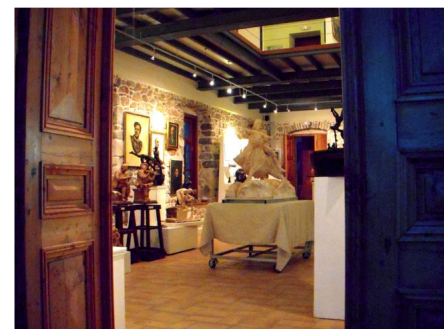




Kalymnos to Kos Cruising "Home" to Leros.



It just goes to show- we nearly didn't make it here after bad reviews from cruisers and guide books, yet we loved both islands. **Kalymnos** was rough, barren and wild, the town set dramatically in a huge bay surrounded by bare cliffs. Pastel-coloured houses in Italian and Turkish style. It is the island of sponge divers and rock climbers! Once, around 1500 people earned their living from diving for the world's best sponges, with no equipment but a stone to take them down to 80 mtrs. The boats left for 6 months. It was so perilous they called it the "Black Widow's Island". Today only 100 continue the tradition. There are many varieties, some very expensive. Small factories clean, trim and export them and they are happy to show you around. We found it a cheerful and friendly place. We visited a wonderful gallery, too, and met the sculptor who created many of the town's lovely memorials, a very gracious man, as so many of the Greeks are.



We travelled by scooter, high up into the hills and down to the lovely, tiny harbour of Rina. We experienced Election night greek-style when every restaurant was packed and the national government changed from Conservative to Socialist. We saw first-hand the kind of treatment you can expect in the case of damage to your boat and the less helpful attitude if you're a Turk as was our neighbour. His built in passarelle (gangplank) was wrecked by a Greek who ran onto our boat, jumped down into his small motorlaunch between us to pick up something, up again across the Turk's and off into a waiting car. Jan was a witness, and tried his best to help. The police shrugged their shoulders. The insurance company couldn't help-not caused by a boat. The Greek admitted it but refused to pay. And the Turk, after three days arguing, left with a bill for 6000 euros and a ruined holiday. We felt sad. He was so well-mannered throughout.



Kos was another surprise. We came expecting discos, loud music and lager louts. We found instead a modern, pleasant city of palm- shaded boulevards, cycle paths and peaceful castles, archaeological ruins, and an island of long , wind-swept, sandstone dunes, mountains and fertile plains. It is the island of Hippocrates. We spent a wonderful afternoon in the mountains, climbing to a ruined fortress and a very unique café , perched on the rim with a sweeping view of the whole valley and a most unique WC set in the rocks! The cheerful owner told us it had been his childhood home, his parents were goatherders. It was so tranquil- the most beautiful spot you can imagine. An unexpected gem.



Still warm (29C) and sunny into mid-October, we returned to lie at anchor in one of our favourite spots on **Leros**- the little resort of Pandeli. Tuck turned 1 year on 13 Oct. and celebrated with a swim and a big portion of grilled chicken! A last few days swimming, relaxing and enjoying the company of Willie, our sailing friend from New Mexico, who joined us for 9 days on this trip.



A wet spaniel is a happy spaniel !



And so back to Lakki and Leros Marina where "Havana" was lifted out on 16 Oct. We lie in a sheltered spot under the orange cliffs.

One final surprise awaited...the propeller is shot! A big expense- well, at least it didn't fall off at sea...and it's pouring down with two loads of washing hanging in the rigging. We're cleaning, packing, winterizing engines, outboard and watermaker, hauling out the tarpaulins...then it's time for home by overnight ferry to Piraeus (Olympic's gone bust) and SAS to Copenhagen on 21 Oct.

Tuck's first season- we couldn't have asked for better.

