

Friday, April 20. 2012

## **Big seas**

Friday, 2012-04-20, 11:40 (17:40 UTC), 5:50.1S, 101:07.2W, COG 240, SOG 7kn, Wind 18kn NE

Yesterday was one of those rare great sailing days. A day that makes you quickly forget that most days are not at all like that, and that some days are not nice at all. Like today.

The change came in the early morning hours, when the wind turned from E to NE and brought rain and stronger winds with it. Soon the waves came from the back as well, and Gudrun started to roll left and right again. And so far hasn't stopped. We're flying the parasailor high now, trading speed for more lift and stability, which improves things a little. Safety first! But the seas have gotten bigger as well, with the biggest being about 2.5m. Not dramatic, but enough to give the autopilot a hard time trouble keeping course as t. Every now and then a wave rolls underneath Gudrun, and the boat makes a quick dash to port or starboard and heels over mightily as the autopilot is too slow to respond. I'm sure somebody has built an autopilot with gyro- and acceleration sensors, which would do a much better job in these conditions. Maybe even with a little aft-looking radar or laser unit to register incoming waves? I'm certain it would sell very well on big yachts:

"I have a gyro-stablized steering system on my 70ft ketch, with three acceleration sensors that keep the boat always on a straights course."

"That's nothing. My latest 80ft sloop is equipped with the new 360degree waveaware (TM) unit, which detects incoming waves up to 50m away and automatically adjusts the sail trim. Our heel never varies more than 2 degrees!".

On Gudrun, however, I'm afraid this job falls to me. Time for some hand-steering after this blog entry. At least that solves the question of "what do do with yourself", which always comes up on dreary days like these. There is only so much reading and sleeping you can do before you feel like you're wasting your time. But the weather and movement don't permit much else. Today would be a great day for office work, or to meet friends in a cafe. Hope you're doing well at land! Liz says hi too, with a big hug to the Whitworths around the globe.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 13:27