

4 June: Fast and Furious

[Posted from Licata, Sicilia, Italy.](#)

Actual route taken

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[map style="width:300px; height:300px; border-radius: 6px 6px 6px 6px; box-shadow: 8px 8px 8px rgba(0, 0, 0, 0.75); border: 2px solid white; padding:0px" mapttype="HYBRID" gpx="http://yachtoboe.co.uk/yachtoboe_gps/2013 Season Passage to Sicily.gpx" download="no"]
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[source: GeotagPhotos.com]



Licata, Oboe's Sicily Base

It wasn't until Sunday, 2 June around 1600 hours that we were able to leave Porto Corallo at the south east end of Sardinia. Even then, the winds still blew a constant 20 kts and gusted higher than that. However, the big difference was that, at long last, the forecast was for this extended Maestrale to abate within 24 hours or so. Now, well behind schedule, we had decided to head to Palermo, to allow plenty of time for the team to catch their planes.

We slipped lines and were blown off the quay and this time preferring the genoa, we ran dead down wind in building seas, corkscrewing quite uncomfortably as the 2-3m waves lapped at our stern.

It reminded me of the Atlantic crossing of 2008, so much so that I came out in sympathy with a bout of sea-sickness! Despite this, the roller coaster ride was one of the best sails I can remember for a long time and everyone had big smiles. I tracked our route with a new little app on my phone and you can see the line we took above. It wasn't direct but there was a degree of method in our

madness. Firstly we headed due east to allow the stronger winds to drop south for 10 hours or so, before setting a course directly for Palermo. A little way into this new course, however, it became clear that we were going to be able to maintain at least a 7 kt average speed and that meant that our original destination of Licata, a good deal further south on Sicily, once again became viable, with sufficient time to get back over land to Palermo airport. So a course adjustment to starboard took us onto a fast reach and a more stable angle altogether and there we stayed until 24 hours after our departure we sighted the Egadi Isles lying off the northwest tip of Sicily. Several hours later, as night fell, it was as if someone simply switched off the fan. The winds, which had been so much part of everything, died away and with sails furled, we entered our final night watches as we gently motored down the coast of Sicily in calming seas.

Licata appeared out of a misty dawn and a Rib came out to meet us and escort us to our new berth; with not a breath of wind. Safely moored, we sat quietly soaking up the peaceful misty morning.

Nigel, Steve, Stephen & Michael