

Palma de Mallorca

S/V AT FIRST SIGHT MIXES WORK AND PLAY IN PORTO PÍ AND AROUND MALLORCA



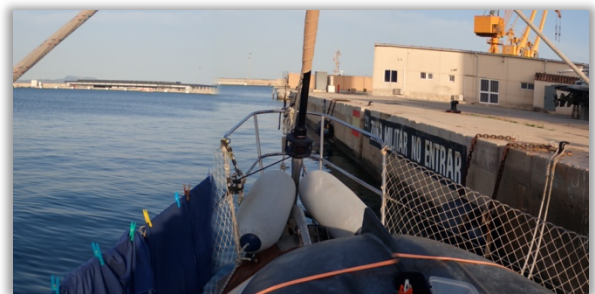
Working ports vs. liberty ports

If you read our last post, which ended with us arriving in Palma de Mallorca on 9 July, you know we had a special welcome to the port and city by Capitán de Navío Dámaso Berengue, Comandante de la Estación Naval Porto Pí, the Spanish Navy Base located at the western edge of the port. Dámaso is a good friend of our good friend, Juan Peñuelas, and they were both helicopter pilots in the Spanish Navy. Dámaso has been a great host, and I doubt he knew what he was getting into when he allowed us to stay on his base, as it has turned out to be quite a bit longer than we expected.

Since Palma is a bustling port with all the maritime trades and crafts well represented, we decided early on that it would be somewhat of a working port for us. (Those with experience in the Navy or Marine Corps know we have liberty ports and working ports. Liberty ports are centered on R&R and cultural activities; working ports are for improving the material readiness of the ship.)



Our arrival in Palma de Mallorca. That's Naval Station Porto Pí in the background. We docked beneath the lighthouse.



We had the military pier all to ourselves in Porto Pí. We're grateful to CAPT Dámaso Berengue for the special privilege of staying on his base. On arrival, we thought it would 3-4 days. It ended up being 2 weeks.

Hey, there's always something to fix on a boat...

For example, we intended to have a rigger fix a problem with wire chafing at the lower main spreaders that we've been watching since a retired rigger friend discovered the problem in the Azores nearly a year ago during a courtesy inspection of our standing rigging. We also wanted to get our Mercury outboard tuned up before the expected heavy use exploring the calas and small ports around Mallorca, Menorca, and further east in the Med. And, we couldn't forget we had only put a patch on our watermaker back in Ibiza, and we needed to do a proper fix to get capacity back up to 100%.

But little did we know we'd be doing a fairly major engine repair on the Perkins diesel, which failed to start for the second time in two weeks when we tried to get underway on 13th. We went through the fuel filter drill again, and the motor even fired up twice, but something wasn't right so we called in a pro mechanic the next day. He determined our high-pressure fuel injection pump wasn't building the requisite 2600psi of pressure, meaning we were hard down until it was repaired or replaced. Either way, it was going to be 10-14 days to get a working pump installed and the motor back up and running. We opted to have it rebuilt locally, which we thought would get us back underway sooner than shipping in a part from the US or UK. It turns out we were right; the

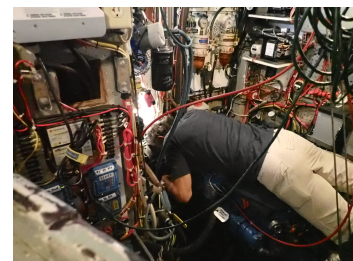


The top two pictures are the "before images." You can see the wire shroud cutting into the end of the spreader. The problem we found was one flange on the u-shaped piece had worn away due to corrosion and slipped inside the spreader. The pros at RSB Rigging in Palma restored the fittings as best they could, tapped an Allen screw into the fittings to hold them together. And as an added measure, they wrapped 3mm Dynema cord around the shrouds to pull them out and away from the spreader tip. (3mm Dynema has zero stretch and breaking strength of ~5 tons!)



The problem with the watermaker was the end piece of the filter membrane broke inside the pressure vessel under the 800-900psi it takes to make fresh water from salt water. Fortunately, our CruiseRO watermaker uses all off-the-shelf components and we easily found a replacement membrane here in Palma de Mallorca.

Here's proof that cruising isn't always head down and butt up. In this image those body parts are at equal heights. ☺



pump was rebuilt and reinstalled in just a week's time.

Nor did we expect to be working on our refrigeration system, which had been working like a champ for months, but now was working overtime to keep the freezer at 14 degrees Fahrenheit, with a thermostat set point of 12F. We thought a simple defrost would do it, but unfortunately not. In fact, after defrosting, 18F was the lowest she would go. After checking door seals for cold leaks and fittings and o-rings for signs of coolant leaks and finding neither, it was time to call in another pro.

With no place to go, and with most of the routine maintenance up to date, we found ourselves with the weekend off duty. Liberty call! Liberty call!



The idyllic Port of Sóller on Mallorca's west coast. This image is of a row of class Spanish La Út fishing boats.



It wasn't all work. Vicki and I had a date night our first weekend in Palma. We walked nearly 3 miles to the old town for dinner, and walked back after midnight to the naval station. Just a couple of kids!

Let the sightseeing begin!

We looked into guided tours of the island of Mallorca, and segway, bike and hop-on/hop-off tours of Palma, but at the end of the day, we opted to rent a car for 3 days and explore on our own. We picked up the car on Friday at noon, and by midafternoon we were having an afternoon *merienda* in the charming port city of Sóller, about halfway up the northwest coast. It looked and felt like an iconic coastal Mediterranean village as seen in countless tourist magazines. Interestingly enough, Ignacio was in Sóller, too, but we didn't see him. His Uncle Pagote had just recently relinquished command of the Spanish Navy base, and Ignacio was



Cala Blava, near Palma



View from Pura Vida



Selfie from our table at Pura Vida and the park at Cala Mandragó



Farewell to Ignacio

Sunday was a beautiful but bittersweet day. Our first task of the morning was to pick Ignacio up at his cousin's flat and take him to the Palma airport for his return flight to Cartagena, where he had left his car when he came aboard. His 4 weeks with us had flown by in the blink of an eye, and we were grateful for his help with running the boat, as well as for his prowess with a speargun that put plenty of fresh fish on the table for dinner. But he needed to go home and start looking for a seaborne internship to complete his qualifications as merchant deck officer.



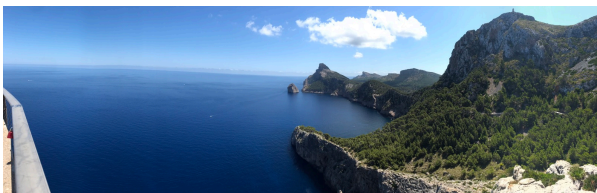
spending the weekend there with family, before heading back home on Sunday.

On Saturday we toured the south coast all the way out to Colonia Sant Jordi, stopping at numerous scenic calas/coves all along the way. And we also ventured partway up the rugged east coast, stopping at Spanish lunchtime (~2:30pm) in Cala Figuera at Pura Vida for a delicious and filling lunch and great coastal view. After walking off the meal around town a bit, we decided to head back to the AFS for a siesta.



Cap de Formentor

After dropping Ignacio off we made a beeline for Mallorca's wild north coast where we spent most of the rest of the day driving the twisty, winding road to the tip of Cap de Formentor. Although it's just 10km as the crow flies from the Port de Pollençà to the lighthouse, it's at least double that in driving distance with all the switchbacks and hairpin curves. But the



brehtaking vistas in route, and the end-of-the-earth feeling at the lighthouse are not to be missed.

Nevertheless, the trip is not for the faint of heart, and Vicki's fitness watch registered peak levels of stress during the road trip, in what was an otherwise *tranquilo* day. We ate a delicious lunch at the casual chic waterfront restaurant, La Llonja, walked on the boardwalk (noticeably at just ~50% capacity on this beautiful summer day), and then drove back to Porto Pí - content with a relaxing weekend under our belts.



Left side from top:

- Selfie from the first lookout point
- Looking north along the west side of the cape.
- Cala Figuera de Formentor
- Lighthouse at the tip of the cape.

Right side from top:

- Just a few of the many hairpin curves and switchbacks on the road to the lighthouse at Cap de Formentor
- Appetizers before a wonderful lunch at La Llonja in Porto Pollença



A busy week in Porto Pí

Monday through Friday of the following week was a blur with activity. We tested the watermaker several times to make sure we were back to 100% capacity. Vicki did a few loads of laundry using the hose on the dock. We troubleshooted the connectivity problems we were having with the Iridium Go satellite system. We fixed a leaky bronze portlight. We added strainers to the gray-water sump system to catch soapy gradu before it reaches the sump tank. We changed fuel filters for the generator. We “de-Japonified” our storm trysail, which we have to admit looked an awful like the Rising Sun on the Japanese national flag.

Best of all, we installed *baggywrinkles* in the rigging that Vicki had been making over the last few months. What are baggywrinkles, you might ask? They are scruffy-looking pads made from bits of scrap rope that sailors have been making for centuries to protect sails and lines from chafing against the standing rigging. They’ve become almost a rarity in sailing vessels nowadays, but they making somewhat of a comeback, and we’re now part of the revival. Over the past few weeks, Vicki made 4 for us to try, each taking 2-3 hours to make. If they work out well, as expected, we think we’ll need 4 more.



Some said our storm trysail looked like Japanese flag. What do you think?



Vicki adding black diamonds to the “rising sun.”

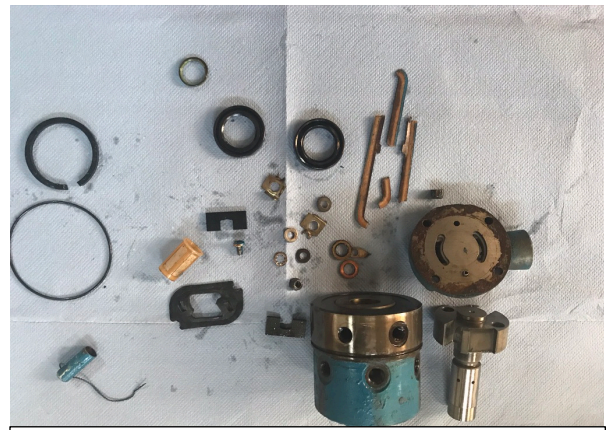


What do you think about our new baggywrinkles?

But perhaps the biggest news is we got the Perkins back up and running! The mechanic called on Thursday afternoon to say he was “75% sure” our fuel injection pump would be ready for installation on Friday. We waited all Friday morning to hear from him; and when we didn’t hear anything by noon we presumed we would have to wait until Monday to fix the motor. We also thought we would miss out on sailing 20 miles offshore on Monday to the national park island preserve at Isla Cabrera. Anchoring is forbidden there - abundant Posidonia seagrass and underwater rock formations - and it took us a couple of weeks of trying almost daily to snag reservations for one of the few mooring balls inside the park. We would have to leave by 09:00 on Monday in order to reach the park before dusk, when the unoccupied mooring balls go up for grabs, an impossibility if the Perkins wasn’t up and running before the weekend. But at 14:00, quite by coincidence, I bumped into our mechanic on my way out of the Mercanàutic chandlery about a mile from the boat. He said he had one more stop to make, and then he would be at our boat with the newly rebuilt pump. He arrived at 14:30, and by 18:00 our Perkins was purring like she did before.

Isla Cabrera, here we come!

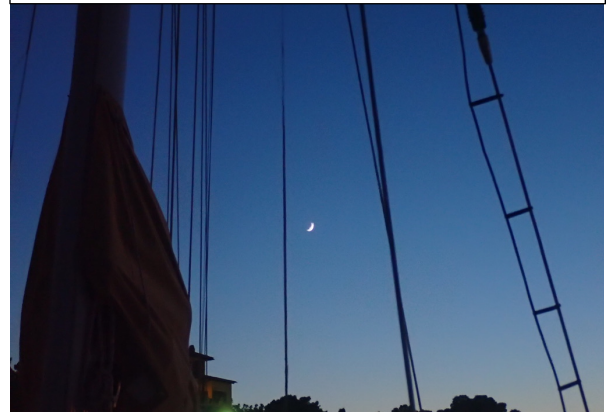
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabrera_Archipelago_Maritime-Terrestrial_National_Park



These parts from our fuel pump only lasted 30+ years and nearly 11,000 hours. We hope the new ones last at least as long.



Our hero in Palma, diesel mechanic Anhar Zainul, proprietor of Marinedoca. Thank you, Anhar!



Our last night in Porto Pi – on this stop. But we’ll likely be back soon.