

## Mediterranean Season 2004

Good day my friends,

It's been awhile from my last news. Sorry for being slack, been very busy... but hey that's no excuse Eleandro!!!

As you already know I'm back in the Mediterrean Sea after a trip with Lolita on a Yacht Carrier from the Caribbean. It was "Different" and definitely a great experience to be on a ship for 2 weeks, especially if all the crew, core of which are Dutch, were great fun. Drop off was Toulon, France and soon after we went cruising with the owner and his wife in La Spezia, Italy, round the Cinque Terre area.

Although last April I made a trip to England where I sailed in the Solent for my yacht master papers and a quick drive from Palma, Italy to Malta with my brother and sister for his wedding, I must say that it is awesome to be back in Europe after an absence of almost 2 years. Europe has so much history and culture that makes it different and unique from other continents I've been. Funnily enough, when I decided I want to travel I was eager to leave Europe and go west in search of other countries. Thinking of which, this was more than 5 years ago now. Don't get me wrong, everywhere in the world is great and there is no bad or Good in any, just different and it makes me feel good knowing that I could compare and talk about one another.

So, yes, we spent a month in Italy cruising from La Spezia up the coast to Genoa. Italy is beautiful but the best thing about this country is the cuisine, mainly to their fresh and tasteful products. Good ingredients makes good Food. Remember that!!

Straight away, we went to Antibes and cruised again with owner, his wife and a couple as guest, between Ville Le France and St. Tropez and back. The French Riviera is a coast that everybody wants to visit and can't be explained in worlds. There is so many places to visit (on a yacht) and are quite sheltered compared to the more open North West Italian Coast. But what they say about the Rich and Famous in the Riviera is true and unbelievable but I'll let your imagination take you there.

Schedule: Time to get the yacht ready for a major regatta; the Swan Words held in Sardinia on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September. In an event like this the boat is changed and prepared for optimum race performance. So off to Palma di Mallorca. The rig is dismantled, checked and put back together. The bottom is painted and sanded down up to a 1200 grid, meaning to those u are not familiar, that the bottom of the yacht is furled and smooth as a car paint job. Reason being less resistance through the water. The hard work indeed pays off when people are surprise with the finish,

thinking we are mad and the results on the race course. The internal is also stripped and covered up, for weight and protection reasons respectively. All this work involved a whole month of dirty work in a shipyard but then the best was yet to come, starting from the departure to Puerto Cervo, Sardinia.

It took us 2 full days of sailing. Weather was bad but had no choice but go since there was still plenty work to be done and 15 race crew will be turning up in 2 days. My first impression of the North Sardinia Coast was impressive straight away. A lot of Islands around with small beaches, splendid water and peacefulness. Puerto Cervo itself had no appeal to me, due to the whole concept of the town... built to attract rich clientele and no surprising that everything is ridiculously expensive. Sardinia is huge, being the biggest island in the Mediterranean (I've been told) and beautiful for sure. From the little I've seen makes me return there no doubt.

Well before our regatta there was another going on for the Maxis .. Which are the fastest and amazing yachts around. But before u know it, all the race crew arrived, Lolita is perfect shape, practice days are over, all competitors in their best form and the 6 day regatta begins. We where doing ok (2<sup>nd</sup>) till the last few minutes of the last race when, due to lack of wind all day and bad tack call, we finished fifth overall. Besides the result, everything was great and the experience was incredible. Unfortunately the weather changed drastically to Force 4 so had to leave right away, back to Palma. Although pretty exhaust from the last 6 weeks of continuous work and sailing, we had a wicked sail in 20 – 27knts of wind and big swell.

Finally tied up in Palma and time for a weekend off to regain strength and chill out. Drove half way round this spectacular island, had BBQs in the place we are renting and of course a visit to the pub. We are presently in the process of changing Lolita to the luxury state she is in when cruising.

Be definitely here for a Month before heading to Barcelona for a cruise. Then I'm not sure if the boat is going to the Caribbean or not. Whatever happens I will be leaving the boat and start freelancing with my dream of owing my own 38ft yacht coming even closer.

Future plans to follow.

Mobile +34 .... Sms or even better phone calls are welcome J

Hope I find you well

Happy days

Eleandro

P.S. Celebrated my 29<sup>th</sup> Birthday in Palma this year