

November 2, 2007

After restocking the boat and doing laundry, we departed Marmaris on Wednesday, August 22, and headed west along the Carian coastline, the second great cruising area in Turkey. As we exited Marmaris Bay, a U.S. Amphibious Aircraft Carrier was entering. What an awesome sight! The carrier was being escorted into the bay by the Turkish Coast Guard, who also had the task of keeping all other vessels, including us, at a safe distance from it.



The Carian coastline from Marmaris to Bodrum was a rugged, mountainous, remote area with crystal clear water and secluded coves. Its landscape varied from rocky and barren to pine covered forests with only a scattering of villages lying along its entire shoreline. The first area we explored were the bays enclosed by the Datca and Hisaronu Peninsulas. The Hisaronu Peninsula extended southwest from the Marmaris basin, and along this finger we spent our first 11 days enjoying 6 different anchorages. In Kizil Adasi, we anchored near some Byzantine ruins and had an evening meal ashore in the nearby quaint fishing village of Bozburun. In Selimiye Bay, we explored the small village of Selimiye, a typical small boat-builders' village, which now also received some income from low-key tourism.



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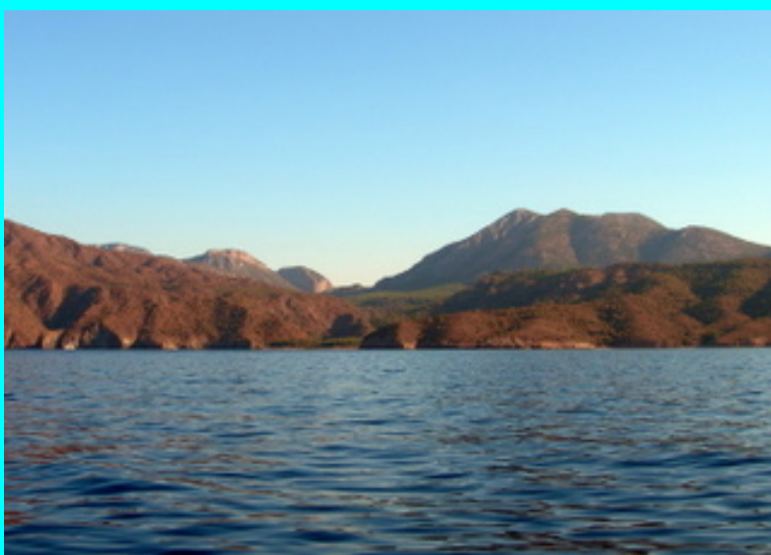
Of all the anchorages along the Hisaronu Peninsula, Keci Buku was the gem. This beautiful sheltered bay reminded us of the Pacific Northwest and Desolation Sound. We anchored behind the small island in the bay, and one morning hiked up to the top of its Byzantine fort where we had magnificent views of Keci Buku. At night over the hills we could see the loom of Marmaris as we were only about 14 miles away as the crow flies, but by boat we had traveled 65 nautical miles around the Hisaronu Peninsula to reach Keci Buku.



Sunday, September 2, we started heading west along the southern coastline of the Datca Peninsula, a very long, narrow, mountainous stretch of land protruding westward from the Hisaronu Peninsula. Even though the prevailing winds were northerly, upon rounding the end of this long peninsula the winds tended to turn easterly and follow the coastline. As we wished to go west, this meant our waiting for the right weather window before moving on to each new anchorage. With winds generally stronger in the afternoon, early morning starts were the norm.

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We enjoyed two anchorages en route to Datca, located about two-thirds the way down the peninsula. At times the mountains along this coast took on a red hue. Our first stop was in the lovely cove of Kuyula Buku. When the Turkish Republic was formed in 1923, Turkey chose to become a secular state and follow the traditions of its European neighbors. Hence, Sunday was the day of rest, not Friday like normally found in Muslim countries. As this Sunday was a very warm day, Turkish families were out enjoying the beach and having picnics or barbeques under the trees. Our second anchorage was in Kuruca Buku, a cove situated next to a holiday village and Turkish retirement community.



Datca, the only town on the peninsula, was a laid-back port and fishing community of 6000 residents. We spent 5 days enjoying this town while waiting for favorable winds in order to visit the archeological site of Knidos, 11 nautical miles further west at the end of the peninsula. We were lucky enough to be in Datca during their International Folk Dancing Festival and attended two evenings of the competition. Most amazing were the folk dancers from Georgia.



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Early Tuesday morning, September 11, we departed Datca and headed west to Knidos. As we approached this ancient city, Cape Krio could be seen off to the left. It was here at Cape Krio that the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea met. In antiquity, Knidos had been a prosperous port city with its two harbors, one on each sea. Ships often had to wait in one of Knidos' harbors before passing around Cape Krio or heading west, thus providing a lucrative business for its residents. Even the ship taking St. Paul to Rome for trial was held here for awhile. Although now smaller, the two harbors (with the northern one silted) still presented an impressive setting. At present this site was only partially excavated. Easily visualized were the agora (market) with stoa (covered walkway) and rooms along the wall, some temples, the two theaters with the smaller one near the port, and the terraces built up the hillside.



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The next morning we headed around Cape Krio at the tip of the peninsula. As the northern winds were still prevalent, we timed our arrival at the cape just perfectly with the help of our weatherman, Phil's brother John. With our arrival, we had traveled a total of 40 nautical miles and 10 days along the southern coastline of the Datca Peninsula.



Once around the cape we entered the Gokova Gulf. With the northerly winds finally starting to pick up, we had a fantastic wing-on-wing sail east, 34 nautical miles, down this deep and long gulf to Kucuk Cati, a small beautifully wooded cove near the Turkish mainland. As there were no protected anchorages along most of the northern coast of the Datca Peninsula, Kucuk Cati was one of the first places to drop the anchor.



We spent 8 days in the rugged eastern part of the Gokova Gulf, traveling just 20 nautical miles and enjoying 4 different remote, pine-clad anchorages: Kucuk Cati, East Creek and North Cove in Yedi Adalari, and English Harbor. All were beautiful, but the inlet called English Harbor was the gem, especially as it provided excellent all-round shelter. With the fall season approaching, the weather and winds had become more changeable, and this was a welcomed anchorage. During World War II the British Special Boat Squadron had used this inlet, hence the name.



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Just like when traveling west along the Datca Peninsula, the same wind conditions prevailed along the northern coast of this gulf. Upon receiving a favorable weather window, we departed English Harbor on Thursday, September 20, and headed west to Bodrum, 39 nautical miles away, stopping overnight in Cokertme. As we motored to Cokertme on Thursday we ran several tests as we had been smelling diesel in the bilge for the past few days. Our tests confirmed our worst fears; we did indeed have a leak in our fuel tank. With this depressing news, we changed our time frame for returning to Marmaris. Now instead of eight days, we wanted to be back in four in order to see what resources were available for fixing the tank before leaving October 3rd on our road trip to Cappadocia.

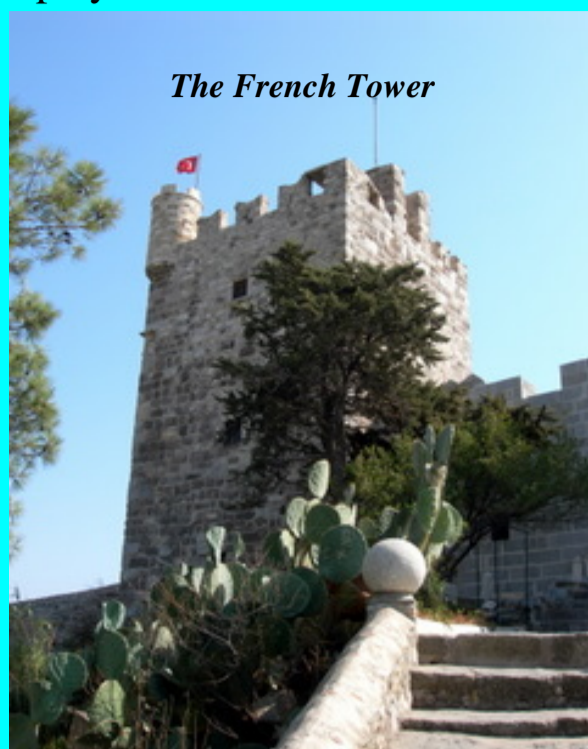
Bodrum, a port town of 25,000, lay on the ruins of the great ancient city of Halicarnassus, the center of Caria during the reign of King Mausolus in the 4th century BC. Our English word ‘mausoleum’ comes from the magnificent tomb, the Mausoleum, that King Mausolus began building in 355 BC. His wife completed it in 350 BC, 3 years after his death. The Mausoleum was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and it stood for over 1700 years before being destroyed by an earthquake. Also noteworthy was the city’s 5th century BC native son Herodotus, considered the father of written history due to his extensive writings.

Upon our arrival in Bodrum on Friday morning, we anchored in the bay by the restored 15th century Crusader Castle of St. Peter, built by the Knights Hospitaller of St. John based in Rhodes. At night the castle lit up, and we had a beautiful, unobstructed view from our boat. In summer, Bodrum came alive with tourists. Its Halikarnas Disco, with a capacity of 5000, was one of the loudest and biggest discos in the Mediterranean. Thank goodness we were upwind from it during our stay as the disco was located in our bay.



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Friday afternoon we toured the Crusader Castle of St. Peter. The castle had five towers, one for each of the crusader nations in the Knights of St. John: England, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. In the later part of the Ottoman Empire parts of the castle were used as a prison. Now, the castle housed an interesting Museum of Underwater Archaeology containing artifacts from shipwrecks found around the coast dating as far back as the Bronze Age. On display were the first anchors used by ships.



*The French Tower*



*Hippocrates Plane Tree*



*Anchors*

Since we weren't flying home from Turkey until November 2, we needed to obtain another Turkish visa as our ninety day limit was soon approaching. Therefore, on Saturday, we took the ferry from Bodrum over to the Greek Island of Kos, the third largest island in the Dodecanese and the birthplace of Hippocrates, the father of medicine. In Kos, we visited the archeological site of Asklepieion and the celebrated "Hippocrates Plane Tree." Hippocrates lived in the 5th century BC and was said to have taught his pupils under this plane tree. Today, this very old "Hippocrates Plane Tree", held up by scaffolding, was probably the 6th to 12th generation of the plane tree under which Hippocrates taught. Asklepieion, built after his death in the 4th century BC, consisted of three levels and contained a religious sanctuary to Asklepios, the god of healing, and also a healing and training center which followed the teachings of Hippocrates. For almost 800 years people came here to be healed, making Kos famous throughout the Greek world. Even though now just ruins, the site was still impressive, especially amidst its peaceful



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Early Sunday, September 24, we departed Bodrum en route to Marmaris, anchoring overnight in Panormitis at the southern end of the Greek island of Symi, a sail of 47 nautical miles. Here in this small bay lay the Monastery of Archangel Michael of Panormitis, the second most important monastery in the Dodecanese after that of St. John of Patmos. St. Michael was the patron saint of Symi and protector of sailors, and this church contained treasured icons. As people came here from all over Greece, this monastery had accommodations for up to 500 guests. Except during the hours each day when tourists came by the boatload, this monastery exuded perfect peace and tranquility. It was during this time that we visited the grounds Monday morning. We headed out the bay toward Marmaris, 39 nautical miles away, just as the tour boats were arriving. By nightfall we were back in Marmaris, having enjoyed 5 weeks along the Carian coast. Our arrival marked the end of our summer cruising.



Tuesday morning, September 25, we moved into Netsel Marina, our new winter home. Last year we had our boat in Yacht Marine, 5 miles from Marmaris. This year we chose the town marina. Now we were only a few minutes from the center of town, located just over the bridge from the marina. Due to our fuel tank problem, we moored 'stern to' for easy removal of the tank in the spring. With our arrival, our attention turned toward finding out the resources available for fixing the tank, plus getting ready for our upcoming Cappadocia trip.



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Early Wednesday, October 3, we departed on a seven day road trip to Cappadocia. (See Cappadocia Log.) Upon our return, we spent three more weeks in Marmaris before departing for home. Not only did we prepare Kuhela for our four month absence, but we also enjoyed becoming better acquainted with the town of Marmaris. What a difference it was to be in town, so close to everything. Last season out in Yacht Marine we had been isolated; now we were in the heart of everything. It was fun to try out different local Turkish restaurants and to wander the back streets of Marmaris. On our walks, we'd sometimes pass men's cafes where just men came to socialize or play games, or we'd wander by two men seated out front of a shop (usually one was the shop owner waiting for customers) engrossed in a game of backgammon, the chief Turkish pastime.



As Marmaris was a tourist town, cruise ships often docked for the day just outside our marina, and gulets for charter lined the town's main promenade waterfront. In the 16th century Suleyman the Magnificent had built a citadel on Marmaris' waterfront hill, and today it was the town's museum. In Turkey, every town and village had an Ataturk statue, and Marmaris' Ataturk statue was displayed proudly along its waterfront. In addition, it was easy to get around anywhere in the Marmaris area by dolmus (small bus) as each bus color represented a different route.



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In Turkey, every village or town had a weekly market, with the same traveling vendors coming weekly to sell their produce and goods. Being a rich agricultural country, the seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables in the markets were bountiful and relatively inexpensive, making buying at these markets such a fun experience. We always seemed to buy more than we originally intended. On our road trip to Cappadocia, we had seen red peppers hanging outside the houses to dry. Upon our return to Marmaris, we saw the same at the weekly market in Mugla.



When we first arrived in Turkey a year ago, we were surprised to see so many boats with American flags, as we hadn't seen that many U.S. flags before during our entire time in the Mediterranean. It wasn't until much later that we understood the reasoning. Believe it or not, boats can actually be registered in the United States online in the state of Delaware. Because of this, some Turks use Delaware and the U. S. as a tax dodge, some Israeli cruising boats use Delaware and the U.S. flag for safety reasons, and Turks buying older cruising boats use Delaware as their port of registry as they're unable to get a Turkish registration. We were once moored next to a Turkish couple in Yacht Marine on an older cruising boat. He was a retired Turkish Naval officer, and everyday he would proudly put up his U.S. flag upon arising and then retire it again in the evening. It was such fun to see.



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These last six months in Turkey have definitely been special. We've enjoyed so much the Turkish people. We feel so safe and comfortable around them. They are friendly, easygoing, industrious people, with most working long hours. Some even work seven days a week at the height of the tourist season. It is part of their nature to be open, gracious, and helpful. To be in Turkey is to partake in tea, an intrinsic part of the Turkish hospitality. It's the sign of courtesy. Everywhere we went, we'd see tea boys bringing tea to different businesses. One day we asked how the system worked, as the tea seemed to always magically arrive. Basically, there were buzzers linking a tea room to different shops, and when called the tea boys came.



Wednesday, October 31, we flew from Marmaris to Istanbul. Before departing for home, we enjoyed some more of Istanbul's sights. Two of the places we visited were Chora Church and the Military Museum. The present Chora Church dated back to the late 11th century. In the Ottoman period, it had been turned into a mosque. Now, it was a museum. The special attraction of this church were its incredible 14th century mosaics. The inlaid pieces were so minute that the pictures looked painted. At the Military Museum, we watched the routine of the Ottoman Mehter Military Band. In Ottoman battles, this band had been used by the sultan as a psychological battle weapon. The band's purpose was to terrify the enemy while inspiring the troops. As we listened, we could feel profoundly that terrifying fear through the band's loud war cry. On exhibit inside the museum was a section of the chain used by the Byzantines to block the entrance to the Golden Horn, plus some excellent dioramas depicting the fall of Constantinople in 1453.



Friday, November 2, we departed Istanbul for home. Our plan is to return to Turkey on March 10. We will be living in an apartment for about six weeks while we replace our fuel tank and work on the boat's bottom. This coming cruising season we will depart the Mediterranean, arriving in the Canary Islands in September and either Brazil or Barbados in January.

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