



Through the Dodacanese.....Rhodes



After peaceful Fethiye, Rhodes was a culture shock (many tourists!)...and hard work. We seemed to be forever climbing up and up...One of the best-preserved medieval cities in Europe, the Old Town is surrounded by walls 12 m. thick which enclose 3 sections (Byzantine, Ottoman and Jewish), a labyrinth of narrow, cobbled streets, restaurants, shops, small squares, the impressive Palace of the Grand Masters and the 600 m. honey-coloured Avenue of the Knights. In 1309, after a 3 year battle, the Knights of St. John arrived and stayed for 203 years until driven out by Suleyman the Great's army of 160,000 men! The Knights (500-600) were both healers (establishing hospitals) and warriors (defending against the muslim invaders) and were divided into 7 "tongues" (Germany, Italy, England, Aragon, Castille, Provence & Auvergne) and each defended a section of the bastion. Italy was in charge of the fleet. Interestingly, the order still exists with headquarters in Rome, doing social work in many countries. The night shots were views from our cockpit.



We hired a car for 2 days to see the countryside...a hard and hot climb up a one kilometre path followed by 285 steps to a tiny church with stunning views where childless women make pilgrimages to the Virgin Mary...another climb up to Monolithos Castle (right) for a picnic with a view and a stop at a local countryside village, Siana, to buy various honeys (pine, thyme and grapes in honey) plus a tasting of the local grape snaps (souma)- very strong!



It was good to be back in Greece again, not least of all, for the wonderful pies (ham, cheese and mushroom or spinach and feta) (and pork chops and salami after 3 months in Turkey!). Jan also enjoyed the “boots of beer” (small 1 ltr./ large 2 ltr!). Rhodes is also known for its lovely textiles and we took the opportunity to buy new sofa cushions for Havana.



Another lovely spot was Lindos, a white village of 17C houses, famous for its clifftop Acropolis, labyrinth of alleyways and donkey terminus! (those over 50.8 kg./ 112 lbs) not allowed by EU law but this is probably ignored- we didn't see anyone being weighed anyway), St.Paul's Bay (landed 58AD to evangelize the island). Many houses have been restored by foreign celebrities. Over half a million tourists visit yearly so it somewhat commercialised but the setting is spectacular. It was this vantage point and good harbour that made it one of the most important cities in the Dodecaneses until overtaken by Rhodes. Like the other 500.000 tourists, we had a good "lunch with a view" from a pretty rooftop restaurant.



While writing this (13 Oct), I have to mention that it is a very important crew member's birthday today- Tuck turns 2 years! Chicken dinner for our sea spaniel! (yes, this is how you get after 6 months on board!)

