

Hi to all - We've reached Gibraltar! 21/7/12

AZORES TO GIBRALTAR

Leaving Horta in the Azores, the North Atlantic was kind to us, until we approached the coast of Portugal. Gale force winds and big seas made crossing perpendicular to the Traffic Separation Zone (Cape St. Vincent thru to Gibraltar) at night a challenge. We felt like ducks in the shooting gallery with major shipping passing first from the north and then from the south. Sighting the loom of the Cape St. Vincent light was a relief. Europe was dead ahead and North America was well astern.

As a treat we decided to stop at Portimao, Portugal for a night of rest at anchor - the first time ever that we had anchored the boat, after only 3200 miles of sailing! Our pristine anchor and virgin chain landed on flat calm water over lovely sand in an active resort area on a lively Sunday morning. Life was good - until midnight when we were hit by a dragging charter yacht. No significant damage was done, but we were happy when they re-anchored far away from us.

From Portimao, we only had 160 miles to go to Gibraltar. The building easterly swell foretold the coming of a Levanter - an easterly gale. With much bashing we ran for refuge into Caliz - the home of the Spanish Armada and today a very industrial port for naval activity and commercial shipping. Gale force winds did not deter us from a very much needed night of R&R at anchor. The last leg of our journey to the Med found us sailing past historic Cape Trafalgar and the Faro light. We turned into Gibraltar Harbour at 2330 along with dozens of commercial ships difficult to spot in the confusion of background city lights. By one in the morning we managed to find a spot to anchor near the new marina (not properly positioned on any of the charts yet) in La Linea, Spain - just under the Big Rock. We slept well.

Jeanne and Colin Harrison

Divided Sky