

BUMBLING ALONG

Craig | Joanne | Peanut

Bits & Bobs

- An Italian snorkeler came to the sea with his sunglasses on.
- Craig had a potter day going around Homer tightening screws. He loves tinkering.
- Discovered marina's are a great place for water. The mooring points are empty this time of year but water still switched on
- Craigs decided on his next car...

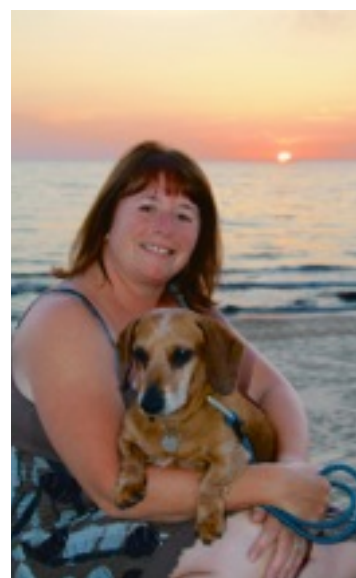


- Jane check out these letterboxes. Not sure if they stock there at B&Q but well cool



Bumble Mode

This week we've hit a patch of sunshine and so we've had a few lazy days beside the seaside. Homer's temperature gauge hit an all time high of 32, so summer is certainly on its way. It is surprising how a few more relaxing days beside the ocean make you wind down a few more notches. Craig is now nice and chilled and quite happy bumbling along in a kinda holiday way - he no longer waves his hands at Italian drivers when they honk their horns, trying to overtake. Either that or the honking has made his deaf as a post. This week we've driven down the shin of Italy and now coming to the end of the shin, so not long before we stomp on Italy's big toe.





Friday 9th May: Agripoli to Santa Maria

Drove a few miles further down the coast to a village of Santa Maria. The drive to the village was really nice with pretty views over the countryside. We are now heading in to Buffalo country where they so called make the best buffalo mozzarella. The road signs have changed from deer to cow. Through-out Italy we have seen deer signs but yet to see any sort of wildlife except little lizards running across the road. Poor

little chaps always look like they are burning their feet - you can just imagine them going ah ah ah in a squeaky voice as they make a dash for the other side of the road.

Its weird, all of a sudden it feels very different. The houses are now in stone, marble or white washed rather than shades of terracotta.

Everywhere seems cleaner and brighter and there is hardly any rubbish around. Not sure if its just this area or the South in general but it certainly has a nicer feel about it. As we approached Santa Maria, Craig spotted a little road to the beach. We turned down and sure enough it took us straight to the beach. There was a little restaurant to our side, on the beach but the owners were still preparing for the summer season, so guess they won't mind us stopping here. We parked up, pulled out the chairs and had a lovely beach day. In between Craig pottered around with his tool box fixing little bits and checking out screws. He was in his element tinkering here and there. I was sun creamed up with book in hand and Peanut under the chair. This is the life.



Peanut got a little hot, so I took him inside for drink. I had a new swimming costume and it still had the boob inserts. You know that awful padded bit that never fits properly. They were uncomfortable so I took them out. Over the years Craig has taught me to not throw things away without thinking about another use. Ah Ah I thought. I grabbed the scissors and a piece of bungee and off I set to work. Half an hour later, Peanut had a little sun hat and mobile butt



cushion. Craig pissed himself laughing because Peanut just looked like Norman Wisdom. I thought he looked pretty cool...what do you think?

That reminds me, this morning we had yogurt for breakfast. We buy the big pots of natural yogurt then they last a few days. Last serving scooped out, so Craig placed the empty pot on the floor. Peanut loves yogurt, so his nose went straight in and he started to lick the pot clean. He came up for air and we howled laughing, he was covered in yogurt. It was in his ears, eyes, everywhere. We tied his ears back with a peg and then he continued to lick every last bit.

Saturday 10th May: Santa Maria to Accrioli

This is a lovely place and we'd love to stay but having so many motorhomes around sort of spoils the seclusion. He cycled in and around Santa Maria and it truly is a most quaint and beautiful place. Its one of those places that has a few select hotels but none of the large chains. Most of the buildings are in stone including the marina. Everything is so bright and clean but yet a good village feel. Little windy streets, plenty of arch ways and shops runs by locals. A fish monger with todays catch and an old chap selling oranges picked this morning. The beach front is crescent shaped and if you follow it around you come to another little bay called San Marco. It is one of those special places that in years to come will be as popular as the resorts on Amalfi coast. Cycling around the tiny streets we came across the Saturday market and its here we lost each other. One minute we were



together and the next Craig & Peanut were no where to be seen. Well no point trying to find them here, so after a toot around the market, I made my way back to Homer. A few minutes later Craig and Peanut turned up.



A very polite policeman pulled up at the side of us and informed us no overnight parking in the square. We acknowledge him and told him we were moving on later that day and sure enough just after lunch we set off/

We arrived at Accrioli marina and what a nice place. We could see a couple of motorhomes tucked in on the harbour, so we thought we'd take a look. There were quite a few 'no motorhome' signs in the town, so we weren't expecting to stay very long but the place was nice enough to have a walk around at least. We pulled up next to two Italian motorhomes and went for a walk around. Lovely marina and once again, quaint little village.



Back at Homer and the Italian motor homers were in full holiday mode. Italian music blasting, kids shouting and dads bellowing at each other. They were having fun and it was nice to watch the families having a good time. At the side was an old chap, who we called Jacque, in tight swimming trucks. He was laid out on the rocks like a big X.



Stretched out, making sure his wrinkles didn't create any tan lines. Every so often he would put on his mask and go snorkelling. It was so funny to watch him check himself out in his car window - by god he loved himself.

We stayed at the marina until about 5pm when two friendly police ladies ask all the motorhomes to move to a car park a few meters away. We all moved and everyone still happy especially as no charge and free water.

The two Italian family also pulled in. Later in the evening, Craig made banana and nutella pancakes for desert. We shared two with the children and I can't tell you how excited they were. its like they'd never had them before and it was the best food

they'd tasted. The mum's even pinched a piece and they also went mad, so Craig made another two for each of the mum's. I was just washing up when the two mum's asked me if I wanted to go for a walk. I would have gone but we'd planned on having a bike ride around the marina. It was so beautiful, I didn't want to miss the sunset with my hubby, so I politely declined. And the sunset was surely amazing and well worth watching.



Sunday 11th May: Accrioli to Palinuro

We left the towels soaking overnight, so Craig went to rinse them whilst I put the kettle on. Next minute our new Italian buddies came round with a cup of coffee. Their way of saying thank you for the pancakes. We didn't like to refuse even though they looked like two tiny cups of black treacle. We took a deep breath. Craig chinned his in one go whilst I took a little sip. Wow that's amazing, nothing like we expected. It was like sweet liquid gold and nothing like we'd tasted before. We must investigate the Italian coffee a little more!

Just as we were settling down for breakfast the two police ladies from yesterday turned up. They were telling everyone in a very polite way that tomorrow is market day, so we'll need to move tonight. After breakfast we hit the road travelling further south.

We headed for a little marina but when we got there is wasn't a place for us. The beach was nice and it was quiet but it had no soul. Just something about it that didn't ring our bell. We decided to fill up the LPG as Marg kindly let us know there was one just around the corner but the station was closed for festival. We're not sure where or what but we could certainly here the drums banging in distance and fire works echoing through the valleys. No LPG we settle for a supermarket shop. €35 lighter but stacked up with groceries and water for the next week.



5 minutes in to the journey and Marg got her right and left mixed up unless of course she wanted us to hit a brick wall. We ignored her and carried on. Another 5 minutes later and we came across a tunnel half the size of Homer. Oh dear looks like we need to find a different route. We managed to find the highway and headed for the next major town. Another 5 minutes later and we turned a corner and oh my god that road is way too steep for Homer. He'll bottom out and rock like a seesaw if we attempt to go up there. Homer shuddered as if to say no way I'm going up there. No choice but reverse (which is not Homer's best gear). After a nifty shuffle Craig turned Homer around. No alternative but head in to the hills

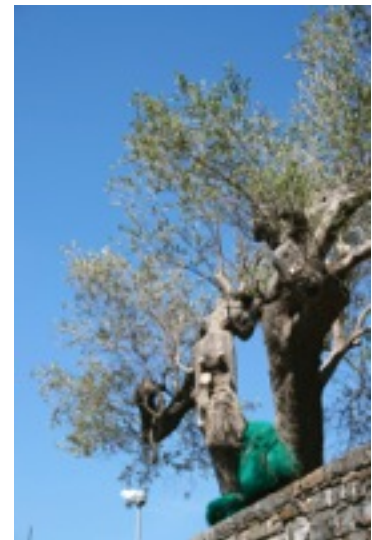


and we did. We wound up and up and up high in to Olive country. The Cilento valley to be precise and it was beautiful and the views over the bay were those kinda views that make you lose yourself in your inner thoughts. No idea what I was thinking but it was certainly relaxing. Until of course I we came to a stretch of road that was missing and we had to slowly creep passed hoping the road would hold for one more vehicle. My toes certainly got a work out today, gripping on to that dash is hard work you know.

I can't tell you how many olive trees are up here but there's a lot. The growers were putting out the nets out to catch the olives and not sure if the coloured nets meant anything but low down they red and orange then mid way green and finally yellow right at the top. We passed very few people or villages and it was so nice to just slowly wind up the hills and admire the view. At the top we stopped at a tiny village to stretch our legs. Probably a dozen houses and a church and of course, half a dozen little old ladies sweeping the church entrance. As we got they said hello and



waved. Binking ek, a welcoming Italian. We couldn't believe how friendly they were - that's not to say Italians are unfriendly but they are only friendly if you make the effort first. They stare but in an inquisitive and not welcoming way, so to have Italians wave is a nice change. As I looked over the church wall, down the street, a middle aged woman came to her door. She



saw me and shouted at the top of her voice "bwon jour no". I shouted back with a wave and she got all excited shouting the whole family out. Really made our day. We stopped off at several little villages in the hills and everyone the same - friendly and welcoming.

The road seemed to go up and up and at one point the GPS looked like a piece of spaghetti. Just a small wiggly line that wiggled all over the screen. Here we go...strap in Peanut we're going on the mad mouse again. At points Homer refused to get out of 1st gear it was so steep. He even coughed a few times, which made more than my toes curl.

Winding down wasn't half as bad as going up and in no time we were back on the coast. We settled for a view over the ocean at Palinuro in the Vallo Di Diano. The beach is pretty nice and from what we can see there is hardly anyone around, so nice secluded spot. We walked to the beach and there were loads of lizards, it reminded me of the time in Madeira. Walking down the hill in a back alleyway with mum and 100's of lizards shot everywhere. She screamed so loud she woke all the sleeping dogs in Madeira. The dogs started howling, which triggered the cats to scurry, which in turn made mum scream even louder. It was the funniest thing ever although I am not sure she'd quite agree.



Tonight we having homemade beef burgers and chips. With Ketchup...Dave!



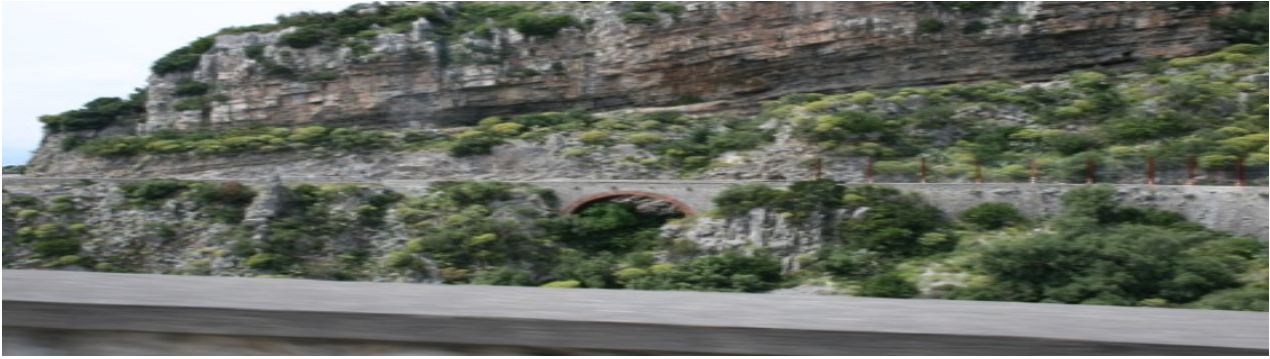
Monday 12th May: Palinuro to Scalea

Today we planned on doing a short journey of about 30km. Following the coast wasn't an option today so we cut through the valley missing the headland. The sheer sandstone cliffs were mesmerising and every so often you could spot a cave just under the ridge. The river bed was nearly dry but I bet in the winter months good place to view the rapids. We spotted a few cattle farms with scrawny grey or white cows nothing like the cubby buffalo that I imagined.

We pulled over to admire the view and Craig started rummaging in the roadside, kicking bits of rubbish with his feet. He spotted a telescopic umbrella and started to recite the uses of a broken umbrella, he could clearly see the look on my face...not impressed with scrap joining us on our journey. I don't know where he has got this sudden desire to rummage?

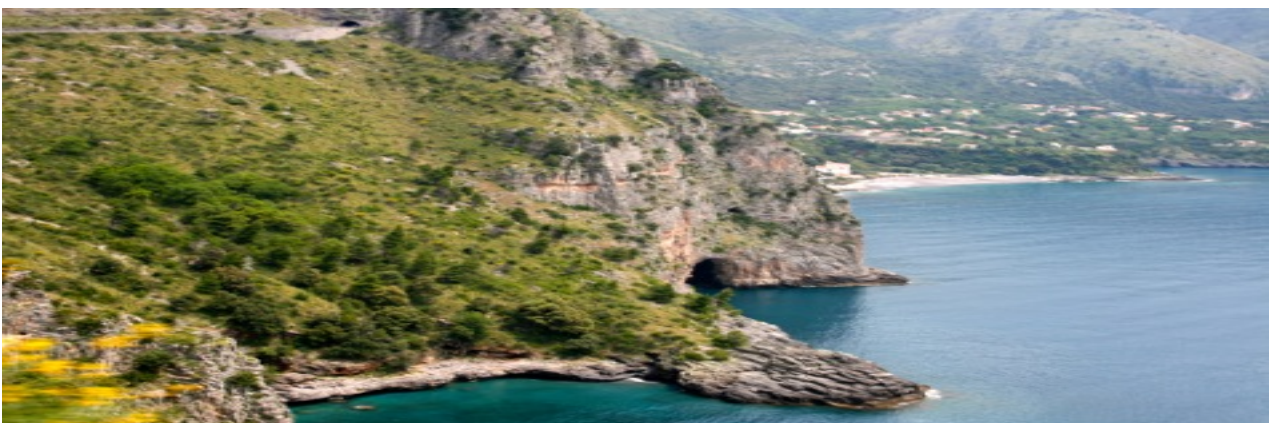
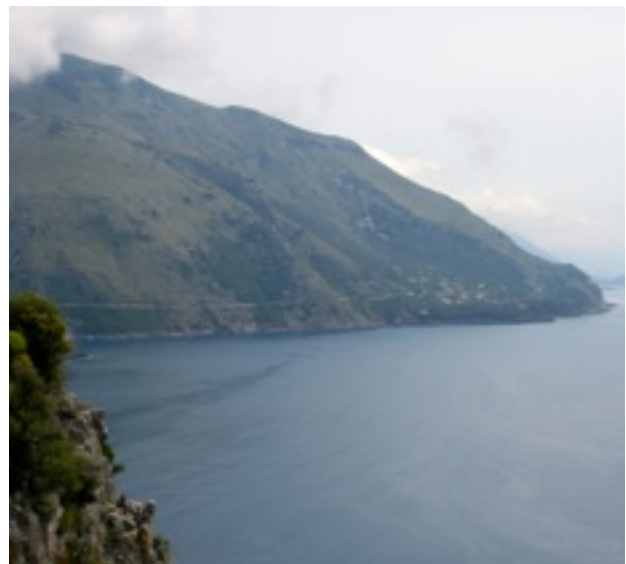
The views reminded me of winnats pass in the Peak District but on a much bigger scale. I just love winding through sheer cliffs, I don;t know why, I just do. As we wound through the valley the sandstone cliffs turned to lush green hills. They reminded me old fashioned jelly moulds. I could just imagine god grabbing a big spoon and tucking into a lime green jelly.



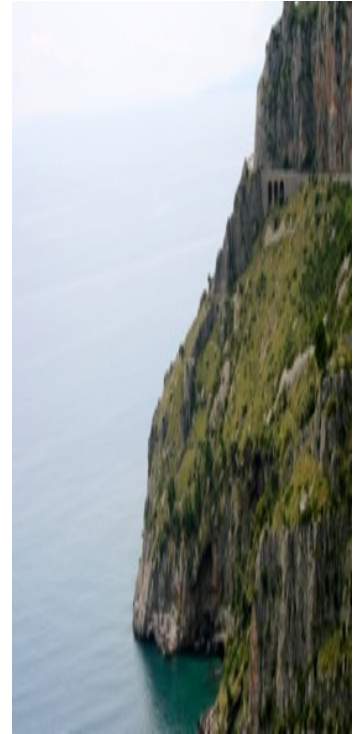


Once back on the coast we pulled in at Sapri hoping to find somewhere nice to stay. The place just wasn't floating our boat, so we pulled on to the side of the beach just to have lunch. As we were preparing lunch we could see a few gypsies tucked behind what looked like the large concrete blocks from a suspension bridge. They had an old estate car with the boot propped open on a broom handle. Inside a mattress and bedding. A chap was lying down on the floor with half his arse hanging out whilst his wife prepared a brew. They were using the insets of the concrete blocks as cupboards and cooking shelves. Needless to say we had lunch and then shot off.

The coastal road turned out to be amazing with sheer drops in to the turquoise waters below. The roads were pretty narrow with tight bends, so lots of go slow and beeping to avoid being hurtled over the cliff by an oil tanker or swerving to avoid a stupid Italian scooter chap. Not that we saw much traffic but when we did, it was hair raising enough to be memorable. We passed some amazing churches and little villages high up on the cliffs. The villages and beach coves were amazing and completely unspoilt. We tried to stop in one of the villages in and around Maratea but Homer was just too fat. As we headed just around the headland we could see Monte San Biagio (vertical cliff over the ocean) with an enormous white marble Christ perched on top. As you looked up your neck ached and I sure hope they've used strong super glue to keep him in place. I would hate to be standing here in a gale, I would



certain feel uneasy. The statue was positioned with its back to the sea and arms in the air, as it looked towards the mountains. At the foot of the statue, a church which could easily be squashed with Christ's big toe. I don't think I've ever seen such a dominant figure on such a beautiful coastline (no photo only video). As we moved further south the landscape became more dramatic and captivating unlike the buildings which just turned to concrete blocks. What a shame to have such natural beauty spoiled by man. We were entering the region of Calabria, mezzogiorno, traditionally the very poor. The area was neglected for many years and many Italians fled, which meant the area sunk in to extreme poverty. You can tell they've put a little money in to the irrigation and the infrastructure but that's about it. It really does feel like you are stepping back in time circa 100 years. The mafia in this region are well known for international dealings in heroin and nuclear waste and considered one of the most dangerous gangs in Italy. Better behave ourselves then!



Apart from locals taking a short break there is very little tourism in the area, so plenty of natural hidden gems to find..maybe. We noticed a few camping areas in Praia a Mare, so we wound down in to the sprawling town. It was like a beach plateau sandwiched between two huge rocks. Lots of craggy features and lush fauna, it was naturally very stunning. Down in the town, a different story. It was like an abandoned holiday resort from 1900's they'd even tarmac the beach right up to the sea. It was horrid town and despite driving around to find somewhere to stay, so we could admire the natural beauty we really struggled. We saw very few people but when we did they looked extremely poor.

We drove a few more kilometres to the town of Scalea and straight way it felt much better. We pulled on the beach front next to the old man's club. As you looked back the town was perched on the side of the hill with wandering streets. Not necessarily pretty but more medieval in its feel, The sunset was the best to date, bright red with pink fluffy clouds. The types you dream of on cold wintery nights. The sunset lit up the town whilst we tucked in to our roast chicken swilled down with a chilled glass of lemonade. We had two chicken legs left over and it made me think of mum's chicken and stuffing buttes, god I used to love them.



Tuesday 13th May: Scalea to Dimante

As I sipped my coffee and debated our next stop. Craig watched 3 workers and their boss try to erect a shower on the beach. Not sure what happened but the boss guy lay down the law and everyone bugged off. Later he paced up and down the beach with one bermuda short leg (just one) pulled up as high as possible. No idea why!

I am not sure I would like to live here but with apartments starting at €20,000 certainly worth considering as an investment. I am not sure you'd get much as a rental home but certainly get something if you're looking for capital growth. Hey we could start our own version of Location Location - anyone need any help out there?

We set off 20km south to a little place called Diamante and it is a really nice beach place. The waters are a lovely turquoise colour and just off the shore line is a little wee island with some church ruin on top. When its dark it looks a jelly with a cherry on top. We've decided to splash the cash and pay for camping. At €10 a day it is worth it because we can get all our bedding and washing done. Its not the facilities but more the pegging the washing out to dry - you struggle to peg out on a public car park. Craig went and did the washing whilst I cleaned Homer from top to bottom. I was like a pig in muck, scrubbing everywhere with my CIF to a few Paloma Faith tunes. I inherited the



desire to clean from mum - sometimes a blessing and sometimes a curse/ Oh take note of our street name.

The campsite is right on the beach but like the rest of Italy...there is hardly anyone around. About half a dozen italian campers who just spend the day running between each others motorhome. Oh one guy rang a bell when lunch was ready. His wife



didn't come straight away, so he rang it again...how bad is that? Anyway, we have a cracking spot all to ourselves and if Homer's stretched his axle really hard he would be able to touch the sea. Just to our right is a little island with what looks like a ruined church on top. No idea what it is but we'll ask someone tomorrow.



A perfect end to a productive day...cocktails at sunset on the beach with my handsome husband. Followed by BBQ before crashing out for the night. Night night xxx

