Charter Cruise CROATIA 6.-13. September 2008. Central Dalmatian Coast and Islands

THROUGH THE KORNATI AND THE SIBENIK ARCHIPELAGO

Crew: Jane, PK, Wilhelm
Base: Marina Kremik near Primosten, central Dalmatia.
Boat: “Grazia”, Yaretti/Horizon 46, semi-displacement flybridge motor yacht with aft cabin (approx. 49 ft / 15.0m), 2x Caterpillar diesel 425hp.
Chartered from Offshore-Boote

Saturday 6.9.

Flight London Heathrow to Split, arrived 15:30. Usual taxi service to Kremik marina; we stop at a supermarket en route, in Rogosniza, for catering.

After check-in and yacht briefing we get the taxi to Rogosniza, restaurant Atrium, and have very nice first fish dinner.
The weather is hot, about 30deg C; forecast to get even warmer the next day; SE winds 3-4 during day.

Sunday 7.9.

I register the crew at the marina reception (Kn5/£0.58 p.p.), we do some catering in the marina market, and have the air-conditioning system fixed (a blockage of the cooling water filter had stopped it working).
We leave berth at midday and head for Lojena cove on Smokvica island in the Kornati. The SE wind has got up but does not impact us much.

In Lojena we choose restaurant Piccolo, where we are directed to go alongside the small quay. This feels a bit scary due to its low level and rough rocks sticking out underneath. The restaurant boy - who doubles as berthing helper- is adamant to pull the boat along the quay instead of securing our ropes first, causing further concern.
Anyhow, Piccolo proves a good choice; we have fish dinner with skarpina one of our favourites; the quiet balmy night invites for a late swim, a true treat.

Approx. 26nm.



Konoba Piccolo, Smokvica island



Evening in Lojena cove on Smokvica

Monday 8.9.

A short walk up the path, which starts near the second restaurant in the cove, Mare, offers amazing views of the Kornati channel to the NW and all around.



View to NW towards the Kornati channel, main island Kornat on the right side



180deg panoramic view from Smokvica towards West. Sculj island in the centre

We leave berth and cruise into the Kornati, passing Opat, and along Kornat island.



Restaurant in Opat cove



Along Kornat island

Lunch stop at Vrulje cove, anchored in the E part of the cove protected from the NW.
Kornati national park officials came along in a rib to collect the visitors' fee (Kn400 for an 11-18m boat)



Vrulje on Kornat, the largest settlement in the Kornati

Later in the afternoon we continue NW through the Kornati channel, past Silo island, and have a look into Telascica bay on Dugi Otok.
This includes a tour of the popular Mir cove.



Toreta (6th century fortress ruins) on hilltop



Tourists' cove, Mir, part of Telascica nature park

Finally, we make for restaurant Aquarius in the N of small Katina island, directly overlooking Mala Proversa passage.
We had expected that there would be buoys in the small cove opposite the Aquarius restaurant, as in the past, but there aren't any.
There is space on the inner part of the small jetty; but the presence of a catamaran moored alongside the short quay makes access difficult.
Adverse wind from NW does not help!
Somehow we squeeze past and moor with the assistance of the restaurant owner along the ragged wall, all without causing scratches on the boat.

We have a good meal, and hear from our host, Zoran, that he had just removed the buoys, in reaction to his neighbour who had started an illegal makeshift restaurant next to his, and was enticing customers moored on Aquarius' buoys away and to his (still crappy) place.
We wish Zoran best of luck with his restaurant and feel disturbed that rough people have arrived and started unethical practices on these idyllic bare islands where business is not easy anyway.

Approx 19nm



"Grazia" moored at restaurant Aquarius' jetty on Katina, Proversa Mala



A trip boat has passed the Proversa Mala passage heading for Mir cove

Tuesday 9.9.

The weather is clear, starting with a bright and calm morning; some NW of 3-4 bf getting up during the day.

Our plan is to anchor in a cove on nearby Zut island during midday and go to one of the restaurants in Zut cove over night. We anchor in the bare small Bodovac cove where the wind seems to come from WSW whilst outside it is NW. I notice that the voltage of the engine starter batteries is showing low, apparently not being charged by the alternator, the corresponding charge control light is out. I try to call the base to discuss but there is insufficient network coverage inside the cove. So we decide to go to Zut marina (ACI) on the other side of the island where we expect to be able to use our mobiles and be well positioned in case we need shore power or help.

The base confirms that the alternator might have an issue; I will monitor it, and meanwhile charge the batteries from mains power or generator.

We spend the afternoon in brilliant sunshine in the pleasant Zut cove with sunbathing and swimming.
Later we explore the large bay by dinghy; followed by reasonable dinner at the marina restaurant (its design reminds us of Piskera marina).

It feels like late in the season, only few boats on the long marina pontoon, although weather and sea temperature could not be any better.

Approx 9nm.



Berthed in ACI marina on Zut island, where the water invites to swim off the boat



Wednesday 10.9.

The forecast for the next couple of days is again for fine and warm weather.

We leave Zut by 10am and cruise in calm seas towards Murter island, passing Vrgada en route.
The ladies enjoy sunbathing on the front deck.
The boat feels comfortable and quiet at 9 kn, although being capable of up to 18kn when pushed, creating a big unpleasant bow wave.
We prefer the relaxed and fuel saving displacement speed.



Prisnjak Lighthouse on a rock at the NW end of Murter island

Along the West coast of Murter island, the small cove of Vucigrade is mostly blocked for yachts

by swimming area markers, with just 2 buoys for small yachts left in the centre.
We proceed to Kosirina, a much larger cove, and anchor at 6m in front of the beach and camping site. Sandy ground and good holding.
Swimming is good; at 3 pm we decide to leave for Tribunj marina, to explore the old town and tourist resort.

When using the deck-shower a corroded mixer tap disintegrates, hot water is splash out: No way to turn it off other than by switching off the domestic water pump; this means no water available nor working toilets on board(!); a solution is needed urgently.

After arrival in Tribunj marina (with fresh NW) I get in touch with Offshore Boote; helpers arrive by 7:30 pm and block off the hot water supply to the deck shower. Ah! The domestic water system is restored and so is the crew's morale.

Marina Tribunj is mainly occupied by annual berth holders, a collection of expensive craft; we were just able to get a visitors' space.
The upmarket marina looks modern and its facilities appear to be first class; prices are, correspondingly, high.

For dinner we walk along the harbour towards the Old Town and choose the original looking Simuni taverna; it is fine place, but it's sad to see there are hardly any guests any more at this time in the season.

Approx. 17 + 8 = 25 nm.



Tribunj's Old Town situated on a small island



Tribunj's old fishing harbour with Simuni restaurant across the water

Thursday 11.9.

The day starts warm and sunny; the weather forecast is for a fine day with little wind. We visit the resort of Tribunj, and find the location of the Old Town on a small island, its stone bridge and town quay with cafes and bars very pleasant.

I take a walk to Sv Nikola church on the hill behind the Old Town.
The splendid views over the Old Town and marina make the short hill climb, along a Way of the Cross, rewarding.



View from Sv Nikola church over Tribunj Old Town (to right) and marina

We leave berth at midday and cruise leisurely to Tijascica cove in the S end of Tijat island. The uninhabited cove is pretty and large, protected from the NW and obviously popular with yachties.
However, there are swarms of intrusive wasps, so we decide to weigh anchor and look elsewhere; we try U Smetnja on the S central part of neighbouring island Zmajan, equally pretty, uninhabited and protected against the wind, but - alas - wasps again!

Escaping the insects we head to Vela Nozdra on Kaprije island, a mile across to SW. This time we are lucky and able to spend a fine afternoon lunching and swimming.
At 4 pm we head round the corner to Mala Nozdra (Little Nozdra) cove, where Matteo's restaurant has been recommended. We moor stern-to to his small quay. Mala Nozdra is a pretty and partially wooded cove, offering good swimming, and excellent cuisine and friendly service at Matteo’s rustic place.
The cove is open to SE, but for the coming night there should be no issue.
Just to mention, there is of course no electricity or water supply on these island restaurant moorings.

Approx. 9nm



G8' is the second restaurant in Nozdra, maybe worth a try one day



Moorings at Matteo's konoba in Mala Nozdra



.. tied up on Matteo's jetty

Friday 12.9.

The high pressure weather has changed as a frontal trough approaches slowly from NW. During the night the wind has changed to a light SE. We leave Nozdra at 10am.

The sky is greyish with hazy sun but very warm. Looked at U. Tratica on Kakan (SE of U. Potkucina), no protection from SE, some mooring buoys.
Potkucina is an ample uninhabited cove, one mooring buoy was spotted; good anchoring in 8-9m.

We then change to small U Vanjska on Kaprije, protected from SE, for swimmung and lunch.



Cove Vanska on Kaprije

Around 2pm clouds gather and we leave the anchorage; go round the N tip of Kaprije and towards Zlarin for a harbour tour; light drizzle starts so we take to the inner helm. Zlarin harbour looks inviting and worth a visit at some stage; hardly any boats at this time.

Grey skies on our way back to Kremik; the SE is blowing stronger and raising some swell.

We make a harbour tour at Primosten, where there are still many yachts, but vacant spaces on the town quay and buoys.
Berth in Marina Kremik at 4:30pm.



Back to the forest of masts in Marina Kremik

The weather has cleared and the sun is out again, for the time being. We have dinner at the marina restaurant.

27 nm.

Saturday 13.9.

Taxi picks us up at 12:30, our flight departs 14:10, and by 16: 00 we are back in London.

REVIEW

Total mileage 115nm, most of it at 9kn displacement speed, some at 16kn.
Diesel fuel used 446 ltr (about 4 ltr/nm): Kn 4281.60/ €621/£495 (9.6 Kn per litre, approx €1.4 or £1.12 per litre)

We have been very lucky with the weather, with temperatures more like high summer than Sept; had just one half grey day (which cleared up later).
We have enjoyed wonderful nature, sun, swimming and good food; explored new islands and coves, including the enjoyable Sibenik archipelago.

We also revisited places in the Cornati islands: Much to do and to see without having to travel far from the base at Primosten.
Jane quite liked Tribunj as a mainland resort, but thinks that Primosten has more to offer.

Eating in island restaurants with jetties appears expensive (660-980Kn for 3, lower price is for meat, higher for fish dinners), but considering the savings on marina or harbour fees (maybe 480-580Kn) it still seems good value.

Exchange rate (9.2008): 1 EUR= 6.9Kn / 1Kn=EUR 0.145; 1 GBP =8.6Kn/ 1Kn =0.116 GBP

Kornati national park entrance fee Kn 400/€58

Dinners Kn 180-320/€ 26-46/£21-38 per person. (1st class fish Kn 380-400/€58 p.kg)

Finally, a few more impressions from this holiday:



Fishing boats in Tribunj



Marina Tribunj, strict separation between power and sail?