

Polish yacht "Solanus" visit in San Francisco Bay Area, 14-19 Nov2010



Only a few boats in the world have managed to sail the difficult, dangerous, and hard-to-reach Northwest Passage.

Now, the Bydgoszcz yacht, the s/y "Solanus" has joined this elite group.

The Northwest Passage is considered to be the most difficult sailing route of the world. It is said to be "a sailing K2." Sailing the icy fjords of northern Canada and Alaska above the line of the Arctic Circle is a test both for the boat, which must be well prepared for such a route, and for the crew, who has to be aware of conditions unique only for these waters. Not only cold poses a problem during that trip, but the unpredictable weather conditions, icebergs, or the ice cap of the fjords melting only on certain distances and only for a short period of time, as well as getting rescue help or limited possibilities of replenishing the food and fuel supplies due to a very sparse population in the arctic circle.

Belonging to the yacht club "LOTTO-Bydgosztia-WSG-Bank Pocztowy", the yacht "Solanus", launched in 1992, has been sailed for many years by the Bydgoszcz sailors, and in the last couple of years has been prepared for this trip. Commanded by Captain Bronislaw Radlinski, the expedition set sail from Gdansk on May 16 of this year. The changing crews navigated the boat through the Danish Straits to the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, through the Shetland Islands, Faroe Islands and Iceland reaching Greenland. Unfortunately, engine failure stopped "Solanus" for three weeks in the port of Ilulissat, where the engine had to be removed to do a complete overhaul. Despite many difficulties, a crew of five including captain Bronislaw Radlinski, Roman Nowak, Monika Witkowska, Witold Kantak and Damian Chorazewicz began the hardest and the longest part of the expedition at the beginning of August.

It took "Solanus" 38 days to get through the Northwest Passage, which is the distance from the entry to the Canadian Straits, in this case from the port of Pond Inlet, to the Bering Strait at the beginning of the Pacific Ocean. After beating about 4 thousand nautical miles (7200 km) on September 19 the boat crossed the Arctic Circle on the Chukchi Sea, a day later, fighting with strong currents conquered the Bering Strait and sailed into the Bering Sea. In the U.S. port of Nome, two crewmembers - Monika Witkowska and Damian Chorazewicz - disembarked and returned to the country. However, the core 3-member crew remains on the yacht and continues the voyage to sail on the "Solanus" around South America - including the infamous Cape Horn - and is going to return to Poland most likely in August next year.

Bydgoszcz "Solanus" is the third yacht under the Polish flag, which sailed through the Northwest Passage. In 2006, the yacht "Stary" and the yacht of the Canadian Polonia, "Nekton" succeeded in that journey, although one should remember that even earlier, in the years 1985 to 1988, three Poles made the successful passage on the French yacht "Vagabond II". The first yacht, which navigated the entire course of this difficult route, with winter layover on the way, was the ship "Gjoa" led by Roald Amundsen in the years 1903-06, and not until 1977 the Northwest Passage was crossed in one season, this was accomplished by Willy de Roos on the yacht "Willywaw".

For information on "Solanus" and updated details of her voyage visit:

www.solanus.bydgoscia.org.pl and

<http://share.findmespot.com/shared/faces/viewspots.jsp?glld=09Vuga0n9q2uCOMHPoJJ4cNjdTI4YB2CA>

For Solanus pics in San Francisco, please visit:

http://picasaweb.google.com/YKPSFO/2010_11_14Solanus#

or

<http://picasaweb.google.com/owczarek.chris/PowitanieJachtuSolanusWSanFrancisco14Nov10?feat=email#>

To learn more about "Solanus" stay in the Bay Area please follow the link to the Oakland Tribune: http://www.conracoostatimes.com/news/ci_16639779

