

Saturday, July 31. 2010

### **Birthday in Las Palmas**

Yesterday was my birthday! Can't have a birthday without presents, so I bought a "Radar Detector" for myself . That's a handy little device that uses next to no power and sounds an alarm when the radar beam of another vessel passes over Gudrun V. The last one of the little gadgets that makes sleeping without a lookout safer. Then I read my birthday email (so much, thanks guys!) and applied another layer of paint to the battery box. In the evening I went for a night-dive at the wreck of Kalais. Diving through the ship's cargo hold and passages only with a flashlight is really something special, definitely to be recommended. And after the dive I was surprised with a chocolate birthday cake (thanks Gricel!) and about 20 people, and we all went for drinks and some food. Just great! No pictures unfortunately, way too busy talking. I got back home early in the morning and needed, quite honestly, most of the day to recover.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:09

Thursday, July 29. 2010

### **1.111.307 nm in four months**

The proof: I have sailed 1.111.307nm. New world record! My Raymarine C80 chart plotter came with a lot of features - and a big problem. Out of the box the ground log showed more than one million nm sailed. There is a feature to reset the ground log. But it didn't work. There is also a feature to reset all settings and restore the factory defaults. Which worked. But since the factory default seems to be to set the ground log to a random number, it didn't help an awful lot. Sounds like an uninitialized variable to me. Naturally I checked the Raymarine website for a new firmware version. It turned out that I have Version 4.30, whereas the officially available Version is (still) 4.29. It also says "Development Version" on my info screen. Interesting! Update problems. A little confused (and amused) I registered at the Raymarine website and filed a bug report, complete with screenshot. The reply was not so amusing, because it never came. So the only option left to me was to downgrade to the older version from the website and hope that this one doesn't show the problem. During the update the device crashed once, but in the end it completed the update. And - eureka! - I was able to set the ground log to 0 - finally. Side note: the version 4.29 is also labeled "Development Version". Sigh. As Arndt commented already - all these problems sound way too familiar to our regular working life. Because I can't be having that here on the boat I put aside the little electronic troublemakers after the update and went to the diving school to take the theory class for the "Night/Low Visibility Diver" specialty. Surprisingly the Spanish in the exam was considerably harder to understand than that for the "Nitrox" specialty. Probably because Nitrox is only about simple physics (partial pressure calculation mostly), whereas night diving is about very complicated things like communication, orientation and following procedures. Anyway ... I'm looking forward to a special treat for my birthday tomorrow: night diving!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 02:37

Wednesday, July 28. 2010

### **Second thoughts about the batteries**

Current draw (@ 12V) Radar 2,4A Autopilot 1,7A Chart plotter 0,8A Stereo 0,8A Lights (night) 0,8A Navigation lights (night) 0,3A VHF Radio 0,2A AIS 0,2A Navtex 0,1A Sounder/Log 0,1A Sum 6,6A ! Ever since I've ordered the batteries I've been thinking. Something doesn't feel right. Adding more batteries is one way to deal with the power consumption. But is it the right way? I don't think so. I should reduce my power consumption, and not buy bigger batteries. Actually, all I really need during a crossing is the Sounder/Log, the AIS, Navigation lights and a little light inside. That adds up to a current draw of 0,5A during the day (6W) and 1A during the night (12W). However, in addition to what I have I would need a little device to show my GPS position and sound an AIS warning, because I would keep the power-hungry chart plotter turned off. Hmm. Actually ... I have a Lego Mindstorms NXT "intelligent brick" with me. With a interface converter from RS-232 to RS-485 and "a little programming" to parse the NMEA data from the AIS engine that should be able to do the job just fine. And it only draws 0,1A. Come to think about it, I also have a compass sensor for it, hehe. Hey, this is cool! So here's the plan: I'll cancel one of the batteries, 3x168Ah is enough. And turn my LEGO NXT into an AIS display. Should it turn out that I "can't live" without the stereo, chart-plotter (not much to plot on an ocean) and radar, I'll get an Ampair towed water generator.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 03:17

Tuesday, July 27. 2010

## **New Batteries**

so much ..... stuff! After the strengthening BBQ my back was ready for more challenges. Like emptying the huge lockers to get to the batteries. Even though I knew there was a lot in those lockers, I was still impressed when everything was finally arrayed on the deck. Then I had a clear view of batteries. They are not in good shape and loose their charge rather rapidly, so I need to replace them. Gudrun's current "battery bank". Which raises important questions like "What type?" and "What size?". In addition to a starter-batterie I have two 108Ah maintenance-free wet-cell batteries on Vespina. These 216Ah are just enough to run the navionics, lights, radio and auto-pilot for about 30h in "adverse charging conditions" - not much apparent wind and clouds, and then the battery is in desperate need of a recharge. First of all I would like to have a bigger safety margin than that, and second the batteries last a lot longer when they are not discharged to less than 50%. So in the long run it's actually cheaper to buy bigger batteries. Fortunately I have a lot more space on Gudrun, and after a little calculation I decided that 500Ah to 600Ah would be about ideal. There is also the question of type: serviceable wet-cell, maintenance-free wet-cell, AGM or GEL? But once I started reading about the different types it became quickly apparent that AGM is what I wanted to have. They cost more than wet-cell batteries (about 2.5EUR/Ah compared to 1.4EUR/Ah), but they last at least twice as long. In addition they are truly maintenance-free, charge faster, keep the charge longer, can operate when submerged, and are in general safer. GEL-type batteries are better in hotter climates and can be discharged deeper, but the higher costs (about 3.5EUR/Ah) are not worth it. In the end I decided for four 168Ah AGM batteries from Mastervolt - 42kg each. Plus a small 65Ah as a starter battery for the Engine. And today I go shopping for plywood to build a nice battery-box.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 03:53

Monday, July 26. 2010

### **Pictures from the BBQ**

Yesterday I had the privilege to attend the best planned & executed barbecue ever. For half an hour Carlos seemed to be everywhere at once, and then the fire was going, the meat salted, the drinks covered in ice, and everything else also at the ready. It's always great fun to see professionals at work! Orvil is starting the fire. Carlos, el rey de el asado Check out the girl-to-guy ratio. Football is mandatory ..... slingshot shooting plain fun. A survivor.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 01:12

Saturday, July 24. 2010

## **Of AIS and BBQ**

Not much happening here at the moment. Last week I managed to move the VHF Radio, GPS, AIS, Navtex, Radar, Chartplotter and Iridium antenna from Vespina to Gudrun V. Unfortunately not without protests from my back - too much time spent in awkward positions while removing and adding electrical cables. So this week I was forced to take it very slowly. So slowly, actually, that for four days all I could do was to lie on my back and read or sleep until the pain went away. On the positive side that gave me time to improve my Spanish a bit, so that I was able to attend an "Enriched Air Nitrox" diving class in Spanish for the last two days and successfully passed the written exam today - also in Spanish. It's not a big thing, but I'm proud of it anyway. Unfortunately I'm still absolutely useless when it comes to any meaningful conversation. Obviously more practice is necessary! Which I'll probably get tomorrow at a big BBQ hosted by Carlos, one of the diving instructors. Carlos is Argentinian with a special interest in lots of meat, and he's been planning that BBQ for the last two weeks now. Should be interesting . Carlos is also one of the guys I've been diving most with. He speaks as little English and German as I speak Spanish, but mixing all three languages together we somehow manage to get a simple conversation going. Well, hands and feet are also often necessary. And it certainly helps that we share the same sense of humor. Other than that I am working on a document that describes in detail how to install AIS receivers and hook them up with Chart-plotters and Laptops. Many of the sailors I've met had expressed their interest in the matter, since AIS is such a simple and inexpensive way to make sailing in high-traffic areas safer. Unfortunately there is no comprehensive how-to available, so I thought I could write one while I'm into the subject. Patience conquers technology! It's not a big thing really: find out where the data is coming from and where it should go, then read the manuals and figure out what cables to connect. Finally wire everything together and pay special attention to the grounding. It's easy enough to do, especially with a good voltmeter and - patience. Btw, here's my opinion on what it really takes to stay sane in a world where electronics and software are encroaching on all aspects of life: patience. Simplified AIS installation on Gudrun V. But after I started writing I noticed that there are quite a few different scenarios to cover, and that every vendor of the involved devices uses (of course) a different color coding for the wiring. And then of course there is the software configuration part. Baud rates, COM ports etc. So ... unsurprisingly it takes me a lot longer to write the document than I had anticipated, and I'm afraid it's not quite possible to target the electronically ignorant as I had hoped initially. Which Roy, my neighbor, will be probably glad to hear: Roy funds his voyage mostly by carrying out electr(on)ical installations as well as computer & diving works for other sailors.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:02

Tuesday, July 13. 2010

### **The mast is out**

Rolo is guiding the mast out. Here it comes. It's only seven months since I stepped the mast on Vespina. I did not think then that I'd see a crane so soon again. Fortunately the memory of what to do and in what order is still fresh, and I only had to reverse the steps to prepare Gudrun V. Only an empty hole remains. No innocent bystanders (e.g. Frederick) were hurt. The appointment with the crane was for 1pm at the shipyard, which is just two pontoons away. I arrived 10 minutes early, and so did the crane. The guys from the shipyard checked Gudrun V briefly over and after a nod and a grunted "no problem" the spectacle started. Half an hour later everything was over. Every hour spent on preparation is two hours saved during the operation. And Gudrun V is now a motorboat. Before ... .. and after. Tomorrow Octavio will check over the mast and together we'll then prepare everything for sanding and painting. I already spotted a small fracture at a welding near a spreader, which will have to be re-welded. Apart from that the mast looks like it's in good shape even after 30 years. No visible bends, dents or cracks.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 10:27

Monday, July 12. 2010

### **Campeones del mundo!**

Ole ole ole ole! Up and away ... al agua! al agua! Enhorabuena España! The best football team of the world won the world-cup. I watched the game together with my new Canarian friends in the diving school, after a party on the boat of Gorka, the diving instructor. Everybody had brought food and drinks (I had made Raisin-Walnut-Paprika-Couscous), and it was a wonderful party. It was also very hot, and many jumped (or were made to jump) into the water frequently. This practice got totally out of hand after the match, as people were lifted up and dragged away to be thrown off the 5m high jetty. Gathering around the food and chilling. Even though I had to climb out of the water four times I am very happy to have found some friends here. It makes a huge difference to my life. Most voyagers are easy to get along with and you get acquainted very quickly, often within minutes. But it's different with locals. To them voyagers come and go so quickly that it's not worth the effort to get to know them better. And often enough the boaties don't care much for the locals and stick to themselves. So if you want to you have to make the effort yourself: Stay at the same place for a while, show a little respect, do as they do and be consistent. But it's impossible to do that when you sail every few days from one harbor to the next in order to get to see the country. Instead of seeing all of the country I prefer to get to know the people where I stay. So for me doing longer sails and then staying somewhere for a few weeks is the better choice. 1. Scrape away the rubber sealing. 2. heat the base with a gas torch. 3. hammer away on the impact drill. Otherwise the work is going well on Gudrun V. Only the winches are giving me a hard time. The stainless-steel screws are firmly locked into the aluminium threads, and it takes a gas-torch, impact driver and a lot of patience to get them out. After three days of work I only have six of the twelve winches removed. But today I will finish preparing the rigging for having the mast taken out tomorrow. It needs new fittings, rolls etc. and new paint - a lot of work. In the meantime Octavio and Domingo from Alisios Sailing Center are working on the new sails and rigging. As it turned out Octavio knows Marti and Yaiza (Gudrun V's previous owners), because his wife comes from the same town. And Domingo is an Olympic gold-medalist and two times Americas Cup sailor (1999, 2007). In addition they are really nice guys, and talking and working with them is great fun. Unfortunately even though Octavio made a good price, the new sails (genoa, full-battened main-, stay- and storm-sail) are costing me an arm and a leg: 6000 EUR. Originally I wanted simple cross-cut Dacron sails. But as the difference in price is not very big I went for the better performing DC Sandwich Polyester with a radial cut in the end. Fortunately I can at least reuse the Gennaker from Vespina.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 04:12

Wednesday, July 7, 2010

**Clip form the first passage on Gudrun V**

A short clip of the uneventful passage with "Gudrun V" from La Graciosa to Las Palmas. There really isn't much to see, except how little the boat moves while doing 9 to 10 knots.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 21:50

Sunday, July 4, 2010

## **In Las Palmas with Gudrun V**

Back to front: Henk, Sepp and Christa. Sepp and Christa sailed to New Zealand, where their boat burned down. Now they go again. That's the spirit! Las Palmas has the best facilities for yacht repairs in the Canaries. Since Gudrun V needs a pretty complete overhaul of the rigging (old), the sails (very old) and the deck hardware (blocked with sand), this is where I had to take her. I expected that the trip would reveal other problems that I had missed on the survey and test-sail. I had estimated that I would need approximately 24 hours for the 120nm, give or take 2 hours. Because the harbor office in Las Palmas is open from 9am to 2pm on Saturdays, I wanted to leave La Graciosa around 11am on Friday. Well, with all the last-minute-preparations and saying farewells it was 1pm when Sepp, Christa, Henk, Patrick and his girlfriend waved me good-bye. For the first hour I only used the engine, to check that this is going well. When I was confident that the engine would bring me back in case of trouble I turned into the NNE wind and set the sails. Left to right: Patrick, Henk, Christa, Sepp. The mainsail is with 40sqm almost twice as big as on Vespina, and I had to use the winch for the last few meters. Theoretically I can set it from within the cockpit. But Gudrun V also has a winch next to the mast and I'm so used to working on the mast from Vespina that I set it from there. The genoa also unfurled smoothly from the freshly fixed Profurl furler. And then the furler came apart. Damn, looks like our repairs on the gear were not as good as Marti and I had hoped. I gave it a little twist and it looked like I could furl it back in anyway. Contrary to Vespina on Gudrun V the genoa is a lot smaller than the main-sail. Oops. Broken furler. I estimated that I would only have to drop the main-sail to sail downwind with the genoa completely unfurled up to wind force 6 easily, probably more. So I very likely wouldn't need the furler until I arrived in Las Palmas. And there I could always drop the genoa the old-fashioned way without using the furler. So no worries. I went back on course to Las Palmas and sat down in the cockpit, eager to see how Gudrun V would handle. I sailed on a broad reach, with a gusty wind of force 3 to 4. Contrary to Vespina a gust showed itself mainly in more speed, and very little heel. Sail away! The pressure on the rudder was very light and constant. Just wonderful. At first I made between 6 and 8 knots, but when I started trimming a little the speed increased to beyond 9 knots. For an hour I sailed like that. A huge smile split my face in half and I could hardly believe that I found such a wonderful boat. This was almost too easy. I know there will be times in the future where I'll curse the deep draft of 2,50m. But right then it made me the happiest sailor in the world. Fantastic. A look inside. View from the navigation table. An hour later the wind increased to a force 5. Gudrun started to heel more as she was approaching 10 knots, and the force on the tiller increased. Time to reef the main-sail. Or drop it, because at the rate I was going I would arrive in Las Palmas in the early morning hours. So I dropped the main-sail and just sailed on with the 35sqm genoa at about 5 knots on average. I wondered briefly whether sleeping alone on a boat at night during the first trip is a proper "seamanlike" thing to do. I came to the decision that it was probably not. But Gudrun sailed so smoothly and quietly that I had not a single doubt about her capabilities and my safety. In that she is very similar to Vespina. So seamanlike or not - I made myself comfortable in the cockpit and started to sleep in my usual 30 minute intervals. By now I'm so used to it that I don't need to set the alarm anymore. I still do it, but I always wake up two or three minutes before it goes off. Then I take a look around, check everything that I feel needs checking, reset the alarm and go back to sleep. After a few hours I switched to sleeping in the cabin as it got colder during the night. "Optimist" sailing school in the harbor of Las Palmas. The entrance into the harbor in Las Palmas was without complications. The furler worked despite being broken, and coming alongside the pontoon is a well-practiced maneuver. The paperwork was a different matter, and I was a little apprehensive as I entered the office. The German flag-certificate hadn't been issued yet, and I knew trying to check-in without one would not work. But after talking with Yaiza to the harbor master in La Graciosa we had agreed that I would sail under the Spanish flag and act as if the boat still belonged to her and Marti. She wrote a note for me saying that I am allowed to move the boat in her name. So I showed the Gudrun's Spanish documents, the note and my passport, and everything seemed to go well. Until the harbor master pointed out that the insurance document was outdated. Marti or Yaiza would have to fax a current copy before I could check in. But fortunately I had already applied for insurance for Gudrun myself and had received and printed the documents. I showed them and that was good enough for the dear harbor master and he finished checking me in. The fee for Gudrun V is 280 EUR per month, water and electricity included. That is 80 EUR more than I pay for Vespina. 40% more, but still affordable. Over 12m length is where it really gets expensive, and Gudrun is 11,98. Now Gudrun V is tied up only four boats away from Vespina on the same pontoon, and moving stuff back and forth between the two boats is easy. Sure, right alongside would have been even better, but on a marina with more than 1000 berths being on the same pontoon is more than I could have hoped for. For tomorrow morning I have an appointment with Octavio from the Alisios Sailing Center, the company that will make the new rigging and probably also the sails for Gudrun V. Very exciting!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 07:50

Friday, July 2. 2010

## **On the way to Las Palmas**

So far everything works great. I left just after 1pm and set the sails after one hour of motoring at 5kn. Gudrun V is doing 6 to 9 knots ever since. Even though she sails almost upright. At the rate I'm going at the moment I'll be too early in Las Palmas. We'll see, still 100nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Vespina at 11:55

## **Family life on Gudrun V**

Marti sewing, Anna helping. Yep, there is a sailing boat somewhere. After Marti and his family left on Wednesday afternoon I started to prepare Gudrun V for sailing to Las Palmas. Marti had already helped me with fixing the Profurl roller-furling (new gears) and mending the genoa, while Yaiza was sorting through their stuff on the boat, and the children were playing in the cockpit. From Sunday to Wednesday the cockpit has been a mess of toys and tools, and it was impossible to see that there is a sailing boat below all that stuff. Yeeehaaa! Anna Quim During those days we five lived together on Gudrun. It was a very special time for me, to share the life of this wonderful family with the two little kids Anna (1,5) and Quim (3). Living on the boat with kids is very different from regular "crew life". Everything takes unbelievably longer, and it is very hard to actually finish some work because always the kids have to pee, are hungry, hurt themselves, or want to help. I can imagine that this could possibly be a very frustrating experience, especially with the time pressure of getting everything done before the flight home. Talking in the evenings. Lunch with Patrick. But I've watched Marti and Yaiza deal with this situation over and over again with all the patience and calmness you would attribute to a Zen master. They worked while the kids were playing or sleeping, and when the kids needed attention they immediately dropped the work and cared for the kids. Sometimes to play, sometimes to give in, sometimes to be firm and make a point. But always calm and patient. After a while the kids were fine again on their own, and then Marti and Yaiza picked up the work where they had left it. Sometimes with a sigh, but always with a grin. So despite the bustle the last few days have been very quiet, and without all the screaming and stress that I had feared. Very educating indeed. Yaiza and Anna dancing. Bye, bye!! I've always wondered how people sail with little children, and I'm glad that I had the chance to get a glimpse of that. Being in a hurry is always a bad thing on a boat. With children it becomes madness. But I think when one accepts that the adults set the direction but the children set the pace, then it becomes very relaxed. Certainly it takes more time to do anything, and you have to be a lot more careful and plan ahead. But you still can do everything. And in a way it is much more fun too, as you see the kids explore and learn and adapt to their environment. Or adapt it to their liking, so maybe you want to pack some extra spare parts. La Graciosa harbor. Now Gudrun V is ready for sailing to Las Palmas. Everything is stowed away, I know where all the seacocks and tools are, and the Diesel and water tank is full. Just in case (by the way: 83 Cent for a liter Diesel). The weather forecast predicts 15 to 20 knots of Wind from the NE, a little less during the night. With Vespina that would be about 30 hours for the 120nm from La Graciosa to Las Palmas. Let's see how long it takes with Gudrun V. I am very excited.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 04:59