2 Weeks in Early Season: Through the Kornati and to Zadar, then further North to Mali Losinj. Visiting Rab and exploring several islands on the way.

Cruise Croatia 22 May – 5 June 2004

Itinerary: Kremik/Primosten - Piskera - Zadar - Dugi Otok - Silba - Olib - Ilovik - Mali Losinj - Rab - Ist - Zirje - Kremik.
Total distance logged: 286 nm
Total fuel used: 920 litres (reasonable 3.3 litres/nm).

Boat: "Eva", Fairline Corsica, Flybridge Motor yacht, 36 ft, ca 8t, 2x 300hp Cummins Diesel engines on shaft drives, based at Marina Kremik (Primosten). Chartered from Offshore Boote. (www.offshore-boote.at)

Crew: Wilhelm and Jane, additionally on 30/5 and 31/5 only: Willi Hoschek, Tanya, Stani.

22/5 Saturday: Arrival

We take a taxi from Split Airport and arrive at Primosten/Kremik Marina at 4pm. Marina restaurant and market are closed for refurbishment, but the friendly and helpful Offshore Boote lady offers us her car to go to nearby Primosten to do the shopping. Had excellent seafood dinner (skarpina/red scorpion fish) at Stare Stelo in Primosten.
It feels pre-season and un-crowded. Only few boats in the harbour. Stay the first night in Kremik marina.

23/5 Sunday: Marina Kremik - Kornati/ Piskera Marina

Weather forecast: Gale warnings. A front from NE reaching middle Adriatic during the day. Rain showers, thundery.
Had rain in the morning but cleared soon, some sunshine during the day.
Leaving berth at Kremik 11ish. Choppy seas to Zirje. Stayed for lunch in Kameni Zakan bay (**Uvala Zakan**, Kornati). Some 10 new buoys (Kornati National Park) in bay, quite small. Easier to anchor nearby.
On to **Marina Piskera**. Cloudy weather and bit fresh. Ok meal in marina restaurant, it seems to have just opened and feels pre-seasonal with only few boats in the marina.
Log 27 nm.

24/5 Monday: Piskera - Zadar

Min temp 13°C, max 20°C
NE wind in the night. Barometer rising: Last evening 990, midday 1000, evening 1003.
Forecast NE wind 20kn (5bf), turning NW over the day, 24 kn (6bf) max.

Enjoyed a walk across Piskera island and amazing views across the rocks and sea. The marina is a sheltered oasis in a bare landscape.




Marina Piskera (Kornati)

We are a concerned how to leave the berth safely due to strong wind from port quarter; at 1 pm left without problem. However, suddenly alarm sounds and partial loss of steering! Controlling the boat with the engines only I found that the alarm originated from the autopilot that had switched itself on erratically and was trying to take control over. This unusual electrical problem seemed to disappear by turning the unit off, but re-appeared later so I had to switch off the power at the fuse.

Through Proversa vela, and then the Zdrelac passage, onto **Zadar**. Excellent visibility and blue skies let us enjoy the cruising; despite the wind the sea state is only very slight. In the Zdrelac passage (bridge) I noted SW going current of 3 kn.
Arrived **Zadar town marina** in bright warm sunshine, 3:40pm
We visited Zadar Old town, interesting sights, went up the large bell tower.
Have dinner near the ancient town harbour; nice setting, no crowds, and warm enough to sit outdoors initially, but after sunset it gets chilly. Unprepared for the cold we get back to the boat.






Zadar Old Town and harbour

25/5 Tuesday: Zadar - Dugi Otok/Bozava

Min. night temp 9°C, max 20°C
Barometric pressure constant. Leave Zadar town harbour 11am. Forecast E 2-3 later NW2-3. Sunny. High pressure ridge approaching from NW (finally!).
We pass the NW end of Ugljan. West coast is much less developed than E coast. Onward to Iz, we find Marina Iz quiet. Anchored off **Knezak**, on 5m, for lunch.
NW day wind rises as expected. Pleasant spot, not too developed yet but potential (Knez). Anchored in Vodenjak bay at 5m, S side. Cool air but warm sun.
Dinghy on the davits is in the way of launching the bathing ladder.

We anchor in a bay not explicitly described as anchorage but adjoining an anchor bay. When lifting the anchor it got caught in rocky ground; by moving the boat round full circle, releasing/pulling in chain, finally got free. – Lesson learned: Look more carefully for rocks when anchoring.

Arrive **Bozava** harbour on Dugi Otok 7pm, staying over night. Bozava is a small friendly village, there are surprisingly many yachts in the harbour, and tourist boats on the outer quay. As the harbour gets shallow towards the quay we moor bow to quay.
Due to the early season there is only one restaurant open, but its is right at the quay and our dinner is fine. No public toilets available in the harbour (need to go to the restaurant). A large hotel on the opposite side of the bay has ‘resort looks’, it may get busy in summer but has no business at this time.
Today’s log 34 nm.





Bozava (Dugi Otok)

26/5 Wednesday: Dugi Otok - Molat - Skarda - Silba

Min temp over night 14°C, max 24°C
Leaving for Veli Rat, look around Pantera bay, and Cuna cove. The latter resembles a small lake, quite shallow and not really interesting. There are about 20 new buoys in Pantera bay, a wide cove overlooked by Veli Rat light house; there is a little bit of a Caribbean atoll feel, with very clear water. The charted wreck outside Plic Bracic seems to be a tourist attraction for yachties.

We carry on to Molat and up its W coast.
Lunch in Griparica cove on **Skarda** island, with 3 other motorboats, a nice bay. Had a (very short) swim in rather cold water.
Arrive **Silba East harbour** at 5pm, mooring bow to breakwater. Pleasant fishing harbour with yacht moorings for about 20 boats, but open to NE (Bora); the forecast is for light SE so for now it’s a perfect place.
Walked over to the West Harbour, there is a Jardrolinja pier but no space for yachts. Silba is a small quiet island with a relaxed feel, pleasantly green, no cars, and there are 3-4 restaurants in the village

between East and West harbours. Some of the old stone houses are now derelict, their owners seems to have left.
We have excellent dinner at Ivo's near the West Harbour, watching the sunset. His special fish dish is well worth tying.







Silba East



Silba West



"Sails" sculpture by Sime Vulas

27/5 Thursday: Silba - Olib - Ilovik

Lowest temp 13°C, max 23°C. Weather forecast on VHF Ch 24 is ok, at least for the motor boats. Mainly SE 2-4, turning N; sunny or var cloudy but more clouds from the N.

There is electricity on the pier and even water, but not much water comes out the hose when more than one yacht tries to fill crews try to milk the up at the same time. There are 3 'dried out' yachts with football team sized German crews. We trust that the sizeable tank of our boat still holds more than enough for us two for the next day or two, and decide to leave and let the Germans have fun milking the taps.

Anchor for lunch in Sv Nikola cove on **Olib**, at 6m, and find it very pleasant. Calm weather, getting a bit hazy in the afternoon, about 23°C.


We have the nice cove all to ourselves

For the night we moor in **Ilovik**, There are several available buoys in the passage but we prefer the convenience of walking to the restaurant and go to the pier, opposite side of the ferry. There is no harbour master anywhere to be seen, but a yachtie helps with mooring.
There is electricity on the pier but no water. This is available from a well with a hand pump near the church, for those who are desperate.

Ilovik is a relaxed place, far enough from busy Mali Losinj, and in its wide passage (looks like a bay) the yachts are swinging on buoys in the sunset, whilst their crews come to the 2 restaurants by dinghy. Tonight there are less than half of the buoys occupied, and there are even spaces on the pier - but this will change soon.
Had a meal at Porto's, which is in a nice location overlooking the water.

The weather forecast at 21:45 warns of NE (bora) gusts in the North Adriatic of 30-40kts, the high pressure is weakening and a cold front is approaching from the N. The next day would have SE first then NE 3-4, and var cloudy with local rain.



Ilovik pier

28/5 Friday: Ilovik - Mali Losinj

Lowest night temp 17°C.
We decide to make our way slowly during the day towards Mali Losinj, one day earlier than necessary to pick up our friends from Vienna who arrive from the mainland by ferry.

Leave 10:30am, the wind is already NE and blows us towards our neighbour's mooring, so getting out needs some care (Eva has no thrusters). Reminds me never to underestimate the effect of cross wind, and put plenty of fenders on the lee side. Leaving berth using both engines positively and steering slightly to windward seems the best way.

Made fast on a nearby buoy to practise the manoeuvre under wind and, more importantly, to have lunch; the easiest way seems to be to bring the boat alongside the buoy so that Jane can pick it up from the cockpit.
The time after the completion of the manoeuvre and before lunch was put to good use by having half an hour of crew briefing. Q: Should the fat rear ball fenders that had been thrown into the cockpit and were sitting in the corners be taken off and stowed elsewhere, for the benefit of moving around more easily during such a manoeuvre as we just did? A: No. Jane educated me in detail that it was far too onerous to detach the fenders from their cleats. The skipper is a slow learner, but eventually he gets it.

Had lunch and set off for Mali Losinj at 2pm, it was getting hazy. Passing the W coast leisurely we inspected the bays along. **Uvala Krivica** is the most scenic, 3 yachts there, none in the other bays. Some coves are not suitable for anchoring anyway due to windsurfer trainees and children's swimming areas.
Weather getting cloudy and darker as we go into **Mali Losinj town harbour**, at 3pm stern to on the furthest out floating pontoon. This would be a prime position for pleasant sunset views from the cockpit facing NW, but from 4pm NW winds start causing some swell. During the evening and night the NW-N increases, but we feel safely tied up.
Rain sets in during the evening, temperature drops; have dinner in town, nice but would have been nicer in the right weather.


Mali Losinj quay


Bora at Veli Losinj

29/5 Saturday: Mali Losinj, Veli Losinj

Scared by the strong N wind (NE outside the bay), we decide to spend the day on land. Walk to Veli Losinj for coffee and drinks; the walk takes at least 45min (nearly 4km), not 20min as described in the guide book. The cliff path offers views over the sea towards the Velebit mountains under moderate Bora. **Veli Losinj,** the old "Large Losinj", is a nice small touristy place, but its narrow harbour does not accommodate yachts. There are several cafes and restaurants around which seem mostly visited by elderly tourists and families at this time.
In this part of Dalmatia, different from the middle and southern regions, tourists are predominantly Austrians and Germans. Menus are written in German, Italian and Croatian, not in English.

Later today our friends from Vienna, Willi, Tanja and 12 years old Stanislav ('Stani') are scheduled to arrive in Mali Losinj to join us for a couple of days on our boat. Being fastidious, I have had the

updated crew list stamped by the harbour master, and am eagerly anticipating my new responsibilities as family skipper.
This evening we decide to dine on the less expensive side, and ask for only small fish (sardines), squids and house white in a pizzeria on the harbour front. Anyhow, the friendly waiter serves us extra starters of sardines on the house and it turns out to be a tasty treat altogether.



Veli Losinj

30/5 Sunday: Mali Losinj - Ilovik

The Bora had been forecasts to last for 3 days but luckily the wind died down and the sun come back out.
Left berth 11ish, stopped in Uvala Krivica, anchored at 7m. Beautiful and equally popular wooded cove, we find 3 other yachts at anchor with landlines to rocks because of the limited space.
At 5pm continue to **Ilovik**, stern to quay.

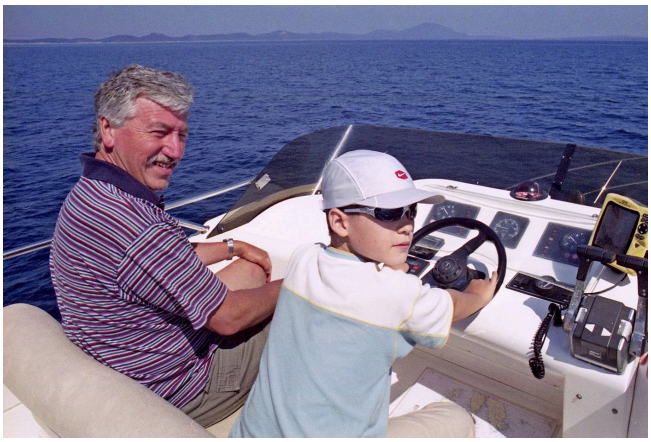
This time, different from 3 days earlier, the buoys have filled up by 7pm, and all spaces at the pier are taken. An Italian sailing yacht squeezes in between us and the next, using a bow anchor where there is no mooring line and, of course, not enough space. His argument is that this is the way he always does it in August.
Some unfortunate squabbling between crew members (over non-nautical issues) are overcome later; otherwise it would have been a perfect evening in beautiful weather, scenic and calm surroundings and with good food and drink.

31/5 Monday: Ilovik - Cres - Rab

Left Ilovik 10ish. Beautiful sunshine and calm sea; anchored in cove **Jadriscica** an inlet at the southern end of island Cres. A beautiful large lagoon type cove.
On the way we had crossed a supposed “dolphin area” but none of the beasts had showed up.

In this bay and under the balmy sun, Jane demonstrates her skills of rowing the RIB dinghy like a punt. The male crew prefers power, however, and we pay a visit to a stranded ship wreck at the far end of the cove.
A swim reveals that that water is slightly warmer than before, but still fresh.

Leave at 3pm for Rab. Stani is allowed to helm a short distance (at displacement speed) making this his first lesson as a trainee captain. Arrive **Rab** town at 5pm, go stern to on a marina pontoon.
This has been our warmest day and feels real summer. We walk Rab old town with its unique church towers and enjoy magnificent views.



Willi Ho. and the young captain



Ships are interesting but wrecks even more…





Iconic view of Rab on the approach





1/6 Tuesday: Rab - Ist

Minimum temp over night 15°C, morning temp 18°C. As per plan, our friends leave and take the 8:15am catamaran ferry to Rijeka to go on their journey back to Vienna.

Dark clouds have developed and a moderate SE.
The disappointing forecast for the central Adriatic for the next 3 days to June 5, is cloudy unsettled weather with rain, light to moderate SE and E, and cooler.

Left berth at noon and back towards Silba-Olib. S wind in the Kvarner raises some swell but we can easily maintain planning speed at 20-21 kn. In rain we use the interior helm, and find the noise levels inside unpleasant. Arrive **Ist** at 2pm, stern to quay in harbour. It seems a popular place, the spaces are all taken by 3pm.

This is our first grey day without any sun on this holiday. Anyway, we walk to the church on top of the hill which promises panoramic views. The initial part of the zigzag path, in the village, is not very clearly signposted. You need to expect the best part of one hour to get to the hill top if you walk leisurely and take in the views, but there are far views in all directions from the chapel.

There is a choice of two quite sophisticated restaurants in Ist, we use the one closer to the beach and find it very pleasant. Shame about the rain.



Moorings at Ilovik



"Guide" to the chapel of St.Mary





View from the hilltop

2/6 Wednesday: Ist - Dugi Otok - Katina

Heavy rain over the night has stopped by the morning. Calm seas. Left berth 9am.
Head for **Pantera bay** on Dugi Otok, on buoy 10am. At 2pm the weather starts clearing and we see some good sunshine. Going South along the East side of Dugi Otok, passing church Sv.Pelegrin with its unusual cemetery.
We reach Sali at 5pm, but do not like it well enough to stay for the night.

We decide to go instead to one of our favourite coves, next to Mala Proversa, **Katina island,** and moor on one of the buoys of the Aquarius restaurant.
The restaurant does simple but very good food and is well run (not cheap though), and enjoys an enviable position for watching the sea and boats passing the passages. Different from last night there are few yachts here, only 2 sailing yachts. The owner blames the unstable weather.



St Peregrin church



Vela Proversa passage, Katina





On restaurant buoy Aquarius restaurant

3/6 Thursday: Katina - Kornat - Zirje

The forecast is again for a deepening low causing unstable weather, isolated thundery storms are possible.
The morning, with 18°C does not looks too bad. I finally take the time to investigate the reason for the inaccurate position reading of the boat's GPS plotter: A previous user had mis-calibrated it and left it.

We leave the buoy at noon, light clouds and hazy sun. Lunch at anchor on Uvala Modri, a cove on the SW coast of **Kornat** island, at 6m depth. Wind is now W-SW and 3 bf. At 3pm we leave and go in SE direction, getting closer towards our home port. Near Zirje island we spot 2 dolphins.

Arrive in uvala **Stupica Vela** on Zirje at 4:30pm, go on buoy. There are about 30 buoys in the bay, run by the restaurant, whose owner charges a moderate mooring fee. The bay is well sheltered to N and W but open to SE. Rain again.
The restaurant is very simple; it seems advisable to ring and book if one wants fish. We were quite happy with our choice of pork cutlets and nice rose wine.

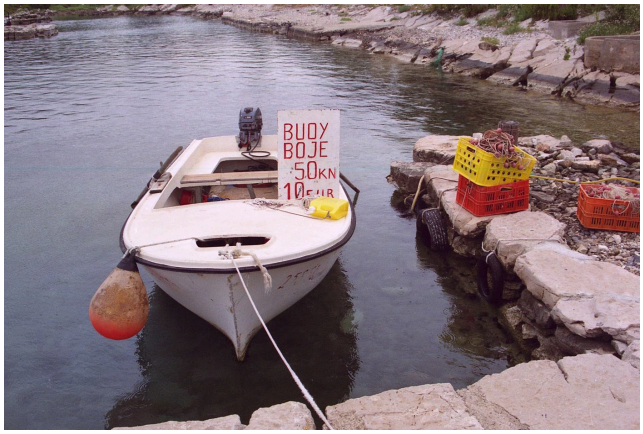
Later in the evening, tirelessly checking the weather forecast, there is little reason to cheer up. I learn about an extending low, clouds and occasional rain, NE 10-24kn and isolated gusts of NE up to 30-40kn.

4/6 Friday: Zirje - Primosten - Kremik

The wind during the night has made me inspect the rope and buoy twice. Temperature has stayed mild, with a morning temp of 18°C as has been before.
We go on land for a walk to the ruins of the ancient fortification overlooking the bay.

We are concerned about possible swell from the Bora and gusts on the journey and decide to get moving towards the mainland and our final destination of Primosten/marina Kremik. Leave buoy by 10am and go to **Luka Grebastica** on the mainland. Anchor in a calm small cove on N side, at 7m. 43°38.5'N 15°56.25'E.
Hazy sun, then heavy rain afternoon. We watch a fisherman bring out his net only some 10m away from our boat, apparently unconcerned about movements at anchor.

Arrive **marina Kremik** by 6 pm, in pouring rain.



Vela Stupica cove


Marina Kremik

5/6 Saturday: Returning the boat and flying home to London

Harbour/mooring fees during the cruise (based on 10.5m, 2 people):
Zadar town marina (Tankerkomerc) 351 kn; Rab Marina ACI 247 kn; Piskera ACI 244 kn; Mali Losinj town harbour 202 kn; Bozava harbour 147 kn; Ilovik steamer key 144 kn; Ist 137 kn; Silba East harbour 121 kn; restaurant buoy in U Stupica Vela (Zirje) 50 kn; restaurant buoy Proversa Vela (Dugi-Otok/Katina) - free.


Silba West side port
