

Tuesday, October 23. 2012

Video from sailing to Niue

Here's the video from sailing from Niue to Bora Bora:

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:13

Friday, October 5. 2012

Gudrun in the cyclone pit

After two days of frantic activity Gudrun was ready to be hauled out and put into her cyclone pit at Vuda Point Marina. Everything went smoothly and now Gudrun is a fish without water:

Gudrun in her cyclone pit

Next day (today) we were all going to say goodbye - Tim from Slick, Jessie from Obelisk, Alef from Batten Anna, (plus assorted crew) and me. Reason enough to go out party.

Anybody confused?

dancing

locals dancing too

It was a great night out, the first for me actually in, puh, I don't even know how long. You don't get to dance a lot when cruising, because you tend to stay away from the touristy places with the clubs and discos.

And today another rare experience: I'm wearing shoes. Not as usually barefoot or in thongs, but in real shoes. Boy does that feel weird! But I'm flying to Auckland, where it's cold (12 C) - brrrrr.

Shoed feet at the airport.

So, only a few more hours until I'm re-united with Liz. Very exciting!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 01:37

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

Vuda Point Marina

I'm at Vuda Point Marina, getting ready to haul out into the cyclone pit today. Yesterday Tim from S/V Slick helped me to take the sails down and fold them. We also removed the solar panels, which from now on will decorate his boat. I kept one 85W panel to keep the batteries topped-up while the boat is on the hard. Gudrun looks very different without the bimini over the cockpit. Almost like a real race boat again

Mainsail, Tim, crew, crew, Jessie

Other than that I'm busy cleaning out the boat. Empty the deck, secure all lines and things that might flop around in strong winds. Remove all the food, clean the bilge, stuff like that. With a flight to Auckland on Friday evening the schedule's a little tight. But I'm very much looking forward to seeing Liz again.

Gudrun will stay here until April, when I'll sail her to New Zealand and finish the trip. A long break, but I have to attend to other matters first - NZ residence, wedding, and then wait for the end of cyclone season. Every thing has it's time.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:02

Fwd: Pirate tactics

I'm posting here a very interesting email I've received from my friend Matt, who's at the moment on his way from Bali to Madagascar.

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Pirate tactics

Date: Mon, 1 Oct 2012 14:25:08 +0100

From: Matt Steadman

I've spoken to lots of people about the pirates, including a few who were stopped and robbed on their passage through the Red Sea. There are far more attacks than those which make the headlines. Some yottie getting robbed a bit on the high seas - and no nice pix - isn't headline news. The Chandlers got kidnapped but that's rarer, it seems. More common is just a quick working over, take any cash, computers and so on. This doesn't make the headlines, or even if it does, it doesn't make the international headlines. It's only when the people to whom I spoke came to report their attack that they saw how many attacks there had been - several every week.

The previous feeling was that there was "safety in numbers" and hence yotties would band together in flotillas to make a passage to the Red Sea. I know one or two who have done this in the past few years. But things have changed. More recently it seems groups are easier to target, and pirates know that they don't much help each other if one gets attacked - it's every boat for themselves - the others thank their lucky stars and keep going.

The round the world Blue Water Rally went bust because of the Somali-based pirate issue. Their route was all around Thailand, India and then Med via Suez... and the 2011-2012 departure only attracted one or two entrants. So the Blue Water Rally is now just an unofficial bunch of pals, of which Karacool is one, and which proly won't go round the world.

A friend in the City reports that pirates have been seeking proper funding with CV's and so on - £20m gets a proper set up with a tooled-up mothership and ten or so attack boats to send over the horizon. This means that an

attack could happen almost anywhere in the Indian Ocean - the Chalmers were kidnapped over 1000 miles south of the Horn of Africa, but that's a few years ago.

So the 2012 World Arc is possibly the riskiest gig at the moment - a massed group hence easy to find, a published route, published sailing dates, and diverse boats which won't/can't sail as a group. It says on the worldcruising web site that they leave Cocos Keeling today on Monday 1st October, next stop Mauritius 2/3 weeks later.

All WARC boats have yellowbrick - are they turned off in the Indian Ocean? I hope so. Lots have AIS - is that universally turned off by rally participants? And they have VHF and a daily SSB net too - is all of this going to stay silent? Not easy to enforce radio silence. But they'll likely all have nav lights on, and anyone who wants to know where they are can simply guess - they're 50-100 miles WSW of Cocos towards Mauritius right now, a fleet of 20 or so boats spread out every 5-10 miles or so.

So if one were out there it might be best NOT to be part of the WARC group (or any group), to be on a different route, at a different time, without broadcasting position on AIS (which gives a position to other boats with 20 or so miles) or Yellowbrick devices (which give a position on Google Earth website) or on anything.

Is an attack on boats heading south around the Cape of Good Hope likely? It's another 1200 miles SE from Seychelles area so in that regard alone it's less likely. 14th-15th of October would be almost moonless, and plenty of targets NE of Mauritius. Hum. But realistically? - nah - I think it's far too far for them and not an easy enough return, based on attacks to date, and current/trending data. I hope so anyway.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:02

Monday, October 1. 2012

Lautoka

Tuesday, 2012-10-02, 11:48 UTC+12, 17:38.344S 177:22.387E, 4nm south of Lautoka Wind 6kn SW

Pretty hot here in Fiji. But it looks nice, lots of little islands and reefs. Easy to see why this is such a tourist destination.

I'm almost in Lautoka now, 4nm to go. I've been motoring the last hour because with the little wind I was risking running late. As it is, I'll probably show up in the lunch break. Book says I have to call Port Control and get instructions, so I'm assuming I either have to wait at anchor or can go to a wharf if I'm lucky.

I'm very excited about the photos of Gudrun sailing. I've been complaining to Liz ever since we got to Tahiti that we'll probably arrive in New Zealand and still won't have a photo of Gudrun sailing. Very happy now, and a beautiful day for photography too. I had all sails up, and a blue sky as background. Very exciting!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 19:19

Through the pass

Tuesday, 08:00 UTC+12

Sailed through the pass and who do I see coming my way? Corinna and Manfred on S/V Moin! And they're taking photos. The first photos of my boat with sails up. Unbelievable that I have to sail around half the world just to get some photos of my boat

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:45

Almost there

Tuesday, 2012-10-02, 0:11 UTC+13, 18:20.975S 177:29.706E COG 260, SOG 5kn, Wind 15kn E

Almost there, 30nm South-East of Navula Passage, Viti Levu. I'm trying to time it so that I get there when the sun's up, which is in 7-8 hours. No point in getting there and night and running on a reef. From the pass it's another 25nm to Lautoka where I can check in. So I'll probably arrive after lunch-time. Apparently there's a lot of forms to fill outn Fiji. I've already spent an hour just with the forms I've downloaded from the immigration Website.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:25