

September 10, 2004

The sail from the Azores to Portugal was the last leg in our transit across the Atlantic Ocean. After departing the Azores on Wednesday, August 18, we sailed for 1½ days on a close reach, first with winds N 14-17 knots, then N 10-13 knots, and then NNE 6-7 knots. By late Thursday evening the winds became variable and we started motoring.

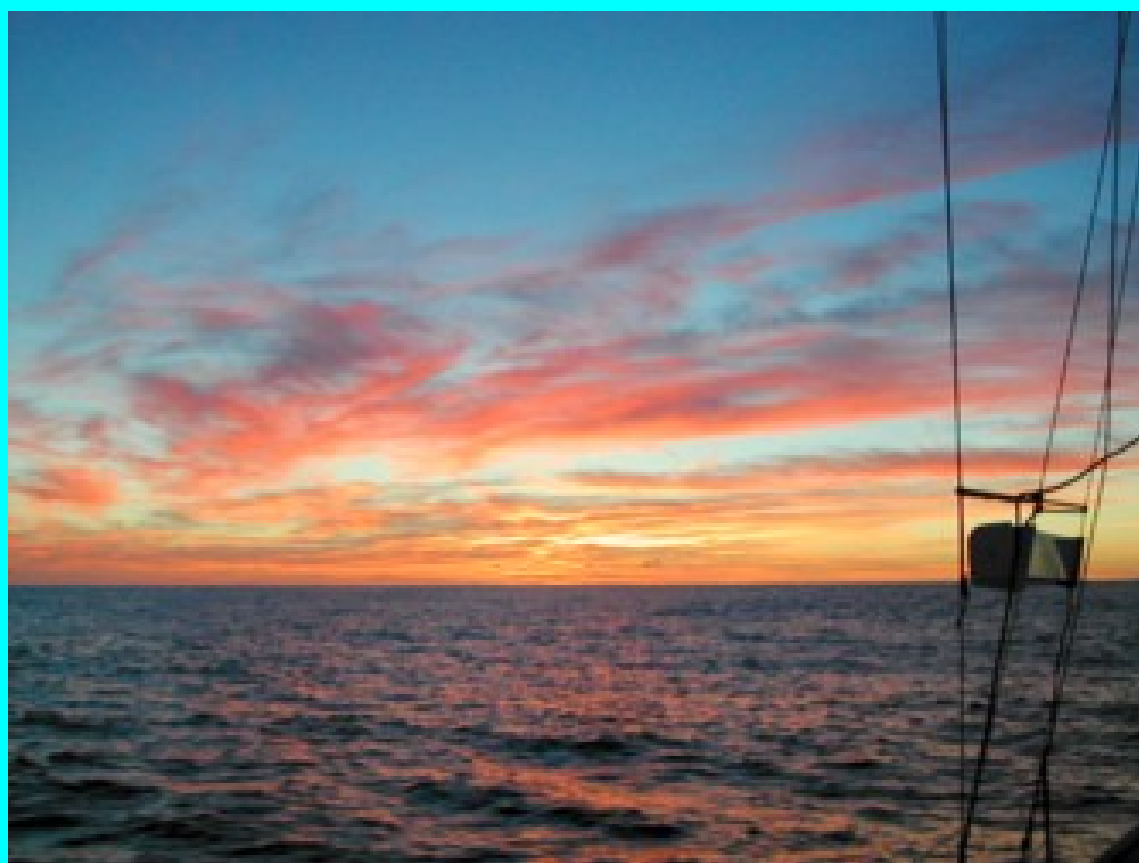
For almost three days, from late Thursday evening to early Sunday afternoon, we motored as we had become caught in the middle of a big high and were riding it east. To our surprise, we also found ourselves being set north by a strong current and had to adjust our boat's course.

Finally, around 1 pm Sunday, August 22, we once again started sailing. KUHELA glided through the water with the flat seas, sailing first on a broad reach with winds NNW 7-9 knots and then later in the evening on a reach with wind N 13 knots. To our delight, we were entertained during the day by quite a few dolphins.

On Monday we decided to sail as close to the wind as possible to get more north in case the wind decided to come around from the NE. Throughout the day we sailed hard-to-weather with winds NNE 12-16 knots and seas 3 feet.

While motoring, we had wished and wished for wind. Late Monday the "wind gods" gave us more than we wanted. Now we had too much wind caused from compressed isobars as two conflicting weather patterns converged. At first the winds were NNE 19-21 knots, but by Tuesday morning the wind had increased to 30 knots NNE with gusts to 35 knots. With the increased winds came increased seas of 10-12 feet. We slowed the boat down to about 3 knots and were able to continue our general course toward Portugal, but at the same time we took a lot of water over the boat and ever so often a breaking wave. For a little over a day we endured these wind and sea conditions. Finally by late Wednesday morning the wind had dropped to N 16-18 knots and we were once again sailing through the water at 6 knots.

Throughout this entire passage we had enjoyed beautiful blue-sky days and starlit nights. As we neared the coastline of Portugal on Wednesday, the sky became quite hazy causing us not to see the coastline of southern Portugal until about 8 miles out. As we approached land, our winds also dropped significantly and we had to motorsail for a couple of hours. About 4:30 pm we passed Cape Sagres on the southwestern tip of Portugal. Once around the cape we picked up warm land breezes of 15-16 knots filled with a lovely fragrance of dried pine, and at the same time we lost our sea swell. This made for a most delightful evening sail to Portimao, 22 nautical miles further along the southern coastline of Portugal, and our first port of call in Portugal.



*Sunrise at Sea*

[Next Page](#)

We anchored in Portimao at 8:45 pm, Wednesday, August 25. From the Azores to Portugal we had traveled 834 nautical miles in 7 days and 7 hours. We celebrated the completion of our trans-Atlantic crossing with a bottle of wine. It was also exciting to think that we had finally arrived on the continent of Europe.

Thursday morning we moved our boat over to the Portimao Marina and advanced our clocks ahead one hour to Portugal time. Looking out over the surrounding hills, the landscape reminded us of Southern California. We also received news that Mary's brother Eugene had passed away just after our arrival in Portimao. He will be greatly missed.

Soon after our arrival we rented a car with another cruising couple and drove from Lagos, Portugal to Rota, Spain looking at possible marinas to keep the boat for the winter. On our way back we stayed overnight in Sevilla (Seville), Spain, and were stunned by its historic beauty. It will be quite exciting to further explore this fascinating city at a later date. After looking at all the marinas, we have chosen to winter in Lagos, Portugal.

This region in which both Portimao and Lagos are located is known as the Algarve. It extends along the entire southern coast of Portugal. The word "Algarve" comes from the Moors who ruled Portugal for five centuries. They called this area Al-Gharb meaning "The West" as this was the most western part of the Islamic world. Here in the Algarve the weather is dry and warm, very much like Southern California, with lots of beautiful beaches. As there are many tourists, especially from Britain, English is spoken by almost everyone.

We spent two weeks at the Portimao Marina before moving over to the Lagos Marina on Thursday, September 9. Lagos is a charming town with lots of narrow streets within its old medieval walls and should be fun exploring this winter. Everything is accessible within a short walk from the marina making this a perfect place to live onboard our boat. We plan to fly home to Florida for the holidays on October 19 and return to Portugal on January 13. We will be in Lagos until around April 1st when once more the weather becomes favorable. Before our departure from Lagos we plan to do some traveling in both Portugal and Spain

[Back to Index](#)