

Thursday, April 8, 2010

### **My little prima donna**

Lifting the anchor Last night the wind changed from west to east, and increased to 30 knots. At half past eight I pulled up the anchor (no electrical anchor winch), and set sail towards Gibraltar. Or as close as I could set the course towards Gibraltar, which was not very close. With the wind from east, I should have been pretty much running before the wind. Because it is very hard to hold that course, and boats roll uncomfortably from left to right, I usually sail at an angle of up to 20°. More or less, depends on the boat. Looks like it's rather more for Vespina. She was still rolling heavily at 30°, and the waves were constantly threatening to push her off course. Broad reach instead of running. I had to be very alert and stem with all force against the rudder to keep her from getting turned into the wind. Unfortunately the wind-vane was no help at all today, because it could only hold a course of about 60° to the wind. So instead of running before the wind, I was more or less reaching and baby-sitting the rudder again all day. At first I blamed it on the wind-vane. But then I remembered that I had encountered the same phenomenon a couple of times before. With no swell everything is fine, but Vespina acts all funny as soon as those waves start pushing her around. I have to work the rudder so much that it feels more like rowing, and not sailing. No kidding. Maybe the problem isn't the wind-vane, but just Vespina's bilge-keel design? I looked into my log book for past wind direction vs. course steered. And yes, there seems to be a pattern. Either I'm doing something continuously horribly wrong, or Vespina has some severe limitations. Here is my highly scientific conclusion in form of a drawing: It shows at what angles of wind Vespina is easy to sail (green), hard unless there is no swell (yellow) and very frustrating (red). Angles of wind Looks to me like Vespina is a little prima donna who likes nice weather. Which is no problem for a 40nm or 50nm day-sail. But it is not so great when the plan is to cross an ocean alone, where the wind is pretty much always from behind. 20° more or less on course matters a lot when the distance is more than 2000nm. Hell, it even annoys me tremendously when it's only 100nm. But the real problem of course is that the wind-vane can't cope. Hm ... Well, over the next days I'll continue and try to make my way towards Gibraltar. I'm afraid it will not be pleasant. Any tips are highly appreciated! Or maybe I can simply weld a deep long-keel to Vespina's belly?

Posted by Axel Busch in Vespina at 15:33

Sehr spannend! Denk an Dich.

Anonymous on Apr 8 2010, 21:52

Hi Axel!

Interessantes Phänomen... mit welcher Beseglung bist Du vor dem Wind? Meine Vermutung ist, dass bei starkem Wind zuviel Fläche oben ist bzw. evtl. die Balance nicht hinhaut. Vor dem Wind hat sich bewährt, ganz auf's Gross zu verzichten und die Genua ziehen zu lassen, kostet nur wenig Speed und ist viel komfortabler, u.a. weil nicht so anfällig für Winddreher und weil das Schiff komfortabler in der Spur liegt. Viel Glück und viele Grüße

Thorsten

Anonymous on Apr 10 2010, 02:53