

The Chronicles of Carmen

Back in the USA - after Armageddon.

So anyway we chickened out and had a delivery crew bring Carmen back to Ventura. It was supposed to be San Francisco, but the alternator quit at Santa Catalina and Ventura has a large Cummins dealer. Fate always has a way of exerting the upper hand.

We arrived in Ventura with our new extended family, Farley, our now six months old Havanese puppy came with us for a three day drive from Sidney, BC to Ventura. It all went very well.

So we relaxed after our trip, sorted out the boat in Ventura, and began looking for weather windows for the trip north. Weather windows are very similar to PC windows in that they are not very stable. If anyone had told me that calculators that sometimes crashed would become perfectly acceptable business tools before we entered the "personal and desktop" computer age, they would have been laughed out of town. Those days it was mainframes as big as today's condos to do the payroll.

So our view was that we had to find several windows, one for the trip to Santa Barbara, a mere $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour run, one for Pts Conception and Arguello to Morro Bay, another for the run to Monterey and yet another for the run up to SF Bay and Alameda. A study of the various weather forecasts showed that they were very similar to economic forecasts. Use with great caution and a good dose of sheer disbelief. Simply put the number of different forecasts equals the number of sources -1. The truth lies.....somewhere out there.

Speaking of economic forecasts - the atmosphere in the USA is very different from last fall. Now it is post Armageddon (the late fall and winter US & World financial meltdown) and it shows, things are very quiet, no one around at the marinas and such. Diesel is now nearly affordable. Of course the Canadian \$ has fallen in exact proportion so again fate rules.

The micro climate of this area shows that two distinct windows are required, one across the Santa Barbara channel to Santa Barbara and the other out of Santa Barbara round the terrible duo and on the Morro Bay. On April 30th the 1st window opened. So we took it and had a fairly uncomfortable $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour run. Farley was sick! Yes he was not a happy camper. Very little roll but boy the seas were short, and that was with no wind. Our new strategy is to concentrate on wind; if there is little wind we figure we can handle the rest of it. Wind waves on top of swell makes for bad news.

A change in the forecast saw us head out the following day instead of taking the break. We had a reasonable run to Morro Bay but again Farley was sick. Carmen, our feline companion, of course was not sick but also not overly pleased. We gained Morro Bay without incident, other than the use of a lot of paper towels. The forecast indicated a stay in Morro for the day so we did just that. On Sunday the 3rd we set off for Monterey, a long but calmer run. There was again no wind but the seas were quite big, 8-10ft swells. The view from the pilothouse was like an alien landscape, gentle rolling water hills with a series of mountain ridges marching across the scene. The mountain ridges proved to be benign as we just went up one side and then down the other, quite an experience. Farley was not sick! Everyone was pleased.

The forecast for Monday was poor and so we lounged around for a day and then decided to split the next run into two days, one to Half Moon bay where we would take on fuel - seeing we were getting low, and the following day head up to Alameda. Both days were easy runs with no wind to Half Moon and little wind to the gate and beyond. Foggy though, yes the days without wind are very poor visibility days.

We passed under the gate at 1130hrs on Wednesday the 6th and went over to Alameda. Visibility was poor at about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

We made fast, and then pretty much crashed - had to catch up on our rest. Journey's end.

Now we are looking forward to the SFBANTA Rendezvous and the special weekend that follows.