



North Brittany & Channel Islands Cruising Companion

Update – January 2014

NEW NORTH BRITTANY MARINAS

Since this edition was published, two new marinas have opened on the North Brittany coast – at St Cast, eight miles west of St Malo, and at Roscoff, much further west near the Roscoff–Plymouth ferry terminal. Both are nicely placed between existing marinas, improving North Brittany’s coast-hopping options.

Page 141 – St Cast marina (opened 2009)



Tucked beneath a sheltering headland, the snug 800-marina at St Cast is now a favourite port-of-call in the Gulf of St Malo. It opened a year after this edition was published and had taken quite a while in the planning, building and finishing. The final result is an undoubted success.

Accessible at any tide, the marina has a relaxed atmosphere of carefree summer holidays. You berth below a wooded headland of soft pines and secluded villas, looking south towards a golden beach and curving seafront. An attractive level promenade follows the shore from the marina into town, which has some good shops and plenty of cafés and bistros. The marina has excellent modern facilities, apart from the fuel berth which is squeezed tightly into the north corner of the basin and is a bit of a pain.

Just above the marina you can join a spectacular cliff path and follow the coast west around the long drying Baie de la Fresnaye to a picture-book fortress on Pointe de la Latte and the commanding lighthouse on Cap Fréhel.

Approach and entry

The marina is close south of Pointe de St Cast in the north-west corner of Anse de St Cast, a glorious shallow bay shelving gradually towards the holiday beaches around St Cast seafront. Half a mile north-east of Pointe de St Cast, Les Bourdinots rocks dry 2m and are marked on their seaward side by an east-cardinal buoy.

Most yachts approaching St Cast enter the bay east of Les Bourdinots, heading for the substantial breakwater which curves south and south-west towards the marina entrance. Keeping just east of the breakwater and inside some moorings, you follow red and green buoys right round to the breakwater head and turn in to starboard. The visitors' berths are at the inner end of pontoon D, though you can also go alongside any of the hammerhead pontoons if there's room.

At night: The north elbow of the breakwater has a key light (IsoWG.4s.9/6M). Its white sectors keep you clear of Les Bourdinots and close in you leave the green light to starboard while heading down towards the flashing reds and greens of the approach channel buoys. Rounding up into the marina you leave the breakwater head light (Fl(3)G.12s.4M) close to starboard. Note that Les Bourdinots buoy is unlit and there is no light on Pointe de St Cast.

Page 235 – Roscoff marina (opened 2012)



This new 625-berth all-tides marina was opened to visitors in 2012, though work on the shore facilities was still going on during 2013. The marina is just south of the Brittany Ferries terminal and 20mins stroll from Roscoff town. It will have full services, including a travel-hoist. The fuel berth is on the inside of the north wall.

For the nearest supermarket, climb the short hill from the marina, turn left *away from* Roscoff, then right along Rue Kerhoret for a quarter mile, then left just after a mini-roundabout onto Rue du Pontigou. You soon reach a Casino supermarket, whose friendly staff will deliver heavy bags of shopping back to the marina office.

Approach and entry

You approach Roscoff marina by turning in past the Brittany Ferries jetty and then heading just south of west towards the marina's north entrance gap. Port traffic signal lights (on the ferry breakwater and just north of the marina entrance) control yacht and fishing boat movements if a ferry is about to enter or leave. *Do not* try to enter the marina through its wide south gap, which is littered with drying rocks.

A significant tidal stream runs north-south through the marina on the flood and south-north on the ebb. This stream is strongest near the visitors' berths at the end of pontoon B, so try to enter or leave the marina near slack water if possible, to make manoeuvring easier and safer.

At night: The Brittany Ferries breakwater head has a white approach sector leading in from the NNE (Fl.WG.4s.10/7M) and after you round the breakwater the marina entrance has obvious green and red lights – Fl(2)G and Fl(2)R. A lit N-cardinal buoy lies a cable ESE of the marina entrance.

A strategic location

Boats crossing from the West Country now have Roscoff as a useful landfall, 90 miles from Salcombe entrance or 97 miles from Plymouth breakwater. But the new marina will be of strategic benefit to anyone cruising in North Brittany or working along this coast to get round into Biscay.

This far west end of the French Channel coast has always been rather bleak for passage-making. Even after Trébeurden marina was completed in the early 1990s, you still had a 45-mile haul west past quite a remote stretch to reach the next snug haven at L'Aber Wrac'h. Now it's only a 30-mile hop from Roscoff to L'Aber Wrac'h entrance, with the first few miles through the fascinating sheltered channel inside Île de Batz.

For boats returning from a Biscay cruise, Roscoff marina may be handy if, as often happens, you run short of time or meet unhelpful weather in the Channel. Leaving a boat at Roscoff for a while is safe and easy – the ferry to and from Plymouth docks right next to the marina.

Cruising near Roscoff

The local cruising is rich in Breton atmosphere. Roscoff marina lies in the north-west corner of a grand, two-pronged estuary scattered with reefs, islets and beacon towers, and pierced by navigable channels into the Morlaix River on the east side and the narrower Penzé River on the west. The outer Penzé beacons are just east of the marina and above half-tide you can easily follow the river four miles inland to a sleepy anchorage wafted by the salty tang from oyster and mussel beds.

Just opposite Roscoff, charming Île de Batz has a picturesque village and a mostly drying harbour on its south side. At neaps, moderate draught boats can anchor near the harbour, though the best way to explore Batz is to leave your boat in the new marina and take a day trip by ferry from Roscoff's distinctive long jetty – the low-tide *Embarcadère*.

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