

Dear friends,

we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy 2024!

2023 was a good year for us, a beautiful year with wonderful experiences - at sea and on land. Even though a lot of bad things happened around us in the world.

The weather allowed us to go hiking in Heidelberg, the Neckar Valley/Odenwald and the Palatinate in January and February. We had to postpone our traditional New Year's Eve meeting due to illness. But we also had a wonderful time with Bärbel, Jürgen and Theresa in January. And a visit to our friends Uwe and Gabi in Hamburg was also on the programme.

Then it was time to start preparing for the 2023 sailing season. At the end of March, we found our boat in good condition at the boatyard on land in Kilada in the south-east of the Peloponnese. Some work on the hull, deck and engine, then we went into the water, into the large bay, where we anchored for a week due to persistent rainy weather. Were we really in Greece? We had to wait quite a long time for the warmth and more stable weather this year.

On the eastern side of the Peloponnese, we first travelled south, through an area that was familiar to us. In Monemvasia (the place with the imposing rock), our favourite place for four years now, we experienced the Greek Easter celebrations. It was nice to return to places we already knew. In Monemvasia, we thought long and hard about whether we should dare to sail to Crete. With the prevailing northerly winds, it's easy to get there, but usually difficult to get back. We did it. Crete is a difficult place to sail, but we found a small harbour, Kolimbari, in the far west, where we could moor the boat quietly and spend more than a week ashore, sometimes with a car. In the beautiful, completely Venetian harbour of Chania, through the impressive Samaria Gorge, although in constant rain, in the Caribbean-like Elafonisos on the south-western tip, in wild mountain regions in the west of the island, and visiting our friends Ursula and Norbert, who live on Crete.

Back on the Peloponnese, Jürgen from Heidelberg Jazz Choir visited us in Pylos with his wife Gisela. On our way north, we left our beloved Peloponnese and headed for the southern Ionian Islands. Zakynthos, Kefalonia, Ithaca - we visited all three before our summer break. Beautiful islands, we particularly liked Kefalonia, we want to go there again. The weather suddenly became more stable, with sunshine and a moderate wind. How relaxing! The whole spring up to mid-May in Greece was too cold and very rainy. The reason for this was the large, constant high over Germany. Towards the end of June, our boat found its way to its summer break berth in Messolonghi almost all by itself. Just like home harbour.

Then we flew from the tiny airport near Preveza to the huge BER. What a contrast! We spent a few days in Berlin, meeting friends and colleagues at Walter's old employer and in Gisela's former office in Auguststraße. There was music in Heidelberg, which we were really looking forward to: Gisela was able to sing with the Heidelberg Jazz Choir again, but not in the choir competition at the BUGA in Mannheim. Then we were already on the boat again, but we were able to congratulate the choir on the second place in their class. And Walter? He was with the Bossa Nova Trio at the Weststadt market, in Neckargemünd and in the marvellous Hirschhorn castle courtyard high





above the Neckar. Of course there was much more during the short summer break: a visit from Trix and Peter, the previous owners of our boat (we travelled with them on the tourist route in Heidelberg), fun with the children of Gisela's nephews, and, and, and ...

On 24 August we flew to Preveza, from there by bus through the wild mountainous area we already knew to Messolonghi to our boat. Of course we wanted to continue exploring the Ionian Islands. We had visitors on Corfu. After several days of waiting for better wind

(we had to head north, that's where it was coming from), we set off - quite briskly, with just a few stops in between.

Lisa from Heidelberg and Claudia from Karlsruhe came on board one after the other in Corfu. We celebrated Gisela's birthday with Lisa on this beautiful island. We then spent the rest of the season travelling in search of the wind. But light wind sailing can also be nice if the distances aren't too long. Instead, we discovered beautiful anchor bays and small harbours on the Greek mainland coast and on the islands of Kalamos, Meganisi and Lefkas, and also took time to go hiking. Mild late summer weather in October and the still warm sea was pure relaxation - especially when the many charter sailors and flotillas were no longer on the move.

Our boat has been moored in the well-protected bay of Nydri/Vliho on the island of Lefkas since the beginning of November, waiting for the next season. The marvellous Ionian Islands continue to entice us. We still haven't seen everything and will be travelling in this area again next year.

For now, we are back at our home on land. A few weeks with a busy programme have already passed. Reunions with our neighbours, friends and family. Gisela's mum turned 95, which we celebrated in style. We can take part in the rehearsals for the homemade music again. It's nice that we can join in again and again. And the Palatinate is a great place for hiking. There will be no time for boredom.

We hope to see you again or at least hear from each other and wish you all the best.

*Gisela & Wolk*