

ALCHEMY HARBOR NOTES:

These notes were written by Dick and Ginger on Alchemy and reflect our personal likes and dislikes. Many reasonable people may differ. Our intention is for these notes to be a supplement to the regular guide books. There is some overlap, but if the guidebook says it all, I may not mention the port/anchorage at all. Please also notice the dates for which we are reporting conditions. The weather/crowds/ambience may be quite different at various times of the year or my notes may be quickly out of date; please send a quick email with changes.

Thanks, Dick & Ginger, s/v Alchemy

NORWAY, north of Sognefjord to the Lofotens (mid June to mid Sept., 2014)

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1. Norway general information:

1. Phone numbers: maritime emergencies = 120, police = 112, ambulance = 113. Please confirm for yourself.
2. Cruising the Norwegian coast is not for the inattentive. It has many rocks and islands; in addition it has ocean swells in the outer parts, predictable tidal changes and current that can be unpredictable in addition to wind made unpredictable by the terrain. The rocks, however, are usually easy to see (and avoid) in the generally very clear water so one should not hesitate to go poking around. Charts are excellent and ATONs are plentiful. There are a few choke points. Stad is one of them. Please see weather forecast for notes on getting specific info on this area. However, prepare yourself for the joys of sailing sheltered waters.
3. Weather forecasting (for coastal cruising). Mostly we used the usual, Windfinder, Windguru & gribbs as well as the excellent Norway forecasts labelled YR. For wx including wave heights & period, wind, and current flow for Stad (and other choke points) go to YR web site and type in Stadlandet. Wx was generally mild to moderate and we had no gales in our 3 months.
4. Currents were generally not very well predicted by us. Luckily, our ignorance mattered little, but knowledge becomes far more important at the choke points like Stad. Those with much experience said the currents along the west coast is generally N but vary in strength according to tide state (ie slack to N but no or very little S). In among the skerries we found currents in all directions, generally quite light and if stronger, short lived.
5. We used 3 cruising guides: **Norwegian Cruising Guide** by Nickel and Harries (lots of hiking/walking suggestions), **RCC Norway** by Lomax, and **Havneguiden** (can be downloaded with harbor pic s,

diagrams and some English descriptions). They complement each other well. No one guide does it all. There are many duplicate harbor names so if you look up a harbor, make sure it is the one you want information about.

6. We bought paper charts at bookstores in Norwegian towns and felt it was money very well spent. Traversing the skerries with them in hand felt much more secure than e-charts (or in conjunction with e-charts). Moreover, daily planning was far easier and enjoyable with paper as they were more detailed and less “cluttered” and so easier to “take in”. It was easier as well to find good anchorages. Finally, there are a source of wonderful local knowledge, some of little practical use, but just delightful to see on a chart. A local answered Ginger’s question about the names in italics along the shore line and she was correct in her guess: these were the names of the farmers who had homesteads in these parts. Many are now the summer homes of the grandchildren of these farmers.
7. Rafting in marinas is common and not usually a problem in these fairly benign summer weather areas. However, it has been my experience that other sailboats can be quite inexperienced and/or cavalier about rafting techniques, especially in staggering masts to preclude any possibility of crossed rigging. Norwegian flagged vessels were very accommodating, often leaving fenders out on their free side. Some vessels, usually foreign flagged, left inhospitable dinghies on the side of their boats which could make things difficult if their vessel was left unattended.
8. The smaller pontoons often have anchoring chains or ropes coming out from their ends and sides: sometimes they can be well clear at HW but a problem at LW for deeper draft vessels. We learned to make a habit of looking for them which was generally easy to do in the clear water.
9. A good road map of Norway helps to orient you, and is also a joy to peruse. Note the parallel dash marks that indicate some of the numerous and very long (13 mile) tunnels that Norway has become so skilful in building.
10. We got a Telenor sim card at a store in the Kristiansund mall; the card was not cheap, but for 10 NOK (~\$1.60) per day we had unlimited data (though it slows down after 250mb) using our iPhone as a hot spot, as well as reasonable phone and text. Telenor is the most widespread cell service in Norway we hear.
11. Generally, many stores, including chandleries, close at 1400 on Saturdays and few stores are open on Sunday. The exceptions are grocery stores which seem to have longer hours and are often open at least some of Sunday. Further, some services/museums/etc. consider the season to be closing down after the first or second week in Aug when the kids return to school. Not sure when the “season” starts.
12. In the Lofotens, we found biting “horse” flies (the big ones that go by many names), especially when out hiking. We were told it was an exceptionally bad year for them. Cooler weather made them disappear as did bug repellent with 20% DEET. Mosquitoes (and other flies) exist, but have not been a problem. Nothing much seems to venture below decks so we have not needed screens.
13. We have done much cross country/off trail type walking and have seen no sign of snakes (black adders do exist here). We have not heard of worries about tick born Lyme disease, though it is supposed to be present.
14. Hiking maps are always fun and useful. The Lofoton Turkart 1:100,000 is especially useful as it gives many of the better trails and a good overview. More large scale maps with many more

trekking trails are readily available. Many hiking trails are on the paper charts and in the Kystatlas (chart books).

15. Electricity is frequently available, even at the more modest pontoons (a 2 prong EU type “household” plug going to a regular EU shore power 3 prong will be necessary at times). It does, however, always read reverse polarity. This occurs even when I insert my reverse polarity adapter which I made for just this problem. Frequently I also read a ground fault. However, all equipment seems to work fine. The explanation is more than I want to (or am really able) to attempt.
16. For those like us who have gotten to depend on the long lasting UHT boxed milk, it is not to be had in Norway. We did not find it hard to find milk regularly, though.
17. Propane gas: Esso fuel dock in Rorvik says he can do many foreign bottles with his adapters (Calor) and can do US bottles. We got our Camping Gaz bottle (he was unsure about other bottles) filled in Svolvær (in the Lofotens) at the campground west of town (see harbor notes below for details). Other possibilities undoubtedly exist.
18. Weather: we had an exceptionally warm and sunny season. Please take this into account when we mention swimming above the Arctic Circle in the harbor notes.
19. We attempted to join the RS coastal rescue service, but for a long time were thwarted by their insisting on payment by bank transfer. After 2 months we finally succeeded at the Alesund RS station; they have a shop and they were able to take our swipe credit card. Please note that the RS is more than an emergency rescue service and, we have heard, will dive on fouled props, and other service related problems.
20. Those who know us know we are proponents of second and third level tourist destinations. We feel they are often of equal (or close to) impressiveness while having far fewer crowds, vendors, bus tours etc. which makes them in aggregate far more appealing. Two examples of this stand out: The mainland fjords north of Boda were empty and delightful while the Lofotens, although quite marvellous, were quite busy & touristy. The other example was the fjord leading to Oye (see below) as opposed to the fjords leading to Geiranger. We found Oye a fabulous destination and overall spent 5 nights there, while Geiranger fjord, also quite fabulous, the destination at the head was just plain a tourists trap. See note under Alesund for how we did Geiranger.

2. North of Boda, east of Lofotens, south to north, July:

Kjerringoy:

Rafted up at this well organized busy guest pontoon, resort and former major trading town (a guide said it had Hanseatic connections through Bergen). Swam off boat as water was warming in the quite warm weather we were experiencing. The museum was fun and there are English tours of the inside of the house (a bit rushed). The history of the area was certainly fascinating. There is a pleasant path along the shore, not immediately obvious, to the museum.

Indre Vettoysundet:

Lovely anchorage. Wind came up a bit at night and, because of terrain, came from multiple directions. More disconcerting than a problem, but might not be great in a blow.

Korsnes:

There is no viable guest pontoon. We anchored in the middle of the harbor and went ashore where we found a summer community and a museum. The museum was only open two ½ days a week. We walked down along the shore road (1.5km) to the trailhead for the petroglyphs (obvious sign) where we found a pleasant walk of 1/4km up onto the lovely open rock hill we had been passing. The life-sized petroglyphs (9000 yr. old) were terrific, unusually executed and exceedingly artistic.

Ornnes:

Charts read a deep anchorage, but we found good holding in 15m off the beach to the NE. Fabulously beautiful anchorage with fascinatingly shaped rock walls towering all around. Water was 20 degrees so swimming was a joy. Sami (Lapps) used to set up their summer camp near the beach, and the red buildings nearest the anchorage used to be a farm. At LW one could not get a dinghy to the compound of summer houses; we left ours on the N side past the old farm where things start to shallow up. Lots of moose/elk tracks.

We walked to the mountain lake out behind the cottages. Follow the path out behind the houses and within a couple hundred meters there is a map/sign indicating a nature preserve. At the top of an incline there is a junction at a big rock--take the right hand trail (left hand trail is faint) to the lake where there is a great picnic spot and great swimming in the lake. Plan for an easy hike, but there are a number of rivers to ford. We rock hopped in good waterproof hiking boots, but in trainers one would be soaked. A more ambitious hike (we got directions from a local) would take one up the large waterfall near the compound and then traverse across and up through the band of trees till you get to the rocks, and then climb to the visible electrical wire stands above the anchorage. From there you can go along the plateau/ridge N where the huge rock wall is.

Kjopsvik:

Side tied on some quite beat up, but apparently safe, pontoons. No electricity or water nor any obvious way to pay any fee. There is a small grocery store right at the foot of the pontoon which closed 5 minutes before we got there. A 20 minute walk up the hill to the E there are 2 modest groceries. This town is bilingual Sami and Norwegian as so many Sami settled here. There is a good deal of summer small boat traffic from surrounding cottages in the harbor. One fun activity from this town would be to take the ferry down to **Helmeboten** where one can take the hike that gets you "across Norway" to Sweden. We have heard differing descriptions about the difficulty of the hike. We did not go, but a local said that it was easy to go to the south nook and stern anchor and tie ashore (I think he said there are rings/posts) and be quite safe and secure.

Sildpollen:

Anchor in the NE corner off the first sandy bit in about 12m. On 3 sides you get a kink in your neck looking at the mountain peaks which go almost straight up from water's edge.

Lodingen:

Tied up at large beat up pontoon out in the open beyond the marina basin with electricity, no water. Walking to the marina basin later revealed that we could have tied on to one of the 2 hammerheads or gone into one of the guest slips; they were not large enough, but others were making it work when we were there. In the basin was a quite convenient fuel dock attached to a nice chandlery. There was water & electricity in the marina. Town seemed pretty faded, but there were a couple of grocery stores ready at hand. We moved on to an anchorage for the night.

Slattoya/Bukkoya:

Anchored in the S end of the area in about 7+m. Good holding. Very pretty spot and quite different from the fjords with their towering peaks. We struck up an acquaintance with the fisherman whose mooring is in the anchoring area and he made us a gift of the fillets from a 15kg cod and an 8kg sei. Also some frozen dried cod which we are to soak for a ½ day before cooking. That was a good day of fishing for Alchemy.

Hegstadosen:

Easy entrance. The inside anchorage to the S would provide a great spot to weather a blow. Holding was good in 4m of water with plenty of space for swinging and letting out chain. In the skerries approaching the anchorage we spotted a moose swimming to an island and still 1/4m off shore, looking ridiculous with its waving antlers.

Kvannkjosen:

Easy entrance till the last 100 meters where we found a rock where a freeway should have been (W of the main island w/ cabin there was an extra rock--we think--in between the 2 on the charts). That said, it was easy to bypass with someone watching on the bow. We anchored off the "cove" where the picnic table resides in 10m. Beautiful anchorage with lovely pastoral scenery. We read in the Norwegian Cruising Guide that there is a trail across the land to Kongselva on Raftsundet, leaving from the right side of the river. Turns out to be 2 rivers, one at the beach and a bigger one hard to see farther along to the E; the latter is the correct river we assume. We finally found the trail, but it was quite faint and we lost it at least a dozen times where the grass/underbrush was thick. We gave up near the summit of the saddle to the N. It is clearly not well travelled, except by lots of moose.

3. The Lofotens:

The Lofotens were quite crowded and touristy during our July time there. Expect rafting to occur, with boats appearing well into the evening.

Lille Molla, S anchorage:

Wide open, well protected, easy entrance anchorage at base of 500m rock face of a mountain. Anchored in sand, 6 m. Beautiful spot underneath a 300m cliff.

Gullvika, Store Molla:

We anchored in the E basin after easy entrance. Wondered whether some S swell would creep in, but we were as snug as could be. Took dinghy to W basin and went ashore at the far sand beach and climbed up to the trail. First we went N and crossed a lovely bridge only to finally figure that the trail went off just before the bridge; we followed that trail for quite a ways. Then we went S to a lovely lookout, but decided not to continue to the town. Both directions took us past picture perfect lakes. We were accompanied by biting horse flies the whole way (may have been the unusually hot weather we were having), which were primarily a bother if you stopped walking. Water was warm enough (16c) to swim.

Digermulen:

We found space on the pontoon with electricity (no charge for either) and a very pleasant cafe/store with good hot fresh bread. The summer community uses the pontoon in small runabouts, and there was one fishing boat that will sell fish. Not a place for any (or careless) rafting as once every few hours a wake comes through that can really set you rolling. The wakes stopped in the evening. The anchorage just S of town looked pleasant from on high when we were hiking.

We hiked up the Keiservarden (380m) which had some steep and slippery parts but was quite do-able and had terrific views from 3 different "peaks" close at hand on top. Trailhead is along road S a short ways; on left you will see 2 signs, one a pair of household signs and the other to the mountain; the temptation is to go up a driveway, but if you go straight a few more yards you will see a small red arrow. After that the trail is obvious. There are many trail systems in the area and locals called this trail the one for tourists.

Trollfjorden:

We just did a drive by, but the excursion was well worth it. We were tempted to tie at the pontoon and go hiking, but decided to keep moving. This may be one of the more accessible snow fields if you wish to have a snowball fight in mid-summer. Friends said it is very steep but with beautiful views and a wood fired sauna up top.

N-S channels from Atlantic side to Lofoten Sound (N from Trollfjorden and S from Laukvika)

Raftsund and Gimoyssund. We found sailing directions about the current confusing. In practice, we went through around HW and found current (3+ kn for short periods) N bound going toward the Atlantic.

Laukvika:

I found the available harbor directions a bit hard to decipher, but entrance was really quite easy (might be interesting in a good westerly blow, but why would you be there in those conditions anyway). After coming in past outer breakwater go straight till you see the inner harbor and fish port to the right. The guest pontoon is clear of local boats, and there is room for at least 4 boats with electricity, no water seen. Town is clearly a working town and quite pleasant with a decent store, again with good hot fresh bread. Clear indications of the winter cod industry in the impressively large and abundant (with varied

designs) drying racks. Attempted to pay fee, but the number given was to the Svolvær harbor master with no representative in Laukvika, so we gave up.

Henningsvåg:

Major tourist town. Also a major technical climbing gathering place. Guest docks were full so we ended up at the hotel pontoon which was fine while being a bit beat up. Needed a household 2 prong to shore power adapter to get electricity; there is water. Hotel is pleasant and we had a very good meal at their restaurant overlooking Alchemy. Another major winter cod fishing town with drying racks everywhere. We took a hike up Festvagtinden. To get to trailhead, go out of town over the bridges. After the second bridge at the big loop you will see an old foundation at the water's edge and a building foundation on the land side of the road. Here you will find the trailhead. Stay right at trail junctions (the left takes you to technical climbing spots; look to the left for splashes of color on the rock wall--those are climbers) and go up the rock field to a lovely lake (quite swim-able). Continue around lake to CW and the trail is obvious. We took 4 hours, door to door & not moving fast. At 540m the views were great and the top truly felt like a "peak".

Svolvær:

Easy entrance but a quite busy port. We tied on the wharf just the other side of the guest pontoons at the outer end. The end of the wharf was rafted 3 deep, but might be more comfortable as the area we were in was used by charter boats picking up passengers and by fishing boats. The pontoons were filled with medium to small cabin cruisers rafted. We were at a large spring tide of 3m and I think a 2m draft vessel might get in on the end on the pontoons, but it would be a near thing. The end of the inner pontoon would be a better bet but the wharf end of both pontoons looked too shallow. Across the way, the hotel's wharf held a large sailboat, but check depths. The pay station takes American swipe credit cards with no fuss. The chandlery is excellent.

Please put your binocs on the "Goat" in the mountains to the N and, if lucky, watch some brave soul jump from rock to rock. One can get Camping Gas refilled (maybe others) here at K. Paulsen & Sonner (760-70-400), a 30 minute walk out of town (perhaps can go by boat or dinghy). They charge by how much is put in (not a swap), so a top up is possible. Good ice cream at the end of the square (Navrossa?).

Skrova:

Easy entrance from W. Locals had recommended the 1st pontoon on the right as you enter the harbor (no charge)(dried cod stored in buildings next door) and we found good water on the S end for the spring tides encountered. Many side tie possibilities, as well as the guest pontoons which had rafted boats by evening. Local knowledge says to stay clear of side tying near the ferry dock as the buffeting could be severe when the ferry works its way in & out. Walk to town via a tunnel which is a must see even if moored in town. Hard hats are issued at the entrance and there is a quite nice photo gallery inside the tunnel showing the whale fishing industry at work as well as local life. Continue past tunnel a couple hundred meters where there is a trail off to the right with a trail map on it (circle the island and/or climb the hill). The town, with what we assume are many summer homes as well as one

functioning fish factory is very pleasant to walk around. Some trails we followed eventually lead us to a cove/beach where the water was warm enough for a swim.

Hopen:

Easy entrance. We went right into the first small inner basin where we anchored in 8m. The beach to the S just after entry is another possibility, but the sun sets there much earlier. Another lovely spot.

Stamsund:

Rafted off a large wooden sailboat, "a work in progress", which may still be there in the years to come. Decent grocery ready at hand and some interesting art galleries. We moved on leaving some good hikes undone. You get to them by walking out of town N and going up the steep road left and follow trailhead signs, so we were told.

Nusfjord:

Careful with fenders as the pontoons are quite low. We needed a bit of work to get off the outer pontoon when there was a N breeze the next morning. There is an excellent 6 mile hike (round trip) along the S. Shore to Nesford. Start on the gravel shore road and follow signs when the road stops. The museum is quite well done and the atmosphere, although touristy, very laid back and comfortable.

Sorvagen:

Tied up to pontoon and walked to A and went to the stockfish museum, where we learned a lot about cod fishing/preparation etc. The other museum looked fairly interesting as well, but it was getting late. The walk was about 2km along a busy road, but it was about as interesting a walk as a roadway can offer. Small grocery 200m from pontoon.

4. The following are inner lead harbors, Rorvik to Boda, south to north, late June and early July, 2014

Lauvoyvag and Krakoya, anchorages just N of Rorvik (but really part of Rorvik, which is covered in #6):

Lauvoyvag, the anchorage just N of the high wires of Skarvberget were blocked off by a string of orange floats with lines connecting them. The anchorage next to it, the cove in Krakoya, also had a line across that was very hard to see. Both blockages were related to fish farms. We ended up going around and anchored (deep, 20m) and just S of the Skarvberget power lines and W of Aunhl.

Solsemvagen on Leka:

Very easy entrance. We anchored at HW in 8m off the inner buildings in sand. This turned out to be quite close to thin water once the tide went out. The northernmost building had a new pontoon and ramp which the owner allowed us to use for the dinghy. The area is all farms/residences (no shop). There is a cave here with unusual 4000 year old paintings; the parking lot for the cave is up the valley about 1km (look for sign). There are regular guided tours, (+47) 91 77 51 04 (100 kr/person) on Sat. during the season and private tours by prior arrangement for 500 kr. We got a ride to the west side of

the island to see the amazing geological formations and the red rock. Our guide suggested mooring in Skei on Leka where you can rent bikes and explore the island. Wonderful quiet anchorage.

Moyhamna:

Lovely quiet anchorage; one could also choose the far pontoon at the small marina ahead. We walked to Torghatten for the hole in the mountain. It's 4+km along a paved road and then a nice hike up to the hole. Friends dinghied to the campgrounds, as some guidebooks suggest, but found no place to leave their dinghy. It's well worth the hike.

Bronnoysund:

Stopped for fuel. The Esso in middle of town had the owner out in his truck doing deliveries so could not get fuel w/ cash and neither our US swipe nor our UK chip cards would work. Went to Shell at S end of town where we were promised an attendant, but it was not to be. Going N again I noticed the truck was back and we were able to get fuel.

Hjortoy:

Just a stunning anchorage. We anchored in 12-13m in the SE corner with a fabulous view of the Seven Sisters. Took the dinghy ashore for a walk; views from the heights were excellent. The pontoon is labelled private. First anchorage (going N) where we had any other boats for company.

Sandnessjoen:

We met the Hurtigrute ferry here to pick up a guest. Decent food store a few steps away and bigger ones farther out. Stores closed at 1400 on Sat. We heard the chandlery is excellent. Staging area for hikes up the Seven Sisters.

Sila:

We anchored in the NE corner near the moored boats and used the pontoon as a dinghy dock. Excellent walk: go out to the road and look left where you'll see a sign pointing to (?) 2k. Follow this quiet road inland to a lake, cross to S and follow trails. We chose the one that goes up towards the "Sombrero" and got above the tree/bush line and called it a day. Steep but some lovely views.

Nordsfjordvagen:

Leave Aldra to west for some lovely views. The way into this anchorage takes you past some fish farms (where you turn N); here friends an hour ahead of us saw an Orca whale who played with them for a bit. This anchorage and the fjords to it were stunning. This was a favourite for views and a cosy wonderful feel.

Engen, Holandfjord:

Tied to the pontoon with a great view of the glacier. Rafting is likely and it could get uncomfortable, I would think, in W winds. We arranged for a guide to take us on the glacier (Anneke,

post@rocksnrivers.no, 800kr pp) who took us onto the glacier for 2+ hours (whole trip = 5+ hrs) and she provided cramp-ons, harness, helmet and ice axe, all of which were greatly needed. The trip was not for the faint of heart. Glaciers were far tougher than I expected. Do not think you will get on the glacier safely without this sort of equipment. Also, you might be tempted to go under in the many beautiful enticing spots where that is possible, but we were warned not to. The edge of the glacier is a very pleasant 4+km with the last part climbing on the rocks, which can be quite slippery when wet. Bikes are available at the pontoon area to rent (not sure how it works, maybe honor box) which will take you ¾'s of the way.

Bolga:

Guest docks are on the right as you go up the harbor. Boats bigger than 12-13m might try the hammerhead on the left where we ended up because we did not notice the other spaces. On the guest pontoons, it looked like there was only electricity on the middle pontoon and that was up on shore. Great place. Nice people and a decent store and pub/cafe. Near the pub was a map; if you take its picture, you will have it with you. We walked to the hole in the mountain--really very nice, in part as it takes you through varied terrain. We heard you can continue on the other side and go around the island. At the west side of island is a tipping/rolling rock that is really cool: we needed the map to find it. Some people talked about circling the island taking 3 hours.

Sandvika, Sorfugloy:

Easy entrance. We found a space on the W side of guest pontoon. The east side had a big reserved sign, but a transient boat was tied there. Room for 2 boats on each side. This was an impressively engaging group of summer homes, each very delightful in its own way. A terribly pleasant community to stroll about in. At end of town was a steep scree field leading up to the hanging valley. The valley looked very tempting, but we decided to get to Boda that day and so left the hanging valley for the future. We were told there was an easier way up from the other side, but we did not see it as we went N.

Boda:

The guest docks are all the way in and crowded. We stayed on the fuel dock which is also open for guests. We were able to use our UK chip card on the un-attended fuel machine, something not workable elsewhere (at least by us). The laundry machines are very efficient though it took a while to figure out how to get them to work using our American swipe card; there is usually a host or hostess around to help, though not when we were there. The shrimp boats sell fresh caught shrimp (very tasty) off their boats just N of the guest docks.

5. Outer skerrie harbors from Boda to Kristiansund, north to south, late July and early August

Bliksvaer:

Good anchoring observed just N of harbor. We tied to pontoon so we could walk around. There were scattered summer cottages very well kept. The island is lovely. Casual attempts at the designated walks

(trail maps in post box in harbor) revealed they were marked at the beginning and possibly doable, but quite overgrown with thigh high grass.

Rodoya:

The pontoon is fairly primitive and at average tidal range we had just a smidgeon of space under our 2m keel. Open a bit to the E and (on the pontoon), a wee bit bouncy when NE winds stir up things outside, but quite protected in general. That said, anchoring would be quite workable. There is a pub/restaurant and grocery store just a few feet away. Also looked to be some very nice hikes to take.

Selsoyvika:

Two long pontoons for side tie. Choose an inside space for surprisingly good wave protection by the pontoons. We were there for a 20+kn SSEly and were very comfortable. Small general store, but with all the essentials, and a July cafe sometimes w/ music and sometimes a quiz night and an always very nice family running the compound. Pleasant strolling around and what looks like a nice hike up the hunk of rock to the east. Just a very pleasant place to hang out for a bit.

Skagavagen:

Easy entrance and good anchoring for a comfortable night.

Hysvaer:

Incredible area. Anchored just N of the channel. Later saw that the far side of the pontoon at the restaurant was free (a bit rustic). There must be hundreds of low lying islands. The houses stand out for miles. Makes for a rather compelling and eerie sight. There are deep channels running among the islands; tempting to try. Went ashore at the restaurant/pub; apparently, you must make arrangements ahead of time for a meal. Rowed around a few of the collections of houses and saw only one person. Did see the eider duck houses that serve as home and collection places for the eider feathers. Desolate feel; you really feel you are "out there".

Kynnoya:

Noticed that there was a pontoon free so we took a spot rather than anchor as we wished to walk around this exquisite little community. We think we were on the sail club dock and there was a modest fee & electricity. Walking around was limited but very pretty.

Sula:

Another exquisite old fishing village that has had people living here since 1300. Nice short walk up to lighthouse where there are excellent views of the skerries, sometimes hard to get in these low lying islands. Other walks looked good, but we went no further.

Veiholmen:

The visual of Veiholmen if approaching from the N is awesome. Then you come into the entrance (we came from the W) and work your way through narrow, but well marked passages into a keyhole harbor (plenty of room for a boat to maneuver once you get in) surrounded by old fishing buildings and a hotel or two. We tied onto the guest pontoon on the left (under hotel) as you enter. Extremely well protected from wind and swell. Wonderful feel to the town and very nice walks around this part of the skerries which clearly are remote and at the brunt of winter's ocean storms. One of our favourites so far.

6. The following are mostly inner lead harbors, Kristiansund to Rorvik, south to north.

Kristiansund:

What a sheltered harbor. It does not get better than this. Guest pontoon was readily apparent; we needed to raft which was made nicer by a very accommodating Norwegian boat. Town is a 10 minute walk south. Immigration check (we arrived from Scotland) in at the police station was easy (take a number from button labelled "pass" and wait in the waiting room). There are some of the largest, best equipped service/salvage/tow ships I have ever seen anywhere gracing some of the wharfs.

Just a few minutes' walk north of the marina is an old ship yard, Mellemervertet, which has all the belt driven tools, etc. that a yard needed at the turn of the century. Now it is an excellent museum which allows local wood boat owners to use these old tools and facilities and it has excellent examples on their pontoons. We bumped into a curator who took us on an extensive hands-on personal tour with a wonderful running commentary about the cast of characters that made this shipyard so special.

Good walk out over bridge to the old town where there is a small section undamaged in WWII and has some quite interesting buildings. We returned by the ferry which does the circuit of the 4 points around the harbor.

Another lovely walk & view was to go up to Kjerkelandet to the lookout tower and then spiral down and W to a series of paths w/ drain ditches used in times past to collect water. This is a lovely wooded area leading to the reservoirs & back to town.

Valsfjorden:

Ignore the windmills and quarry factory on your way in and you find an excellent protected anchorage on the port side with good holding in 6m with great scenery for 300 degrees around.

Grisvagen:

Easy entrance (in gale force winds from NNW) to this skerry mini-archipelago with excellent anchoring. We weathered a NNW F6 gusting F7/8 in there. Lovely, remote spot. Next day was beautiful and we climbed the rock hill to the south for great views.

Sorjervagen in Sorjerfjorden:

We entered the fjord from the NNE leaving Skjaerbaken (the lone rocks only showed at LW) to starboard and had an easy time of it. Anchored in the middle and got a good stick. Tons of room. Went ashore,

leaving the dinghy at an abandoned foundation in the N end of the bay, and walked around to climb the rock just to the S. Good fun and, once again, great views.

Passage outside the mouth of Bolefjord:

We did not like the look on the charts through the skerries outside the mouth of Bolefjorden of the south side passage (the east part of the Auksundssteit). It proved to be quite straightforward. Least depth seen at about ½ tide was just under 7 meters.

Rorvik:

The 1st pontoon looks separate from the marina, but is a guest pontoon and part of the marina. The next pontoon is where we tied up. Late June and early Aug. there was rafting every night (the museum pontoon was empty). Excellent free wifi from our berth towards the shoreside end of the pontoon. Good to very good supplies for the boat close at hand. The Esso station at the end of town fills propane tanks; it had different attachments and was willing to try other countries (yes to American) bottles. He also had a small pontoon where diesel was available and pay with cash (our cards did not work). Every night at 2020 the Hurtigruten ferries, one going N and one going S, tie up, their one destination where they overlap. They are very impressive and fun to watch. The museum is good and, if requested ahead of time, might be able to set up an English tour. It has a pontoon with at least 2 spaces right off the channel which one can use if visiting the museum (and maybe stay for the night). The museum has a restaurant which friends say gave them the best meal they have had in years (others confirm). We contacted the cave painting guides (on Leka) directly after being told at the museum that the caves were closed. The phone number is (+47) 91 77 51 04.

7. Kristiansund to Stad, north to south (Aug, 2014):

Haholmen:

We went in from the N side as described in the Norwegian Cruising Guide; the entrance was straightforward if not straight. There was lots of room on the pontoon (watch for an underwater rope off end of long pontoon from shore). It's a delightful comfortable compound with the replica Viking ship that the original owner actually took around the world. Lovely strolls available around the island and a great looking pub.

Ona:

Easy entrance from SE. Some of the wood fronted wharf space far in on the starboard is available if the pontoon is filled. Look for the cone-over-ball day signal hanging up on the hill, remnant of the pre-radio past when ships at sea needed to know whether harbors were open and/or gales were forecast. Nice walks around to the various points. Be sure, if you go to the cemetery, to notice the raised beach (group of small round boulders) 100m before the graveyard.

Alesund (or Aalsund):

Easy entrance. There are 2 sets of guest pontoons. The first set is exposed to the entrance where a N swell does bounce in, but we sat out a 25+ kn northerly quite comfortably. The deeper in pontoons are far more protected and nestled in the cradle of some lovely old buildings, but you are more likely to attract rafting inside. Both are obvious. There is a pay toilet (5 NOK) in the kiosk right on the other side of the tourist info office, and also below the kiosk (10 NOK) where you pay the mooring fee. Alesund is a good place for guests as there are connections to planes, buses etc. with a number of interesting sailing destinations to choose from depending on the weather. The Alesund Museum is very good, lots of war history as well as local history and boat models, especially an egg shaped "lifeboat" that sailed across the Atlantic 100+ years ago. Find also the tunnel (well below the museum) with lots of old photographs. There is also a Shetland Bus memorial near the harbor.

Trails: There are nice walks in the park to the east on top of the hill. Good views. The stairs are closed for repair, due to reopen in 2015. Maps are near the entrances. We also took a bus (618) to the trailhead for the climb up Sukkertoppen; the tourist office has a map. The bus lets you off on the main road just past a Y intersection; the bus driver will tell you where. Go up the upper road of the Y and in 50-100 meters the trail goes off on the right, marked only by a small sign. Once on the trail, the way is clear and the views are lovely. Many locals were climbing it on a sunny Sat.

Excursion: To get to Gerainger we took the Hurtigruten ferry to Gerainger and the bus back. The ferry was a wonderful treat and the bus back allowed us to see the top of the fjord and some of the countryside. Again, the tourist office has info.

Oye:

We were often the only boat on the pontoon. We had 10+ NNW and were very comfortable. Anchoring would also be very easy & safe in moderate depths. The fjords are magnificent and the waterfalls after 2+ days of deluge were stunning. A fabulous place with great hiking.

The Oye Union Hotel is a gem, a hotel right out of Agatha Christie novels. We had drinks there the first night, which was rainy & cold, in front of a warm fire (Local Slogen beer was excellent). We decided that this would be our Norway dinner splurge and went there the following night for a superb meal. At 10:30 many nights they have a small story-telling about the hotel and the region which they did in English for us. It was most enjoyable. Ask to see Kaiser Wilhelm's room that still has the bathtub he brought with him when he would visit for a month filling the hotel with his entourage. Also there is a rock on the third floor dislodged by an Allied bomb intended for a German warship in the fjord. It went through the roof and settled on the landing where it has been ever since. Rooms are named after famous guests.

Trails: One of the pleasantest of the season was a 2-3+ hour trail up the west side of the valley. Great varied terrain. Follow the main road past the hotel and go right on the first smaller road across the river. Take your first left onto a gravel road. The gravel road turns into a trail that is marked by fluorescent pink blazes. At one juncture, far along, you can go right up Keipen mountain or take a left back to the road; we went left. When you get to the road you are just a few hundred meters above a stone bridge from the 1830s. Return by road--downhill. To go CW walk up road past trailhead for Slogen, past the stone bridge obvious on left, followed by a parking lot for a trailhead. 100-200 meters later notice an overgrown road and look for the fluorescent pink blazes taking you in on the right. Follow the pink blazes to the left off the road.

There are also trailheads to at least two nearby peaks.

- Slogen (1560m) is straight up the road 1+km on the left and is marked by a sign. The first part is a climb to a lookout at 300m is marked by paint. The whole climb to the summit is quite steep, and the last bit just before the peak is quite challenging. At 1100+m is an extremely nice saddle where one gets views in many directions that are fabulous.
- Kliepen (1200+m) is reported to be harder than Slogen in places, but shorter. The one cruiser who tried did not find the trail leading to the top 1/4 of the hike. It has its trailhead ¾ along the well marked west of valley trail mentioned above (or enter the trail at the upper end off the road and find the trail head after a shorter walk).

Orsta:

Narrow entrance leading to a left dogleg between quite close quartered boats in finger pontoons, and then a right dogleg which opens up into a snug but workable turning basin; Havneguiden has a good chart. 12+m boats on left while shorter boats on right in finger pontoons. Get key for Yacht Club bathrooms at the Statoil fuel station. Groceries right across street. Pleasant and very friendly non-touristy Norwegian town. We were unusual enough to be interviewed w/ pics for the local newspaper. There is a tourist office in a small white building north of the new mall.

Trails: Excellent hikes all around. We went up Vallahornet which is the rounder mountain up the valley to the N at 833m. Just go up the road almost straight from the harbor and it is obvious (tourist office will help or ask any local). For the ambitious, right beyond is a 1300+m peak which is the finish of a race starting at the harbor; the winners do it in under 1 hour. Many locals on the trail for exercise and most went to the top. A Norway Trekking Association hut is ½ way up where we had lunch. Water is plentiful in mountain streams.

Runde:

Easy entrance. Visiting boats took slips in the finger pontoon area as well as the guest pontoon in this late Aug period. Bathrooms/showers are in the fancy building (conference/community center) about 150m to the right when you hit the road. Map with trails on the side of the road on the way there.

Trails: There are many interweaving trails at both ends of the island leading to bird watching areas. We went counter clockwise around the whole island taking 5 hours at a slow pace. The campground gave us a map and suggestions for the driest trails and where to find the late Aug. sea birds.

Sandsholm:

Easy entrance and no other boats at this early Sept. time. Good maps for what looks to be some very nice walks and climbs.

8. Stad to Bulandet (just north of Sognefjord), north to south: (Sept., 2014)

Stad:

We had an easy time of it and the YR weather/current report was quite accurate. A 15m steel motor sailor went through the day before with only slightly bigger swell, a day Ginger and I would have considered close to ideal, and was roughed up a bit. Locals treat this stretch with great respect, but strategies differ: a well found ship can just button up and be uncomfortable for a short period by staying in close, or any ship can go well outside, many miles seemed to be suggested, for a more comfortable time of it.

Malloy:

Just went in to Shell for fuel on the E side of the bridge. The pontoon needs respect in 2 ways; bolts hold a fender type material which is nice, but the bolt heads stick out a bit and will scratch paint. Also the N side of the pontoon has a chain going off on the end which hung up a friend with 2m draft. We were on the S side and were fine. Our UK chip debit card worked, but there was no attendant for cash nor could swipe cards work.

Rugsund:

Delightful old trading post (17th C), a bit rundown. Friends anchored in the E end nook and were quite comfortable. We went to pontoon which was not in great shape, but quite workable. Elec. & water. Nice walks. Will open store upon request.

Kalvag:

A very bustling fishing community in this Sept. mackerel season. The guest pontoons had one recreational vessel (ours) and 5+ fishing boats all tricked out for mackerel. Fun to have them so close at hand. The bar/restaurant is very welcoming (especially to fishermen who got ½ price breakfasts-nice gesture) and the town services convenient. We walked up on the hill to the S for some nice views and a good leg stretch; there are more challenging hikes but it was too wet from recent rain.

Floro:

Try to be on the inside of the pontoons as they provide some wake protection from the cowboys running the ferries next door. The walk up and around Storasen Hill was lovely; there are wide gravel paths, but keep an eye out for the little trails off to the S as they are prettier and often lead to nice views, especially the one beyond the big microwave tower. Lots of bustling construction in this industrial but pleasant town and area.

Rognaldsvagen:

Possibly our favourite stop of the season. NW entrance easy. Some swell creeps in from the NW. We first tied to the fixed dock with close spaced boards just beyond the ferry dock. Just before that is a floating metal pontoon that is also available. We moved over to the hammerhead of the pontoon "complex" to the N where there is electricity. Tom seems to be the go-to guy for the pontoon complex and may have to unlock the electricity. He kindly took us across to Kinn where there is a 12th C church, a nice 3 hour hike around the island, and archaeological sites & caves. You can also hike to the

top, 300+m. Tom breeds a type of small sheep with special wool which you see around the harbor. Wonderful out of the way place. The market has good basics, a cafe with great views, and all the people have great stories.

Svanoybutak:

Tucked into a corner with an easy entrance. The pontoon near the ferry dock gets the ferry wash and no electricity while the other has cobble-it-yourself electricity, especially if you are far into the pontoon. Anchoring looks easy. This island has a quite different feel, much more what I call North America North Woods. The market is well stocked, and renting bikes took us across the island to the other harbor, a deer farm, and some lovely inland locales.

Hindoyhamn:

Lovely protected anchorage. Easy in & out, anchor in 10-12m. Seal visits.

Bulandet:

Outer skerries archipelago of flat islands (a few bumps make for nice views). Easy entrance but then things got a bit tricky. We went to the farthest in guest dock. With big boats on the commercial dock it was hard to see the way through and the power line was listed at 18 but we went under with our just under 20m mast by hugging the starboard shore at high water springs with space to spare. But it was a breath holder. The near guest dock is far easier and better set up and closer to things, but it is mackerel season and it is filled with fish boats going out this evening. Nice walking on roads and more bridges than you can shake a stick at. Two paths to look-outs and to a lighthouse. See maps in toilet area or on wall across from Joker. Staged here to cross to Scotland.