



SOM 17: Heading for Tierra de Fuego

The alarm is ringing at six today's morning. We get the usual stress at the beginning of a journey. Should we stockup the fresh water tank or no? Once we had problems with less Diesel. It will be better to have all tanks filled. And the usual scheme starts to run. Stress on time that means can we start at the planned time or should we fix and stow away all things before? Have my eyes on the weather forecast and I am thinking every minute saved is important, Anke has her eyes on all the things we should have done. Our mood is becoming more and more stresslike but we ensure ourselves that we still want to continue sailing together. Finally all lines are on board and we are moving towards *Canal Honda*. The friendly *lancheros* Ramon and Manuel wave to say good-bye. Argentines are really warm-hearted people.

Streß is continuing on the channel. As usual. Calm down versus complaining what we could have done yesterday or what is not ideal on our JUST DO IT. Again we ensure ourselves we still want to sail (and live) together.

An hour later the waves – literary spoken – calm down. We start to enjoy the trip. Sun is shining out of a clear blue sky. The banks are intensively green. The tiny bizarre blue house is passing by. And all the little *datcha*'s and rich man's palasts on the countless islands of the rivers estuary too.

Farewell to Buenos Aires. Somehow this means farewell from Argentina. We still will spent some more month in this beloved country but we will not come as close to all the folks here like in the month that have passed. Turning from *Rio Paraná de Las Palmas* to *Canal Mitre* – because of the low tide we have to go this long way – I get the ease feeling to head to the right direction.

It seems to be a tradition that yachts leaving *Baires* get some stormy regards passing the *bahia* with the nice name *Samborombón*. There is no exception to us except that the wind starts blowing a lot of miles before we reach the *bahia*. During the nighttime the winds are increasing and we get a hit on our caps like we say in Germany. Step by step but at last quickly we are reefing sails to the smallest size. It is not so much wind but the *Rio de La Plata* is a shallow water. There are fifteen sometimes less feet beneath our keels. Uncomfortable waves not even high but short and steep. Our windvane gets a lot of strikes. The first day, better the first night on see, could be more calm, indeed. We spent our watches by doing sail manouvres and follow the funny task to circle around the countless buoys. Next morning the sun is breaking through the clouds and our sailing is continuing without any problems. Somewhen the brown, dirty floods are changing to bright blue waters. We ultimately left the muddy waters of *Rio de La Plata*.

Some thrill we have heading to the port of Mar del Plata. The wind is turning from one second to the next, it is becoming warm and a sweet smelling breeze from the shore drifts hundreds of moths to us. The sky is painted dramatically. We wait expecting a Pampero but first the wind disappears. Engine on. Strike. What is this? Strike without any union is not allowed! Mutiny! The starter battery seems to be sucked out. But using the consumers power-circle battery we have no succes neither. We tear the generator out of its store, charge the batteries and half an hour later the engine is running. So we prefer to sail the last miles using the iron genoa. We enter the port at a pleasant time and get a nice berth next to the Polish BONA TERRA.

The days in *Mar del Plata* pass in the usual way. We repair this and that, make some buys and wait for Gustavo to make the promised visit to his estancia. I'm a little excited because a good wheather window is appearing. Hopefully we don't pass the final good possibility to head for the south. But then the visit to Gustavo's little flat is shorter than expected. In the morning after our arrival we have a good horseback-ride including a short galop. Anke becomes some troubles to keep her seat in the saddle. She is really shocked that this happen to her. ;-) Then we enlght the parilla expecting a huge traditional Argentine countryside like barbecue but the sky is changing its



appearance. Big clouds are coming up. Gustavo starts to become nervous. The distance to the next paved road is more than 20 km and strong rain can make the dirt road unusable. So we found ourselves on the way to the next little town quickly and unexpected to go back to *Mar del Plata*. It is a pity because of the good meat that Gustavo now has to eat all alone. How should he manage this without our help?

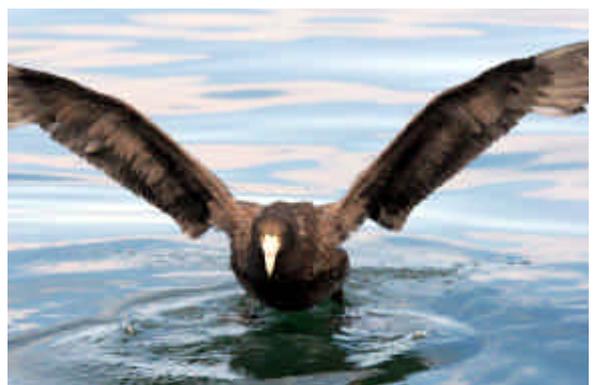
We do some final buys of foods and fish tins (a specialty in *Mar del Plata*), we do a dutiful visit to the sea-lions colony which is responded by an visit of some sea-lions at our boat where they throw fish cadavers to us and at last – we leave. No stress, no struggling between captain and admiralty. (!) The sea outside the harbour walls is roly and the skipper – you can't believe my words – feels more or less seasick. Some quarters of an hour later the admiralty is complaining similar symptoms. She don't want to believe in this and starts to get really angry about this. Finally we both agree that this feelings may have their reason in the consciousness that the todays start ultimatively means that we go to Cape Horn or Beagle-Channel. This severe feelings don't want to disappear the next time. And the smell of all the sausages hanging in the salon do not increase our well-being. The first word of the second day in our navigational log is **Schnatter**. (Meaning a state like trembling with all bones including the teeth) During the night it was really cold. During my second watch it was hard to wait until the sun starts to turn its circle in the sky and began to warm up my freezing body. Unfortunately today we get bad news of Anke's mother, which now will accompany us for the rest of this trip. On the other hand we come back to routine. First I prepare a salad for lunch (yesterday the kitchen was very lousy because of the weekend crew) and later we prepare meat balls to eat at once and to get them in stock as a snack. Anke bought so much meat that we can't eat fast enough. Fishing therefore is forbidden. ☹

Days are passing, the weather is turning better and we enjoy to sit in the cockpit watching all the countless sea-birds. Petrels, Storm-Petrels, a lot of Albatrosses.



In the night of tuesday the 28-11 to wednesday we cross the 40° latitude. Now we have entered the *roaring forties*. But there is no roar. Vice versa the winds are low and change their direction frequently. We enjoy the accompanying sunshine. So at one days noon we decide to have a big shower-party in our cockpit. We do not expect that you believe our story: Sailing across the roaring forties and jumping naked in the cockpit and doing a good warm shower.

According to the winds we sail slowly. Otherwise we have a lot of time to watch the birds: Black-Browed Albatrosses, we think 3 different species of Petrel, Magellanic Penguins. The latter only visible as couples. From time to time the birds gather to huge crowds drifting at the calm surface of the greenish-blue sea. Interesting is that all this groups are joined of all different species. They do not separate.





During 3. of december we reach *Caleta Horno*. A small sheltered fjord, the safest anchorage on the whole Argentine Atlantic coast. Totally sheltered but on the other hand far away of all connections to the civilized world. The wheather is good enough and we could sail further on, but a short break to recreate our poor bodies will be no mistake. So we decide to enter the bay. We have all things prepared, the dingi is built together, the shorelines are waiting in their positions and we know what to do when we pass the entrance channel. There are to people sitting on the rocks and waving their hands. The crew of *SIX PACK*. Then we discover a second boat at

anchor, the *SKEDEMONGSKE* from Belgium. The first steps of our anchoring manouvre according to Matzes instructions are well made. The dingi goes to water in record time, the anchor is going down but then the shoreline procedure turns to chaos. Well, we need some practise. But after some time *JUST DO IT* is fixed between anchor and shore like a spider in its net and we can lean back. Perhaps I should mention that I just has started a bath in this 13° - 16° C cold waters. This appeared unavoidable because I forgot to fix the dingi after the shoreline-operations. And somehow I had to catch the drifting dingi. Lazy days come in a meager landscape, inhabited by flocks of Guanacos which we share with new friends. (Not the Guanacos, we let them alive. We shared the days.) The sunset of the second day finds all of us sitting on fishermens boxes and whale-bones at a small beach eating little snacks, drinking red vine, enjoying the warm air and the wonderful sunset. It seemed to be a hidden place in the Mediterranean Sea. Only *JUST DO IT*'s drifting anchor disturbs the peace of this place. Kelp made a good hold impossible. Finally we set the anchor again at an other place and from this moment we have got peace.



The wheather pognoses are still good so nobody has an excuse to stay. We all pull in the shorelines and lift the anchors. We didn't make arrangements but some days later we all meet at a certain point close to the entrance of *Le Maire-Street*. The sailing is without any problems. Less birds but more activity on the air, means in the HF-radio. The situation of Anke's mother is severe and her father wants her to return immediately. He mails we should enter *Commodore Rivadavia*. But this is no safe port for a yacht and I do not agree to risk our safety and health. There are three possibilities remaining. Heading to Falklands, but the airline connections from there are only a few. The other possibilities are to enter *Beagle-Channel* and go to *Puerto Williams* or *Ushuaia*. The *Street of Magellan* and *Punta Arenas* is impossible to head to because westerly winds are prognosted. In Germany it may be difficult to understand that here the choices are restricted. But in a certain meaning this is one of the worlds ends. Heaved to we wait in a safe distance to *Le Maire* for the right

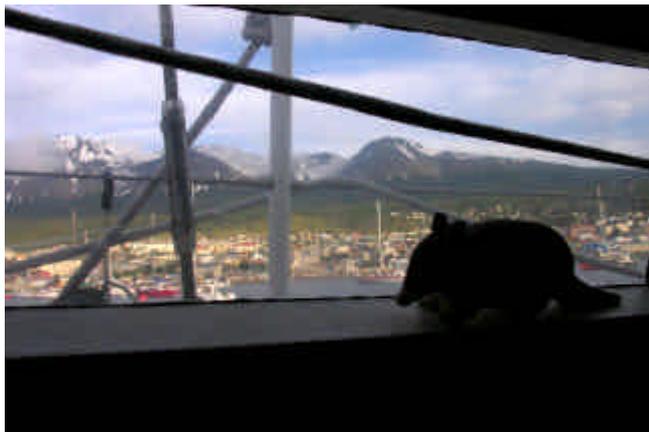


tide and hopefully decreasing wind. Actually the gusts are really strong. First we plan to heave to for more than 24 hours but according to the pressure of Ankes mothers fate and following the herd instinct – the other yachts will continue – we join them. So (consequently) in the *Street* we get a really strong hit. Opposite to the prognosted decreasing winds the gusts enforce up to 48 knots. A really nice storm coming from the direction we want to go to. After some hours we can hold the course to the bay of *Buen Suceso*. Including machines power we can not continue against wind, waves and the increasing tidal current. So we have to turn and go

with the wind to the end of the street where we will heave to and wait for better conditions. Niki really calms us down with his friendly information that just behind *Cap Buen Suceso* the wind will increase further more. With a special mood in our minds we now expect winds of a fully-grown hurricane which will blow our ears away in the next minutes. Only some cables than we have the cape in 90°. And look – like somebody has turned a switch the conditions are changing. The wind decreases to 10, 12 kn and turns to south. ??? The tidal stream stops and changes its direction. We don't waste time by thinking about. We hurry close to the shore and with machines help we struggle back to the bay. One hour later our anchor dives to the ground. The crews of the two other boats wave their hands. They all are glad to see us here. We throw away all our wet and salty overalls, prepare a warm dinner and than we fall to our berths.



The next day we hurry on. A jump to *Caleta Aguirre*. The Argentine Navy-Station in *Bahia Buen Suceso* gave us a bad weather-forecast and suggested to stay. But the two others are on the way and because of weather conditions totally different to the prognosis we will follow them. Two hours later the wind disappears totally and our engine strike again. Excatly spoken, the starter refuses to work. The next rocks only in half a mile distance, claro. With the old-fashioned srew-driver-method I can wake up our good old Daimler and we sail the rest of the way using the iron genoa. From time to time we have good winds for our sails but we don't want to risk anything. Better to avoid a situation



when you need the engine and you can not start it. One stop we do in the picturesque *Caleta Relegada* a bay which seems to be a lake in the Alpien mountains including forests and meadows at the banks and a scenic high mountain panorama as background. Then we start to the last little jump. Low hanging clouds, rain. Nevertheless I am enthusiastic. We did it! We are just here! JUST DO IT has done her job in a wonderful manour. We didn't get a single wave in the cockpit. Rarely a sea was flooding the foreship. And in gusts of 48 kn we could keep a course more or less close to the wind by making some progress. A good boat.

We close up to *Ushuaia*. Bad sight. Only two miles visible. Reaching the yacht-club „Afasy“ some movement starts on the towed boats. Noël is the first to welcome us and to take one of our lines. And then all the other sailors come to help and to say hallo. A really warm welcome. We are back at home with friends (and a warm shower too.)

Two days later Anke is aboard a plane to Germany and I remain back as a harbours single-hander in *Ushuaia*. Now we have to wait and the future will show how our travel will go on.

Dear friends,
 many warm regards and
 best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

from Martin aboard of JUST DO IT
 and Anke in Germany

commentary to the pictures according their order:
 sailing with the new spinnaker-pole – horseback-riding with Gustavo – Sea-lions colony in *Mar del Plata* – looking in the eye of a sea-lion (no tiger available) – Black-Browed Albatros – Southern Giant Petrel – Enjoying a shower in the roaring fourties – *Caleta Horno* – Guanacos – Commerson-Dolphin – SKEDEMONGSKE in rough seas with Staaten Island (Street of Le Maire) as background– sight to *Ushuaia* in the morning after