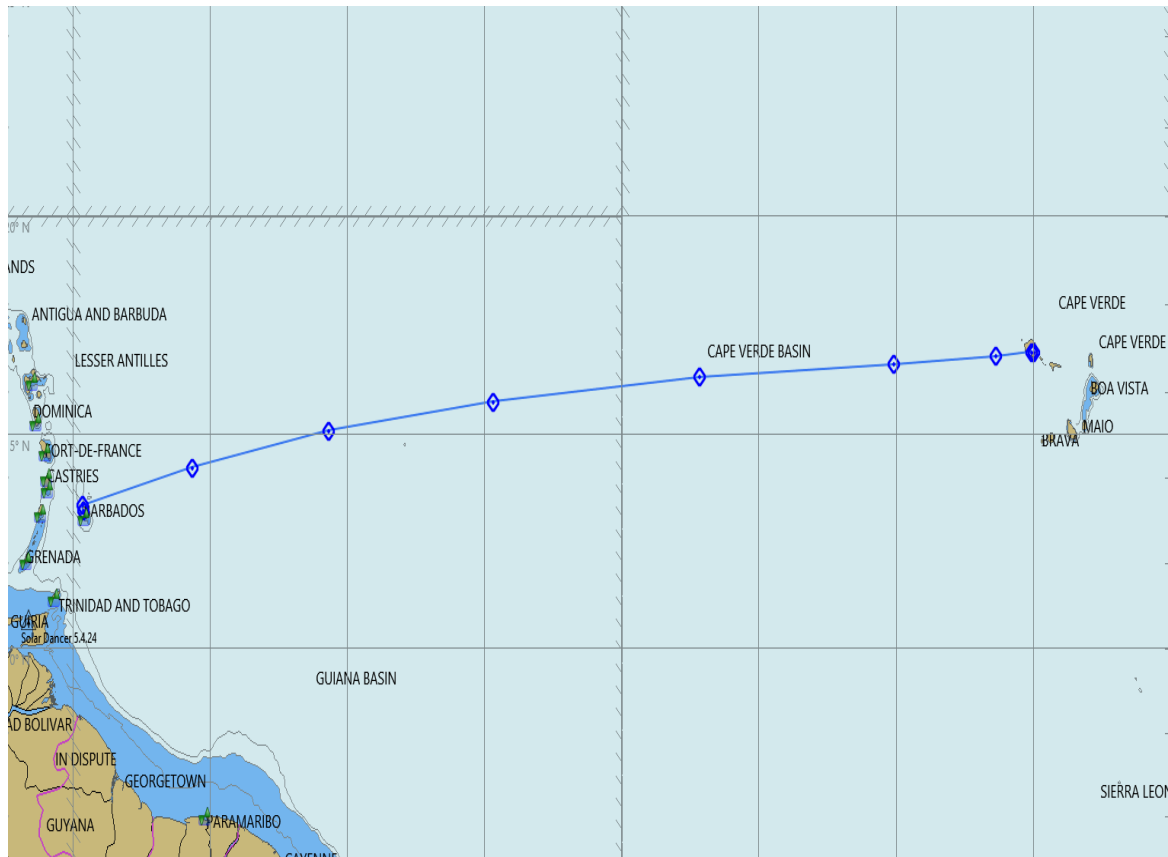


Fig. 31.5: Our journey across the Atlantic to Barbados.



## 32. The Lesser Antilles

Logbook: Barbados – St. George

Date: 16.01.23

Days at sea so far: 108

Nautical miles so far: 6689

In **Barbados**, we need to clear customs somewhere. The options are Bridgetown, the capital, and **Port St. Charles**. We have to dock at a customs pier. Bridgetown has a tall concrete quay, while Port St. Charles has a small wooden one. Since we've already had experience with tall concrete quays in Greece and don't want to repeat that, we opt for the wooden pier. So, we sail around the northern end of the island, get thoroughly soaked in a downpour, and finally contact the authorities by radio.

### 1. Barbados

As expected, we were invited to moor at the wooden pier. We were surprised by the rather large swell, but with plenty of lines and fenders, we finally managed to tie up safely after a friendly local from Barbados helped us with the lines. The health department, customs, and immigration were thankfully all in the same building, staffed by friendly officials, and the procedure was quick and easy. We were in. The harbor master offered us a slipway for the next day and allowed us to stay at the customs quay free of charge until then. For dinner, we staggered into the restaurant (land sickness!), the cocktails arriving later. Everything was good and expensive, so we had another cocktail and then quickly went to bed to catch up on the sleep we'd lost on the Atlantic.

It didn't work. The waves were crashing into the harbor with a swell; the boat rocked almost worse at the light and unprotected quay than it would have at sea. During the night, three of our lines snapped, and two fenders didn't survive the ordeal. We barely slept. The next morning, we were able to get into the actual slipway early, but only because the customs quay was needed. We moved Tanuki, five minutes later we were moored 20 meters further around the corner. It's still rocking, and that's not just due to seasickness. Oh well, the damage is already done.



Fig. 32.1: The port of Port St. Charles.



Fig. 32.2: Tanuki finally at the stable concrete quay.



Fig. 32.3: Cocktail in the harbor bar.

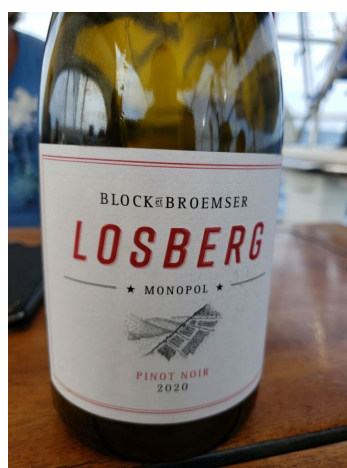


Fig. 32.4: A gift from the Rheingau region. Our guests are winemakers! And good ones at that!

First, we're having guests. The boat is already prepared; our friends Birgit and Henning from the Rheingau region are staying for about 10 days and will accompany us on our journey south. We're skipping Bridgetown and will essentially sail away again after two more days. We clear customs, and then it's off on an overnight crossing.

## 2. St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The trip begins with beautiful weather, as it should. But it doesn't last long. The wind picks up, now 26 knots, the waves become unpleasant, and the autopilot struggles. Add to that seasickness and darkness at night. Where's the moon when you need it? Our guest Henning has always wanted to experience seasickness. Seriously? He got it right away! It's truly awful weather, not good for the first day at sea with land lubbers.

Well, we steer manually for a few hours; our guest Birgit even helps and, after a short introduction, steers like a pro. In the morning, we see our destination, **Bequia**, and turn between St. Vincent and Bequia towards **Port Elizabeth**, reaching the lee of the island and finally the harbor (**Admiralty Bay**) of Port Elizabeth. We anchor in 5 meters of water and visit the town in our dinghy to clear customs.

**St. Vincent and the Grenadines** is an independent country, and naturally, we fly the yellow flag above the one of the host country. The bay is large enough for us and over 50 other boats, so no problem. We clear customs and get a SIM card for internet access. Even though the anchorage is a bit shaky, we enjoy a blissful sleep after the obligatory wine tasting (remember, our guests are winemakers...). We learn how to pronounce the island's name ("Bequai") and explore the colourful array of local shops and restaurants.

Then we continue on to the next island, Mustique.



Fig. 32.5: Admiralty Bay off Port Elizabeth.



Fig. 32.6: Our dinghy at the jetty.



Fig. 32.7: The beach promenade of Port Elizabeth.

### 3. Blues Festival on Mustique

Just 12 nautical miles southeast of Bequia lies **Mustique**, the island of the rich and famous. No visitors are allowed, except for a few private yachts that can moor at the buoys. We set sail late in the morning, close-hauled for the second half of the journey, racing a British boat. Rumour has it we'll get a really good price for the buoy for three days, and of course, the annual Blues Festival is beginning, a benefit event for the education of local children. The British boat overtakes us, and we round the dangerous Montezuma Shoal, as second winners. To our delight, we can choose our buoy; there are still a few available. Local mariners help us tie up and collect the very low mooring fee. The island is a dream: no tourists, clean beaches and houses, and friendly locals.

Mustique is named after the French word for mosquito, but nowadays it has hardly any mosquitoes. It was sold as a private island to Collin Tennant in 1958, who shortly afterwards gifted a plot of land to Princess Margaret. Since 1968, Mustique has been owned by a company ("The Mustique Company")



and many celebrities and rock stars live or vacation there, such as Mick Jagger, Tommy Hilfiger, and Noel Gallagher.

We visited the meticulously manicured beaches, snorkelled in the shallow water among turtles, reef fish, and stingrays, attended the festival with blues musicians from all over the world, and ate freshly caught lobsters. Our conclusion: so far, the most beautiful and interesting stay for the Tanuki crew.



Fig. 32.8: Tanuki at the buoy off Mustique.



Fig. 32.9: Mooring fee approx. €80 for three days.



Fig. 32.10: Beach at Britannia Bay.



Fig. 32.11: Pink and purple house in gingerbread style.



Fig. 32.12: The world-famous Basils Bar.



Fig. 32.13: The Blues Festival.



Fig. 32.14: Freshly caught. Before...



Fig. 32.15: ...and a little bit later.

#### 4. Mayreau and Union Island

We continue south. We sail past **Canouan** Island, briefly explore the bustling Charlestown Bay, and then head towards **Mayreau** Island. East of Mayreau lie the famous Tobago Cays, a group of idyllic islands with narrow, shallow passages.

Even from a distance, we could see that the anchorage area between Petit Bateau, Petit Rameau, and Baradal was packed with masts. The Lesser Antilles guidebook commented: "The chance of finding a good anchorage there is about as good as winning the lottery." So, we decided to take it easy and head into the (at first glance) well-protected Saline Bay on the leeward side of Mayreau and drop anchor there. The bay was a bit smaller than we had expected, but we found a spot in 6 meters of water on the sand. No problem. Unfortunately, our optimism was a bit premature; the night was very choppy, and we didn't get much sleep. We spontaneously decided to leave this inhospitable bay the very next morning.



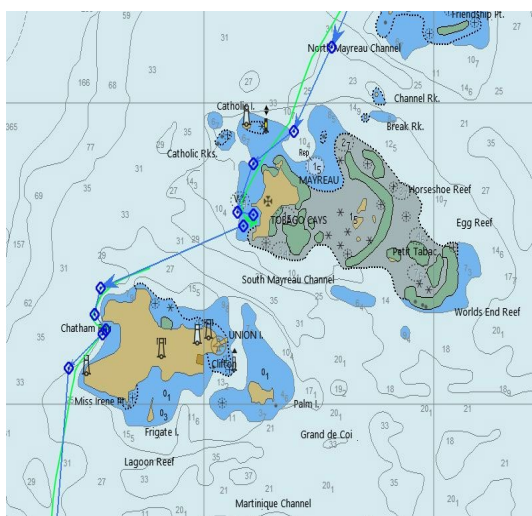


Fig. 32.16: Mayreau and Union Island.



Fig. 32.17: The Saline Bay.

We continued on to the neighbouring **Union Island**, also to the leeward side of **Chatham Bay**. More beach, more protection from the harsh sea conditions. Unfortunately, we had to re-anchor several times to find a comfortable spot in the anchorage. Our anchor winch got hot and the fuse blew. We dropped anchor by hand, and the fuse was quickly fixed. Nevertheless, the skipper and Henning dismantled the winch drum, and we decided that the winch should be properly serviced at some point, as we would need to rely on it for the remainder of the trip.

Shortly after we anchored, a local man approached us and offered us our dinner – two freshly caught red snappers – for a price we found acceptable after a brief negotiation. Afterwards, a tall ship with five masts visited us. The **Royal Clipper** is actually a cruise ship of a special class, and we were quite astonished when this giant vessel sailed into our anchorage.

The night passes peacefully without any disturbance from the waves. We decide to stay another day. Our dinghy takes us to the vast beach and in the evening to the Caribbean beach bar with live music on the steel drum, "catch of the day" (fish...) and Caribbean rum cocktails.





Fig. 32.18: Chatham Bay.



Fig. 32.19: Dinner.



Fig. 32.20: The Royal Clipper next to us.

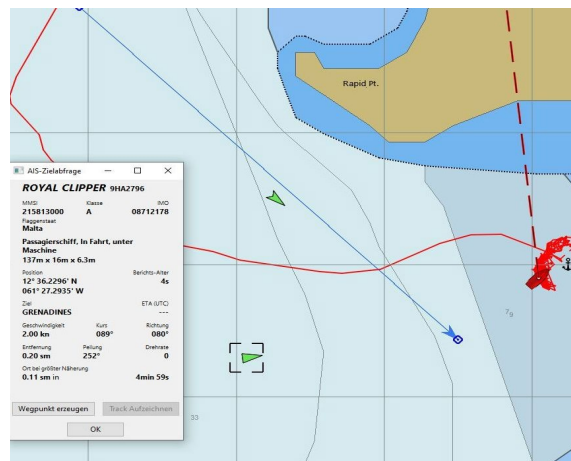


Fig. 32.21: Looks quite inconspicuous here.

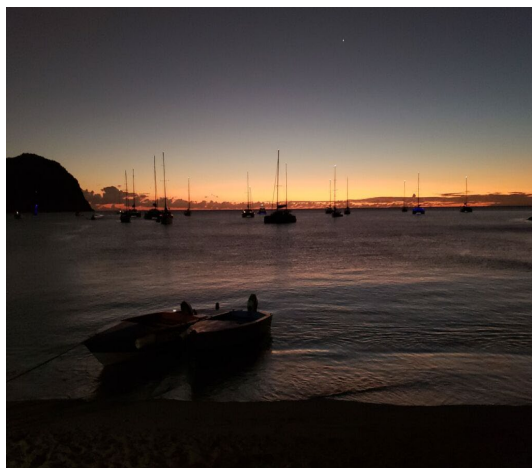


Fig. 32.22: The bay at sunset.



Fig. 32.23: Authentic steel drum music.



Fig. 32.24: Clifton Harbour.



Fig. 32.25: Street restaurants in Clifton Harbour.

Since our next stop is in another country, we have to clear customs. This can be done in **Clifton**, the nearest larger town on **Union Island**. We get a ride there from the innkeeper in his four-wheel drive; the road is full of large boulders, and the vehicle bottoms out on rocks several times. Only later do we notice the completely worn tires. The driver is good; he gets us there safely, even though we have a few panicky moments. The paperwork at the authorities is quickly completed, and we're ready to leave. The next morning, we continue on to Grenada.

## 5. Carriacou

The next island, **Carriacou**, is just a short trip of 12 nautical miles and about 2 hours. Carriacou already belongs to **Grenada**, and we have to officially clear customs. On the way, at the special request of our guests, we will sail past Sandy Island, a small island north of Carriacou.

It's not actually an island, but merely a sandbank offshore with palm trees and popular snorkeling spots. We're surprised that the damage from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 has been repaired; new palm trees have been planted in the meantime. Shortly before reaching it, we encounter an old acquaintance. Ahead of us lies the Black Pearl, which we had already met in Montenegro. We sail close by and wave to this special sailing superyacht.

A little later, we arrived at **Tyrell Bay** in the southwest of the island. The entire bay was packed with boats of all sizes and ages (including some real clunkers). This was probably because the bay offered quite good anchoring conditions, even for long-term moorings. We found a suitable spot and dropped anchor. The anchor winch was slow, but it worked. We took the dinghy ashore and received our Grenada customs clearance and a one-week SIM card.

The next day, after a peaceful night, we weighed anchor (the winch didn't let us down) and sailed towards Grenada, a distance of approximately 35 nautical miles and an estimated 5-6 hours of sailing time. We passed an interesting maritime phenomenon, the "Kick 'em Jenny".





Fig. 32.26: Sandy Island off Carriacou.



Fig. 32.27: A grand reunion, the Black Pearl.



Fig. 32.28: Tyrell Bay.

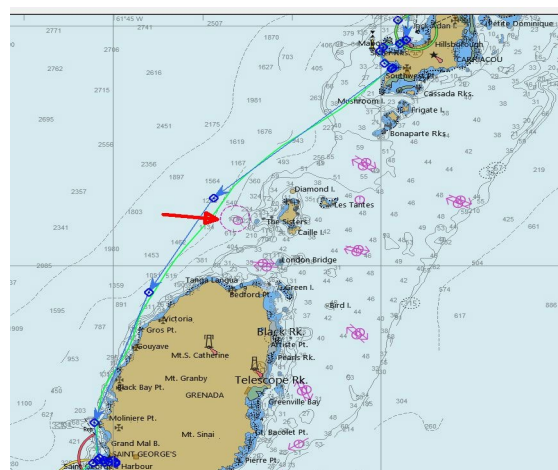


Fig. 32.29: Kick'em Jenny, underwater volcano.

Kick 'em Jenny is a real volcanic mountain, only underwater. The volcano occasionally shows activity and poses a risk to shipping. During eruptions observed between 1936 and 2015, the volcano produced steam plumes and tsunamis. Nautical charts therefore recommend avoiding this area. We heed this advice and set a course northwest of the volcano at the recommended distance.

## 6. Grenada

Around mid-afternoon we reach **St. George** and our destination, **Port Louis Marina**, where we reverse in and enjoy a celebratory beer. A friendly Frenchman is moored next to us with his Amel, an Australian catamaran is at the dock opposite, and a little further away is a German research vessel, the "Eugen Seibold," conducting marine biological studies on behalf of the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry. (Spoiler alert: We'll see them again.)





Fig. 32.30: Tanuki in the Port Louis Marina.



Fig. 32.31: City harbor of Port St. George.

Our guests are leaving us here to fly back to Germany. For us, it's time for some housework: the boat needs to be desalinated, the interior needs tidying and cleaning, and we're also organizing the repair of our anchor winch and a major shopping trip to replenish our supplies.

The public transport system in St. Georges is interesting; there are shared taxis that can carry up to 12 people for a minimal fare and stop on demand. We drive to the nearest large department store and load two trolley loads of supplies into a local taxi. Afterwards, we visit the local chandlery and prepare for departure. The skipper reworks the power supply for our autopilot, which was connected with a cable that was too long and too thin. This is quickly and easily corrected in two hours.

## 7. Whisper Cove

The company that's supposed to service our winch is located further south, so we've decided to spend a few more days in a small marina there while we wait for our appointment. Tuesday is a national holiday, and we'll be making the most of the long weekend (Monday). The mechanic is coming on Wednesday.

So we set sail and head for the small **Whisper Cove Marina** in **Wobourn Bay** on the south coast of Grenada. The owner helps us dock. Unfortunately, our draft is too deep, and we run aground on a sandy bottom, but we manage to free ourselves. After several attempts, we finally dock at the end of the pier, where the water depth is sufficient for Tanuki. The mechanic actually comes on Wednesday and removes the unit to repair it in the workshop. New brushes for the electric motor and a fresh oil change for the gearbox are agreed upon. Everything is reassembled on Friday, and we are finally ready to leave.

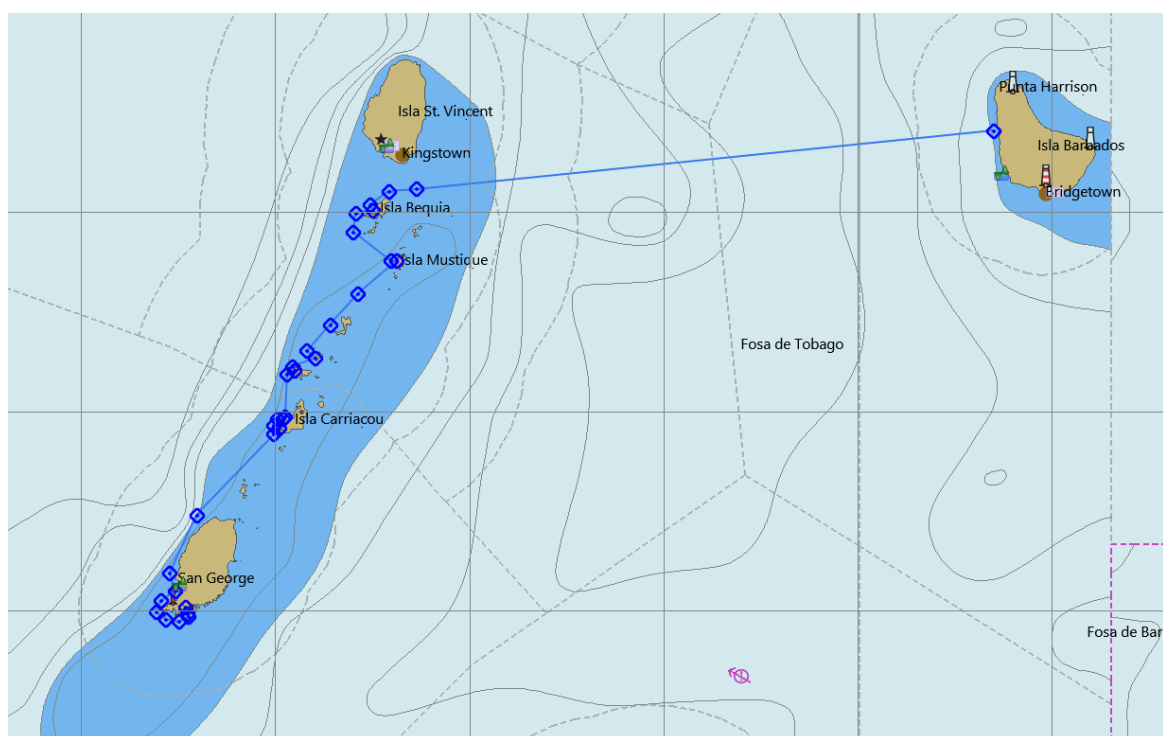


Fig. 32.32: Our route from Barbados through the Lesser Antilles to Grenada.

### 33. The Dutch Antilles

Logbook: Grenada – Curacao – Aruba

Date: 13.02.23

Days at sea so far: 116

Nautical miles so far: 6846.0

It's time to leave the Lesser Antilles and begin our journey to Central America. We've chosen the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao) as our intermediate destination. While planning our route, we also discovered Los Roques, a diving paradise that, although part of Venezuela, is relatively safe for tourists. This safety comes at a price, however; an agent quoted us around US\$950 in fees alone, which quickly dampened our interest. We'd rather save up for the Galapagos islands.

The day of departure is approaching, we receive another request from a German hitchhiking couple and, after a lengthy conversation, decide to take Florian with us to Panama as crew.

Here we go. We cast off without any problems in strong winds, without running aground anywhere, then turn west in the south of the island. The wind is strong and the sea is initially very unpleasant, but it quickly improves. Soon we can engage the autopilot and begin our journey of approximately 500 nautical miles over 4 days of sailing.

We begin with a long 50nm southwest leg and then gybe northwest. This strategy allows us to catch the trade winds in optimal sail trim. Off the coast of **La Blanquilla**, we set a direct west course and sail past **Los Roques and Islas de Aves**, which we skirt at a considerable distance to avoid any complaints from the Venezuelan coast guard. We also know from other sailors that a speedboat patrols near Los Roques. Towards evening, we pass **Bonaire** Island, which we skip. We're much too early; now we need to plan our arrival time to arrive during daylight. We use the island's lee to sail a zigzag course along the coast. This (and another zigzag before Curaçao) allows us to time our arrival on the neighboring island of **Curaçao** so that we arrive in early daylight. Florian is doing a great job as a crew member and is helping us reduce the number of night watches. So, it's definitely paid off to have some help on board.

Around 3 a.m., off the coast of Curaçao, while the skipper was on watch, Tanuki was suddenly illuminated by powerful spotlights. A shock in the early morning! At the same time, the coast guard called over the radio. They had actually crept up silently, without any official lights or AIS. Damn, our radar wasn't switched on to save power. Oh well, the captain politely asked us for the boat's details, our names and passport numbers, and then wished us a good trip.

#### 1. Carnival in Curacao.

We have a reservation at Curacao Marin (without the "a") and therefore need to enter the natural harbor of **Schottegat**. We radio for the pedestrian pontoon bridge (Kon. Emmabrug) to be opened, which is kindly granted. Then we pass under a road bridge. A quick look at the nautical chart reveals a clearance of 55 meters, enough for our 22-meter mast and antenna. We round the bend and head for the marina, which has a berth ready for us alongside. A celebratory beer and then off to clear customs in town. We go to customs first. Mistake! Luckily, the customs officer is in a good mood and issues us the necessary forms anyway. Then it's a walk to immigration to get our passports stamped. We're in, and just in time for the big Caribbean carnival parade!





Fig. 33.1: The Kon. Juliana Bridge. We can easily fit through there.



Fig. 33.2: Tanuki is moored alongside.



Fig. 33.3: The Kon. Emmabrug opens.



Fig. 33.4: The bridge at night.

The marina is small, belonging to a shipyard without a restaurant or luxury shops, but it's inexpensive. Unfortunately, getting into town is a bit of an ordeal; we first have to take a taxi. Curaçao is vibrant, the people are friendly, and everything exudes a blend of Dutch and Caribbean flair. Even the local language, "Papiamentu," is a similar fusion of Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and African influences. Everywhere we go, we're greeted with a "bon bini" (welcome).



Fig. 32.5: The colorful facades of Willemstad.

Sunday is the big carnival parade. We walk to the pedestrian bridge and a little way into the local neighborhood of Otrobanda. We wait there for about three hours, and then the Caribbean parade begins with music and colorful costumes. Around 7 p.m., it starts to rain heavily. We've seen enough and go to a local restaurant. The food is fantastic. A taxi takes us back to the marina.



Fig. 33.6: The Carnival Princess.



Fig. 33.7: The princes or the king?





Fig. 33.8: Colorful costumes.



Fig. 33.9: This young woman is clearly having fun. She almost looks Brazilian.

Since all the shops are closed during Carnival, we're staying in Curaçao for two more days and then, despite horror stories about the customs clearance process, we decide to head to Aruba. So we're following the famous Beach Boys song: "Aruba, Jamaica, oh I wanna take you to Bermuda, Bahama, come on pretty Mama...."

## 2. Vacation in Aruba

Onward to the west. **Aruba**, the third of the ABC islands, lies on our route. We debated for a long time whether to visit this island because of reports circulating online about how terrible the customs clearance procedures are. You have to go to an industrial port in the south of the island for both entry and exit, with a designated wooden jetty right next to a dangerous shoal onto which the prevailing wind tries to push boats. Incidentally, the water depth at this jetty isn't suitable for larger boats. Two forums strongly advise against using this jetty, or even Aruba itself, especially since you have to follow a specific approach route. So, we initially decided against going to Aruba. Fortunately, in Curaçao, we found a local skipper who assured us that approaching the port of **Barcadera** is straightforward. We believe him, get detailed instructions, and embark on this adventure, albeit with some trepidation.

The trip to Aruba is an overnigher; we depart from **Wilhelmstad** and pass through the swing bridge, which is already open for a cargo ship. Sailing northwest with a good breeze from slightly aft and a speed of 7 knots with heavily reefed sails, we reach the coast of Aruba early in the morning.

A bit of snailing off the coast (sailing slowly back and forth) and suddenly it's bright morning. We enter the port of Barcadera and politely report to Harbour Control, who are quite delighted that a tourist sailor is actually following the rules. The reason is that the narrow entrance sometimes requires manoeuvring by very large ships, and the officials want to avoid collisions or other problems.

Here we're instructed to head for the infamous wooden jetty, even though we've declared our considerable draft of 2.25 meters and the friendly harbor master even double-checked with his boss. We're cautiously optimistic. There are two large buoys in front of the customs quay, which we navigate around according to the local guide's instructions, and then we see the wooden jetty, an extension of



the concrete quay. We cheekily tie up at this quay even before reaching the wooden jetty, knowing the water depth is sufficient here. A few fishermen take our lines and are quite happy that we reward this service with a few cans of beer. We're securely moored without running aground, and nobody complains.



Fig. 33.10: Tanuki at the customs quay in Aruba. Wasn't that difficult at all.

Clearing in (no problems), customs (paperwork), and a surprising search of our boat by four friendly customs officers, and we're "in." The customs officers are polite and only superficially search our cupboards; we are polite and cooperate—no stress.

We cast off in reverse, circled the mooring buoys again into the channel, quickly checked with Port Control to see if we could leave the harbor basin, and then headed for the marina. They informed us that we unfortunately had to wait a few more hours until our reserved berth was free. No problem, we dropped anchor off Surf Beach and took a deep breath. No alcohol yet. The actual approach to the marina was later routine, despite the wind in the harbor. Now for the celebratory beer!

What a surprise! The **Renaissance Marina** belongs to a luxury resort (Renaissance Hotel, Marriott). As marina guests, we are privileged to use all the amenities (swimming pool, beach, casino, yoga classes, etc.) free of charge. We're also moored right in **Oranjestad**, the island's main town, practically separated from the city centre only by a street. Besides the hotel complex, there are shops and restaurants in a large mall. The friendly marina manager recommends a local fish restaurant, and the co-skipper is unstoppable. Local delicacies at moderate prices. We decide to take a few days off while we wait for a weather window to allow us to continue our journey. This trip will be exciting, as the cape we're aiming for has been plagued by bad weather. The local sailors (whom we consulted in our weather research) say that a good opportunity typically arises at the beginning of March. We see it already at the end of February and aren't about to let this opportunity pass us by. Hooray, we have a weather window for a safe passage through a dangerous area!



Fig. 33.11: Tanuki in the Renaissance Marina.



Fig. 33.12: Market passage in the hotel complex.

But first things first: vacation time! The hotel has a private island with a secluded beach. We take the hotel's water taxi and are on the island 10 minutes later. A chic resort with separate areas for families and an adults-only section. Right at the entrance, somewhat sleepy lizards wander across our feet at arm's length. Tame flamingos patrol the beach, and the luxurious sun loungers beckon us to soak up the sun. Cocktails are available at the enormous bar or, as if by magic, find their way to the loungers. We're blown away and enjoy our vacation day. The next day, we have breakfast at the Dutch Pancake House until we're hit with a sugar rush. Strangely enough, the place is buzzing; we even have to wait 20 minutes for a table. Interestingly, the majority of the guests are Americans, although there are also many Dutch people here.

Right next to Tanuki lies the German research vessel **Eugen Seibold**, which we already reported on in Grenada. They are also benefiting from the weather conditions, but unfortunately they are leaving two days before us. We enjoy talking to the skipper and crew and having them explain their research mission to us.

Unfortunately, departure day arrives far too soon. We cast off and visit the industrial port of Barcadera once again, where we complete the official procedures this time in reverse order, but without a visit from the friendly customs officers. This time, no one takes our lines, so we practice our lasso throwing skills and manage to snag a bollard with our centerline. We're on it! We're almost exactly where we were when we cleared in.





Fig. 33.13: Private island with bathing beach.



Fig. 33.14: Tame lizards on the pathways.



Fig. 33.15: The flamingos are the stars...



Fig. 33.16: ...and run around everywhere.



Fig. 33.17: Morning blood sugar shock in the Dutch pancake house...



Fig. 33.18: ..but we don't mind!





Fig. 33.19: These flamingos are plastic.



Fig. 33.20: Our neighbouring boat, the research vessel Eugen Seibold.

We decided to take some more pictures of the approach. Suddenly, after immigration, a catamaran approached and made to cut across the suggested route. The friendly immigration lady panicked; she had already warned us about the very low tide, which further increased the already high risk of running aground. We remained somewhat calmer, as catamarans have very little draft, but we still helped by waving and signalling the other skipper the correct entrance and taking his lines, which is standard practice among sailors. After the American skipper docked, there was no sign of thanks; he later told the immigration lady that he had been there many times before. Tsk, tsk, tsk.



Fig. 33.21: This is the correct way to get to the customs quay.



Fig. 33.22: The infamous wooden bridge. Tanuki is further ahead.

Our conclusion regarding Puerto Barcadera is simple: the procedure is annoying, but not a problem if you prepare and listen to the locals. The latter is always an invaluable source of information. We're glad we stopped in Aruba and wouldn't want to miss these few relaxing vacation days.

Finally, we reverse out and a friendly harbor controller even wishes us "fair winds" over the radio for our onward journey to Colombia.



Fig. 33.23: Our route from Grenada to Aruba.

## 34. Colombia

Logbook: Aruba – Santa Marta

Date: 02/26/23

Days at sea so far: 123

Nautical miles so far: 7339

The route from Aruba to Colombia is notorious for bad weather, especially the northernmost tip of the Guajira Peninsula, **Punta Gallinas**. Cabo de la Vela, a little further southwest, is also notorious. For almost a month, we observed low-pressure systems with wind speeds exceeding 40 knots here. Sailors report that this area ranks highly on the list of the 100 most dangerous stretches of water in the world. Just before our destination, the port of **Santa Marta**, lies another cape (**Cabo de la Aguja**) that also has notoriously bad weather. In addition to the high wind speeds and the associated violent gusts, there are also katabatic winds from the mountains and strong currents close to shore; even pirates are said to be active on the Venezuelan side. So, we've been warned. However, a local sailor in Curaçao told us that the weather should be favorable at the beginning of March. We'll see.

As predicted, at the end of February an ideal weather window opened up for us to sail from Aruba to Santa Marta. So off we went, expecting the 280 nautical miles to take about 2-3 days. First, we rounded the islets of Los Monjes (the monks) off the coast of Venezuela and then turned left towards Port to give Punta Gallinas a respectful distance. The wind direction was perfect; we were on a safe downwind course, making 7-8 knots. After almost exactly 24 hours (since departure), we rounded Cabo de la Vela without any problems. The wind dropped from about 24 knots to 14-17 knots, and we sailed for a while under full sail, passing two oil derricks. We slowly began to see the mountains, classified as the highest coastal mountain range in the world; the highest peak is Pico Columbus at 5775 meters, just under 50 km inland. We reached **Cabo de Aguja** on the morning of the second day and were greeted by winds of up to 40 knots and heavy waves. To our relief, the rodeo only lasted about two hours, then we were around the cape and could sail into the bay of Santa Marta with more moderate conditions.

What a mess! The World-ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) is in the marina with more than 25 boats, and all the berths are taken. We had already sent several emails with a reservation request three days ago, but none of them were answered, and of course, we don't get emails while crossing the Atlantic. After some radio communication with the marina, they finally promised us a berth for the next day, as soon as the ARC had departed. However, our request to clear customs through the marina's agent was denied. They gave us the address of a local agent who would gladly do it for a bit more money (\$350 instead of \$60 at the marina). It's worth noting that in Colombia, an agent is mandatory for clearing customs. By now it's late afternoon, and well – which agent works that late, especially in a predominantly Hispanic country? We drop anchor in the harbor, comfortably with three other boats also affected by the ARC, and simply leave our yellow flag flying. Nothing happens.





Fig. 34.1: The industrial port of Santa Marta. Large freighters pass by.



Fig. 34.2: Sunset at anchor. The ARC is still blocking all berths in the marina.

The next morning. The ARC boats head out in the late morning, some just casually, but most execute a regatta-style start, complete with all the trimmings, including starting line tactics. We're surprised. Afterwards, the marina staff, exhausted, have to take a lunch break. We're called into the marina one after the other starting around 3 p.m. By now, there's a strong crosswind in the channel, and practically no boat makes it into the slipway on the first attempt. Neither do we; we have to try a second time after being blown off course by the wind the first time. No panic, though. The skipper has a feel for the problem the second time around, everything works out, and we're in. A celebratory drink, and then off to the marina office to take care of the paperwork. For \$60, they take our passports, and the marina agent clears us in. Everything's going to be fine! With the money we saved, we go to a restaurant and try the local ceviche (a salad made with raw, pickled fish, originally from Peru). There are restaurants that specialize in this (cevicherias). It tastes fantastic!



Fig. 34.3: Tanuki correctly parked in reverse.



Fig. 34.4: Cheviceria! Co-Skipper happy!



Fig. 34.5: We are organizing a delivery to the boat. Everyone is helping and having fun.



Fig. 34.6: Local curiosity. Rum and aguardiente in a Tetra Pak.

The marina is well-protected, clean, and safe, and all the staff are friendly and helpful. Santa Marta is a lively tourist resort with a strong police presence, and at least in the city centre, it's relatively safe. We shop at the local supermarkets, as they're supposed to be cheaper compared to Panama. One supermarket even delivers, after we spent about 45 minutes negotiating with four (!) friendly and helpful employees who had to make phone calls all over the world to get approval for a 2 km delivery of two full shopping carts. It all worked out in the end, everyone had a good laugh, and it saved us a day's rental car expenses. Any problems with our poor Spanish? Not a chance!

Our crew member Florian is also happy, as he's reunited with his girlfriend here. This ultimately led him to decide to leave us a little earlier. Understandable – even though we would have had room for her in a bunk as well. But the two of them want to trek a bit longer through Colombia, which we're happy to let them do.

Together with the crew of another German boat (NaKiKa), we made plans. Our initial idea of clearing customs in Panama and transiting the canal without an agent didn't hold up and was thwarted by harsh realities. So, like many other boats, we decided to sail directly to Colón and complete the paperwork with an agent there before treating ourselves to a week's vacation in the San Blas Islands. A young woman from NaKiKa's crew had already gained local experience as crew on tourist boats there. We exchanged recommendations on where to go and where to avoid. A few weeks ago, I stumbled upon a cruising guide for San Blas in a chandlery and immediately snapped it up, as even the latest edition of Eric Bauhaus's fantastic book isn't readily available everywhere.

The weather is steadily improving; our weather program currently indicates Wednesday as the best day to depart. So, we've already booked it. Santa Marta is a typical Central American city; you hear salsa and cumbia music everywhere, along with at least ten other musical styles that even the skipper doesn't know. The restaurants are inexpensive and the people are easy-going. Even with our rudimentary Spanish, we get by and always receive a smile for our attempts to communicate with our hands and feet.

But we have to keep going; after all, we want to get to Panama.

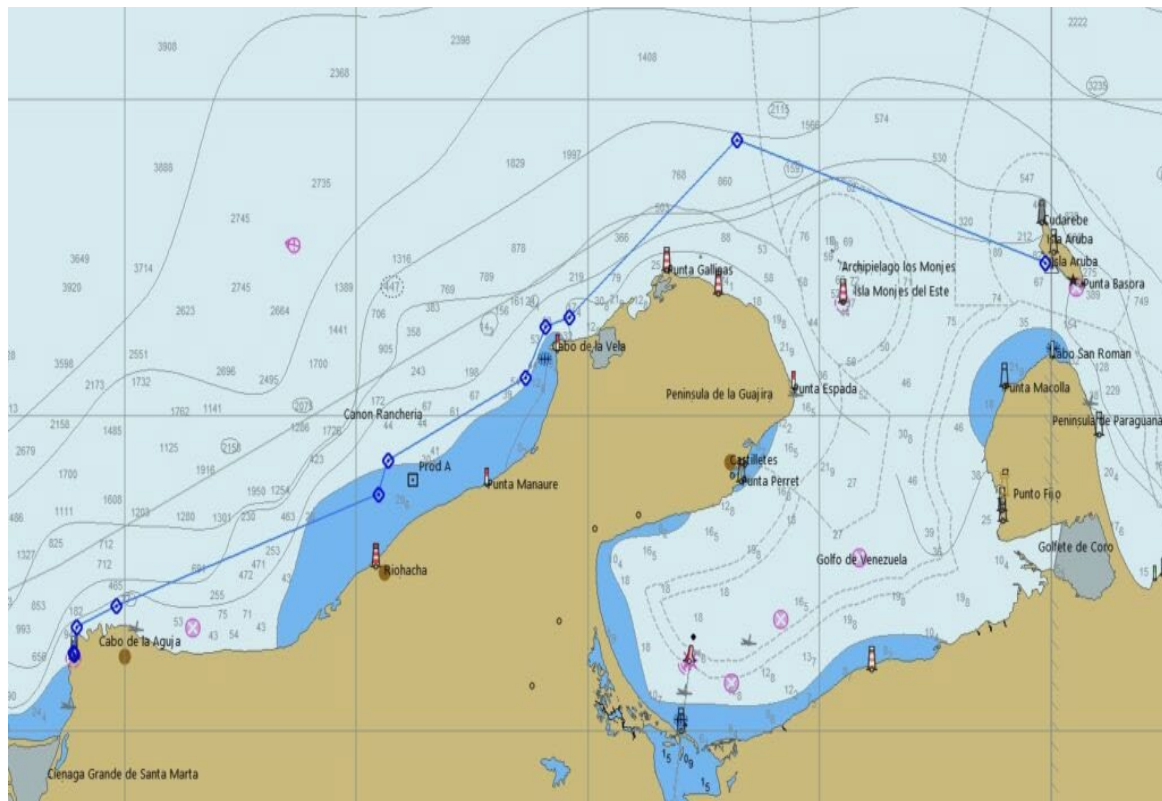


Fig. 34.7: Our route from Aruba to Colombia.



## 35. The trip to Panama

Logbook: Colombia - Panama

Date: 08.03.23

Days at sea so far: 127

Nautical miles so far: 7604

It somehow seemed fitting to begin this chapter with a Janosch quote, and I simply couldn't resist. For the skipper, at least, Janosch's picture books<sup>3</sup> for children are cherished memories.

We've already described several times how important the sea weather is for our crossings. Good weather planning makes all the difference between a relaxed sailing trip at a good speed and a stressful journey in foul weather (I'm deliberately not talking about increased danger here). Fortunately, our next leg is relatively easy; we're expecting three to four days and a somewhat bumpy start for the first half day, but then calm weather.

The journey goes from Santa Marta to Panama. For Panama, you need the usual customs clearance and a so-called cruising permit. According to information online, you can clear customs without any problems in the first port (Puerto Obaldia), but there's no cruising permit available there; you'd have to go to Colón for that. That's a real shame, since the most beautiful islands in the Caribbean, the St. Blas Islands, are right on the way, and without a cruising permit, you can't go anywhere, under threat of hefty fines. But wait, some boats are reporting that there is indeed a cruising permit available in Puerto Obaldia. So, what's the deal? We're confused. After discussing it with several other boats in Santa Marta, we decide to sail directly to Colón with the group and visit the St. Blas Islands later. (Spoiler alert: That was a mistake – we know that now. The harbor master in Puerto Obaldia has the form for the cruising permit.)

So, on Wednesday morning, we set off, leaving Santa Marta with heavy hearts, having grown to appreciate and love South American culture. Getting out of the slip was no problem; we headed straight for the nearest available gas station, filled up one last time, and then we were off. First, we motored away from the shore to get a better wind angle and clear the mouth of the Magdalena River, which washes a lot of trash into the Atlantic near Barranquilla (trees, beams, refrigerators – you name it). Then we set a course parallel to the coast, about 10 nautical miles to the southwest. With a good wind of around 20 knots, we made 6-7 knots (now without the engine) and sailed into the night. After a few gusts in the mid-20s in the afternoon, the new day greeted us with winds around 10-12 knots. Full sails were in order; our sails were happy to be fully unfurled. We were only making 4-5 knots, but it was stress-free. Our friends' boat (NaKiKa) has already pulled ahead (were they in a hurry, or are we racing? We suspect the former), but we can still see a German boat sailing parallel to us. Johannes from Heidelberg, with his Freyke, is on the same course, and we've made it a habit to keep an eye on his AIS signal during every navigation check. At some point, he calls us on the radio, and we arrange to have a chat during our night watches – it's fun and keeps us awake.

So, we continued in a straight line across the Gulf of Urabá to the northernmost tip of Panama. We learned that the ARC had now filled the marina on the canal and decided to stay at anchor in Linton Bay for at least another night until the ARC moved on. So we set our course and speed for arrival on the morning of the fourth day, after sailing 350 nautical miles and performing only two maneuvers

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<sup>3</sup> Here: "The trip to Panama (The story of how Little Tiger and Little Bear travel to Panama)" by Janosch

(two gybes). The anchor dropped in Linton Bay in the morning, right next to NaKiKa, who was probably waiting there for the same reason. Heavenly peace and quiet, except for the squawking of birds, monkeys, and dogs. During the anchoring process, we noticed that our anchor winch had failed again. Checking the cables and the fuse, we discovered the next problem. A wooden board under the forward bed had come loose, fallen down, and punctured the bow thruster battery. It had leaked and thus given up the ghost (or rather, splattered). What now? First, the old battery had to come out. No problem. The battery is removed (remove two screws and two terminal clamps), moved aft, and rinsed. Then the leaked battery acid has to be cleaned out. First, it's thoroughly diluted with water and then emptied. All surfaces in the bilge are cleaned and left to dry. The dinghy is lowered, and we sail with the dead battery to Linton Bay Marina to inquire about a new one. Unfortunately, none is available, but the marina employee offers to take care of the broken battery properly. That's a help. So, once again, no bow thruster – no problem, we can manage without it. The broken anchor winch is worse. The skipper has checked everything; it's truly "cactus" (as the Australians say). So, how are we going to raise our anchor?



Fig. 35.1: Anchored in Linton Bay. Dense jungle all around us.



Fig. 35.2: Other side without boats.

The next morning: Na Kika wants to leave too. They have the same problem: their anchor winch has also gone to the great beyond and has arranged to meet ours there. They're solving the problem with muscle power. Hmmm – Tanuki doesn't have that much muscle power on board, and our anchor is considerably heavier. Classic problem: brains versus brawn. We lay a line with a chain hook aft to one of our side winches. The skipper uses the winch to pull up the chain. Then it's secured with another chain hook, and the line is reattached forward with the second hook. It works wonderfully, although not exactly fast, as the boat also has to be steered so that there's no tension on the chain. After 30 minutes, the anchor is up, and Tanuki continues towards Colón. Due to the lack of wind, the engine has to help. We can see that something is happening there on the AIS and from the many large ships anchored offshore. It's the entrance to the **Panama Canal**. We pass the two large buoys into **Bahia Limon** and turn towards Starboard in the direction of **Marina Shelter Bay**.

We called the marina on VHF radio and received an immediate, professional response. They asked for our reservation and boat details and instructed us to proceed slowly towards the marina. Meanwhile, a catamaran pushed ahead. No problem, the driver announced that a second catamaran was coming.

Also, no problem, the dockmaster was unflappable. Tanuki was instructed to slow down even further and finally wait a few minutes. We reported that our bow thruster wasn't working, also no problem. We were assigned berth D14 and guided in bow-first. The marina team took the lines and had us tied up in no time. Truly professional! We thanked them.

The marina has plenty of space, even though not all the ARC boats have left yet, and boasts a vibrant community of sailors. The area is otherwise secure, as it's located on the grounds of a military base. Only occasionally does a curious crocodile swim through the marina.

Now we have to tackle the paperwork for our Panama Canal transit.

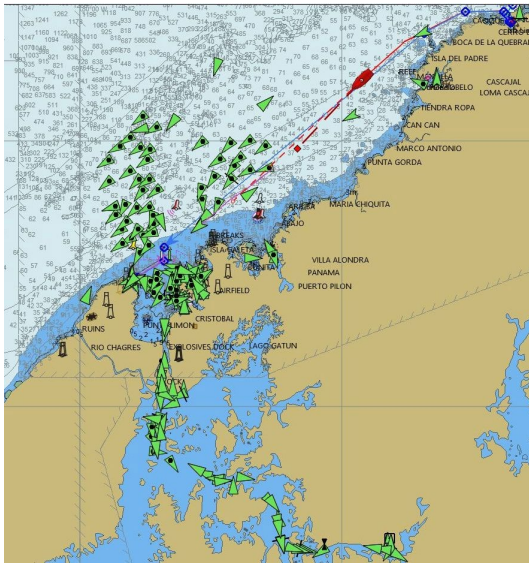


Fig. 35.3: The entrance to Bahia Limon.



Fig. 35.4: Passing by anchored large ships.





Fig. 35.5: Bahia Limon, in the background the bridge over the canal entrance (Puente Atlantico).



Fig. 35.6: Our route from Colombia to Panama.

## 36. The Panama Canal I and Panama City

Logbook: Panama

Date: 24.03.23

Days at sea so far: 131

Nautical miles so far: 7933

We're comfortably moored in **Shelter Bay Marina**. The replacement part (motor) for our anchor winch has been ordered from the USA and should arrive soon. The marina has its own agent in the USA who handles this. It seems to happen quite often.

Our canal agent has now taken care of all the formalities, and Tanuki has been measured by a canal authority employee – what can we say, Tanuki hasn't grown in the meantime. The canal authority employee only glances at our documentation and otherwise devotes himself to the can of beer that our hospitality has produced. Previously, the passage fee was calculated according to the boat's dimensions, but now there's a flat rate, at least for small yachts like ours.

The canal passage has been scheduled for April 8th, and now we're waiting. Well, what do you think awaits us?

The canal is the absolute star attraction here; the effort involved in its construction and the precision required to navigate enormous boats through the narrow locks border on the impossible. The 81-kilometer-long canal was built between 1881 and 1914 (after an unsuccessful French attempt) by American corporations and was transferred to Panama by treaty on December 31, 1999, which continues to manage it today.



Fig. 36.1: The Gatun Locks as seen from the bridge. On the right, the traditional route; on the left, the new locks for the bigger "Panamax" ships.

Small boats need a supervisor (essentially a pilot) provided by the canal authorities to pass through the locks. Each boat requires a skipper and four crew members who can handle the lines in the locks (so-called line handlers). They also need someone to provide food and drinks for the crew. Small boats are usually transported through the locks individually or in clusters (two or three boats tied together), essentially as cargo attached to a freighter.

We're curious, and although we already know quite a bit about what to expect from the internet, we're going along as line handlers on a Canadian catamaran, "TouCan," which is one of our friends. It's common practice among sailors not to accept the approximately \$150 "wage" for line handlers, but rather to offer their services as a friendly and free service.

The trip begins in the afternoon in the notorious anchorage area "**The Flats**" just outside the marina entrance. The supervisor arrives a little later than expected with a pilot boat, and it's gradually getting dark as the boats pass under the Ponte de dos Americas towards the Gatun Locks. Three boats, each with a supervisor and four line handlers, are tied together before entering the first lock and positioned directly behind a cargo ship. Inside the lock, the canal authority staff throw light lines from the side, which are then used to pull our thicker ropes up. The minimum qualification for the line handlers is therefore a strong pull and mastery of the bowline knot. The amusing thing is that with such a cluster of boats, only the four outermost line handlers are ever actually working, while eight sailors just stand around.



Fig. 36.2: Going under the bridge.



Fig. 36.3: Entering the first lock.

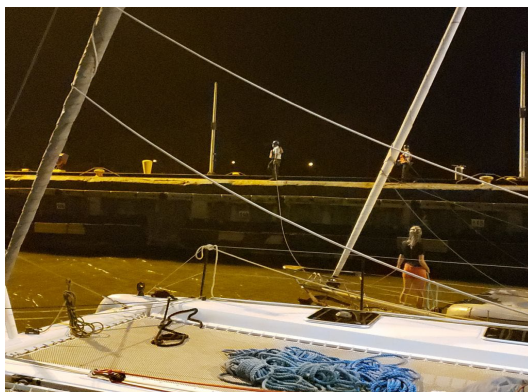


Fig. 36.4: Taking the lines.



Fig. 36.5: The next morning at Gatun Lake.



Now the lock gates are closed and the water rushes in, lifting us about 10 meters. The first lock, the Gatun Locks, consists of three locks in succession. After that, we enter the large, man-made inland lake, and the three small boats are separated and spend the night moored to a buoy. Late dinner and then off to bed.

In the morning, we continue through Gatun Lake into a long waterway leading to the Pacific-side locks, the Pedro Miguel Locks and the Miraflores Locks, where we lock downstream. These are three lock chambers in total. Here, the order is reversed; we enter the lock first, followed by the freighter (it's a bit uncomfortable). Finally, the last lock gate opens, and we have officially arrived in the Pacific Ocean.



Fig. 36.6: In the lock chamber, a freighter is still snuggling in.



Fig. 36.7: Our package, as seen by the canal authority's webcam. We are on the side-mounted catamaran.

Our boat finally drops us off at Balboa Marina, from where we then take a (very inexpensive) taxi to **Panama City** to stay there for two days.

Mind you, this was the rehearsal for our crossing, and we now know exactly how it's done.

We'll start by taking the city bus (hop-on/hop-off) for a longer tour. The city is a large metropolis (around 880,000 inhabitants) with an interesting mix of skyscrapers and historic architecture. Passing the canal administration buildings, we'll head to the visitor centre of the Miraflores Locks to see what our visit to the locks yesterday looks like from the other side.

The centre presents the history of the canal on panels and with an Imax film, which we watch with fascination.



Fig. 36.8: The seaside promenade.



Fig. 36.9: In the CBD, a neo-Gothic (?) church.



Fig. 36.10: The old town "Casco viejo".



Fig. 36.11: Oops - Where are we now? Corrientes 348 is an address in Buenos Aires and a line from the tango "A media luz" from 1924.



Fig. 36.12: The skyline of Panama City.





Fig. 36.13: Don't forget where we are. In .....

Next, we head to the **Albrook Mall**, one of the largest shopping centres in South America, where we enjoy the cool air conditioning. We then ride on to the offshore islands (Isla Naos, Isla Perico, and Isla Flamenco), accessible via a causeway. There, we find the two marinas on the Pacific side that would be suitable for Tanuki. Too small and fully booked! Tanuki will likely have to anchor, as many sailboats do shortly before heading out into the Pacific. Our last stop is the old town (**Casco Viejo**), a UNESCO World Heritage Site with romantic alleyways and old, almost pristine architecture, even if some parts are in a state of disrepair. You can see the city's efforts to renovate this area, but also the beginnings of gentrification. We eat at a Peruvian restaurant; the skipper is delighted with the ceviche (an authentic Peruvian dish), and we enjoy a genuine Peruvian beer, toast to our Peruvian friend Carmen (far away in Brisbane), before leisurely riding back to our hotel. The next day – we went back to Albrook Mall to buy the skipper a guitar and visited the obligatory hardware store to get some more gifts for Tanuki. We took the express bus back to Colón; it was a bit cramped, but fast and cheap.



Fig. 36.14: Peruvian cuisine. Ceviche!



Fig. 36.15.: Casco Viejo again.



## 37. The Panama Canal II

Logbook: Colon – Panama Canal – Isla Flamenco

Date: 08.04.23

Days at sea so far: 131

Nautical miles so far: 7933

The big moment for Tanuki is just around the corner; we're finally going to sail through the Panama Canal ourselves. The appointment for the following morning is confirmed, and we're to be ready at 5:00 a.m. We've borrowed fenders and long lines from the agent; Tanuki is as prepared as possible. We're a little worried about leaving the marina, though—it's narrow and shallow, and we don't want to navigate it in the dark. So, the afternoon before, we head out to the "Flats," the recommended anchorage area before the canal transit, exactly where the pilot will be picking us up in the morning. Joining us are our line handler, Brendan, and Irish from South Africa, whose catamaran went through earlier and is now anchored on the Pacific side. Also joining us is Keio, an Australian solo sailor with Japanese roots, who, of course, is happy to come along for a boat with a Japanese name (Tanuki is Japanese!). We have a restless night; we're excited and hoping our anchor will come out willingly from the somewhat frowned-upon anchorage.



Fig. 37.1: We are still in Shelter Bay Marina.



Fig. 37.2: Spot the yacht: Where is Tanuki? Many yachts are waiting here for their canal transfer.



Fig. 37.3: The Marina building.

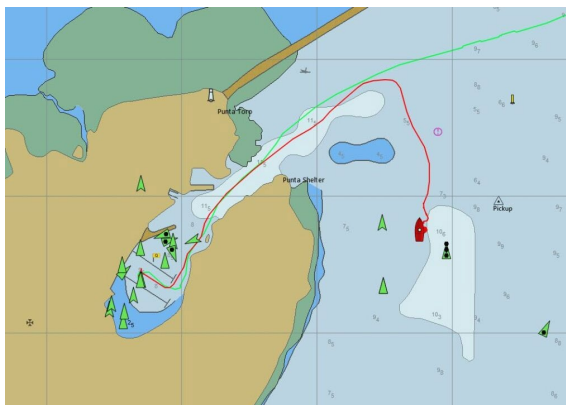


Fig. 37.4: Tanuki sails out into the flats.

At 5:00 a.m., still in the dark, the pilot boat arrives with three pilots—well, they're only called advisors; the actual pilots are reserved for ships weighing many thousands of tons. Our advisor immediately sends us on our way to the canal, which we reach just before the bridge. We turn in and are now navigating one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Our group consists of three boats, which are to pass through the locks as a raft (tied together). The excitement is building, especially when we hear that we will do the whole transit in one day without break in the Lake Gatun.



Fig. 37.5: Still dark, the anchor is raised.



Fig. 37.6: We reach the Ponte de dos Americas at dawn.



Fig. 37.7: I wonder if this will end well. (Unfounded) panic every time a bridge is crossed.



Fig. 37.8: That was a close! Phew!

We approach the first lock. The boats are tied together with four lines each. Tanuki is the middle boat and responsible for steering the flotilla. We slowly enter the lock behind a slightly larger freighter, which has just a few meters of clearance on either side. The large gates close hydraulically, and we ascend like in an elevator. Lock gates open, and on to the next lock—the same process three times in total. Then we're in the heart of Central America, on the large Gatun Lake. It's now early morning and bright, and we don't have much to do, except for the skipper, who steers the flotilla according to our supervisor's instructions. Only now is the flotilla untied, and we continue as individual boats. Incidentally, sailing is forbidden in the canal or on the lake; everything is done under motor.



Fig. 37.9: Our neighboring boat in a raft.



Fig. 37.10: We are entering the first lock.



Fig. 37.11: Our lines are practiced with heavy lines taken from the shore.



Fig. 37.12: And the lock is already closing.

We continued through the canal, occasionally overtaken by large freighters. Once, however, we were instructed to overtake one on the starboard side after our advisor checked with the skipper to make



sure it was safe. The skipper, with a big grin, relishes pushing the throttle forward, the turbo kicked in, and Tanuki accelerated smoothly. All these manoeuvres were radioed by our advisor to the control centre, which closely monitored the traffic. It is now mandatory for all boats to be equipped with AIS (an automated internal signalling system) and to have it activated.

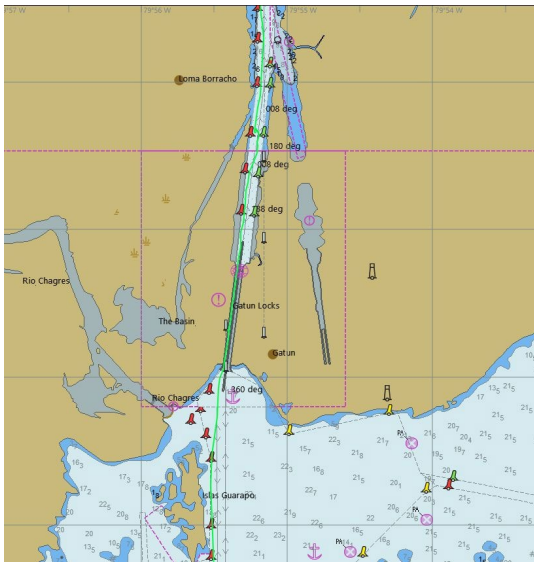


Fig. 37.13: Entrance to the Gatun Locks.



Fig. 37.14: We've overtaken him!



Fig. 37.15: Through the so-called Gaillard Cut.



Fig. 37.16: The Miraflores Locks. A small ship can still fit behind us!

The co-skipper served a delicious lunch for the crew, and shortly after noon we reached the last locks on the Pacific side. First the Pedro Miguel Locks, and then the two Miraflores Locks. Here we went downstream, and the entry procedure was such that we entered the lock chamber rafted up first,

followed by the massive cargo ship (which we were essentially carrying as cargo). This made us small boaters a little uneasy, as the tens of thousands of tons of cargo could easily crush us against the lock wall like a bothersome insect. But it didn't; it was maneuvered into place by small locomotives! We locked down. In the Miraflores Locks, we saw the visitor center and the webcam streaming our passage to the world (see picture). Friends and acquaintances in Australia and Germany were watching with bated breath on their computers!



Fig. 37.17: The visitor center next to the Miraflores Lock, our fans are already waiting!



Fig. 37.18: The lock photographed from the visitor center.



Fig. 37.19: Our lock as seen on the webcam. Tanuki is in the middle of the package.



The final lock passage, the gate opens, and we breathe in the Pacific air. We're across. It's afternoon, and there's still plenty of time to reach our destination, the anchorage off **Marina La Playita** near Panama City, and drop anchor. What a day!



Fig. 37.20: The Tanuki Crew with our supervisor Ricaurte McLean.



Fig. 37.21: Exit from the canal into the Pacific Ocean!



Fig. 37.22: Tanuki in the Miraflores Lock!

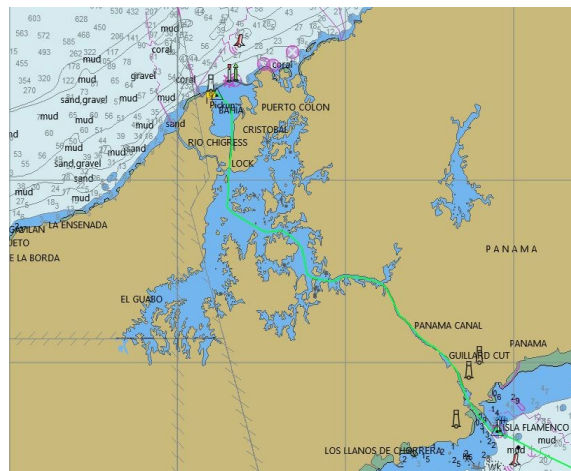


Fig. 37.23: Our complete route from the Atlantic to the Pacific.



### 38. The Las Perlas Islands.

Logbook: Isla Flamenco – Isla San Jose

Date: 11.04.23

Days at sea so far: 132

Nautical miles so far: 7978

So, we're anchored off the entrance to the crowded **Marina La Playita** on **Isla Flamenco**. It has a dinghy dock, so we can easily dinghy ashore and visit the local restaurants. We're staying for three days, partly to refuel, to return the lines and fenders, and also because you can (and must!) clear out of the country nearby.

So, let's get started. First, we'll take the rental equipment back ashore by dinghy. Then we'll take four empty jerrycans to the gas station, which has far too shallow water for Tanuki. These will also be brought back on board by dinghy, each containing 20 liters of diesel. After this transfer, we're fully fueled again and can calmly set off on our long journey. There's an immigration office at the port authority where we'll get our Zarpe for the next leg of our trip. A Zarpe is a document confirming our official exit from Panama. Now, we're supposed to leave Panamanian waters within 24-48 hours. But nobody does. A few days of illegally staying in the offshore islands, the **Las Perlas**, are unofficially allowed and tacitly tolerated by the authorities.



Fig. 38.1: All the "stuff" for crossing the canal must be returned!



Fig. 38.2: Tanuki at anchor protected by a navy vessel in the Las Perlas (see text).

We're a little nervous because boats were attacked and robbed there two weeks ago. So, we're thinking very carefully about how we want to react. We're heading first to the island group north of Las Perlas. Between **Mogo Mogo** and **Chapera** islands lies a wonderful anchorage with some advantages. To begin with, there's already an American boat there, and we think to ourselves: there's strength in numbers (not to perpetuate the stereotype that all Americans are armed). But it gets even better. A Navy cruiser enters the anchorage at the same time as us, and a dinghy with uniformed Panamanians visits our boat. They politely explain that security measures have been increased and that we should report anything suspicious. They're also staying overnight to keep an eye on things in this hotspot. We and

the Americans who have since arrived in their dinghy are deeply impressed, and we enjoy a relaxed and peaceful night at anchor, knowing that the Navy is watching out for us. Thank you, Panama!

The next day we continued south to **Isla San Jose**, from where we planned to begin our long journey across the Pacific. The island had been highly recommended to us because of its diverse birdlife, and one resort even boasted parrots and toucans. After a somewhat tricky approach, we dropped anchor and visited the recommended resort the following day. In exchange for a dinner reservation at the restaurant, we were allowed to use the resort's facilities. We were immediately greeted by a flock of parrots, who came to the resort daily for their "bribes" in the form of food. Unfortunately, there was only one toucan we had hoped to see, but it completed our collection of Panamanian wildlife. Dinner was fantastic, and we left the anchorage the next morning to begin our Pacific adventure.



Fig. 38.3: Parrots in Las Perlas. The red one is the boss!



Fig. 38.4: Parrots in Las Perlas. Here in the wild.

Let's talk about the wildlife. On the one hand, there's the crocodile that paid us a visit at Shelter Bay Marina. Well, we're used to crocodiles from Australia (and ours are much, much bigger). On the other hand, Panama also has animals that seem completely foreign to us. In the jungles, there are monkeys that communicate more acoustically (howlers) than visually. We practically never saw them, especially in Linton Bay. We did spot one group in the treetops near Shelter Bay. The small mammals are amusing, especially the coatis, which we saw crossing the road in small groups near Shelter Bay. With their ringed tails, they rival the raccoons, which are called mapachos in other parts of the world. In Panama City, there's a small restaurant called Mapachito, and that's where (near Marina La Playita) we found the somewhat underweight specimen pictured. The anteater we saw walking along the road near Shelter Bay was also a nice sight. A completely different creature is the common sloth, pictured here on a power line near La Playita. We realize that this is by no means a complete list of the local animals; these are all just chance encounters by tourists.





Fig. 38.5: The crocodile in Shelter Bay.



Fig. 38.6: Single Coati.



Fig. 38.7: Hungry raccoon (Mapacho).



Fig. 38.8: Restaurant „Pink little Mapachita“.



Fig. 38.9: The anteater (northern tamandua).



Fig. 38.10: The sloth is just hanging around here....





Fig. 38.11: Tired Pelican(o).



Fig. 38.12: And there at last is the toucan....



Fig. 38.13: Reptiles everywhere.



Fig. 38.14: Tyrannosaurus plasticus in its natural habitat. Eats curious children.

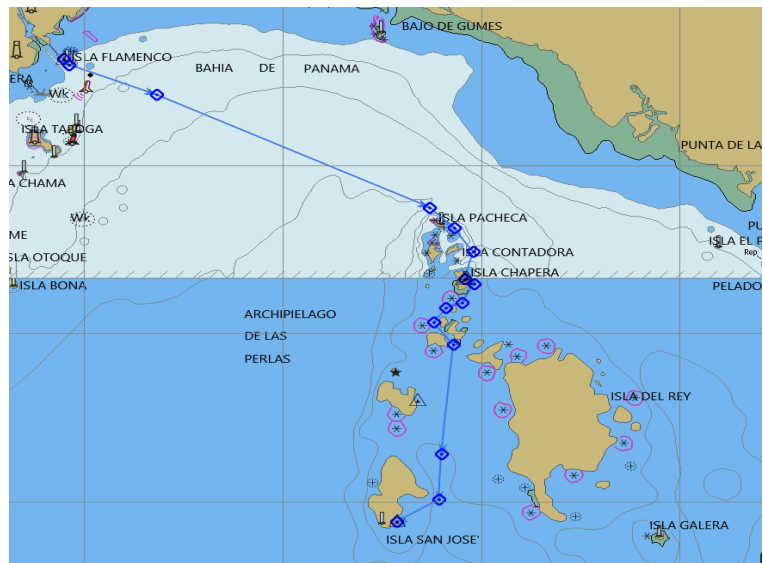


Fig. 38.15: Our route in the Las Perlas to isla San Jose.

## 39. Las Perlas to Galapagos.

Logbook: Isla San Jose - Galapagos

Date: 14.04.23

Days at sea so far: 134

Nautical miles so far: 8037

We're about to embark on our first Pacific crossing. Our destination is the Galapagos Archipelago. Despite the high fees for sailors, we've decided to visit this unique nature reserve and are preparing for an approximately two-week voyage. The route is challenging and notorious, as we have to navigate through the area of doldrums, now more commonly known as the Intertropical Convergence Zone, or ITCZ. This zone, stretching from about 10 degrees north to 10 degrees south of the equator (note that this is a gross oversimplification), is notorious for its lack of wind. The north and south trade winds converge here and rise, leaving a windless zone at sea level. Oh dear – we're a sailboat, and without wind, we're stuck. We could start the engine, but we don't have enough diesel on board for more than two or three days of motoring.

What now? Fortunately, the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) isn't constant, and you can occasionally find weather windows where you can expect some wind. That's exactly what happened to us. Our satellite-based weather forecast spurred us on, and we left Las Perlas Island, San Jose, at 9 a.m. on our way to the Galapagos. We had about 900 nautical miles to sail. We estimated it would take about 9-10 days (normally around 100 nautical miles per day).

**Days 1-2:** Initially, we made good progress, with winds reaching 25-30 knots on the first night. We covered a good distance and made good time. Our meals (guess what): pre cooked chilli con carne.

**Day 3:** The wind has dropped to 6-15 knots, but we still manage a daily run of 120 nautical miles. We have our fishing rod out and catch a small tuna – too small for us, the fish is lucky and gets to swim away again.

**Day 4:** We turn south of **Malpelo** onto our final course.

**Day 5:** 377nm sailed so far, halfway through. Significantly less wind.

**Day 6:** Light winds, strong WNW current, at times almost impossible to hold a course.

**Day 7:** Little wind, we're motoring for 12 hours. So far, 550nm. Making water and topping up our batteries.

**Day 8:** Engines partially used. 688nm so far. Tacking in 5 knots of wind under full sail. A booby (gannet) spent the night in our anchor shovel and left its droppings. No problem, it's allowed to do that in the anchor shovel, just not on deck...

**Day 9:** Partly sailing, partly motoring, the wind is now against us. A family of three budgies is becoming intrusive and wants to spend the night on our deck. The co-skipper chases them away with a broom.

**Day 10:** We tack downwind. At 88 degrees 27.87 minutes west longitude, we cross the Equator, and the skipper is thus christened a "Shellback" (though without any ritual ceremony).



Fig. 39.1: Cheeky bird on our Rocna anchor.



Fig. 39.2: Sunset during a calm on the Pacific Ocean.

Later that afternoon, we tried to start the engine, but it wouldn't start. We discovered that one of our preventers (a long line to secure the boom against swinging) had come loose, slipped under the boat, and wrapped itself around the propeller. This shouldn't happen – but it did anyway. We tried diving under the boat in the calm, but couldn't because of the waves. So, we continued tacking. The skipper's exact words: "We're a sailboat!"

**Day 11:** We continued tacking, having lost 20 nautical miles overnight due to currents and insufficient sail area, but are now successfully tacking under full sail. Wind 12-18 knots against us. Land sighted at 5:30 pm local time. Batteries charged with the small Honda generator; unfortunately, our solar panels aren't producing much power under the overcast sky.

**Day 12:** After a wild tack, a boat from the Kapitania **San Cristobal** comes towards us early in the morning and kindly tows us into the anchorage. The anchor drops.

The friendly Coastguard officers inspected our predicament and handed us a towline. Their assistance was free of charge. We thanked them with a bottle of rum. Afterwards, we enjoyed an anchor beer and some peace and quiet.

In hindsight, we now have stricter rules on board regarding securing long lines. We were lucky with the weather; at least two other boats belonging to friends, who weren't heading to the Galapagos, had to make a very expensive refuelling stop here (due to the emergency entry permit).

A little later, the welcoming committee from immigration, biosecurity, customs, and our agent arrives—a total of eight people who now crowd our boat. A diver checks our hull and kindly cuts the line out of the propeller while he's at it. We're seaworthy again. Now we can finally begin our Galapagos adventure.





Fig. 39.3: Those without engine must tack.



Fig. 39.4: The Coastguard tows us in.



Fig. 39.5: The anchorage off Puerto Baquerizo on San Cristobal.



Fig. 39.6: Our route from Panama to Galapagos.

## 40. The Galapagos Archipelago.

Logbook: Isla San Cristobal –Isla Isabela - Isla Santa Cruz

Date: 04/29/23

Days at sea so far: 146

Nautical miles so far: 8922

Sailing through the Galapagos sounds like heaven on earth. That's only partially true; our visa only covers visits to three islands. Check-in is in San Cristobal, and check-out is mandatory in Santa Cruz Island. A further condition is that you can only anchor in the island's capital and can't use your own dinghy, as water taxis are readily available everywhere. So, beyond island excursions, that's all you can do; the boat must remain anchored at all times. Each island has its own unique wildlife.

### 1. San Cristobal

The stars of San Cristobal are undoubtedly the sea lions, which live here in several large colonies, lazing all over the beach and visiting anchored boats – after all, you might find a comfortable bathing platform to sunbathe and linger there. Since the animals are quite intrusive, they aren't welcome everywhere; in some places, they're even kept out with barbed wire (as seen on a Coast Guard boat). We keep a respectful distance and keep our bathing platform closed whenever possible. The next day, our friends from the sailing yacht Tango are already anchored near our spot. Tango was moored in the Shelter Bay Marina right next to us.

They had no luck with the crossing and used up almost all their diesel supplies, so they now have to make the very expensive refueling stop here.

The town of **Puerto Baquerizo** is overrun with tourists, and popular tours are booked out days and weeks in advance. Souvenir shops abound, so much so that we wonder how it all works economically. Shopping is expensive, but not exorbitantly so. After three peaceful days, we continue on to the next island.



Fig. 40.1: Sea lion colony in Puerto Baquerizo.



Fig. 40.2: This one is posing for our camera.





Fig. 40.3: Skipper in his preferred environment.



Fig. 40.4: When angels travel...

## 2. Isabela Island

Isabela, the largest of the islands, focuses on Galapagos lizards. We anchor right next to a large coast guard cruiser where new recruits are being drilled. Our anchorage is otherwise quiet, with no other boats. The town of **Puerto Villamil** is also considerably quieter. Arriving at the water taxi dock, we immediately see a large number of lizards sunbathing on the paths and frolicking in the mangrove waters. It's about a 2 km walk to the town. We visit the tortoise sanctuary and rent bicycles to ride to the local landmark, the Mura de Lagrimas, a wall built completely pointlessly by convicts between 1946 and 1954 in the middle of the wilderness. Occupational therapy? On the path, which is known for its free-roaming tortoises, we see many tortoise tracks, but not a single one crosses our path. Shopping opportunities are very limited in town, but there are many small and cozy restaurants. After three days, we continue on to our final destination.



Fig. 40.5: Tanuki next to the coast guard.



Fig. 40.6: We cycle through the national park.





Fig. 40.7: Eye to eye with Godzilla.



Fig. 40.8: Not at all afraid of water!



Fig. 40.9: Turtle in the breeding station.



Fig. 40.10: The wall of tears.

### 3. Santa Cruz Island

Santa Cruz, we were told, is the only port where we can clear out, even though we now have to sail back. Oh well, a day's sail of 45 nautical miles. Here, the tortoises are the stars. We visit the local **Charles Darwin Research Station** and receive a very informative tour about the island's biology and the relationships between the plant and animal species. The highlight is the exhibit of Lonesome George, the last Pinta tortoise (so named because he came from Pinta Island). Now he lives out his posthumous existence as an exhibit in the foundation's museum. We also see live tortoises of all ages and get a good overview of the efforts to protect and reintroduce the tortoises.





Fig. 40.11: The Charles Darwin Foundation...



Fig. 40.12: ..partially financed by the German state.



Fig. 40.13: Small turtle bathing.



Fig. 40.14: Slightly larger and dry.



Fig. 40.15: Lonesome George.



Fig. 40.16: Taxi Aquatico.



Fig. 40.17: Here as well: The Co-skipper's favourite food: Ceviche.



Fig. 40.18: When it rains: A local beer helps.

Three days later, and after an exciting refueling operation with jerrycans (Tanuki is now fully fueled again), we cleared customs. This time it was easier; only five officials came aboard and gave us our departure documents (Zarpe). We were excited, as we would now be at sea for about a month, heading for the Pacific.



Fig. 40.19: Our journey in the Galapagos Archipelago: Isla San Cristobal to Isla Santa Cruz.



## 41. The Pacific Ocean.

Logbook: Galapagos (Isla Santa Cruz) – French Polynesia (Marquesas)

Date: 06.05.23

Days at sea so far: 148

Nautical miles so far: 9041

Pacific, here we come!

The Pacific Ocean is enormous. At 166.24 million km<sup>2</sup>, it makes up roughly 35 percent of the Earth's total surface area, or half of the Earth's ocean surface, and is thus larger than the combined area of all the continents [Source: Wikipedia]. Its extent from west to east (Panama to Australia) is approximately 7,500 nautical miles. Even though the Pacific is unimaginably vast, crossing it by sailboat can be easily accomplished in stages.

From Panama to the Galapagos Islands, it's almost 900 nautical miles. The next leg to the Marquesas Islands is 3000 nautical miles, making it the longest stretch in both the Pacific and our entire trip—even longer than the Atlantic crossing. All subsequent legs are island hopping and shorter than 1000 nautical miles.

So, we're now ready to tackle the Pacific and have fully fueled Tanuki, stocked her with food and drinks, checked the technical systems and rigging, inspected the life-saving equipment and communication systems, and monitored the weather forecast daily for over a week. We won't have any water shortages; our watermaker is working perfectly. We have enough fresh food for the first week; otherwise, we'll have dry food and canned goods, and in bad weather, we'll even resort to instant noodle soup (which, incidentally, also comes from Japan, just like the name Tanuki). We estimate the 3,000 nautical mile crossing will take about three to four weeks, provided the trade winds are blowing. Usually, you have to head south from the Galapagos Islands to reach stable trade winds, almost like when crossing the Atlantic. However, we seem to be in luck; the winds are supposed to blow for Tanuki right after leaving the Galapagos Islands.

Here are some excerpts from our logbook:

**Day 1:** We set off at 10 a.m. local time; the skipper is cooking the usual chili con carne in a pressure cooker, our standard meal at the start of long voyages. The satellite weather forecast is good; we'll have wind.

**Day 2:** First day's sail: 135 nautical miles. Initially good wind. South of Isabela, a strong southerly current and light winds tempt us to motor. 5 hours under motor. The chili con carne is holding up.

**Day 3:** At 3 a.m. we had to reef due to winds exceeding 20 knots. Around 4 p.m., we saw a large Spanish fishing vessel heading for Suva on AIS. We had spotted it visually during the night because it was brightly lit, but now there was no AIS signal! Around 6 p.m., a pod of minke whales crossed our stern. We still have 2710 nautical miles to sail, with a daily run of 140 nautical miles. Around 10 a.m., we fully unfurled the jib and reefed the mainsail to 1, making 6-7 knots in a 17-knot southeast wind.

**Day 4:** Good wind of 14-17 knots. Mainsail still reefed to 1, overnight jib reefed to 1 for speed around 6 knots. In the morning, jib full, 6-7 knots. Remaining distance 2565 nautical miles, daily run approximately 145 nautical miles. Schools of flying fish. Dinner: Penne al Arrabiata. Spotted a cargo ship on AIS around 3 a.m., 20 nautical miles astern. Fresh bread from the bread machine.

**Day 5:** Wind around 17-20 knots from the east-southeast, speed 7-8 knots. Jib reefed 2, mainsail reefed 1. Unpleasant seas overnight. Two engine hours to charge the battery. Small mahi-mahi bit around 5 p.m., but we couldn't land it. Remaining distance 2420 nautical miles, daily run approximately 155 nautical miles. Course change towards 270 degrees (i.e., instead of heading further south, now directly towards the destination).

**Day 6:** Wind between 18-24 knots. Speed 7-9 knots. Jib reefed 2, mainsail reefed 1. A bit choppy due to the sea state. 1 hour of engine use due to battery drain. Dinner: Rice with chicken and oyster sauce. Remaining distance 2255 nautical miles, daily run approximately 165 nautical miles.

**Day 7:** Wind 16-21 knots, speed 6-7 knots. Rocky. Both sails reefed to 2. Daily run 147 nautical miles. From 11:30 a.m., engine running for about 4 hours to make water. AC (aft/centre) tank now 2/3 full and drinks canisters filled. We're not taking drinking water from the tanks but filling it directly from the watermaker into 5-liter plastic canisters.

**Day 8:** Wind 17-24 knots, speed 6-7 knots, reefed 5-6 knots. Reefed in the evening, squall between 9 and 11 pm, 1 hour of manual steering by the skipper to relieve the autopilot, wind up to 30 knots. Very choppy. Dinner: Prawn spaghetti. Skipper hungry but busy. A little better after the squall passed. Daily run: 145 nautical miles, remaining distance: 1960 nautical miles. One third completed.

**Day 9:** Wind 20 knots, both sails reefed to 1, mainsail reefed to 2 overnight for safety. Currently making 7 knots. Wind fairly constant, choppy. Daily run 150nm, remaining distance: 1815nm.

**Day 10:** Wind 20-22 knots. Both sails reefed to 2 overnight, mainsail now reefed to 1. Making 5-7 knots. Wind fairly constant, choppy. Daily run 145 nautical miles, remaining distance: 1665 nautical miles. Less swell in the morning, still choppy. Lunch: Lentil stew à la skipper from the pressure cooker.

**Day 11:** Stormy night. Wind 22-28 knots, 3m waves. Both sails reefed to the second reef. Slightly better in the morning, still choppy. Weather forecast optimistic. Daily run: 142nm, remaining distance: 1500nm.

**Day 12:** Calm night. Wind 15-20 knots, 2m waves. Both sails reefed to the first reef. Full sails in the morning. Some water in the bilge. AC water tank 25% full, stern water tank empty. House batteries low (below 12V). Daily run: 135nm, remaining distance: 1395nm. 5 hours of engine running to make water and charge the batteries. Batteries slightly fuller, AC water tank now 75% full. 10 liters of drinking water produced. Watermaker working perfectly, inlet pressure a bit low. Spaghetti Bolognese for dinner.

**Day 13:** A quiet night, apart from a brief gust from 15 knots to 30 knots. Wind in the morning around 18-20 knots, speed around 6 knots. Daily distance: 143 nautical miles, remaining range: 1250 nautical miles. Batteries slightly better, but still below 12V. 1 hour of motor run for a charging boost.



Fig. 41.1: Minute-gust. From 15 to 29 knots within a few minutes. The blue curve on the left shows the wind speed. Reef quickly now!

**Day 14:** A quiet night. Sailing with a reefed jib and full mainsail in 14-18 knots of wind and 5-6 knots of speed. We've changed our destination. We're now heading to Nuku Hiva because of the better anchorage. In the morning, we'll have full sails and plan to tack downwind. Daily run: 140 nautical miles, remaining distance: 1150 nautical miles.

**Day 15:** A tiring night. The previous evening, a line squall with winds around 24 knots. The wind shifted to the east. We couldn't maintain our old course, so we had to gybe to get north. Sailing slightly further north, we tacked through the night with several gybes. Mainsail reefed to 1, jib reefed to 2. Wind 12-18 knots. Speed between 5 and 6 knots. Daily run: 130 nautical miles, remaining distance: 1030 nautical miles. Afternoon: The outhaul broke. This is the line that pulls the sail out of the mast and keeps it taut. The cause was probably poor material and damage from an awkwardly positioned block in the boom. We threaded a plastic cable (for electrical work) through the boom and used one of our preventers as a new outhaul. The whole operation took 90 minutes on a rocking deck, tethered to the boat.

**Day 16:** A tiring night. Rough seas, little speed. At 6:00 a.m., we jibed onto a course of 280° NW. Predictwind recommends this course for at least one day. Daily run: 140 nautical miles, remaining distance: 895 nautical miles.

**Day 17:** Good night, a bit choppy. Sailing northwest to get a position for the final leg. Wind 10-16 knots, speed 5-6 knots. We're a bit frustrated because despite a good daily run, we're not making any progress towards our destination. Daily run: 125 nautical miles, distance to go: 802 nautical miles. Mainsail fully furled (reef 1 during the night), jib reefed 2 as it's constantly flapping in the swell. Course change at noon to west-southwest. Attempt to hoist the spinnaker pole to pole out the headsail fails because the pole comes loose from its upper anchor and threatens to topple onto the deck. With luck and some help from the lines, we manage to lower the spinnaker pole safely onto the deck and secure it. Two hours of work on deck and plenty of adrenaline pumping. We treat ourselves to a can of light beer to salvage this scare.

**Day 18:** Pleasant night. Still sailing northwest. Changed course to southwest at 9:30. Wind shifted favourably. Wind 10-16 knots, speed 5-6 knots. Daily distance: 105 nautical miles, remaining distance: 695 nautical miles, approximately 5 days.

**Day 19:** Stressful night. Wind picked up the previous evening, now 20-25 knots. Mainsail and jib reefed to the second reef. In the morning, 16-18 knots. Reefs out. Engine started for watermaker and batteries. Daily run: 140 nautical miles, remaining distance: 560 nautical miles, approximately 4 days.





Fig. 41.2: For once, there's very little going on in the Pacific. No wind, no waves!

**Day 20:** Night OK, a bit choppy towards morning. Wind 20-25 knots, waves 2.5m. Daily run 148nm, remaining distance: 405nm, approx. 2.5 days. Sailed through the night with 1.5 reefs<sup>4</sup>. Unreefed in the morning at 18 knots. Speed 6-7 knots. Back to reef 1 around noon. Yesterday we made contact on VHF radio with Jeanne from SY Nereida (GB) and also spotted the yacht this afternoon. Nice chat, Jeanne is also going to Nuku Hiva.

**Day 21:** A choppy night, little wind around 10 knots. Sailing with full mainsail and jib reefed to the first reef. In the morning, started the engine to make some water. Daily distance: 133 nautical miles, remaining distance: 275 nautical miles, approximately 2 days.

**Day 22:** Light winds overnight. No chance of holding course towards morning. Engine on and water-maker on for the forward starboard tank. Daily run: 121 nautical miles, remaining distance: 150 nautical miles, approximately 1 day. Hardly any wind in the afternoon. Engine on.

**Day 23:** The wind picked up a bit during the night, 12-15 knots, we're sailing with full sails. Speed around 4 knots. Land in sight (Ua Huka) at sunrise. Spirits are high and the champagne is chilled. The battery is holding up well after a thorough charge, our tank is still more than half full. Around midday, a brief squall with rain and gusts around 20 knots. We dropped anchor in Nuku Hiva on a 12-meter sandy bottom. Plenty of space in the anchorage. Our decision to come here was the right one. Time for an anchorage beer and a good night's sleep. Champagne will come later.

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<sup>4</sup> As we can continuously furl both sails, the reef positions are not fixed as in conventional sail rigs, so reef positions here (like reef 1 or reef 2) are guesswork. However, sail sizes between these positions are possible (like reef 1.5).

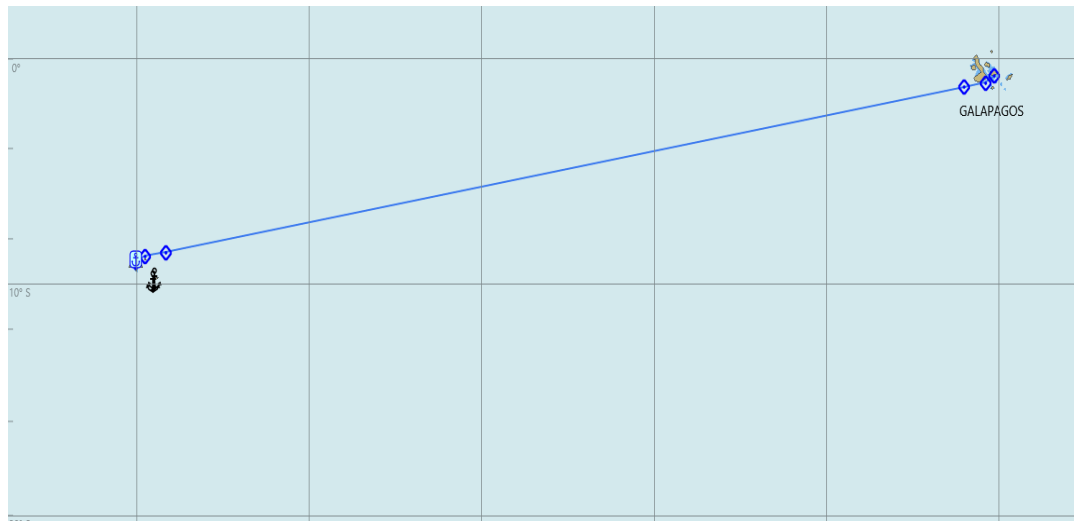


Fig. 41.3: Our route across the Pacific Ocean from Galapagos to French Polynesia to the Marquesas Islands, about 3000 nautical miles or about 5500 km.

## 42. The Marquesas Islands.

Logbook: Nuku Hiva – Ua-Pou – Tahuata – Hiva Oa – Tahuata

Date: 28.05. 2023

Days at sea so far: 169

Nautical miles so far: 12,114

A few years ago, we found a book by Ursel and Friedel Klee in an antiquarian bookshop, describing a circumnavigation of the globe in the 1970s. The title of this beautifully written book is "And every now and then Land lies in the Way". For us, like for the majority of sailors on this route, it's the Marquesas Islands, which we're now reaching after only 23 days at sea, simply because they're on the way and offer a good introduction to South Pacific culture. This isn't entirely unusual. It seems that all sailors who don't take the southern route to Easter Island stop in the Marquesas; they're practically on the highway to the South Pacific.

The **Marquesas Islands** (Te Henua Enana), an archipelago of approximately 14 islands, belong politically to French Polynesia and geographically to the Eastern Polynesian Islands. Since we have finally arrived in the Pacific Ocean, and with the name of my former university (James Cook University) in mind, it's worth mentioning that the Marquesas were discovered in 1595 by the Spaniard Álvaro de Mendaña de Neyra, but were soon forgotten due to a lack of interest. They were rediscovered by James Cook in 1774 [Source: Wikipedia].

The Marquesas Islands are interesting in the South Pacific because they are not atolls (coral islands), but rather the peaks of a volcanically formed underwater mountain range. The islands can be roughly divided into a northern group with the main island of Nuku Hiva and a southern group with the main island of Hiva Oa [Source: Wikipedia]. Both islands have natural harbors on their southern sides, making them arrival points for the many boats that follow the prevailing monsoon winds on the route from Central America (Panama) to the South Pacific. Sailors know this route, with its relatively consistent winds, as the "barefoot route" because it consistently offers warm temperatures and moderate wind speeds. As sailors ourselves, we would qualify this with "most of the time."

### 1. Nuku Hiva

We approach the islands early in the morning, sailing south past Ua Huka and dropping anchor in the southern bay of **Taiohae**, the largest town and administrative centre of the islands, where we enjoy the traditional anchor beer (or in this case champagne). Majestically towering above the bay is the 12-meter-tall Tiki Tuhiva, the largest sculpture in the South Pacific. A tiki is a sculpture or statue, an iconic cultural symbol. They come in various sizes and materials and can be found in the heart of towns or simply by the roadside. In the Marquesas Islands, they represent guardian deities or symbols of the connection between humans and nature [Source: Wikipedia]. We take our dinghy ashore to clear customs and see the first tikis on our way to the gendarmerie. Unfortunately, we quickly realize that we've arrived on a public holiday and will have to wait the entire weekend until the office opens for customs clearance. A friendly policewoman tells us the usual "Pas de probleme..." and implies that Monday would also be fine. The post office, where they sell phone cards, and the small shops are also closed. So, we'll take a walk through the town.

Three days later, we checked in without any problems, only to discover that there were no phone cards or eggs to be found on the entire island—the former due to high demand from sailors, the latter



because of a salmonella outbreak (among the chickens). The anchorage is spacious, and we're lying relatively calm with only a slight swell. We eat once at a holiday resort (expensive but good food) and a few days later arrange to meet up with the crews of several boats for Polynesian pizza (inexpensive yet still good). Switching from Spanish to French is still proving difficult, but English is the most common language spoken among sailors anyway.



Fig. 42.1: The anchorage in Taiohae on Nuku Hiva (search image: where is Tanuki?).



Fig. 42.2: The large Tiki Tuhiva.



Fig. 42.3: Modern Tiki.





Fig. 42.4: Another tiki by the roadside.



Fig. 42.5: Square symbol (Marquesa Cross).



Fig. 42.6: First contact with other culturally relevant symbols. We do not know yet.



Fig. 42.7: Solution: Different countries, different beer.

## 2. Ua Pou and Tahuata

Our journey continued with an excursion to the southern group of islands. We sailed south to **Ua Pou** and dropped anchor in the harbor there, **Hakahau**. Unfortunately, the anchorage wasn't very comfortable (we had no cover, and there was a swell in the harbor), and docking options for the dinghy were very limited. We decided not to spend the night there and continued south. Friends had recommended an anchorage on **Tahuata**. So, we sailed through the night and in the morning arrived south of our intended anchorage at the harbor of **Vaitahu**. There, we managed to get a SIM card (still no eggs,

unfortunately) and a few hours later sailed north to **Baie Hanamoenoa**. Five yachts were already there, including our friends from the American yacht *Tango*. The anchorage was calm, and the next morning we were greeted by two manta rays swimming across the bay.

Besides a few relaxing days in paradise, we want to tackle two problems. We need diesel and eggs, and our water pump is leaking from the engine, so we constantly have to bail water out of the engine bilge. Luckily, John from the yacht *Tango* is a gifted mechanic. We had the foresight to get a repair kit for the water pump while we were still in Croatia. So, we quickly removed the pump and took it over to *Tango* in the dinghy. John is helping us to press the new seals and ball bearings onto the pump shaft, a job we probably wouldn't have managed on *Tanuki* alone. Thanks, John!



Fig. 42.8: The anchorage in Taiohae.



Fig. 42.9: Tanuki and co-skipper in holiday mood.



Fig. 42.10: Tanuki at anchor in paradise.



### 3. Hiva Oa

The shopping trip to Hiva Oa, the main island in the southern group, is more difficult. The harbor in **Tahauku Bay**, right next to the main town of **Atuona**, is notorious for being too narrow, too deep, and too crowded, as many boats land here on the barefoot route. Furthermore, the use of a stern anchor is recommended for the stay (we have one as a precaution, but we're not experienced in using it – well, that could be remedied).

So, we're not planning a longer stay; our plan is to sail to Hiva Oa (practically around the corner) in the morning, refuel, raid a few shops (eggs!), and then head straight back to our beloved anchorage paradise. No sooner said than done, Janet from Tango accompanies us on our shopping trip, and we set off early in the morning. The 8 nautical mile sail takes 90 minutes, and we arrive in what we consider a "Sicilian" anchorage situation, meaning boats moored side by side with little room.



Fig. 42.11: It's really crowded here. The anchorage of Atuona on Hiva Oa.

After a circuit of the anchorage area, the skipper finds a suitable spot and our Rocna bites into the seabed. The background here: The co-skipper is generally responsible for anchoring maneuvers and guides the skipper from the bow to a suitable anchorage using hand signals.

We set off in the dinghy to the dinghy dock at the gas station. Unfortunately, we can't dock Tanuki there, so it's time to refuel with jerrycans again. We already had the jerrycans with us and leave them at the gas station to be filled. In the gas station shop, we spot the last few cartons of eggs, so we buy them immediately. Then it's a 90-minute walk into town. We have a leisurely lunch at a restaurant along the way, arriving in Atuona in the early afternoon. Here, we plan to do some shopping and admire the local attractions. We start with the local cemetery, where we visit the graves of Jacques Brel and Paul Gauguin. There's also a museum dedicated to Gauguin, where we can admire the diversity of his works. Gauguin, a post-Impressionist painter and precursor to Expressionism, lived in Tahiti during two significant periods of his life and moved to Hiva Oa in 1901, shortly before his death in 1903 [Source: Wikipedia].

After that, we do a big shop at the local "magasin" (that's what the small or larger grocery stores are called here). We take advantage of the store's service and are driven back to the dinghy dock by an

employee with our extensive purchases – a service we greatly appreciate. Then we're off. First load: five 20-liter jerrycans into the dinghy and to the boat. The skipper diligently fills the diesel tank. Then another trip with another 100 liters. Tanuki is now full, as are the jerrycans for the emergency reserve.



Fig. 42.12.: Hiva Oa. Where is King Kong?



Fig. 42.13: A school of rays on the beach.



Fig. 42.14: The Paul Gauguin Museum...



Fig. 42.15: ...and his grave in the cemetery of Atuaona. At the grave someone has dropped a copy of one of his most famous paintings, "Women on the Beach," from 1891.

It's now 5 a.m. and sunset is already at 6:15. Time to quickly raise the anchor and motor back to the anchorage. We don't reach it until it's pitch black. So, emergency plan B. We carefully maneuver into the anchorage and drop anchor in an outer spot. Luckily, the other boats have their anchor lights on. We can always move the boat tomorrow morning. John picks Janet up in the dinghy, and our work for the day is done. Two vacation days later, we set off on our journey to the Tuamotus. Unfortunately, our internet card isn't working and we don't know why. No one has been able to help us so far. Not good!



Fig. 42.16: Our trip in the Marquesas Archipelago from Nuku Hiva to Tahuata.



## 43. The Tuamotus.

Logbook: Marquesas (Tahuata) – Tuamotus (Kauehi) – Fakarava

Date: 07.06.23

Days at sea so far: 172

Nautical miles so far: 12,213

### 1. Crossing to the Tuamotu Archipelago

In the South Pacific, most islands are atolls. The highest concentration of atolls is found in the Tuamotu Archipelago, an area of approximately 2 million km<sup>2</sup> southwest of the Marquesas Islands, comprising 78 atolls, 45 of which are inhabited by around 17,000 people. The Tuamotu Archipelago is the world's largest island group. The name Tuamotus comes from the Polynesian word "motu" for island [Source: Wikipedia].

According to Charles Darwin's theory, an atoll forms from a volcanic cone breaking through the sea level, which develops a circular reef structure of coral (fringing reef) below the surface. The volcanic cone erodes or sinks below sea level over time, while the coral reef grows upwards, forming a circular or oval structure of small islands and reefs [Source: Wikipedia]. The interior of the atoll is usually relatively shallow, with coral reefs and small coral heads (so-called bommies), which are also subject to the tides. This results in regular, substantial inflows and outflows of water, which over time carve openings in the outer reef. These sometimes-narrow channels are the only access points to the interior of the atoll, often not even navigable, and notorious in seafaring for their difficult navigation, as strong currents of well over 10 knots, eddies, and chaotic waves occur there. The goal of the ships is therefore to pass through the channel (if navigable) at a time when the current reverses and is ideally minimal (slack water). Navigationally, this used to present several challenges. First, finding the atoll, as it is very shallow and not visible from a distance, and avoiding running aground on the fringing reef due to inaccurate navigation. Second, one must reach the channel precisely at the moment of minimum current (high or low tide). Both tasks required a high level of navigational skill. Nowadays, GPS and electronic plotters have replaced precise celestial navigation, and computer programs have replaced tide calculations. However, inside the motus, the challenge remains of avoiding larger or smaller reefs (bommies), which are usually not shown on nautical charts and are not marked with navigational aids. Therefore, venturing into the motus is still a considerable undertaking and more difficult than navigating in open sea. Skippers who do not approach this task with the necessary respect can easily find themselves in dangerous situations.

So, we set off from the Marquesas Islands. The wind conditions aren't ideal; wind speeds between 5 and 14 knots make downwind sailing uncomfortable. Despite the light winds, there's a swell of about 1.5 meters, and the boat is tossed about by the waves unless it's sailing at a speed appropriate for the conditions. This means adjusting and trimming the sails even more than usual, and possibly even starting the engine to help with the luffing sails. Gusts from occasional squalls arrive within seconds and can increase the wind speed, making immediate reefing necessary. It's therefore crucial to keep a close eye on the weather to be ready to adjust the sails at any time.

We set off with good wind conditions and hoped for a 3-4 day crossing. Since our internet still wasn't working, we bummed some Starlink from Tango the day before to gather additional information for our destination, Kauehi. According to our Iridium data, the weather forecast was favourable. We made good progress, covering 110 nautical miles on the first day. A really big fish bit our plastic lure and bent our rod violently. After a 5-minute fight, however, the 35 kg (77 lb) rated fishing line snapped. Fish and

lure gone. Images of great white sharks flashed through our minds. Oh well, it wouldn't have fit in our cooler anyway! However, we love sashimi.

On our way, we sail past a prominent boat. SV Delos (now an Amel) is probably the most famous YouTube yacht in the world.

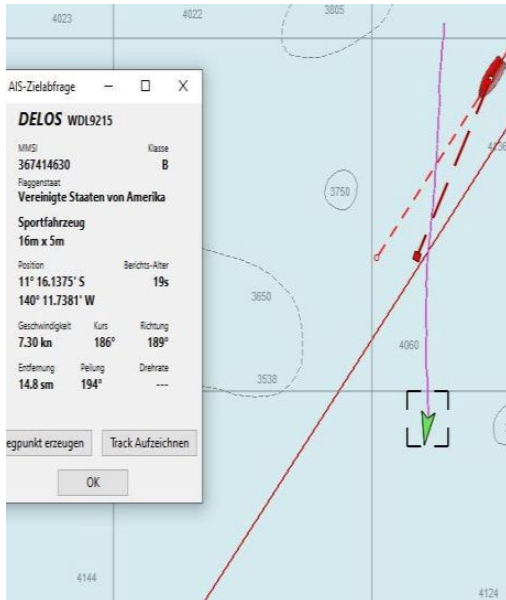


Fig. 43.1: We encounter SV Delos, probably the most famous YouTube yacht in the world.



Fig. 43.2: The pulley on our mainsail has torn out.

On day three, we were reefing the mainsail at night when a gust of wind hit us unexpectedly and at the worst possible moment. With a crack, our mainsail flapped. It sounded like a broken outhaul (the line that pulls the mainsail taut horizontally – we had just been scheduled to address that), but after furling the sail in an emergency, we saw the extent of the damage: the clew at the rear of the sail had ripped out, and there was no way to attach an outhaul. We started the engine and continued motor-sailing through the night with the headsail. In the morning, in daylight, we conducted a final damage assessment and then discussed the situation. With the mainsail no longer functioning, we were missing half our propulsion and would therefore be more reliant on the engine. It wasn't a major problem; we still had an almost full tank and less than two days to go, so we planned to motor-sail with the headsail for stabilization. Even if we couldn't find diesel at our destination, we could probably reach Tahiti without any issues. Theoretically, we could also temporarily sew the roll by hand using material from our lifelines. That would be a solution for a longer crossing without the possibility of using the engine. However, we have ruled that out for our current situation.

## 2. Kauehi

Day 4, the wind is steady from the east-southeast, we've covered a good 135 nautical miles in a day, and the wind speed is increasing. The night is restless, with winds around 20 knots and waves up to 2 meters high. We set our watches to the new local time and see land around noon. Our computer program (Tuamotus Current Guestimator by Gram Schweikert) predicts slack water at 4 p.m., so we

increase the engine speed a bit, as we still have to circumnavigate the entire atoll to reach the southern pass. Nevertheless, Motu Kauehi is one of the easiest to navigate and is often used by sailors as their first practice destination. We reach the pass a quarter of an hour before slack water and have about 2 knots against us as we pass through. The waves in the pass are a bit choppy, but we pass through without any problems. We chose the early passage because we want to drop anchor while it's still daylight. The passage through the atoll from south to north takes just over an hour and is clearly marked on the chart. We still keep an eye on the water depth and any potential coral reefs, but arrive quickly at the anchorage off **Tearavero**. There are several free mooring buoys available for yachts here. A fellow skipper from the neighbouring yacht helps us tie up and tells us he's checked his buoy and found it to be in good working order. We're finally there and enjoy our buoy-themed beer.



Fig. 43.3: Land in sight, no mountains, everything flat.



Fig. 43.4: Troubled waters in the pass, 2 kt current against us.

The next day we went ashore in the dinghy. Nothing was happening. No pub, no restaurant, the shop was closed, and otherwise, it was dead quiet. But we were happy with our spot at the mooring buoy, the baby sharks that occasionally came to visit us, and the nearby reef that was perfect for snorkeling. The co-skipper dove down to check our buoy and was satisfied. We had drinks with the crew of *Paikea* (Humpback Whale in Maori), a New Zealand yacht that had helped us moor. Rumour has it that there's diesel and even a sailmaker on **Fakarava**, our next destination. But for now, we're enjoying our holiday.





Fig. 43.5: Our anchorage in Kauehi.



Fig. 43.6: A coral reef right next to us.



Fig. 43.7: The main street is being swept.



Fig. 43.8: Skipper with coconut.

### 3. Fakarava

Departure is two days later. We opted for the morning slack water at 8:30 and set off an hour earlier at 7:30. We had already slipped the lines to the buoy the day before and came free from the buoy without any problems. Passing through the pass was completely straightforward this time, as we made it through right on time. It's 45 nautical miles to **Fakarava**, and we navigated the northern pass without any issues (the slack water time was perfect) and reached the town of **Rotoava** around 4 pm. There wasn't a free spot, and boats were anchored and moored haphazardly, creating a chaotic mix of swaying radii. Frustrated, we headed to the southern end of the anchorage and dropped anchor in 12 meters. Time for an anchor beer! We took the dinghy down and went ashore for a nice lunch. The pizzeria was closed, so we visited the sailors' restaurant Hirinaki Lounge and enjoyed a portion of fish to the sounds of a Polynesian singing duo.



Fig. 43.9: Our anchorage off Rotoava.



Fig. 43.10: Tanuki at the end of the anchor field.



Fig. 43.11: The local watering hole for thirsty sailors.



Fig. 43.12: Skipper with Polynesian band in the background.

The next day we visited the yacht service run by Stephanie and Aldric. Aldric, who does simple sail repairs, looked at our pictures and informed us that his sewing machine only had a maximum stitch depth of 8mm. Our lashing straps were doubled and, with the sail, 16mm thick. So, we had to go to Papeete for the repair, and according to Aldric, it would take at least two weeks to get an appointment with the sailmaker. This put us under pressure, as Max was due to visit us in Papeete in about two weeks. Time for a quick decision! We decided to refuel and continue our journey as soon as possible. We quickly did some shopping in the two well-stocked stores and had dinner at a local restaurant with a dance floor and good friends.

Regarding the fuel situation: With a full tank, we can easily reach Papeete. The gas station is accessible by boat, but the ground is very shallow. We don't dare attempt this maneuver and refuel again using jerrycans and the dinghy. First trip: 100 liters in 5 jerrycans. The skipper performs the usual hose injection. Second trip: It's 4:50 p.m., but the gas station attendant informs us that they are already closed. No amount of persuasion helps; we should come back on Monday morning. Which we do. We arrive promptly at 7:30 a.m. and have just filled the first jerrycan when the pump cuts out. The friendly attendant shrugs and concludes that the tank is empty. Not our tank! We've emptied the gas station's tank! New fuel won't be available until Thursday...

Another war council! We calculate and decide that we have enough diesel to reach Papeete and get ready to depart. The anchor is raised at 9:30 a.m., which coincides well with the slack water time at the North Pass. No wind. We pass through the pass without any problems and set course for Tahiti.

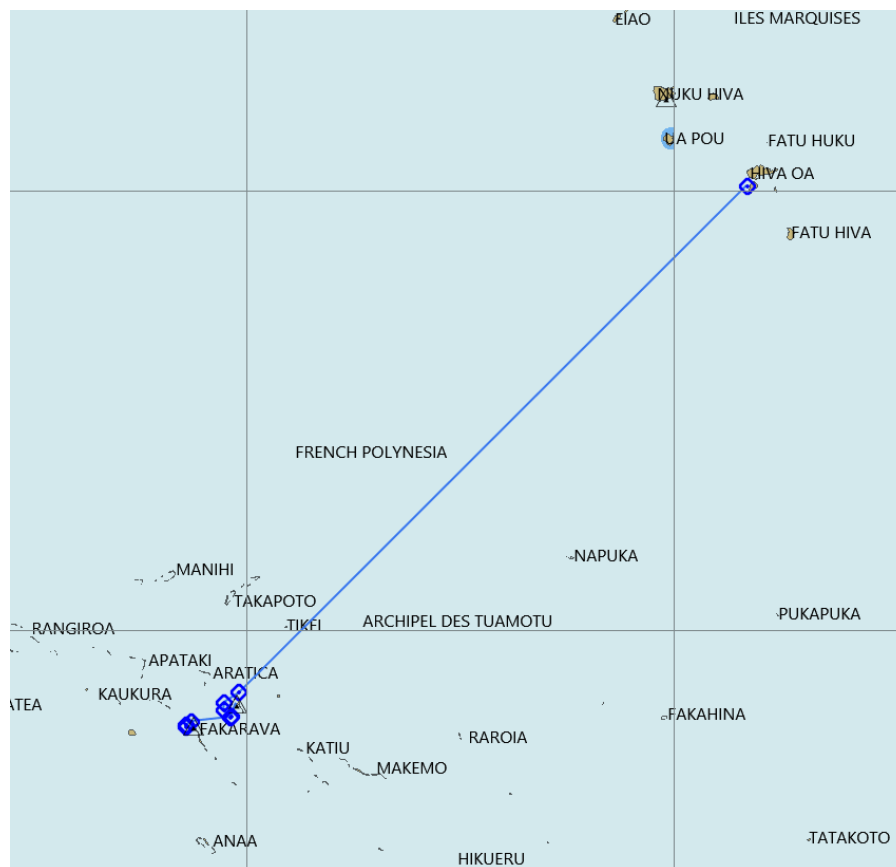


Fig. 43.13.: Our journey from the Marquesas (Tahuata) to the Tuamotus (Fakarava).



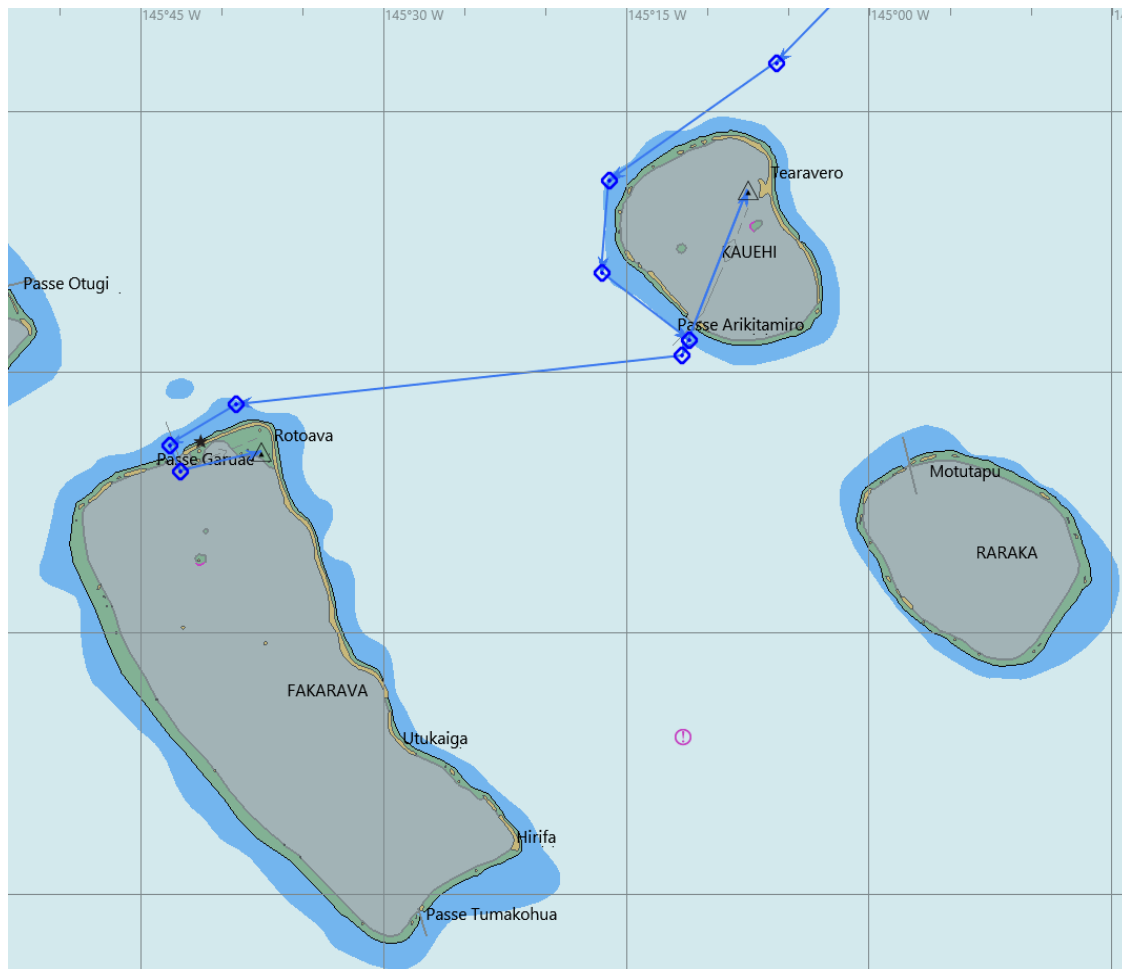


Fig. 43.14: Between the atolls Kauehi and Fakarava.

## 44. Tahiti

Logbook: Fakarava (Tuamotus) – Tahiti (Papeete)

Date: 06/19/23

Days at sea so far: 179 Nautical miles so far: 12,768

We are motor-sailing with the headsail three-quarters furled, as the mainsail is still not repaired and cannot be pulled out of the mast due to the missing outhaul. After a two-day journey without incident, we reach the island of **Tahiti**. Tahiti is also part of French Polynesia and, with its 61 x 29 km and just under 190,000 inhabitants, is geographically part of the Society Islands (Îles de la Société).

These are further divided into the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands [Source: Wikipedia]. The latter essentially includes the islands of Tahiti and Moorea, which lie downwind, i.e., in a southeasterly direction from which the trade winds blow. Unlike the Tuamotus, these islands are high-lying, volcanic islands, but like the Tuamotus, they have a fringing reef, which is occasionally broken by channels. Behind the fringing reef lies an area that is mostly shallow, but interspersed with navigable channels and can be traversed by boats with a shallow draft. The shallow water behind the fringing reef is protected from swells and offers a variety of anchoring opportunities. Tahiti is a double island with a shared fringing reef and is divided into Tahiti Nui and Tahiti Iti (the smaller island to the south). The capital, Papeete, is located northwest on the larger island of Tahiti Nui [Source: Wikipedia].



Fig. 44.1: Tanuki in the Papeete Marina. We are incredibly lucky to have gotten a berth here.

Tahiti has three marinas suitable for a boat our size. None of them take reservations, so you have to go there and if a berth is available, you're in luck. We were incredibly lucky. Shortly before entering the Passe de Papeete, we radioed Marina Papeete and they told us to arrive in exactly one hour to secure a berth. We did. We cruised along for a bit before the pass gate and arrived at the marina at precisely the right time. But wait, the marina had no marina staff to take our lines. Thankfully, Christian from Germany, who lives on one of the neighbouring boats and works as a boat sitter, did it for us. We maneuvered backward into the slipway with a finger mooring (only two attempts) in a 16-knot cross-wind and were moored in one of the most beautiful marinas of our trip. The dock runs parallel to the coastal road; coral is cultivated between the dock and the sidewalk, and you can see fish and the occasional turtle on these mini-reefs. To reach civilization, you only have to cross the street and you're right in the capital city of Papeete.



Fig. 44.2: Our berth as seen from the main street.



Fig. 44.3: The jetty seen from the side. Tanuki is obscured here.



Fig. 44.4: Tahitians having fun with ukuleles.



Fig. 44.5: Evening on the beach in Tahiti.



The capital is very touristy, but offers everything we need, including shops for yacht supplies. We buy the necessary spare parts and oil for an engine service. With the rental car, we stock up on food supplies at the large Carrefour supermarkets, use the car for an island tour, and visit some of the island's sights. It's an island tour in the truest sense of the word; the interior of the island is uninhabited, and there's only a coastal road that circles the islands. The gap between the two islands is bridged, so we can also make a side trip to Tahiti Iti.



Fig. 44.6: Inland waterfall.



Fig. 44.7: Extinct volcanoes in the interior.

The main attraction, however, is the annual dance competition "Heiva i Tahiti," where groups from all over Polynesia compete against each other. We had already decided to go, but we still peeked through the fence of the large stadium during the dress rehearsals and were already captivated. Of course, we went to the actual show. Besides the choirs, the dance groups were the most interesting. These consisted of an estimated 60 dancers in colorful costumes and performed a pantomime dance with a specific theme, for example, from Polynesian legends and fairy tales, interspersed with acrobatic elements by the male dancers and vigorous hip and belly movements by the female dancers, somewhat reminiscent of belly dancing. The groups also brought their own orchestras with a large rhythm section (drums), guitar, and ukuleles, amplified by a professional sound system that really got the audience's diaphragms pumping. Everything was filmed for television by more than six cameras. We managed to get tickets (even though the ticket seller initially refused to give them to us without knowing our hotel) and were seated quite close to the front. That evening we saw two dance performances and some rather dull choral music, which we decided to skip during a break. We were captivated by the dancing, the expressiveness of the movements, and the harmony of the music and drum rhythms. Unfortunately, we weren't allowed to take pictures or videos during the show; a woman from the event team was watching like a hawk. However, we later received some footage from the television program from a neighboring boat.



Fig. 44.8: Heiva i Papeete. (Screenshot from the television program France Televisions 1).

A few days later, it finally happened. Guillaume arrived with our sails, which had been repaired and overhauled. We immediately reattached them to their rollers and, 90 minutes later, were a sailboat again. After a quick weather check, we planned our departure for Moorea, the neighbouring island, together with Max, our holiday visitor. Unfortunately, this meant leaving our precious marina berth and not knowing if we'd get another one (spoiler alert: of course not). No matter. The next day, we left Tahiti for an extended vacation on Moorea.



Fig. 44.9: Skipper threading in the sails.



Fig. 44.10: Sails set in the harbor. Now quickly furl them in.

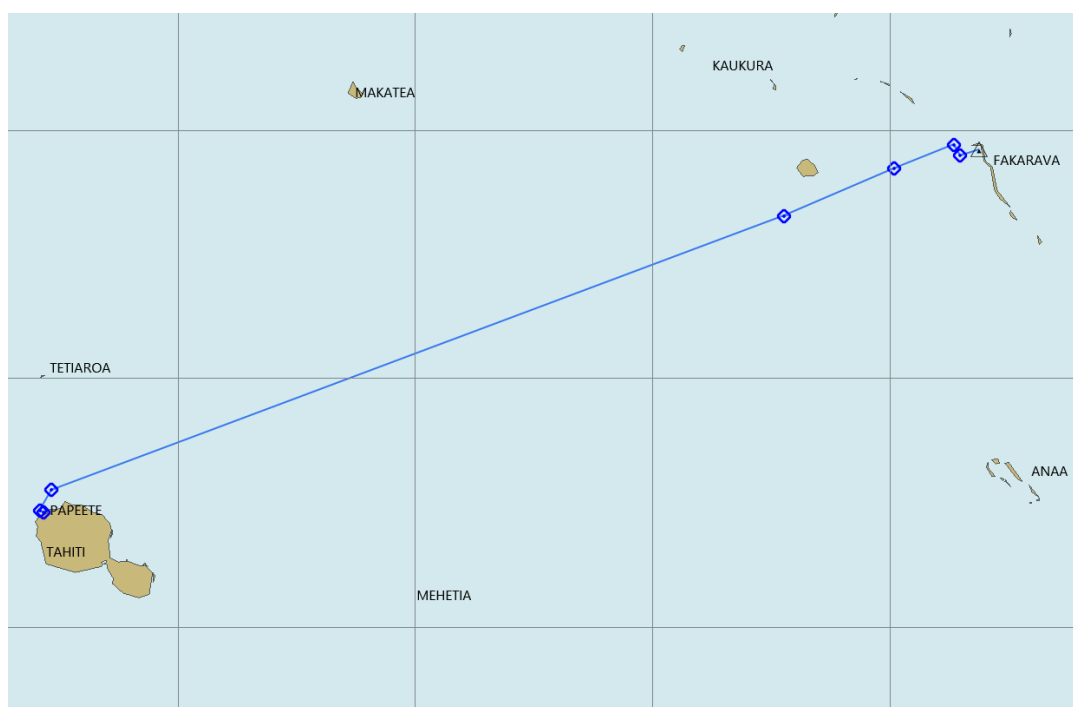


Fig. 44.11: From Fakarava (Tuamotus) to Papeete (Tahiti).



## 45. Moorea

Logbook: Tahiti (Papeete) – Moorea

Date: 06.07.23

Days at sea so far: 182 Nautical miles so far: 13,003

We decided that after two weeks in Tahiti's capital, we were ready for an island getaway and wanted to visit the neighbouring island of Moorea. **Moorea** (for simplicity's sake, I'm using the international spelling here, not the Tahitian spelling Mo'orea) is an atoll with a volcanic main island and a surrounding fringing reef, just like Tahiti, only slightly smaller with approximately 17,000 inhabitants [Source: Wikipedia].

We set sail around 9 a.m. and head northwest through an unpleasant swell. The route is about 20 nautical miles long, and after three hours we round the lighthouse at the northeastern tip of the island. Our destination is Cook Bay, which, according to Wikipedia, is the most photographed spot in the entire South Pacific. Moorea is generally considered the most beautiful of the Society Islands, and we can wholeheartedly agree.

Cook Bay on the island's north coast is one of two deep bays, both offering ideal protection from the wind and good anchorage. We sail through the Passe Avaroa, through the fringing reef, and directly into the bay. I forgot to mention that the passes through the fringing reef also have names in this country. There are two anchorage options here: either on the outside between the island and the reef, but somewhat exposed to the wind, or deeper in. We opt for the more sheltered spot deep in the bay and anchor in about 18 meters of water, as the shallower spots are already occupied. No problem, if only our anchor winch was working. It isn't. A quick check by the skipper doesn't offer a simple solution, so we manually drop the anchor and 65 meters of chain by releasing the chain brake. The well-known saying, "Sailing is like repairing a boat on the world's most beautiful beaches", comes to mind. Time for an anchor beer, launching the dinghy, and thinking about dinner.

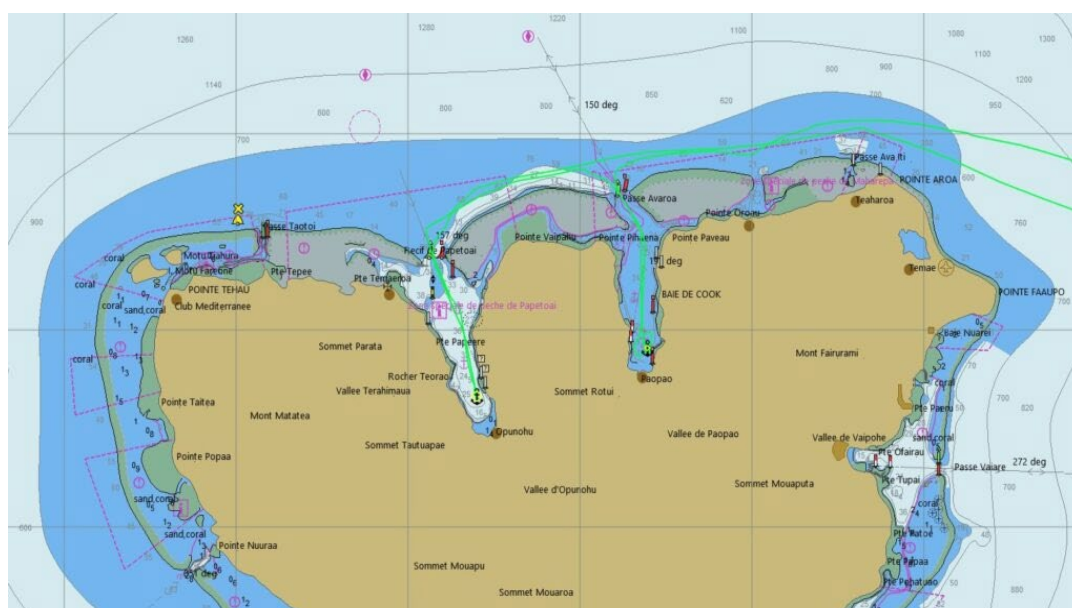


Fig. 45.1: The north of Moorea, showing the two bays where Tanuki anchored.

The next morning. The family takes the dinghy ashore, and the skipper makes repairs (in the most beautiful spot of our trip). The anchor winch relay (after being removed and tested) isn't getting any power. A quick multimeter check reveals that there's no connection to the battery's negative terminal, even though the switch and fuse are working. So, a wiring problem. After untangling a somewhat chaotic wiring harness, it turns out that the negative cable is hopelessly corroded and brittle. So, a new wire is run, everything is reconnected, and lo and behold, we're back in business. Just to be safe, the bow lights are also rewired, and after several hours of work and troubleshooting, the sail locker hatch (behind the chain locker, where spare sails used to be stored) finally closes. Time for a beer!



Fig. 45.2: Cook Bay as seen from our anchorage.



Fig. 45.3: The crews of four boats meet for pizza.

The family went shopping and returned satisfied because the prices were unexpectedly lower than in Tahiti. In their shopping basket was a fresh baguette (the French really know how to make them!) and the gas station was open. It was the weekend, but we were able to fill up, and our Tahiti certificate for tax-free fuel purchases was accepted. The gas station had a small wooden dock, which we didn't really trust, especially since there was no one there to take our lines. So, again we transported the jerrycans in the dinghy and filled the tank with a hose. No problem. We were full again after the debacle in Fakarava.

Meanwhile, two friendly boats have also arrived and are anchored very close to us. Kayo, the Japanese solo sailor, has anchored outside the bay. Communication among sailors is working as usual; we've already been given all the necessary information and are all meeting up for a typical Tahitian pizza.

The bay is indeed very picturesque and we've photographed it extensively, but there's no real action; beautiful beaches or snorkeling spots are a long way off. The crew is threatening mutiny, so we decide to head to the next bay. After the cable repair, the anchor comes up willingly, and we motor around the bend through the Passe Tareu directly into **Baie D'Opunohu**. Here, too, the sailing community splits into a group anchoring behind the fringing reef (closer to the swimming beach) and a group anchoring deep in the bay. We go into the safer bay and anchor once again at a depth of 20 meters with 70 meters of chain out. No problem, we have 100 meters of chain in the locker, which is generally recommended for anchorages in the Pacific.



Fig. 45.4: Baie D'Opunohu upon arrival. On the left, the outer anchorage (very crowded).



Fig. 45.5: The entrance to Baie D'Opunohu as seen from the summit of "Magic Mountain". The fringing reef begins at the white line; where the blue-green water indicates a shallow area, the outer anchorage is located directly in front of a popular sandy beach.





Fig. 45.6: Tanuki at anchor in Baie D'Ounohu. We're waiting for King Kong again.

The bay with its view of the jungle and the high mountains in the middle of the island, whose peaks are often wrapped in cottony clouds, reminds us of scenes from the ancient King Kong films, and we are already waiting for His Majesty to climb down the mountains.

The bays offer safe anchorage; occasionally a gust of wind blows over the mountains, but it's calm and a real holiday feeling sets in. At the end of the bay, there's a small marina with an attached refreshment stand for thirsty sailors. We take the dinghy there and have a decent dinner. Unfortunately, we missed the Saturday dance show. We'll catch it next time. The family is happy too, as there's a white sand beach with palm trees at the entrance to the bay, easily accessible by dinghy. Our friends are already there, and there's a lively dinghy traffic between the boats.

Now for the highlights. First, we took the dinghy to the small village at the western entrance of the bay, skirting two nasty coral reefs. There, we could access a hiking trail up the slightly smaller local mountain and, after an hour's hike, reach the summit of "Magic Mountain" with its stunning view of the fringing reef. Afterward, we took the dinghy to an underwater tiki garden for a short snorkeling session. We continued through shallows and coral heads to a spot teeming with reef sharks and manta rays. No wonder, since they're fed there daily by hundreds of tourists. The sharks are blackfin sharks and completely harmless; the most dangerous creatures are the gulls, which quite aggressively try to snatch the fish food from the air. A visit to an island restaurant at the northwestern tip of the island rounded off the day. We decided, however, to return when there are fewer tourists at the manta ray spot.

It's the weekend, and suddenly about 15 yachts arrive in the bay. It's the Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous, a rally from Tahiti to Moorea and back. Suddenly, the Bay is packed. We had considered sailing with them, but it was too expensive for us. However, I remembered an announcement for a gala evening, so we quickly booked a table at the Marina Bar restaurant. We were in luck; there was a dance show with live music, and we were right in the middle of it. And it was completely free (except for drinks and food).



45.7: Our bathing beach.

Fig.



Fig. 45.8: The skipper drives the dinghy through the coral.



Fig. 45.9: Max cuddles the manta ray.



A few days later, we went out again in the dinghy. First to the restaurant, then during our lunch break to the spot with the rays. This time we brought food with us, a few small frozen shrimps, leftovers from the depth of our fridge. The rays appreciated it and came right up to us, even letting us stroke them. What an experience!

We have to return to Tahiti the next day, as our guest is flying out. Once again, we navigate choppy waters with a headwind. After four hours, we arrive at the entrance to the pass. The marina has no space for us. What a shame. However, we do see our friends from Tango on the way; they were moored as guests at the Yacht Club de Tahiti and are now leaving. Surely their slipway should be free? We call – no one answers. Oh well, it's Sunday. So we head towards the club and anchor next to a few other yachts. A peaceful night at anchor. On Monday morning, we call again, and lo and behold, we get the slipway, which is still free and has been waiting for us. After a bit of searching, we reverse in, and for the first time in the Pacific, we're moored stern-to with our lines against the dock.



Fig. 45.10: We are guest berth holders at the Yacht Club de Tahiti.



Fig. 45.11: Stern to jetty and footbridge as in the Mediterranean.

The next day, we drove Max to the airport in a rental car, then visited the Carrefour supermarket and shopped like crazy. That should last until Tonga. After that, we waited for a favourable weather window while gusts of up to 40 knots lashed around us. We slept soundly nonetheless. The skipper had a new oil extractor pump bought in Tahiti and changed the oil and filters on everything that uses oil (engine, gearbox, outboard). Finally, the day arrived with a good weather forecast.





## 46. Society Islands (Huahine)

Logbook: Tahiti (Papeete) – Huahine

Date: 01.08.2023

Days at sea so far: 184

Nautical miles so far: 13,018

We set sail this afternoon for an overnight passage to **Huahine**. Huahine is one of the Leeward Islands, located northwest of Tahiti, essentially in the lee of the prevailing southeast trade winds. We expect the journey to take about 22 hours, so we plan to use the night to arrive around midday. Off we go! We leave the marina without any problems and head around the corner, parallel to the reef.

Ten minutes later, it happened: the engine stalled and wouldn't restart – we were shocked. The wind, around 16 knots, was slowly pushing Tanuki diagonally forward from starboard towards the reef, just a boat length away, and we were already imagining ourselves running aground. Luckily, the skipper immediately remembered that we were a sailboat and gave the command, "Set jib – to port!" The crew reacted professionally, and within seconds the jib was partially unfurled, and Tanuki turned her bow with the wind. A small gybe followed, using only the headsail, and we were soon sailing slowly towards the familiar anchorage where we had spent the night. As soon as it was convenient, we dropped anchor, and Tanuki was safe, though half in the channel – not a big deal for us at the moment. Now it was time to troubleshoot. The skipper found the problem to be in the fuel line, and after some searching and help from Lars, our Swedish neighbor who came by in his dinghy and offered his assistance, we found the reason why the engine had stalled. It wasn't air in the fuel line as initially suspected; a fuel pump relay was stuck, preventing our Volvo from receiving any diesel. The problem was quickly resolved, and shortly afterward, our engine was purring again. To salvage the scare, the crew received a glass of something, and Lars received a bottle as a thank you. Although it was already dark, we set off anyway, as we had arranged to meet the crew of Tango the following day. We drove past the treacherous reef, through the pass, and toward our destination.

The sea is relatively calm, a bit of swell makes Tanuki dance and is a reminder of the gusty winds of the day; only a little wind helps us head northwest. So, we motor-sail through the night, stabilizing Tanuki somewhat with just the headsail, and finally arrive in **Huahine** as planned around midday the next day. Then things get exciting again. We sail through the pass and for an hour between the reef and the island to the southern end of Huahine. Along the way, we cross several shallow areas, some as deep as 3 meters (our draft is 2.25 meters). We are rewarded with a stunningly beautiful anchorage. In **Baie d'Avea**, our friends from Tango have already reserved a free mooring buoy for us and even help us tie up. Once we're there, we enjoy a buoy beer. Janet from Tango cooks for us, we polish off John's whiskey, and then, full and in good spirits, we fall back into our bunks on Tanuki.





The next day, we visited the holiday resort in front of which we were moored and met up with the crew from Tango at a small roadside restaurant for dinner. We spontaneously decided to rent a car together the following day and drive around the island. We saw the sacred eels in a concrete canal near **Faie**. The eels are tame because they are constantly fed by locals and tourists. They are particularly interesting because they have blue eyes, which mean they can barely see. Unfortunately, we didn't have any food with us, so the eels remained sulking in their burrow.

A little further on, there are old fish traps in the river; these are long channels made of stones that end in circular areas from which the fish can easily be collected. Clever!



Fig. 46.6: The sacred eels snuggle up in their home.



Fig. 46.7: The clever fish traps.



Fig. 46.8: The southern tip of Huahine. The fringing reef is clearly visible.

Next, we head to the capital, **Fare**, for lunch at the yacht club. The resident rooster, sensing we're about to devour roasted roosters, complains with a loud crow. Nevertheless, the dog, cat, and rooster all gather around our table, begging for food. For dessert, we visit a distillery and sample our way through the entire menu. We finally buy a bottle of grapefruit liqueur. Back at the boat, the skipper cooks one of his famous Thai fish curries for both boats, and the evening concludes with a liqueur and a shot of German Schnapps.

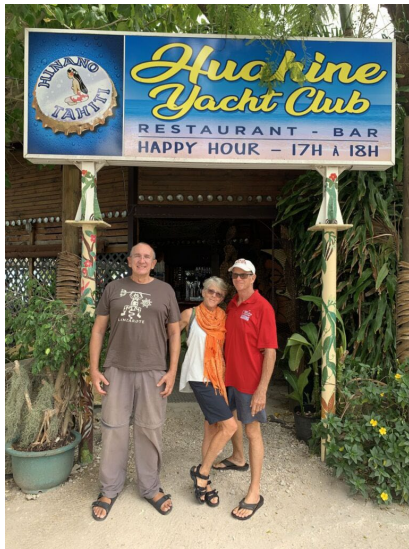


Fig. 46.9: Lunch break, skipper with crew of Tango.



Fig. 45.10: Where are my hens? In the kitchen?



Fig. 46.11: Where are the cocktails?



Fig. 46.12: Tanuki crew with dance group.



The next day: Tango departs for the neighbouring island; we plan to spend another day there and continue our journey the following day. We enjoy a cocktail during happy hour, attend the weekly dance show at the hotel, and are even invited to have our picture taken by the dance troupe, who are clearly proud of their costumes.

And on we go the next morning. Another hour back between the fringing reef and the island. Luckily, we still have the track from our outward journey, which we can now easily follow, and shortly after, we pass through the channel into the open sea for about three hours of sailing to **Tahaa**. There's little wind, so we motor-sail along. Once there, we pass through the channel framed by two small islands. It seems to be low tide, and we're sailing against a continuous ebb current of 1.5 knots. Finally, we turn to starboard and anchor in 5 meters of water in a well-known shallow area just behind the small island. Time for a beer! Tango has meanwhile set off back to Tahiti to buy spare parts because of a problem with her generator. We're not worried; John is a gifted mechanic who will surely get the problem sorted out.

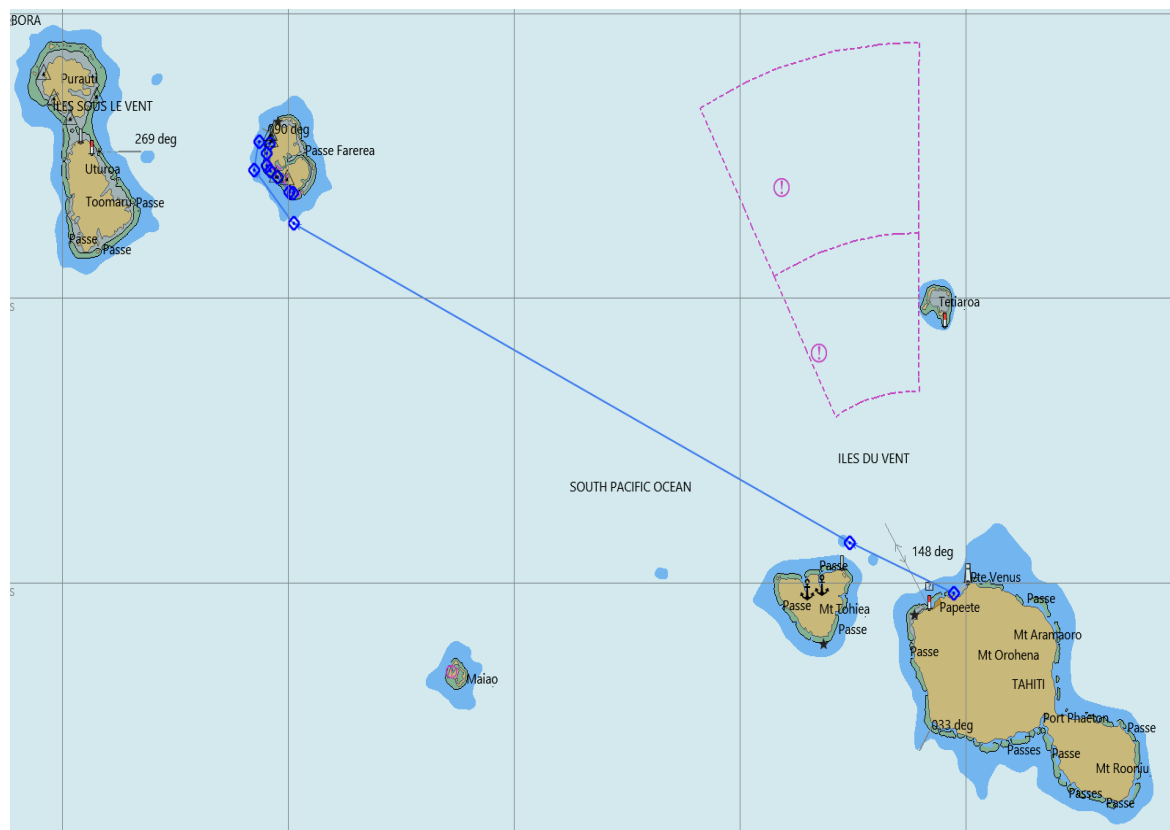


Fig. 46.12: From Tahiti to Huahine.



## 47. Society Islands (Tahaa)

Logbook: Huahine – Tahaa

Date: 06.08.2023

Days at sea so far: 186

Nautical miles so

**Tahaa**, together with Raiatea, forms a double island, meaning they lie close together and are surrounded by a shared fringing reef. We set off at dawn (so before breakfast, while we're still feeling the effects of the weather) and it takes us about 5 hours to cover the nearly 30 nautical miles. The pass (Passe Toahotu) lies to the southeast and is conveniently bordered by two islands. We zigzag through the pass and turn right around the corner, where we drop anchor in shallow water at a depth of about 4 meters. The anchorage is protected from swell by the fringing reef, but exposed to the wind. Nevertheless, we stay here for the time being because Tanuki desperately needs a cleaning, and the clear water at the shallow anchorage makes it easier to see any debris. There are black streaks on the sides from our fenders (which we cleaned back in Tahiti), and a green, slimy film of some kind of seaweed is swirling around the waterline. That's not acceptable and does not look very seamanlike; moreover, it slows the boat down while it's moving.

We jump into the pleasantly warm water with diving masks and fins and remove the green stuff and the occasional barnacle with a spatula. The strip above the waterline is cleaned of all sorts of greasy residue with a cleaning sponge. This takes two work sessions of two to three hours each. We do the second work session very early the next morning and then raise the anchor. We are still not finished completely, but winds with gusts of 20-30 knots are forecast, and we want to anchor in a sheltered hole on the leeward side of the island.



Fig. 47.1: Anchoring directly at the fringing reef....



Fig. 47.2: ...next to a palm-covered island.

We set off northwards, once again between the island and the fringing reef. Our map shows a recommended snorkelling spot with a lovely bay opposite, so we steam in that direction. As skipper, you always keep a watchful eye out for swimmers, small boats, large vessels, and all the fishing gear, which is usually marked with small buoys. We've barely started when the lookout at the bow warns, "Fishtrap ahead!"<sup>5</sup> We sail around the small buoy and then realize it's not a buoy at all. It's a coconut floating in the water. We continue on and notice that more and more of these little obstacles are floating in the channel. Our quickly formulated scientific theory is that the coconuts come from the many palm trees along the shore. Obeying gravity, the coconuts experience a free fall (hopefully without hitting anyone) and then roll down the short stretch of beach to go for a swim. Halfway along our route, we notice a fishing boat, but instead of fish, it's completely full of coconuts. A clever idea to fish them out of the water!



Fig. 47.3: Coconuts in water.



Fig. 47.4: This fisherman takes care of it!

We turn into **Tapuamu Bay** and see several boats already anchored there. It's deep, though, and we're not keen on anchoring at 23 meters. Suddenly, the skipper spots an empty mooring, and we immediately head for it, securing Tanuki with two mooring lines in true seamanlike fashion. Lucky us! The buoys are actually operated and charged by the government (around \$14 per night), but no one comes to collect our fee – so we're lucky again. A visual inspection of the mooring from the dinghy goes well; later, we'll dive down to inspect it as thoroughly as possible. The next morning, we find that we're relatively sheltered from the wind and that the boat is hardly rocking. A good spot to wait out the three windy days ahead.

But first, work calls. After Tanuki's waterline and the accessible underwater hull are finished, it's time to tackle the sides. The skipper climbs into the dinghy and scrubs the sides clean of all colored deposits, so Tanuki is sparkling clean again. She certainly deserves it!

We realize that we can see the island of Bora Bora from here and decide that we absolutely must go there.

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<sup>5</sup> Fishtraps are secured to the seabed and usually marked with anything the fisherman has available. It is advisable for yachts to keep away from these obstacles.



Fig. 47.5: Tanuki is clean again!

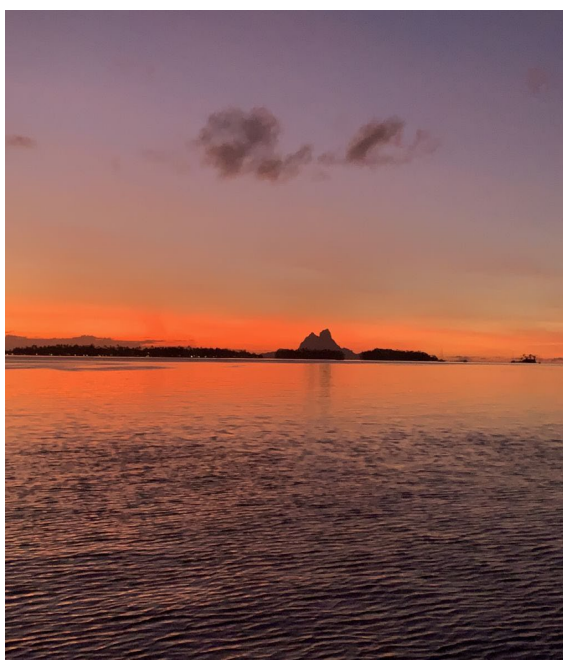


Fig. 47.6: This is Bora Bora in the distance!

Now it's time for a shore excursion. The dinghy dock is one of the more modern models. We visit the rum distillery across the way and take a look behind the scenes, even though we're familiar with sugarcane and rum (ever heard of Bundaberg?) from our home in distant Queensland. They work hard here too, pressing sugarcane in an industrial press. The rum is then produced in an equally modern still and aged in wooden barrels. Unfortunately, we don't like the final product, so no business with us. Nevertheless, we thank them in Tahitian and head straight over to the jetty where a genuine tiki hut is moored. This is a motorized houseboat that houses a beer and tapas bar. We enjoy a glass of local craft beer.

The next day, we visited a pearl farm in the neighbouring bay (a 20-minute walk). The presentation about the production process was professional and friendly; we were even allowed to watch the expert implanting the pearl husks into the oysters. This is highly skilled work and is well paid. If he makes a mistake, it won't be noticed for 18 months, as that's how long it takes for the oyster to complete its work and the product, the famous black South Sea pearl, is ready. A visit to the sales area then proved successful: pearls for a necklace and earrings for the co-skipper. Everyone was happy.

Later that evening, we had visitors. Our friends from Chantey arrived, couldn't find a free mooring, but did find a nice anchorage. We exchanged many greetings and met up for a few drinks. We arranged to go snorkelling the next day. However, things didn't go as planned. The skipper had an earache and therefore couldn't dive. Damn – the advertised coral garden wasn't worth the trip anyway, as Chantey later told us.

We didn't experience any of the strong winds. We want to continue on to our last island in French Polynesia and will set off towards Bora Bora the next day.





Fig. 47.7: This is where the rum comes from...



Fig. 47.8: ...and here it is served.



Fig. 47.9: This is where the oysters are busy at work.

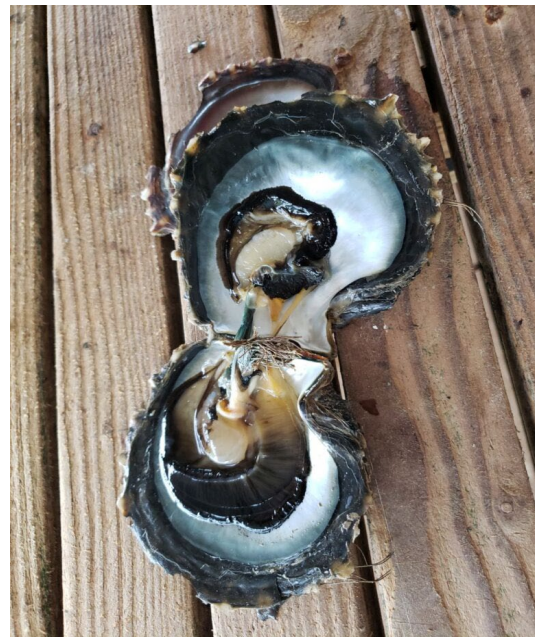


Fig. 47.10: We make pearls for beautiful women.

## 48. Society Islands (Bora Bora)

Logbook: Tahaa – Bora Bora

Date: 08/10/23

Days at sea so far: 187 Nautical miles so far: 13.146.7

**Bora Bora**, on the northwestern edge of the Society Islands, is actually an atoll in formation. The island has a central volcano and a surrounding coral reef. The volcano has been extinct for a long time, and the mountain of basaltic lava (the entire island measures 9 x 5 km) has already flattened considerably. According to Charles Darwin's model, a classic atoll will form here in hundreds of thousands of years [Source: Wikipedia]. We sail through the **Teavanui Pass** into the central lagoon and now have a choice. Anchoring is generally prohibited, except for one or two designated anchorages. There are also two spots with mooring buoys. We opt for the southern one, the buoy field in front of the well-known "Bloody Mary" restaurant and bar. The passage to this point is somewhat unpleasant because the trade winds are blowing strongly from the southeast through a gap, and we have to sail against more than 20 knots of wind. No problem, but there's no mooring buoy in sight; they're all occupied. So we turn around and head north to the other mooring field, in front of the Bora Bora Yacht Club. There we immediately find a buoy and a friendly lady in a motorboat who helps us tie up and collects the mooring fee. We've arrived!



Fig. 48.1: The central mountain of Bora Bora.





Fig. 48.2: We picked a mooring in front of the yacht club of Bora Bora.



Fig. 48.3: The dinghy dock with buoy field.

The remnants of the volcano in the center of the island, Mount Otemanu (727 m) and Mount Pahia (661 m), look spectacular, but we also have a good view of the reef and the passage. As a foreign yacht, we have to register here, so we take the dinghy a little way south along the coast to park in the harbor and visit the gendarmerie. There, we can also apply for permission to leave French Polynesia, as Bora Bora is one of the last ports in the western Society Islands where this is possible. We order the documents in advance, just to be safe, since processing takes several days. The town of **Vaitape** is small and easy to explore. Friends of ours are there too, and we meet at the yacht club, which has its own mini-reef right in front of the veranda, which is illuminated in the evening. The main topic of conversation is usually the sailing weather and the possible routes for our onward journey.



Fig. 48.4: The main street of Vaitape.



Fig. 48.5.: Tanuki in the Baie de Tehou.



After two days, we wanted to explore more of the reef and sailed with Tanuki through the reefs between Motu Tapu, where Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau filmed his famous silent film "Tabu" in 1931, and the small island of Toopua into the **Baie de Tehou**. There's a buoy field there, and at least unofficially, the possibility of anchoring. We entered the very shallow buoy field, constantly on the lookout for individual coral heads, and finally found a suitable buoy with sufficient draft. We stayed there for two days and took the dinghy out along the fringing reef. Unfortunately, we didn't see any rays, but we did see a whole school of reef sharks that accompanied our dinghy for several minutes, presumably hoping for a tasty morsel. No way, we weren't giving them anything...

We continue back to the yacht club to another mooring buoy. Our friends from Tango are already there, and we moor just 50 meters further on.



Fig. 48.6: In the background, one of the super-expensive resorts.



Fig. 48.7: Reef sharks circling our dinghy.



Fig. 48.8.: Bora Bora seen from the Baie de Tehou.

We have a few more days to prepare for our next leg of the journey, which will take us to the Cook Islands. One last stop at the gendarmerie, a quick fill-up with gas, and then we're ready to go.

**Conclusion on Bora Bora:** It's a nice island, small and surprisingly friendly to us yachties. Whether it's the ultimate dream island, however, and justifies overnight prices exceeding €1000, we dare to doubt. Rumour has it that Bora Bora is the most expensive travel destination in the world. Well, we can't compete with that. Unfortunately, it didn't make our list of top anchorage destinations either, but we admit that the view of the central mountains is truly breathtaking.

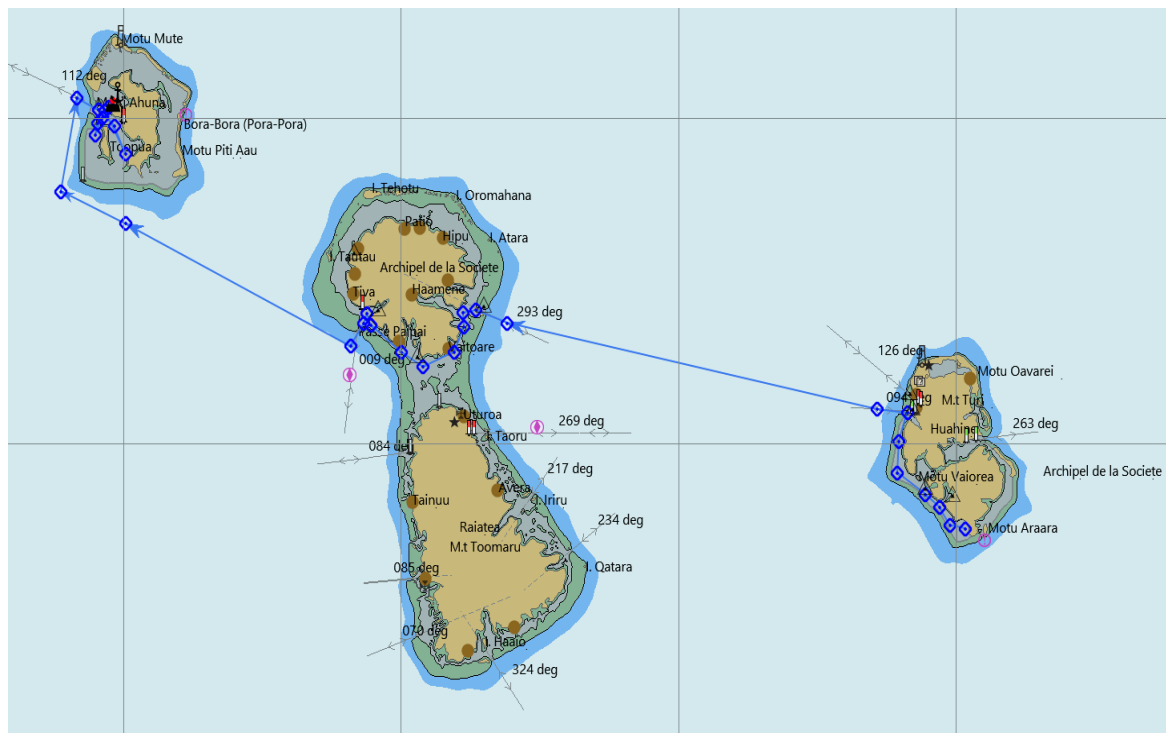


Fig. 48.8: From Huahine via Tahaa to Bora Bora.

## 49. Cook Islands (Suvarrow)

Logbook: Bora Bora – Suvarrow

Date: 15.08.2023

Days at sea so far: 188

Nautical miles so

Our next destination is the Kingdom of Tonga, from where many boats depart for New Zealand. So, we're initially aiming for the northern archipelago, the Vava'u group. There are essentially three routes to get there. First, the direct route via Aitutaki, Palmerstone, and Niue; second, the northern route via Suvarrow Atoll; and third, the southern route via Rarotonga (see Fig. 49.1). Several factors influence the choice, the most important being the weather and local conditions. Weather-wise, the southern route is risky because of the high chance of encountering a low-pressure system. John, the skipper of Tango and our resident weatherman, warns that the low-pressure systems coming from the south and moving eastward are tracking further north this year. We're therefore ruling out the southern route (red). The direct route (green) is out of the question due to our draft, which makes stopping in Aitutaki difficult, even risky, although rumors suggest that the harbor entrance has recently been deepened. In terms of weather, the northern route is somewhat safer, and the Suvarrow Atoll seems very interesting to us because of the nature reserve there.

So, we opt for the northern route, while our friends from Tango prefer the direct route. The northern route is only slightly longer than the direct route, a little less than a day's journey each way.



Fig. 49.1: Our options for a trip from French Polynesia to Tonga. We choose the northern route (blue).

So, off we go from Bora Bora. The weather is good, and so are our spirits. This time we're sailing with Chantey, our British friends. We head northwest, in rain and winds between 22 and 30 knots. The first few days are rough and unpleasant, so we head slightly north, following the weather report, to get a better wind angle. We first pass Motu One (pronounced Motu Oh-ne), which we spot and leave to port. On the third day, the wind slowly dies down, and with 5-10 knots, we decide to start the engine overnight. The next day, the wind picks up again, and we sail directly towards our destination. On day



five, the wind freshens to between 18 and 30 knots, so we reef and slow down to arrive in daylight on day six. Chantey takes the easier route; they speed towards their destination and heave to off the island overnight (see glossary under "heave to").

Following standard procedure, we radioed in and, after a few questions about boat size and number of passengers, received permission to enter the atoll. We then passed through the channel, narrowly missing another boat that was just leaving. The anchor dropped at 4-5 meters at 10:00 a.m. local time.



Fig. 49.2: The Suvarrow Atoll.

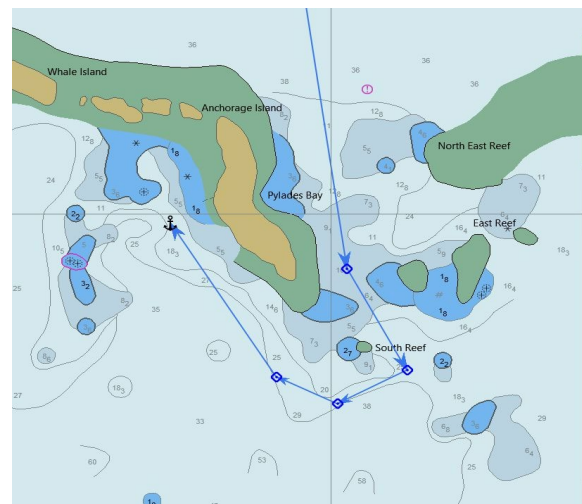


Fig. 49.3: Our entrance through the pass to the anchorage, practically around the corner.

**Suvarrow** is an atoll, discovered in 1814 by the Russian ship Suvorov (named after the Russian general Alexander Suvorov). The spelling Suvarrow (with two w and two r) is the official spelling prescribed by New Zealand. The atoll is part of the Cook Islands, which are an independent state but in free association with New Zealand. The atoll has a circumference of approximately 80 km, and its roughly 20 small islets (called motus) have a combined area of slightly more than 1.6 km<sup>2</sup> [Source: Wikipedia], with a population of usually 2.

We have a post-anchor beer (late morning – shocking!) and realize that Chantey hasn't arrived yet, so we've just barely made it in first. Dinghy down, and first off to the local ranger on Anchorage Island to clear customs. He gives us official permission to anchor in the nature reserve and also handles customs and immigration for the Cook Islands. After what feels like 15 forms, we're finally in and learn that Ranger Harry and his wife are the only inhabitants of the atoll, and even then, only for half the year. They're simply dropped off by the supply ship with a meagre six-month supply and have no way to pop into a supermarket. Their house and "office" are very basic, and Harry is delighted with our small care package of food, which we had already prepared for him in Bora Bora – this is common practice among sailors, and we're happy to support nature conservation in this way and with our \$60 visitor's fee. Incidentally, Harry is very careful about protecting the local environment. We heard him on the radio issuing stern warnings to sailors who disturbed the local birds with reckless kitesurfing. Incidentally,

this boat also failed to follow the standard radio procedures – what's so difficult about using them when entering a new area? How about briefly reporting on a state territory and a nature reserve?



Fig. 49.4: Suvarrow Atoll as seen from the sea. Difficult to spot due to its shallowness.



Fig. 49.5: The loneliest beach of our trip.



Fig. 49.6: Anchorage Island as seen from our anchorage.

The water here is warm, and colourful fish populate the mostly healthy reefs. The co-skipper and the crew from Chantey snorkel at the local manta ray cleaning station, where manta rays and other fish are cleaned and freed of parasites by small cleaner fish.

Ranger Harry invites us and several other boats to a potluck dinner (barbecue) on the beach the following evening, where he provides the fish and everyone brings drinks and salads. Unfortunately, there aren't any of the delicious coconut crabs that scuttle along the beaches here in abundance. The discussions revolve, once again, around the weather and the sailing route (some boats are heading to

Samoa from here). In any case, we enjoy the good conversation and the (almost) plentiful fish. A bit of nervousness arises because a weather window for Tonga is opening up. Caught up in this nervousness, we decide not to stay any longer, but to set sail again the day after next. No problem, Harry issues the documents, and off we go with Chantey to the Kingdom of Tonga.

**Conclusion of our visit:** Pure and unspoiled nature, untouched by tourism, in one of the few places in the world that can only be visited with your own boat or an expedition.



Fig. 49.7: Dinghy jetty in front of the ranger station.



Fig. 49.8: Ranger Harry with his wife and the skippers of Chantey and Tanuki.

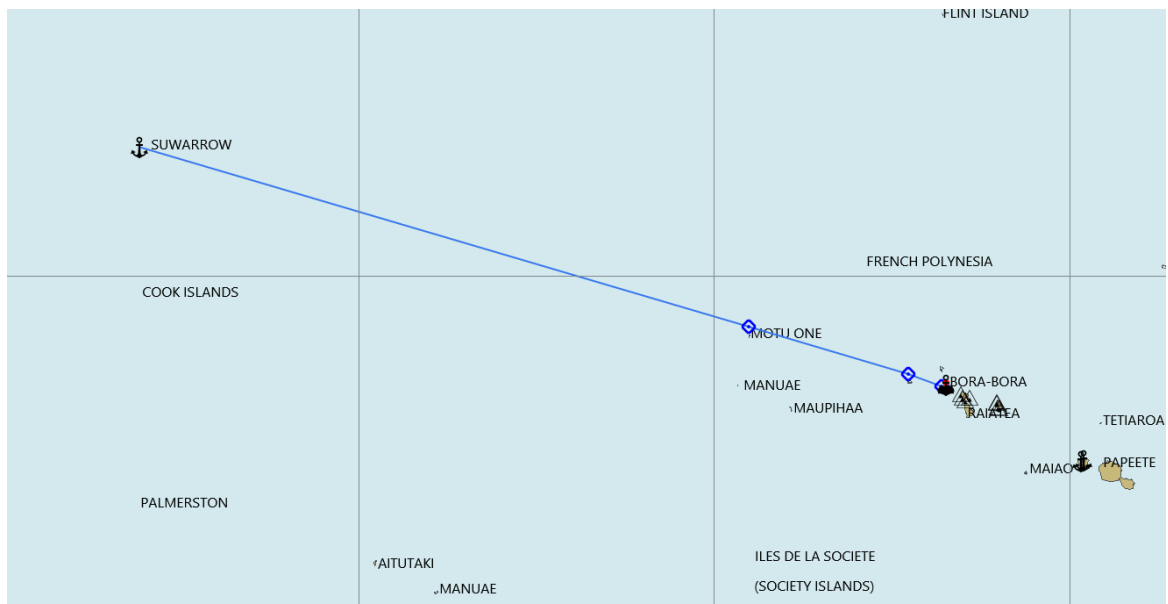


Fig. 49.9: Our crossing from Bora Bora to Suvarrow (700 nautical miles).



## 50. Kingdom of Tonga

Logbook: Suwarrow - Tonga

Date: 23.08.23

Days at sea so far: 193

Nautical miles so far: 13,865

Our next destination is the **Kingdom of Tonga**, specifically the northern **Vava'u Group**. The route is clear: we head directly southwest to our target area. We set off in the morning, leaving Suwarrow after thanking Ranger Harry once again by radio for his hospitality. We start with light winds, but the next morning the wind picks up to fantastic sailing conditions of 18-22 knots, though this drops to 10-12 knots by the following day. By the afternoon, the wind is down to less than 8 knots. It's the calm before the storm. A front is expected to pass through during the night with gusts up to 30 knots. We prepare the boat and crew for bad weather, putting on our foul-weather gear and making sure our life jackets are ready.

The bad weather caught up with us at midday on day 4. Initially, gusts of around 24 knots, later increasing to 29 knots. Waves of about 3 meters weren't very pleasant either. We reefed the mainsail to reef 3 and the jib to reef 2, but still managed to make progress. On day 5, the storm subsided somewhat to 15-20 knots, but then returned in the evening with gusts up to 30 knots. Day 6 dawned without much change; we saw land and thus our destination in the morning. We hoped to arrive in the afternoon and added some sail area to avoid having to anchor in the dark. Around 3 p.m., we entered the entrance to the Vava'u archipelago and were pleased to find pleasant sailing conditions in the lee of the islands. Originally, we had planned to motor the last few miles, but the wind was so good that we left the sails up and turned off the engine. We rounded the corner to **Neiafu** and went straight to the mooring buoy that Tango had already reserved for us. They had a good trip on the direct route and, of course, beat us in our little race (remember: "Two sailboats with the same destination already constitute a regatta"). Anchor beer and off to bed; we're a bit worn out from the crossing. We had already checked with customs beforehand and received permission to clear in the following day.



Fig. 50.1: Storm warning. We put on your foul weather gear.



Fig. 50.2: At anchor in Neiafu.

We were supposed to clear customs the next morning, so we had to go to the customs dock with Tanuki. It's actually built for large ships and not at all designed for small yachts. Some sailors call it the "Dock of Horror," and we gladly join in. Luckily, we have friends ashore who catch our lines, and after a successful attempt, we have to cast off again: "The ferry's due soon." So, once more. Giant rubber fenders leave black streaks on our white hull, and the boarding party of officials has trouble getting on board. Many forms later, we're cleared in and motor back to our mooring buoy, where we lower the dinghy and chug along to "**Mangos**" for dinner with Tango and Chantey's crew. Friendly people everywhere and inexpensive food await us. John from SV Tango arrives late. He had helped relaunch a restaurant raft and tow it from the boatyard to the port of Neiafu. Or so we thought! The tugboat was too weak, and in the end, the raft is now tied to a buoy far out at sea. We were quite surprised when we were told that it belonged to the local fish and chips bar, "**Hideaway Cafe**," a well-known meeting place among sailors and online, accessible only by dinghy. So, no fish and chips today. In short, Tanuki was immediately shanghaied to help with the rescue operation the next day, in the form of our dinghy and the skipper as driver. Tanuki's skipper procured two more dinghies, and the rescue team was complete.

The next day. We met at the Mango's dock and then sailed about 3 nautical miles out to the raft. John from SV Tango, a former US Coast Guardsman, took charge of the transport operation, positioning three dinghies and a motorboat around the raft, with another mobile dinghy as a backup. Since the raft had no rudder, he steered it solely with the attached dinghies and their engine power. After about two hours, the raft finally arrived in Neiafu and was anchored to its buoy. Rescue operation successful. Skipper with sunburn.



Fig. 50.3: The buoy field as seen from "Mangos". Mangos is the local sailing watering place.



Fig. 50.4: Tanuki's dinghy as propulsion for the fish and chips raft "Hideaways Cafe".

We're staying a few days and exploring the kingdom's second-largest city. Finally, good internet and a well-stocked market. It's whale season outside; the animals have calves and are staying in the calm

waters of the archipelago with their young. The co-skipper is going on a guided snorkeling trip. A whale-watching trip to swim with the whales. A unique experience.



Fig. 50.5: A whale in Tonga .....



Fig. 50.6: ..shows us the fluke.

Then the next weather window arrives. We've decided not to go to the southern archipelago, but to continue on to Fiji, in order to attempt the crossing to New Zealand from there. The next cyclone season is already looming.

So, here we go again. We were supposed to dock at the "Dock of Horror" to clear out, but we spoke to customs beforehand and got permission to anchor there. We didn't do that, though. The skipper rowed 20 meters to the dock and pretended Tanuki was at anchor while the skipper's wife took care of the paperwork in the dinghy. Then, quickly hoist the dinghy and off we went!

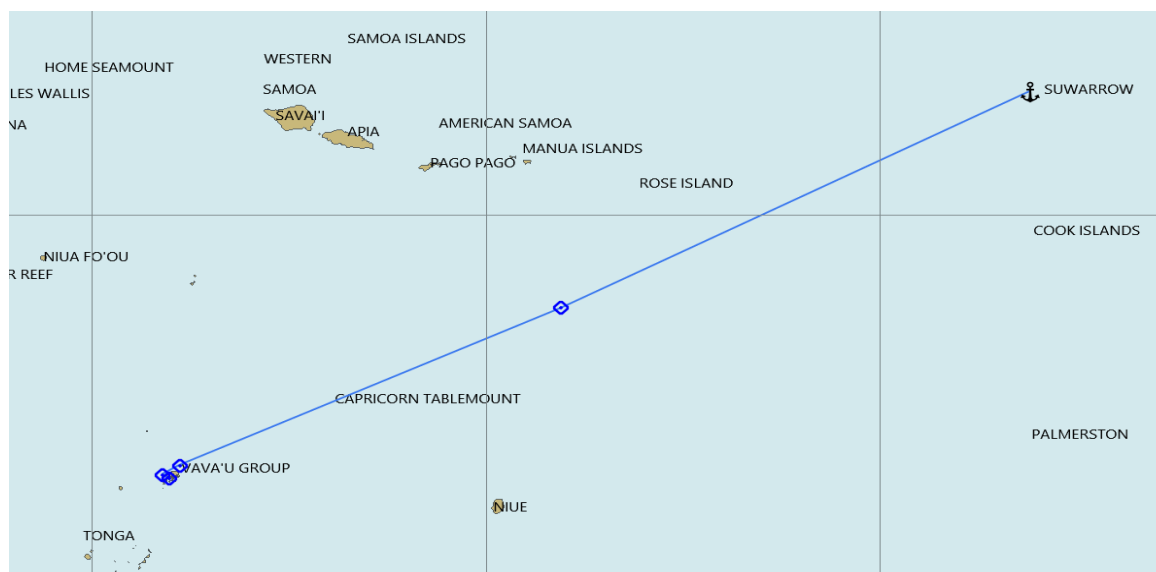


Fig. 50.7: Our crossing from Suvarrow to Tonga (Vava'u). Another 700 nautical miles.



51. Fiji (Vanua Levu)

|                       |                         |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Logbook: Tonga – Fiji |                         |                   |
| Date: 04.09.2023      | Days at sea so far: 199 | Nautical miles so |

**Fiji** is a group of over 330 islands located west-northwest of our starting point, Tonga. We've estimated the approximately 400nm journey will take about 3-4 days. The weather looks good. So, we set off in the afternoon, and after clearing customs at the "horror dock," we head north out of the archipelago, unfortunately without spotting any whales; they must be on maternity leave.

We set off with light winds and the engine running. Only in the morning do we switch off the engine and sail in 10-14 knots of wind at about 4 knots. The next day the wind picks up, and we cruise at about 5-7 knots under full sail. During the night leading into day 3, we reach Fiji's territorial waters and enter the **Lau Group**, the easternmost island group, which we must navigate safely. Unfortunately, there's no suitable place to clear customs here, so we can't visit any of the many beautiful islands. We sail past the Late'i Vitti Atoll through the Lakemba Passage, right through the heart of the Lau Group. During the night of day 3, we turn north and then, after another tack, head west towards our destination, **Vanua Levu**. This turn is due to the fact that we're not sailing directly downwind, but rather at an angle of about 20-30 degrees, allowing us to gybe occasionally to sail close-hauled. We "snail" through the night with heavily reefed sails, then the next morning we enter **Savu Savu Bay** through the Point Passage.

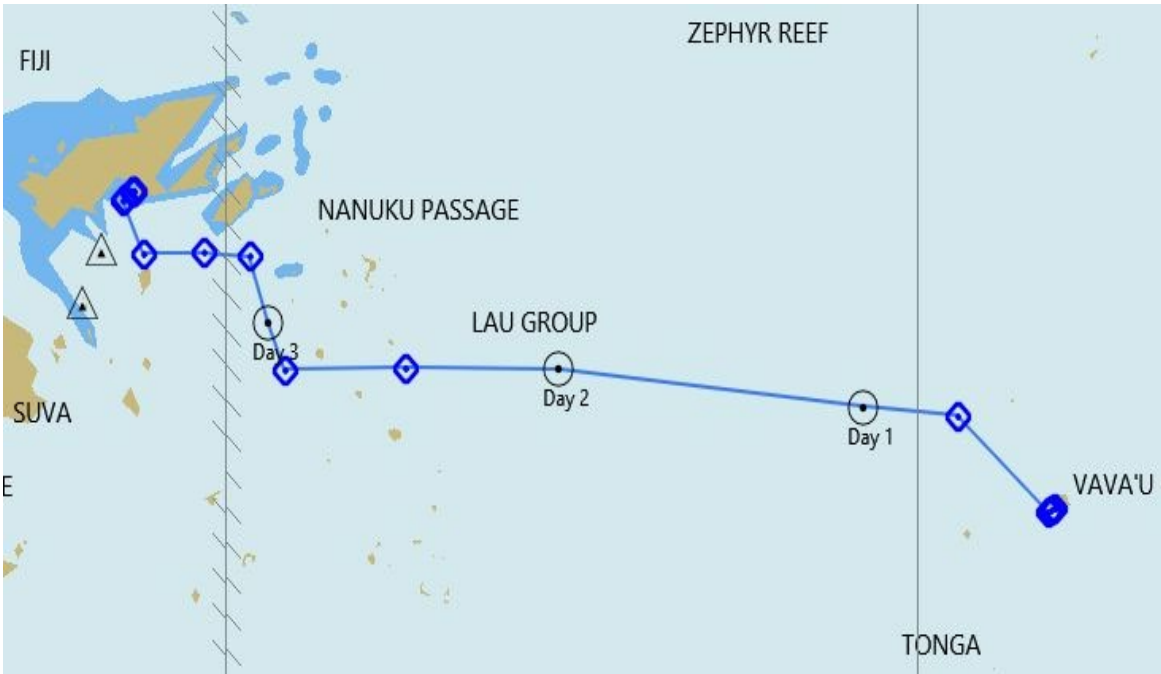


Fig. 51.1: Our crossing from Tonga (Vava'u) to Fiji. Approximately 400 nautical miles.

A word about our arrival strategy. We definitely don't want to arrive in unfamiliar waters late in the evening or at night, so we choose our arrival time to arrive in the morning or during the day, ideally in good light conditions. This is especially important in areas where coral reefs are likely. One might argue that in the age of GPS navigation, the risk of running aground is practically non-existent. Unfortunately, this isn't the case, because even the most up-to-date electronic charts are inaccurate, often based on hand-drawn historical nautical charts. Furthermore, the positions on the chart can be offset from the GPS position by several hundred meters. Therefore, it's extremely important to pay close attention when navigating in reef areas. For arrival planning, there are three options: sail faster, sail slower, or wait. The first requires the ability to safely increase sail area, which is usually not advisable, or to engage engine assistance. We don't like doing that and prefer to rely on the second option: slowing down. For this, we simply need to reduce sail area (reef) and adjust our speed according to the wind and waves so that we arrive at the right time. The third option is called **heaving-to**, which means simply stopping and using the sails and rudder to stabilize the boat. However, this requires sea room, as the boat will then drift – even if only slightly. So, for our arrival in **Savu Savu**, we decided to reduce our speed and arrive in the morning. It worked. Now, quickly raise the yellow flag.

We radioed the marina and customs and were directed to a customs buoy, where we waited an hour for the officials to arrive. Before that, the health inspector came and checked our health status. All good – no contagious diseases. We were then allowed to tie up at the customs dock in the marina. Three officers arrived later, bringing the usual stack of documents, which we dutifully filled out. We had already heard from other boats that biosecurity checks in Fiji are generally very thorough and that a lot of supplies are confiscated. We arrived without fresh food and with an empty refrigerator, as we had already given some of our supplies to other sailors in Tonga. Honey (the devil!) and all food containing chicken are also prohibited and confiscated. Friends had even had canned goods and dry food (e.g., chicken soup) confiscated. We were lucky, and the biosecurity inspector who checked our cupboards found nothing to complain about. Forty-five minutes later, we were "in". Savu Savu is the largest city on the North Island (Vanua Levu). Here's a brand-new marina offering such low prices that renting a mooring is hardly worth it. So, we're looking forward to marina life and sail into a large marina with space for over 100 yachts, which is barely 10% full. Plenty of space and the cleanest and cheapest berth we've had in the entire Pacific so far. Clean showers with plenty of hot water at all times, electricity and water at the berth included in the price, and an inexpensive restaurant just 50 meters away – we've landed in paradise. Friendly people everywhere, greeting us with a cheerful "Bula."

Navi Marina is located on an island opposite Savu Savu. Water taxis take guests across the creek to the main town twice an hour. A small market sells fresh food, and the small department stores offer other items at Pacific prices (meaning expensive). We get inexpensive Digicel SIM cards with generous data allowances that work well. Network coverage is mostly excellent throughout Fiji. Tango has also arrived, and we welcome our American friends with dinner.



Fig. 51.1: Tanuki at the customs jetty, Savu Savu in the background.



Fig. 51.2: Tanuki and Tango (back right) in the almost empty marina.



Fig. 51.3.: Life in Savu Savu.



Fig. 51.4: The market. Fresh food again.

Rest, recharge, and plan. Our next destination is the main island of **Viti Levu**, which we intend to explore together with Tango.

A few days later. Well rested, we want to sail to the main island of Viti Levu with our friends from Tango and another boat (Gone Bamboo), and we've opted for the more interesting northern route (circling the island to the north) to Nadi. The challenge will be navigating between land and countless reefs. So we'll be using our nearly new C-Map charts and, in some cases, satellite images for navigation.

John, our friend from Tango, is an early riser, so we get up at 5:30 a.m. and depart at 6:00 a.m. at sunrise. Departing from Navi Marina is no problem, and by now we know the bay of Savu Savu quite well, allowing us to navigate the narrow channel without difficulty. There's little wind. We motor out to the open sea and head west.



### 1. Technical problems (one day prior)

Before both longer and shorter passages, we check our rigging and engine, paying particular attention to the oil level. The engine is fine, but we notice that the gear oil in our saildrive looks milky white. Well, the seal on the propeller shaft is probably leaking, and seawater is seeping into the saildrive from below. Possibly a souvenir from the line that got tangled around our propeller shaft back in the Galapagos. This isn't good because oil this contaminated can't lubricate properly, and damage to the gears and bearings of the gearbox and saildrive is imminent.

To explain: The gearbox switches between forward and reverse, and the saildrive directs the engine's power in a Z-shape through the hull, downwards and aft. Both components are connected and share the same oil. Well, the seal can't be changed underwater, so Tanuki needs to be hauled out of the water as soon as possible. For now, we'll siphon out the contaminated oil and give the gearbox a good dose of fresh oil. We'll call Vuda Marina and book a berth ashore and a mechanic for the saildrive service. Luckily, we have the parts for this minor repair on board.

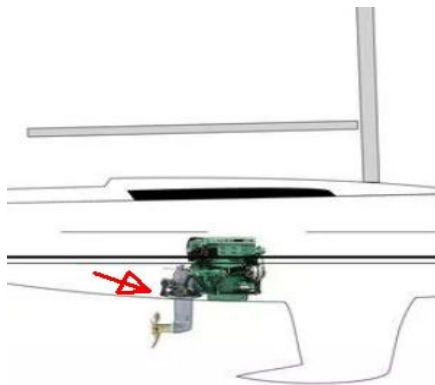


Fig. 51.5: This is the saildrive, which redirects the engine's power downwards and backwards.



Fig. 51.6: Oil contaminated with water looks milky white (right).

### Day 1 - Our journey from SavuSavu to Nabouwalu

So, we head west, aiming for the southernmost tip of Vanua Levu (Vuya Point). To do this, we have to navigate through the Vanua Levu fringing reef, using the **Nasonisoni Passage**, which can certainly be described as narrow. Our boats go through the passage one after the other, navigating by chart and sight between the land and the reefs. We continue around Vuya Point and Coconut Point to **Nabouwalu**, a small ferry and fishing port on the west side of Vanua Levu. There, we drop anchor in 10 meters in the afternoon and spend a peaceful night as the island and the reef protects us from waves. Oil check: The oil is turning whitish again.



Fig. 51.7: Route from Savu Savu to Nabouwalu.

### 3. Day 2 – Nabouwalu to Nananu

John shows no mercy, and our little flotilla weighs anchor promptly at 6:00 a.m. We sail through the fringing reef, which has a large extension to the south here, and around noon we pass through the widest passage back into the open sea. Around 10:00 a.m., we spot a single (?) whale and a large school of dolphins, but they swim past us in the opposite direction. No sooner are we in the open sea than our fishing line goes off. During our passages, we frequently tow a lure behind us. Fish alert! The fish isn't a monster, but it's putting up a good fight. After 15 minutes of effort, an 80 cm barracuda comes into the boat. Victory photo, and back into the water. We don't trust reef fish because of the possibility of ciguatera poisoning. Then, in the late afternoon, we head back out into the fringing reef of **Viti Levu**. We sailed through the Nananu Passage, past more reefs, and into the bay between the islands of **Nananu I-Ra** and Nananu I-Thake, where we finally dropped anchor for the night. The bay was well protected from wind and waves, and we spent a peaceful night, unfortunately without sushi for dinner. Oil check: white gear oil, so we drained it and refilled with fresh oil.

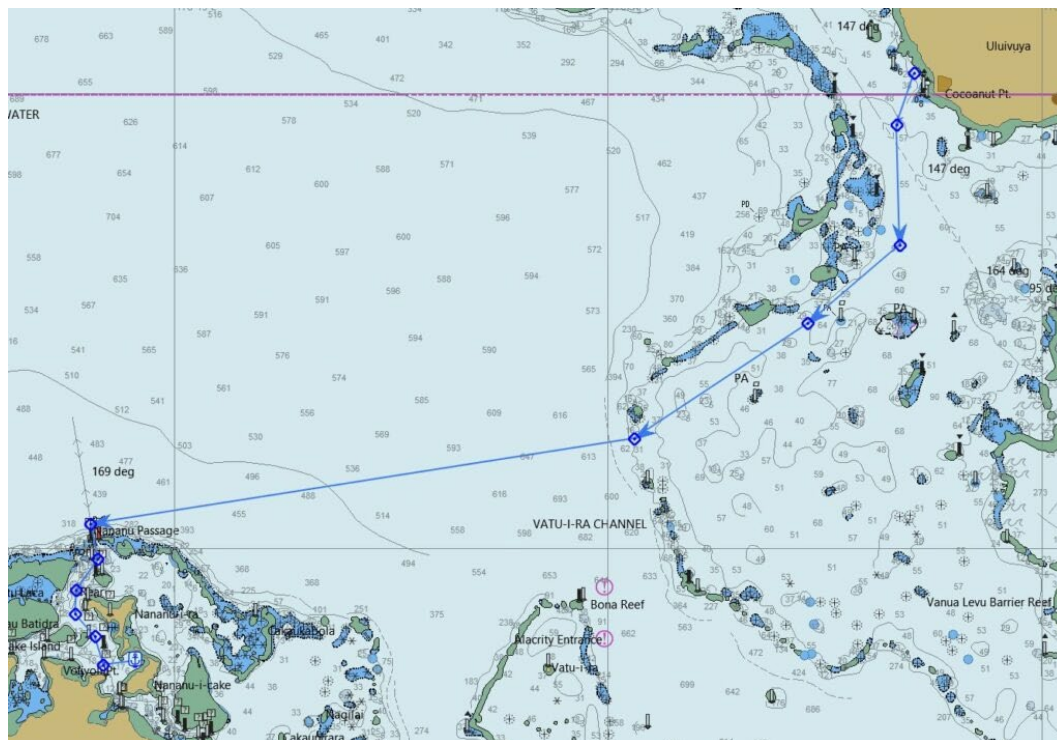


Fig. 51.7: Route from Nabouwalu to Nananu.

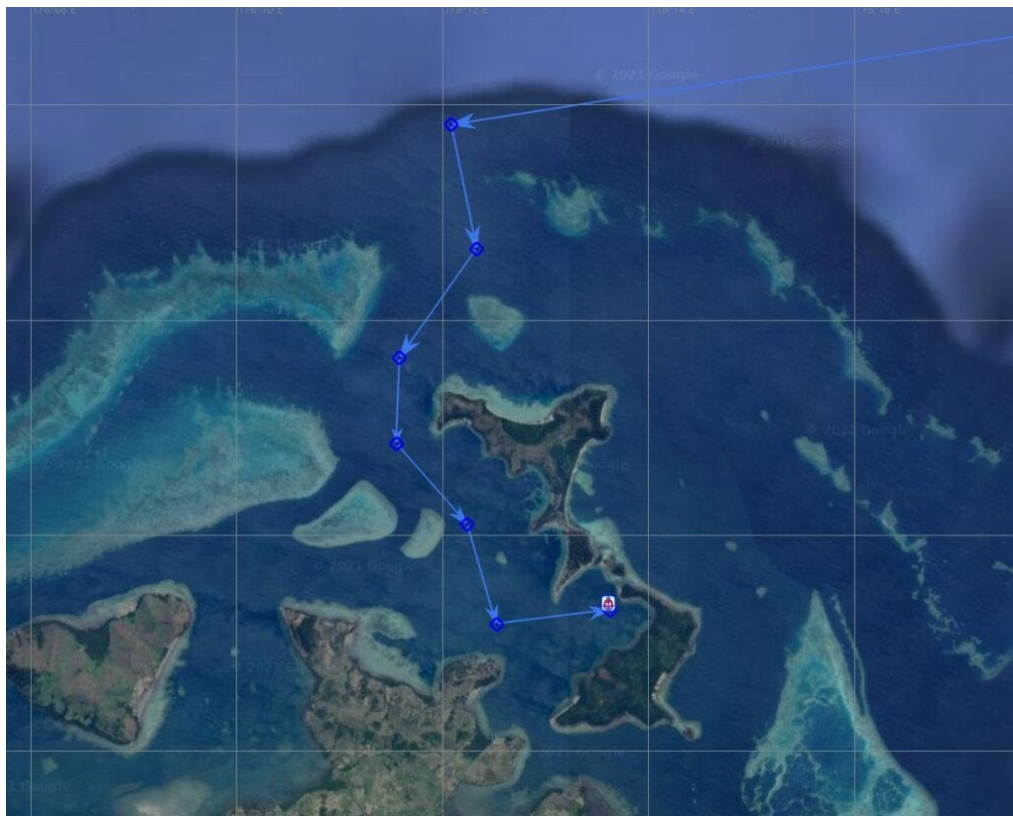


Fig. 51.8: Entrance through the fringing reef to Nananu on the satellite map.





Fig. 51.9: This barracuda fell for our bait. Now it can go back into the sea. Too small!



Fig. 51.10: Sunset in front of Nananu.

## 52. Fiji (Viti Levu)

Logbook: Fiji (Nananu) – Fiji (Vuda Marina)

Date: 09/15/23

Days at sea so far: 203 Nautical miles so far: 14.989.8

We have arrived in our anchorage bay **Nananu**, and thus on the southern island of **Viti Levu**.

Today John is being merciful; we don't weigh anchor until 7:00 a.m. and motor along the north coast of Viti Levu. Although the chart shows some navigational markers, most are no longer there, so we have to be extremely careful to spot the reefs early. There are only two boats left; Gone Bamboo has decided to stay on the north coast for a few more days. Around 1:00 PM, we reach our intended anchorage, Vatia Wharf, but immediately realize that the night here will be anything but peaceful, as a stiff northerly breeze is blowing and we have no decent shelter from the wind. So, we have a radio conference and decide to head another 17 miles south to **Vitogo Bay**. We like it there, and around 4:30 p.m. we drop anchor. The bay is ideally sheltered, and we sleep undisturbed and safely again that night.

Oil check: It's a bit white again, but it should work for another day. So far, the engine hasn't let us down.

### Vitogo Bay to Vuda

It's just a stone's throw to **Vuda Marina**. We set off at 7:00 a.m., passing the town of **Lautoka**, turning the corner to the west side of Viti Levu, and finally arriving at Vuda Marina. After a short wait, we dock there.



Fig. 52.1: Our route from Nananu to Vitogo Bay.



Fig. 52.1: Our route from Nananu to Vitogo Bay in satellite view.

So here we are, moored in Vuda Marina. Until our scheduled crane appointment in the marina's central basin, where the boats are arranged in a circle. Here, you moor bow-first against the harbor wall and secure the stern with lines to small buoys. While this holds, it requires some acrobatic maneuvers to get ashore. We tried the opposite (stern-first), but the wall is too high for us to lower our platform. From the deck, we have to lay down a three-meter-long plank, which also requires acrobatic skills to avoid falling into the harbor water. The marina itself is pleasant and has a reasonably priced restaurant, a small chandlery, and very friendly and helpful marina staff. Everywhere we go, we're greeted with a friendly "Bula."



Fig. 52.3: View into the central circular pool of the Vuda Marina.



Fig. 52.4: Here, the boat lies with its bow towards the quay wall. Sometimes, even boarding works without any problems, as with this boat.



Tanuki is taken out of the water, and a mechanic installs the new seal in the saildrive. Fresh oil in the gearbox ensures everything runs smoothly. Meanwhile, we sand Tanuki's hull (a day's work) and apply a new coat of antifouling to avoid any problems entering New Zealand. Unfortunately, it's no longer in Tanuki grey, but in boring black – grey wasn't available. Everything's fine now, and Tanuki goes right back into the water.



Fig. 52.5: Tanuki in the crane.



Fig. 52.6: The saildrive is working again.



Fig. 52.7: Back into the water.



Fig. 52.8: We are now moored in the other harbor basin in a conventional manner (without acrobatics).

After our crane appointment, our friendly approach with the ladies at the marina office finally paid off. We moored the freshly painted Tanuki in the side basin at a highly coveted spot on the conventional floating dock. Here we can finally disembark from the boat in just one step via the swim platform, without having to perform circus-like balancing acts across a plank.



Fig. 52.9: The bus to Lautoka.



Fig. 52.10: The market of Lautoka, with Florian in the background.

Unfortunately, the small mini-market at the marina isn't sufficient to adequately supply the boats. So, we take the bus (1.5 Fijian dollars) to Lautoka, the nearby larger town. The buses are quite an adventure, with no windows but always blasting loud Pacific folk music. In Lautoka, you can find almost everything you could want, and someone in the shop repairs our local SIM cards, so we finally have internet access. Incidentally, Fiji is the country where 4G internet is inexpensive and widely available; even on the remote islands, we always had a good signal.

The weather here takes some getting used to. It's usually calm in the mornings, but in the afternoons, it blows at 20-25 knots, occasionally even stronger. This ruins our plans for an island tour of the Yasawa archipelago. Just as we're expecting visitors from Australia, the wind picks up so much that setting sail is out of the question. Sorry, Florian, it's five days of marina life instead. In between, we drive our rental car to **Port Denerau** and meet Sabine and Joachim, the crew of SY Atanga from Germany, who have been circumnavigating the globe for over six years. We have a fun afternoon and spontaneously decide to invite them to Australia (spoiler alert: they actually came!).

In mid-October, our crew finally arrives for the New Zealand passage to wait with us for the right weather window. We pick up Petra and Thomas by boat at the neighboring Port Denerau marina. After a few days of acclimatization, we sail (occasionally we even manage to sail) to the infamous island of **Malolo Lailai**. There, we navigate through the reefs to the popular anchorage of **Musket Cove**, passing the famous **Cloud Nine** bathing platform on Malolo Lailai's south coast. Pizza and cocktails are available there at exorbitant prices. We prefer to sail past and anchor in Musket Cove in front of the local holiday resort. Sailors can visit the resort; they simply need to become lifetime members of the yacht club for a few dollars. The crew explores the resort with its beaches and the island's hiking trails. The anchorage is well-protected and always full of boats. However, there are clearly visible reefs and even a sandbar that is visited daily by tour boats at low tide and is perfect for snorkelling.





Fig. 52.11: Port Denerau to Musket Cove.



Fig. 52.12: The sandbank at Musket Cove.



Fig. 52.13: Farewell with the Marina Choir.

We stayed at anchor for a few days and then decided to return to Vuda Marina. Port Denerau was too expensive and too touristy for us, with hundreds of tourists being transferred there daily between ferries of all sizes. In the meantime, we kept an eye on the weather to find a suitable weather window. The friendly ladies at the marina had reserved a berth for us again at the dock in the West Basin and were clearly delighted that we had returned. Tanuki was prepared: fresh food and legumes were removed, supplies were used up, and we planned our journey so that we could pass through biosecurity control in New Zealand without any problems. Then, at the beginning of November, a decent weather window finally appeared, and we decided to attempt the 1,100 nautical mile journey.



## 53. Crossing to New Zealand.

Logbook: Fiji – New Zealand

Date: 02.11.23

Days at sea so far: 210

Nautical miles so far: 14989

The route from Fiji to New Zealand isn't short, but it's not excessively long either. We estimate 8-10 days for the 1100 nautical miles. No problem so far. The problem here is that we now have to say goodbye to the familiar downwind sailing in the trade winds and face changing wind and weather conditions. Why is that? The closer we get to New Zealand, with a latitude of 35° S, the closer we get to the "roaring forties," an area with typical westerly winds and constantly shifting low-pressure systems moving eastward, bringing rain fronts and strong winds. These low-pressure systems typically alternate with high-pressure systems and come more or less far north, close to our route. In November, the lows tend to stay further south, so most sailors aim for a crossing in late October or November. We do too.

So, it means waiting for the right weather conditions to set sail. But you shouldn't wait too long, because cyclone season starts in Fiji in November. You're caught between Scylla and Charybdis, and you have to rely on a lot of experience and a bit of luck to find the right moment to jump ship. We've been monitoring the weather daily since the beginning of October and, in addition to listening to the rumours from other sailors in the same situation, we've also hired an expert. JM, a renowned weather expert, is helping us choose the right time to depart for a not insignificant fee. As an old sailor's saying goes:

### **Sailors with time on their hands never have bad weather!**

Right on schedule at the end of October, the time had finally come. A large high-pressure system between Fiji, Noumea, and New Zealand promised calm weather and few days spent motoring. In fact, the route is notorious for a combination of strong winds and calm days, necessitating motoring. Although we are a sailboat, we also dislike drifting in choppy water during light winds or calms. So, with heavy hearts, we bought another five jerrycans of fuel to increase our engine capacity to four to five days, just to be on the safe side. The engine was checked again, the cooling water topped up, and the oil checked. The watermaker received a comprehensive service, including a filter change and chemical cleaning of the membrane, and our winches were freshly greased. Lines and shrouds were inspected for wear, and all blocks, including the furling systems, were lubricated with Teflon grease. Provisions were stocked for the skippers, and two crew members. Petra and Thomas from Australia joined us as additional crew for the crossing and had already completed their first lessons on board. Next comes the obligatory safety briefing on board and emergency procedures (3 hours) with practical exercises on the life jacket. This is followed by a training session on the correct "pirate harrrrrr" and the proper way to drink rum. Then the moment arrives: Tanuki clears customs, and the marina's mixed choir serenades us and presents us with a flower wreath as a farewell gift for good luck on our journey.

November 2nd is the day; we were able to convince Tango (our American friends) to set sail with us, and JM, our weatherman, agrees with our choice of departure date.

So, it all starts around noon.

**Day 1 (2. November)**

Due to the lack of wind, we motored to the Malolo Passage through Fiji's fringing reef. Tango, who had previously been anchored in Port Denerau, joined us along the way. Through the passage, the sea became rougher, and the wind picked up. By nightfall, we were already facing 20 knots of wind against us. Not fun; our crew had taken on a slightly greenish complexion – despite having been given cinna-rizine beforehand. No matter, the skipper and the admiral shared the night watches.

**Day 2 (3. November)**

Wind reduced, only 8 knots by midday. Waves approximately 2.5 meters. Crew's complexions ranged from pale green to light green. Daily run: 125 nautical miles. Our weatherman is sending us southwest to the **Ceva-i-Ra reef**, after which we should sail on to Johns Corner. We have to turn southwest due to the wind direction. Johns Corner is considered the ideal point to change from a southwest to a southeast course.

**Day 3 (4. November)**

Daily run: 110nm, 16 engine hours so far. Approaching Ceva-I-Ra. Wind approx. 15 knots.

**Day 4 (5. November)**

Passed Ceva-I-Ra at a safe distance. Crew recovered. Wind still on the nose from 160°. Daily run: 93 nautical miles.

**Day 5 (6. November)**

Wind 16 knots from 125°. Sailing at 4-5 knots to 190°. Daily run approximately 90 nautical miles. Crew is now able to stand watches. We have adjusted our watch schedule. Tango radios us her position and will repeat this every few days. They are sailing a slightly more direct route (as always).

**Day 6 (7. November)**

Wind is picking up, 20-25 knots. Daily run: 100 nautical miles. Nobody feels like eating a regular cooked meal. Light snacks and instant noodles are in season.

**Day 7 (8. November)**

Wind now 9 knots. Motor sailing towards 120°. Daily run 83 nautical miles.

**Day 8 (9. November)**

Wind shifts east, 15 knots, we're sailing again without the engine. Daily run: 110 nautical miles. Wind picks up, 25 knots, gusting to 30 knots. We're starting to worry that we're sailing too far west and will miss the northern tip of New Zealand. We've contacted our weatherman, but he hasn't replied; he told us beforehand that we shouldn't worry!

**Day 9 (10. November)**

Still 25 knots from the east. Daily run 87 nautical miles. Time changed to New Zealand. We're starting to feel like we should head east now. Still haven't heard anything from the weatherman.

**Day 10 (11. November)**

Wind down to 10-12 knots. Daily run: 108 nautical miles. Sudden 10-minute gust (squall) at 28 knots with rain. Afterwards, winds back up to 13 knots. Still no word from our weatherman. We've had

enough and decide to start the engine and head directly for New Zealand (Cape Brett). The Predictwind forecast indicates a light wind zone north of New Zealand.

#### Day 11 (12. November)

Wind 6-7 knots. Engines still running. Sea state 0.5m. Daily run 125nm. We've filled our jerrycans into the tank, which is now full again, indicating that we won't have any fuel problems.

Weatherman has since emailed us to ask if we can now receive his email, unfortunately without any professional recommendation from him.

#### Day 12 (13. November)

New Zealand sighted during the night. Radio Whangarei contacted at 7:00 a.m., rounded Cape Brett around 8:30 a.m. local time. Wind from astern approximately 18 knots, but we couldn't set sail due to the direction. Motoring at 6-7 knots. Daily run: 163 nautical miles. Around 1:30 p.m., dolphins were sighted. They were playing with Tanuki and greeting us in New Zealand. One jumped so high that it flew over our anchor and almost hit the forestay. Yellow flag raised. Docked at **Marsden Cove Marina** around 4:30 p.m. local time.



Fig. 53.1: Our route from Fiji to New Zealand (approx. 1100 nm). Next to it, the sailing route from Tango.





Fig. 53.2: Shortly before Cape Brett, Flipper greets us in New Zealand.

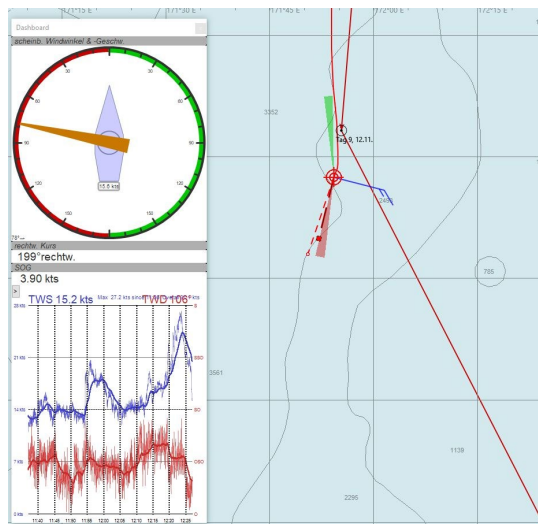


Fig. 53.3: Wind increased from 14 to 27 knots in just a few minutes. Reef quickly!

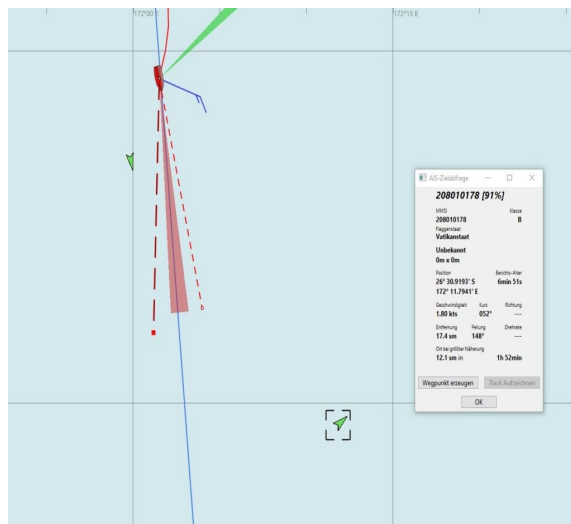


Fig. 53.4: A boat from Vatican City is visible on the AIS. A good omen?

We're now moored at the so-called Q-Dock, the customs dock, which we're not allowed to leave until we've completely cleared in. The friendly immigration officer arrives almost immediately, shortly after we've had our dockside beer, and takes just under 15 minutes to clear us in. However, the biosecurity officer finishes work promptly and leaves us moored at the customs dock. On the one hand, it's inconvenient, but on the other hand, it means we get a free night in the marina. Well, we're losing two days, because with the appointment the next morning, we'll also miss the tide for our trip to Whangarei. Damn! Whangarei can only be reached via the river and some shallow water areas, so precise tide calculations are essential; in other words, we need to reach the shallows at high tide.



Fig. 53.5: Our entrance to Port Marsden Cove!



Fig. 53.6: Marina Marsden Cove photographed from the customs jetty.

The next morning. We wait until about 11 a.m., then a two-man team finally arrives and checks our food supplies. We have almost nothing left, including no honey (absolutely the devil's work!) or any other fresh produce. We'd even disposed of our vacuum cleaner bag back in Fiji. No issues there. Tanuki is provisionally valued by customs, and they determine how much tax we would have to pay if we sold her here. No problem at all. We receive our paperwork for New Zealand and are allowed to move into a regular berth. No wind, no problem – the skipper is in good spirits and skillfully reverses Tanuki into the slipway. John and Janet from Tango are already there and take our lines. After a quick visit to the marina office, we head to the local shops and are quite surprised to find a bakery and a well-stocked supermarket where you can buy absolutely everything at reasonable prices! Hallelujah!

Now all we need is the New Zealand certificate for our electrical system. The nice lady in the office calls for us, and 30 minutes later a qualified electrician confirms that we have a shore power/inverter switch (visual inspection) and has professionally tested our connection cable for continuity. \$230 later, we have the required document and have thus legally arrived in New Zealand. The electrically savvy skipper remarks that we paid for the document, not the labour. That's one way to look at it.

The next morning, we said goodbye to our crew, Petra and Thomas, who had taken the horrific crossing in good spirits. We initially thought that 10 days of sailing against the wind wasn't exactly our dream crossing (well, the second worst...), but we changed our minds within a few hours. Friends from Fiji informed us that the boats that had set off a day or two later all had to turn back due to bad weather. Furthermore, the first Category II cyclone hit Fiji shortly afterward. So, we were glad we had taken

advantage of a suitable departure date and hadn't waited any longer. Sometimes you just have to make a bold decision and stick to it – says the crew of Tanuki!



Fig. 53.7: The winning boat (IMOCA 60) of the America's Cup 2000 is displayed in Marsden Cove.



Fig. 53.8: The seagulls are playing a game of rugby on the green areas. Shouldn't they wear black feathers?



## 54. Whangarei.

Logbook: Marsden Cove – Whangarei

Date: 11/15/23

Days at sea so far: 222

Nautical miles so far: 16.358

Well, so here we are in **Marsden Cove**, comfortably settled in our slip, and unfortunately, we have to wait another day before we can continue. Why?

Our destination is the small town of **Whangarei**, a little further up the Hatea River. Whangarei comes from the Māori name Whangārei-te-rerenga-parāoa, meaning "place where the whales gather" [Source: Wikipedia]. The name Whangarei here refers not only to the town but also to the extensive bay facing the sea (Whangarei Harbour). So, we have to navigate through freshwater and under a low bridge. The chart shows that the depth in the Hatea River drops to 0.9 meters. How can that be, when Tanuki has a draft of 2.25 meters (to be precise)? The answer is simple: we need the tide to help us. At high tide, the tide is about 2.8 meters, so that works. The marina tells us that we can expect a minimum depth of 3 meters at the berth. Therefore, we have to plan our trip so that we arrive at the critical point precisely at high tide. So, we consult our computer and, like good sailors, the locals as well. The manager of Marsden Cove Marina turned out to be very experienced and gave us detailed advice about the route and navigation. His best advice was: "Always stay in the middle and don't look at the depth sounder 😊". We'll do that! Surely!

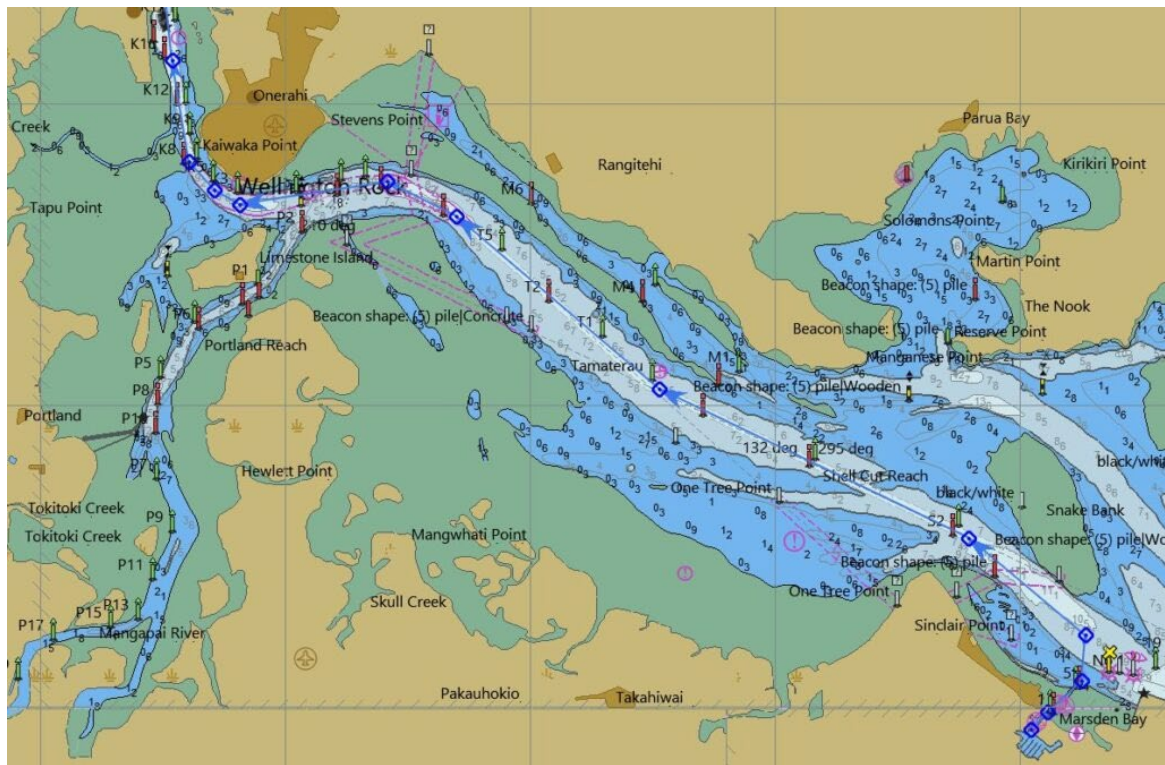


Fig. 54.1: Tanuki's route through Whangarei Harbour to the Hatea River.

So, we start at 8:30 a.m., settle our bill, and cast off. The river is lightly trafficked, even though hundreds of yachts are anchored or moored to pilings. The gentle current and the lack of waves are also unusual. Just under two hours later, in perfect weather, we've sailed deep into Whangarei Harbour and are turning into the Hatea River.

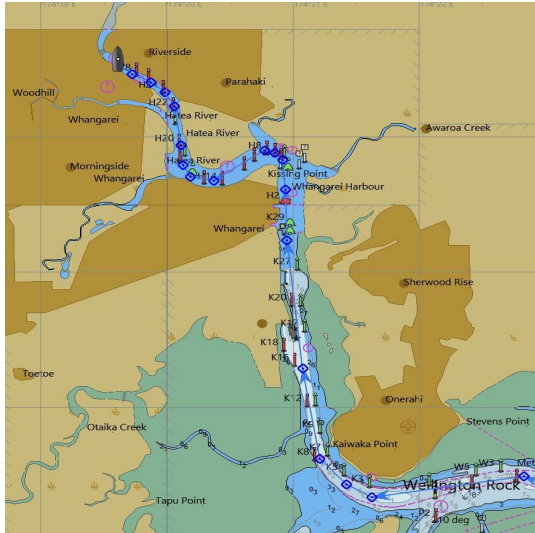


Fig. 54.2: The final sprint through the Hatea River.



Fig. 54.3: The fairway is still wide.



Fig. 54.4: The Hatea River bridge opens for us.



Fig. 54.5: Tanuki drives through. Perfect!

A few bends later, we reach the swing bridge over the Hatea River. We radio the bridge control, and promptly, traffic is stopped for us and the bridge swings open. We enter the town, now in the shallow water zone, but at just the right time for high tide. We radio the marina, and the friendly lady from the office is already there to take our lines. There's hardly any wind, so reversing into the channel and



backing into the slipway is a bit tricky, but with plenty of bow thrust, it's no problem. We're in and finally arrived in the town where we'll celebrate Christmas and wait out the worst of the cyclone season in Australia. It feels just like that, almost like a new home. We're already looking forward to exploring New Zealand.



Fig. 54.6: Tanuki's new home for the end of the year. The city marina in Whangarei.

It's 11 a.m. and we're already having a celebratory beer (shocking, but nautical custom) before visiting the marina office. We cross another bridge and pass the Hundertwasser House. What? Yes, there's an art museum in the Hundertwasser style right here on the harbor. Across the street is a branch of Pak'n'Save, the largest supermarket chain in New Zealand. We're happy and already planning our next cooking extravaganzas.





Fig. 54.7: The city marina in Whangarei in the evening.



Fig. 54.8: Whangarei – Colonial-style houses.



Fig. 54.9: The Hundertwasser House.

Finally, back in civilization. What a joy – shopping without any problems, moderate living costs, and easy access to the world. But first, Tanuki needs tidying up. It needs an engine service, some minor repairs, laundry, and restocking supplies. We're also enjoying Whangarei and recovering from the rigors of the crossing. The nearby "Pack 'n Save" has all the good things New Zealand has to offer, including good bread and reasonably priced New Zealand wine. So, we'll definitely be adding a roast lamb to our menu.

Our children Larissa and Max are coming to visit and celebrate Christmas and New Year's with us, while Tanuki is safely moored at the dock in Whangarei. A long-term rental offer from the local car dealer gives us a car, allowing us to explore the tourist attractions of the Northern Peninsula. In February, we'll fly to Australia and Germany to visit family and prepare for our arrival in Australia.

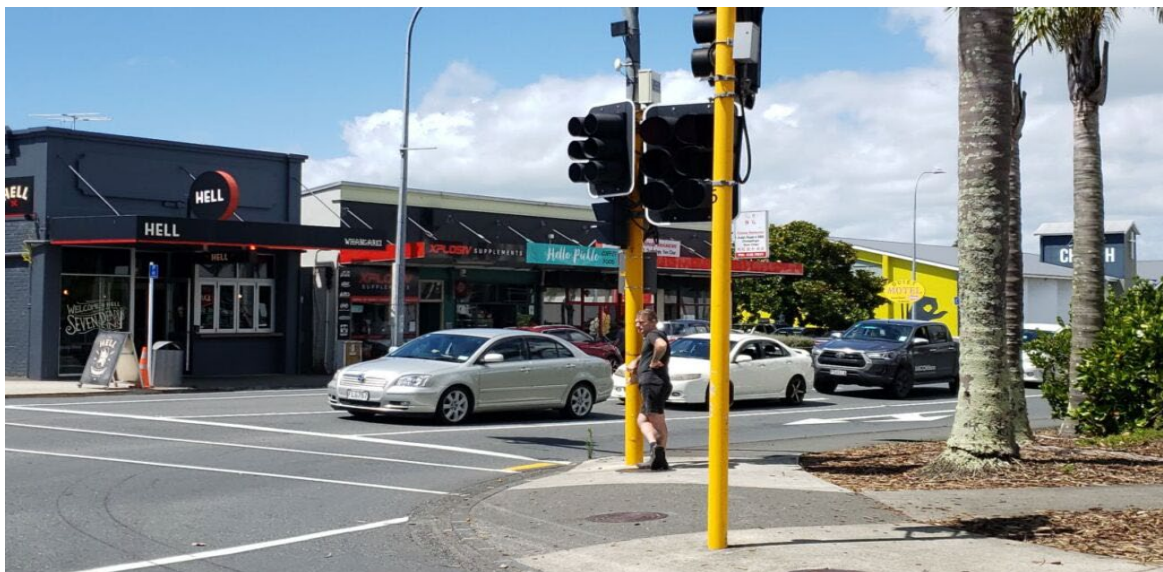


Fig. 54.10: Street in Whangarei. Right next to the Baptist Church (far right, behind the trees) a pub called "Hell" has opened. What a coincidence – or should we call it a choice?



Fig. 54.11: This is not the bird's ham. New Zealanders jokingly call themselves "Kiwis," meaning ham made from local meat. Delicious!





Fig. 54.12: "Kiwis" (like Aussies) have a fondness for vintage cars, which can be seen in museums here and drive on the roads perfectly restored, like this Studebaker.

The northern peninsula, with its green pastures and rolling hills, is reminiscent of the Alpine foothills. The meadows are dotted with cattle and sheep, and the roads are passable, though not up to European standards. We're on the lookout for kiwis (birds – the locals are jokingly called "other kiwis" here – which are everywhere), moas, and tawny eagles, but we have no luck. The small, wingless ground birds are rare and nocturnal, and the others are thankfully extinct. Instead, we see specimens of the nearly extinct kauri tree and a forest of giant redwood trees, as well as beautiful beaches and unspoiled nature.



Fig. 54.13: Forest on the North Island.



Fig. 54.14: The king of the Kauri trees (Tane Mahuta).





Fig. 54.15: Beach near Waipu. Almost private.



Fig. 54.16: Hiking trails on the beach. Larissa is building a stone pyramid.

Near Whangarei lies the small town of **Waipu**, whose inhabitants stem from Scottish origin and hold a large festival every year, which we visit with friends from neighboring boats to cheer on strong men in kilts at the Highland Games.



Fig. 54.17: Highland Games in Waipu, the bagpipe is played in kilt and tartan.



Fig. 54.18: Highland Games, strong men throwing the beam.

Like all visitors, we are drawn inland to the volcanic springs and fumaroles, so we visit Rotorua and let the sulphurous scent waft around us. The small geyser nearby doesn't erupt on its own; park rangers have to heat it up with washing powder. But then it offers a remarkable natural spectacle.



Fig. 54.18: Lady Knox geyser in Wai o Tapu.



Fig. 54.19.: Crater with fumarole in Wai o Tapu Park in Rotorua.



Fig. 54.20: Small pool with green mineral water (Roto Karikitea).





Fig. 54.21: Entrance to the Redwood Forest in Rotorua with Maori carving.



Fig. 54.22: The redwoods are huge.

After returning from our trips abroad, we will finally begin preparations in March for our sailing trip to Australia.



The route from New Zealand to Australia is known for its frequent bad weather, especially on the final stretch near the Australian coast. The area in between is dominated by high and low pressure systems that move from the southwest towards the northeast. Before we can set sail, however, Tanuki needs to be made seaworthy and all ship systems checked and brought into safe working order. In particular, our underwater hull needs to be inspected again, the navigation lights and shrouds checked, and Tanuki needs to stock up on sufficient provisions for the crossing. On top of that, Australian border control is notoriously strict; fresh food and a long list of certain items are prohibited. We've decided to take crew on board for this leg (another 1000 nautical miles and about 10 days). Keio, our Australian-Japanese friend who has just completed her solo circumnavigation, recommends a nice Swedish couple whom we immediately like and hire. Work in exchange for a bunk, the occasional bit of food, and a moderate amount of alcohol works quite well here.

Work in Whangarei involves cosmetic repairs in the interior cabin, tidying up, and re-oiling the teak planks. The skipper reseals all the hatches, and our son, who will later return to Australia by plane, is sent up the mast to check the shrouds and the navigation lights. Everything is meticulously tidied, and the engine is checked again, as are the autopilot mechanism and the two rudders, which also receive a thorough lubrication. We begin daily weather analysis to stay informed about future developments and potentially identify a favorable weather window. All further work requires Tanuki to be hauled out of the water and will therefore be planned in Marsden Cove.



Fig. 54.23: Polishing the deck.



Fig. 54.24: Checking the rigging. Max on his way to the very top.

So, we set off from Whangarei on Monday morning at first light, hoping to cross the river's shallows before high tide. We planned to settle the bill at the marina the day before. Despite our (not overly enthusiastic) insistence, the employee there told us everything had already been paid by credit card. We didn't believe it, but were sent off with a friendly "fair winds," and we had a feeling something was

up. Oh well! Tanuki was ready, and we cast off shortly after 6 a.m. to enter the Hatea River. Our destination was the marina in Marsden Cove, where a professional boat lift and the customs and immigration station awaited us.



Fig. 54.25: Goodbye Whangarei! We're driving off, at high tide and past Hundertwasser...

The shallows are no problem; the bridge opens for us, and we thank the bridge operator warmly. Our engine, however, is giving us some trouble, as we're experiencing a strong vibration that's dependent on the engine speed. We suspect a simple cause: marine growth on the propeller. The skipper dismisses it, saying it's no problem for two hours as long as we don't go full throttle, and that Tanuki will be out of the water after that anyway.

We sail into the marina and are assigned a guest berth, as we're hauling out the next morning. Tanuki is moored directly opposite the slipway, but without electricity or water. Oh well, we have plenty of gas, and our tanks and batteries are full. We're up first thing the next morning; the manoeuvre—driving 30 meters to the slipway's dock—takes 40 seconds, and a slip trailer lifts us out of the water. A new experience for us, as we've only ever used travel lifts. While still on the trailer, we can see the mess beneath the surface. While our antifouling paint is still in pretty good shape, the product on our propeller has clearly failed. It's covered in barnacles, and it's no wonder it was running rough.

Friendly people hose down our underwater hull, and soon we're standing on a sturdy scaffold. A long list of tasks awaits us. We begin with the underwater hull. The old antifouling is sanded smooth again, the zinc anodes are replaced, and the propeller is cleaned of all biological debris. Propspeed is applied to the propeller, a coat of new antifouling is applied to the hull, and then we continue with repairs to the hull's gelcoat, followed by a high-gloss polish.



Fig. 54.26: Out of the water.



Fig. 54.27: Tanuki on the slip trailer.



Fig. 54.28: Saildrive and propeller have some (, a lot!) of fouling.



Fig. 54.29: Scaffold for polishing. Two days of work!





Fig. 54.30: Tanuki freshly painted and polished...



Fig. 54.31: ...and back in the water again.

Tanuki is gleaming in her former glory, and she's already back on the trailer, ready to be launched after three days of hard work. Once in the water, we head for our assigned slipway. We also receive greetings from the marina in Whangarei, which, after all, still wants money from us and bombards us with more than four different invoices; their billing system seems to have gone haywire. Has Skynet taken over?

Our American friends from Tango are moored not far from us, and we have a lively reunion. Our crew from Sweden, Victor and Malin, are visiting us for an initial get-together, and we all immediately feel comfortable, especially since Victor has already completed an Atlantic crossing and is therefore not a complete novice in the nautical world.

## 55. Crossing to Australia

Logbook: New Zealand - Australia

Date: 19.03.24

Days at sea so far: 224

Nautical miles so far: 16390

Our crew, Victor and Malin, arrived the next day. We had a great greeting, cooked together, and they received a briefing on the boat's systems, safety, and the weather conditions. The weather was good for departure in the next few days, and we grew more and more excited each day. The skipper and crew finally made a decision, and we immediately called the officials, who travelled all the way from Auckland for us and were very friendly and relaxed. We received permission to stay until the next morning and refuel tax-free. Perfect!

Then we leave the marina and have to fight our way out of the bay against the rising tide, strong winds, and a powerful current. There's no decent wind, so we motor to the North Cape before we can finally set sail. It's a somewhat strenuous start for our crew, and for us too, but a friendly high-pressure system then allows us to sail calmly towards Australia. We're already looking forward to our destination, not least because it's already gotten a bit colder in New Zealand, and the temperature difference to Australia is more than 10 degrees, at least according to our weather forecaster.

We decided not to hire a weather expert this time, as we were somewhat disappointed after last time and believe we can make the necessary decisions ourselves with some preparation. A little overconfidence? Perhaps!

Before we can leave, a disastrous email arrives: We were scheduled to arrive in Coffs Harbour, but we messed up by making sure our arrival falls on the long Easter weekend. Customs strongly suggests we find another port of arrival where staff can meet us despite the Easter weekend. This is bad news for us, as the route to Coffs Harbour would have been the ideal solution weather-wise. After a quick look at the weather charts, we decide on the Gold Coast as our new port of arrival and inform the Australian authorities. This will cost us some sailing time, as the Gold Coast is significantly further north, near Brisbane. But since we have good friends there and our car is parked there, the extra time isn't a big deal. Our ultimate destination is Sydney, but we want to enjoy the Australian coast first.

Here is an excerpt from the logbook:

### Day 1 (19. March)

We set sail from Marsden Cove at noon; refuelling took longer than expected. The gas station actually has a pump with a credit card machine. However, since we're tax-exempt, we had to bypass it manually, which took some time. We cast off and headed out into the incoming tide and a headwind from the bay. We rounded Bream Head under motor at 2 p.m. Still a headwind. We continued motoring to the North Cape. The waves were 2-3 meters high, and we were being tossed about quite a bit. This isn't ideal for the first day of the trip; the whole crew wasn't exactly thrilled. Night watches were okay; the situation improved somewhat once we gained some distance from land.

**Day 2 (20. March)**

We rounded the North Cape around midday. Daily run: 118 nautical miles. Finally sailing west-north-west, downwind with the preventer deployed. Around 8 p.m., a whale was sighted northeast of Farmer Rock. Wind now 12-15 knots and speed approximately 4-5 knots. The crew is recovering from the first day. No change in course or wind direction, still speed around 5 knots, sailing under full sail. Batteries recharged with 2 hours of engine running. Around 8:30 p.m., the wind freshened to 15 knots.



Fig. 55.1: Goodbye New Zealand. We enjoyed our time here.



Fig. 55.2: Flipper also says goodbye, but is not in the mood to play today.

**Day 3 (21. March)**

A restless night with winds up to 22 knots. We're now sailing through the night with the second reef in the mainsail. The autopilot is steering according to the wind angle, and we're being pushed slightly towards the west-southwest. Around midday, the wind shifts further, and we tack. Daily run: 101 nautical miles

**Day 4 (22. March)**

Cloudy, light winds with occasional gusts. Full sails now, but still only speed 3-4 knots. Daily run: 93 nautical miles.

**Day 5 (23. March)**

Good night, around 11 p.m. the wind dropped below 8 knots. Engine started for the morning watch change. Sailed a little north to look for wind. Sighted a whale early this morning.





Fig. 55.3: Skippers in good spirits and now in sailing mode.



Fig. 55.4: Good mood also among crew Victor and Malin.

### Day 6 (24. March)

Engines still running, 150 nm daily run. We're filling our tank with 100 liters of diesel from the reserve jerrycans. The tank wasn't empty, but we prefer to do these refuelling operations in light weather, as the jerrycans have to be fetched from the bow. Diesel in the tank is better than diesel in jerrycans!

### Day 7 (25. March)

Restless night, slightly more wind, hoisted the mainsail and reduced engine speed. More wind at sunrise. Now under full sail. Remaining jerrycans filled. Fuel tank now at  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Daily run: 143 nautical miles.

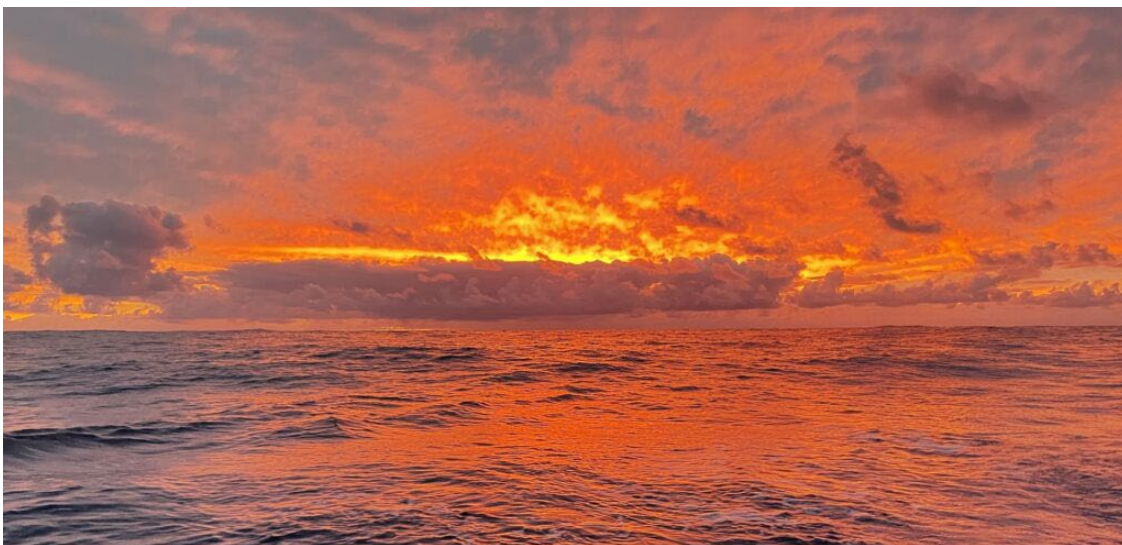


Fig. 55.5: Magical sunrise on the high seas.

**Day 8 (26. March)**

Beam wind of 10-16 knots. Speed around 4-5 knots. Freezer switched off and first critical food items thrown overboard. Three hours of engine running to recharge batteries. Daily distance: 105 nautical miles.

**Day 9 (27. March)**

The wind is picking up, now 16 knots. We gybe and set a direct course for the destination.

**Day 10 (March 28)**

Calm night, wind dies down, 4 hours of motoring. Wind picks up around midnight to 16-20 knots. Sails reefed once. Further reefing to arrive at 7 a.m.. Time changed to Brisbane time (-3h). Arrived in Gold Coast at 7 am, last day's run 137 nautical miles.



Fig. 55.6: The Gold Coast south of Brisbane comes into view. Land Ho!



Fig. 55.7: Tanuki once again at a customs jetty.

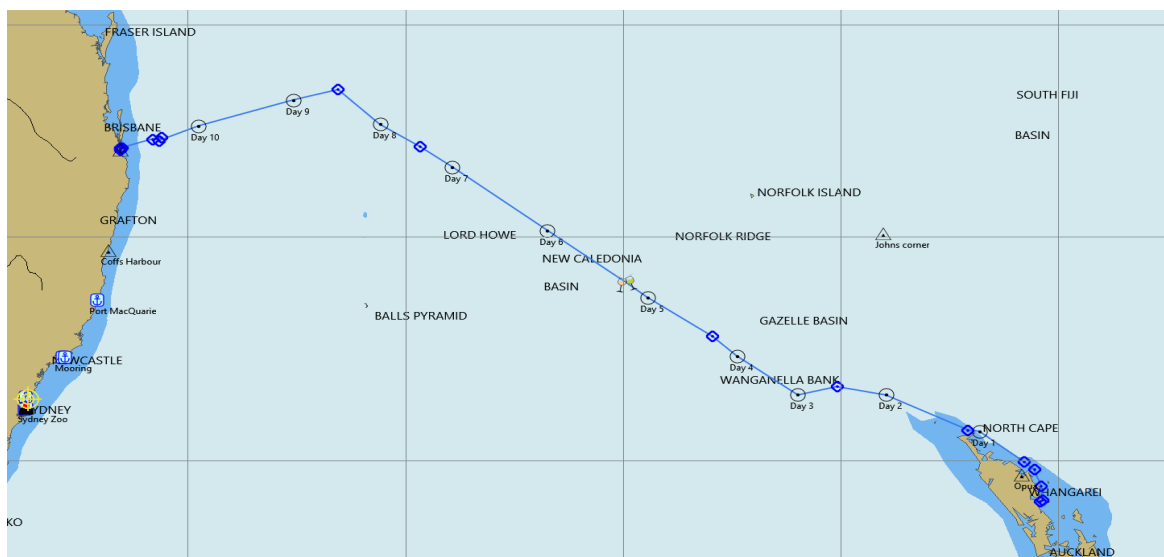


Fig. 55.8: Our crossing from New Zealand to Australia.

So, at 7 a.m. we entered the Gold Coast Seaway and turned into the South Channel. Numerous boats, jet skis, and swimmers demanded the skipper's full attention as he maneuvered Tanuki through the narrow channel using hand steering. The situation was critical due to heavy traffic for the long weekend and because some boats seemed unaware of the traffic rules. Sport fishermen were anchored in the middle of the narrow entrance, and suicidal swimmers were crossing the busy passage.

We contacted the traffic control centre and reached the marina in Southport about an hour later. We docked at the customs pier, and because it's a pier for superyachts, we felt like VIPs. After phone calls to the marina and customs, two hours later, four officials were once again standing in front of Tanuki, searching the boat and finding nothing amiss. We were informed that Tanuki would have to be imported and, in the meantime, our freedom of movement was restricted to the area around Brisbane. The biosecurity official was surprised that we had even remembered the vacuum cleaner bag (again!) and only objected to our popcorn supplies because the kernels could potentially sprout. Although it was commercially packaged microwave popcorn, he still had to confiscate it, which would cost us \$160 for a garbage bag. After some persuasion, he finally allowed the skipper to make the popcorn, and soon there were five bags of fully cooked microwave popcorn in the galley, which were then no longer objected to. We are officially "in".

Now that we've finally officially entered Australia, Tanuki needs to be restocked. This applies not only to the beer supplies, but especially to the food. Luckily, there are plenty of supermarkets here, and we start by shopping at Aldi. The marina allows us to stay in the superyacht parking area for a few days, and we decide to stay for three. Our friend Florian, the passionate sport fisherman, visits us right at the dock and brings freshly caught fish. In return, we go out for dinner with Florian and his family.

Moana arrived in Gold Coast almost at the same time as us, and we were delighted to spend an afternoon with her crew. We've known Moana since Tahiti and have run into them several times. It was time to nurture this friendship.



Fig. 55.9: Who is sneaking up on Tanuki? Are they pirates?



Fig. 55.10: No, it's Florian with a fish delivery for the hungry Tanuki crew.



## 56. Sydney

Logbook: Gold Coast - Sydney

Date: 01.04.24

Days at sea so far: 234

Nautical miles so far: 17,678

We're heading south, specifically to Sydney for our farewell cruise. Victor and Malin are coming with us until the very end. The weather forecast, however, isn't promising. Thunderstorms and gales with winds exceeding 40 knots are predicted, so there's no chance of us making it to Sydney in one go. But we could essentially halve the distance and wait out the bad weather in a cozy harbor. Sounds good.

As nautical residents of Eastern Australia, we are familiar with the challenges of local harbor entrances. Here, river mouths typically form a limited sandbar, variable in depth and size, which can only be crossed safely under optimal conditions. Such "coastal bars" exist at almost all marina and river entrances, so we have a healthy respect for them. When planning coastal passages, it is therefore advisable to consider all available information and to have Plans B and C in addition to Plan A. So, let's do just that and plan our departure immediately to avoid getting caught in bad weather, which would mean another week's stay on the Gold Coast.

We've chosen Port McQuarie as our destination port, which, however, has the disadvantage of a challenging coastal bar. We'll see. The skipper has spoken with Customs in the meantime, and we've received official permission to move Tanuki to Sydney. So, we're off on April 2nd at 8:40 a.m. We'll leave the Gold Coast under motor in bright sunshine and light winds, then turn south. We'll dutifully check in with BrisShipping and the Gold Coast Guard by radio, and let them know in Sydney that we're coming.



Fig. 56.1: Gold Coast from the sea in wonderful weather (for now).



Fig. 56.2.: Gold Coast to Port McQuarie.



Fig. 56.3: The journey continues to Port Ste-

The weather isn't cooperating. Although the strong coastal current is working in our direction, the sailing conditions are more than poor. Apart from short stretches, we're motoring south. During the night, we can sail downwind, but the swell increases and the waves come from behind, which isn't good for our autopilot. We steer manually for a few hours, and after the autopilot has had a break, we set the watches to two hours. In the morning, the wind shifts against us and freshens to 20 knots. Engine on. The uncomfortable part is that the waves are increasing to over 3 meters, and Tanuki is crashing into the short troughs with increasing force. So, we sail at the ideal angle into the waves, tacking our way forward. In these conditions, the skipper refuses to go over the coastal bar in Port McQuary, and Plan B is implemented. After consulting the latest weather report, we decide to continue on to **Port Stephens**. Here, the entrance is huge, and we don't have to go over a shallow coastal bar. According to our calculations, we will easily manage that before the real bad weather arrives in the form of a storm front.

The situation remained unpleasant overnight, the waves consistently over 3 meters high, and to top it all off, it rained. We reached Port Stephens just before the storm hit and sailed into the bay at 4:30 p.m.. Our plan was to dock at the marina. But no such luck! The marina had forgotten our reservation and, citing the bad weather, tried to sell us a guest berth for \$300 (per night). Not a chance! The second marina nearby also offered us a berth for a similar price. We said no to such shady deals. We spotted an available public mooring (pink) in front of the marina and tied up there. Public moorings are provided free of charge by the state for boats and are generally well-monitored and as safe as you would expect. So, we tied up to the buoy. Tanuki was secured to the buoy with two strong lines and was now safely and well-protected from the wind and waves.



Fig. 56.4: Our entrance into the bay of Port Stephens. We are moored sheltered from the wind at a public mooring.

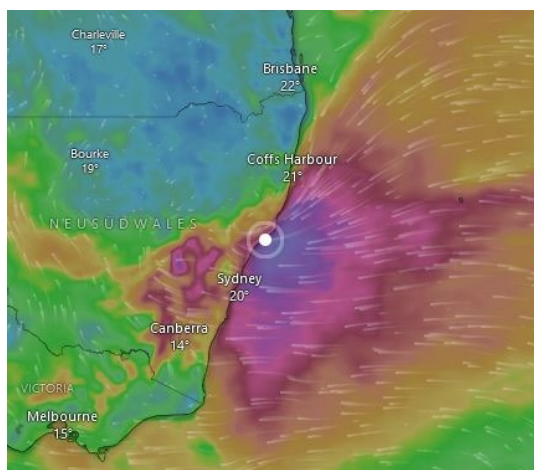


Fig. 56.5: Weather situation. Storm! We arrived just in time.

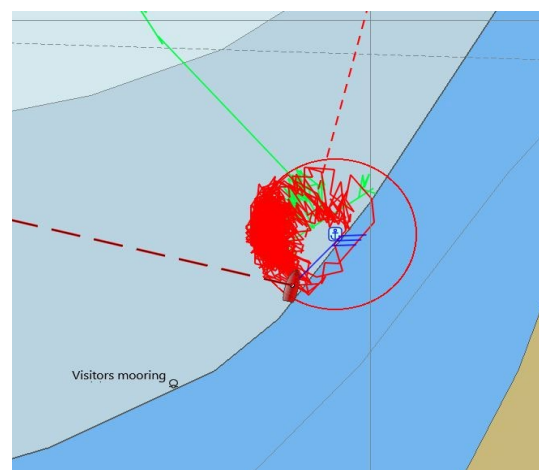


Fig. 56.6: Wind force 6 at the sheltered anchorage! Tanuki is pulling on the mooring line.

Towards evening, the storm begins. We're anchored deep in the bay, sheltered, and measuring wind speeds of up to 30 knots at what is actually a well-protected anchorage; we don't dare guess what wind speeds are raging out at sea. For safety, the skipper sets anchor watches (well, actually mooring watches, but that's not the official term) and radio watch for the emergency channel. There's a lot of activity on the channel. Several other boats in the bay are drifting with loose anchors that can't be



retrieved, causing near-collisions. The Coast Guard reassures but doesn't go out. Our mooring is keeping us stable and safe. A catamaran is moored next to us on the second mooring. Around midnight, the Coast Guard reports a catamaran missing and inquires by radio. The skipper goes outside to check, but our neighbor is also safely moored. It must have been a different boat they were looking for. We still send a radio message to the Coast Guard to report that everything is alright.

Sometime after 1 a.m., the storm subsided, and we could finally get some rest. Skipper and crew agreed on a day of swimming to relax and recharge. Good food, some swimming, and the peace and quiet after the storm revived our spirits. Our Plan B (Port Stephens) also had the advantage that we only had a short distance to Sydney left, which we planned to cover overnight.



Fig. 56.7: The next day, after the storm. Our mooring spot was a good decision.

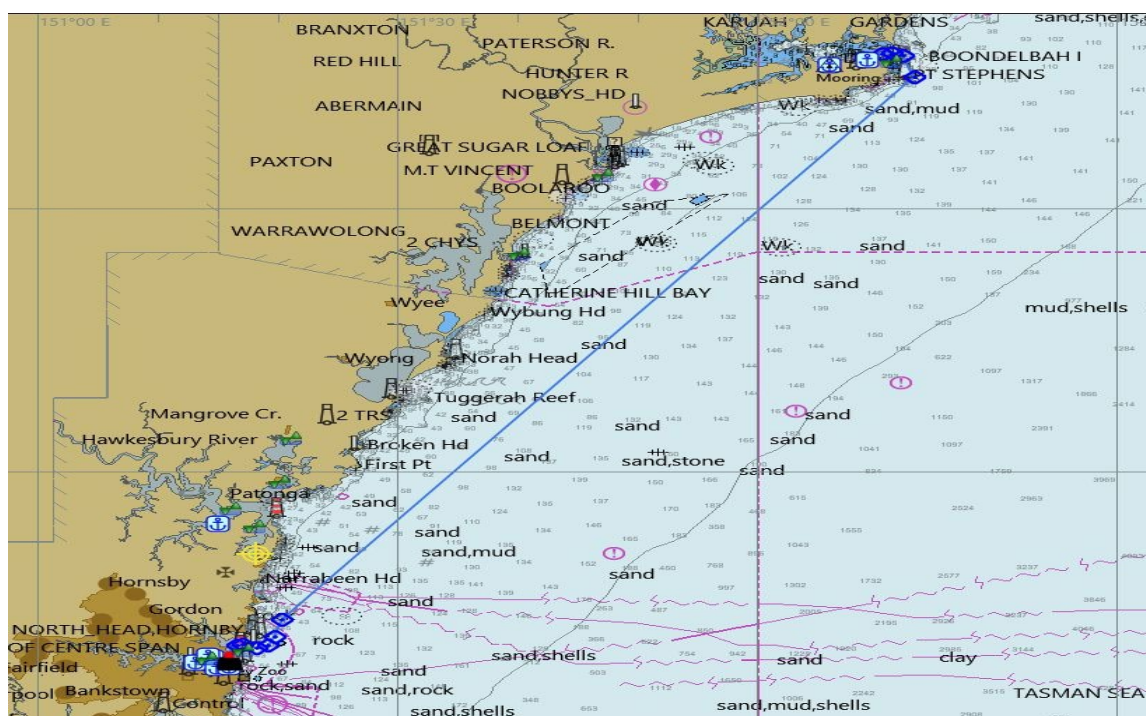


Fig. 56.8: We continue through the night to Sydney, just a stone's throw away from us



Fig. 56.9: Sydney comes into view.



Fig. 56.10: Around the curve and closer.

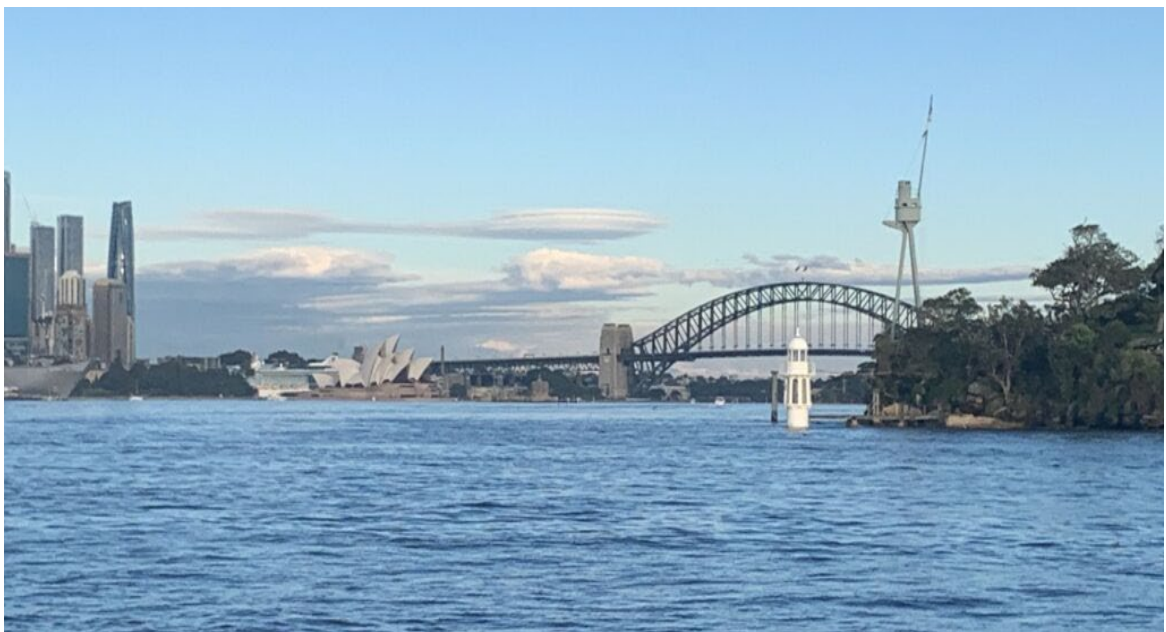


Fig. 56.10: Now we can also see the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge.

Passing the famous opera house, we sailed under the harbor bridge, turned around, and boldly anchored right next to it for the night. We celebrated the end of our trip with champagne and delicious food, cooked as always by the skipper. It turned out that our crew member Victor had his camera drone with him, and we didn't have to persuade him for long to take several aerial shots of us and Tanuki. Later that evening, we were treated to the sounds of the opera house's open-air stage, complete with a mini fireworks display. What a perfect end to a long, inspiring, and occasionally challenging journey!





Fig. 56.7: Entering Sydney Harbour. We briefly pass under the Harbour Bridge and then boldly anchor next to the Opera House (we believe this is even allowed here).



Fig. 56.11: Under Australia's most famous bridge.



Fig. 56.12: Tanuki and the skippers are happy. We are anchored right next to the opera house.





Fig. 56.13: Tanuki with the entire crew at the most iconic spot in Australia.

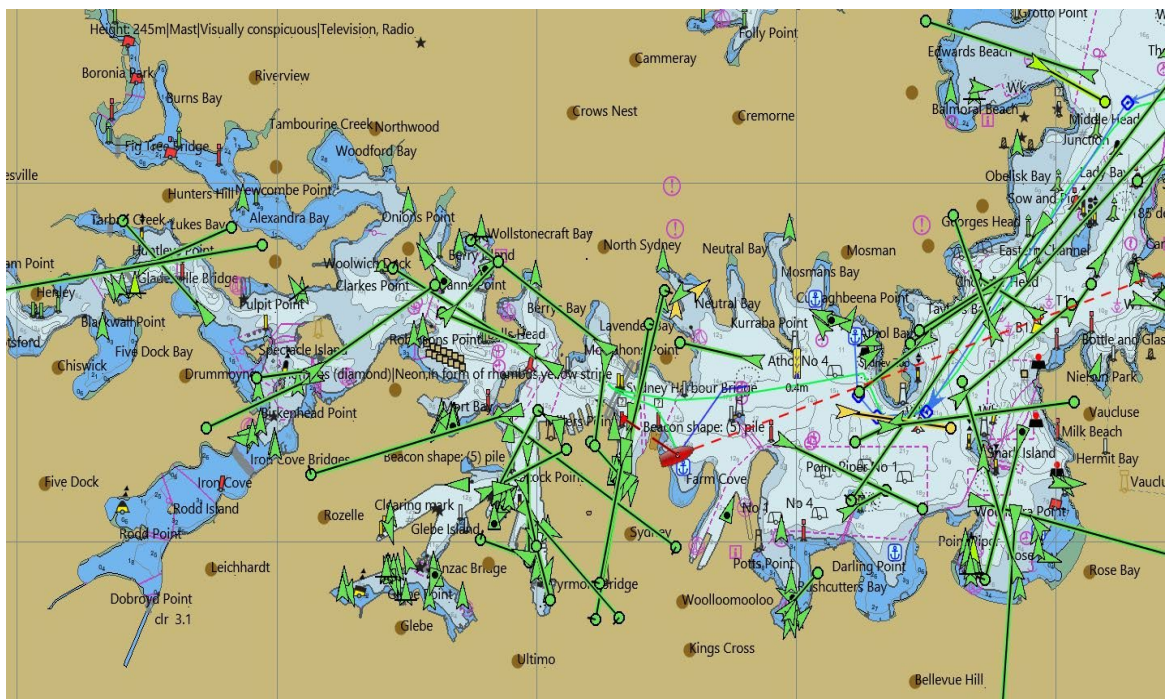


Fig. 56.14: There's quite a lot going on in Sydney Harbour. We haven't seen so many boats on the AIS for a long time. Tanuki is the red boat.

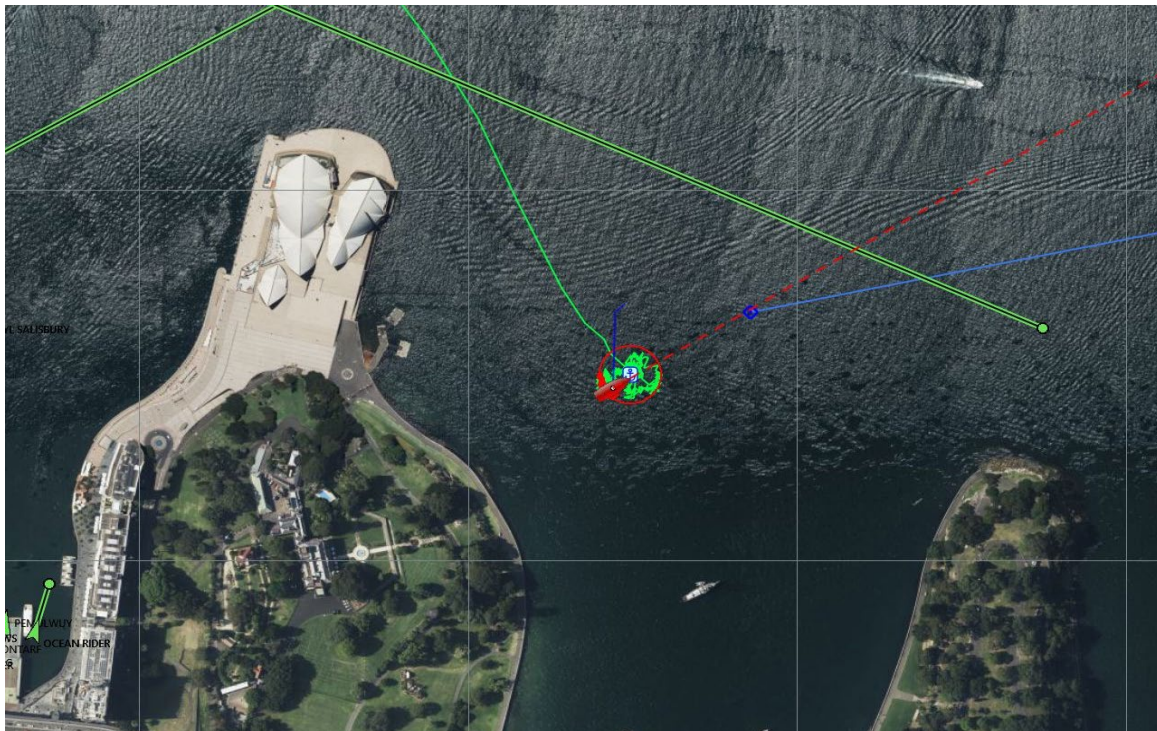


Fig. 56.15: Satellite image (with GPS position and AIS boats) showing our position next to the opera house.



## 57. Pittwater

Logbook: Sydney - Pittwater

Date: 07.04.24

Days at sea so far: 237

Nautical miles so far: 18054

We've reached the end of our journey! The realization is sinking in slowly, but it's a little painful, because we have to part ways with Tanuki. Tanuki has been our home and mobile haven for over two years, but just like with a property, it doesn't make sense to leave it empty after moving. The expenses for maintenance and mooring are simply not financially justifiable. So, the only option left is to sell Tanuki. Since Fiji, we've been in contact with one of Australia's largest boat brokers, who will find Tanuki a good new owner for us. To do this, we first need to transport Tanuki to the dealer's base in Pittwater, which is only a few hours north of Sydney.

It's important to note that the entrance to Pittwater is reached via a very shallow area with an average depth of only 2-3 meters (Tanuki's draft is 2.25 meters). We therefore have to set off early in the morning to enter Pittwater before the tide goes out. So, before sunrise, it's "anchors aweigh" and we head back out to sea. The sea has calmed down by now, and we can motor north without any problems because, once again, there's hardly any wind. Three hours later, we round Barrenjoey Head and enter Pittwater Bay, successfully crossing the shallows, turn south, and reach the Royal Motor Yacht Club, which has reserved a berth for us for a few days. Unfortunately, we're moored at the outer pier and not in a slip, so the waves from Pittwater toss us around, which is quite uncomfortable in the long run. The marina is also a bit strange; we sense a very unpleasant, underlying snobbery among the boat owners and marina staff, something we haven't encountered in the bluewater sailing community. Bluewater sailors are generally friendly and helpful, looking out for each other, not only because they know that they might need help at any time and often can't just call the coastguard or a professional mechanic.

Victor and Malin, our crew from Sweden, are leaving us the next day to begin an extended trip to Australia. They leave with our best wishes, and we're sad because we'd recently made friends with them. Then it's time for us to get to work. We have to empty Tanuki, pack everything important into boxes, and get the interior clean and presentable. The skipper flies to the Gold Coast to drive our car to Sydney, and the skipper's wife is currently packing and cleaning the boat. Two days later, the car finally arrives, is loaded with valuables, and our boxes are stored at the boat broker's, where they will later be picked up by a shipping company as cargo. Pure stress.

Finally, the moment arrives. Tanuki is moored securely with the broker, the import is handled by a customs agent, and we finally receive approval from Customs to sell Tanuki. That same day, Tanuki is listed on the boat broker's website, and we begin our journey north, where – after visiting our daughter in Sydney, friends on the Gold Coast, and our son in Brisbane – we return home to Cairns.



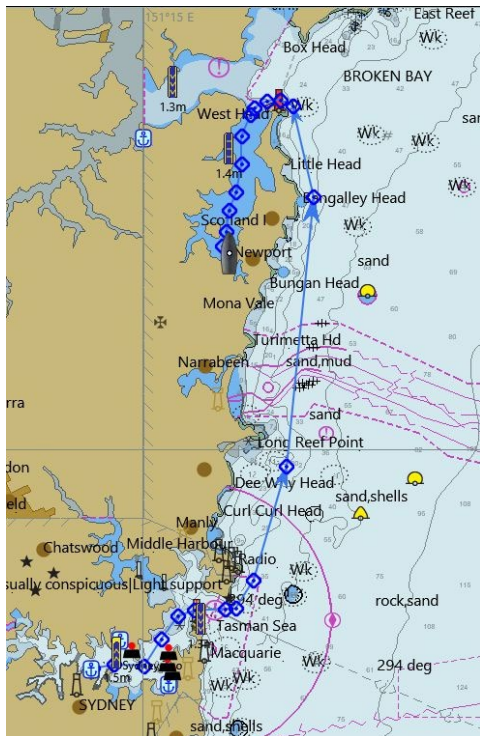


Fig. 57.1: From Sydney to Pittwater.

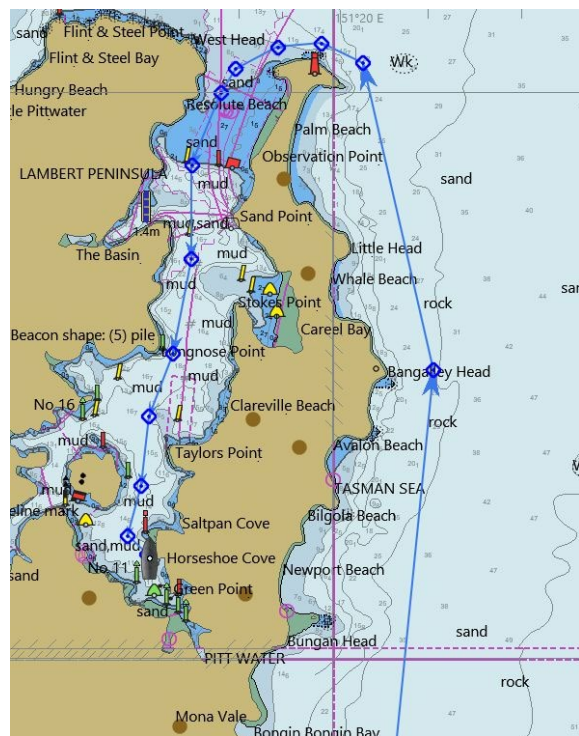


Fig. 57.2: The entrance to Pittwater.



Fig. 57.3: Crossing the bay.



Fig. 57.4: Almost there. You can already see the marina.

Then we tidy up and clean out. Here are a few pictures during and after our cleanup:



Fig. 57.5: Chaos in the middle.



Fig. 57.6: Cabin aft, starboard, complete.



Fig. 57.7: Cabin aft, port side complete.





Fig. 57.8: Owner's cabin forward.



Fig. 57.9: Crew cabin with bunk beds.



Fig. 57.10: Toilet and shower at the front, spotless.



Fig. 57.11: Wet wardrobe and washing machine.





Fig. 57.12: Navigation and galley (kitchen).



Fig. 57.13: Living room. The television remains inside.

## 58. Coming home

Logbook: Pittwater – Cairns (by car)

Date: 15.04.24

Days at sea so far: 238

Nautical miles so far: 18,061.4

Meanwhile, Sabine has been busy packing, and the skipper has flown to the Gold Coast, where we left our newly purchased car with our friend Florian when we flew from Whangarei to the Gold Coast in January and stayed with him. So, Richard is driving the car (a brand-new Jeep Compass) down to Pittwater (a day's drive, a stone's throw by Australian standards). In Pittwater, we load our belongings into the car, and everything else will either go in the trash, be given away, or packed into boxes. We booked three cubic meters of cargo space with a shipping company at a good price and filled it with about 15 boxes, which are waiting to be picked up here.

Tanuki was towed from her berth in the marina to a mooring where she will remain for the next few months until a new owner is found. Our farewell was brief, but with a touch of tears, as Tanuki had bravely and loyally performed her maritime duties, and we had clearly taken good care of her to earn that loyalty. The broker took us ashore by dinghy, and we quickly got into the car to drive to Gosford to visit our daughter Larissa.



Fig. 58.1: Tanuki “for sale” at a mooring of the boat broker. (Image: DBY Boatsales).



Fig. 58.2: Our new car. "We bought a Jeep".



Fig. 58.3: Coffee break: The giant banana in Coffs Harbour. Australians like large plastic sculptures.

**Gosford** It's a small town on the Central Coast, north of Sydney. After just a 90-minute drive, we arrive and are warmly greeted by Larissa. She's just finished her job as a registered nurse at a local hospital and is in the process of settling her affairs. She plans to travel to Germany for a few months to explore Europe with her boyfriend. She's not gone yet, though, and we're spending a few days here relaxing and spending time with family.

Then we continue north. We drive to the Gold Coast to visit our friend Florian, another day's drive, but Richard already knows the route. We travel via Newcastle, Taree, Coffs Harbour, and Byron Bay, reaching the border of New South Wales and Queensland and the Gold Coast in the evening after 800 km on the A1 and M1 highways along the coast. As always, we stay in the guest room at Florian's, a dentist and academic friend whom we've known since we emigrated to Australia. Florian's family is looking forward to Sabine's cooking, and we're looking forward to Florian's pancakes.



Fig. 58.4: Florian is the uncrowned master of pancakes.



Fig. 58.5: Meatballs: We went to Ikea and were also inspired by our Swedish crew. Sabine says: "We can do better than that." True!



Here too, we spend a few relaxing days. We visit Max in Brisbane and go to Ikea, where we find inspiration beyond just food (we spontaneously cook Swedish meatballs for Florian's family). Then we continue north. **Brisbane**, the **Sunshine Coast**, **Bundaberg**, and **Gladstone** are our stops. We spend the night in **Rockhampton** and continue north on the A1. Next, we head to **Mackay**, **Airly Beach**, and **Bowen**. Our next overnight stay is in **Townsville**. We're quite amazed by the development of Townsville, which has now become one of the larger cities in the north. There we also meet Thomas and Petra, our crew from the crossing from Fiji to New Zealand. They're here with their off-road trailer for a minor repair, and we enjoy a stimulating dinner in their company. We continue north on the A1. From here, we know the route like the back of our hand, and after another five hours, we arrive in Cairns at midday, a mere 1,800 km from the Gold Coast. We're excited and happy to see our house again, which the tenants vacated just a day ago. At the same time, we're worried about our furniture and belongings, which have been locked away in the pantry for three years. Pests, high humidity, high temperatures, and mold are common in the tropical north and threaten anything exposed to these conditions. With horrible thoughts running through our minds, we drive to our house. It's still there!

Our tenants didn't do a great job with the final cleaning, but we can move in. Unfortunately, we have a lot of extra work to do before the house arrives in a truly clean condition. So, first night it's on a Chinese inflatable bed. Richard opens our furniture storage area, and we're already blown away by the first inspection. No mold, everything's in perfect order. Another weight lifted from our shoulders.



Fig. 58.6: Very first impression of our house after almost 3 years.



Fig. 58.7: Furniture storage area partially emptied. No mould or other damage!

Two days later, Thomas and Petra came to visit. The men moved the furniture out, and after just a few quick moves, the house felt comfortable again. They had to give up, however, when it came to the heavy billiard table, and even with the help of two neighbours, the table was simply too heavy. What to do? For a tip of \$80, two guys from a moving company came, spat on their strong hands, and after 20 minutes, the table was in the living room. Everything turned out alright. In the evening, we enjoyed a delicious curry on our now-functioning stove.



Fig. 58.8: Garden with wallaby.



Fig. 58.9: Welcome dish: Thai Red Curry!

Richard quickly installs the IT equipment and the home network, and we're reconnected to the world. Next up is assembling our grill, while a curious kangaroo watches from our garden. In no time, the house will be functional and habitable again. Then it's on to the badly neglected garden...

We have arrived.

## 59. Epilogue

Logbook: Croatia - Australia

Days at sea: 238

Total distance sailed: 18,061.4 nm (33,595 km)

Our journey was adventurous and unlike any other form of travel. In the end, we covered more than 18,000 nautical miles, circumnavigated more than half the globe, crossed several oceans, and transited the Panama Canal. All of this was achieved largely sustainably and under our own power.

Along the way, we made many friends from various countries and gained valuable experiences, ultimately achieving our goal through perseverance and steadfastness. We grew from this experience and are proud of our accomplishment and grateful to Tanuki, who never let us down.



## 60. Appendix: Timeline

|                                                 |               |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Preparation                                  | 2020-2021     |
| 2. Final sprint in Australia                    | November 21   |
| 3. Flight to Germany                            | 20.11.21      |
| 4. First contact Croatia                        | Dec. 2021     |
| 5. Introducing our boat                         | January 2022  |
| 6. Flight to Croatia and travel by van          | January 2022  |
| 7. Boarding the boat and holiday days in Trogir | January 2022  |
| 8. Initial work on the boat                     | February 2022 |
| 9. Boat christening with the name Tanuki        | February 2022 |
| 10. Export of Tanuki from the EU                | 21.03.22      |
| 11. Through the Croatian islands                | 23.03.22      |
| 12. Dubrovnik                                   | 29.03.22      |
| 13. Montenegro (Tivat)                          | 04.04.22      |
| 14. Greece – Corfu to Nidri                     | 13.04.22      |
| 15. Ionian Islands 1 and 2                      | 27.04.22      |
| 16. Refit of Tanuki in Nidri                    | 12.05.22      |
| 17. Ionian Islands 3                            | 05.06.22      |
| 18. Peloponnes                                  | 11.06.22      |
| 19. Crete and back                              | 24.06.22      |
| 20. Peloponnese to Zakynthos                    | 12.07.22      |
| 21. Italy (Calabria)                            | 24.07.22      |
| 22. Sicily                                      | 29.07.22      |
| 23. Sardinia                                    | 12.08.22      |
| 24. Balearic Islands                            | 27.08.22      |
| 25. Spain                                       | 04.09.22      |
| 26. Refit Almerimar                             | 11.09.22      |
| 27. Gibraltar                                   | 20.11.22      |
| 28. Crossing to the Canary Islands              | 27.11.22      |
| 29. Canary Islands                              | 01.12.22      |
| 30. Cape Verde Islands                          | 15.12.22      |
| 31. Atlantic crossing                           | 29.12.22      |
| 32. Lesser Antilles                             | 16.01.23      |
| 33. Dutch Antilles                              | 13.02.23      |
| 34. Colombia                                    | 26.02.23      |
| 35. Oh, how beautiful Panama is!                | 08.03.23      |
| 36. The Panama Canal and Panama City            | 24.03.23      |
| 37. Panama Canal Part Two                       | 08.04.23      |
| 38. Las Perlas Islands                          | 11.04.23      |
| 39. Las Perlas to Galapagos                     | 14.04.23      |
| 40. The Galapagos Archipelago                   | 29.04.23      |
| 41. Pacific crossing                            | 06.05.23      |
| 42. The Marquesas                               | 28.05.23      |
| 43. Tuamotus                                    | 07.06.23      |
| 44. Tahiti                                      | 19.06.23      |
| 45. Moorea                                      | 06.07.23      |

|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| 46. Society Islands (Huahine)   | 01.08.23 |
| 47. Society Islands (Tahaa)     | 06.08.23 |
| 48. Society Islands (Bora Bora) | 10.08.23 |
| 49. Cook Islands (Suvarrow)     | 15.08.23 |
| 50. Kingdom of Tonga            | 23.08.23 |
| 51. Fiji (Vanua Levu)           | 04.09.23 |
| 52. Fiji (Viti Levu)            | 15.09.23 |
| 53. Crossing to New Zealand     | 02.11.23 |
| 54. Whangarei                   | 15.11.23 |
| 55. Trip to Australia           | 19.03.24 |
| 56. Sydney                      | 01.04.24 |
| 57. Pittwater                   | 07.04.24 |
| 58. Journey home                | 15.04.24 |
| 59. Arrived                     | 02.05.24 |

## 61. Appendix: Countries visited

1. Australia (Arrival at Tanuki by plane and car)
2. Germany
3. Luxembourg
4. Austria
5. Slovenia
6. Croatia (from here: Journey with Tanuki)
7. Montenegro
8. Greece
9. Italy
10. Spain
11. United Kingdom - Gibraltar
12. Spain (Canary Islands)
13. Cape Verde (island republic)
14. Barbados
15. St. Vincent & Grenadines
16. Grenada
17. Curacao
18. Aruba
19. Colombia
20. Panama
21. Ecuador (Galapagos Archipelago)
22. French Polynesia
23. Cook Islands
24. Kingdom of Tonga
25. Fiji
26. New Zealand
27. Australia



**62. Appendix: List of boats friendly to us.**

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| SY Aloma             | Germany      |
| SY Atanga            | Germany      |
| SV Balena            | Australia    |
| SY Boaty Mc Boatface | Germany      |
| SY Calypso           | Germany      |
| SY Chantey           | New Zealand  |
| SY Chiringuito       | Belgium      |
| SY Freyke            | Germany      |
| SV Grainne Mhaol     | Australia    |
| SY Mago del Sur      | Germany      |
| SY Moana             | Germany      |
| SY Naivasha          | England      |
| SY Nakika            | Germany      |
| SV Nausikaa          | Australia    |
| SY Paikea            | New Zealand  |
| SY Rangatira         | New Zealand  |
| SY Sea Wind          | Sweden       |
| SY Tango             | USA          |
| SY Teulu             | England      |
| SY Tirohanga         | New Zealand  |
| SY Tu Meke           | New Zealand  |
| SY TouCan            | Canada       |
| SY Viento del Mar    | South Africa |
| SY Yuimaru           | Japan        |

## 63. Appendix: Glossary of nautical terms

### **Bear away and Head up**

When heading up, the bow is brought closer to the wind direction (i.e., upwind) by steering, while when bearing away, it is brought closer in the opposite direction (i.e., downwind).

### **AIS**

With AIS (Automatic Identification System), modern boats transmit their name, position, speed and course every second via VHF marine radio. This allows a receiver on another boat to display the position, course, and speed on a chart plotter, thus helping to avoid collisions. The problem is that not all boats are equipped with AIS, so watchkeepers still have to keep a lookout using traditional methods.

### **Upwind and downwind courses**

When sailing "downwind," the wind blows from behind, so the boat is essentially sailing ahead of the wind. When sailing "close-hauled", the wind comes from diagonally ahead, so the bow is close to the wind direction.

### **Autopilot**

The autopilot is a pushrod on the steering mechanism, driven by a motor or hydraulics. Its electronics allow the boat to steer on a set course or at a specific wind angle. The autopilot is the most important tool for assisting the crew during bluewater voyages, as otherwise manual steering would be necessary.

### **Bimini and sprayhood**

The bimini is the cockpit canopy, usually made of canvas, providing protection from sun and rain. The sprayhood, on the other hand, is essentially a windshield, also made of canvas with plastic windows.

### **Pulling or releasing lines**

The loosening (easing) or tightening of lines.

### **GPS**

(Global Positioning System), a swarm of 36 satellites orbiting the earth, transmitting precise positions via radio waves so that the receiver's exact location can be calculated electronically. The position data has an accuracy of several meters. It is the most important (but not the only) tool for modern navigation.

**Gust and Squall**

A gust is a sudden increase in wind speed, often accompanied by a change in wind direction. A squall is the passage through a small, local weather cell (weather cloud) containing gusts and often rain or heavy rain. Squalls can often be detected early on weather radar and then avoided if necessary.

**Gybing and Tacking**

During a gybe, the sail is shed until the stern of the boat turns due to the wind. At precisely this moment, the sail must be turned carefully to the other side, or there is a risk of the boom crashing, with a high risk of injury or damage (so-called accidental gybe).

During a tack, the boat is brought to windward until the bow turns. Sometimes, the boat loses turning speed and "gets stuck" in the turn, meaning it cannot complete the maneuver. In that case, a new attempt must be made.

**Knots (speed)**

A measure of the speed of boats, currents, and wind. One knot is equal to one nautical mile per hour.

In ancient times (from around 1600 onwards), a boat's speed was determined by a log. This was a board suspended from a line and thrown into the water. The line would then run out, and the length of the unwound line indicated the speed. This length was marked by knots in the log line, which the sailor could feel. According to old convention, the log line was knotted so that one knot corresponded to a speed of one nautical mile per hour (more precisely, 7.71 meters per knot for a measurement time of 15 seconds). The old log board has officially disappeared, but is still used by traditional sailors (sometimes with different measurement principles) because it contains no electronics and is not as easily damaged. In this book, we use the abbreviation kt. For those who want to be completely accurate, the unit symbol kn is used for the knot instead of the older kt from the English-speaking world.

**Length and width**

Coordinates are used to determine the position of a point on the surface of a sphere (such as the earth). Latitude indicates the angle between the equator and the point's position (the equator is at 0 degrees and the poles are at 90 degrees north or south). Longitude is the angle between the prime meridian at Greenwich and the point's position in a westerly or easterly direction. The position of Cairns, for example, would be: 16° 55' 31.7676" S and 145° 45' 14.8320" E, given here in degrees, minutes, and seconds.

**Luv and Lee**

Luv is the side of the boat facing the wind, lee is the side away from the wind.



**Outhaul**

The line that tensions the mainsail at its lower rear corner (called the clew). For sails that are furled inside the mast, this is the line that pulls the sail out of the mast.

**Plotter (or Chart-Plotter)**

A device that determines the position using GPS and displays it on an electronic nautical chart. All data from the boat's network can be displayed on the plotter, and course lines (tracks) can be prepared.

**Preventer**

Preventers secure the mainsail boom forward, preventing it from capsizing in the event of sudden wind changes or sailing errors. This is particularly important when sailing downwind.

**Saildrive**

Part of the engine that protrudes downwards from the hull and connects to the the gearbox. It carries the propeller.

**Apparent and true wind**

When a vehicle travels through the atmosphere, a headwind is created against the direction of travel. This headwind is relative, meaning it acts on the vehicle and can be felt or measured inside. A stationary observer will not detect any headwind. (And no, I'm not about to delve into special relativity.) This headwind increases with speed. In addition, there is atmospheric wind, a weather phenomenon called true wind, which can be perceived by both observers. The perceived wind inside the vehicle is called apparent wind, and it is the vector sum of the two wind components (true wind and headwind). Traveling against the wind increases the apparent wind, while traveling with the wind decreases it. Modern navigation instruments can measure and calculate both wind speeds by subtracting the vehicle's speed and direction (as vectors) from the measured apparent wind.

**Sheets and halyards**

Sheets are part of the running rigging and adjust the position of the boom (mainsheet) or the headsail (jibsheet). Halyards haul sails or other objects vertically towards the masthead (e.g., the main halyard sets the mainsail). Horizontal control lines can also be called halyards, e.g., the line that furls the headsail or mainsail over the furler.

**Sailor's knots**

Looping techniques for joining lines. Knots must be easy to tie, easy to untie, and secure under load. There are hundreds of individual knots. However, on a modern sailboat, you only need about 4-5 different ones.

**Nautical mile**

The nautical mile was defined as one minute of arc on the Earth's equator (or meridian). Given the Earth's circumference of approximately 40,000 km, dividing by 360 x 60 (degrees and minutes) yields the length of a nautical mile, which is 1.852 km. For those who have checked the calculation: this isn't quite accurate. The stated value takes into account that the Earth isn't perfectly round, but rather an ellipsoid. The correct abbreviation is nm for "nautical mile".

**Sextant**

Device for determining the angle between the horizon and a celestial body. Used for the conventional determination of a ship's position without electronic aids.

**Sicilian anchorage**

A term coined by us specifically for precision anchoring in confined spaces. A salute to the Italians who have mastered this art.

**Starboard and Port**

Starboard is the nautical term for the right side of the ship when facing forward, corresponding to the position of the rudder and tiller on older vessels. The opposite is port for the left side. Fittingly, our preferred helm position was also on the starboard side.

**Survey**

Inspection of a boat before purchase by an independent, sworn expert.

**Shrouds and Stays**

Shrouds and stays are wire ropes that brace the mast forward and aft (stays) and sideways (shrouds) to ensure its stability. The singular form is shroud or stay. Shrouds are further divided into the forestay (forward) and the backstay (rear). Depending on the rigging, other types of stays may also exist. Shrouds are often tensioned away from the mast by spreaders. Both are part of the "standing rigging," meaning they usually cannot be adjusted by hauling in or slackening. The tension of the shrouds and stays is crucial for mast positioning and can significantly influence sailing performance. For this reason, the backstay tension on a Tanuki can be adjusted using a mechanism with the winch handle.

**Watermaker**

A watermaker is a high-pressure pump that desalinates saltwater by pumping it through a semipermeable membrane. This allows you to produce fresh water at sea when the boat's tanks become depleted. Typically, you expect to use about 8-10 liters of water per person per day on a crossing, which can be significantly reduced by using saltwater, for example, for personal hygiene. Depending on the crew size, this can quickly lead to a critical water shortage. A watermaker, therefore, allows you to convert energy (e.g., solar or engine power) into fresh water.

**Whisker Pole**

An additional pole (horizontal pole) used to position the headsail or a light-wind sail (spinnaker or similar) further to the side. Used on downwind courses to catch wind from astern. Tanuki has a whisker pole to boom out the headsail.

**Wind direction**

The direction from which the wind is coming. This can be given as a compass direction (e.g., the wind is coming from SSW) or as a degree angle to the bow (wind angle: e.g., the wind is coming from 60 degrees off starboard). The latter is relative to the direction of travel but describes the boat's position relative to the wind and thus enables efficient sailing. Wind angles are often used in autopilot programming.

Sailing boats have mechanical (you have to look at them, typically at the top of the mast) or electronic wind sensors that determine the wind direction and strength at the top of the mainmast and transmit this information to navigation instruments such as autopilots.

**Winch**

A drum operated by hand crank or motor, used to haul in or control running rigging (see sheets and halyards). The anchor chain is also hauled in using a winch. Winch handles are used to operate a winch (there are some electrical winches as well). On all boats, winch handles frequently get lost by force of gravity into the sea, so you may want to describe them as “consumables”.

Winchhandles lost on Tanuki: 2.



## 64. Appendix: Recommended Literature

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## 65. Appendix: Recommended Websites

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