

Divided Sky - Italy in August 2012

We decided to treat ourselves to a marina stop for three days in Cagliari, Sardinia in order to do all those necessary housekeeping chores: change the oil, wash clothes, have a real shower, reprovision, refuel, and wash down the yacht. The latter being necessary as Sahara dust turned a sprinkling of rain into mud showers, which coated everything brown, whilst sand-filled morning dew left chocolate footprints as soon as we walked on the deck. More importantly, however, we needed to find the perfect place to celebrate Col's 75th birthday whilst enjoying some sightseeing in and around the historic old city.

That perfect birthday place turned out to be a small restaurant on Via Sardegna in the old town of Cagliari, appropriately called Anticocagliari.

With a delightful wait staff, fabulous fresh seafood and pasta, what ingredients could make a better celebration? Oh, yes, refreshing local Sardinian white wine was enjoyed as well, with complimentary birthday aperitifs after the sorbets.



Did we mention that it has been hot, hot, hot? We were anxious to get underway again as the temperature in the city reached into the high 30's and humidity neared 80%. As we headed east towards Sicily on a two day passage, we were relieved by the lack of commercial traffic on our route, but somewhat apprehensive of being so alone yet so close to the North African coastline. When the grey ship of the Italian Guardia approached to challenge our credentials, we were actually pleased to know that they were patrolling the area.

Onwards we sailed towards the Aeolian Islands off of the N.E. coast of Sicily. These islands are volcanic peaks and pinnacles, with two of the volcanoes still active: Stromboli and Gran Cratere on Vulcano.



Our goals were to circle Stromboli at night to view the fireworks (what mariners call the largest lighthouse in the Med) and to bath in the hot mud pools of Vulcano.



At 3 a.m. we woke to up-anchor and head towards the N.W. coast of Stromboli from a nearby island. Our reward was periodic belching of red hot lava from the crater, followed by a loud boom and resultant lava flow

to the sea below - all just 2 miles from the yacht on a star filled, moonless night in flat calm water.



We then carried on to Vulcano, where we could see the hot gas rising from the main crater as well as from various crevices in the slope adjacent to our anchorage. The mud baths were an easy dinghy row away. Memories of Italy in August will forever be hot (temperature), hot (lava flow), hot(mud baths)!





