

"NORSEMAN", Walti's notebook, part 6



A new anchor chain for the "NORSEMAN" was long overdue. But the old, totally rusted one is still in operation and still useful for the time being, rust or no rust. Then came the problem with the anchor, which was not able to hold the ship firmly enough in the sandy bottom in strong gusts of wind - remember that?

The sorry state of the anchor and the totally rusted chain

That's why the crew started talking about a 13 chain, stronger and heavier. I intervened and drew attention to a major conversion. The anchor winch's chain sprocket would have to be modified accordingly and it was questionable whether the 24-volt DC motor would still have the power to recover the 13 mm chain from a depth of 40 meters. In addition, the conversion would require at least one week of dockyard time, which is hardly possible during the fully booked season. This problem has therefore been shelved for the time being. In the meantime, this discussion has become superfluous after using the new anchor, the 10 mm chain is sufficient! Now and again, problems are solved in a simpler way.

I asked our former supplier in northern Italy for a quote for 100 meters of anchor chain, 10 millimeters thick, calibrated, i.e. each chain link is standardized, hole size 28 millimeters and hot-dip galvanized. I reckon with costs of +/- 1'000 Euro - si vedra? The answer comes by return mail: "Chiuso per ferie fino 25. di agosto".

The Italians are known worldwide for their "forging" of anchor chains. It goes without saying that the individual chain links are now bent by machine, fully automatically, interlocked and "interlinked" and electrically welded. There is no longer a man standing at an anvil bending red-hot round steel into chain links by hand.

Monday, September 02, 2024

The company RIGAMONTI apologizes for the late offer due to company vacations and I find it attached. My estimate (+/- € 1000) was not that bad.

The quotation includes VAT and transportation

1'105.53 Euro.

Ordered in Hamburg, it would have cost € 1,320 without VAT and without transportation to Elba.

Since the contents of our pirate treasure chest allow for this edition, I can order the anchor chain, yay!



Tuesday, September 03, 2024

via WhatsApp:

Caro WALTER, grande problema! Un Topo (a rat) has apparently sneaked on board at the mooring. But we only discovered this when we were already out at sea.

Answer Walt:

Caro LUCA, I warned you to always put rat traps on the mooring lines in the harbors and moorings. Now you have to set at least 2 traps, and not with bacon or cheese, but with a juicy slice of apple. I know from experience that you should have caught the rat in 2 days at the latest!

Reply LUCA:

Unfortunately, the rat nibbled on Skipper LOSAN's feet during the night. He can no longer his feet due to his paralysis. We were therefore forced to return to the berth with the boat. Asking the guests to disembark and hiring a rat catcher - even that?

Friday, September 06, 2024

Via WhatsApp:

Buon giorno WALTER! Fortunately, the rat has been caught. However, the "NORSEMAN" will not be in action next week and will therefore remain stationed at EDILNAUTICA's berth. Thank you very much! Hope to see you soon, LUCA!

Some of you will remember experiences with a rat on board. Especially when staying overnight in fishing harbors (e.g. in Porto San Stefano), there is a great danger of picking such a clever furry animal as a stowaway. Rats walk agilely over the mooring lines on board or even climb up the anchor chain from the water.

The cook, in particular, is the first to take notice. Sometimes an egg was nibbled on, the next day a fruit in the bowl on the table. Even the curtains in the living room were not spurned and gnawed on.

Sooner or later we caught the constantly voracious rodent every time and the relief was always great.

Of course there were rat plates, made by me personally, on board in my day. But just like so many other things that have gone missing.

I'm going to get 4 rat plates, because there aren't any on sale here. Wednesday,

September 18, 2024

LUCA happily informs me that the new anchor chain has arrived - wow....! I will examine the shipment and take some photos as proof.

Of course, the new chain will not attached now, but only in the course of the winter, so that it can be inaugurated at the beginning of the coming season. First, however, new distance markers with different colored electric wires have to be woven into the chain links.



The new, 100 meter long, shiny anchor chain!

Depending on the anchorage and water depth, the captain always determines precisely how many meters of chain should be deployed. One of the main points on my wish list can now be ticked off.

Perhaps you remember the photo of the compass handover to LUCA in my first report? This was on the occasion of the "resurrection" and first launch of the "NORSEMAN". When I took over the ship in 1981, I dismantled the more than 100-year-old "signpost" for navigation by magnetic disk and replaced it with a more modern and, above all, clearer SESTREL compass. GPS navigation for civilian purposes did not yet exist at that time. I carefully kept the "Bussole d'Epoca", the noble old compass, at home in my collection until the day it was handed over to the new team. It no longer looked nice and had some minor defects. But the fact that the original compass was to be returned to its original place was much more important than its appearance. Nevertheless, it still bothered me every time I visited the ship.

When the "NORSEMAN" returned to her berth at the shipyard because of the rat story, I had the opportunity to unscrew the compass and give it a cosmetic treatment in my small but reliable workshop.

It's a bit of a shame, but the long-standing patina and verdigris on the copper and brass had to be removed.

Using the pneumatic turbo sander and a fine steel brush, I carefully cleaned the entire compass housing until the shiny metal underneath was revealed again. I also managed to repair or remake all the defective parts. It wasn't manpower that was required, but rather patience and enjoyment of the work.



From OLD ...



made NEW again!

This old wayfinder was illuminated at night with a small petroleum flame on the housing attached to the side. Taking advantage of modern electronics, I built a tiny little LED light into the housing, which is powered by mini solar cells at the top thanks to the sunlight. Hardly anyone notices this modification, but the inside of the large compass cover is discreetly illuminated all night long.

September 26, 2024

Various discussions with the crew revealed the need for various small items that would be very useful for the upcoming winter overhaul of the ship, but would require a considerable amount of money in total.

I checked point by point and drew up another shopping list based on what was in my/our pirate treasure chest.

This includes various products that would be very difficult or impossible obtain here. Each of these products is intended for a very specific job.

From the unattractive-looking, corroded tap on the small washbasin opposite the toilet, the missing rat plates, deep penetrating protective wood varnish to 2 new, strong mooring hawsers on the stern, etc. etc. The order is (still) affordable and I have been able to submit it as an order to TOPLICHT in Hamburg.

October 08 or 09, 2024



The high regard in which "Diversamente Marinai" is held for its work is demonstrated by the publicity in the town for the annual charity event, this year in aid of the association with the "NORSEMAN".

The organizers are calling for a large number of people to come and taste the delicacies and drinks on offer in the streets of the old town on the evening of 9 October.

The entire proceeds of this event go a different charitable institution every year, this year, as already mentioned, to the "Behinderten Seeleute" (disabled sailors).

All the food and drinks on offer are donated by local restaurants, traders and businesses. The prices listed for the respective consumptions are more symbolic and can be increased or decreased as the mood takes you.

A music band and a disc jockey provide the musical entertainment and atmosphere in the narrow alleyways. Long wooden tables are set up everywhere, barbecue fires blaze and pans and bowls with the menus on offer tempt you to nibble.



Lively hustle and bustle until midnight



Delicious dishes

Exuberant atmosphere



Dj music



The street party lasted well past midnight and the weather also played along well at the event, in stark contrast to the (rainy) day originally planned for it. But the Italos don't need to be taught how to improvise. In the event of bad weather, they simply crossed out the day originally specified and replaced it with a sticker with the new date.

Monday, October 14, 2024

As announced by the DHL carrier in a short text message, the ordered goods arrive reliably from Hamburg.

The two heavy packages once again contain valuable material for many hours of work on the ship during the winter months. Of course, the rat protection plates are also included!

With the transfer of these goods to the "Workshop boss" GIANCARLO has thus completed my/our first major help in restoring the "NORSEMAN" to its former beauty for this year.



Thursday, October 17, 2024

At the end of this first and very successful season with the resurrected "NORSEMAN", I am invited to dinner by LUCA and GIANCARLO and their wives. With no one around to disturb us, we have time to reflect on the past few months. Apart from a few incidents (anchor story, clutch disk and rat on board), I only heard happy stories.

The "Diversamente Marinai" season in cooperation with LEGAMBIENTE and its new flagship, the "NORSEMAN", was a complete success for everyone.

There are already new plans for 2025. The season is to start as early as April and an extension of the weekly cruises to Capraia and Monte Cristo (!) could, no, is an option.

Last but not least, my and your help is greatly appreciated. All beginnings are always difficult, but to lift this story, a neglected Bringing a 102-year-old wooden ship back to a successful cruising season within months is a more than commendable feat. It's unbelievable what disabled people are capable of!

And with our great help, we can claim to have made a significant contribution to the external "appearance" and safety of the "NORSEMAN".
