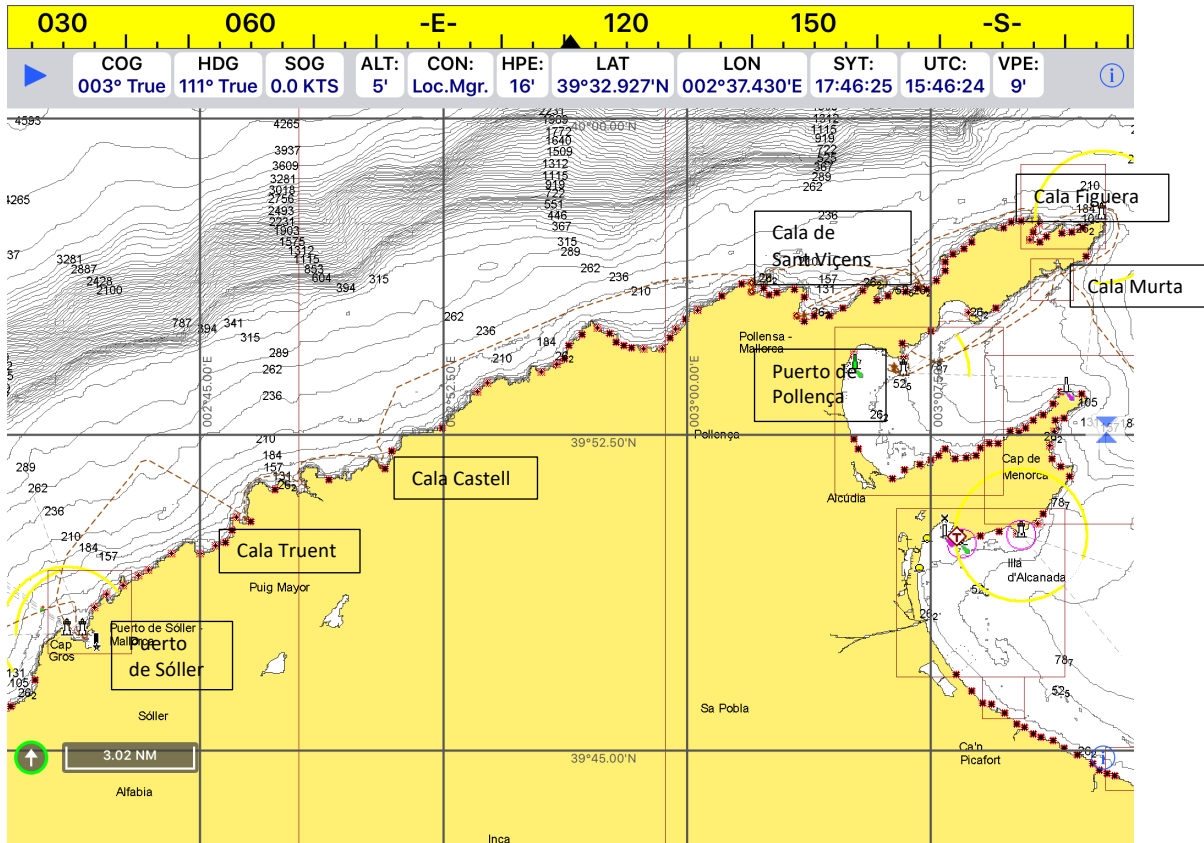


Circumnavigating Mallorca

Aboard S/V At First Sight

Pollença to Sóller

August 25-28, 2020



We enjoyed our time on the hook near Porto de Pollença, tucked in under the protecting ridge of La Fortalesa. Although everything was *tranquilo* in the anchorage, by the same token something was always going on. For example, there was a lot of turnover in the anchorage with locals and charterers on a schedule either coming or going throughout the day, especially in late morning and late afternoon. We saw several fleets of sailing schools out practicing or racing every day in their Optimists, Lasers, and 470s. Kayakers and stand-up paddle boards went by in route to their destinations. We were also treated to an airshow by a fire-fighting seaplane from the Spanish Air Force hangered near the anchorage.



We enjoyed our time at anchor in the lee of La Fortalesa (a private compound). Several local sailing schools would tow their fleet of training craft to clearer air and water, which was just beyond where we were anchored. And interesting commercial and recreational vessels were always sailing by us, too, like this beautiful schooner.

One of our best days, though, was the day we set sail in our tender, *2nd Sight*, for the town of Pollença to stock up on perishables before leaving for the more frontierish northwest side of Mallorca. We had a comfortable single-tack broad reach all the way to the dinghy dock on the town quay, a distance of at least 3 miles. We walked 2-300 meters to a supermarket, did our shopping, and briefly thought to stop of a coffee in one of the many seaside cafés. However, because the wind was freshening rather quickly, we loaded our groceries into the tender, hoisted its gaff-rigged sail, and began beating the 3 miles back to *AFS*. What took ~40 minutes going, took ~90 minutes returning, but the wind-dictated route took us back and forth several times through various slices of Pollença’s expansive mooring field, which was full of commercial and private vessels of every size and shape imaginable. And just as we climbed aboard *AFS* and began to stow our groceries, the seaplane airshow was on again for the second day in a row.



We took *2nd Sight* for a sail into Pollença to resupply with vittles and drop off our trash. When we returned aboard *AFS*, Vicki prepared stuffed mushrooms, which we took aboard *SY Miles Away III* that evening for “nibbles” with Andrew and Ali Miles.

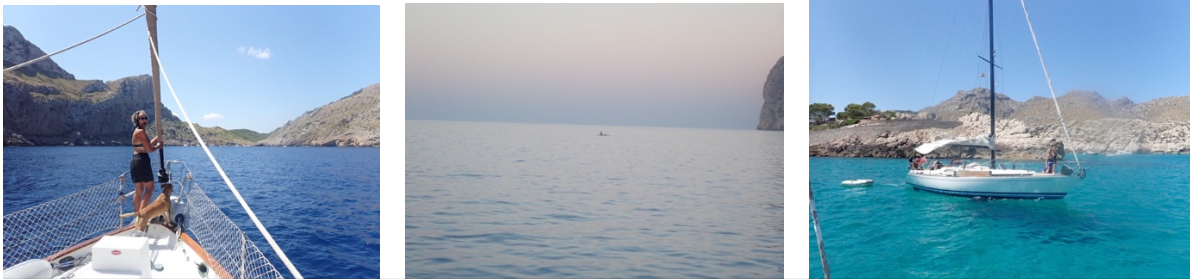


We say goodbye to Andrew and Ali, as they set sail for Menorca. Later, we watched a seaplane crew practice their fire fighting skills.

Later that evening we went aboard *Miles Away III* for “nibbles.” They were getting underway for Menorca the next morning, and this would likely be our final

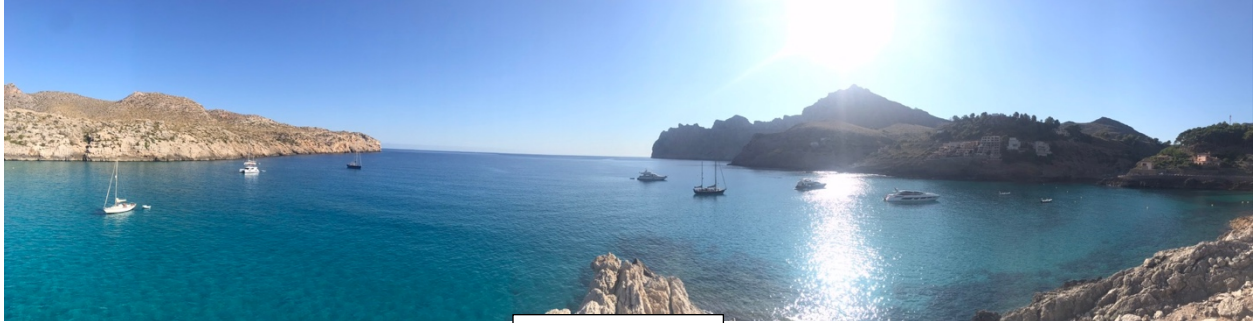
farewell. We weighed anchor the next day, August 25, after a busy but fun three days under the shadow of La Fortalesa. We had had a great stay there, but we were looking forward to being off the grid and exploring remote calas on the northwest coast.

We got off to just a so so start because we had hoped to stop at Cala Gossalba or Cala Murta, next door, just like we had hoped to do on the way into Pollença, but they were already full with dayboats at 10AM. Then we anchored briefly in Cala Figuera on the northwest side of Cap de Formentor, but I dove on the anchor and saw it was ~2 meters into a bed of Posidonia seagrass, which was enough to spook us given all the other boats in the cala restricting our ability to move very far. Then we tried Cala Boquer, but it was full, too. And by the time we got to Cala de Sant Vinçens toward the end of the afternoon, we had traversed about half of the northwest side of the island, far more than we had intended at the start of the day.



Vicki does visual navigation to get us into Cala de Sant Vinçens, which was quite lovely, even if one side of it had a hotel and a couple of restaurants. Another boat anchored next to us, and we became fast friends after their son swam over to see Saylor.

But we hit a homerun with Cala de Sant Vinçens, even if one of its two forks had been urbanized with a hotel and a restaurant or two. Nevertheless, the setting could not have been more relaxing nor the water more inviting. As afternoon gave way to evening, another sailboat arrived and anchored behind us. The young boy aboard was immediately captivated by Saylor, and soon 12-year-old Carlo swam over to see her close up, and he and Vicki struck up a lengthy conversation while I putzed around on some maintenance project.



Cala de Sant Viçens

The next day, I stopped by their boat during my morning swim to say how we (Vicki) enjoyed meeting Carlo, and his father, Niccolò, an Italian, invited me aboard. I told him we had only recently pretty much decided to not cruise to Sardinia, mainland Italy, or Sicily this year because of our concern that we would not be allowed to legally enter Italian waters due to ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions. Niccolò immediately called a public health doctor friend of his in Sardinia and the manager at Marina di Sant’Elmo, Alghero, Sardinia, to get the strait gouge about entry procedures for an American vessel and crew coming from Spain – and just like, we were going to Sardinia again (after Menorca)!



The water in Cala de Sant Viçens was so clear, I was able to free-dive 22’ below AFS to recover an oarlock I dropped into the water. Before weighing anchor to continue our circumnavigation of Mallorca, Saylor and I rowed ashore to drop off garbage, buy a few things, and explore a bit. Saylor must have thought she was a mountain goat. The panoramic views were spectacular from the rocky cliffs overlooking the cala and AFS at anchor.

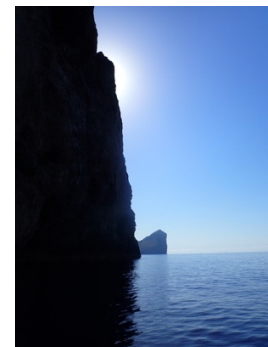
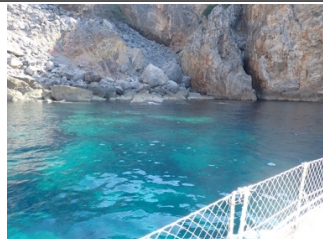
We ended up spending two perfect days in Cala de San Viçens. I rowed ashore with Saylor early on our last morning to drop off our trash and to explore the

town a bit. We also did some rock climbing to the promontory overlooking the cala. We got underway at 11AM, and were anchored in a tiny unnamed cala in the lee of Punta de la Nao, where the water was 30-40' deep, and the bottom a mix of rock and Posidonia with very little sand. We tried to hit a patch of sand, but missed by a few feet, so we stayed there for lunch only, and then moved on in the direction of Puerto de Sóller.



Along the way, we attempted to anchor in Cala Castell, but as we approached the mouth of the tina cala a large motor yacht raced around us and took the only spot in which we would safely fit. We moved on, then, to Cala Codolar, a small cala with 60-75' deep water right up to a boat-length away from enormous sheer cliffs. We thought long and hard about anchoring overnight in this amazing spot, but decided it was a little too open to the sea for our liking.

We almost spent the night in Cala Codolar, with its sheer cliffs on two sides and water as clear as anywhere we've been. Unfortunately, it had a rocky bottom, and with 60-75' deep water, we would have been in a jam if our anchor had gotten wedged in a crevice. So, we moved on.



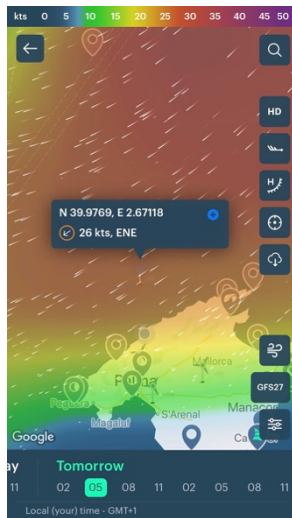
Next we decided to continue on to Cala de la Calobra, which some call the most spectacular cala in the Balears. Of course, it was packed with mega yachts and dayboats. We unsuccessfully tried to anchor in two spots there, but we were either in Posdonia or 50' deep water. (Unfortunately, no pictures.)

We eventually motored further down the coast to Cala Tuent, about 3 miles away, which proved to be just right for us – crystal clear water, sand everywhere below, and a spectacular setting (even if not as dramatic as Codolar). And we had the

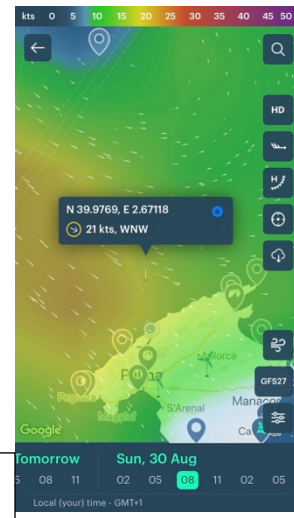


Although it wasn't on our list of calas to see, we feel fortunate to have spent a night in Cala Tuent, which was surrounded on 3 sides with a lush green forest of trees and great water for swimming. And the bottom was all sand, with no Posidonia or rocks.

cala almost all to ourselves when the dayboats left, only an hour or so after we arrived. We had a great dinner on the fantail, and watch a movie.



After PT and a nice breakfast the next morning we set sail for Puerto de Sóller, a short 20 miles away, where we had permission to dock at the Spanish Navy base and ride out two days of rough weather, a Tramontana (strong NE winds) on Saturday and a Mistral (strong NW winds) on Sunday with heavy rain interspersed between the two weather systems.



We needed safe harbor because two nasty weather systems were coming our way. A Tramontana nor'easter on Saturday, followed by a Mistral on Sunday bringing strong winds from the northwest. The sudden change in direction would turn the sea in to a mixing bowl.

After securing AFS and making time for an afternoon siesta, we walked into town for dinner at 8:30PM. It was still high season and the picturesque town appeared to be bustling with Spanish and German mask-wearing tourists; however, we noticed ~25% of the businesses were boarded up, an apparent consequence of decreased tourism due to COVID-19.



Scenes from Puerto de Sóller. Far left: AFS safely docked at the Spanish Navy base, which is at the edge of town Left: Paseo marítimo with restaurants on one side and boats on the other. Below left: Cap Roig (Scorpion Fish) cooked to perfection. Below right: Two happy campers.



We walked about a kilometer to Ses Oliveres, a restaurant recommended to us by the base commander, CDN Javier López Cerón. There we had one of the best meals we've had in Spain, ever. Our selections included two local delicacies, Pulpo Roca Mallorquín (spicy grilled octopus) and Cap Roig (whole, flash-fried Red Scorpion Fish), complimented with a nice bottle of Mallorcan white wine.

We returned to AFS around midnight, and as we were getting ready for bed, Vicki suggested we put up the eisenglass cockpit enclosure. Was that ever a good move, because when the much-anticipated wind and rain started shortly after sunrise the next morning, we were pelted with 30-minutes of hail the size of garbanzo beans. But having the eisenglass up is like having an enclosed patio, and we were able to watch the fierceness of the storm in relative comfort. That said, a big swell started rolling in, and AFS was bucking on her mooring lines like a mechanical bull in a honkytonk bar. And during a break in the storm, we deployed several layers of fenders arranged horizontally outboard from the hull to take the place of the solid 2x12" timber fenderboard that snapped like a toothpick from getting slammed into one of the pilings on the quay.



Hail the size of garbanzos.



The eisenglass cockpit enclosure kept us warm and dry during the storms. It's like having another room.



Far left: Sailor inspects our fender set up to make sure AFS stayed off the pylons.
Left: This 2x12" wood fenderboard was snapped like a toothpick from the force of getting slammed against the pylons. It was sacrificial – better the fenderboard than our hull!

After the storm passed, Vicki decided "enough is enough" and she gave me a long-overdue haircut, only the second one I've had since mid-February. She did a great job, and there's nothing quite like having a barber with benefits 😊.

My payment was a surprise romantic dinner. I had discovered a secluded picnic table in a remote seaside corner of the base during one of my early morning walks. We got a paella to go, and that, along with a bottle of wine, made for a wonderful picnic dinner with the lights of the town off in the distance. And, as if



on queue, the local opera company was performing *Madam Butterfly* on a beach on the other side of the harbor as well, and although it was too far away to see what was going on, the wind was just right to provide us with enchanting background music for our date. As an aside, it's worth mentioning the two paellas we tried from Sa Paella, a takeout only paella joint in Sóller, were the two best paellas we've ever had. And to show how small the world truly is, the paella chef was Carlos, Juan Peñuelas's nephew and Ignacio's cousin. We had met Carlos in Palma several weeks before, while Ignacio was still with us. And although he's a civil engineer by day, his passion is cooking paella on the weekends. Little did we know we'd bump into him in Sóller.



We enjoyed a delicious paella in a secluded part of the Sóller Naval Station. It was prepared by a relative of our friends, the Peñuelas Family.

The next day, Vicki and Saylor went power walking for 90 minutes around the harbor and in the mountains overlooking it, while I did yoga on the dock next to AFS. Afterwards, we made preparations for getting underway, which we did around noon. Despite the storms, we had a terrific three days in Puerto de Sóller.