

s/y NAOS

Opportunity knocked again, and I just couldn't say no. Actually getting paid to go sailing, what a concept !!

Almost 6 years ago, when I was training to sail as crew in the Challenge Business "Around the World" race, one of my training skippers was a Welsh chap named Jon Jeffreys. We have crossed paths a few times since with the help of some mutual sailing buddies, but haven't had a chance to sail together for years. Last I saw him, was at a wedding in England two summers ago, for a mutual sailing mate. Sort of out of nowhere, he e-mailed me, with the offer to help crew his current ride, a 106' luxury yacht, from St. Maartin in the Caribbean to Palma, Mallorca, an island in the Mediterranean. To sweeten the temptation, he said I would be considered professional delivery crew, so would be getting paid, yes paid, to sail, including airfare on both ends of the trip. It was actually pretty bad timing, as I was in the middle of vacation and would have to find a way to finagle even more time off, so I regretfully told him "thanks, but no way."

Thought about it for a few days, and decided it was too good an offer to turn down, so I went into a trip trading and schedule bidding frenzy. Managed to get rid of all my scheduled work except one trip in June, so decided to go ahead and commit to the boat trip, figuring I would just deal with that June trip later.

Packed my sailing gear, bought an iPod, and headed to St. Maartin via Orlando. Wasn't sure whether to take just warm weather sailing kit, or also cold, so took it all.

Arrived at the dock the night before the projected departure, and here is a picture of the lovely yacht, Naos, that would be our home for nearly a month. Naos is Greek, means "ship."



The boat is owned by a rich Swiss banker. He and his wife use it about 12 weeks a year, the rest of the time it is either chartered out (rarely, but you can book it for \$35,000 per week) or just sits around. It sometimes moves around the world a bit, so harbors either in the Caribbean, Bermuda, Newport RI, or in the Mediterranean. Built about 20 years ago in Italy, originally a \$12 million yacht, now worth about half that, but still pretty posh. It has 4 fridges, a walk in freezer, laundry, two TVs with DVD, trash smasher, 5 heads with private showers, even a bidet, scuba gear for 8, so shaping up as a pretty comfy journey. As far as sailing gear, almost everything on the boat can be operated from the cockpit via electronics and hydraulics. All the sails furl (roll up), the mainsail furls right inside the mast, and all the sails can be trimmed by just touching a joystick or a button. It also has an autopilot, and even bow-thrusters to help maneuver in wind and current. Jon advised us that he preferred that all the crew sail barefoot, to help protect the woodwork and decks. I was hesitant, as sailing barefoot in rough weather usually leads to broken toes, as there are a million toe stubbers on a yacht, but thought I would give it a try.

Jon and his wife Brigid pretty much run the boat, as skipper and chef. There is also a full time mate/engineer named James and a stewardess named Josie. Brigid and Jon are in the process of trying to get pregnant, but with a few challenges, so Brigid has taken a leave from the boat to do some in-vitro up in Newport, RI, where she and Jon call home. So, here is the cast of characters:

Jon Jeffreys – skipper and friend – Welch

Brigid Jeffreys – Jon's wife and off duty chef, also in charge of shore management – American
Not actually sailing with us – she does not enjoy deliveries, but she pre-cooked most of our meals

James – 1st mate / engineer, easy going guy – Welch

Josie – stewardess / if you have a question where something is on the boat, ask her – Cornish

Kat – new replacement chef, basically doing a working interview during our crossing – Welch

Michael Nightingale – delivery crew – owns his own boat in eastern US – American

Katherine O'Connell – delivery crew – old sailing buddy of mine, several previous delivery trips together, including my previous Atlantic crossing in 2001, American currently living in Edinburgh, Scotland with a mutual friend Stu, she has also sailed $\frac{3}{4}$ around the world as a substitute legger for one of the Challenge Business races. Good friend of Jon and Brigid's, having introduced them to each other several years ago.

Sarah Johnson – delivery crew – previously sailed with Jon on another boat in US, young beauty with a pure heart – American

Me – delivery crew – just damned glad to be along for the ride

So, 4 guys and 4 gals – 4 Americans and 4 from the UK – a perfect match. Five of us had a fair amount of sailing experience, but 3 had little to no knowledge of big boat sailing. Jon had hand picked the entire crew from people he had sailed with before, people he trusts to keep an eye on things so he can relax a bit during the crossing. The boat is very automated, lots of electronics and hydraulics, and can pretty much be sailed by 1 person, so the sailors in the

bunch were along as an insurance policy, just in case something went horribly wrong in the middle of the Atlantic. (side note – Kat and Sarah had both recently had major breakups with boys)

The afternoon I arrived, we were all supposed to be busy prepping the boat for the trip. Most of the work had been done, groceries stocked, fueled and watered, so just last minute details. However, my friend Katherine, was starting to show signs of a change in her life, that she had perhaps crossed the line from being a hard living, hard drinking sailor chic, to a downright alcoholic, as she seemed to be on a constant quest to find a way to sneak off the boat and grab a beer or two. (Not to mention the 40 or so pounds she has gained since I last saw her) Signs of things to come. Bad news for her (and all of us) is that it would be a “dry” boat any time we were not in a harbor. This is fairly normal, as you don’t want a bunch of drunks sailing your big expensive yacht, or putting the skipper’s job at risk. Jon sensed a problem, and had a bit of a talk with her to make sure she would be fit for the voyage.

The entire crew sat down to a tenderloin dinner on board that night, got to know each other a bit, and discussed the overall sailing plan. It would be the last night we would eat in the main salon, as it is tough to keep clean when the boat is moving under sail. In fact, most of the main living quarters would be off limits to help prevent any damage to the woodwork and upholstery. They even had custom-made canvas covering almost every inch of the main living areas for protection. Instead, 4 crew were put in the guest rooms mid-ships, and the other 4 shared the normal crew quarters in the aft. I ended up bunking with Jon, the skipper, so had to be on my best behavior. We had a separate crew mess in the main galley, and that was the focal point of all activity.

On May 12th, we cleared customs, waited for the draw-bridge between the St. Maartin lagoon and the Caribbean Sea to open, then headed out for the 1st leg of the journey. This is the 4th time I have sailed out of St. Maartin. Our tentative plan was to possibly make one stop somewhere in the next 4000 nautical miles, most likely the Azores. However, Jon wanted to be in Palma by June 1st, as there was a planned inspection of the boat on June 3rd. This put us on a pretty tight time schedule, so the weather and wind would determine our course of action. We all wanted to be able to sail the entire way, winds providing, but we would have to maintain about 10 knots average speed to be on time, so the plan was to start the main engine any time the speed dropped below 8 knots. With good winds, the boat sails along at about 12 knots. We generally leave the sails up when the engine is running, as they help keep the speed up and save fuel, while also keeping the boat from rocking in the waves, providing a more comfortable ride. This is called motor-sailing. We did have a fair amount of wind, however it was mostly right on our nose, which would require us to zig-zag (tack) our way across, so we ended up motor-sailing the majority of the trip to the Azores, about 13 days.

We divided the crew into 3 watches, each watch would work 3 hours on followed by 6 hours off. This means that you never sleep at the same time any 2 days in a row – takes a few days to get used to, but is better than almost all other watch systems I have ever done – usually 4 hours on and 4 hours off at night, with 6 on / 6 off during the day. The plan was to also rotate people between the watches every time we crossed a time zone, so we wouldn’t be stuck with the same person the entire trip. Two of the watches had 2 people, one had 3 people, and Jon had no official watch time, but was to be woken up any time he was needed.

The basic job of the watch was to just make sure we didn’t hit anything or sink the boat. Other wise, we made minor sail adjustments, kept an hourly logbook, monitored the navigation, checked the radar for boat traffic, but basically just sat on our butts and watched the ocean or

the stars roll by. At the end of every watch, my job was to do an engine room check. This involved a hands-and-knees crawl through the hot and noisy bowels of the ship. Basically, the job was to ensure that everything was running smoothly and that there were no major leaks. I had to monitor several systems and log all parameters, there was a 12-cylinder Mercedes as the main engine, two 380 volt generators, 2 water makers, air conditioning, and just lots of pumps, valves and pipes, etc. Last chore was to run the pumps in the 8 different bilges to assure we kept everything high and dry.

We would also spend a bit of time sitting at the Captain's station, the nerve center of the operation. Primarily, we monitored the navigation on one of the GPS synchronized laptops that controlled our course. Also, the radar here had a better display than the one on deck, so we could track ship traffic better. The boat was quite well equipped: multiple GPS, 2 satellite phones and satellite fax, High Frequency radio with data feed for back up weather, internet via satellite for e-mail, browsing (expensive) and live weather data downloads, VHF radios, ship tracking radar, and a bunch of stuff I have no idea about. I didn't e-mail much, because it is pretty expensive, but others did quite a bit. We did send out a few general boat e-mails to friends and family with trip progress updates.



When off watch, if we weren't sleeping, we were reading, watching DVDs down below, sunning on deck, playing backgammon, solving sudoku puzzles, telling jokes and stories, listening to iPods, or watching ocean wildlife. There was a constant supply of food and snacks. I think I saw every episode of "Friends" and "Seinfeld" not to mention a lot of British TV shows. All 8 of

us had iPods, with over 100,000 songs between us, which we were able to play through the boats stereo system, and up on deck.

On every other boat I have sailed, every one shared in the cooking and cleaning chores. But on this boat, we had a chef and a stewardess, so changed things quite a bit. We all offered to help with everything, but were always told by Josie to just leave things to her, so didn't take long for us to quit offering to help out. Josie is a great stew, but gets a bit fussy about everything being in it's place, so we were all better off just letting her manage things. Even my laundry came back clean and folded. A bit sexist, don't you think?

We enjoyed fresh salads with every lunch and dinner, and ice cream every night. Most of the meals had been prepared and frozen before we launched, so all we had to do was pop them in the oven. We didn't want to use the stove-top at all, to avoid making a mess in the galley, but we did microwave a lot. Prepared meals work perfect when the weather gets rough, but since we had mostly smooth sailing, we were able to do a fair bit of "normal" cooking, such as steak or swordfish dinners. We also baked fresh bread every day.



We planned to supplement our diet by catching fresh fish. We only fished during daylight hours, and in over 4000 miles of ocean, managed to catch exactly zero fish. So much for fresh sushi. Josie had brought a bottle of Tanqueray gin up on deck to keep handy in case we did catch any fish. (You pour it over their gills and it kills them in moments without the need of whacking them with a hammer) One day, Jon found the gin tucked in a cubbyhole, picked it up and said: "What's this?" Assuming that someone had been sneaking a nip, he promptly tossed it overboard, to the great horror of Michael and I, both committed martini drinkers. I thought Michael's jaw would never come off the deck after witnessing such a waste of perfectly good gin.

The weather was sunny most of the way, with quite calm seas, so boat life was very pleasant. The 1st few nights we sailed under the full moon, and enjoyed some beautiful bright nights, almost as light as day, then had some fabulous star gazing and satellite tracking after the moon waned as the days went on. There are few places left on the planet that still enjoy the true darkness of night without light pollution from nearby cities. I learned that even on the darkest night, the most stars anyone can see with the naked eye are only 7,000. A lot less than I thought, for sure, but I didn't try to count them. When I went below to my bunk after watch, I could see the reflection of the moon on the waves from my cabin window, and let it soothe me into sleep as I watched, with the occasional dolphin jumping over the sparkling waves.

My biggest challenge was to not get too sunburned or too fat. After a few days of watching the crew lying around doing basically nothing, Jon had a clever idea. Since we were to be inspected by the owner's agent upon arrival in Palma, he needed to get things shined up a bit, so he created a contest, or as the Brits call it – a "challenge." He divided the boat into thirds, and each watch was responsible for cleaning and polishing a section. Prizes awarded for best job. We were only supposed to work on our section during our active watch, not when we were off duty. The work consisted of scrubbing the teak deck, polishing any stainless metal work, waxing any paint, keeping the salt water damage to a minimum and getting rid of any corrosion or rust. On a boat this size, under weigh in the ocean, the work never ends. As soon as you get it all clean and shiny, you need to start over.



Kat and Josie enjoying the "pool"

About this time, the lack of alcohol was beginning to have an effect on Katherine, getting a bit jumpy. (Well, I'm sure we all missed it a bit) So she threw herself completely into the "challenge", to the point of compelling insanity. No one was allowed to touch anything in her section of the boat, or even splash water on it. It actually started to get a bit ugly. What really pissed her off was when Jon declared the "challenge" a 3-way tie, and awarded the prize of a beer to everyone on board. Clever skipper.

Turns out, the other reason Jon wanted the boat so ship-shape, was that he was a bit concerned about whether his annual contract would be renewed when we got to Palma. Apparently, the last time Brigid and the Swiss owner's wife were on board together, there was a bit of a misunderstanding, so Jon was not sure whether that would affect his job at all. Therefore, the better the boat showed in Palma, the less likely they could find any fault with him.

Now that we are over a week into the trip, a more accurate description of the crew would be:

2 heartbroken ladies / 1 clean freak / 1 bitchy drunk / 2 horny old guys / 1 nervous skipper with his job on line / 1 absolutely normal and well behaved 1st mate

Thus, we arrived in the Azores.



One of the islands named "Pico"

We really didn't need to stop for anything, we had plenty of fuel and food, but after a couple of weeks, everyone was ready for a bit of dry land, not to mention beer. Stopping at the Azores added a couple hundred miles to our trip, so Jon was being kind by letting us stop. He had been there before, so I think he was a bit nostalgic to go back. It is an historic place, as almost every explorer that ever crossed the Atlantic stopped here at one time or another. The archipelago consists of nine islands, a couple with active volcanoes, about 1000 miles east of Portugal, pretty much in the middle of nowhere. There are several ports to choose from, but the most famous, and the best pub, is in Horta. Arriving in the islands was picturesque, with the volcano tops sticking up through the clouds. We also began to see quite a bit of ocean life, as the islands are like an oasis for sea critters, birds, dolphins and whales. Oddly enough, as we motored slowly into the harbor, another boat with the same name – Noas – sailed right past.

First chore upon arrival was to add a bit of insurance fuel, then find a safe slip. A yacht as large as ours usually has a bit of trouble finding a slip large enough, so we had to drop anchor and tie up, aft end in. The boat has a hydraulic ramp aft, that can be extended to the dock. It is called a passé-rail (sp?), more about this later. The harbor is not very well protected from large ocean swells, so Jon decided to keep the watch system running so that there would always be someone on board to keep an eye on things. This meant that whoever had a watch coming up would have to keep themselves relatively sober. So Jon gave us a little reminder talk that although he wanted us to have a good shore leave, he also expected us to behave properly. His parting words were – “Every one likes a drink, but no one likes a drunk.”

My timing was great as far as the watch went, I got off at 6 PM, then was due back on at midnight, so I could maximize my evening enjoying the town and the pubs, just knew I had to slow down before midnight to stay sober for my watch. Sarah was supposed to be on watch with me, but I told her to not worry about it, one was enough on the boat, and to go into town and get started celebrating our landfall. While I was on watch that afternoon, I decided that nothing much could go wrong while tied to a dock, so I decided to sneak in a quick shower. Murphy's Law again proving itself. Michael was up on deck, not on watch, but just tidying things up a bit, when he noticed a 70' sailboat trying to squeeze into the slip next to us. He just happened to have a boat fender (air filled plastic bumper that is put between boats or between a boat and the dock to protect boat from damage) in his hand, when he noticed the other boat was going to crash into us. He managed to pop the fender between the two boats at the last second, preventing thousands of dollars of damage. Very lucky for me, as I was responsible for the boat, but was in the shower instead of on deck where I belonged. Whew!!

By the time I got off watch and headed into town, the rest of the crew was awaiting my arrival in Peter's pub, a world famous watering hole for sailors. The place reminded me of the bars in the Star Wars movies, all sorts of characters from all around the galaxy, with a dozen or so languages being spoken. Portuguese is the native language, so the little Spanish I know was of no use. The pub has been there for centuries, and has the most extensive collection of scrimshaw in the world in an upstairs museum. It was obvious I had some catching up to do with my crewmates, but I soon realized that a couple of them were too far ahead for me to ever catch up, not that I really wanted to. Katherine was stumbling drunk, and Sarah was chugging beers and belching the alphabet. There were some local Portuguese folks playing guitar, singing and dancing, so we all joined in. By 9:00, Katherine and Sarah had no choice but to stagger back to the boat. I figured Sarah just might be able to sober up by midnight when our watch started, but Katherine was due to go on watch immediately, and was way beyond hope for recovery. Jon, James and I finished up the night with some food and a few more beers, but

left the pub in pretty good shape. I figured I couldn't get in too much trouble if I was with the skipper.



Sarah and Katherine



The "locals"

Arriving back at the boat, we walked into utter chaos. Katherine was still up, and had consumed about half a bottle of vodka, while on watch! Fortunately, her watch mate, Michael was at least functional. Since it was time for Sarah and I to go back on watch again, I knocked on her cabin door, with no answer. Went in to try to wake her up, with no luck verbally, so I reached into her bunk to shake her awake. I quickly withdrew my hand though, as I had unknowingly stuck it into Sarah's puke – yuk! Now, here we see the loyalty of watch mates. I knew she would be in some trouble if Jon or Josie knew she had puked the bed, and also for not being able to stand watch, so I proceeded to try to clean up the mess without anyone noticing. Not! In a few minutes, Josie came around, pitched a fit, then dragged Sarah to another cabin and stripped Sarah's bed. Meanwhile, Katherine had passed out in the crew mess, so Josie tried to get her up and help her across the salon and down the hallway to her cabin. They fell twice along the way, and on the 2nd crash, Katherine smacked her head on a railing and went down hard. Needless to say, Jon was not impressed. Turns out, Katherine had also fallen off the passé-rail sometime during her watch, into the water, and had to be pulled to safety by Michael. They managed to cover it up for the night, but would be discovered the next day.

The next afternoon, I went on a walkabout to see the little bit of the island I had time for. It's too bad we hadn't more time, as there was a volcanic cauldron on the other end of the island I wanted to check out. It was very green and lush, mostly agricultural, but I had a nice walk up and down the hills.



I returned to the boat late afternoon, as we planned to set sail again that evening. The two party girls were still in their bunks, and after they finally dragged themselves out, Jon announced that we would be spending another night in port, as he didn't think the crew were well rested enough, or in some cases sober enough, to be safe on the ocean at night. He then had a private talk with Katherine, where he told her how disappointed he was in her and that he had actually tried to buy a ticket to fly her home right then and there, but couldn't get one on such short notice. Somehow, Sarah was excused for being young and easily influenced. Of course, Katherine, in true alcoholic self-denial, felt that she was catching all the shit for everyone else's bad behavior, but her friendship with Jon was now in question.

When Sarah appeared from her cabin, she had a nasty sore on her lip, probably from sleeping in her own vomit, or maybe from one of the many drunken sail bums she kissed the previous night in Peter's. As she appeared able to function again, we reminded her that she had been assigned a very important task in Horta. It is traditional for all yachts that pass through here to paint a small bit of artwork on the cement dock, as a remembrance of their passing. It is also considered bad luck to leave without doing so. Since Sarah was a bit of an artist, it was her job to scrounge up some paint and find a spot on the dock that had not already been taken. By the time she actually started the project, it was raining and night was approaching, not to mention she was not exactly in top form. Despite the adversity, she did a nice job, and here we are posing the next morning.



Jon, Chuck, Katherine, Michael, Sarah, Josie, Kat, James



That evening, we were confined to quarters, well, at least to the boat. We had a quiet dinner on board, and were in fine sailing shape the next morning. I had just enough time to check e-mail. And was happy to learn that my buddy Dave had somehow cleared up my flying schedule, and that I did not have to work until June 13th. Yippee!!

Just prior to our departure, the owners of the other “Naos” we had crossed paths with arriving in Horta, came by to chat. Their boat name, “Naos” was formulated by combining the initials of their children. Interesting coincidence though. We departed in a drizzle, but nice to be sailing again. As we cruised amongst the islands of the Azores, we enjoyed the scenery, and also an amazing amount of wildlife. For several days, we had dolphins surfing our bow wake and could see whales spouting all around us. We saw Atlantic White Sided, Spotted and Common dolphin, and most of the whales were Fin whales, the 2nd largest in the oceans. In fact, we nearly hit two of the Fin whales. Every time someone on deck spotted some, they would call us up from below. On this occasion, when I went topside to join in the excitement, I noticed every one on board was up at the bow for a better view. As I watched the whales approaching from starboard, I realized we were on a collision course. We were motoring at the time, so I quickly throttled back, and we slowed just enough to pass within inches of them as they dove beneath our bow. Turns out it was Michael that was supposed to be at the helm, instead of at the bow, so this had become my chance to pay him back for saving the boat from crashing in Horta on my watch. We were supposed to change watch mates when we left the Azores, but everyone was so pissed off at Katherine, that no one wanted to stand watch with her, so we left her stuck with Michael, and didn’t rotate watch mates for the rest of the trip.

I had never read Jules Verne's "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," so decided a boat trip would be the perfect time. I was truly amazed at how well he had envisioned the future, predicting long range under water travel, deep sea diving with SCUBA type gear, complete with lights and cameras, future wars, un-heard of technology, etc, but the one thing he was horribly wrong about was man's ability to over-live his planet's resources. Seeing all this ocean life about, made me realize how little life there actually is left in the ocean today, compared to what was around in the mid 1800's that Jules Verne lived in. I quote from Mr. Verne – "Nature's power is far beyond Man's instinct for destruction." How could he be so right about everything else, and so wrong about this? Just proves that even the brightest among us could never imagine to what extent mankind would be able to damage and destroy what seemed to be too vast and plentiful to ever need worry about.

As we traveled east beyond the oasis of the Azores, the ocean life dwindled a bit, but was more plentiful than the 1st part of our journey. We still had quite a few dolphin, and since the nights were now darker due to the late rising and waning moon, when they approached the boat, their movement stimulating the phosphorescent plankton made them appear as glow-in-the-dark torpedoes bound for sure impact. Many times, if you didn't see them coming, you would be made aware of their presence by 1st hearing a quick gasp for breath as they surfaced in our wake next to the cockpit. It is reassuring to know they were escorting us along our way.

We also saw quite a few other small, unusual and sometimes unexplainable bits of ocean life. Portuguese Man-of-War jellyfish were everywhere, along with some kind of barnacle embryo pods. At times, the sea was covered with all kinds of spawn and living flotsam, arousing our curiosity and sparking considerable debate as to just what we were witnessing.

Next landfall would be the straits of Gibraltar. As we neared mainland Europe, the ship traffic increased dramatically. Nearing Gibraltar, they have what are called "Traffic Separation Schemes", which are basically controlled highways in the ocean, to get all the shipping traffic lined up to squeeze through the 12 mile wide passage at Gibraltar. This required heightened vigilance by the crew to avoid getting run over by a super-tanker, so we were glued to the radar and the binoculars. We became a bit concerned about the weather as we approached the famous straits, since they are legendary for catching boats unprepared for the quick changes that can occur in that region. There is a strong current that always flows out of the Mediterranean into the Atlantic, and if the winds kick up against this current, it can create huge waves in a very short time. The weather maps the day before we arrived showed strong winds and therefore very rough seas, and we discussed several options such as diverting to Morocco or Spain for a while to wait out the winds. Fortunately, the winds died out the next day, and we had a relatively smooth trip through the straits. Unfortunately, the sands blown from the deserts of Morocco filled the air while we were in the straits, reducing our visibility, and also coating every inch of the boat in a fine brown powder. Again, our tight schedule prevented us from being tourists, so instead of stopping over in Gibraltar or Morocco, we pressed on. We were only 10 miles from the Rock of Gibraltar, yet could barely see it. All we had to do was turn a few miles to the north, and we would have been sailing right past the rock. Seems a shame to travel over 3000 miles, and not make a ½ hour diversion to see such a famous landmark. Damn the real world that awaits us in Palma. We did get a fairly decent view of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, but I must say, they looked very dry and unwelcoming.



The Atlas Mountains of Morocco, Africa



What I saw of "The Rock"

Now that we were in the Med, we couldn't tell a bit of difference between it and the Atlantic, except that we began to see a lot more ocean life again, in the form of huge pods of dolphins swimming along with us. Other than that, it was just more water between us and our final

destination, so we set our sights on Palma. The big difference here is that for days, we could see land, or at night, the lights of land. Lots of other ship traffic too. Re-assuring, yet I already missed being alone in the middle of the ocean. You see, when you are too far from land to be able to call for help, a boat becomes a self-sufficient island. An island that is your only source of life support, yet an island that you must maintain to perfection to make sure that it helps keep you alive. You become mutually dependent on each other, therefore, you take care of each other.

There are a lot of superstitions on a sailing ship, and one involves wind. When the old sailors were lacking wind, sometimes they would whistle, believing it would bring the wind back, and called it "whistling for wind." On the other hand, there are skippers that forbid whistling on a boat, as they believe it will bring more wind than is safe. Since we had a relatively calm crossing so far, Sarah was getting a bit bored, as she had expectations of more rough weather, and actually was a bit disappointed so far. So Sarah began "whistling for wind." Well it worked, and as we approached Palma, she got her wish. We had a couple days of good strong sailing wind, and decent sized waves, so finally had an exciting ride with bow crashing through big waves and salt spray flying everywhere. It was fun, but I'm glad the entire trip wasn't this lumpy. Our biggest concern in this kind of weather is damaging some of the furnishings down below, as we had quite a bit of china, crystal, lamps and glass artwork stowed in the cabinets. The worse that happened though was the microwave door flying open and the carousel tray going airborne across the galley. No injuries, except to the galley floor, but I decided it was time to put some shoes on again. The wind did blow out the clew (rear attachment point) of our staysail, which provided a bit of excitement, as we had to winch James up the rig with the boson's chair to recover and repair the flapping sail. The increased motion of the boat also got lots of other things moving about that hadn't moved for months, including any water that was trapped in the fuel tanks, which eventually found its way into the main engine and both generators, shutting them all down. This meant that for a brief time, we didn't have the luxury of hydraulic power, and actually had to sail the boat. Problem was fixed in a couple of hours though, so we pressed on. There was considerable water coming over the bow, several feet deep at times running almost the entire length of the boat, so we also discovered quite a few leaks in the top of the hull, requiring us to remove much of the posh lining of the ceiling down below to prevent water damage.

We sailed past the lovely island of Ibiza, another place I would have enjoyed visiting, then eventually arrived in Palma about 6 days after leaving the Azores, in the middle of a dark night. We were assigned a dock right in the heart of the working section of a very large, dirty and noisy boat yard. We tied up, but couldn't legally depart the yacht until we cleared customs the next morning. Since we arrived on Sarah's birthday, we had a nice little onboard party, then celebrated our journey's end with beer and wine. The next day was a working day onboard, getting the boat ready for its inspection, but by evening we had all scattered around the town of Palma to explore a bit and check e-mail, then all met at another popular sailor's pub for drinks, followed by a tapas dinner. Tapas are a popular way of eating and socializing in Spain, basically consisting of a wide variety of appetizers, with each tapas bar having a specialty or two. A night out in Spain is basically a pub-crawl, with great snacks, and we usually stayed up until dawn, as Palma enjoys the typical nightlife culture of any Spanish tourist town. We were in the heart of the "old" section of town, so enjoyed the classic old European architecture, the narrow winding cobblestone streets giving it all a delightful feeling that we weren't really in a city. We had lots of laughs together here, and also made fast friends of other boat crews who were in town as well. It is a relatively small community of people, with many of the crews we saw in St. Maartin or Horta, also ending up here. Palma is a major yacht re-fit port, so it is a great place to cross paths with other sailors, and it is common for crew to change yachts here

seeking a better job. After a couple days, I felt like Norm on the TV show “Cheers”, everybody knew my name whenever I walked into the local hangout.

I thought Naos was a relatively large and luxurious yacht, until I saw all our neighbors in the boat yards of Palma, lots of 200’ + boats, fitted out to the max, dwarfing us in all ways. We spent a couple of days prepping the boat, surrounded by a hubbub of activity on all the other yachts. Very noisy and dusty, so didn’t waste any non-working time hanging out onboard. After over 3 weeks of protecting myself from the sun on the open ocean, I managed to neglect to cover my feet with sunscreen while working on deck in the boat yard, and ended up with blisters on top of all my toes, so was unable to wear shoes for days, instead traipsing all about town in flip flops, eventually leading to blisters on every part of my feet that I hadn’t already sunburned.



We all had to vacate Naos before the inspection, so I found a nice little room in town with a perfect view of the cathedral, the focal point of town. Katherine went missing after the 1st night out, and soon found herself a local “boyfriend,” Sam. Although we would see them out and about at night, she never even turned up to unpack and move off the boat, so we had to toss all her gear off onto the dock. A few days later she finally showed up, dragging her tail between her legs like a bad puppy, but was unable to make things right with Jon, so appears her behavior on this trip ended up costing her a friendship, or three.

A few words about Spain and Palma – it still has things that I miss in America, mostly a feeling of free choice and very little government trying to tell you how to live. You can still smoke anywhere, like it or not, buy antibiotics without a prescription (I loaded up), drive a Vespa

without a helmet while holding an open beer, and it is apparent that the lawyers have not been allowed to ruin it all, yet. Just a nice laid-back feeling, nobody seems to work overly hard, except the visiting boat crews. Besides that, we had perfect weather without being too hot, and I never saw a single woman that I would consider the least bit overweight. Must be the tapas.

The yachting world is very enticing, and I wish I had discovered it in my youth. It is truly an opportunity for almost anyone to join an adventurous bunch of friendly people, with an unbounding zest for life. There are lots of entry level jobs, deck hand, stewardess, cook, etc, that only require an easy going demeanor and a free spirit. It provides an opportunity to travel, and truly live in, and experience many different cultures, and also become more intimate with the largest eco-system on the planet – the ocean. Most of the crews are from western Europe, the UK, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, with only a very few from the US. It attracts lots of stunning yet inviting young women, and rugged adventurous men, mostly between the ages of 20 and 35, yet has room for all ages and cultures. It also allows a glimpse into the big \$\$ world, allowing one to live like the rich and famous, without actually being rich and famous, however showing that world is not the real world for most of us, a bit out of touch with themselves and reality. It is a world and a lifestyle that has a relatively low cost of entry, just learning some basic sailing skills is all it really takes, something anyone could do at the local yacht club in a summer's time. Wish I'd known!!

Sarah had always had a dream of riding a Vespa on an island. Unfortunately, she only had 2 days in Palma before her flight home, and with the late nights and working days, it didn't look like she would get her chance here. I ran into her the day I was moving off the boat, about 10:00 AM. She was so tired she could barely stand, and still looked to be a bit "influenced" by the previous nights' drink. Her flight out was later that evening, so she just wanted to rest up before departure. I wanted to explore the island a bit my self, despite having spent some time here 30 years ago. We were on a different part of Mallorca than I had visited then, so I set out looking for a Vespa. Sarah tagged along, but I had no luck finding anything but a two-person Vespa-ish sort of motorcycle. Sarah said she was too exhausted to drive one herself, fearing she would have an accident, so we decided it would be a good idea if she rode along on the back of mine, but only if she promised not to fall asleep and fall off. She told me she had a sniglet for her condition – exhaustipated – meaning really needing to sleep, but can't. So, we embarked on what would be the most dangerous part of the trip - 2 on a Vespa, 1 barely able to hold on, in a foreign country, surrounded by Spanish drivers on narrow, twisting roads, our only protection being shorts and flip-flops. We ended up covering over 100 kilometers, along the tourist beaches, then up into the Mallorcan mountains, and along the stunning southwest coast of the island. It was a perfect day.



Dropped Sarah off just in time to catch a taxi to the airport. We had been watch mates for the majority of the trip, spending hours chatting and getting to know each other. She is someone whose path I'd like to cross again, one of the most genuinely pure-hearted women I have ever met. She grew up in the north woods of Maine, in a small cabin with no plumbing, daughter of a fly-fishing guide and log cabin builder. Her Mormon mother left when she was relatively young, so her dad was the big influence in her life. Her most recent job was working as a deck hand on a lobster boat, not the usual path for a pretty young girl. She will go anywhere and try anything, and I know that will take her far in life.

I had made plans to do some para-gliding while on Mallorca, but when I called the people I had set things up with, they told me it wouldn't work because of trouble finding equipment I could use. So, after about 5 days here, I decided it was time to head home myself, and I moved my flight up a couple of days. I stopped by the boat that night, and was invited to stay for dinner with the crew. Brigid had flown in that day, and had spent the entire afternoon in the galley creating a gourmet dinner of quail. I took the opportunity to ask Jon whether I had behaved well enough to be considered for another trip, considering that he was generally not pleased with the overall behavior of the crew. Apparently, I had committed no unforgivable sin, and he told me he would like me to come back later in the summer to help move the boat, possibly to Greece and Turkey. Sounded great to me!

The next morning was the boat inspection, which we all thought was due to a new shore agent taking over management of the boat and crew, and wanting to get a look at the operation. I

spent my last day on the island bumming, relaxing and writing. When I stopped by the boat that evening to bid farewell, a bad feeling was in the air. Turns out the true reason for the “inspection,” was to fire Jon and Brigid. Apparently, the friction between Brigid and the owners’ wife was part of the cause, added to the fact that Brigid would likely be on a long leave anyway if she managed to get pregnant. The trickle down effect was that the entire crew was out of work. The new replacement skipper had already been hired, and was to show up the next day with his own 1st mate, so James was also out of work. Josie was offered a job with the new skipper, but didn’t want to work for him, so decided to take a break before finding another boat. Kat was on a working interview anyway, so she too was now jobless. I am sure they will all move on to bigger and better things, but the timing was pretty poor for Jon and Brigid, considering they are in the middle of expensive fertility treatments and planning on a baby pretty soon, should that work out. As far as yacht skipper jobs go, Naos was a good one, so I hope Jon finds similarly rewarding work. So much for my trips to Greece and Turkey.

A general synopsis of the trip:

Just over 4000 nautical miles sailed and motor-sailed

20 days sailing

Cost to move the boat across the Atlantic – aprox \$75,000 for crew, fuel, food and supplies, dock fees and repairing broken equipment

Damage to boat, relatively minor for this type of trip; one blown staysail clew, multiple leaks discovered, misc broken hardware, several water and hydraulic pumps damaged when shore power in Palma hooked up wrong causing them to run backwards

Crew injuries – (no broken toes for me) but Josie split a toe open and dislodged her toenail when running to the bow to view spouting whales. Sarah’s lip did eventually heal, but it was pretty ugly for a while there, thought we’d have to amputate

Friendships made – many, some for life
Friendships lost – one good one

Square feet of teak deck scrubbed till it shined – aprox 2000

Linear feet of stainless steel polished and re-polished – lost count

Pints of ale consumed in pubs – too much, or maybe not enough, not sure yet

Clothing and gear packed, but never used – most of it

The reason Jon was willing to pay to have people sail with him is that it allows him to relax. His job on a delivery is to make sure someone else’s toy doesn’t get broken. Although if all went well he could almost do it alone, it would be way too tiring and stressful. The crew was hired to let him focus on keeping things running smoothly, and still be able to get some sleep, while not having to spend every moment worrying if something had broken or whether we were going to hit something. We were also there in case we got into what sailors call a “shit fight.” If some important piece of gear were to fail, if the rig and the mast came down, if the boat hit something submerged, if the keel fell off, it takes a lot of hands to recover from that kind of damage, and can become a matter of survival. Although only 1 person is all that is really

required on watch, we kept 2 on to assure that the other stays awake. Fatigue and boredom are the main enemies on this kind of trip. I always enjoy sailing with Jon; he is a good guy and a good teacher. On this trip, I learned more about managing people and situations than about the art of sailing. Even when sailing with friends, a certain amount of discipline and professionalism is required, out of respect for each other, and for the task. For me, the fact that I was being paid to sail, whether it was with a friend or not, raised my level of accountability a bit.

The last time I sailed across the Atlantic, it was a completely different experience. It was cold, we were constantly wet, when on watch we were either shivering cold, or sweating our asses off taking sails down or putting them back up. We ate boil-in-bag or freeze dried food; there were no salads or ice cream. The boat was noisy, we shared tight quarters, the ride was rough, the winds were strong and constant, we hardly slept. I spent so much time helming the boat, fighting the large waves, that both my arms and several fingers went numb, and stayed numb for months. We were clipped on most of the time on deck for fear of being washed overboard by a wave. And it was great !

It is not even fair to compare the trips. This was just plain easy sailing. I only touched a line to adjust a sail a few times, I never hand cranked a single winch. I did manage to actually get a little damp once. I only broke a sweat when I had stayed too long in the sun. I was never cold, not even my bare feet. I only helmed once, because I was bored and sleepy. I got more sleep than I needed. I never had to clip my safety harness on at all. And it was great too!

Both trips, although radically different, were big adventure for me. It's more about being out in the ocean, and sharing it with quality people, that makes it for me. If we had known, before we left St. Maartin that the crew would all lose their jobs in Palma; it would have changed the trip dramatically. No timetable, more pure sailing vs. motor-sailing. We could have stopped in several enticing ports with magical names like the Madeira Islands, Marrakech, Casablanca, Gibraltar, Tangiers, Morocco and Ibiza. We all would have been more relaxed. We wouldn't have had to spend so much time polishing and re-polishing. In all fairness, it was a bit mean of the owners' agent to not tell Jon and the full-time crew what was awaiting them in Palma. It would have given them the entire crossing to send out feeders for new jobs, and they could have likely walked off Naos and right onto a job on another boat.

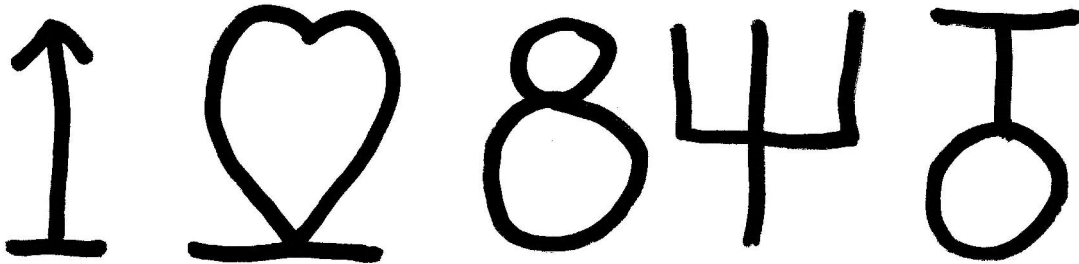
Here comes my "Warren Miller" closing. Why do I do these trips? Because I still can. Someday too soon, I won't be able to. I am fortunate enough to have a lifestyle that allows me the time to go off on adventures, and the health to do them. There is a world full of people out there who have never had a "real" job, or quit the "real" jobs they had and never looked back. Are these trips easy – NO. Are they comfortable – some less than others. But are they worth it – absolutely. Three quarters of the planet you live on, probably the only planet you'll ever live on, is ocean. Most of the life on earth, resides there. If you haven't yet, you really should visit sometime!

Chuck Savall

Here are a few brainteasers we all tried to solve on the trip:

O TT FF SS E - What letter comes next in the sequence?

Here is another one, again – what symbol comes next in the sequence?



Weighing marbles

Given are 12 marbles. One of these marbles is slightly heavier or lighter than the others. You have a two plate balance scale. You are only allowed to weigh three times. Can you find the marble that differs in weight?