

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

### **News from the Anchorage**

Liz and I love it at the anchorage. Every morning we swim to the beach and do some Pilates (which Liz is learning from DVDs). We also do some Martial Arts. But not for very long, because Liz always starts to laugh after the second punch or so, drops on the sand, and curls up into a ball. Well, you can't have everything . Eeeek! Working in underwear because it's so hot. Other than that I was diving on Monday, and work on the boat is continuing. After having the bottle filled I could go down for a special "boat cleaning dive". Four months in Las Palmas and four weeks in the Simpson Bay Lagoon had left the boat already caked with shrimps and barnacles and stuff. Eeeeeek. Check out the picture. And today I was working (again) on the electrical installation. The kitchen appliances - suddenly high priority items - don't run on the old inverter, and I had to install a bigger one.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 19:30

Sunday, March 27. 2011

### **Liz' first sailing lesson**

Come and buy! The flea market on Saturday was a great success. I was enthusiastically advertising our "Treasures of the bilge" and throwing in extras. After a very short time everything was gone except a #7 winch and a camping light. I'm so glad the stuff is gone. Now the cockpit lockers are only half full and it's a lot easier to get to stuff. The money was quickly re-invested - in a bathing ladder, a washdown pump and a bigger inverter so Liz can run her kitchen equipment (hehe). I had no idea how the washdown pump would increase the comfort level. I installed it underneath the sink and put a spray-nozzle to the sink and an outlet for a garden hose to wash down the deck. Now we can do the dishes with salt water in the sink under pressure and don't have to carry everything on deck to do it in the bucket. And I can simply spray down the deck, and especially the anchor-chain. Awesome! And it saves so much fresh water when doing the dishes. Liz trimming the genoa With all the stuff for the flea-market gone from the deck we could finally go sailing. Liz has been reading "Sailing for Dummies" over the last days, and today we went out for her first coastal sailing lesson. Which included: • starting and stopping the engine • raising the anchor • avoiding crashing into other boats at the anchorage (including the big ones that are so busy getting to their favorite spot that they don't look out for other boats) • basic right-of-way rules under motor and sail • use of the autopilot • unfurling, trimming and furling the genoa • tacking • anchoring That's plenty for one day, and after two hours we went back to the anchorage. And then ashore for some Mahi-Mahi with rice and veggies. Yummy . We want to sail out every day a little while I wait for the US Visa to arrive.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 14:22

Friday, March 25. 2011

### **Electronic life**

Thanks to the help from Garvin and Ian from the Serendipity community forum the comment spam is now under control, and I don't receive any more messages informing me about cheap pills, great deals, or hot chicks. I'm don't need any pills yet, the only deals I'm interested in have to do with boating supplies, and the hot chick is right there next to me. Thanks guys! Mentioned hot chick, Liz, has re-activated her old blog (but I'm not allowed to post the link), and it's very interesting for me to read what she thinks about life on the boat. Although we share the same values and enjoy very similar things, her priorities and her outlook on life are very different from mine. Talking, working, and living with Liz therefor provides me with a different perspective on what is happening around and within me, and I feel like I learn and adapt much more quickly when she is around and gives feedback. I have met very few people in my professional or personal life that observe behavior so accurately and are able to give such precise and constructive feedback as Liz does. And there are more blog news. I often notice that I think I've understood a certain subject. But when I sit down to write about it, I realize that the knowledge is in fact pretty vague. I have to read up on it some more and try things before I know enough to actually finish the article. So for me writing is a great way to learn. Therefor it was a given that I would start a photography/video blog after I've decided that I want to pursue photography and video more seriously. It's also a great way to share pictures with the people I meet on the way. I am not quite done setting it up yet, but here's the link: [www.xlvisuals.com](http://www.xlvisuals.com). Enjoy

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:28

Thursday, March 24, 2011

### **Gudrun at anchor**

Gudrun in Simpson Bay This is Gudrun at anchor in Simpson Bay. Every morning we swim to the beach, do some exercises, then swim back and have breakfast. Perfect!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 10:14

### **Impact aproved**

Is it still impact approved? An "impact approved" tank container carrying gasoline - with damage that is patched up inexpertly with duct tape. This is the caribbean!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 10:02

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

### **At anchor in the bay**

Tony explaining to Liz the concept of "bearing"Winching your woman up the mast is so much easier than going yourself Sunday we finished reorganizing the boat. During the process I had emptied the lockers and went through my tools and spare parts. There were just too many things, taking up too much space and making it difficult to get to the stuff that I really need. But in order to sort out more stuff I had to adjust the selection strategy. Originally it was "If you haven't used it in six months it goes out". And now I added "If you don't need it for emergency repairs or normal maintenance it goes out". Now I'm pretty happy the way it is, and I have a lot of stuff that will make good money on the flea market next Saturday. During the crossing some of the screws that hold the tiller to the rudder shaft had become loose. The threads were damaged and I couldn't tighten them anymore. On Saturday I replaced them with new, bigger screws, and reinforced the area. I had learned the hard way a long time ago that there are no shortcuts for doing a job right when it counts. Otherwise you have to do it over and over again. So I would never have done a sloppy job when it comes to the tiller, one of the most important parts on the boat. However, I still caught myself thinking "Axel, take care. You have to do a good job here. You have a woman on board now." Crazy! A woman on board increases the responsibility level dramatically. But she also increases the comfort level. And it's just a wonderful feeling to know there is someone else who will share the experience with you. Makes all the work more worthwhile. And easier, too! For example I don't have to pull myself up the mast for repairs, but I simply sit Liz in the bosun's chair, explain her what to do and winch her up. Then I can sit back and enjoy how the look on her face changes from skeptical, to confused, to eureka!, to satisfied. Quickly followed by "let me down again!". Just great. And of course the food is much better too. Tuesday morning we left the marine in order to head out of the lagoon and anchor in the bay. We were a little too late for the 11am bridge opening, and had to anchor in the lagoon for a few hours and wait for the next bridge opening at 4:30pm. That meant leaving the dredged channel and finding a suitable spot to drop the anchor. The lagoon is very shallow, and the anchorage only 3m deep in the best of places. Not very deep for a draft of 2.50m. The water is very muddy, and often sand is floating in the water, sucked up from the bottom by the wake of speeding power boats. The display on the depthsounder was jumping from 3 to less than 2 meters all the time, which gave me the creeps. With plenty of nutrients being washed into the lagoon from rivers and sewers most of the bottom is covered by thick weed where the anchor doesn't hold well, and I instructed Liz to look out for sandy patches where we can drop the anchor. To illustrate what I meant I steered close to one of the sandy patches that was next to the channel. I went very slowly because I was unsure of the depth, and wanted to give Liz a good chance to look. When I wanted to speed up again a little I noticed that we were stuck. Immediately I switched the gear into backwards to try to get off the shallow again, but to no avail. Fortunately only a few seconds later a guy in a dinghy came by and offered to pull the bow around. Great plan! I threw him a line from the bow, and when he started to pull I gunned the engine forwards. In no time at all we were off the sandy shallow and free again. I stayed inside the channel until I was at "my old spot" where I knew the water was at least 2.80m deep, and we dropped the anchor. We run it in in backwards and then gave plenty of chain. It held on the first attempt, and we were very glad and relieved. Ten past four we lifted the anchor again and went to the bridge where we lined up as the last of eight other boats. Outside in the bay we turned to the west and found a nice spot close to the beach to drop the anchor in 4m of water on sand. We plan to stay here for a few days and clean the hull, go swimming, sailing, have a bbq with Marc and Lisbeth, and (of course) do some more repairs.

Posted by Axel Busch at 16:40

Saturday, March 19, 2011

**Back in St. Martin / computer issues**

On Friday evening Liz and I arrived (back) in Sint Marteen - just in time to meet everybody at Lagoones for BBQ and Open Mic (bring your instrument and bang!). Saturday we spent mostly working on the boat. But in the afternoon we took the dinghy out into the bay and watched pelicans as they hunted for fish. In the evening we went to McDonalds for the internet. A few days ago I had started to receive lots of spam comments on my blog and I wanted to update and re-configure it. There are some issues though, and I might not be able to blog for a while. I ask for forgiveness in advance. Liz' first dinghy experience quickly followed by a hammock experience Pelicans going about their business as the sun begins to set. The fiddler (Tony from Darwin) doing the same after sunset

Posted by Axel Busch at 21:06

Thursday, March 17, 2011

### **They kept my passport!**

This morning I visited the US Embassy in Frankfurt for my visa interview. No problem there, visa granted (yay!). But they kept my passport and will send it back together with the visa in about 10 days. Which wouldn't be a problem if they had told me that in advance, because my flight back to Sint Maarten is \*tomorrow\*. And I need my passport for immigration there, ID card is not enough. So now I have to hurry back to Ulm and get a temporary passport (for another fee) and hope that the immigration guys in Sint Maarten accept that. Neither the German nor the Dutch officials could tell me if it'll be ok, and nobody's available in Sint Maartin yet - wrong timezone. Well ...

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 02:53

Friday, March 11. 2011

### **Travel visa applications**

On the list of countries that I plan to visit next are two that require me to get a travel visa while in Germany: Cuba and the United States (which includes Puerto Rico). Regular tourists (those that enter and leave the country by plane) don't need a visa for the US. But if you go with a private boat, you need one. And you better take this seriously: First you have to fill out an online form here. It took me almost two hours, but that was only because I could state the following information out of my head: Countries traveled to in the last five years, last five visits to the US, educational history, job history, military service history, contact in the US, parent's details, and of course whether I planned to be a terrorist, money launderer, pimp, etc. So be prepared! And don't forget to save the document regularly or you'll end up entering the information more than once as the time runs out. You also have to upload a picture that complies to US passport regulations (50x50mm, white background, 50% covered by face, max 240kB). Fortunately the online form includes some algorithms to verify the picture. After filling out the form you get a processing number. Then you call the Embassy to make an appointment (tel: 0900 1-850055 in Germany. EUR 2.99 per minute from you mobile phone). A friendly and well-informed person checks your information quickly, then explains the rest of the process. You can choose a date, and you will be assigned a time by the computer. I choose next Thursday, the computer choose 07:30 in the morning (argh!). You will then get a confirmation email, which contains a link to a website where you can register to pay for the visa (105 EUR) and tells you what documents to bring to the interview: • your passport, obviously • color print of the picture you uploaded (50x50mm) • print of the invitation to the interview • print of confirmation of filling out the online form • proof of payment for the visa • copies of documents that state why you want to visit the US • copies of documents that proof that you have sufficient funds to pay for your visit • copies of documents that proof that you will leave the country after a limited amount of time • addressed and postpaid return envelope for the visa Interesting to read is also what not to bring: • any electronic devices, including radios, iPods, mobile phones, USB-Sticks etc • umbrellas • luggage • and obviously weapons and explosives Everything but the umbrellas will be taken away from you and not returned. Overall the process is well organized and documented, and the embassy staff seemed helpful. But it sure takes a lot of time and I was lucky to get an appointment before my return flight next week Friday. If the interview goes well I will receive the visa by mail after a week or so. I only wonder how I can proof that I'll leave the US "after a limited amount of time". Will the mortgage and loan for my house in Ulm be considered "a binding tie to Germany"? Maybe I should apply for a job. Or fix a wedding date In case you wondered what you have to do to get a visa for Cuba: Go to the embassy (no appointment needed), enter your passport details into a document, pay 22 EUR and after 10 minutes you walk out with the visa. I even took my phone and iPod with me

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 08:23

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

**Fair winds Henk!**

While I'm taking the fast way to Europe, Henk enjoys the solitude and peace at sea on his trip to Panama. Here's the video of him leaving Sint Maarten. Fair winds my friend!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 01:22

Monday, March 7, 2011

## **Heineken Regatta**

Yesterday was the last day of the 31st edition of the St. Martin Heineken Regatta - the biggest regatta in the Caribbean. 184 boats raced seriously for three days, and the crews partied even more seriously for four nights. But there are so many boats here on the island that you could have spent the whole time at the anchorage without noticing a thing. Not that the race is over some of the many superyachts are leaving to go wherever the next big party is, but that's about it. Personally I'm glad the race is over. I tried some of the parties, but I didn't like the crowd too much. Either hyped up t(w)eens that work on a megayacht, or the blokes that own one of the,. I much prefer chilling in one of the cruisers' bars, where the crowd is relaxed, the drinks are cheap, and there's life music every evening. And because I'm leaving for Germany tomorrow to pick up Liz and have to leave the boat unattended for a while I wanted a place in one of the marinas, and they were very busy during the race. Deploying the race markers. At the starting line Go go go Guy looking for his spinnaker? nice spinnaker Patty's got it all figured out Paaartyeahchilling

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:47

Friday, March 4. 2011

### **Atlantic Crossing Video**

Video of my single-handed voyage across the Atlantic from Gran Canaria to St.Martin in February 2011. 3120nm in 21 days and 4 hours. Thanks a lot to Liz and Mat for their honest and creative feedback on the rough cut.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:33

### **The Treasure of Monkey Island**

When I was I teenager I loved to play adventure games on my 16MHz '386 computer. I spent hours after hours on games like Space Quest, Day of the Tentacle, Indiana Jones, or the Monkey Island series. Central to those games is that you are stuck in a certain place and have to collect items and information before you can progress in the game, which which usually means traveling to a different location. In order to get those items and information you have to talk to game characters, complete little quests for them and solve riddles. The characters, quests and locations are all connected by the theme of the game and tell the story. Now, 20 years later, I'm back in the game. The game is called "Voyaging on a sailboat" and it moved from the computer to real life. And just like in the game, wherever I go, I'm busy exploring an island to collect items and talk to people to gather information which I need to fix the boat and continue on my voyage. Overall it's a pretty good game. Very entertaining, a little educating and good fun. But there are days where I wished I could get my hands on the game designers and shove a particular riddle or item down their throats. A large ceramic toilet bowl for example. Or the daily quest for good internet connection. Which is absolutely necessary to upload a video ...

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:28

## Blog Export: S/V Gudrun V, <http://www.gudrunv.com/>

Tuesday, March 1. 2011

### Pictures

I know that sounds a little funny, but I'm a little pressed for time at the moment. So much to organize and fix after the crossing. I've uploaded some pictures though, but only on Facebook since it was easier. But you can view them even if you are not on facebook with this link: <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=341184&id=647693059&l=b9e247a96b>  
Here are some teasers:

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 07:27