

# Saorsa II – 2013 Cruise

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## SitRep 004

It's been several weeks since my last Situation Report (SitRep), so this one will of necessity be somewhat long. So, before you start reading, visit the heads, fetch a drink, and attend to any other pressing duties.

You may recollect that one of the crew, Jason S., left prematurely due to a threatened VIA rail strike. All were dismayed by the development and, as it turned out, especially frustrated as the strike never transpired. These things are sent to try us and they most certainly do so.

Since then, *Saorsa II* carried on and has made Her way down the St. Lawrence Seaway and River, around the Gaspé (Gaspésie) Peninsula, through the Northumberland Strait, and is now anchored in a small bay off the Canso Strait poised and ready to venture onto the Atlantic on Her way to Halifax.

Transiting the locks of the Seaway was blessedly uneventful and became, dare I say, somewhat routine. The lock keepers were thoroughly capable, professional, and very helpful. The fact we were down bound made the transit that much easier as there was minimal turbulence in the lock chamber as it emptied.

In between the locks, we managed to find a few anchorages to spend the night and not spend funds before we made our way to Montréal where we docked at the Longueuil marina to take on fuel and water as well as refresh ourselves with showers and do some laundry.

On our way down river from Longueuil, the Richelieu Rapids provided the usual thrill of riding along on over seven knots of combined tidal and river current. Immediately after, we docked at the small but charming marina in Portneuf where we became weather bound (not for the last time) for a few days. The monotony of grey cold windy rain was relieved briefly with a run ashore to find an excellent pizza in the local restaurant. It's a good thing the word "pizza" is widely understood *en française*.

From Portneuf, it was a quick run to that historic outpost of Europe in North America, La vieille Ville de Québec. Some time taken to explore the "old city" was well spent and provided charming streetscape views, beautiful architecture, good food, and delightful street musicians. A thoroughly enjoyable outing!

Also of note, we docked at the Yacht Club de Québec which is a short walk from a very good chandlery. Any yacht in transit needing parts or fittings would be well advised to visit this shop.

From Québec city, we continued downriver stopping briefly at Cap-à-l'Aigle marina before arriving in Tadoussac at the confluence of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence River.

A brief moment of moderate drama unfolded as we approached Tadoussac. Canadian Coast Guard radio issued a Marine Assistance Request call for a disabled pleasure craft off Tadoussac. The vessel was a small power boat adrift on the tide with four people on board. Fortunately, we were in a position to offer assistance and quickly made our way to the casualty which we took in tow and delivered safely to Tadoussac.

Tadoussac also provided our first whale sightings of the cruise. Both Beluga and Minke whales were seen cavorting in the waters where the Saguenay and St. Lawrence mingle.

From Tadoussac, a night at anchor in Anse à l'Original preceded our arrival in Rimouski at the marina there. This was a working stop where we bunkered diesel, changed engine lubricating oil, took on water and



victuals, and refilled propane tanks. The staff at this marina were immensely helpful. It's a very good place for a cruiser in transit to see to such things.

After a pleasant night at anchor in Anse du Petit-Mitis, we continued on to the yacht club in Matane. Although convenient for some shopping, this location is a nightmare due to shallow water and crumbling sea wall in the harbour. I would not stop there again.

From Matane, we went on to Sainte-Anne-des-Monts marina where we were again weather bound for a week as a series of easterly gales blew down the St. Lawrence towards us. Winds were clocked consistently at force 7 with gusts to 8 while daytime high temperatures seldom exceeded 10° Celsius. Fortunately, there is a very nice café and bakery close to the marina which offers excellent bread, pastries, and coffee. It provided a welcome refuge from the inclement weather.

Some boisterous sailing for us as we rounded the Gaspé and began to head south. At Beaufile, we rested and prepared for an overnight passage into the Northumberland Strait and on to Bouctouche, New Brunswick. From there, we crossed the Strait and visited Prince Edward Island at Summerside and then continued on to Nova Scotia. After stopping in Cape John (a great little marina) and Caribou Harbour we entered Pictou, Nova Scotia. In Pictou, we rested and played tourist. I can attest the fish & chips at Sharon's restaurant is superb; the products at Grohmann's Knife factory of the highest quality.

A little more travelling and we arrived at the Strait of Canso and Port Hawkesbury. The latter is an excellent stop for a cruising yacht in transit. Supplies, fuel, and so forth are readily available. The local yotties are extraordinarily friendly and helpful.

So, the cruise continues. We've had some grand sailing, some challenging weather, some good times, and some difficult times. All perfectly normal.

I haven't felt the urge to maintain a journal; for that, I apologise to my followers as I know some of you enjoyed my prose in the past. Not to worry, there's still time. I've made some use of Twitter (@saorsaii) to send out photos and very brief updates. Those of you interested might want to follow me in that medium. I've also managed to get a few photos put up on my web site.

I remind my correspondents that there continue to be crewing opportunities available for various portions of this cruise. I encourage all who are of good moral fibre, strong back, and adventuresome spirit to contact me directly if interested.

In return, you'll find adventure, hardship, good food, strong drink, charming companionship, and wonderful memories.

Yours aye, Bill  
(aka Captain Zaphod)

