

Saturday, June 23. 2012

## **Arrived in Tahiti**

Friday, 2012-06-22, 20:34, 17:31S, 149:33W, at anchor in front of Taaone, Wind 4kn SE

Today was one of the most unpleasant sailing days on the trip, and we're very glad we made it safely to Tahiti. The boat was hit hard by waves many times and water washed over the whole deck. A few times the boat heeled over so hard that the boom was dragging through the water. But Gudrun always righted herself quickly and got hardly pushed of course. If it wasn't for her great ability to go upwind we wouldn't have made it here on one tack.

We arrived with slack water but two hours past sunset. I avoid arriving in a new place at night whenever possible, but this time we didn't have many choices. Hove to we would have drifted past Tahiti, and I also wanted to get out of the rough conditions. In daylight we would have aimed for Pass de Papeete, and then tried to find a nice spot in one of the small boat anchorages. But that would have meant navigating a busy entrance and 6nm of channel at night, and we heard that the anchorages and marinas are full of boats for the Pacific Puddlejump Rallye which starts tomorrow.

Pass de Taunoa, just east of Pass de Papeete, and it's anchorage looked like it would be less busy and we aimed for that. Once we were past Pointe Venus the wind dropped from 30kn to 10kn, and the sea became flat. Going through the pass was easy, and as expected we didn't find any boats in the large but deep (20m) anchorage.

We dropped anchor, then programmed the anchor alarm, and celebrated our arrival with a Vodka Orange. Yay! Tomorrow morning we'll move out again and try to find a spot at Marina Taine, or in one of the anchorages in front of it. There are a few things to do and it's easier to work on the boat in the marina.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 02:24

Friday, June 22. 2012

## **Bumpy**

Friday, 2012-06-22, 11:10, 17:31S, 149:31W, COG 210, SOG 6.5kn, Wind 20kn SE, sunny with clouds

The beginning of the trip was nice enough, but since we rounded the north-western corner of Rangiroa and turned south-east we are taking 20kn of wind, 3m waves, and some current at 60 degrees angle and it's very uncomfortable. Every few minutes a breaker washes over the deck and cockpit. We stay down below and only pop our heads up to have a look around every 20 minutes. We both feel a little seasick and don't talk much, just sit/lie there and look at each other.

Unfortunately the hatch, though tightly shut, is leaking and the bunks are soaking wet. So sleeping space is at a premium and I slept on the floor. I'm glad that we'll be in Tahiti this evening. Because waves and current are slowing us down we'll not make it before nightfall, but we should be in time for low tide, and the pass and lagoon are well lighted so it shouldn't be a problem.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:53

Thursday, June 21. 2012

### **On the way to Tahiti**

Thursday, 2012-06-21, 11:40 local, 14:53S, 147:42W, COG 270, SOG 6kn, Wind 10kn SE

This morning the anchor wouldn't come up, probably because it was caught underneath some coral. I didn't want to go about it with brute force, and instead dived down to clear it. 14m is a little deep for freediving for me, but I have a little air tank called "Spare Air 300", about the size of a water bottle, and this is very convenient for those occasions. Just stick it in your mouth and it gives you air for about 50 surface breaths, a little less than half of that at 15m.

Thanks to the trip-line the anchor was freed quickly and we were on our way to Tiputa pass. We went through at 10:00, one hour before low tide. That gave us four knots of current in the back. Then we ran into some 2m standing waves (wind against tide) on the exit off the pass. Not so nice, I recommend to go through the pass right at slack water.

It's 200nm to go to Tahiti, which we can just make in 24h in 20kn of Wind on the beam. But at the moment we have only 10kn, so we'll probably have to spend two nights at sea.

Since leaving Ua Pou we've only stopped for a few days at islands (Nuku Hiva, Fakarava, Rangiroa), and we feel like we've made good progress towards New Zealand without rushing it too much. All those islands/atolls are quite small, and five days is more than enough to see everything there is. Papeete will be something else, especially because there are festivities now (leading up to Bastille day), and there are some repairs that need to be done before we go on a week's sail to Niue. So we think that we'll spend one or two weeks in Papeete.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:40

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

## **Honeymoon**

Rangiroa. There isn't much on this beautiful atoll other than one very nice resort (Kia Ora), a few dive shops, a snack bar and one restaurant. The snack bar only opened three weeks ago. People come here for their honeymoon, and we can understand why. It feels like a honeymoon to us, although the wedding is still six months away.

People also come here to see dolphins in the wild during a dive.

Hi buddy

Liz with Dolphin in the wild

Hideo, Turtle, Liz

This place is so amazing. So much to see underwater. There's more fish in Fakarava, and definitely a lot more sharks. But the wild dolphins make Rangiroa very special.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 15:00

Tuesday, June 19. 2012

### **Diving with Dolphins**

We were diving at the pass in Rangiroa today, when three Dolphins came along and said hi. One came very close and let us touch it. What a wonderful experience! Here's the movie:

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 00:52

Monday, June 18. 2012

### **Rangiroa**

We went through the pass at 1:30, and dropped anchor 15min later in front of a tiny village and resort. Managed to arrange diving for tomorrow, then had a beer and panini - yummy!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 02:11

Sunday, June 17. 2012

## **To Rangiroa**

Sunday, 2012-06-17, 11:30 local (21:30 UTC), 14:59S, 147:29W, COG 278, SOG 6kn, Wind 20kn SE, 30C, sunny

We left Fakarava yesterday afternoon with the destination Rangiroa. We heard that you're almost certain to meet Dolphins when snorkling outside the pass at Rangiroa, and since Liz is such a big fan of Dolphins, we decided to make the detour on our way to Tahiti.

Rangiroa is 150nm NW of Fakarava, within easy reach of an overnight sail. But sailing between the atolls in the Tuamotos is tricky. Obviously you want to leave and arrive during daytime, ideally with some hours safety margin. But because all the anchorages are inside the atolls, and there are only a few navigable passes through the reefs, you also have to pay special attention to the tides. You want to leave and arrive with a favorable current, or ideally during slack water (at high or low tide). The currents through the pass can get up to 6kn, and you can easily loose control of the boat and end up on the reef.

Slack water occurs every six hours at the change of the tide. Days being pretty much exactly 12h long here, there are two chances per day to make it through the pass during daylight. We choose to leave Fakarava with high tide at 2pm yesterday, planning to make good speed in 20kn of wind and arrive in Rangiroa around 1pm, 1 1/2 hours before high tide at Rangiroa at 2:30pm. That'll give us a slight current in the back, and some time for safety in case we take longer than anticipated.

Now we're 9nm away from the pass and doing 6kn - looks like we'll get there spot on at 1pm. Close to the pass we'll turn on the radar to see whether the map in the chartplotter is correct, or whether we have to work with an offset (like in the San Blas). But in Fakarava the Navionics charts were 100% correct, and I that bodes well for here too. Makes going through the channel and around the reefs so much easier! Thank god for technology.

We plan to stay only a few days for snorkeling and diving, hoping to shoot some good photos of dolphins or maybe even a whale. Although it's too early for whales, the dive guides in Fakarava said they generally don't arrive before August. But maybe we'll get lucky and meet an especially fast or eager whale who's here early. Then, probably Thursday, we'll sail on to Tahiti were (hopefully) the new sail and autopilot is waiting for me. One of the autopilot rods broke when we left Hiva Oa, and the spare also sounds like it's on it's last leg. Only one more day buddy, keep up the good work!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:03

Friday, June 15. 2012

### **Diving in Fakarava**

Drift dive in the north pass of the Fakarava atoll, French Polynesia. Current was about 3kn. Unfortunately my G 12's display is broken and it doesn't let me shoot video anymore, so I had to use the GoPro. Less than ideal without the flat lens cover and at a depth of 25m, but you get the idea.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 21:04

Thursday, June 14. 2012

### **Diving in Fakarava**

The last two days I was diving with the guys from topdive. Four drift-dives through the northern pass, and two dives at the reef just outside the pass. The depth is around 20m, and the coral and marine life absolutely stunning. Unfortunately both of my underwater cameras are broken. The Lumix doesn't work at all anymore after getting a little wet on the rainy hike in Hiva Oa, and the G12's display is not displaying anything after the Ikelite housing developed a leak. Which means I can't adjust the settings or aim the camera properly underwater. But the conditions are so good here that you almost can't go wrong.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:36

Monday, June 11. 2012

### **At anchor**

The wind is changing all the time. Spend a few hours in the cockpit and you'll get a 360 degree view of the atoll. Not that I spend a few hours in the cockpit, there's way too much sun. Even with the awning up. Liz and I prefer it "downstairs", away from the sun. The open hatch and a ventilator above the table keep the air flowing and make it bearable, despite 30 degrees celsius.

Yesterday evening we dinghied ashore and walked the one street of the village along the beach. Here some impressions:

S/Y A Go Go, Romano and Luana's boat.

A jetty going out into the lagoon

My good friend, partner, fiancée, 1st mate, and galley guru Liz.

Well, I guess that's me then.

Sunset and a construction for hauling boats out of the water.

When not on passage we sleep in the forepeak (front of the boat). During the passage there's too much movement there, uncomfortable, and the weight up front is also not good for the trim of the boat. But at anchor it's quite nice, and sleeping up front has the benefit that I can hear what's going on with the anchor chain. Last night it was moving over rocks (or coral), which is not great. So today I dived to check it out.

As a result of all the swinging around the anchor chain was wrapped around a coral head. Not good for the coral, and also impossible to get the anchor up without diving. So I unwrapped the chain, and then undug the anchor and half dragged/half carried it to a area clear of coral. Inflating the BCD all the way helped a little, but the 24kg anchor is too heavy to be lifted by a little bcd. Eventually, maybe 20m to the side, I found a nice little hole in the sand into which I dug the anchor in.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 19:46

Sunday, June 10. 2012

### **Arrived in Rotoava, Fatarava**

Sunday, 2012-06-10, 09:30 local ( UTC), 16:03S, 145:37W, Wind 4kn E, sunny

We're at anchor in front of the village of Rotoava, on the north-east corner of the Fatarava atoll. Our first atoll! Yesterday wasn't very nice sailing at all (again) - Wind 20kn on the nose, frequent rain, and chopped up waves - and so we're glad to be at anchor now. And today is looking to be a wonderful day. Sunny and light winds from the E/NE, just perfect for sailing on our old course. Well, we're here now. No more working the sails in the rain while desperately holding on to a wildly rocking boat. The adventure is over for a while, now we can relax. Liz is already back asleep .

The interesting, because new, part was crossing through the pass of the atoll this morning. The atolls here are basically a large circular reef, with only a few passes. Fakarava is one of the largest atolls with a length of 30nm, and two passes. Through these passes the tide has to come in and out, and depending on the size of the atoll that is a lot of water. Which means a lot of current. Get your times wrong and you get stuck in the pass, or worse, get pushed onto the reef.

So the key thing is to start the entry or exit in time with slack water or a favorable current. We timed the arrival at the pass to 1.5h before high tide. That gave us still 1kn of current in our favor. Nice, but not too much to risk being pushed somewhere we don't want to go. The current can be up to 6kn. The pass here in Fakarava is huge, a couple of 100m wide, and 10m to 20m deep. Very good for first-timers like us. Incidentally the "Aranui 3" went through the pass just ahead of us, nice.

I use mostly the program WxTide, or the Navionics Gold charts to view tide tables. The service hydrographique et oceanographique de la marine website also has tide tables for the French Polynesia. The data from the institute matched WxTide, my charts don't have data for the Tuamotos.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 15:30

Friday, June 8. 2012

**cross-seas**

Friday, 2012-06-08, 11:45 local, 13:54.3S, 143:27.1W, COG 205, SOG 3.5-4.5kn, Wind 5-7kn E, 31C, 1009mBar, cloudy

Having some connection problems with Iridium lately. Usually connecting to the internet works fine, if slow, but since yesterday it takes many tries to establish a connection. Now and then Windows will not clean up all resources properly and I have to reboot the computer and try again, quite annoying.

Other than that everything as before. We're sailing SW in light winds between 30 and 120 degrees apparent wind angle. Two sightings: All through the night I saw a navigation light ahead, and this morning a roll-on-roll-off cargo vessel passed in front of our bow, heading east.

Since nine in the morning it's a little uncomfortable. We're caught in cross-seas coming from SE as well as NE, and the boat is dipping like a sea-saw. Hope we'll get through that rather quickly. I changed course further south so we have more pressure in the sails and more speed so that it's bearable.

184nm to go to Fakarava

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:18

Thursday, June 7, 2012

## **A race**

Thursday, 2012-06-07, 12:00 local, 21:30 UTC, 12:10.22S, 142:10.16W, COG 215, SOG 5.5kn, Wind 8kn NE, 30C, 1009mBar, sunny.

It's going better than I had hoped for. The forecast was for 7-12kn of wind, shifting SE to NE. And that's exactly what we have so far. Predominantly SE winds, except for the afternoons when it's NE. So we're mostly sailing close-hauled at 30 to 60 degrees apparent wind angle at 4 to 7kn of speed. That can be uncomfortable, but the sea is so calm that we even have the hatch open at the front most of the time, and the wind is so light that the boat hardly heels.

Yesterday a 6pm, just before sunset, I made out sails on the horizon west of us, at 258 degrees. As usually I got very excited and ran for the camera, but the sailboat was over the horizon and so I only captured the top half of it's sails. Then I lost it in the background of clouds. Half an hour later, after sunset, I saw it's navigation light just over the horizon. This time at 265 degrees, falling behind. One boat is sailing, two boats and it's a race .

The night was quiet, no squalls. Liz and I are doing watches in our usual shifts. Liz in the morning and evening, me in the afternoon and the night. At the other times we're sleeping, reading, or talking about what it will be like in NZ.

312nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:38

Wednesday, June 6, 2012

### **On the way to Fakarava**

Wednesday, 2012-06-06, 11:30 local, 21:00 UTC, 10:20.4S, 141:02.7W, COG 217, SOG 4.5kn, Wind 8kn NE, 29.3C, 1010mBar, sunny.

We like the Marquesas. Stunning landscapes, fantastic climate, and very friendly people. The food's a bit pricy, but then this is one of the remotest parts of the world, with a small population of only a few thousand and no local industry. No surprise then that the imported food costs more than back home. Liz is delighted that most meat, fruit, and dairy products are imported from New Zealand.

The flip side of seeing all the familiar products in the shelves is that the urge to reach New Zealand is getting very strong. There are at least three more weeks of sailing until we get to New Zealand. But in our minds the voyage is already over, and we find it hard to get excited about visiting the islands along the way. Maybe it will change when we get there. But last week we talked to the NZ immigration advisor, and now we be are busy collecting and requesting the necessary documents for my immigration. So New Zealand, the immigration, and our upcoming wedding is all we think of.

Which is why despite having a good time we said our good-byes to our cruising friends in Nuku Hiva yesterday, weighed anchor, and set out for the 4-5 day trip to the Fakarava atoll in the north-west corner of the Tuamotu archipel, our next stop. Before leaving the bay we practiced some man-over-board maneuvers with an empty jerry can. I'm happy to say that the jerry can doesn't need to worry about getting lost at sea.

Once out of the bay Liz set the Parasailor in 15kn of wind from the NE, while I assisted with, uhm, helpful comments. Two hours later the wind changed to ESE and we changed it for main and genoa. Unfortunately I stubbed my little toe against the fairlead, and judging by the pain when I try to move it it's broken. Well, it's not the first time and won't be the last. We kept the sails up all night, but reefed the main when a squall went by. This morning the wind was back to NE, and we put the Parasailor up again. Smooth, slow, sailing at 4-6kn in 8-10kn of wind. The sea is calm and the boat's very stable, Liz likes it that way.

440nm to go to Fakarava

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:37

Monday, June 4, 2012

### **Pacific Crossing video**

Took me a while this time, but here it is finally. The video of the passage. Yay:

Originally we wanted to do a video diary every day, but never knew what to say. And after the first week the whole filming of more sea, and more clouds, got a little tiring. And what sea/clouds we filmed got cut out during editing to keep the clip to a maximum of 8 minutes. So the film speeds up a lot the further we go. Still, hope you get the idea of what it was like.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 09:21

Sunday, June 3, 2012

## **Gudrun V at anchor in Taiohae**

Gudrun V at anchor

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 21:02

### **Nuku Hiva**

Yesterday we weighed anchor in Ua Pou and sailed over to Nuku Hiva. Nuku Hiva is 26nm north of Ua Pou, and with 12kn of wind from the east it was a perfect 4h sail. Just before arrival some dolphins came along, icing on the cake.

Bye Ua Pou

Liz trimmed the mainsail perfectly

A lot of boats are here in the bay, many old friends we've met in or since Panama. That was only five months ago, but on the ever changing cruising scene that's definitely old friends. We're pl

Hi Nuku Hiva

Sunlight playing on the western ridge

The plan is to stay here for a few days and get some 'work' done, the internet connection is quite good here. I'm finishing the pacific crossing movie and hope to upload it today, and there are also a lot of photo albums that I would like to upload for backup, too. Then we want to sail on to the Tuamotos, ideally rather soon while the moon is still up at night.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:06

Saturday, June 2, 2012

### **Hiking on Ua Pou**

These islands offer some fantastic hikes. But because the paths are not obvious, not much used, and cross private lands, it's best to take a local guide. On Ua Pou we walked with Jerome from the little pension up the hill, and he turned out to be a well of knowledge and a very good guide and entertainer. Highly recommended.

It's easy to see from the bay that there must be some fantastic hikes on the island of Ua Pou.

Jerome explaining about the local flora. No doubt poisonous.

Sue scratched herself, and Jerome wrestled her to the ground immediately to treat the wound.

The volcanic spires poking through the vegetation, into the clouds.

Ulli is taking in the scenery.

A rest for the wicked

refreshing waterfall on the way

In the evening we return to Hakahau bay

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:13

### **Voilier spectacle**

Next to us is the " La Loupiote" at anchor. The yellow boat is owned by a Delphine and Franck, two "Navigartistes" - they sail around the world and use their boat as a home and as a stage for their artistic show. Thursday they did a show in Ua Pou.

People have gathered on the docks for the show

The first show is classic slapstick

Everybody is laughing their eyes out

The second show, after sunset, is artistic

Including artistic feats on ropes

high in the rigging of their boat.

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

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 10:52