

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

### **Lost in Barcelona**

Counter closed. Barcelona? Barcelona! Because of the reduced off-season flight plan to and from Gran Canary, and the winter chaos at a few major Airports, my choice of affordable pre-Christmas flights to Germany was somewhat limited. The best option seemed to be a flight with Vueling to Barcelona, and then continue to Stuttgart with Germanwings. Unfortunately the vueling flight was 90 minutes late. With further delays at the baggage retrieval (40min) and transfer between the two terminals (20min) I missed my second flight by 10 minutes. And there was no other flight to Germany that day. So ... a day in Barcelona. Could be worse I've been here a few times before, mostly on business. Walking again through the streets of my favorite city in Europe reminds me of the last time I was here, 51 weeks ago, on the way to Ibiza very early on in my voyage. I spent New Year here and incidentally met up with my friends Kym, Neil, George, Ville and Johanna. Celebrating with them took my mind of the two storms that I passed through on the way here. I remember, when I left La Escala for Barcelona another sailboat was coming into port, escorted by the marine rescue boat. Hehe, I'll never forget the look on their faces, though barely visible underneath the foul weather gear. Little did I know that I'd run into the worst storm of my life after leaving Barcelona! Only a year, but it seems a lifetime ago. So much has happened since then. The Christmas holidays will be a time for reflection for sure. I'm very glad that the work on Gudrun V is done and that uncertainty and pressure is off my mind. And the financial strain off my wallet! Refitting a racing boat ... what a stupid idea .

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:31

Tuesday, December 21. 2010

### **Simplify your boat - throw stuff out!**

Yesterday I threw out the washing machine. Well, "threw" is a little exaggerated. "Lifted it out very slowly with the help of my friend the fork-lift" is what really happened. From now on washing is done (like on Vespina) by hand and laundry. But in exchange I get a lot of space to store food. I like food. I also gave away the TV and XBox 360. Haven't turned either on in 5 months. And everything that isn't used for half a year ... goes out. With it went a large amount of tools and "stuff". Simplify your boat! Preparations Ready! Bye bye! Harald the carpenter and his toys. The guy claims that's only half of what he has on the boat. Insane. And more important things happened: The wood for building a shelf where the washing machine was got delivered. Harald is going to do this while I'm gone. Check out the crazy amount of tools he's got. And the mast got sealed into the deck. Unfortunately without sailing with Domingo beforehand, but the guy just never has time. But I'm confident that the rake of the mast is ok as it is, at least Gudrun sails wonderfully with it. Today I am leaving for Germany (by plane) until January 16th. The last weeks here were full of frantic activity to get the boat ready before Christmas, because when I come back I want to leave within a few days. And it looks good. All the important systems - sails, rigging, water, electricity, navionics, engine - are done. Done! After five months of work. I'm so happy.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 01:37

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

### **Cleanliness is next to godliness**

Carlos helping me with the engine. Good news: the cooling problem of the engine is a thing of the past. I removed all hoses from the saltwater intake to the exhaust one by one and cleaned them, lubricated them, and put them back. Halfway through the work Carlos came around, quickly followed by Krasimir. Together it was much easier, and more fun too. Plenty of opportunities for practical jokes involving water under pressure and handing the wrong tools :-p. Gudrun's bilge. Not easy to clean with all the cables and hoses. After the work was done the bilge was half-flooded with water from the hose-testing and -cleaning. Because I don't like half-finished jobs I removed all the floor-boards and flooded the rest of the bilge too. I thought that would be a good opportunity to test the three bilge pumps and really clean the bilge, because it looked like that job had been neglected for the last ten years at least. Turns out one of the manual bilge pumps is not working and I need to replace the diaphragm. Floorboards drying on the deck. Good morning! Took me a few hours to get all the dirt out and clean the boards, but now I feel much better. Cleaning always makes me happy, because with every swipe you get a little sense of achievement. Wonderful frustration therapy too, although fortunately I find little cause for being frustrated with my current life style. By the time I was done with cleaning the sun came up and greeted me with a beautifully colored dawn. What more can you ask for. Sprayhood frame. After having a Coffee with Inigo I started to mount the sprayhood-frame that Miguel welded for me. It's purpose is to protect the entrance from rain and spray while the hatch is open. It will also allow me to stand or sit in the entrance, feet inside the boat, and be well protected from the weather while having a look around. Most people have bigger sprayhoods that cover the whole width of the cockpit. But I don't like them very much, unless they are of the solid type liek Vespina had one. As far as canvas goes I only trust the small sprayhoods. Also suits Gudrun better. Can't have a sleek racing boat and then put a huge sprayhood on top of it, can you.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:34

Monday, December 13. 2010

**|: sail, work :|**

Bad weather = good pictures Bad weather = concerned looks Unfortunately I had to cancel the trip to Fuerteventura because of the weather - first the wind was stronger than I would have liked without getting the "ok" from the rigger first, and next day the weather changed and I was afraid to be stuck in Fuerte for a while, and there is still so much work to do. So after a few hours beating against the wind and getting soaked I returned to port. Looking back it seems like it was better this way, even though it was very sad not to be able to meet up with Klaus. Since then I've been sailing in front of Las Palmas almost every day, some days twice, and on the other days I rearranged stuff on the deck, replaced gear or installed new stuff. Now everything works great, and I can handle it well enough alone. I have a few more ideas for improvements but these are nice-to-have. The only thing the rig needs 'officially' before I can say "done" is, as far as I can tell, the approval of the rigger, another toggle for the second Spinnaker halyard, and sealing the mast where it goes through the deck. I hope to go sailing with Domingo tomorrow and finish that bit. Then I can start tuning the Wind-vane. In the meantime I am servicing the engine. The exhaust smoke is white, which can mean water in the fuel or faulty injectors. I bled of old Diesel from the bottom of the tank (dirty dirty!) and replaced the fuel filters, hope that helps. If not I'm afraid the injectors need servicing. I also exchanged the oil and oil-filter and at the moment I am working on the water cooling, because I think there should be more water being ejected through the exhaust. I've already cleaned the filters, valves, hoses and replaced the impeller, but still. My guess is that it sucks air somehow, maybe through the water filter. The plan is to bypass the water filter for a test and see if that improves the situation. And then see how it goes. The engine doesn't trouble me too much which is why I left it to the end. It will get me out of port here and into port in St. Martin, and there are not many lee-shores on the way across the Atlantic. The ParasailorThe "regular" sails.Regarding the sailing I'm happy to say that it's absolutely fantastic. Gudrun sails wonderful, with very little movement, and everybody I take out with me is impressed by her performance on all courses and wind speeds (though 30kn was the maximum so far). 90° and downwind I usually only set the Parasailor as the only sail, and upwind the mainsail and genoa that Octavio made for me are absolutely fantastic (and pretty too ). I can sail nicely up to 30° apparent wind, with the best speed at 35°. Impressive. I really like the deep draft (2.5m). PeterHarald, Gerhard, ClaudiameRegarding sailing single-handedly ... well. Very different from Vespina, where I could do everything at the same time: Tiller between the knees, main-sheet in one hand and genoa-sheet in the other. Gudrun is different. Very. Because of the runners, the cockpit size and it's compartmentalization by the mainsheet-track a crew of three would be ideal: One at the tiller and main-sheet, one for the runners, one for the genoa. Alone it's a little more difficult because I can't reach from the tiller to the winches for the runners or the genoa. And because of the size of the sails holding anything just in the hands is impossible. So the operation for e.g. tacking is like this: • turn on the autopilot • go close to the wind • harden the mainsail and the genoa • change the runner • set the autopilot to tack • switch the genoa tack • ease out the runner • ease out the sheets • change to new course Kind a lengthy. And gibing in strong winds is to be avoided. But it's absolutely possible to sail her alone, and the reward for all the trouble is a feeling like being "king of the hill" as she speeds through the waters. Then I leave the cockpit and sit on the windward side, feet dangling centimeters above the water and my arms hanging lazily over the rail, nose in the wind. Great feeling, absolutely exhilarating. Anybody wondering why I love sailing?

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:23

Tuesday, December 7, 2010

## **Sailing!**

NanaLizSailing! A lot has happened since the last blog entry. I was invited to Dinner by Nana and Andreas, who left Germany this summer on a sabbatical to sail around the world. Then Liz arrived. We went diving together, and when the high-load blocks arrived a few days later we installed them and went sailing together - finally! Gudrun sails wonderfully. After that some partying was required, at Krasimir's, El Mojo and of course also on Gudrun. We also went to see the Bodyboard World championship at El Confital, but arrived a little late :-p. Now Liz is gone again, and I'm back in my old routine. Fiesta at Krasimir's place. And el MojoCooking! Liz expands her horizon ...diving ..... and climbing the mast. I'm very glad that Gudrun V can finally be sailed. Not everything is complete done yet, for example the final sail with the rigger still has to be completed before I can seal the hole in the deck through which the mast goes. At the moment only a few meters of cling film stand up to the wind and spray. But Domingo is taking part in a regatta in Florida at the moment, so this has to wait another week. Apart from that there are still various pieces that have to be fitted to the mast and deck, the engine has to be serviced yet and I decided to throw out the washing machine and install a cupboard for food instead. The only place I can store food now is in the bilge, and I had bad experiences with that on Vespina. So I will still be busy for another few weeks and not be leaving before Christmas. But I had given up on that dream shortly after the ARC left anyhow. To cross the Atlantic was the only thing I had wanted to do this year, but no personal goal is important enough to cause pain to the ones you love. And this Christmas and New Year's is for the family. I will be celebrating Christmas in Germany with my family and then we all fly to New Zealand for New Year's to celebrate with Liz's family. The first get-together of the two families, yeah! . And just in time before Liz will be joining me on the boat (!) ... after I've crossed the Atlantic. So we're talking about a crossing in January and then time together sailing in the Caribbean from February onward. Will be interesting to see how she likes it. After more than a year apart I'm very much looking forward to spending some time together. Therefore I am very relieved that I can finally sail with Gudrun V, and that that elusive goal - crossing the Atlantic - is getting within reach. The most difficult milestone on the way is reached - the rigging is complete. Having done all that work on Gudrun makes me realize just in what good shape Vespina was when I bought her. I was really lucky there (and Ulrich and Anke as trustworthy and honest as I had hoped). I could have very well been a nasty surprise after reaching the med, and I might still be stuck there getting Vespina ready - in the cold, and with very little sailing experience. Much better to work on the boat where it's warm, and when you know (more or less) what you are doing and what for . So the next big thing is practicing with the new rig. It's a lot more complicated than on Vespina, and it will take some time until I will have the hang of it and be able to operate it efficiently. A whole new world in sailing. A good opportunity to enter that world is an overnight sail to Fuerteventura. A friend of mine, Klaus, will be there for a week and I want to leave Gran Canaria on Wednesday evening to meet up with him. Let's keep the fingers crossed that everything works out fine!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 08:10