

Manca 2014

Leg 1 Almerimar to Benalmadena

Prelude March - April

In the early Spring I arrived back at Almerimar to begin the annual clean up and re-launch of Manca. This usually takes 2-3 weeks at the most. I was apprehensive as this was the first time I would be completing the tasks in Spain. I still needed to get acquainted with the suppliers and all the skilled workers needed for: painting, Volvo mechanic, glass repairs , riggers, polishing, upholstery, sail makers, welders, stainless fabricator and the rest!. My terrible Spanish was not going to be much use!

After the 34th launch I was completely gob smacked by the daily discovery of one more repair issue after another! Each morning I would be up early make a coffee, then down to work on: "The List". Each day "The List" grew longer despite a frenetic pace to get all the jobs done. It seemed like Manca would never get away sailing.

Happily I was handed incredibly friendly, highly professional help, from:

Frank: The Mechanic of Nauticmobile

Chris: The supplier of materials in the yard and gelcoat: Almerimar Marine Services Inc.

Jose Maria: The yard team pressure washer, polishing and gelcoat

Regis and Max: INOX ALMERIMAR welding and stainless work

Colin Dixon: An'C sail maker, repairs, washing, canvas repairs and bending on

Angela: Cushions, mattress upholstery

Brian: My Canadian buddy, volunteer, climbed the mast, checked the rig helped remove the 200l water tank

Toni: The hoist team who tenderly cradled and re-launched my baby

Andy: The rigger who helped bend on the sails and re-rigged the third reef line on the mainsail.

Without all these wonderful workers Manca would still be in the yard! An international team of skills. In order above: German/Spanish, German, Spanish, English, South Africa, Spanish, Canadian, Spanish, English and one Tasmanian running around in circles, pulling out hair and vast sums from his now slender wallet.



Manca ready to re-launch - Almerimar
March 25, 2014

Finally Manca is ready for launching. But there are still many jobs to finish!

The water tank removed; Brian seeks the cause of the leak.



Brian and Frank check the repaired tank.

After numerous delays Manca was almost ready to sail. Just two big items waiting: V berth mattress from Angelica and the return of the repaired sails from Colin. However on Thursday afternoon Colin had a terrible kite surfing accident in 40k of wind. He is hospitalized and may be off work for six months. His wife Angelica is of course thrown for a loop and has to spend many nights in emergency with Colin at the hospital.

Amazingly Colin's friends came to help me and Angelica was able to finish the new bed within a few days. Incredible, wonderful people!

On the crisp, cool morning of April 9 after 29 days of preparations Manca cleared the lights of Almerimar and headed west along the Spanish Main for a new season of adventures and sailing fun!

Leg 1 Almerimar to Benalmadena

How beautiful to catch the sunrise as we headed west for the 45NM leg to Marina del Este. Across the water, a beautiful view of the snow capped Sierra Nevada, towering above with 14 peaks over 3000 metres and less than 100k to the SW. Granada nestles in these mountains just a bit further west.

Leaving Almerimar, April 9



Sunrise at the beginning of Leg 1 over Sierra Nevada. The red buoys mark the dredged

For a while we enjoy an offshore breeze. Later Volvo settles into a steady chug against a prevailing easterly tidal stream along the coast reducing our SOG to about 5.5k.

We arrive at the gorgeous Marina del Este at about 1630 and with excellent staff assistance we are soon settled with our stern to a wonderful café, bar and restaurant. The hilly tropical coast is lined flowers, exotic trees, “natural” sunbathing beaches; great views.

MARINA DEL ESTE. The island provides protection from the strong storm swells



From Marina del Este there is a beautiful walk up and over the hill and down to the beach of La Herruda. There are also beaches either side of Marina del Este.



MARINA DEL ESTE looking out of the entrance. “Natural” beach to the left I am told a 5 minute walk

After the big push to get going we decide to take the next day off to relax, walk, take some photos. This local gull liked to be photographed.

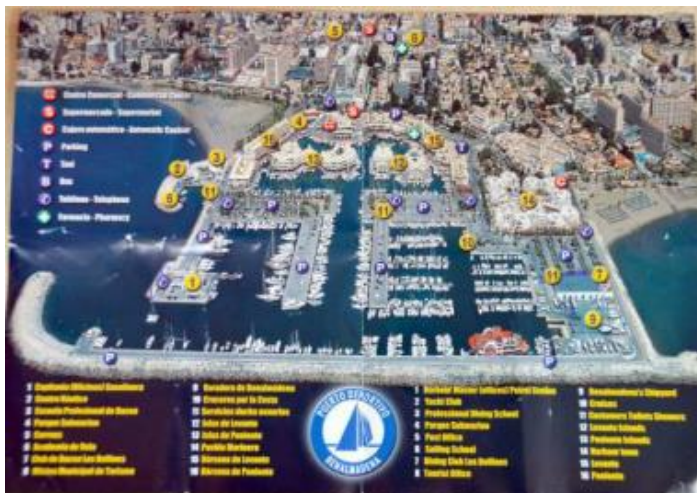
MARINA DEL ESTE A pretty and bold gull. And the species is?



From Marine del Este it is just a short 16.5 miles to Puerto Caleta de Velez. This was a convenient stop; halving the distance to Benalmadena. Still a fishing port, we found the locals enjoying a great feed of fish just past the fish sheds, on the main drag across from the first beach. In the evening we found a tiny family café in a street behind the marina offering great seafood and cheap good wine.

On April 13 at 0900 we headed to Benalmadena, sailing by the busy port of Malaga and arriving at Benalmadena, after dodging dozens of fish traps and buoys, at 1300. The friendly reception struggled to find us a spot to dock but finally took me outside. "Do you think you can squeeze in there?" as she pointed at the corner slip surrounded by a maze of mooring lines and protruding anchors extending across our approach. Well yours truly undaunted, but trembling, pattered very slowly backwards towards the dock, weaving around the obstacles and with a great sigh of relief and applause from the professional mariners, Manca slid into her narrow space without a scratch or a bump.

Benalmadena is an amazing development. It has been beautifully styled borrowing a lot of ideas from Gaudi. The different mixture of styles, textures and colors seem to work so well. It is successful and now enjoyed by many locals and tourists who come to enjoy the water, the docks, the beaches and the boats.



BENALMADENA - A wonderful project. There are many mooring spaces well protected between the buildings with a Venice canal like approach.

From our cockpit we enjoyed nice view of the development. Despite the appearance of luxury, the moorage costs were quite reasonable. With my folding bike "Sputnik" I could pedal the laundry from our dock near the office to number 9 on the East Pier. All other services easy peasy.

BENALMADENA - view from our cockpit. The building designers were inspired by Gaudi I am told.



The Royal Palms are generous hosts to a busy and industrious colony of green parrots; viewed right from the stern of Manca. We enjoyed watching their skill in nest building with 2-3 entrances, cleverly weaving long sticks to make fortify the structure against strong storm winds. Sometimes I saw parrot pick up a stick at the base of the palm and do a straight vertical climb to the nest!



Green parrots colors add camouflage in the royal palms; a safe place for their nests.

A green parrot makes easy work of a vertical climb with a very long stick. They are fast strong flyers and clever nest builders.



During the Easter break it was great to see the racing yachts: the big boats and the small Optimist class.



Optimists return from Easter regatta in a stiff westerly breeze

It was great to watch the Easter regattas big boats and Optimists.

The boats enjoyed great winds but the next day force 7 westerly cleared the beach.



Leg I is complete. Clean up time!

Manca now eagerly awaits the arrival of the Swiss, German, Kiwi Crew to begin Leg 2.

Terry

PS. Once again many thanks to Miran for his expert help with Manca's website!