

UPDATE FROM ISLAS BALEARES

IBIZA AND MALLORCA

JULY 14, 2020

IBIZA – A SMALL ISLAND OF CONTRASTS



While the town of Ibiza is a magnet for *clubbers* from around the world, it's magnificent and imposing citadel is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The old town, D' Alt Vila in Catalan, looks down on modern Ibiza and the sea below.

BEAUTIFUL CALAS (COVES)

We last reported from beautiful Formentera, a small, thinly inhabited island very near to Ibiza, which by contrast, is mostly known for its hedonistic nightlife, for those who can afford it. However, Ibiza is also endowed with stunning, picturesque, deep water coves for anchorages and desolate islets mostly for day use, but that can be used for anchorages when the weather is just right.

Our first stop was at Cala Roig on the south-central coast, just a few miles around the corner from Ibiza Town, on the eastern shore. Cala Roig is a scenic and popular anchorage, well sheltered from the common northeasterly winds. It is quite deep, too, with >50' showing on the depth meter until just a few boat lengths from

shore, which is mostly rocky except for a few small pebbled beaches that seem to attract beach bars and restaurants like a lightbulb attracts mosquitos.

Shortly after dropping the hook, Ignacio kayaked to the far side of the large cove to visit a friend of his who is chief engineer on a large motor yacht. What a small cruising world it is. Meanwhile, I went for a swim, and Vicki chilled in the cockpit while having a video chat with our daughter and granddaughter.



Ignacio returning by kayak in Cala Roig from visiting his friend who is chief engineer on a super motor yacht.



One of our neighbors was the \$50M SY Ngoni. At 187', she's nicknamed "The Beast" and looks like she's out of a James Bond movie.



A picturesque (and with so little wind) borderline sultry late afternoon in Cala Roig. By nightfall, our little part of the cala had reached its capacity of about a dozen boats. Even with the crowd, the anchorage was peaceful and relaxing. Do you see the 165' super ketch off in the distance? They're anchored in 150' of water, suggesting they have >750' of anchor chain.

Cala Roig was the perfect relaxing spot to lay up for one night before going to Ibiza Town for the parts we needed to fix our watermaker. And we were in great company, too, with several megayachts anchored near us, including SY Ngoni, which is a 187' beast of a sailing vessel. As soon as PT and breakfast were out of the way the next morning, we weighed anchor and set sail for Ibiza Town.

Getting underway was more complicated than it needed to be, mostly due to poor pre-departure planning. One unavoidable event was the anchor swivel somehow fouled on itself making it impossible to bring the anchor fully aboard, lending credence to those who believe anchor swivels should be avoided. Fortunately, I was able to reach down from the pulpit and lift the 99-pound Spade just enough for Ignacio to untwist and unfoul the swivel and chain allowing us to bring the anchor aboard. We also left our swim ladder mounted on the port side rail and gear adrift all over the deck. We had no unintended outcomes, thankfully, and learned from the near misses.

IBIZA – A PARTY TOWN KNOWN THE WORLD OVER

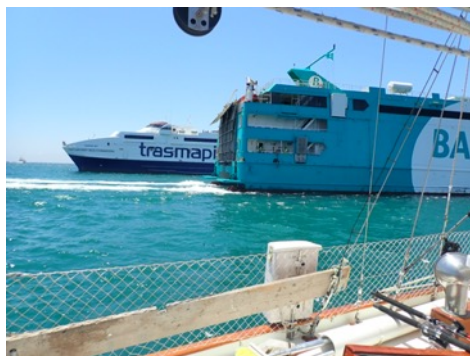
By contrast, as rustically charming as Cala Roig was, entering the port of Ibiza Town was chaotically vibrant. Fast ferries from multiple lines were coming and going every few minutes, along with cargo ships, large yachts, and small pleasure craft, too. But even the fast pace of the traffic separation scheme couldn't take away from the grandeur of the citadel high on the cliff overlooking the entrance to the smallish-for-the-volume harbor.

Anchoring is not permitted in Ibiza Town harbor, so we shopped by phone while in route from Cala Roig for the best "deal" for a slip. At First Sight is 48' (14.5m) in length, and several of the marinas in Ibiza cater to vessels >20m, so our choices were somewhat limited. All the rate quotes we received were over \$300 for one night, which is about what we paid for a month back in Cartagena. We settled on Real Club Náutico de Ibiza (RCNI) at \$325, including electricity and foul smelling (purportedly) potable water.

I raced out in town to look for our parts as soon as we were safely *med moored* to the farthest seaward pontoon in the expansive marina. Unfortunately, I hadn't realized it was siesta time and almost all the businesses were closed for several more hours, which meant a long disappointing return to the boat. I returned to town a few hours later only to be disappointed that none of the shops in town had what we needed, which was two 1/4" threaded brass plugs to seal off one of our two watermaker tubes. Fortunately, there was plumbing supply warehouse, 20 minutes away on foot, where I purchased the needed plugs (plus 2 spares) for €3.00. Back aboard AFS, we quickly installed the plugs, tested the watermaker, and voilà we had water making capability restored, albeit at half capacity since we were down one of two tubes. Just enough time to relax before checking out Ibiza's famed nightlife.



Top left. Picture of our chartplotter showing the congestion in Ibiza Harbor. The green icons are pleasure yachts. AFS's icon is at bottom right of the screen.
Top Right. Coming into port was like playing dodgeball with all the ferry traffic.



Bottom right. Med mooring is stern to the pier, which means a *pasarela* or gangplank to go ashore. For €300 per night, you would think a concierge might assist.
Bottom left. Old town Ibiza in the morning light, as seen from At First Sight.



After brief naps, Ignacio rendezvoused with another friend who happened to be in Ibiza. The two of them took tapas at the marina restaurant before heading out for a night of clubbing. By this time, it was nearly 9pm, and the sun was just setting. Vicki and I disembarked from AFS and made our way down the floating pier, Saylor in tow, and onto the quay, and finally to the seawall at the edge of the marina near the guarded gate out into town. It was there we realized that we were "too pooped to pop" (as my dear mom used to say when, as kids, we fell asleep standing up). So instead of an exciting night out on the town, we opted for a quiet romantic dinner at the marina restaurant. Even with this more sedate option, it was nearly midnight before we returned to the boat. Ignacio, on the other hand, was out until 4:30am.



When we arrived at midday, we were looking forward to checking out Ibiza's club scene that night, just because we could. By 9pm, however, we realized we could not hang with that crowd so we opted for a quiet dinner at the marina followed by a short walk around the waterfront. We will check out the clubs next time. Yeah, right...

After our night out, we enjoyed breakfast out in town and went on self-guided walking tour of D' Alt Vila. This picture is from the ramparts that have overlooked and protected the harbor from intruders for centuries.



We had a relaxing morning sightseeing in the old town before doing a little grocery shopping and completing preparations for getting underway at noon, checkout time at RCNI.

BOARDED BY THE GUARDIA CIVIL AND TAX AGENCY



The taxman cometh... We were boarded just before leaving Ibiza by two officers, one from the Guardia Civil and one from the Spanish IRS. (They would not allow us to take pictures of their faces.)

Checkout time is noon at RCNI, but shortly before noon we were boarded by two officers, one in uniform from the Spanish IRS, and the other from the Guardia Civil who appeared more like Serpico (if you're old enough to remember that 1970s undercover cop movie starring Al Pacino). In reviewing the marina's list of transient vessels and their crews, they noticed ours as American flagged, but with a Spanish national aboard.

They had two issues to discuss with us. The first was to show proof that we were the owners of At First Sight, and not charterers, with Ignacio being the real owner and captain. (One scheme that more than a few tourists apparently use to reduce the cost of chartering in the Balearics is to say they're the owners, when in reality the vessel is owned by a Spaniard trying to do charters without a charter permit.) We have lots of proof we own At First Sight, so that was relatively easy to dispense with.

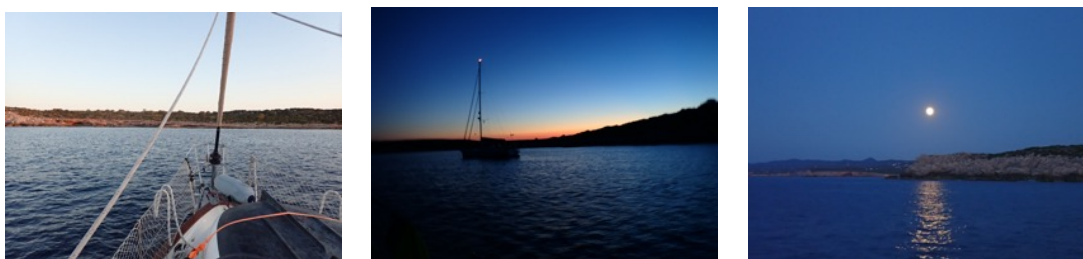
The second issue was whether or not we have paid Value Added Tax (VAT /IVA in Spanish) for At First Sight after purchasing her in the U.S. and sailing her into European Union waters now 11 months ago. That proved to be more challenging, and even the officers conceded the laws about this are complex, especially since we have *Permisos de Residencia* for Spain. They filed a report, and we'll have to see what, if anything, happens.



It seems SY Ngoni (aka The Beast) followed us to Cala Roig, where we anchored on the far side this time. Yes, Vicki looks very happy. She had just completed a video chat with Shelby and Maebel.

After Ibiza Town, we were ready for a relaxing day or two somewhere less crowded and with less hustle and bustle – and no revenue agents. We returned first to Cala Roig, because it was close and sunset was approaching due to our delayed start. We did a day sail the next day while looking for a cala in which to spend a few days at anchor.

We found just what we were looking for in Isla Conejera, a small kidney shaped island ~3nm off San Antoni, Ibiza's so-called second city of hedonism. The cala on the east side has a narrow entrance giving it a lagoon like feel. And the island is an uninhabited nature reserve with visitors not allowed ashore, except for researchers and students. The challenge with anchoring in Cala Conejera is ~50% of the seabed is either hard rock or protected Posidonia seagrass, making it a challenge to find a spot that is safe and legal. To help us, Ignacio put on a mask and snorkel and helped us find the perfect sandy spot. This proved crucial, as I'll explain later.



We shared our first night in the secluded cala of Isla Conejera, ~5nm west of St. Antoni, with just one other boat that made for a beautiful silhouette at dusk. And then the full moon lit up the night sky.

After an idyllic first night, with a beautiful full moon, we launched 2nd Sight the next morning, and mounted it's gaff-rigged mainsail for Ignacio to sail ~5 miles downwind to join friends of his from Madrid aboard their vessel, SY Alma, a DeFour 38 – with its crew of 8 aboard, 2 fathers and 6 of their kids and friends ranging from 6 to 26 years. Pity the cook, because Ignacio made 9 for dinner aboard Alma that night. The next day, he called from Alma about noon, and asked if we could all get together for lunch. And 2 hours later Alma was neatly rafted for lunch along our port side in Cala Conejera. I have to say we were briefly taken aback when everyone shook hands, exchanged customary *besitos*, and otherwise treated each other as long-lost family, even though most of us had never met before. It seemed awkward at first, after socially isolating and socially distancing from others for the better part of 5 months.



But before we had time to give it a second thought, lunch was being served aboard AFS. And what a lunch it was, too! Owner/captain, Pepe had prepared a beautiful and delicious seafood fideua, a paella-like dish made with noodles instead of rice. We spent ~2-1/2 hours alongside each other; and then just like that, it was time to break up the raft. They departed for San Antoni and we remained in Cala Conejera for another relaxing night at anchor.

Early the next morning, Saturday, Maritime Park Police cruised the lagoon looking for boats anchored illegally. All of the half dozen or so Spanish boats scattered to the winds as soon as the police boat entered the area, leaving just 3 foreign-flagged cruising sailboats at anchor. They spent a long time hovering over our anchor chain looking into the 30' crystalline water below with a sophisticated "looky bucket" or "reef scope" with a camera attached (<https://archipelagosail.com/diy-looky-bucket/>), so we engaged them in conversation.



The Marine Police visited the cala at Isla Conejera twice while we were there. The first time they said we were good to go – our anchor was not disturbing the Posidonia seagrass. The second time, they cleared everyone out the anchorage.

They said they couldn't see our anchor because it was buried under the bed of seagrass below. However, since we were 100% certain we were anchored in sand, we told them they needed to go out farther from our bow and find the large sandy spot where our anchor was set. Sure enough, when they were 3-4 boat lengths (150-200') in front of AFS they gave us the "thumbs up" sign that we were good to go. (The same with the other 2 vessels, too.) The very next day, however, another Maritime Police boat checked out all three of our anchors and told us all we had to leave because all of our anchor chains sometimes swung through seagrass. So, weigh anchor we all did, dropping the hook this night in the Port of San Miquel further up Mallorca's majestic west coast.

PALMA, MALLORCA, HERE WE COME!

We had intended to leisurely sail or motorsail our way up the west coast of Ibiza over the course of several days, because (1) it is beautiful and (2) because the high peaks shielded us from some pretty hefty winds from the ENE. And although we wanted to take more time gunkholing along the coast, the very next day we took advantage of a good weather window with no easterly wind component to make the 60nm open crossing of the Canal de Mallorca from San Miquel to the port of Palma, Mallorca. In

fact, we had no wind for most of that crossing, and we motored nearly all the way to Palma. It was rather boring, actually, except for ~10 minutes of excitement when something very large attacked and ran with one of the two lures we were trolling with. Ignacio raced to the pole that had had the strike, while I eased the throttle back to idle.

He fought whatever it was for about 5 minutes, and then, sadly, the line broke. And just like that it was gone. We conjecture, though, that given our location, this time of year, and the velocity with which the line whizzed off the reel, it very well could have been a pelagic Bluefin Tuna, which breed in the Canal de Mallorca in July and August. Of course, we'll never know... As we approached the Bay of Mallorca, some 10 miles or so from the port, a brisk afternoon sea breeze finally kicked in allowing us to come into port looking spiffy under canvas.

While we intend to fill you in on Palma in our next post, I'll mention here that it turned out to be a very special port, indeed, even if it was mostly a working port. Juan Peñuelas had called ahead and made arrangements for us to dock at the Estación Naval de Porto Pí, the Spanish Navy Base tucked away in the corner of the Port of Palma. Normally, a foreign-flagged recreational vessel would not be allowed in this part of the port, but most foreigners don't know Juan Peñuelas! And not only were we given permission to dock at the base, the *Comandante* of the Baleares Naval Sector came out to greet us at the harbor entrance in his own boat to guide us into our spot on the quay, which is normally reserved for destroyer size warships. But more about our port visit to Palma in our next posting.



We had a special welcome to Palma. Capitán de Navío Dámaso Berenguer, Comandante de Estación Naval Porto Pí, Palma de Mallorca, came out to greet us as we arrived at the port of Palma, and he escorted us to our berth.