

MEDITERRANEAN FRANCE & CORSICA PILOT – Rod and Lucinda Heikell, 6th edition. Published in hard covers by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] at £45.00. 400 A4 pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3849-9

It's hard to find good things to say about Rod Heikell's Mediterranean guides that have not been said before. Always returning to the Med after sailing elsewhere, Rod and Lucinda's Skylax is back there again after a circumnavigation, and Rod and Lu are back at work updating their books.

This 6th edition of Mediterranean France & Corsica contains substantial changes from previous editions and is an essential reference for anyone sailing the western Mediterranean. It covers territory from the border with Spain to the Alpes Maritimes and Italy. Divided into six sections, it gives detailed information about Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence, Côte d'Azur (West and East), the French Riviera and Monaco, and Corsica. Most important, although not much has changed about the infrastructure in this region, the authors cover what has changed in the rules and regulations governing mooring and anchoring in the bays and along the coast, where protecting the environment and managing marine reserves has become of vital importance. This will continue to be a major concern to cruising sailors as marine reserves are established, restricting access to safe anchorages.

There is a substantial section on the southern inland waterways, including the Canal du Midi from Port-la-Robine to Les Onglous, La Nouvelle, Etang de Thau, Canal du Rhône à Sète, Beaucaire, Le Petit Rhône and the Rhône (from Arles to Port-St-Louis-du-Rhône). Advice is given on licenses and documentation, hiring boats, mooring and negotiating locks, and there is a reference page showing the signs used on French waterways. Many plans show the channels and places to tie up along the way.

The authors spent the summer and autumn of 2016 cruising in Corsica, then worked their way northwest to the Golfe du Fos-sur-Mer, stopping in many harbours, collecting new information and taking photographs, and adding details to the text. There are many more aerial photos than in previous editions, and important information as to the predominant wind patterns for each harbour and stretch of coast is given.

Naturally, after spending two recent seasons in Corsica that section has been seriously updated. I particularly like the Quick Reference guides, which for Corsica show on one page all the ports and anchorages in order, starting from Calvi and continuing in an anticlockwise direction and providing visual reference as to shelter, moorings, fuel, water, provisions, eating out, plan and charge band (cost). When the wind shifts or a meltemi blows, it could be very helpful to quickly locate an alternate anchorage.

The Appendix, completely up-to-date, offers useful addresses, associations, books, charts and guides, as well as a brief glossary of common French words, including translations of French terms found on charts.

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