

**We Are Circumnavigators...  
Of Mallorca!  
Aboard S/V At First Sight  
September 12, 2020**



We got underway at noon from Estación Naval Sóller, and as we exited the mouth of the harbor and entered the Mediterranean we briefly wondered if should have waited until the next day. We had a relatively light northerly wind as we left the confines of the harbor, but as mentioned in our last post, we had sought safe harbor in Sóller to wait out a nor'east Tramontana followed by a northwest Mistral. As a result of the two days of high winds and the large wind shift, the sea outside the harbor was turbulent with residual swells coming from several directions. AFS was bobbing around like a cork. Fortunately, though, we were able to mitigate some of the roller coaster movements by briefly turning north into the wind, hoisting our mizzensail, falling off to a southwesterly heading, and

then unfurling our big genoa. Ahh, instant relative comfort under jib & jigger with generally following seas.

Once we got settled under sail, we looked back to check on traffic and saw a large dark-hulled sailboat off in the distance. She appeared through the binoculars to be a ketch, and she was gaining on us fast - which wasn't a blow to my ego since we were sailing and, absent any sails aloft, she was obviously motoring. We checked our Automatic Identification System (AIS) target information and learned she was SY *AquiJo*, an 86-meter sailing vessel making 13kts (compared to our 4), and that she would pass <200' from us in 8 minutes.

We Googled her and learned *AquiJo* is, in fact, the largest high-performance sailing ketch in the world. With a crew of 17, she is equipped with a full spa, as well as a panoramic sundeck and pool, and you and 11 of your closest friends can charter *AquiJo* for an easy €450,000 *per week*! With a 9-knot speed differential she overtook us fairly quickly; but the coolest part of the passing was we could see her captain taking pictures of AFS under sail – and no doubt dreaming for the simpler life we were obviously enjoying.

The wind clocked around to the south a short while later, and we soon put the mainsail up to give AFS more umph pushing through the swell. We made anywhere from 3-8kts beating back and forth to weather, depending on the wind speed, which was anywhere from 4-15kts. After several hours of tacking back and forth with good progress, we realized we wouldn't make our destination before sunset unless we motored on the rhumb line the last few miles.



SY *AquiJo*, the largest ketch in the world, gaining on us at 13kts!



The behemoth SY *AquiJo* as she overtakes us. We could just make out 4 people on the bridge, atop the cabin, just aft of the main boom. They looked like ants to us, but it was neat to see them through



Approaching Isla Dragonera, which is the island ahead and to starboard. We had just doused our sails and were motoring on a rhumb line course for the island. That's the southwest tip of *mainland* Mallorca to port, and Isleta Mitjana jutting out into the middle of Els Calafats / Freu de Dragonera, the narrow cut between Mallorca and Dragonera.

We were intending to anchor somewhere along the east coast of the Marine Reserve at Isla Dragonera. Andrew and Ali, our friends in *SY Miles Away III*, had recommended Dragonera to us (although we learned later it had been a few years since they last stopped there).

Cala Lloró, about midway down, was our first choice. And, in fact, our logbook reads we anchored – for exactly 26 minutes.



Here's photographic evidence we actually anchored in Cala Lloró, although our logbook indicates it was for only 26 minutes. I was still in the water inspecting our anchor and the track of the chain with the Posidonia Police arrived and told us anchoring is no longer permitted anywhere around Isla Dragonera.

I was still diving on the anchor to ensure we weren't in Posidonia when the *Vigilancía de Fondeo* (aka Posidonia Police) motored up in his Zodiac and told us anchoring is no longer permitted in any of the calas of Isla Dragonera. He said the closest cala where anchoring is permitted was ~6nm away; or we could take a mooring ball across the strait at Cala Pantaleu, part of the Platjas de San Elmo area. With nightfall quickly approaching, we opted for the later - €45, thank you very much.



Sunset view of Isla es Pantaleu, where we took a mooring for one night. It was a beautiful cala with some of the best underwater topography we've seen in the Balears.

We had a peaceful overnight in Cala Pantaleu, and my morning swim was one of the best ever. Like so many other places in the Islas Baleares, the water was crystal clear glass, and just the right temperature for pushing yourself to swim hard (but not necessarily fast, in my case). But the bottom topography and scenery were spectacular with undulating waves of variegated Posidonia mixed with beautiful rock formations. And lots of fish.

But that doesn't mean the stop wasn't without its drama. At ~22:00, a large catamaran entered the mooring area followed by a large monohull. The catamaran tried to anchor in the mooring field, a little too close to us for comfort. They must have realized it too, and when they were weighing anchor to move, they seemingly stumbled upon an open mooring and opted to take that instead. Meanwhile, though, before the catamaran was settled, the big sloop glided right in behind the cat and dropped his anchor, clearly from our viewpoint, well in the swing arc of the cat, even on the mooring. On the one hand, they were both far enough away from us at this point, that we felt comfortable going to bed. On the other hand, we suspected it was only a matter of time before the status quo with those two would have to change. And sure enough, at ~0500, still well before sunup, the sloop chugged noisily out of the cala, passing quite closer to us, followed by the catamaran about 10 minutes later. We presume that they had swung too close for each other's comfort prompting the sloop to weigh anchor, leaving the catamaran on a mooring for which he hadn't paid.

We debated about whether or not to take a tourist ferry to Dragonera and spend a half day there, but in the end we decided to make for Palma de Mallorca, or more specifically, Naval Station Porto Pí. We reasoned it best to get settled there on Wednesday rather than Thursday, so we would have more time to liaison with contractors to order parts and schedule work without getting caught up in the Friday afternoon syndrome. In fact, we texted them in route to let them know we'd be in Porto Pí that night, leaving Thursday and Friday open for getting their work done.

The winds were light and we ended sailing for just 5nm and motoring for 22, making ~90 gallons of fresh water along the way with our CruiseRO reverse osmosis watermaker. We docked at the naval station at 18:30, in exactly the same spot we were docked when we were here before, thereby completing our ~300nm circumnavigation of the island of Mallorca in 37 days.