

The Fourth Voyage of Lumina - Sept 26

Last leg to San Francisco

Post 11

Continuing down the coast we had a rather uncomfortable night in the poorly named Shelter Cove—one sometimes wonders how it is possible for 12 or so tons of boat to oscillate so quickly from one side to another, but somehow it does! Anyway we left early to continue down to Fort Bragg on the Noyo river where there was another little port. This place was an absolute delight, a narrow entrance between rocky



Narrow entrance to Fort Bragg

headlands led underneath a roadbridge to the tightest harbour we have come across so far. Completely invisible from the sea, the channel led between docks and warehouses on pilings as it twisted to the right and left. Inside past the old docks was a small modern marina where a berth was supposed to be waiting for us. Unfortunately, when we got there, a salmon fishing boat was maintaining his long fishing poles which swing out on either side of the boat, blocking our allotted berth. He though the one next door would be ok and by turning the boat round in the rather tight space and reversing in we were able to save moving all the lines and fenders across to the other side of the boat. Anything for a challenge!



A lovely old harbour with many buildings on piles

The only problem with the place was that all the eating establishments were on the other side of the river and the only way across was the main road bridge we had passed underneath on our way in. Carol chose the one overlooking our berth and booked a table. We now



Continuing the series of meals overlooking ones boat!

have had a series of good meals following this principle of being able to see your boat from the table and it always seems to go down well especially when you tell your server that you came all the way here by your own yacht. As we had passed several potentially unsavoury characters on our walk in, we resorted to trying to get a taxi for the mile return journey, however the potential wait was longer than it would take to walk so we headed out in the dark with the local paper headlines of "Grandparents robbed at gunpoint" etc running through our minds. Of course we got back safely after a very fine meal, if expensive, although at the end of the day we are just reducing inheritance tax for the next generation to pay later so it's a win-win really!!?



Night view of our neighbour and the restaurant above



The coastline at Glass Beach and Fort Bragg's other dubious claim to fame—a slice of one of the largest redwoods ever cut down, over 1000 years old

The following morning out came the bikes again so we could explore the coastal trail. This essentially ran round a large wasteland as big as the town which was the site of the second largest sawmill in the country covering 450 acres. The Georgia Pacific mill closed in 2002 and since then the site has been cleaned up in a way only California could do with thousands of truckloads of contaminated soil being transported two hundred miles to a toxic waste dump.

In an ironic twist, what makes Fort Bragg famous today is its "Glass Beach" half way along the coastal trail. It is quite a tourist attraction with a local industry making jewellery from glass that supposedly comes from the beach. In years gone by the town just tipped its rubbish into the sea, and in the days before plastics, all the organic matter would have rapidly decomposed, the metal rusted away leaving just the glass. An old fisherman on the dock told the story of when he was small they would go there, set the



Both Canada and USA provide plenty of facilities wherever you go together with rubbish bins regularly emptied. So you don't see toilet paper in the bushes and litter everywhere.

rubbish on fire and then shoot the rats as they tried to escape. Today the glass beach is a shadow of its former days as the glass gradually disappears, eroded back down into the sand that it was originally made from whilst people campaign for its preservation.

A couple of days sail down the coast we came to Bodega and the pleasantly named Spud Point Marina. Here we had three nights in to allow our friends on Kairos to catch up. We had previously met them in the Desolation sound area where we were both in a rather interesting anchorage with a very shallow entrance only accessible at high water, the sort of place that puts many boats off and consequently we immediately struck up a common interest. Spud Point marina had all the usual facilities and mix of live aboards, commercial fisherman and other yachts and boats in various stages of dereliction from brand new to just about to sink. With time now on our hands we cycled round the head of the bay to the more touristy side and were met with a very busy twisty road similar to what we are used to at home but a far cry from most of the wide American

Highways. After buying some bread and milk on a store obviously orientated towards the RV park dwellers we headed back to the harbour and the quieter side of the bay. Later we met Nicholai and Daniela on Kairos as they came in to the dock with a few beers and had a fine evening catching up on adventures both crew had had since May. They are heading down to Mexico for the winter so we will be sailing together down to San Francisco.

With the bikes raring to go again we went in the other direction the next day following the inlet down towards the sea. At the point there was a car park with a few people looking out at the ocean for invisible whales and we felt rather privileged to know that out there we see them every day. Returning we stopped to look at a lake which appeared to be man made, indeed this was the case as apparently in the 1960s it was the proposed site for a nuclear power station, however, after a considerable amount of groundwork had been completed, the idea was sensibly ditched due to local opposition and another small issue being that it lies pretty much on the famous fault line, a fact that seemed to have been overlooked!

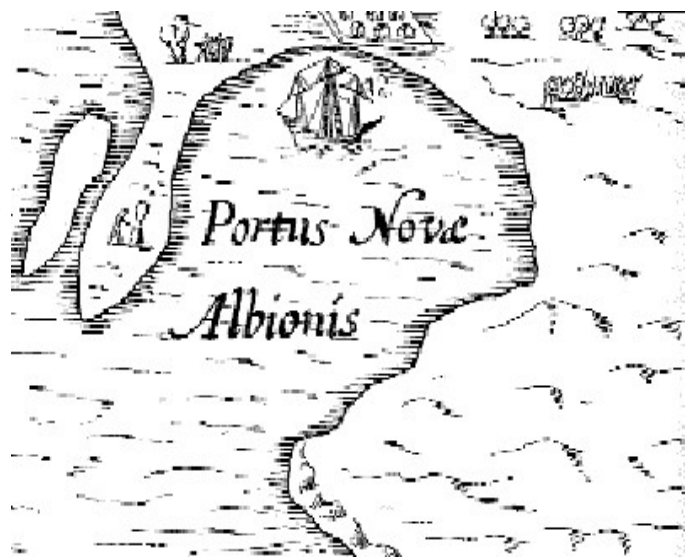


The narrow harbour of Fort Bragg

We now only had a couple of day sails to get to San Francisco with Drakes Bay as a suitable anchorage on the way. This proved to be the best anchorage we had seen on the whole coastline with masses of space away from the pacific swell. In 1579, Francis Drake made landfall in the bay to conduct repairs to his ship the Golden Hind, landed on the 17th of June and claimed the land for Queen Elizabeth I. Naming it Nova Albion as the cliffs vaguely resemble those of Sussex. I thought that as this claim seems to have been overlooked by declarations, notably the recent one just 250 years ago, that perhaps was time that we should revisit our claim. I therefore landed on the shore and hoisted our flag, reclaiming the land for King Charles the 3rd. I am also wondering about contacting Google maps to get the name of this land corrected.



Drakes Bay, then and now



Continuing on we arrived at one of those bucket list destinations for sailors, to sail under the Golden Gate Bridge. With shipping fortuitously absent we swapped places with Kairos several times so each boat could take pictures of the other with the iconic bridge behind. We then sailed into Aquatic Bay, a man made part of the harbour where you can anchor for just \$10 a night. Bearing in mind that this is right in the heart of downtown San Francisco it is truly a bargain. It is limited to 12 vessels and there is a secure place to leave your dinghy when ashore. Our time there was



One of those iconic landmarks for any sailor—Lumina about to sail under the Golden Gate Bridge

an absolute delight, from the boat you could see the Golden Gate Bridge in one direction, Alcatraz island just across the bay and on shore the famous steep streets with the old cable cars running up and down. Ashore you are immediately in the Fishermans Wharf area with all its shops and eateries. Of course we had to sample the cable cars and they didn't disappoint with a couple of trips taken on two different lines. Knowing that the cars are pulled by a cable and seeing that in some places one line crosses another I



Before the Golden Gate Bridge was built the ferry went from here, adjacent to where we were moored and our secure dinghy landing. It was once a maritime museum but sadly recently closed due to the current regime cutting funding

tion driving up the middle of the road.

You could not get much more of a fantastic contradiction when passing by or patiently waiting for this piece of 19th century technology is a driverless Waymo taxi, something that is a piece of sheer 21st century wonderment. Coming from the quiet backwaters of Britain these Waymo's came as a bit of a shock as the city is swarming with them and at first you cant stop looking to see if there is a driver inside. Most of them are actu-

couldn't work out quite how the system must operate, so of course we had to visit the cable car museum based at the hub of operations where all the cables are driven from. I wont bore you too much with the intricacies but essentially the car that is pulled by the cable underneath has to let go and then pick up the cable the other side of the crossing. It is interesting that in this state where often it seems health and safety has been taken to extremes with packaging on products warning of a one in a billion chance of something giving you cancer. Then at the same time on these city roads with crazy gradients you have hundred year old tramcars operated by a driver and conductor pulling on some big levers with no visible electronic safety features. The levers operate the grip on the moving cable and the brakes which consist of wooden blocks that get pressed down onto the rails giving a nice aroma of burning wood on the steep descents. Then you have passengers sitting on open sided benches with more standing on foot-plates holding on with one hand, with the whole contrap-



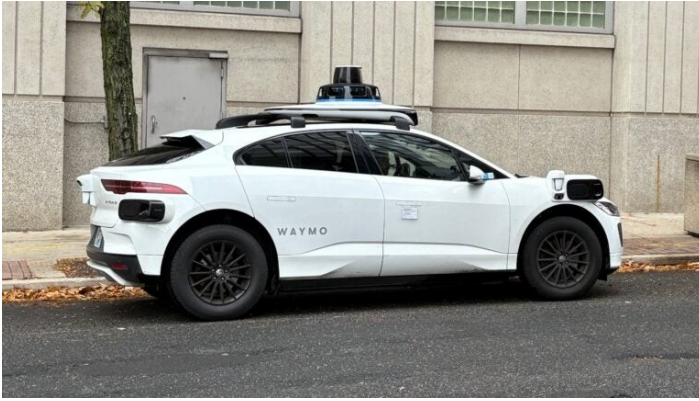
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Jaguar E-Pace cars apparently built in Austria but there are some other even more whacky cars that don't even have a drivers seat or steering wheel. I must say that despite any misgivings one has about them they are really pretty clever apart from them sometimes getting a bit confused occasionally they look to be pretty good at driving. I guess that each of us had to learn to drive and then learn all the other stuff that goes with it, but these things will all be also learning all the time and not only from themselves but from each other as well all the time. They will also have perfect memories of every situation or road feature that every single car comes across. Maybe it is the future after all?



The famous crooked street, you may recognise it from appearing in several films

We now have had a few days left in the marina where



There must be a lot of taxi drivers out of work as there were at least 10 Waymo's for each traditional cab

part of the inland Pacific West Coast as well. When we first started the season I sometimes wished we were off crossing the Pacific with our friends that we came through the NWP with but as it has turned out we have had such a varied time exploring such interesting places that otherwise we would never have seen that I am glad we didn't rush off. We are also in a better starting position being further down the coast so it should make the early part of the Pacific easier next spring when we return.

Lumina will spend the winter before the grand finale of our 2026 trip, a rail journey back up to Vancouver. We had already booked our tickets home before we had our little disagreement with the Canadian Customs and because we had got a cracking deal on the homeward leg to Gatwick it would cost a fortune to change it and so are heading back up by overnight train.

So that's it for the season, nearly 3000 miles travelled with many inlets explored and with our trip to the Rockies by car and the return to Vancouver by rail, we will have seen a good



Best Wishes from Lumina with Tim and Carol signing off for 2026

Tracker for the journey on NoForeignLand [here](#)

Lumina [Website](#) with all the old blogs

The final meal with boat view in San Francisco

