

Wednesday, December 21, 2011

Down South

Shopping for parts with Uwe from SY VenusWe've made good progress with the work on Gudrun, and pretty much exhausted what Santa Marta has to offer in terms of repair facilities. For the rest of the work we have to haul Gudrun out onto the dry, which we want to do at Shelter Bay Marina in Panama. Not that there are a lot of options, especially with a draft of 2.5m. It's only three days sailing to Shelter Bay Marina, and on the way are the beautiful San Blas islands where we want to stop over for a few days and go swimming again - we haven't been swimming since we've left Puerto Rico in June. The beaches of Santa Marta with it's sewage outflow and industrial port facilities are not very inviting. Maybe we're just spoiled. So we're very much looking forward to the San Blas islands. And truth be told, I can't wait to go through the Canal and sail into the Pacific. It's two years since I passed the 166 locks from Heidelberg to Port-Saint-Louis-Du-Rhone, and I'm excited to pass through the huge locks of the Panama canal. Benefits of a big cockpit: space for lots of peopleSo ... bye, bye Santa Marta and off we go? Hmm, not quite. First of all, the weather is not too great at the moment. The wind's are up to over 40kn every night, and a little further west from Santa Marta it's pouring rain. Not the best conditions for trading the safety and comfort of a very affordable marina for an island anchorage surrounded by coral reefs. Over the last few weeks a dozen boats have come in, and all are waiting until January to sail on. And so will we. In the meantime tourists from all over Colombia are arriving in Santa Marta, and the city is gearing up for Christmas celebrations with decorations and lights everywhere. Every other night there is a christmas party at the big mansion adjacent to the marina, until well into the morning hours. And like in all Spanish speaking countries I've been to there is only one volume setting for the amplifiers: maximum. Sometimes I wish for the quiet and consideration of Germany (no to mention the efficiency, and lack of bureaucracy). And for snow! Christmas at 30C just doesn't feel right. But where to find snow in South America? The Andes of course, and ... Tierra del Fuego. Tierra del Fuego: Glaciers, the Beagle channel, and Cape Horn. I've always wanted to go there, and I'm dreaming of sailing around Cape Horn one day (in the not too distant future). It's far away from Santa Marta, 7000km, exactly at the other end of South America. But it's still a lot closer than from anywhere else we'll be going in the near future. Incidentally January is among the best times to visit, and flights are cheap on the holidays. Ushuaia we come! BogotaBuenos AiresYesterday evening we flew to Bogota, and continued this afternoon to Buenos Aires. We will stay here until Saturday and then we're flying to Ushuaia for a week.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 23:55