

M/Y Tarilian - Boating in Croatia 2013

900 Miles around Central and South Dalmatia with its Islands

CRUISE LOG Part 1: May 29 to June 13 Between Primosten and Kotor

For our first boating turn in 2013 we arrive from London on May 27th evening. We had hoped for a mild early summer, but the weather has been unstable, it feels cool and like spring. Boat servicing has been completed and Tarilian is basically ready to go. New underwater lights have been installed, and the new teak cupboard doors on the aft deck look good. Spend the first day checking the boat and completing various small jobs.

May 29 Wednesday Primosten – [Marina Kremik](#) (click links to Google maps)

Brighter weather today, with light SE – SW wind. We do a pre-season trial run of 22nm, to Hrbosnjak lighthouse (on the islet east of Zirje island), and return. All looks good, just a seal on one of the oil fillers needs to be replaced; I draw up trial details in the logbook.



Test run down round [Hrbosnjak](#) islet (near Zirje)

We are now ready for the early season, but the weather keeps being unsettled and wet so we stay around the marina and visit places by car.

June 02 Sunday Korcula

Finally the weather appears to clear, air pressure is rising and the forecast for N-NW force 2-4. At 10:40 we leave our berth at Kremik and set off for the 68nm leg to Korcula. After the rain of the past days the air is clear and views reach amazingly far. After passing Rt Ploce, the middle Dalmatian islands of Solta - with Brac behind-, Hvar, Vis and small Svetac, show up clearly, at distances of up to 30 nm.



Clear view [towards the Central Dalmatian islands](#), Scedro/Brac, Hvar, Vis (from left to right)

We berth at the practical ACI marina in [Korcula town](#) (under side wind, as usual) just after 17:00. Dinner at trusted Addio Mare restaurant. The old padrone isn't seen any more but the place looks a bit more 'tidy' than before with a new kitchen smoke extraction system, and food standard has kept up.

June 03 Monday Sipanska Luka (Island Sipan)

Weather forecast is light wind E-SE 3, later N, light cloud with possible rain showers, 17 to 19deg C, air pressure is rising.

At 10:30 we set off for today's target, the island of Sipan, about 40 nm away.

On leaving Korcula pass the Leda ship works site (near the fuel station), and the picturesque former monastery at Badija, and go towards the green island of Mljet. Anchor in the protected cove SW of the settlement of Pomena, where there are already some sailboats.



Anchored [near Pomena](#) (Mljet National Park)

The sunny weather belies the temperature; it feels too cold to consider a swim.



Konobas with moorings at Pomena

Leave anchorage at 14:15 and head for Luka Sipan. Very clear visibility, but black rain clouds over the land as we approach Sipan. Luckily we escape the rain.



Approaching Sipanska Luka – are we going to get wet?

At this time of the season [Sipanska Luka](#) (Sipan harbour) is sleepy, no harbour master shows up, the skipper of the only sailing yacht on the communal quay helps us with the mooring lines. No fees are charged.



Tarilian on the village quay at Sipanska Luka

Have fish dinner at Konoba Kod Marka, just across the harbour. They are doing their usual best, but the cool weather makes outdoor dining less enjoyable this time.



A large trip boat, Liberty, on the refurbished ferry pier, nearly piercing the old building



Sipan has not changed much since our last visit in 2009.

The harbour has still got its character, and there are still a lot of properties in a derelict state, but we hear that outside the village a villa in its own grounds overlooking the bay has been sold to rich Russians who started developing the site in their very own style; this means a wall and re-enforced fencing around, digging up the grounds and constructing buildings about ten times the size of the original smart little villa (see on the left of the photo)



June 04 Tuesday Tivat (Boka Kotorska)

The unsettled and cool weather continues, light S-SE winds and possible showers.
We leave berth before noon and head for Dubrovnik with the target of Tivat, 49nm to go.
Pass Dubrovnik Old Town, and anchor in [Tiha cove near Cavtat](#); in places poor holding due to weed.



View from Tiha/Cavtat towards Dubrovnik. A large cruise vessel is anchored behind Lokrum island.

After lunch we continue, entering [Kotor Bay](#) and into Montenegro.
The dark wooded mountain ranges around the bay give a stern impression, more like a huge Alpine lake than the Mediterranean Sea.
The views of derelict military craft and installations ashore do not contribute to a serene mood in this cloudy weather.



Rusting ruins of military craft along Kotor bay on the way to Tivat

At 17:20 we berth at the new [marina Porto Montenegro](#) at Tivat, on the site of a former military harbour. They take care of arranging our boat vignette which is obligatory even for a short visit to Montenegro. We stay there for the next day, waiting for the weather to become friendlier, and also for a marine engineer to attend and check a problem I have experienced with one of the electronic controls.



In Porto Montenegro marina. Waiting for summer and sun; this wet weather is atypical

Porto Montenegro, occupying the site of a former military harbour at Tivat, is a foreign investment project marketed as a luxury development, luring international boat owners and apartment buyers, but it feels to me artificial and misplaced in its remote and low key surroundings. Currently a large hotel is being built on site, but even without this disturbance we would not find it very attractive to live there.



June 06 Thursday Kotor (town)

Forecast is for light winds and clouds, chances of rain, as usual. We take a chance to move to the principal attraction in Kotor bay, the Old Town of Kotor.

On our way we peer at the picturesque little church islets of Risan, there are tourist boats on the quay, and not really a chance for our boat to moor up.



The quay at nearby Perast is quite small and used by trip boats coming and going, too. So we decide we won't mess around but miss this attraction; slight drizzle sets in to cheer us up further.

Approaching [Kotor](#), the first and foremost impressions are the huge bulks of cruise liners. Two of them, like 20 stories high floating apartment blocks, loom gently smoking in the direction of the Old Town, not leaving a glimpse of what is behind them.



“Typical view” towards Kotor Old Town from the sea

Anyhow, once past the hideous monstrosities we find the town quay, where we get on a pontoon mooring nicely located right next to the riva and the main gate of the walled Old Town.

From noon things start looking up, the sun finally appears.



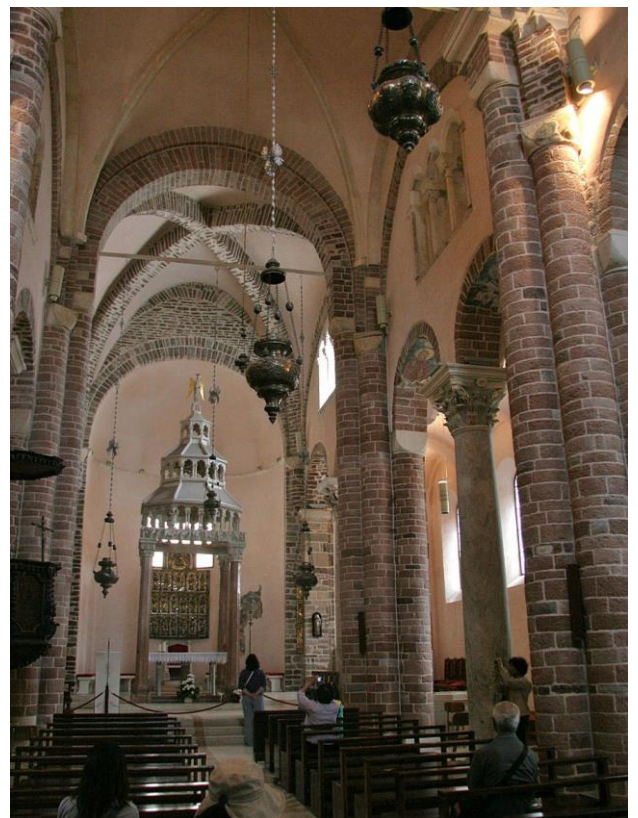
On a mooring next to the market and main gate to the walled Old Town

We venture out for a walk through the beautiful Old Town of Venetian origins.





The Square of the Arms, behind the main gate



The cathedral of St Tryphon in Old Town

From town, there is a long climb all the way to the top of the hill overlooking Kotor, with the ruins of the St John's fortress. Excellent views across Old Town and the bay, well worth doing.



The start of the climb to St John's fortress



Tarilian on a pontoon outside Old Town



We have made it about half way up...



On the top of the former fortress



Venetian lion at the fortress...

By the evening, day tourists and cruiser liner flocks have left, it's quiet in town.
Have dinner in town, ok but not memorable.



View from our mooring; several spots around the hilltop fortifications behind Old Town are lit

June 07 Friday Dubrovnik

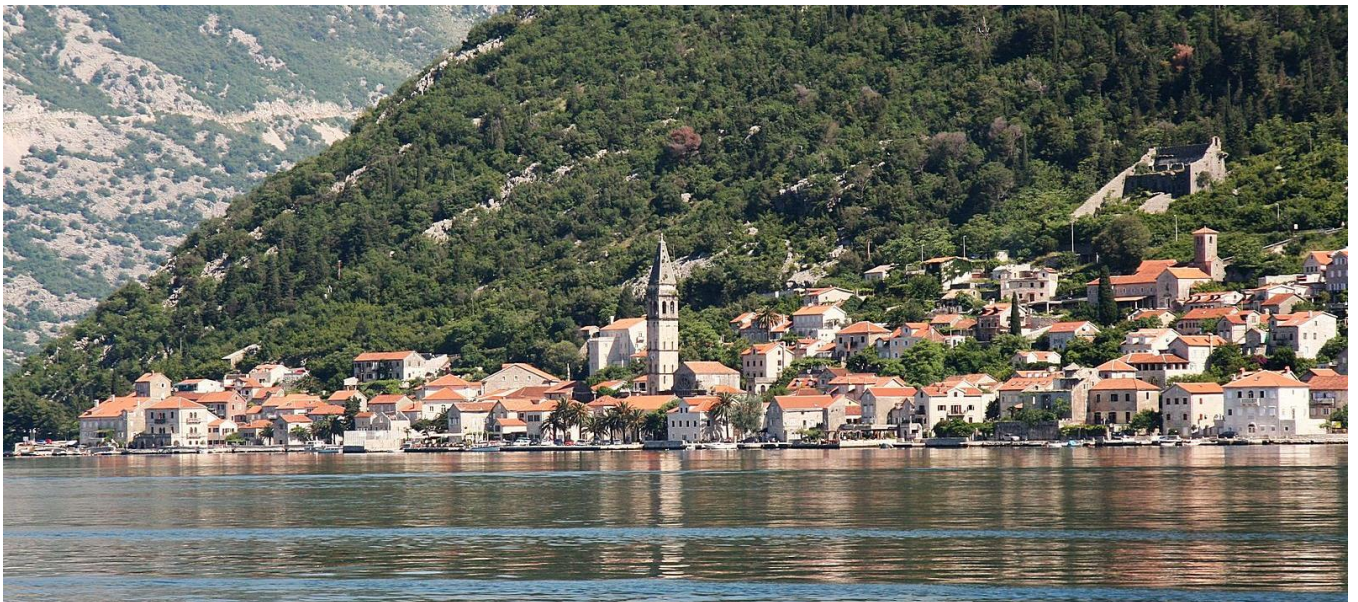
We leave Kotor in clear and calm weather.



Going along the shores of the bay, we notice several pleasant period places, public and private, not to forget Perast, which is said to have many historic buildings but little money to take care for their upkeep



village in Kotor bay



View of [Perast](#)



A final look at the monastery islet Risan outside Perast

Before we can exit Montenegro need to go back to Porto Montenegro to check out with the harbour master and police.

I read that it was easier to do this in the marina than in Kotor town. In fact they do provide a good service, but communication is not always clear, so be patient.

We had hoped we might be able to re-fuel benefiting from the tax free diesel at Port Montenegro, but it turns out that this would have required booking ahead; there appear to be queues (of super-yachts) taking a long time.

So, after sorting the documents we make our way back to Dubrovnik.



View of Dubrovnik Old Town from SE (from [anchorage at Lokrum island](#))



The small Old Town harbour (trip boats only), looking from east

We decide to head for the ACI marina, up in the Dubrovacka river.

By now, the afternoon W wind blows strongly, funnelled by the river valley; this does not make berthing easier. Furthermore, for the first time, we are told that the marina was full, there was only one berth left, a rather tight squeeze between charter sail boats in a corner, getting there would be “at my own risk”. I still decide to go for it.

On reflection, this marina isn't attractive: The wind typically blows strongly in the valley, the Old Town is a taxi ride away, it's crowded with charter sailing boats, and very expensive considering what it offers (Kn1150 or £133 for one night for our boat). Their only strength is the lack of attractive competition

nearer to Dubrovnik who caters to boaters who want to be close to Croatia's principal tourist attraction, Dubrovnik Old Town. The Gruz harbour facilities do not have the best reputation.

We have been to the Old Town on several occasions before, this evening we have a quiet dinner on board.

June 08 Saturday Pomena (Island Mljet)

The weather forecast is 15-22 deg C, wind W 4-5 in the afternoon, and no precipitation, hurrah. Sunny weather, finally.

We leave the marina at 11:15. Again W wind is funnelling in the river valley.

Pass between Lopud and Sipan, on the way have a look into Okuklje cove on Mljet, which I remember as being popular and busy, but no boats here today.

Continue to [Polace](#) cove, where we anchor in the N part of the cove for the afternoon. This is, of course, part of the Mljet National Park, but we are not asked to pay any fees.

At 6pm we weigh anchor and go across to Polace village on the S side of the cove, with its several konobas with moorings, and choose Sponga. Next door Ogiglja seems to be the most established.



In Polace cove (Mljet island), on the moorings of Sponga restaurant

It's still pre-season in this area, and the moorings are waiting to be filled, so we have a quiet dinner and night. The fact that it's Saturday may further contribute to it being quiet, as charter boats are at their base for change of crews.

Polace isn't much more than a row of houses along the cove, but pleasant enough. It is one of the entrance points to the National Park, there is even a roman ruin. Next time, we promise, we'll stay for a full day and visit the National Park, but it must be warmer weather.



Look back at Polace village, Roman ruin on the right

June 09 Sunday Palmizana (Island Hvar)

Like in Britain, the weather is still a main topic ;-). The day is supposed to be sunny with light S and SE winds, but increasing towards the night to S4-5 and rain later.

We decide to revisit the restaurants in the Palmizana (Hvar/Pakleni island) and stay at the ACI marina.

Leave berth at 10:15am in nice sun. At Korcula town we take on fuel. The fuel station is easy to get to but the quay is extremely low and does not appear to be equipped with the kind of pontoon fenders one would expect at a fuel station. This might not affect small vessels, but do prepare for the approach if your boat has high side decks!

We pass Korcula town, this time in bright sunlight.



Lovely Old Town Korcula with its ramparts, where today are cafes and restaurants

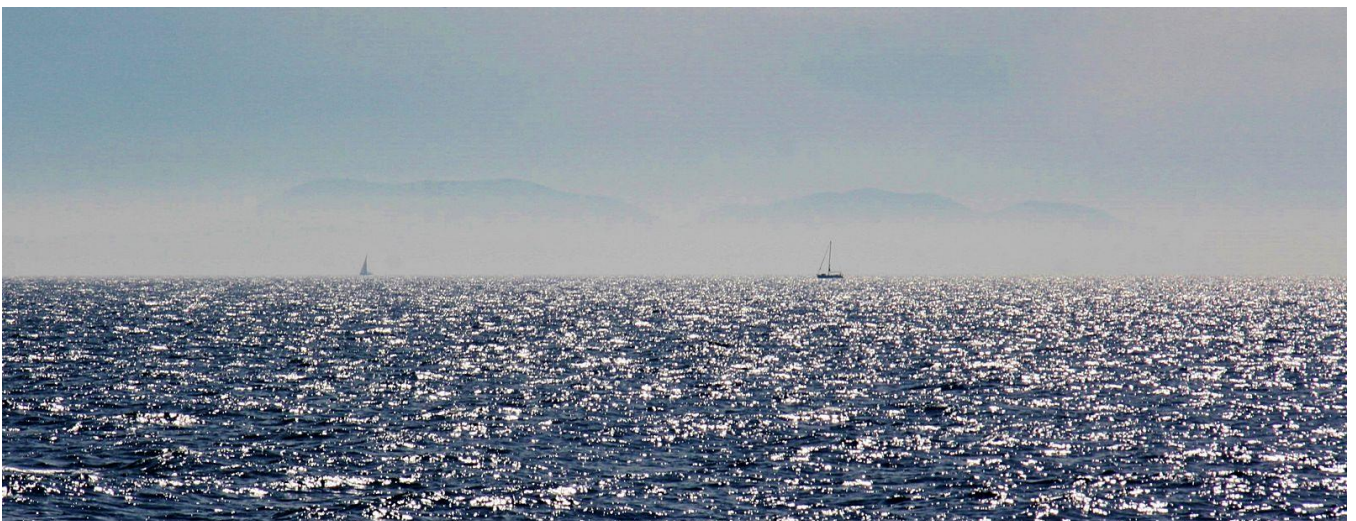
Continue through the Peljeski channel.

Anchor for lunch in Przina cove at the E end of Peljesak, in 6m on sand. Wind is S4. This is a spacious uninhabited cove with good holding ground but open to N and W winds.



Anchored in [Przina](#) cove, azure waters and sandy bottom

Continue at 2pm towards Pakleni islands and marina Palmizana, with some swell from S, berth at 5pm.



Southerly winds and swell on the approach to Hvar, visibility is reduced



Passing [Hvar's S coast](#) (Sv. Nedjeja) we admire the many spaces that have been reclaimed for agriculture, mainly wine

June 10, Monday we spend relaxing and pottering in [Palmizana](#), one of our favourite marinas. I get a call from marina Kremik; the director is advising me that there is a 'problem'. I have missed doing the harbour police check-out and re-registering procedure for Croatia when I left to 'international waters' (i.e. Kotor bay); the custom police found out and were very upset. It might be good if I went to the nearest harbour master to check in rather than wait until we returned to Kremik later. I realize my mistake and misjudgement, to believe that a couple of days across the bay and back would go unnoticed. Without waiting for the taxi boat to Hvar, I take down our dinghy and drive across (a slightly choppy sea) to Hvar town to visit the harbour master with our documents.

After a short wait the guy arrives and we discuss the situation; he explains that it is a legal requirement to check in within one hour of entering Croatian waters, not three days later - that attracts a hefty fine. But after brief consideration he decides – in view that I had been ignorant but not acting with bad intention - he would 'let me off the hook' and write down that we had just arrived at Hvar. I thank him and, armed with a new crew list and boat paper, drive back to the Pakleni islands, very relieved that I was luckily enough to have escaped a legal situation. That's what I think...



Cactuses at Palmizana marina



Fine evening at the Palmizana

Tonight we dine at Zori's, overlooking Vinogradisce cove (like Menghello's and Toto's), a pleasant and sophisticated restaurant, and by far the most elegant of the three.



Walking from the marina up to the 'other side', there is a 'three-way' decision to make for restaurants. Tonight ours is Zori's.



*Sunset over Vinogradisce cove – view from Zori's.
(The very popular cove is still awaiting mooring buoys to be set up...)*

The Paklenis aren't really any longer the kind of 'remote island place' they might seem to the newcomer, they are connected to electricity and water supply from Hvar.

June 11 Tuesday Vrboska (Island Hvar)

Weather forecast for Hvar says W 3-4 turning NW to N, sunny with some cloud, 19-23 deg C. We decide to revisit Vrboska, only a bit more than 20nm to go.

We leave berth at 3:30 pm; the maestral is getting up stronger than expected, raising waves of at least 1m .

At 4pm we are tied up at [Vrboska town quay](#); the helpful and very friendly marinero welcomes us (or, is he actually the harbour master?).



Vrboska town quay

The harbour is well protected, lighter wind and no swell, and I go for a walk and to take photos.



At Vrboska town harbour, fortress church behind



Church bells, not always the friends of cruising folks (certainly not at 6am..)

I am amazed that the square of the fortress church has not got any kind of tourist use...

It is surprising how many old buildings here are in decay; I assume this has something to do with unclear legal ownership which makes it hard to sell those properties or claim possession. Have dinner at restaurant Bonaca behind the marina, and are pleased with it, good food and service, good value for money (and protection from the wind).

The following day, Wednesday, with windy but sunny weather, we leave Tarilian on the quay and go out to the beach, near a hotel outside the harbour by dinghy; anchoring it and, for the first time, I swim off it.

Jane later takes the helm for a harbour tour of pleasant Vrboska.



at Vrboska



Tarilian on the village quay, ACI marina behind to left



This large property overlooking the centre of the harbour is for sale

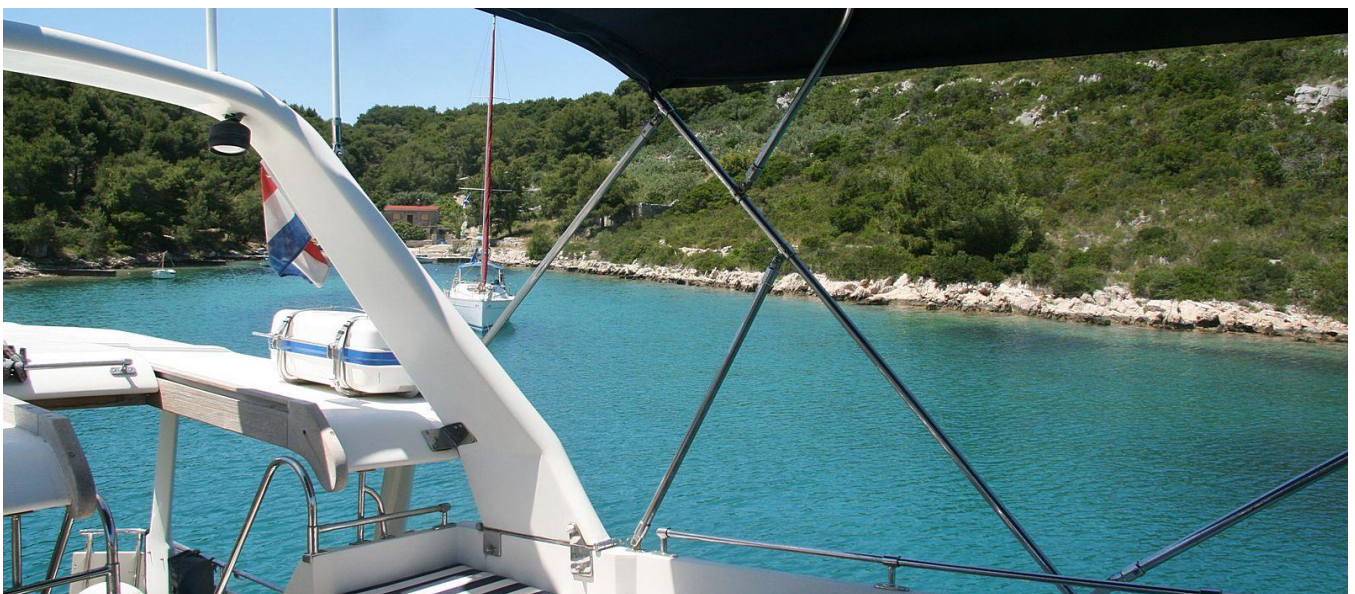
June 13 Thursday Kremik

Mainly sunny, N and W 3-4.

At 9am we leave the berth at Vrboska for our 50nm trip back to our base at marina Kremik.

The morning offers a bit of a surprise, outside the harbour a fresh breeze of NE wind force 5 blows which raises swell of at least 1m, blowing in streaks and gusting. Must be a mini-Bora, a little local speciality of the Mediterranean!

I try to steer closer to the coast of Brac to seek protection; the ride is a bit wet and rattles our bimini. Once closer to Brac the swell gets less and the wind comes more from behind, so it's less felt. Wind continues for about two hours then disappears. Between Brac and Solta there I hardly any wind. Just before noon we anchor in [west arm of Necujam bay](#) on Solta, which I find very pleasant.



Anchored in the NW arm of Necujam cove, island Solta

Around 2pm the wind turns to the usual W, we leave the anchorage at 3:15pm and head for Drvenik.

We are returning to our home berth, so we feel we can take more time, and head for the beautiful - and popular - [Krknjas cove](#), a sort of 'blue-green lagoon' between islets, usually plenty of boats there. The guide mentions that a fee is collected for anchoring, but we are not asked.



Popular Krknjas cove (on island Drvenik Veli), an 'azure lagoon'

The cove is protected from swell but the W wind blows with force 4-5; though the anchor holds well the swaying of the yacht does not make the stay feel very comfortable.

At 5:30pm we leave for Kremik; swell from W still but the wind is getting less.



Getting 'home' against the afternoon sun and swell

Arrive at the marina 7:30pm.

Entering the marina we are asked not to go to our usual berth but to go alongside the custom quay! Oh dear, the police 'wants to see me'. So, the Sibenik harbour police has not communicated with Hvar, I am still pursued as 'illegal entrant from international waters'?

A long and stressful episode of waiting, not knowing what's going on, explaining, pleading, waiting again, ensues.

The police officer is a young lady who obviously does not enjoy the task she has got to do. She conducts repeated and seemingly endless telephone calls with her bosses, who insist that I must be fined – so she tells me - based on the 'evidence' the Dubrovnik police has provided, of my boat manoeuvring in Montenegrin waters (it looks that they have found my very own AIS safety signal from some ship tracking web site and printed it out!).

Two hours later, nearly 10pm, we have still not had dinner, and the lady is far from having finished issuing the forms for the fine. She explains she is sorry and has been trying to argue in my favour, similar to what the harbourmaster at Hvar had decided, but her bosses were adamant. Old style back office bureaucrats, apparently, very different from the real people today out in the harbour offices (she obviously does not say the latter). Anyhow, she will only issue the minimum amount possible (which is an insignificant mount, and in no relationship to the drama we are put through here).

The 'technologies' used by the police in this case are carbon paper to make copies, the telephone to find out all details to be filled into those paper forms/ payslip, and of course several cigarettes going along. "The Mediterranean as it once was" is the marketing slogan of the Croatian tourist board, certainly that holds true here.

At this late hour, I ask whether we can go to the next door restaurant for dinner before it closes, and this is of course ok; I collect my papers afterwards.

Interestingly, this upsetting episode happens only a few days before Croatia officially enters the EU, police people admit they themselves are not sure about new regulations coming into force.

Finally, after 11pm, we move our boat to its usual berth; the mariners are of course still on duty and patient.

June 14 afternoon we fly back to London, that time with a stopover at Zagreb.

When I present my passport to the boarder control lady at Zagreb, she looks up and asks sheepishly 'So, what happened at Sibenik?' I answer briefly. 'So...' she says, and a smile appears on her face, as if saying, haha, I know our people!

Total **mileage** May 29th to June 13th: 399 nm

Tarilian is a Trader 535 Signature, semi-displacement flybridge cruiser with aft cabin and aft deck.
Loa 54 ft/16.5m. Engines: 2x Volvo diesel, 430hp each.
Cruising speed on this trip: 10-11 kn.

Disclaimer

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Web: www.whartl.com (2012)

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