



Near Tangier kasbah at first light of day.

S/V AT FIRST SIGHT Vessel in Transit Tangier, Morocco

December 2024



The 'chill' blue city of Chefchaouen.

Well, hello there. It's been a while since we've stopped moving long enough to sit down, relax, collect our thoughts, and put them in writing. Where to begin...

For the second year in a row, we wintered over in Ireland aboard *SV At First Sight*, this time in Kinsale, County Cork. It was every bit as rainy as last winter in Cahersiveen, but it seemed to us as if some of the edge was off the fierce winds off the Atlantic by the time they reached us on the east coast.

We spent January and part of February visiting with our grandkids and their parents, in Durban, South Africa. It was my first trip there, and Vicki's second. We had a wonderful time being a part of their lives, including school and extracurricular activities, weekend trips, and the like. And when we weren't hanging out with the Tuckers, Vicki and I did a few outings on our own – driving tours of Zululand, exploring big game parks, and a few days in Cape Town, for example.



Weekend getaway with the Tuckers to Port Shepstone, a beach town near Durban.



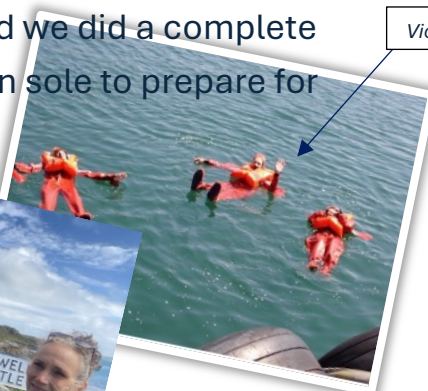
L to R: Our hootch at Umfolozi Game Reserve. Surfing with Shelby at North Beach, Durban. Up close and personal with a hippo at Zululand Lodge. Grandparents on a Durban beach with Shelby, Maebel, and Evan.

Also in February, Shelby and I flew to Florida, where we rendezvoused with son Ben, to attend Niece/Cousin Laura Berner's wedding to Ryan Kahn. The joyous ceremony took place at Surf Studio Beach Resort in Cocoa Beach, where some of our family's most treasured memories have taken place dating back to the early 1960s – including Shelby and Travis's wedding in 2014. In addition to the lovely wedding, a special treat this year was spending a day at Surf Studio with nephew James Alday and his family.



Once back in Ireland and aboard *At First Sight*, we prepared for getting underway with a goal of reaching Morocco by the end of the year. First on the to do list was drying out alongside the harbour [sic] wall in Kinsale, to clean and inspect the hull after a winter tied to a pontoon, change zinc anodes, and other chores below the waterline.

We said goodbye to Kinsale in May, and cruised along Ireland's stunning south coast, with stops in Barloge Creek, Baltimore, Schull, and Crookhaven before an overnight crossing of the Celtic Sea to the Isles of Scilly. From there we went on to Falmouth, where Vicki completed offshore sea survival training in 13°C/55°F water, and we did a complete rigging refit and preventive reinforcing of the aft cabin sole to prepare for upcoming ocean crossings.

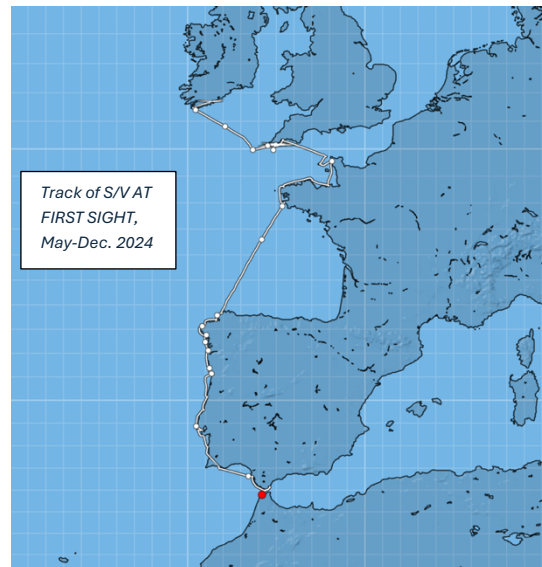




Falmouth is a wonderful seaport and yacht haven, which is a good thing because an intended 3-week stay became nearly 3 months in order to have rigging and shipwright work done on AFS that we couldn't get done in Ireland. And while in Falmouth we also took a cross-channel ferry to Brittany, where we rendezvoused with David's sister, Judi, and her husband, Mark, who were in France for a reunion with a former exchange student of theirs.

It was mid-August before all the boat work was finally completed and we got underway, heading south. Frankly, we both felt like summer had completely passed us by in northern Europe. As an example, we have had flannel sheets on our bed continuously since last October! And with winter now upon us, they're still in daily use.

Our sailing route from August to November took us from Falmouth, England, to Rota, Spain, where we lived from 2000-2003, and where we visited in AFS in 2019 and 2020. Stops in between included rivers, ports and anchorages in Cornwall, The Channel Islands, Normandy, Brittany, Galicia, and Portugal.



After 6 weeks in Rota, which included a haul out to remove ~300 gallons of contaminated fuel and to apply antifouling bottom paint, our 90-day visa-free length of stay in Europe was rapidly coming to an end. Accordingly, we set sail for Gibraltar, where we stocked up on diesel and other tax- and duty-free supplies before crossing the Strait of Gibraltar to Tangier, Morocco.

We're spending the Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year holidays in Tangier, and then work our way south along Morocco's Atlantic coast stopping for a couple of months in Agadir for volunteer work with a local community service organization there.



From an evening stroll in Rota in early December.



Saylor enjoying another TukTuk tour, this time in Porto, PT.



From an evening stroll in Gibraltar a few days before Christmas.

We're not sure in which direction we will head after Agadir; however, we are hoping 2025 will put us in striking distance of visits with son Charlie, who is now in his second year of training in Cincinnati in family medicine and psychiatry, and son Ben, who has grown roots as a computer engineer living in Seattle.

That's it for now. Wishing family and friends near and far a joy-filled Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year.



Saylor on guard for dolphin, off Brittany, France, Sept. 2024.



A blustery day keeping us in port Póvoa, PT, Oct. 24.