Motor Cruise 6.6. – 20.6.2009 Central-South Dalmatia

2 weeks' round trip from Split to the South including Dubrovnik

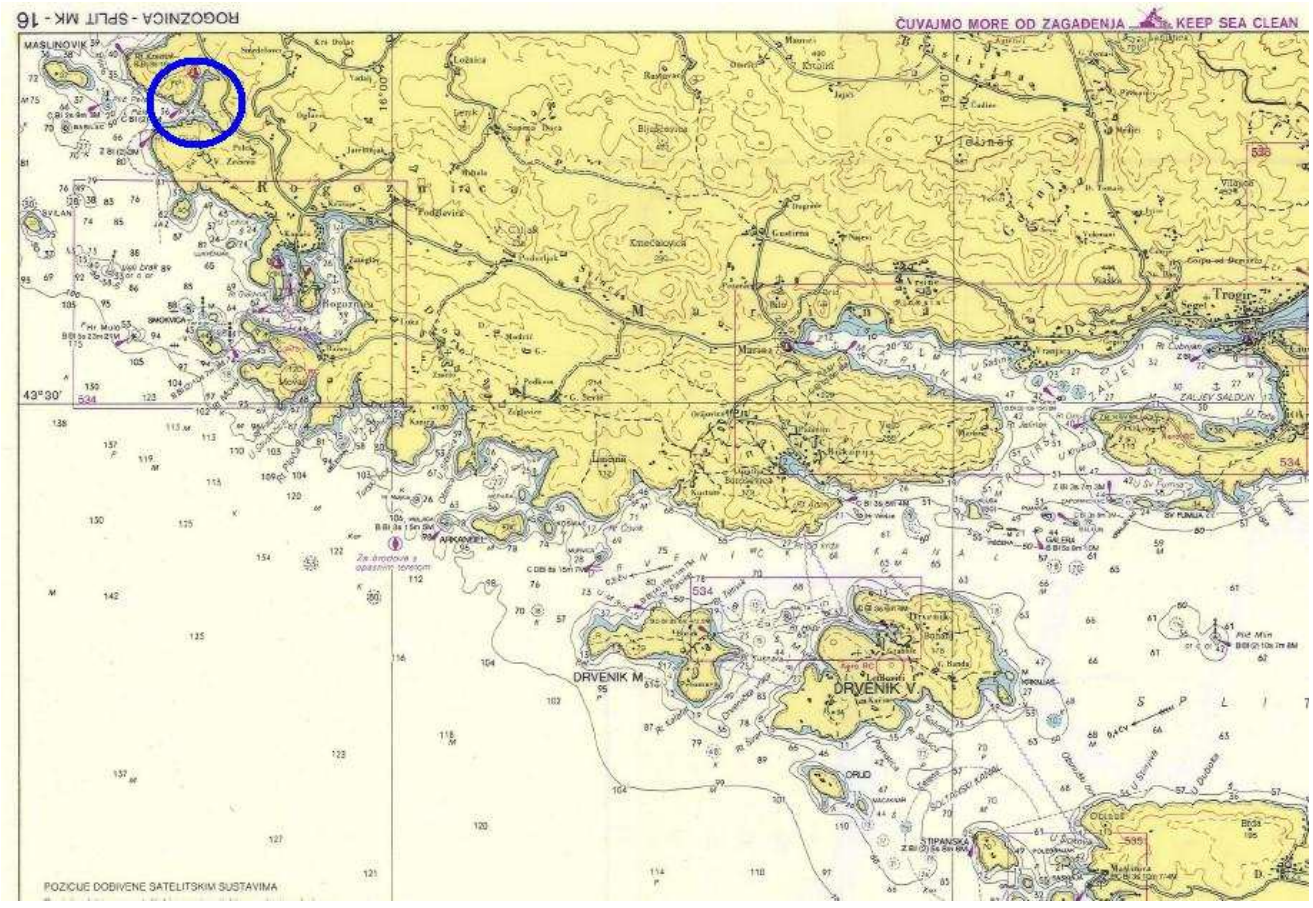
Crew: Jane, P.K., Wilhelm
Boat: “Star Two” Star Yacht 1310 (trawler style 13m / 43ft semi-displacement motor cruiser, with aft cabin and aft deck), 2 x Volvo AD41 Diesels.
Chartered from Offshore-Boote based in Primosten/Kremik Marina

Sat 6.6 ARRIVAL

Flight London Heathrow to Split with Croatian Airlines. Arrival in Kremik Marina late afternoon and check in with Offshore-Boote.
We test the systems of the boat and find some bugs which the helpful engineers need to rectify before we can go out. The boat has not yet been taken out in this season.

Sun 7.6. STAYING IN KREMIK MARINA

The weather is clear but quite windy (Jugo); it is suggested we depart a day later, on Monday, when the Jugo would have blown out and we could expect a pleasant journey.
So we spend the day settling in, having all apparent bugs on the boat sorted (defect windlass and remote; front bilge pump; wrongly wired anchor/navigation lights.) Sadly the auto pilot is defunct and cannot be restored for our trip.
In the afternoon the Jugo recedes but clouds appear and some drizzle sets in which clears towards the evening. We take the shuttle bus to nearby Primosten and have dinner at Konoba Mediterran.



Position of Marina Kremik

Mon 8.6. KREMIK – PALMIZANA/HVAR

The weather has cleared, only light Southerly winds. We start out at around 11:00 and anchor for lunch in Solinska cove on the South of Veli Drvenik island. We are the only yacht at the time, and find the cove pleasant enough and good for a first swim.



Anchored in Solinska cove on VELI DRVENIK

In the afternoon proceed along the South side of Solta and down to Hvar, Palmizana Marina on the Sveti Klement islands, one of our favourite marinas. Enough spaces available; the weather is fine and I have a dip into the water in the Palmizana, one of the few island marinas, where one can swim off the boat.

We have dinner at famous Meneghello's. We appreciate the "artists'" atmosphere, but feel that the food (at least our choice) is on the rustic side rather than sophisticated as we had experienced it in previous years; still a very enjoyable evening.



Inner helm of our Staryacht



STAR TWO at Palmizana marina

Tue 9.6. HVAR – KORCULA Town

Depart at 10:30. Lunch stop on Scedro, Smokova bay in SE, pleasant (but I do not swim as the water seems cold). In the afternoon proceed to Korcula town; we find the ACI marina full (flotillas?), so go to nearby Luka bay and anchor in the central S part at ca. 10m. The water is not clear enough, so I cannot check the bottom and anchor visually, but trust it will be ok for this (calm) night.
Dinghy out and off to the ACI marina to go on land; dinner at another of our favourites, Adio Mare (has extended and renewed in the last 2 years but maintains its good standard of food).
On return to the boat Jane insists on studying the night sky and explaining it to P.K.; bright lights from the quay and restaurant do not help our night vision.
I can never help being a bit restless at anchor, and get up a couple of times during the night to check wind conditions, just in case; it has veered all the way from NE to SW but is very light so all is calm and safe.



Passing HVAR town, on the way South



'Selective sunbathing' on the way down the Korcula channel towards Korcula town



View of KORCULA Old Town walls (cruise ships permitting...)



In Luka cove (near Korcula town)

Wed 10.6. KORCULA – OKUKLJE / MLJET

A fine day starts, after having breakfast we leave the anchorage at 9:30, and pass between Korcula and the islands of Badija (with its old monastery) and Planjak to the South, heading ultimately for Polace bay on Mljet. Anchor in N part of cove on 12m.
Polace is a nice spacious cove. Several restaurants/houses can be seen on S side. Have lunch (as always on board) and swim.
Restaurants are not only found within the bay, there is even one in the E of Polace in the approach channel between the main island and the longish Kobrava island (Borat).

In the afternoon we proceed along the N coast of Mljet towards Okuklje.

Prozura bay looks interesting, with its bizarre rocks at the entrance.

In pleasant Okuklje bay there are about four restaurants and some small room letting/B&B places. In early season however there does not appear to be any business for most of them; only Maran restaurants, which has been recommended, seems to be popular and attracting yachts.

The person in charge of the small public quay next to Maran's tries to solicit yachts to his moorings without luck, until, in the evening, he strikes gold when a luxury motor yacht of 25m or so squeezes into the cove, which has no chance to go anywhere else, and takes all the available space. Typically, none of the guests or crew seems to leave the boat anytime.

We had been directed to take a mooring position on the 'corner' of Maran's pontoon, which is bit awkward to get on land but so be it; we have good dinner and service (a strange 100kn item appears on the bill, which gets wiped out instantly upon enquiry, always check your bill).

The popularity of the place also means it attracts noisy sailing crews, as we can hear next berth, but it is not developing into a problem.
This reminds me of an incident at a restaurant on Mljet several years ago, where noise from a neighbouring boat got intrusive. This has nothing to do with noise from restaurants, those close at the usual time. Are the bays of Mljet a favourite spot for sailing hooligans, party revellers and drunks who come here to "enjoy" themselves shouting and chanting in the night in a way they could not get away with in marinas and harbours?



Anchorage in the North part of POLACE cove, MLJET island



Passage out of Polace cove to East, between islet



OKUKLJE cove on MLJET, moorings of Maran restaurant in the centre, small public quay to the left



Jane and P.K. watch the arrival of a yacht



Evening in Okuklje cove

Thurs 11.6. MLJET – DUBROVNIK

A fine sunny day, again. From Okuklje we cruise across to Sipan island and visit Sipanska Luka. Westerly wind has got up and blows into the bay as NW, so we decide to try to anchor in Sunj bay on neighbouring Lopud island, which is open to the South. We go down the East side of Lopud and, when turning W after rounding its end, to approach Sunj, the W wind gusts surprisingly strongly from ahead and shakes the bimini hard.

We anchor at Sunj, where there are already many yachts. Luckily the gusts of wind get lesser over the day.

After lunch and a swim we go to the ACI marina at Dubrovnik (Miho Pracat) and are asked to tie up to the inner part of the first pontoon on its West end, just opposite some “Super yachts” on the outside of the pontoon, facing West. Most of those boats are in use by owners and are keeping in a normal quiet way, but the largest of all, a on the huge 50m ship called JeMaSa (C.I. registered, no guests or owners to be seen anywhere anytime) the uninterested crew is lounging about and has the generators running noisily all day and night.

We go to Dubrovnik by taxi, as the bus service is very infrequent (45 min wait).

Have dinner at Ragusa II restaurant in Prijeko street (parallel to Stradun). Delicate food despite the tourist setting; however, we need to complain about the poor tasting wine which is quickly replaced, without quibbles, with a much superior bottle.

For the way back to the marina we take the bus which happens to turn up just when needed.

During the night the wind from W continues blowing up the river valley and into the marina.

At about 4:00 in the morning however the wind turns to NE, gusting against the bow of our boat. We have only got one mooring line so the boat is not ideally moored; one stern rope conflicts with the line from the davits holding the dinghy, causing noise in our cabin so I need to get up and rig an additional rope. An unpleasant and unexpected experience; the forecast had not warned of nightly gales!



SIPANSKA LUKA on Sipan island, beautiful old villa, one of many in need of repair (this photo is now historic).



In Dubronik ACI marina (Miho Prakat) up the Dubrovacka river



"Star Two" next door to gin palaces in Dubrovnik marina

Fri 12.6. DUBROVNIK

In the morning the wind dies down. A hot sunny day starts, today's agenda is sightseeing at Dubrovnik. We walk the walls, have lunch at a pizzeria in the old port in between the South and North walls, finally buy souvenirs and have coffee in Gundulic square.

After returning to the marina Jane and P.K. decide to try the marina's swimming pool; this evening we are not walking any further but have a simple and value for money dinner at the restaurant near the marina entrance.



P.K. as tourist, with brand new hat



and Orlando in stone



This yacht has been cheekily moored in Dubrovnik's Old Port - it won't get away with that for very long...



Rain? No, Japanese tourists



STAR TWO's Competent Crew seen here as landlubbers in the Stradun





A couple more views of Dubrovnik's beautiful Old Town ...

Sat 13.6. DUBROVNIK – SIPAN

A bright and hot day. After refuelling at the marina fuel station we head for Sipanska Luka, where we had had unfavourable wind a couple of days before; this time the weather is calm. We moor at the harbour quay (moorings, but no electricity, apparently no toilets).
Sipan harbour seems a bit of a forgotten place, low key tourism, hardly any modernisation.

Today is P.K.'s birthday, so I suggest to try fish dinner at Konoba Kod Marka, which turns out to be quite special (no menu - the host chooses for you, trust him!).
They have, by the way, three mooring buoys for customers, but, anyway, the moorings at the town quay are inexpensive and yachts can also anchor in the harbour.

Do not try to go along to the pier; not only will gulets chase you away, but a big steamer (the Dubrovnik ferry) stays on the inside over night.



"STAR TWO" on the town quay in SIPANSKA LUKA



View towards the bay of Sipanska Luka which is open to the Northwest (town quay on the right side)





Sipanska Luka - a Seeping Beauty ?



Restaurant Kod Marka on the West side of the harbour

Sun 14.6. SIPAN – OREBIC / PELJESAK

Some boat handling training for P.K. and Jane, before we get moving on our way back North.

In light NW wind we cruise along the coast of Peljesak peninsula. “10 more minutes, on the left side” I hear Jane say to P.K. Ah!! The boat training has led to increased navigational awareness of my crew (well, that's skipper’s wishful thinking); Jane has only been timing the sun bathing for her daughter for a her perfect tan...

We anchor in Trstenik, at 6m in front of the sandy beach; this looks a pleasant small resort.

Have lunch and swim; in the cove the wind causes some surprising gusts from SW; later outside at sea it is actually more calm.

From Trstenik we carry on along the Peljesak to Orebic; the NW wind increases over the last five miles towards Orebic and the Korcula channel. Under awkward side wind we demonstrate our acclaimed mooring skills (boat has no thrusters!) and tie to the harbour quay for the night. The harbour is shallow, only 3m depth. There are just four or five visiting boats, a friendly harbour master, electricity + water, no toilet facilities.

Orebic is a small local resort and ferry harbour to Korcula. The views from the berth across the sea and over the Korcula are nice.
We have dinner at restaurant Amfora: Very disappointing food quality, overcooked chewy tourist stuff served proudly on big plates, appalling house wine. Anyhow, this is our only bad experience with food so far; we disinfect ourselves with coffees and Travarica in the local café overlooking the harbour.

We sleep well, despite the ferry. The large car ferry actually does not cause much noise, she does not even use ropes when mooring.



Anchored in front of TRSTENIK's sandy beach



More leg tanning, abeam to port is Sestrice lighthouse



"STAR TWO" in OREBIC harbour

Mon 15.3. OREBIC – SUCURAJ / HVAR

Forecast is for a hot sunny day with little wind.
We leave port at 10:00 and go W through the Korcula channel close to the Peljesak coast.
We leave the Peljesak behind and head N across the channel towards the South coast of Hvar, to explore some of the anchor bays there.

We see hardly any boats, despite the brilliant sunshine. Smarska seems suitable for anchoring but we find it polluted with waste. Turning E, Pelinkovic and Smokvina are really too small for us to anchor comfortably; the same for Zaglav, where the shallow area is only at is very end tip. These tiny bays are suited to small sailing craft, larger craft will find them very narrow and may have to use landlines which is not convenient for short stay.

Turning to E we try Mrtinovic cove but cannot get the anchor to hold for some reason.
This worries me, and – having had a similar experience in a bay on Sipan – I wonder why our anchor appears to hold us only sometimes. It's a Danforth, so it works - once it has hit the bottom - by its large flukes dropping down from the shank and hopefully burying themselves into the seabed when pulled along.
I have already checked that the shank can move freely. But there is a short rope tied to a ring on the crown, which is used to secure the anchor to the windlass cleat during cruising. Maybe there is a slight risk, that this rope gets caught and jams between the shank and the flukes effectively blocking the flukes from dropping and digging in?? Just a weird guess perhaps, but I ask to take that rope off before anchoring, and – guess what - the hook grips first time each time from now on. (Or, if no other effect, it has at least helped P.K. perfect her skills of tying a bowline…).

Reaching a further bay, Rasovatica, we are finally happy and manage to anchor. This cove is small too, but maybe the most pleasant of those we have tried before. More sun bathing and swimming.

For the night we decide to try the nearby harbour of Sucuraj at the E end of Hvar; (Jelsa would be more than 2hours away given our modest speed of just 9kn in displacement mode.)
We are directed by the harbourmaster lady to go alongside a pontoon with electricity and water available.
Sucuraj is a small fishermen's village and ferry port too; we marvel at the Jadrolinja car ferry which turns up in regular intervals and hovers over the yachts moored close by. It does not cause much disturbance though.
The weather is hot and almost wind still.
There are about three restaurants; we choose the simple looking restaurant (Gostionica Fortuna) opposite side of the breakwater and ferry pier; our expectations are exceeded, seafood and fish are fresh, tasty and value for money.



Anchored in RASOVATICA cove/ island of HVAR



On a pontoon in SUCURAJ/ island of Hvar



The ferry hovering close to yachts in Sucuraj



A few berths have been blocked

Tue 16.06. SUCURAJ – JELSA / HVAR

During the early hours SE wind has got up, which sends some swell into Sucuraj harbour and rocks our boat gently. White horses are seen outside, but no large waves. We go shopping and have coffee; by 10:00 the wind has practically died down.
We leave port and head to the E, round Sucuraj point, the end tip of Hvar, and then along the coast to W.
There do not seem to be many bays on the first few miles in this part of Hvar; we carry on to Pokrivenik and anchor in the South bottom of the cove for lunch and swimming. Pokrivenik is an attractive wooded cove surrounded by steep cliffs and rocks, and good for swimming. In the outer part of the cove there is a restaurant with some moorings, which is open and canvassing for guests.
We are the only yacht in this part of the cove. The weather is bright, hot and completely calm.

After 15:00 we leave and head for Jelsa. It feels strange to cruise on a completely calm sea, like glass, with no other yachts in sight anywhere. The only encounter we have is a dolphin, which playfully swims with us, diving before our bow and our sides. It seems disappointed that we are not a fishing boat offering him food, so turns away.

A dolphin can swim much faster than our comfortable cruising speed of 8.5-9 kn which keeps noise down and saves fuel.

Here is Jane's account of the incident, more poetic than I could do it:

"OUR DOLPHIN

Willi spied a dolphin, far out at sea ,
Breaking the water he leapt and swam
Oblivious of the sight of man.
The droning engines of our boat had lured the
Solitary dolphin to our path;
Appearing across our bow he led us from the front and now,
Faster than us he steamed ahead
Waving from side to side with sleek but scarred back turning this way and that
To catch a glimpse of this strange mover of the deep
And then with one swift spurt he veered away,
Perhaps he sensed 'no fish' today,
But happy to ride the ripples of our wake,
He journeyed on through his vast lake
As still as a mill pond, proud to be
The master of all that he could see. "



"Our" dolphin; note the reflection of our boat's bow above.

Berth in Jelsa on the quay on the North side. An unexpected small gust of W wind makes the berthing manoeuvre less smooth.
Jesla is a pretty tourist village around its harbour; we fancy dining with views over the port and watching the sunset, so choose the 'Buffet' in the SE of the harbour with its terrace for dinner; quite reasonable food and glorious sunset.

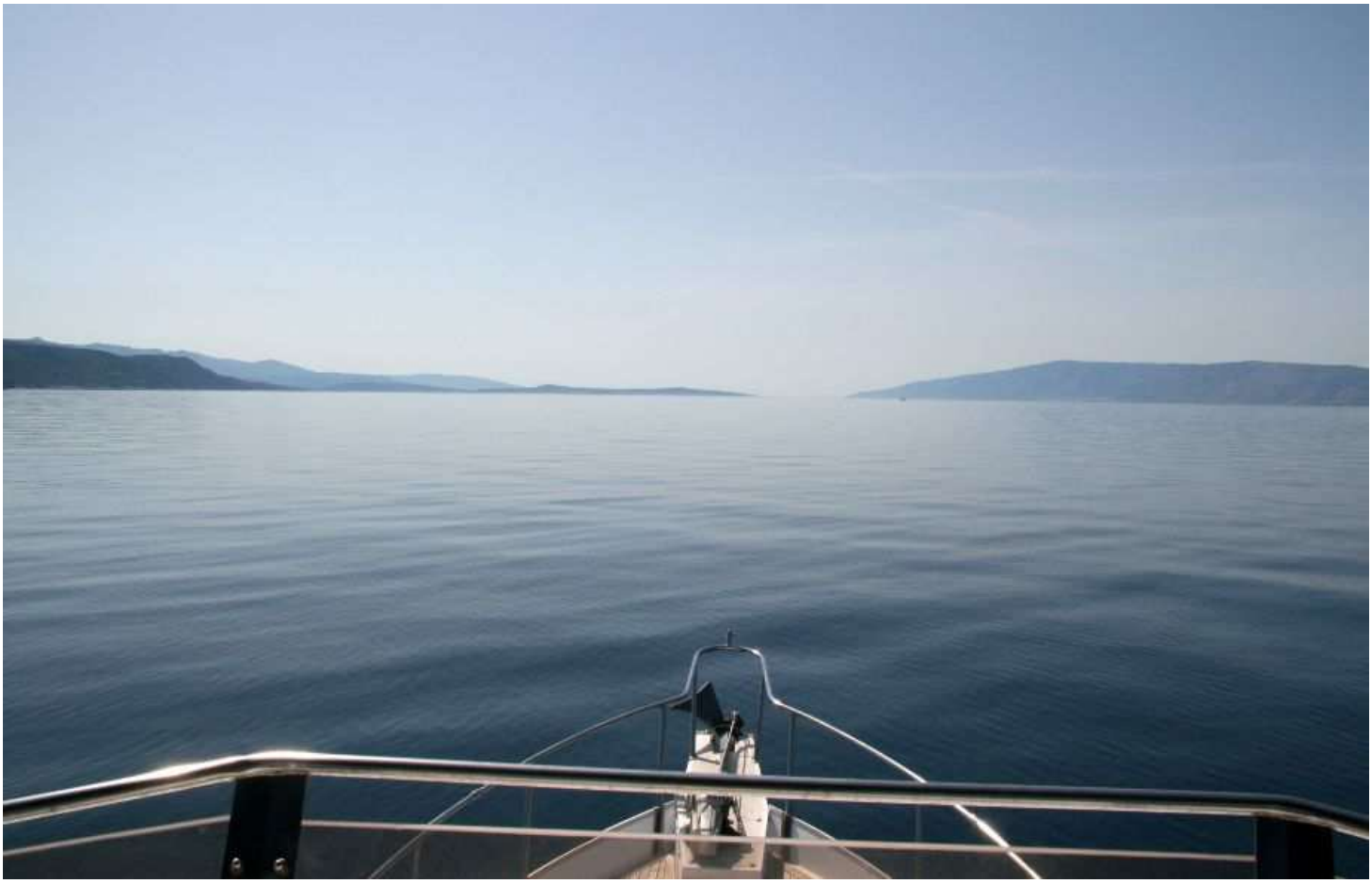
Afterwards have coffees and drinks in the charming village square.



Going round SUCURAJ point with its lighthouse



Anchored in POKRIVENIK cove (Hvar) looking North towards Brac



Glassy calm sea in the HVARSKI KANAL



On mooring in JELSA (island of Hvar)

Yacht moorings in Jelsa / Hvar (beware of Northerly swell into the harbour)





In Jelsa village



The entrance to JELSA port (looking Northeast)

Wed 17.06 JELSA – VRBOSKA / HVAR

Forecast was for cloudy weather, NW winds; clearing during the day and wind getting less.
In the early morning NE wind starts, which sends an unpleasant swell into Jelsa harbour, rocking and rolling our boat on its mooring. The fact that the neighbouring sailing yachts appear to be thrown around even more does not please me. Jelsa harbour is poorly protected against swell from NE.
The wind diminishes from 8:00 but the swell keeps going for a while.

We have coffee in the town square and do some shopping.
Going back to the boat the NE wind has got up again; Jane feels there was no point in leaving under these conditions; cloudy weather. I am keen to get a more detailed weather forecasts and work on my PC; Jane starts doing a wash of her and P.K.'s clothes despite the swell which makes the boat bounce and roll (!) - a movement I strongly dislike.
By 12:20, having enough of the rocking and rolling, we leave port; if seas feel too tough outside we could just turn into neighbouring Vrboska, a safe harbour.

Once outside we find favourable conditions and anchor in the bay just North of the entrance of Vrboska, protected from wind and swell.
The skies clear and we have a calm afternoon and swim in the bay.
With the weather getting close and hazy later we leave for Vrboska. Past the ACI marina, and to the town quay, where there is still plenty of space around 16:30. A very friendly and welcoming marinaio helps us moor up.

We walk around the village, visit the quaint old fashioned fishing museum and marvel at the unusual mighty fortress church.
Dinner at the restaurant above the ACI marina, very pleasant. Later clouds return and there is a little bit of drizzle.

Vrboska is a nice relaxed place. They have improved the quays, and ‘little Venice’ looks cleaner. There are however several abandoned houses/ruins, even in prime positions, same as 2006. The ACI marina has this year been extended with a new pontoon using more space in the centre of the cove.



St John's church in Jelsa



The town pier in VRBOSKA



The fortress church in Vrboska is impressing



but there are several abadoned houses nearby in a state of disrepair

Thu 18.6. VRBOSKA – STOMORSKA / SOLTA

Forecast is for NE winds. We leave Vrboska 10:00.

Some rubbish floating in the sea (as observed frequently during this trip: Never before have we spotted as many plastic bags and debris in the Croatian coastal waters).
We follow the North coast of Hvar and anchor in the inner part of U Zokova ca. 11:30. By this time wind has got up, changed to SW-W and is felt in the cove. We have lunch and at 13:00 decide to leave for Solta/Brac hoping there might be less wind.

We cross the Hvarski Kanal westwards towards Solta and go along the coast of Brac. The Westerly (up to 5 Bf) raises moderate waves (1-1.5m) and makes for a bumpy ride. The marine forecast had been for wind 4-14kn (2-4 Bf) only, but, as often, the afternoon wind is stronger.

We go into bay Lucice on Brac, for ‘shelter’. Anchoring would be difficult because of the depth but there are numerous mooring buoys belonging to the restaurant. There are already many yachts on buoys; we take up a free one. A guy comes along in a dinghy and asks whether we were staying over night; we say no, only want to have a swim, couple of hours. No fees asked. It's a blowy but bright weather. We leave around 16:00 for Stomorska on Solta.

The ride is still bumpy with waves of some 1.5+m; as usual the crew cheers to the fun ride and the skipper has to do the work, hmm.... but after a couple of miles we pass Rt Ratanj, get in lee of Solta and all is quiet again.

We complete the short journey at 17:00, and moor at the public peer (with electricity and water). Stomorska is a friendly small place. The close by church is not easy to spot (it is above the public quay), but prominently heard at 6:00am in the morning.

Have dinner at restaurant Turanj, on the opposite side of the public quay, who serve a good fish dinner. The neighbouring O-la-la restaurant is a noisy “live music” place, that means a one man local band, who seems to try to entertain the whole cove until midnight.

We have the impression that, maybe due to the early season or the economic crises, there is not much business around (yet).
However, today we have spotted more yachts outside than the previous days when there were hardly any to be seen.
Tourists in this part of Croatia include Italians, Croatians from other areas (and other Slavic language people), Austrians, Germans, Antipodeans, even S-Africans we have spotted.



Leaving Vrboska in the morning



There are numerous restaurant buoys in deep LUCICE cove, Brac island



STOMORSKA village and quay (SOLTA island)



STOMORSKA harbour (Solta)



Evening in Stomorska



Fri 19.6. STOMORSKA – KREMIK

Our last day at sea of this holiday, we need to return the boat in Kremik marina this afternoon.

The weather forecast is for moderate to fresh SE winds increasing to 4-6Bf in the afternoon along the coast. In view of the experience of the past days I am concerned the wind might get even stronger, so decide to leave earlier and go to a protected bay on the way to Kremik where we can monitor the wind. In fact, the morning is almost completely calm with flat sea and it turns to a perfect sun cruising day. We cruise to Veli Drvenik, tour the small harbour (few boats, the moorings behind the breakwater appear fine), about three restaurants.

Then go to Mala Luka cove (South of Veli Drvenik harbour), and anchor in the East tip, at about 6m; good swimming cove, unspoilt, albeit getting a bit narrow for larger yachts at its shallower end.

After we arrive there we hear loud cries of seagulls from the end of the cove, and later become witnesses of death in wildlife: A young gull, apparently injured, is floating in the water gradually giving up its ghost. Another gull flies around in circles crying, and only turns away after the one in the water has finally stopped moving.

The weather remains calm and sunny, perfect for swimming; we have lunch and stay until after 15:00; then it's time to depart for our charter marina.
Very light Southerly wind, and hot.

It's Jane' birthday next day, so we take the taxi to Primosten for the evening and dine on seafood and a large skarpina (the red scorpion-fish) at Stari Selo.
We find Primosten a charming and lively place; at this time it's not overcrowded.



Anchored in Mala Luka cove, Veli Drvenik island



Escape of the mutinous crew! No, temperature has exceeded 30 degrees C

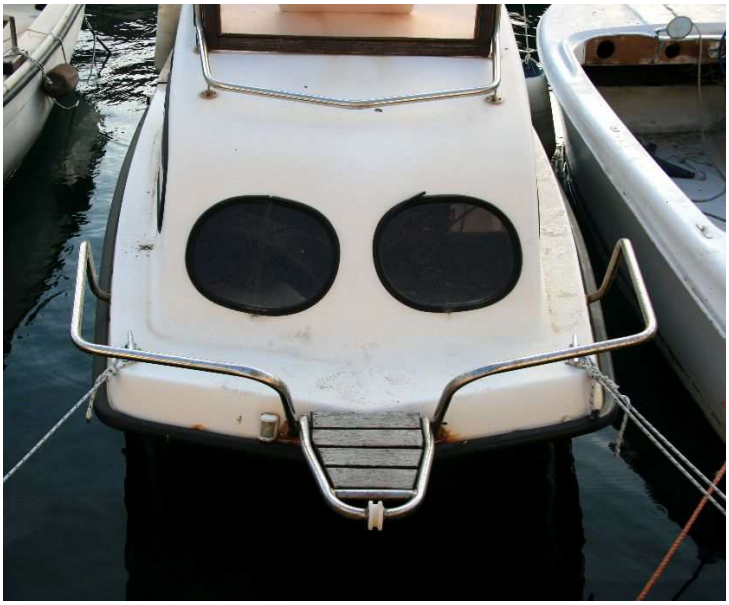



Sat 20.6. Home bound

The weather has deteriorated; the forecast SE wind finally got up and is blowing across the marina. We hand the boat back by 10:00; taxi to Split airport at 12:00.

A very enjoyable two weeks' holiday has finished; we have been very lucky, with no accidents, injuries, bad encounters or technical problems, but lots of hot and sunny days and mostly perfect cruising conditions.

The only losses are my old sun glasses which have found a final resting place on the seabed in Sipanska Luka.




SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Distances motored:

Kremik – U Solinka – Palmizana ACI – U Carnjeni/SCEDRO – Luka cove/ KORCULA (town) – Polace /MLJET – Okuklje/MLJET – Luka/SIPAN - U Sunj/LOPUD – ACI Marina Dubrovnik : 132 nm

ACI Dubrovnik – Luka/SIPAN – Trstenik/PELJESAC – Orebic/PELJESAK – U Smarska/HVAR – U Rasovatica/HVAR – Sucuraj – Pokrivenik/HVAR – Jelsa – Vrboska – U Zukova/HVAR - U Lucice/BRAC – Stomorska/SOLTA – Kremik: 153 nm

TOTAL 285 nautical miles

Fuel used 756 litres, consumption 2.65 litres per nm; mostly at (displacement) cruising speed of 8.5- 9.0 kn

COSTS in Kuna as of June 2009 (7.1 Kn = 1 EUR)

Harbour/marina fees, for a 13m motor cruiser

8.6. Palmizana ACI	400	
9.6. Korcula Luka bay (anchor)	-	
10.6. Mljet Okuklje (restaurant)	-	
11.6. Dubrovnik ACI	430	
12.6. Dubrovnik ACI	430	
13.6. Sipan town quay	130	(10 Kn p.m.)
14.6. Orebic	180	(ca 15 Kn p.m.)
15.6. Sucuraj	260	(20 Kn p.m.)
16.6. Jelsa town quay	240	
17.6. Vrboska town quay	240	
18.6. Stomorska public quay	220	

Fuel costs:

Refuelled at Dubrovnik ACI and Kremik marina (still no fuel station in marina, truck delivery organised by charter company)

Total 5299 Kn (average 7 Kn per litre)