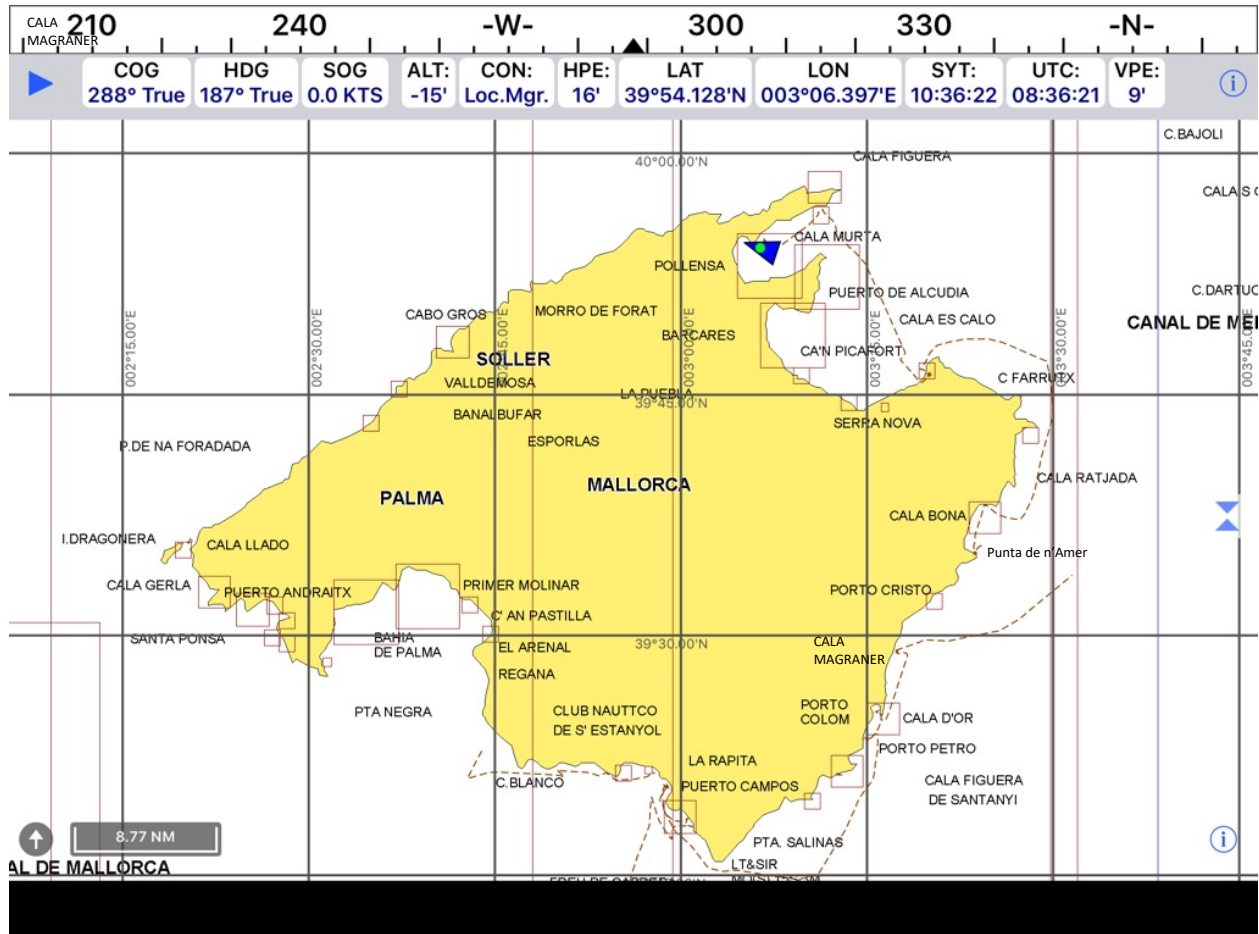


# Circumnavigating Mallorca

## Aboard S/V *At First Sight*

### August 25, 2020



They say one of the most dangerous things on a sailboat is a schedule. Accordingly, *for safety reasons (haha)*, we don't do much detailed planning too far in advance. Rather, we develop somewhat of a concept of operations. For example, for las Islas Balaeres, we've notionally planned to explore all the main islands traversing from south to north, Formentera, Ibiza, Mallorca, and Menorca. And for Mallorca, in particular, our concept of operations has been to circumnavigate the island in a counterclockwise direction, starting and ending in Palma while mostly anchoring in calas (coves) or on the outskirts of small harbors, with an occasional mooring or docking here and there for things ashore such as provisioning, sightseeing, restaurants, etc.

After a week in the beautiful and friendly town of Portocolom, we were ready to resume our circumnavigation of Mallorca as well as our exploration of some of the many calas dotting the east, north, and west coasts of the island. Our first stop was in Cala Magraner, which is a relatively long cala, with crystalline blue water, and lined by sheer rock walls and splitting into two branch calas, with both branches having beaches at their heads. Strangely, the beach on the left fork is mostly grapefruit-size stones covered with at least a foot of dried seaweed, while the beach on the right fork is soft, golden brown sand. While we're sure it is possible to reach the beaches from the interior of Mallorca, it must also be difficult because we never saw any foot traffic on either beach during the three days we were anchored in Cala Magraner.

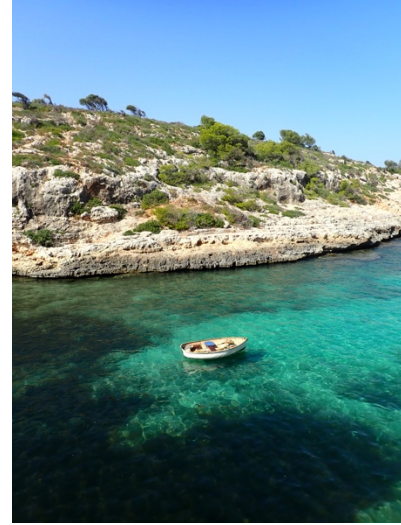


Beautiful Cala Magraner on the day of our arrival. We were able to move back to near the fork in the cala as soon as the dayboats left that day. And then we stayed put for the next 3 days, soaking in the ambiance, swimming, and kayaking, with a boat project or two.

What it lacked in foot traffic, however, it made up with boat traffic; and both it and nearby Cala Virgili must be on the suggested itinerary for every charter boat and tourist boat outfit in Portocolom and Porto Petro. From 10am until two hours before sunset, it was a near constant parade of chartered sailing and power vessels, both large and small, and sightseeing glass bottom boats. Some would just motor in, motor around the cala, and then motor out. Others would anchor for an hour or two and then get underway again for another cala, perhaps a mooring or marina. Others would anchor in Cala Magraner for the better part the day. But always, almost all the charter boats would depart 2-3 hours before sunset, leaving us with the cala to ourselves, or with at most one or two other boats, until the cycle repeated the next morning.



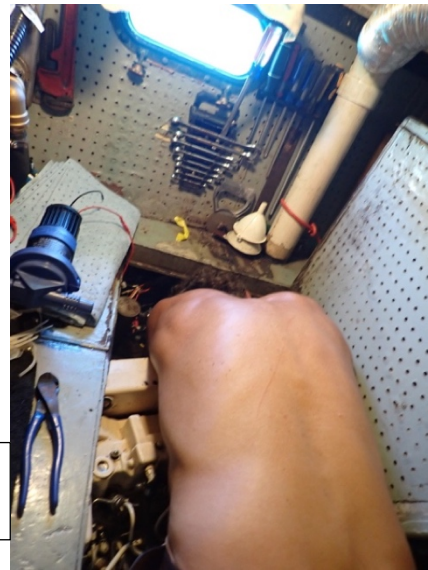
During the middle of the day, as shown above, Cala Magraner was popular with locals and charterers. But for a few hours each morning and again in the evening, we had the cala almost all to ourselves. We used 2<sup>nd</sup> Sight and Vicki's kayak during those quiet times to explore various nooks and crannies around the cove.



We couldn't have had a more relaxing routine than we had in Cala Magraner. We swam, kayaked, and/or rowed for about an hour every morning, while we had the place all to ourselves, the water being flat calm, the wind light, and the sun low in the sky with shade provided by the rocky cliffs. Breakfast was next, followed by more swimming, or perhaps reading, chatting with Granddaughter Maebel online, or a boat project (remember: always something to clean, polish, lube, or repair on a boat).



The crystal clear water was irresistible in Cala Magraner, and we were in it several times a day. But we also had work to do... of course. Here I'm working on the bilge pump.



After lunch, Vicki and I would settle into semi-reclined positions in the cockpit and watch the parade of charter boats go by with their interesting (and quite often naked) people aboard them.



I rowed and Vicki paddled from Cala Magraner to nearby Cala Virgili to see the Indiana Jonesish caves. Saylor is okay with riding on Vicki's kayak, but she prefers the comfort of 2<sup>nd</sup> Sight. At right, Vicki checks in with granddaughter Maebel.



This would take us through to late afternoon, when as quickly as the cala had filled in the morning, it emptied out; leaving us to ourselves once again, which meant an evening swim call and a sunset dinner on *At First Sight's* ample fantail. And at sunset, we were serenaded each evening by the sounds of goats bleating and cormorants returning to roost along the cliffs surrounding the cala.

Cala Magraner was home to goats and cormorants, both of which let us know they were around every morning and every evening.



We thoroughly enjoyed our time in Cala Magraner, and we might still be there if we hadn't received an invitation from Andrew and Ali Miles in *SY Miles Away III* to rendezvous with them the following day in a small but open cala in the lee of Punta de n' Amer, about 15nm north (~3 hours under sail) from our position.

And so, we weighed anchor shortly after noon on the next day and had a relaxing 2-hour light-air sail under our drifter, mainsail, and mizzen. We doused the sails rather far offshore, however, so the added hour of motoring would charge the batteries quicker than solar alone. We found *Miles Away III* with our binoculars, anchored just off Cala Nao, and anchored 4-5 boat lengths off their stern. After the almost obligatory evening swim call, we cleaned up (well, I might add) and rowed over to *Miles Away III* for a great dinner and even better conversation.

The next morning, I did a long swim in the glassy water along the rocky coast, while Vicki kayaked around me to ward off any passing boats. Andrew and Ali departed for parts unknown further north shortly after we returned from our morning workouts, but with promises to rendezvous again for dinner and conversation aboard *AFS*.



Later in the morning, Vicki, Saylor, and I climbed down into our tender, *2nd Sight*, this time rigged for sailing, and we sailed totally downwind the mile and half to the beach fronting the condominium jungle of Costa Llorencina.



We had intended to go shopping together and then have lunch in town, but the lifeguard rushed to inform us one of us had to stay with the dinghy. Accordingly,



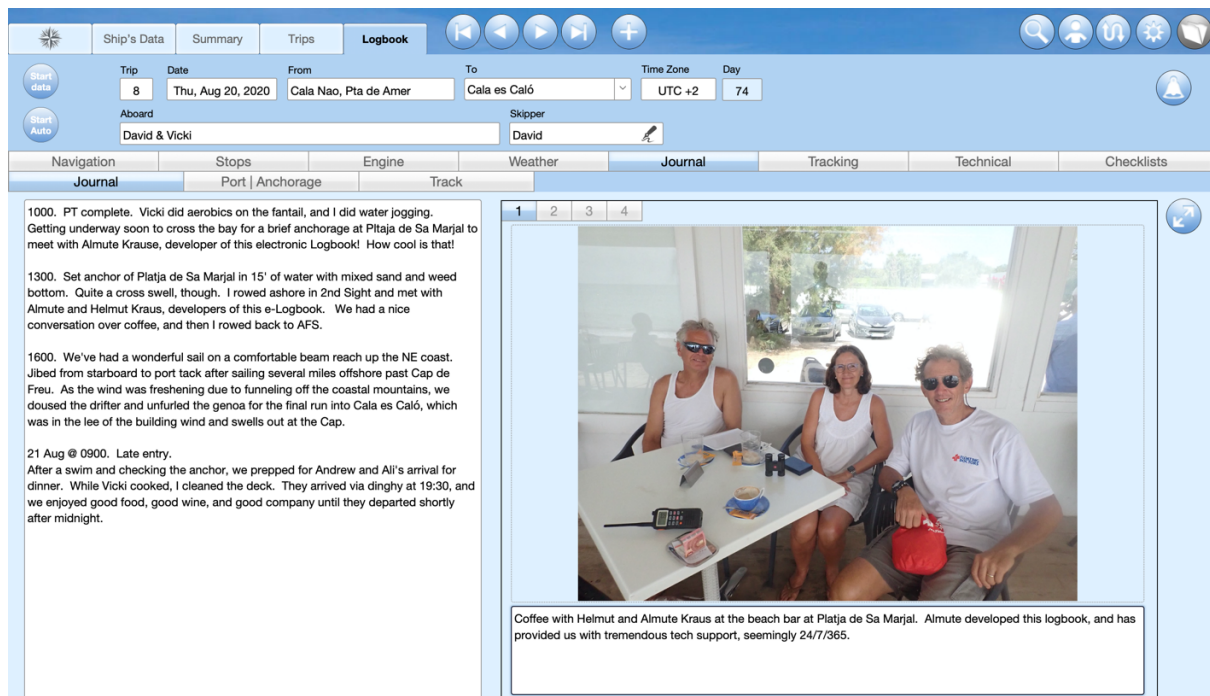
Vicki went shopping while Saylor and I stayed with *2nd Sight*. When she returned, we pushed off the beach, paddled out beyond all the swimmers, and then raised the sail and prepared for a long beat to weather to get back to *AFS*. (If you read our post from Cabrera, you know the last time we beat into the wind in *2nd Sight*, it did not go well for us. We lost ground on every tack, broke our rudder by backing into a rock, and eventually needed a tow back to our mother ship. This voyage went much better; and in fact, we made three long, close-hauled tacks, and were back aboard *AFS* in under an hour.)



We spent a second peaceful night anchored off Punta de n' Amer, and then briefly got underway at 10am (early for us nowadays) for a 3-mile transit across Bahia de Artá to the beach at Platja de Sa Marjal. We anchored in 10' of water, but with a nasty rolling cross swell.

Nevertheless, I quickly climbed down into *2<sup>nd</sup> Sight*, and rowed 1/2nm into the beach to meet for coffee with Almute and Helmut Kraus, the German developers from Düsseldorf of the electronic logbook ([www.logbooksuite.com](http://www.logbooksuite.com)) we've used aboard *AFS* since shortly after we bought her 6 years ago.

Almute has been a lifesaver with technical support for her app via email for 6 years, often replying a few moments after I hit send on my request for assistance, regardless of the time of day. I'm not sure how, but we learned several weeks ago that we would both be in Mallorca at the same time. And we agreed that, if feasible, we would try to rendezvous near their vacation apartment at Platja de Sa Marjal. Helmut helped me beach the dinghy, and after elbow bump greetings at the nearby beachside bar, we took down our masks and enjoyed meeting each other face-to-face for the first time. What a small world we live in, indeed.



This is the journal tab from our electronic logbook. Indicative of the small world in which we live, I was able to rendezvous with the application's German developers on holiday from Düsseldorf at a small beachside café in a small village on Mallorca. For cruisers who might be reading this, we highly recommend Logbook Suite, which you can learn about at [LogbookSuite.com](http://LogbookSuite.com).

Once back aboard *AFS*, we motored 3 miles into a 12kt headwind and 2m swells, turned 90 degrees to port, hoisted the drifter, mainsail, and mizzen, shut down the Perkins, and just like that we were comfortably cruising on a beam reach at 6



We had a great sail under our drifter, mainsail and mizzen from Punta de n'Amer to Cala es Caló. Even Saylor looks particularly content.

to occasionally 8kts along the unspoiled northeast Mallorquín coast. All too fast (because the sailing was so good) we were several miles north of Cap des Frue and it was time to jibe and make for Cala es Caló, in the lee of Cap de Ferrutx, our rendezvous spot with *Miles Away III*. Andrew and Ali were coming aboard *AFS* for dinner later that night. We arrived in Cala es Caló under full sail, which we doused as we approached the anchorage and made rapid preparations for dropping the hook.

We secured from our *sea & anchor detail* and set about preparing for boat guests. I swabbed and cleaned the above deck area while Vicki finished cleaning below and prepared dinner. Our guests arrived via their dinghy at 19:30, and we all enjoyed great food, excellent wine, and wonderful conversation until well after midnight. Thinking back the next morning, we believe this is the first time we've had people aboard for dinner whom we met while cruising. And as an ironic twist, Ali told us that we had also been their first dinner guests ever.

Shortly after PT and breakfast the next morning, we waved goodbye to *Miles Away III* and her crew. While swimming around the anchor, I discovered the chain had wrapped around a large rock, and it would take some maneuvering to weigh anchor the next day, when we planned to depart Cala es Caló.

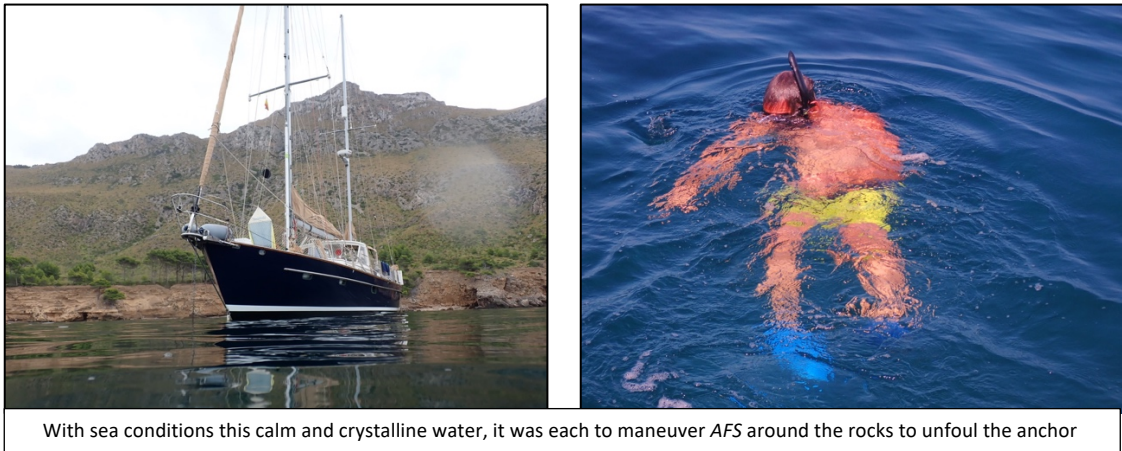


Our anchor did not catch anything, but our chain wrapped around 2 rocks in Cala es Caló – which is apparently quite common in this cala. The Posidonia Police even offered to use her “look see bucket” to help us get free. Fortunately, the water was super clear, and it was an easy problem to fix with a swimmer in the water once we got underway. These pictures were taken from 6' underwater, in water 20' deep!

Despite the fouled anchor chain, we were just settling down for what was to have been a relaxing day at anchor, including a trip ashore for a walk in the beautiful pine forest overlooking the cala.

Unfortunately, we were visited by the *Vigilancia de Fondeo*, affectionately known as the Posidonia Police. She couldn't help but notice with her "look see bucket" that (1) our anchor chain was wrapped around a rock, and (2) part of the chain that wasn't fouled came to rest in a stand of Posidonia. We would have to move, although to her credit, she said we could stay there for few hours, but just not overnight – as had been our intention. We quickly made preparations to get underway.

To unfoul the anchor chain, I jumped in the water and vectored *AFS* with Vicki at the helm around the rock. One zig, one zag, and one  $\frac{3}{4}$ -circle around the rock, and our chain and anchor were both free.



We initially were motoring to the sandy anchorage less than a mile down the waterfront, but changed our minds midstream, opting to sail across the Bahia de Alcudia and Bahia de Pollença instead, and find a cala on the SE side of Cap de Catalunya near the land's end Punta de Formentor. We had 15kts of wind on the beam and even made 8.6kts for awhile. But the wind dropped below 6kts as we approached the cape, so turned on the motor and doused the sails.

We attempted to anchor in the tight Cala en Gossalba and its neighbor, Cala Murta, both less than a mile from the tip of the cape. Unfortunately, they were both full with small dayboats, but it was too rough to wait them out as we still



had 4 hours before sunset. We also scouted out the half-moon shaped Cala Caló, but we could only find rock or Posidonia between the half-dozen or so other boats already at anchor. We concluded our only option at that point was to continue in toward the port of Pollença, and anchor behind Punta de l'Avançada in the shadow of La Fortalesa, a private castle-like estate overlooking the port. Prince Ranier of Monaco and Grace Kelly famously spent their honeymoon nearby. We did two figure-of-eights around the anchorage, and had some difficulty finding a clear area without rock or Posidonia, but finally took a chance and dropped the hook in 7.5' of water (we draw 6'), and had good hold. I dove on the anchor a short while later, and everything looked okay. We nevertheless moved a few boat lengths early the next morning, just to be sure. The anchor has to hold well here; we were expecting 2-3 days of a strong blow from the northeast.



The lighthouse at Punta de l'Avançada was a great landmark for our approach to Pollença. The little bay created by the point made for calm water in just about every wind condition. The well-lit, private Fortalesa was only 100m or so from where we anchored. Prince Ranier of Monaco and the actor Grace Kelly honeymooned in this area in 1956. And we can see why. It's beautiful.

In the meantime, we'll plan to enjoy the ambiance of the anchorage in Bahia de Pollença for a few days. After the blow, we'll expect to motor a couple of miles over to the town of Pollença to re-provision in expectation of rounding Cap de Formentor and transiting down Mallorca's wild northwest coast to Sóller.