

2008 - Port St. Louis to Rome

As I have reported in my previous logbook (written in German) we have reached the MED on August 16th. The mast was rigged and balanced at Port Napoleon, a marina in the GOLVE DE FOS, run by Dutch management. This is a perfect marina, perfect organized with all facilities necessary for boat people and with best service. Checking all the systems unfortunately it has occurred that the GPS System was not working, It was one of the first ones which was already in the boat when bought and very complicated to operate. It would not have been worth to repair and I have been forced to order a new one, however one with a chartplotter and as I did not want to make a fixed cable installment I bought

a hand held one GEONAV Gipsy 4. Afterwards I was more than happy about it, it was really God's recommendation, without a chartplotter I would not have found my way to the small French bays and harbors so easily. As it had to be delivered by the wholesaler we were delayed for some further days.



Vani got acquainted with a lovely French family, living on a boat yet to be refurbished, with a lovely boy - and Vani is always happy with children.

We spent some further nights at the Port St. Louis marina and started from there in a calm weather up the French coast. The first leg we made to **Port Miou**, which is actually not a harbor, it is rather an anchor place in the "calanques" which are mountain gorges in the cliffs. The sea in this region is very clear one can see down to the bottom.

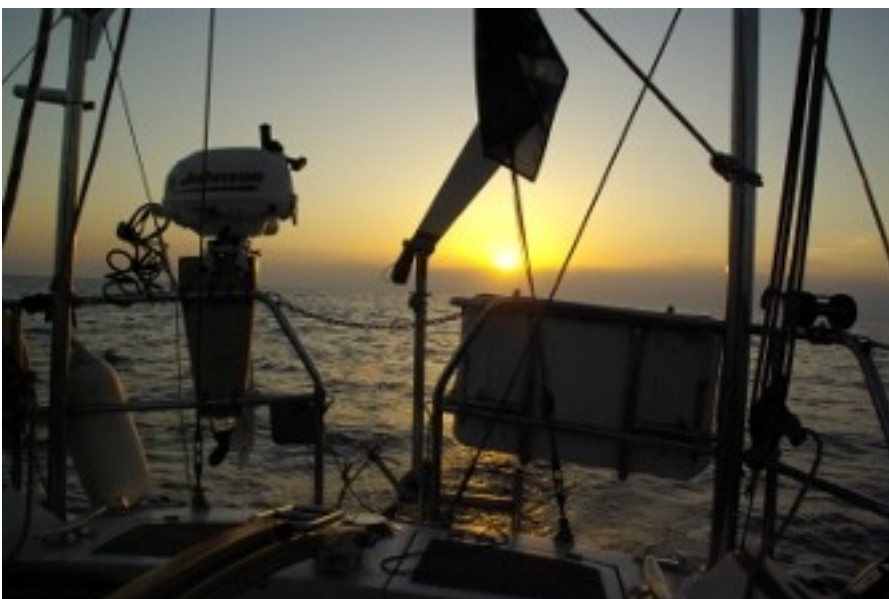
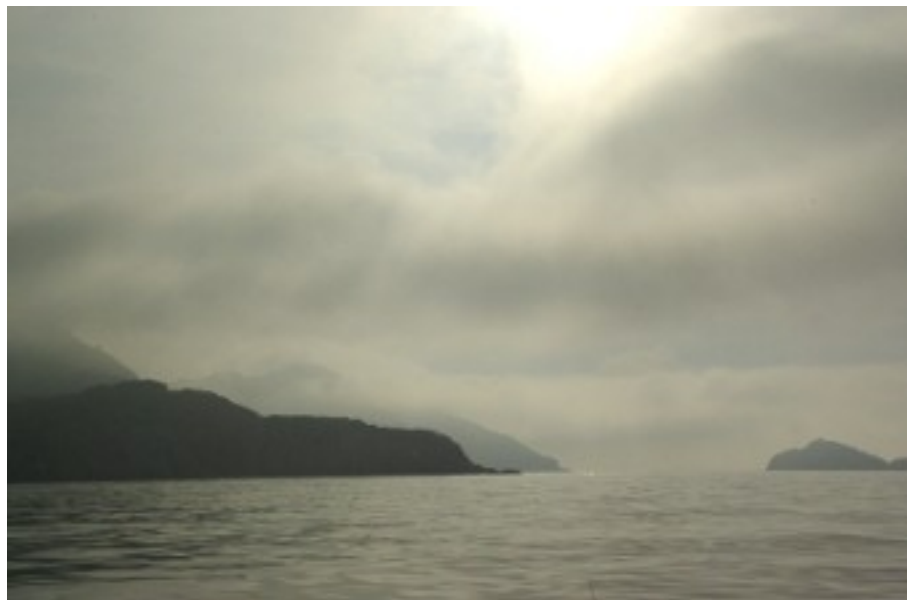
Next morning we have started early to **BANDOL**, which is a holiday resort place on the Cote d'Azur, mostly for French people, and even in the after holiday season very crowded.

The remarkable event there was when Vani wanted to buy a swimming suit. The sales girl said



in best English "you have to speak French to me", and on this she got our answer "no English no business" and we turned out from the shop.

From there we sailed to **ILE DE PORQUERELLOS**, which is part of the **HYERES** islands.



As the weather report on my NAVTEX receiver was stable we set over from there on the next day to **CALVI** in **CORSICA**.

It was a very nice and smooth 24 hours sailing, little winds only and therefore we were

forced to run the motor additionally. It was my first overnight sailing, we have experienced a beautiful sunset, we saw first time dolphins. Vani wanted to watch with me all the night through, although we have met ships and boats only close to the coasts, however at 2am she got tired and went to sleep and woke up only when we approached to Calvi. So I have been alone most of the time. The radar I kept on running all the time, although the sky was clear and the moon gave a little light around the boat.

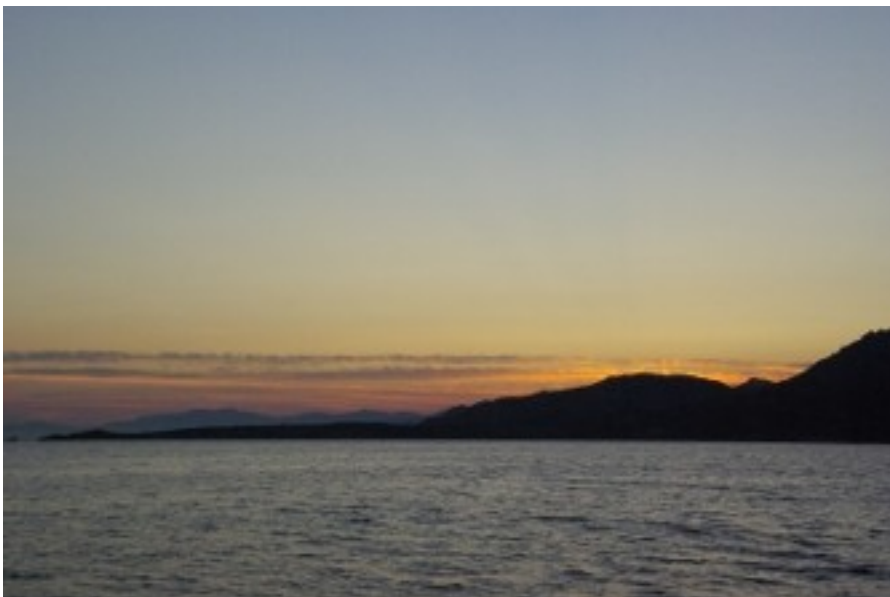


We have reached **CALVI** at sunrise, saw the lights of the village and the lighthouse already from far, the chartplotter led me directly to the harbor entrance. The harbor was occupied even in the afterseason, there were buoys against fee, and we have anchored with some others a little further in the bay for free. We have got acquainted with the crews of two German boats and have got some recommendations for our further route.

Originally we have wanted to sail down the west coast of Corsica. Some incidents made us to change our mind and to stay away from Corsica: We got very aggressive contacted why we have set only the French flag and not additionally the one of Corsica or even the one of Corsica alone. We were refused in the Calvi marina to fill in water, although we wanted to pay for it. The service in the French gastronomy is unacceptable: Glasses get served with fingers inside, if complaining you get only naughty answers.

CORSICA has one of the most beautiful landscapes we have ever seen, the people have lived in the mountains for centuries very isolated and have developed a very difficult character, They want independence basically from France or at least some more autonomy and they try to enforce this with terrorist attacks on facilities, but there has been no injuries to people so far.

The shortest way to leave Corsica was passing on the north coast, to set over to **ELBA** and to sail down from there along the Italian mainland.



The next harbor having sailed to was **ST. FLORENT**, where we stayed just overnight, leaving from there the next day already at 3am in the morning. We wanted to reach **MACINAGGIO**, in the north of the east coast, on the east coast within one day early in the afternoon.



Rounding the dangerous and fierce **CAP CORSE** in the north at calm weather was a very nice experience.



Our plan to stay in **MACINAGGIO** just for overnight to set over to **ELBA** was shot down first time by bad weather, very strong winds have forced us to stay in the safe harbor for some days. We began to realize for the first time that we would not make it to *Greece* this year if this was going on

After three days we could set over to **MARINA DI CAMPO**, a small village in the south of **ELBA**. We have arrived there in the dark after sunset and it was the first time to let the anchor fall amid the night and in the amid of an anchor field of many boats.

(Later at home we have seen coincidentally in N-TV a report about this village: There is a dangerous algae growing in the bay, which is toxic, it affects the lungs. Incredible ! There are

thousands of tourists swimming and there is no warning sign at all (business!). Thank God that we did not swim there.)

The next day the weather changed again, we could not make it anchoring further on because the swell and the strong winds from the south. We were forced to move from there to the harbor of the village, a place which was occupied mostly by fishing boats and only a handful yachts between. Again we were blocked for two days.

We have started to Sail to **PORTO AZURRO** on the east coast at a very nice and sunny weather. Just a few miles off suddenly dark clouds appeared, which I did not take to serious, I was relaxed and dressed with a swimming suit only. Suddenly, out of nothing, we were amid the the most heavy thunderstorm the region has seen since many years (we have later heard of a lot of damage). The wind got 8bft and was ice cold, I was standing on the wheel with a swimming suit. The only luck was that it was not so far away from the harbor.

Vani was very frightened experiencing first time a 8bft wind on the boat, although I felt uncomfortable because of the cold I have never felt unsafe, I have meanwhile got a lot of confidence to our boat

We have anchored in the bay of the harbor and it was easy to set over with our dingy to the village. Although no swell, the weather was not good enough to go on. First time I have started to inquire for a place to leave the boat over the winter time. The prices have been so incredible that we have said to go on whatever might come.

In a very fine weather, after some days of holdup again, we sailed to the south, passing the small island of **GIGLIO** and from there east to the peninsula **PROMONTARIO ARGENTARIO**, where we would have wanted to hold in the marina **CALA GALERA** in the south. On VHF we got informed that the harboris occupied because of a regatta armada which forced us again to anchor outside. Next day again very strong wind, the swell made it more than only very uncomfortable even for me to stay there.

After two days the wind was a little bit less in the morning although the weather report again not so good. As we could not get into the harbor and as waiting at the anchor place would be impossible the same way, we have decided to go further down to **CIVITAVECCHICA**, only a little more than 30 nm away.

We have started at 5 bft, soon it was a 8 bft with sometimes only a 7bft, and this over two third of the distance. Vani was very smooth when sailing, only after reaching the small marina within the big commercial harbor she started to shout and said she will never go again at such a strong wind.

We have spent two nice days in **CIVITAVECCHICA**, seeing a historical theater performance in front of the city walls.



At a very good weather, the wind calmed down again, we went on to Fiumicino, a place which has been recommended to us by the German crew we have met in Calvi to be a possible place to leave the boat over the winter time.

Until now I was prepared to go on, however the swell in **FIUMICINO** was unacceptable, the swell from the west can reach directly the holding places aside the Tiber river, then the weather reports in our area or for the south where wanted to go to were again more than not good for the next days, that made me to search for a place to leave the boat over the winter.

Wir haben in Fiumicino ein nettes Deutsches Seglerpaar getroffen. Leider haben wir deren Kontaktdaten nicht mehr, sie sind durch einen Computercrash verloren gegangen. Solltet ihr diese Zeilen lesen, so meldet Euch bitte bei uns, wir würden gerne mit Euch in Kontakt bleiben.

Following a recommendation received from a German couple we were successful at a holding place after passing the two bridges in the village (both open only four times a week making it possible to pass with a sailing boat with mast set - there no swell anymore). It is not a marina, it is just a place along the river, the owner itself lives on his boat at the site, so it is safe so far, it has no facilities, no showers, also clean water can be received only by tank.

We have met a German woman who has told us that she has been living in Rome for more than ten years and she has never before experienced such a bad, cold and windy, weather at this time of the year.



Of course we have made some **sightseeing to Rome**, the city can be reached within 45 minutes trains. Our feelings were mixed, impressed in one way by the historic buildings, strange affected by the Christian fanaticism we saw on a Sunday on the Vatican square, which did not make any difference to us to fanaticism in some other religions.



All this, the weather, the not very comfortable holding place, actually tired already to see so many different places with so many different impressions, made up our mind to fly back to **VIENNA**. We could book a reasonable priced ´ flight for **Oct. 10th** to Bratislava and from there we have reached our new home in the city suburb of Vienna by bus within a two hours time.



The day before we have left we had a very unpleasant "visitor" on the boat. A rat came in and kept us busy all the night through, The holding place owner did not bother, only a nice neighbor, a Scottish, made it to chase it out of the boat. Fiumicino is full of rats, we saw a lot, beware!

It is our plan to continue our tour to *Greece* end of *March* next year.