

Croatian Cruise Central Dalmatian Coast

Nights at Anchor & Nude Encounters

Port of Embarkation - Sibenik

11-25 Aug 2012



On board - Paul, Sandra, Eimile, Aoife & Roise McSorley

Vessel - Flores, Harmony 38 (2008). A well equipped and comfortable vessel operated by Dreamyacht Charters. 3 cabin layout with spacious double berth forward and 2 double aft cabins. C- type settee layout in cabin and a single heads. The vessel was well appointed for a Mediterranean charter and everything was in working order. Under motor made 5-6 kn @ 2300 revs, not hugely impressive but when in the Med what's the rush. It's sailing abilities remain unknown as winds were light and crews preference was always to travel directly between sunbathing location rather than indulge in finer points of sailing.

One very useful feature was a RIB tender with a 4HP outboard as standard. This proved very useful for commuting to shore and back, as we found that Dalmatian bays and climate lent themselves more to swinging at anchor than tying up ashore.

Wind & Weather. The guidebook warned of 2 fearsome weather conditions – the Bura and the Yuga. The Bura blows strongly from the North, tended to give cooler fresher conditions and usually heralded a period of fine calm conditions. The Yuga blows from the Southwest and was associated with dull and misty conditions. In fact the book warned that if one fell in the water during the Yuga one could be overcome with difficulty in breathing. There

were details of cloud formations that would indicate the approach of either weather system. We thus set off with a wary eye on the hills to the North & East for signs of the Bura and to the western horizon for signs of the Yuga. In fact we departed with fresh Bura blowing. Skies were clear and there was a pleasant coolness in the air. True to form the breeze dropped after 2-3 days and we spent the remainder of the trip in calm hot conditions. The only wind encountered was a very welcome sea breeze in the afternoon. Ideal conditions for nights at anchor in secluded bays.

Cruising Area. The cruising ground from Sibenik had 2 options. Inland along the extensive Kryk inlet to Skradin or out into the Adriatic to explore the extensive cluster of islands of the coast. The inland option is a very pleasant pocket cruise with enough interesting harbours and anchorages to pass a few days. Skradin and the Kryka Falls are well worth a visit. The Adriatic option offers a huge number of islands all within a few a few short miles of each other. We kept our trips short, rarely travelling more than 12 nautical miles a day and preferring a relaxing cruise to an extensive odyssey. Two hours motoring a day was sufficient to charge the batteries and ensure a steady supply of cool beers from the fridge. The islands and coast offered a range of stop-over options - well appointed but expensive marinas, harbours with stern-to moorings and a massive choice of bays to swing the night away at anchor or on a mooring. Facilities ashore ranged from bustling tourist towns to secluded villages with basic supplies arriving by ferry and rustic shacks offering little more than cold beer and the promise of good tasty fresh food. There were many boats working the area but we had no difficulty finding room to swing and get away from it all.

In the inland sea of Kryk dress code was smart, casual and reserved. In the Adriatic it was somewhat more relaxed with the opportunity to let it all hang out. In fact clothes were optional and naturism in some areas seemed almost compulsory. While it may appear healthy while not in motion, our observations were that even a minimum of clothing offered some protection from the hazards of operating a boat.

Aug 11, Saturday. Arrive Split, Croatia.

Our route to Croatia took us via the London Olympics, taking in Hockey, Tennis and Sailing at Weymouth. At Weymouth we found a grassy knoll looking over the 3 courses. It was worth seeing 3 Olympic events all at once, but even with courses coming within 50m of the shore, it was clear that sailing would never be a spectator sport. Best to seize the legacy and get afloat.

Aug 12, Sunday, Depart Mandalina Marina. Lunch at anchor of Vrulje. Overnight in marina Skradin.

Fresh Bura blowing 4. Warm. 8.6nm



Aug 13 Monday. Remained in Skradin Marina - visited Kryka falls. Magnificent.



Aug 14 Tuesday. Skradin to Mandalina to pick up boat hook & snorkelling gear, which we had forgotten. Anchored @ Mickulandre. Lovely bay to ourselves. Unusual experience of swimming in cool fresh water on surface but encountering a layer of warm sea-water 1-2 m below surface. The bay appeared initially like a quiet residential suburb on the outskirts of Sibenik until the festival started. Loud music & singing until 4am. Sounded like band played the entire repertoire of Eurovision losers since its inception. Glad when it finished.

Calm & warm. 14.8nm



Aug 15. Wednesday. Mickulandre to Zlarin. Overnight @ anchor. Wide spacious bay with warm crystal clear water. It was great to be back in the Med. Calm night & good sleep. Shops closed so ate out. Whole grilled calamari delicious. Lovely bay, worth a return.

Hot. 8nm

Aug 16. Thursday. Zlarin to Tribunj. Fresh Mackerel for breakfast bought from fisherman himself. Gutted & cooked for breakfast. Delicious. Tied up in marina next to brown super yacht. Not my preferred choice of colour scheme for superyacht. Several Ferraris - obviously popular with power boaters. Great marina but big price.

Bar 1016 Hot & calm 5nm



Aug 17. Friday. Tribunj to Smokiva V. Hot & calm. Picked up mooring & hefty admission charge for National Park. Beautiful anchorage popular with large power boaters. I was concerned that my 38 footer was beyond the load limit for relatively small concrete mooring but the much larger power boats seemed not to share my concerns. Very nice Taverna Picolo doing good seafood.

Bar 1018 Hot & calm 11.4nm

Aug 18. Saturday. Smokiva V to U Vucigrade, W side Murter Is. Lovely bay famed in a "Conan" movie. A lively Taverna on the shore was built a part of the set for a movie. Picked up mooring. We had delicious meal at their competitors. Very friendly waiter offered us free reign at his home-made alcoholic beverages of which he was immensely proud. The flavoured brandies were strong to say the least and best approached with caution.

Calm & V hot. Bar 1020 7nm.



Aug 19. Sunday. U Vucigrade. No interest in moving on so remained at mooring. Entertained by party of rather elderly naturists during afternoon on neighbouring large motor yacht. One of the securing lines of a motor boat, which was tied along side, had worked loose. The efforts of the 4 of them to re-secure the tender involved much throwing, pulling and hauling of lines. The chance of a mishap was great should one have unexpectedly taken up the strain on a rope entangled in bits of anatomy. With an eye to health and safety I would recommend that such situations are undertaken with dangly bits properly kept out of harms way under protective garments. Fortunately all was re-secured without injury and they were able to carry on as before.

Calm & hot. Some cloud at midday. Bar 1020

Aug 20. Monday. Vucigrade to Hramina marina, Murter via channel between Radelj & Gubavac Islands. Anchored off East side Radelj for lunch & swims. Hot & calm. Lovelies. Sea breeze picked up in afternoon making stern to berthing interesting. Successful at 4th attempt. No help from marina staff. Marina posh & clean but unfriendly & unhelpful. Rather industrial setting. Ate in & drank out. Lively town centre filled with tourists from Main Land.

Calm & hot Bar 1020. ~10nm

Aug 21. Tuesday. Hramina to Soline bay, Pasman Is. Ridge of high pressure over Adriatic continues to produce stable calm and hot weather conditions.

Almost ran over a lone swimmer as we passed north of Vgrada island. We were over a mile offshore and weren't expecting to come across a swimmer at this range from coast. He was off course entirely naked and the all over tan did not improve his visibility. Another concern for health and safety. Perhaps a pair of high visibility Speedos would improve his chances of a long and happy life.

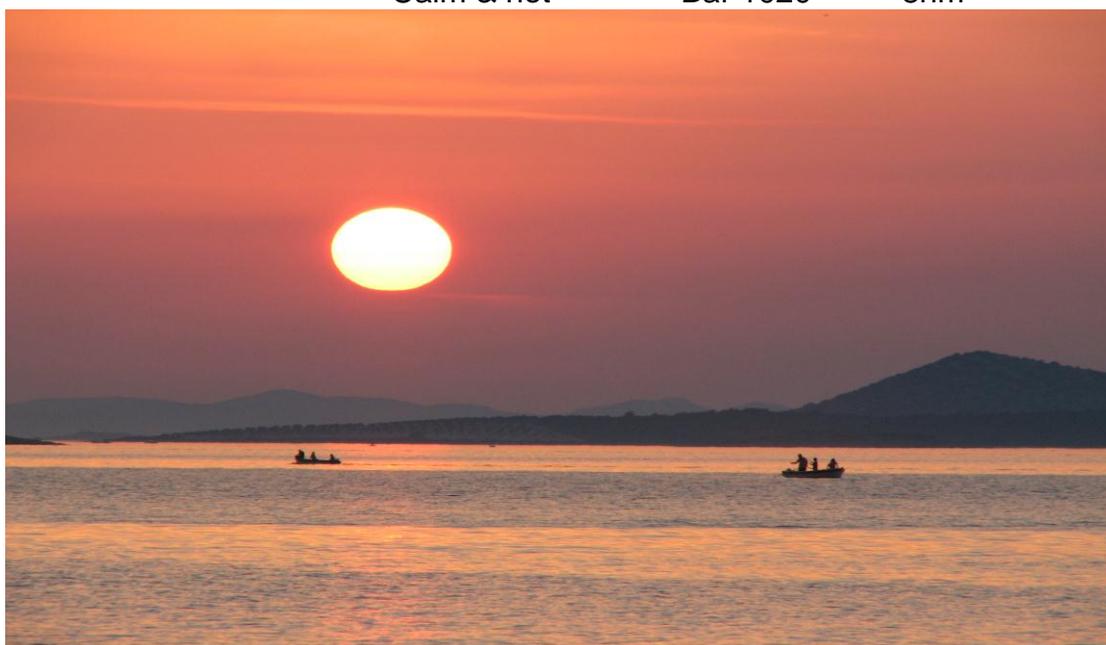
Very sheltered bay with moorings. Very quiet but charged 154 Kuna (~£20) for stay on dodgy rope mooring. Good tavernas at both ends of bays offering fresh fish. Knobs grill at north end looks good- more Conan than Conan. Rather primitive. No sign of mains electricity but they managed to serve a delicious cold beer. Calm evening. Fabulous view of stars, Milky Way & falling crescent moon.

Calm & hot Bar 1022. 12nm

Aug 22. Wednesday. Soline Bay to SV Andrija, Is Vrgada. Night at anchor. Had swims on way of Is Gangaro. Lovelies. Calm hot conditions holding. Anchored of NE end of Vgrada. As we arrived, a naked gentleman on an adjacent yacht was hauling up anchor. This he did by sitting over the anchor well with legs hanging under pulpit either side of bow. The Anchor chain then was handed between his legs. Again the potential for a nasty accident with heavy chain and dangly bits was too much to think about. A skipper should normally insist on a minimum of attire for anchor duties and heavy rope work. That is not being prudish, just safe practice.

Visit ashore not too inspiring. Island appeared to have non tourist function in past and has only just started to realise potential. Reminiscent of visiting Tory. Windless, hot & sticky overnight. Had to sleep in cockpit for comfort. Achieved 10m on breath hold dive down anchor. Roise got 5m.

Calm & hot Bar 1020 ~8nm



Aug 23. Thursday. SV Andrija, Is Vrgada to Krapije. Picked up a mooring. A very popular cluster of islands. An attractive little village with 4 tavernas and no bakery. Bread arrives at 09.20 in the morning we were informed. Most excellent Mojito served at beach shack at south end of village. Ate ashore – excellent sea bass.

Calm & hot Bar 1019. ~10nm

Aug 24 Friday. Krapije to Madalina Marina via Zlarin Joined queue for bread which duly arrived at 09.20 on ferry. Very fresh but I would have thought a bakery was an economic proposition in the village – a business opportunity if anyone needs one. Moorings rather too crowded to offer prospect of a clean refreshing swim, so we motored up the bay to find clear water and plenty of room to swim.

The last day on the cruise. Motored between island and anchored off Zlarin for lunch and last swim before return to base.

Calm & hot. Bar 1020 ~10nm

Aug 25 Saturday. Back in Base & checkout. Some damage noted to steaming light and fridge element but company were reasonable and my deposit was returned. Temperature rising close to 40°C. Hot & sticky ride back to airport as air conditioning in taxi not working.

Trip Total ~105nm

Croatia is an excellent cruising ground that is still in a relatively early phase of development. Food is not elaborate but is fresh and tasty. Croatia may not have the same buzz as Greece, but I would not hesitate to recommend it for a cruise that will take you away from it all. We had many quiet nights at anchor under clear starry skies and every night at anchor is known to add at least a year to your life. We departed Croatia relaxed and tanned. We had pleasant memories and just a few concerns for the wellbeing of our fellow sailors who were inclined to letting it all hang out.



