

Sailing cruise from Saïdia (Morocco) to Porto Calero (Lanzarote)

September 28th – October 15th

Switzerland - Morocco

We arrived at Geneva airport Monday morning very early (5:30). Easyjet leaves unbelievably early. We arrived in Nador (the closest airport to Saïdia) in the afternoon after a long wait in Barcelona, where I bought a Vodafone SIM card (10€), to avoid Swiss roaming costs. In Nador, our plane was the only one on the tarmac, it was really a very simple airport, three custom booths, each custom agent very dedicated, very slow. We took a taxi for about an hour drive South East.

The boat, and its owners were waiting for us at the Saïdia Marina. They sailed from Corsica via Majorca. By the way the boat's blog can be found at www.viramundo.ch. You can also find their actual position. They left Lanzarote for Cabo Verde then headed to Brazil (end of November).

Viramundo is a Catana 42 built in 2014 in La Rochelle. See <http://www.catana.com/catana-catamarans-en/catana-c42> for a full description and at the end for the specifications.

Saïdia

Saïdia Marina is part of a large development area intended to become an important beach resort with many residences, a large busy harbor, a small town. When we visited, very few shops were open, few customers, the harbor is not full. Only a couple of restaurants are still open and seemed to be in business. The small town of Saïdia (just before the border with Algeria) is at about 10 km to the ESE.



Nador airport building



Moroccan sight



Entrance gate (kind of artificial) to the shopping mall at Saïdia marina



Building in the mall



Saïdia city



Saïdia beach



Viramundo waiting for us.



Viramundo facing the harbor exit, eager to go. The port area is in the background.

We spent one night on the boat, in the harbor, then the captain encouraged us to take the bus to Saïdia, a small city, about 30 minutes away. We walked along the beach, wanted a beer, but it seems most restaurant do not serve alcohol. This city also is not very busy, despite that the beach and walkways are quiet nice.

September 30th: nice and warm morning, a sea breeze, we hesitate as when to leave. The forecast (we use [GRIB files](#)) is for very little wind for 24 hours. The prospect of a night without wind, motoring, incited us to postpone our departure to early the next morning.

Thursday, October 1: Saïdia Marina - Gibraltar

It is 7 AM, we are waiting for the police and the custom agent to get our exit papers. Finally, we can get under way around 8 AM. The plan is to sail to Gibraltar.

The exit of the harbor is very convoluted and narrow, the captain is steering. We motor until 1 PM, the weather is beautiful, the sea more than calm. After lunch, we set the gennaker and the wind lifts (we can head up more) regularly. We pass the Cabo Uarc / Nuevo (we have different names depending on the chart) at 4 PM. The temperature is cooling, the sun still pretty warm.

We did see 4 large dolphins which stayed with us five minutes and then stayed behind bobbing up and down. Looks like they were resting.



Los Farallones (3 forks), Cabo Nuevo is the last on the right.



Snapshot of the chart plotter.



Close to the traffic lane.



Moroccan sunrise



The Rock



Algeciras Bay and us squeezed in the traffic lanes

We set course to Gibraltar, no wind, motoring interrupted by a few tries to set sails.

Friday, October 2nd

We are on watch from 3 AM to 6. Clear night with a 3/4 moon. A strong orange light comes out of the horizon, it looks like a mast light, it looks really close, but no, it can't be. Checking Google Sky, we are told it is Venus, which is then followed by the rise of Mars and Jupiter. Beautiful.

We went back to our cabin around 9 AM. I didn't sleep. The Capt. tries both engines at 2'000 RPM which gets us to 5.3 knots. One can reach 8 knots at 2'500 RPM, that was tested on another day, it means increased wear on the engines and significant more fuel consumption.

We saw dolphins on the way over, but they didn't swim with us. Beautiful weather, air is cool though, but it is warm in the sun.

At 12 noon, we have sailed 130 nautical miles.



Approach to Gibraltar, current is against us and pushing us North



Under gennaker

It is 4:15, we have sailed 150 miles. We have entered the navigation channel and had to change course a couple of time. There is heavy traffic. Now, in view of the Rock, we are in the middle of the traffic separation lanes. Big cargo ships cross on our port side. We are facing a current (1-2 knots) that pushes us north, however, the boat is strangely heading West, with the final course vector oriented toward Gibraltar. The autopilot is doing a great job. We have both engines, the main sail and the genoa, we are going over 7 knots on the surface and 6.3 knots over ground. The wind is 12 knots, on a reach.

I have never seen such a large angle between the heading (red line) and the COG (green line, given by the GPS).

After we rounded the south point of the Rock, in the bay of Algeciras we zigzagged between the ships at anchor, a very long quay and one ferry, plus many small fishing boats.

We tie up at the welcome dock, the mariner tells us the office is closed, we can and should stay there for the night, the captain went to the office nevertheless and the secretary happened to be still there, so she gave us a spot with electricity and water tonite already. We docked to a catway without problem.

It is 19h30, we sailed 165 miles, in 42 h sailing, 12h engines.

We stayed a few days in La Linea, the Spanish city next to Gibraltar.

We visited La Linea, went to eat there 3 nights, did our shopping (we took a taxi back), and went to visit the Rock, this time we took the [full tour](#).



The Rock from the Marina (notice the cannon holes in the face)



The Islamic Tower



Stairs going to the top



Another view of the Tower top



Long tunnels were dug in the Rock. These date from around 1780, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Siege_of_Gibraltar

to defend themselves from the Spanish siege and during WWII, to defend against the German. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Siege_Tunnels

Note the one guy who forgot to dress for the part.



Aircraft crossing the main access road to the Empire



View of the British harbor



Top of the rock



View of the port facilities and the bay of Algeciras

La Linea

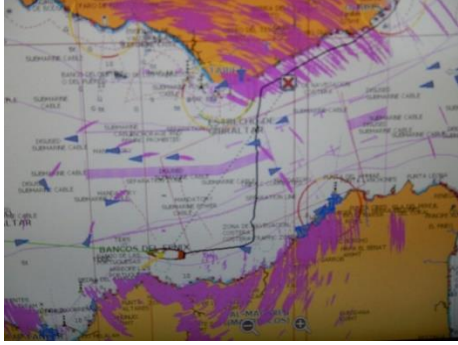


Tuesday October 6th – Gibraltar Lanzarote



8:30 : we cast off and sail out of the Bay against the wind, 2 engines running. We sail towards Tarifa, along the South shore of Spain. We hit a couple of rainy clouds, I get soaked tying a cloth closing the cockpit. At 2 PM, we can start sailing in 12 knots of wind.





This a photo of our navigation chart plotter, displaying in addition the echoes of the radar (note the difference between the AIS localization and echo position).

The plot shows how we crossed the straight, straight, right, it makes avoiding the cargo vessels a bit easier. We were sleeping (off watch) at the time.

3 PM: We are on watch, we are sailing along the coast of Morocco (Atlantic), main sail and one engine. Heading in the direction of Tangier, the Leona Point behind us. There were 2 very large commercial harbors, Tangier Med (*Port passagers et roulier* says the chart, in French) and Tanger Med I. Huge jetties (look it up in Google, those are among the largest deep water harbors).



After the rain, the weather is now partially sunny and some white clouds, and some still dark clouds linger on both coasts (Spain and Morocco). The sea is calm, but there is a long swell, slightly increasing. As we head more into the Atlantic?

We are running under one engine and the main with one reef (it offers less drag when under motor, says the Capt). The wind is light. Our speed, against the current is 3.5 knots (instead of the usual 5). The current should decrease soon... So soon it was not, but it decreased all right.

I try to navigate where the counter current was most favorable. We see it on the water, one side is very rough and choppy (wind against current), the other is smooth like the Mississippi flowing to the gulf. I thought I got it, then I lost it.

Nice weather. 5 PM, on watch, little wind, main and engine. We pass in front of Tangier, ferries coming out at 25 knots, we miss (I shouldn't have, 3 people at the chart table) an incoming ferry, he calls us on the radio, we stop the engine and he safely (for us) pass in front of us.

Main and motor. Cargoes and fishing boats. Boat shakes a bit more on the choppier water.

Wednesday 7

Watch again at 3 AM, Venus, Mars and we should see Jupiter but it is maybe hiding behind the low clouds.

After 24 hours: 117 NM, 72 hours sailing - 45 motoring.

At some point (memory and log book and private notebook do not seem to agree, arggggg), we can hoist the spinnaker. The spinnaker is hoisted in a sock, then the sock is pulled up over the

head and the spinnaker fills with the wind, no risks, much less efforts. You don't believe me: see the pictures 😊



The spinnaker is hoisted in its sock (in French - sleeve is also used in English).



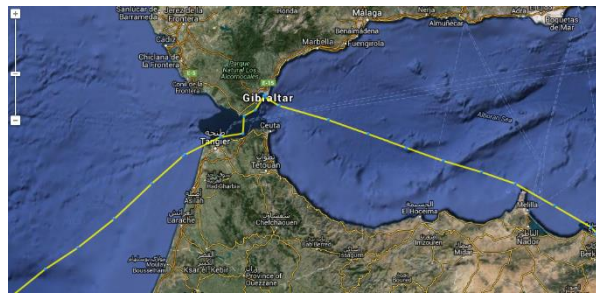
The sock is pulled up using the hosting line.



The spinnaker fills and the sock is rolled up at the top, around the spinnaker halyard, see it ?

Thursday 8

We are on watch, at 3 AM, we are in front of Rabat, stronger wind, 8 knots, moon, first night (10 PM to 2:45 AM) I slept good, due to a change in medication? Getting the rhythm?



It is dark, the sky is mostly clear and dark, many many stars, the moon should come out soon. Still on course towards Lanzarote, a cargo 5 miles on our port side. 2 sailboats 7.5 miles ahead of us (tells us the AIS).

The wind has picked up since midnight, 18-23 knots, NNE, there is still a large swell, and a bit of a chop, the speed is between 6 and 8 knots. The boat is comfortable, but one must hold on good, it moves brusquely. 1 reef and full genoa, since night fall. Before we had full main and gennaker, with wind in the 15 knots, still on a broad reach since 24h.

The moon is just a sliver, playing hide and seek with clouds, close to the horizon. Sirius is the brightest star, aligned with and below the 3 stars of Orion. At 6 AM, we are in front of Casablanca.

The hulls dig the sea and pull a white trough filled with stars (luminescent plankton) and make the noise of a fast torrent or a small water fall in a river. Waves crash sometimes on the underside with a loud bang. Nevertheless, it is comfortable and relatively mild, but outside off the shield of the cabin, the wind is fresh. Tamara feels a bit cold. 3 cargos and one sailboat on the AIS.

At 5:30, we see 5 cargoes on the AIS, between 2 miles to 20 miles from us, no collision course.

11 AM We are in front of Punta d'Azemmour.

Friday 10.9, 10 AM

375 NM, last 24 hours 118 NM, sailing only.

Watch: 3-6. Waves, we drag along at 3-4 knots. In front of Safi (I mean same latitude as).

At 10 AM, we hoist the spinnaker. It is very difficult to keep it full. The wind is shifty and not as strong as we would like. The sun is shining, it is warm, almost no clouds. C. is holding the sheet by hand, the spinnaker is still rebel. Beautiful weather, just the wind is a bit weak. We try to jibe,



not better. We then shift to the gennaker, with 5-7 knots of wind. Motor from 2 to 4 PM, one hour gennaker then genoa, the wind is too close (coming from the front). Then around 6 PM, 1.5 hours motor. Then unexpectedly, the wind picks up and allows us to sail between 4 and 5 knots, close hauled, but not closer. Beautiful sunset at 7.20, a bit later, the sky getting darker, we can see Saturn setting. The temp is cooler (wind chill factor is

not just a view of the mind or some invention of the sportscasters). For the night, we take one reef. The Captain says it also better when under engine (see above). We reach 4 knots in 5 knots of wind, 5 with 8 knots of wind.

In the morning, while sailing slowly, an 18 meter sailboat overtakes us in the south, she carries no sails, running under the engine at close to 10 knots (*Klernia* is its name, I hoped to find it on the Web, no deal).

In the afternoon, we see **Stadtstaat Lehmkuhl** on the horizon, we observe its majesty with the



field glasses (no pirate spy glass), it is a *three-masted [barque](#) rigged sail training vessel owned and operated by the Statstaad Lehmkuhl Foundation. It is based in [Bergen, Norway](#), (Wikipedia, picture is from the German page of Wikipedia), almost 100m long (I am telling you, since you might be too lazy to check it out on your own).*



It carries sails only on the first mast, plus some triangular sails between the masts. We slowly pass south of it and it disappears in the East.

6.20 PM. A bunch of dolphins stay with us almost an hour. Beautiful show, so gracious.

Saturday 10.10.

3 AM. Again on watch. Soon after we can unroll the genoa and stop the engine. We reach 4 knots, close hauled, genoa and main with one reef. At 4:40, the southerly wind has increased to 15 knots, and we sail at over 5 knots, the sea goes from calm to choppy. The night is very dark, as clouds hide the stars. The temperature is mild.

We have sailed 460 miles and are 127 miles from Lazarote. I have time to note this GPS information, just in case you cared ;-).

Around 4:45, a squall hits us, the wind goes up to 20 knots SW, there is rain, I feel uncomfortable, one doesn't see much. I roll the genoa to 50%. I lose my direction, despite all the electronic displays (I disconnected the autopilot as we were headed into the wind, hoping to keep it close hauled, but there no orientation points, the visibility is not good, to put it mildly, a bit of rain, it is so dark, the boat changes direction quickly). The Captain comes out, tells me to turn on the engine and to fully roll the genoa and we motor against the wind, in the right direction. The sky is dark, the see is dark, I do not like it. The wind comes down, motor until 9:00.

Sunday 11th

4th day, 45 miles sailing, 59 miles motoring, 104 miles total, less miles per day each day.

Main with one reef, engine until 16:35. Finally the wind is veering, we can set sails, full main and genoa: 10 knots of wind, NW, we hold 4.5 - 5.3 knots. Course is around 200.

We have sailed 510 miles from Gibraltar, we are 80 miles from our 1st waypoint.

The sun is out, the temperature is warm, just a few cumulus left. We are happy.

Sunday 11th

Around 5 AM, we are 52 miles from Lanzarote. 6 Am, clouds and rain.

5th day : 104 miles, 26 sailing, 78 engine and engine + sails

9 AM, we see land, the first islet of the coast, through the low clouds and poor visibility. We keep sailing along the coast of Lanzarote, some rain and clouds hanging on the volcanic slopes. The coast gets really nice, palm trees, beautiful white houses. Just one big hotel in Arrecife, else

very nice architecture, respectful of the nature of the volcanic island. We understand Cesar Manrique had a strong influence on the architectural development of the island. Lucky us. A bit of sailing but we finish under engine.

At 16:20, we dock in Porto Calero. It is now sunny and warm. Shower, we are tired, not necessarily in that order. Too tired to write more.

We sailed 626 miles from Gibraltar over 6 days.



Arrecife ^



^ Porto Calero v



Carmen



Porto Calero - End of cruise.

We stayed a few more days to visit this wonder full (sic) island and the many artistic and architectural amazing creations by Cesar Manrique. But this will be another story.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%A9sar_Manrique. I didn't find a good site about Lanzarote. [Try this \(collection of picts\)](#).

The layout of pictures is an art in itself (using Word). Sorry for some untidiness.

<p>Catana 42 - Specifications (in French and metric units, In English below and in imperial ones)</p>
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Architecte	Christophe Barreau
Design intérieur	Linea Concept
Longueur	12,58 m
Largeur	6,90 m
Tirant d'eau (dérives hautes)	0,8 m
Tirant d'eau (dérives basses)	2,70 m
Poids lège (Custom Carbon)	8,9 t
Tirant d'air	19,5 m
Surface Grand Voile	70 m ²
Surface de voile au près	112 m ²
Surface de voile au portant (should be spinnaker)	130 m ²
Hauteur du mât	17,5 m
Motorisation	2 x 30 cv
Réserves d'eau douce	670 l
Réserves de gasoil	430 l
Capacité réfrigérateur	115 l

And in English and US/UK/units

Architect	Christophe Barreau
Interior design	Linea Concept
Overall length	41' 3"
Beam	22' 8"
Draft boards up	2' 7"
Draft boards down	8' 86"
Mast Clearance	63' 11"
Light displacement	8,9 t
Main sail area	753 sq ft
Up wind sail area	1,205 sq ft
Down wind sail area (spinnaker)	1,399 sq ft
Mast length	57' 5"
Engines power	2x30 hp
Fresh water capacity	177 us gal
Fuel capacity	113,6 us gal
Refrigerator capacity	30,37 us gal