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Sans Souci and crew explore the ancient and the new in the Med

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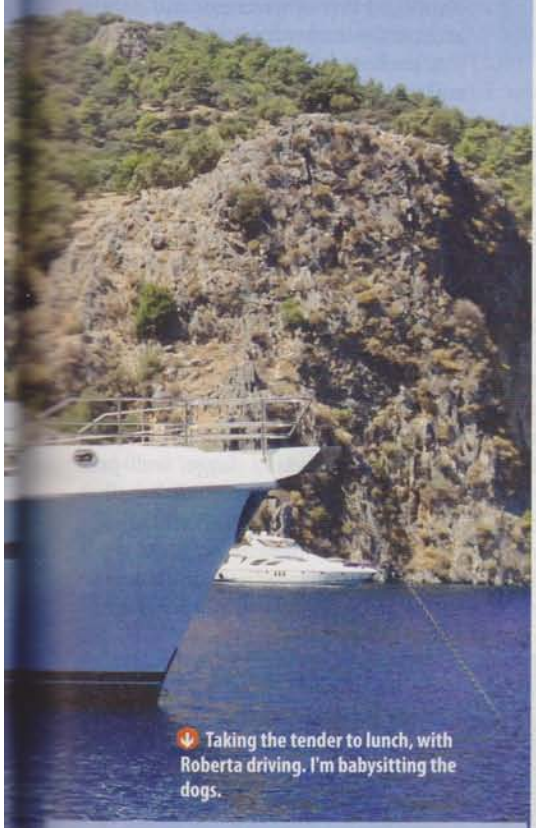
A Season on the Mediterranean

Cruising the Turkish coastline is like a trip back in time but with all the modern conveniences within reach.

Compiled from the blog of Ken and Roberta Williams

When last we checked in on the participants in the Great Siberian Sushi Run, they were in Japan, finished cruising for the season and making plans for the next season. That was almost three years ago. Now, three cruising seasons later (and near the fourth), the GSSR crew — Ken and Roberta Williams on *Sans Souci*; Braun and Tina Jones on *Ocean Pearl* (the replacement for *Grey Pearl*, which, sadly, burned to the waterline in Phuket, Thailand); and Steven and Carol Argosy on *Seabird* — have gone their separate ways, but they're all still cruising in places not many American boaters go.



Stern tying is the norm in the Mediterranean, and we had to adapt. Here, *Sans Souci* is stern tied near Gocek.

Taking the tender to lunch, with Roberta driving. I'm babysitting the dogs.

Sans Souci *and crew spent 2012 cruising Turkey and Greece. What follows are highlights from their 21st century ship's log: kensblog.com. These entries are in chronological order but don't necessarily follow one another, so we encourage you to visit the blog if you want to find out more and see all the highlights.*

THE START

Our only goal for our first trip of the season had been to test the boat and see if everything was working. Next week, we will cruise to Greece and want to make sure everything is working before we head offshore. Our plan was to find a quiet cove, drop the anchor and then try out as many things on the boat as possible. After a few days, then we would return to port and get any surprises fixed. Once we leave Gocek, Turkey, we don't want to return to port for a couple of months. If something is broken, we'd rather know it now.

We didn't want to go very far, so I focused on the area close to Gocek and chose a point about 10 miles away.

As I mentioned last year, anchoring in southern Turkey is different than what I am accustomed to. Instead of just dropping the anchor in the middle of the bay, you drop the anchor about 300 feet offshore and then back the boat to shore, tie a line (or two) to a tree and wind up perpendicular to shore. In some bays, there are a series of little orange posts (bollards) that you can tie to.

This type of anchoring is mandated for two reasons:

- The water is very deep, usually several hundred feet in most bays, and it stays deep almost to shore.
- In the summer, the good anchorages are packed with boats. It is unbelievable how many boats are cruising in southern Turkey in July and August.

THINGS GET INTERESTING

There seem to be three things tourists do in Turkey:

- Visit all the historic sites
- Charter sailboats
- Charter gulets

Sitting at anchor you see lots of charter sailboats and catamarans. These are often fun to watch, because the skippers are not very skilled. I watched one sailing catamaran try to drop anchor for an hour, with no wind, and then tie his stern to the bollards on shore. He couldn't seem to get the anchor to set, and somehow, even with no wind, the catamaran kept floating its way to the beach. I'm not picking on him, because I've been there, done that a time or two myself!

Separate from the sailboats are the gulets — big wooden, cool-looking sail/powerboats, that bring passengers out for a day of swimming, or even weeks of cruising. As we were floating on the mooring ball, we'd watch the gulets constantly coming and going around us. We were next to a good swimming beach, so the gulets were constantly dropping anchor near us, tying to rocks or bollards on shore and dropping their passengers in the water for a swim. Most of the time they'd be gone in a few hours, but occasionally they would stay overnight.

The fourth afternoon, as I was sitting in the pilothouse working on my computer, I suddenly heard loud shouting from just outside. I jumped up to see a gulet next to me practically touching *Sans Souci*, and the gulet's crew standing on deck shouting and pointing at the water. I had been so engrossed in my work that I had not noticed

them pulling up right next to us.

When I looked down at the water, I realized that *Sans Souci* was slowly rotating into the gulet. We were about to collide! It would be a slow-motion collision, but we were definitely about to bounce off each other. I immediately grabbed some huge fenders and put them in the water, as did the crew of the gulet. The fenders did their job, but we were pinned together.

I went back to the pilothouse and started the engines to rotate away from the gulet. It wasn't helping that the gulet had a dozen passengers now diving into the water and swimming around the two boats, finding great entertainment in all the action.

PERFECTION. BOZBURUN

Our next stop was an area known as Bozburun. I had a recommendation from a local that his favorite anchorage was the east side of an island called "Kisel."

When we arrived, we could immediately see why the place was so highly rated. It was beautiful. However, it was also a poorly kept secret. The anchorage resembled a parking lot. Before committing ourselves to a spot, we all agreed we should look around and see if there was somewhere more private.

We noticed a beach in a bay with no one around, just south of Bozburun. My first reaction was, "If no one else thinks it is safe to be here, why do we want to be there?" There can be meltemi winds of 30-plus knots that last for days. Perhaps this was not a safe location. We checked the chart, checked the depths and decided, "This is too good to pass up." We dropped the anchor in about 120 feet of water, backed up as close to shore as we could get and put out a couple of stern lines. Where we finally settled was in 50 feet of crystal-clear water. Can you imagine being able to see the sandy bottom clearly — 50 feet down?

This was the start of three full days of fun and relaxation. Lots of swimming.

We had fun scuba diving off the back of the boat. We even discovered a wreck, or at least lots of wreckage and debris, around the corner from where the boat was anchored. We also discovered several abandoned fishing nets on the bottom. In one of my spookier diving moments, I suddenly realized there was a fishing net beneath me, and the corners were being held vertical for 10 feet or so by floats that were still attached. In seconds, I should have realized that the net had been on the bottom probably for years, but it was more the feeling than the visual that was creeping me out.

COKERTME

Cokertme is a large well-protected bay. I wouldn't call it particularly pretty. Boats anchor there to have a place to hide from the winds, or as a mid-stop in the Gulf of Gokova — not as a desti-

Imagine Anchoring in an Ancient City

We had a smooth ride to the end of the peninsula, where we dropped anchor in one of the most unusual harbors ever: in front of the ancient Greek city of Knidos! It's not Ephesus, but to me, it is almost as awe-inspiring. We couldn't believe where we were.

Entering Knidos is a bit of an adventure. It's an ancient harbor, surrounded by a ruined city 2,500 years old. You have to enter between two seawalls, one of which is damaged and partially submerged and the other that is fully underwater. Roberta asked why, with 2,500 years to figure it out, they couldn't put a red and green light at the entrance, or at least place some buoys to show their locations.

nation. There are a number of restaurants lining the beach (four or five, I think), each with a dock that holds 10 to 20 boats. As boats enter the bay, someone from each restaurant runs to the end of the dock and waves madly, trying to guide each arriving boat to that restaurant's dock. I ignored the restaurant docks, knowing that *Sans Souci*, with its heavy weight and broad sides, would easily rip apart any of their docks in a high wind.

Once we had the anchor dropped, I wanted to take the tender and visit the restaurants. My mission was to select one for dinner. My other two objectives were to 1) grab lunch and 2) find someone who would take our full trash bags.

I tendered to the nearest restaurant, ordered lunch and was waiting for my food when Roberta called my cellphone from *Sans Souci*. "Can you come back to the boat right now? I'm worried we might be dragging anchor." That's the kind of call that gets your attention! I wasn't sure what to do, in that I had just ordered lunch minutes before. I chased down the waiter and tried to explain that I had to go and needed the check. However, he wasn't understanding me. I decided to put 50 Turkish lira ($25 USD) on the table and dash to the tender.

As I was tying the tender to the swim step of *Sans Souci*, the waiter appeared behind me in his own tender. He thought there must be an emergency of some sort. I was still on the swim step but could see no sign that the boat was drifting. The waiter had the 50 Turkish lira in hand and tried to give me the lunch money back, and I wouldn't take it. Then he said, "Will bring your lunch. Ten minutes." I was in a hurry to get upstairs and find out if the boat was drifting. I was no longer in the mood for lunch and told him, "No worries. Keep money. Don't bring food. All OK." He left in total confusion.

Once upstairs, I quickly realized all was fine. The standing orders on *Sans Souci* are that if there is any doubt, call me. Roberta was right to alert me if she had any doubt, and luckily it had been a false alarm.

This is when she said, "Is that our tender drifting away?"

In all of the confusion of talking to the waiter, dogs on the swim step barking, Roberta rushing me upstairs, me worried about *Sans Souci*, etc., the tender had gotten poorly tied. In 30 years of boating, we've never mis-tied a tender, but ... now we had. I dashed down the stairs, peeling off shirt and shoes as I went, and dove into the water.

The winds were calmer than they had been but still in the 15- to 20-knot range and strong enough to move a little tender very quickly. I had trouble keeping up with it. What started as a 50-

Our guests, John and Gloria Buchan, visited the river town of Dalyan and explored the ruins of Caunos (1). The Temple of Apollo, at Didyma — including this Medusa head (2) — was commissioned around 330 B.C. by Alexander the Great. It was never finished, though, despite being worked on for hundreds of years. Ephesus (3), near Kusadasi, Turkey, dates back to the Neolithic age, and has been a Greek city, a Roman city and a Byzantine city. At one time, more than 250,000 people lived in Ephesus. It is an active archeological site, and estimates claim that only about 15 percent of it has been unearthed. Our friend John and I were lucky enough to be able to tour a shipyard in Bozburun (4), where they are building some of the huge wooden gulets so popular here for tourism. We watched as they cut the logs by hand and assembled the boats. It was like a trip back in time!

While cruising the Turkish coastline, you get to see amazing sights, such as Bodrum Castle, which was built during medieval days by the Knights of Rhodes. Didim Marina is definitely beautiful, less expensive than marinas farther south. It has a great haulout facility and a 400-ton lift, but you can expect to burn through plenty of cash if you want to keep your boat air conditioned during the summer heat.

yard swim quickly became a 100-yard swim. And, as I reached the tender, I suddenly realized I hadn't thought through what to do once I got there. I heard a noise behind me and turned around. It was my new best friend, the waiter, in his tender. He motioned for me to throw him the line to the tender, which I did, and he took off pulling the tender toward the boat. I quickly grabbed a handle on the tender and bodysurfed my way back to the boat. Once back at the boat, while retying the tender, I asked Roberta to grab a 20 Turkish lira note. The waiter refused to take the tip and seemed very serious about it, but I was firm, and he finally relented.

In case you are wondering, I decided to have lunch on *Sans Souci*.

"Did you identify a restaurant for dinner?" Roberta asked. The waiter had come from a restaurant called Rosemary's, so I said, "I think we have no choice. We're having dinner at Rosemary's, and I plan to eat there this time. Besides, he also said he would take our trash!"

WELCOME TO BODRUM!

After only one night in Cokertme, we were ready to move on. Our next stop was Bodrum, and it is a major town. The doggies hadn't been on land, other than our brief dinner at Rosemary's, in nearly a week. Civilization sounded good.

Bodrum, called Hallicarnassus in ancient times, somewhat reminded me of where Roberta and I live in Mexico (Cabo San Lucas), in that there are two Bodrums: There is the tourist town, full of extreme nightlife where tourists go to party all night, souvenir shops, and so-so restaurants, cafés and bars. Then, there is the other Bodrum, less obvious to run-of-the-mill tourists. This other Bodrum is quite upscale, with excellent restaurants and amenities, and a very livable, beautiful community.

...

Hiking around town not far from the castle, we passed a Spanish restaurant (La Pasion) inside a beautiful courtyard. We were in the mood for something different and reserved a table immediately. We asked if they would take the dogs, and they said, "No problem." Dinner was excellent. We enjoyed various tapas and shared a wonderful beef paella.

ELECTRICITY CAN BE SHOCKING

The marina [in Didim, Turkey] handles electricity via a debit system. The marina staff issues you a little computer chip and then sells you credits, which are placed onto the chip. Pressing the chip against my power pedestal turns the power on, and my credits start ticking downward.

Strangely, the credits are sold in euros. The marina asked how many euros of electrical credits I wanted to buy, and I guessed 200 euros (about $250 USD).

The next morning, I checked the LED on the power pedestal, curious to see how much money I had left on the meter. It was down to 158 euros! I had somehow burned $100 of electricity in about 18 hours. This triggered a quick trip to the marina office to ask someone to check the meter. After being assured that the meter was correct, the girl at the desk asked whether or not I was using air conditioning. Other people in the marina office all looked at me to see how I would answer. Given the 100-plus-degree heat, I thought the answer was obvious, but suddenly I felt on the spot. "Yes," I responded rather sheepishly. She looked surprised, and they all exchanged knowing glances and words in Turkish.

We were going to be in the marina for two weeks. I started doing the math in my head and didn't like the number I was arriving at. This would be the first time in my life that the bill for electricity would exceed the bill for moorage. I said, "1,000 euros, please." The girl assumed she misheard me. As she realized I was serious, she translated my comment to the girl next to her, in Turkish, and now all eyes, behind — and in front of — the counter were directed at me.

Realizing that I had apparently said something stupid, I softened it and said, "500 euros, please." This seemed to be more palatable but still amusing. I personally preferred getting it all out of the way at once rather than hiking every few days to the marina office, but ... I'm a team player.

BIZARRE INCIDENT DU JOUR

Sometimes, language can be an issue.

Roberta, Chris [our son] and I were in a taxi yesterday, returning from a restaurant. As I was getting out of the cab, I asked what I owed. The cab drivers never seem to speak English, but they all know how to point at the meter at the end of the ride (this is not unique to Turkey). It said I owed 39 Turkish lira (about $20). I gave the driver a 50 TL note and watched as he searched for 11 TL in change. I said, "5 lira is fine," which had no impact on him whatsoever. I wasn't sure what to do, so I just held up five fingers and said, "Give me 5." This caused him to smile ear to ear, slap my hand and stuff the 50 in his pocket. At this point, I realized my error. He was still smiling but had a "thank you and goodbye" look on his face. I couldn't figure if he was kidding or serious, so I reached in my pocket for 5 lira and showed him a 5 TL note, and pantomimed "You to me." He got the message this time and looked horribly embarrassed. Sheepishly, he fished around for 5 TL, gave it to me and we parted company, each a little worse for the experience.

Ed. Note: Check out the September 2010 issue of Sea *for the story of the Great Siberian Sushi Run.*