

# MEDITERRANEAN PASSAGE

BRINGING A FRESHLY MINTED FLEMING 78 FROM CANNES TO MALLORCA  
IS JUST THE TICKET TO RECONNECT WITH THE SEA AFTER A BUSY BOAT SHOW.  
BY ALAN HARPER

## *Fleming 78 Langano*

LOA: 81'6"  
BEAM: 21'5"  
DRAFT: 5'0"  
DISPL.: 197,800 lb. (loaded)  
FUEL: 3,000 gal.  
WATER: 440 gal.  
TEST POWER: 2/1,000-hp MAN  
V8-1000s  
OPTIONAL POWER: 2/1,550-hp  
MAN-150  
CRUISING SPEED: 9 to 12 knots  
TOP SPEED: 15 knots



The moon rose off the port bow, and over the course of a four-hour watch tracked upwards in a gentle curve until it hung in the sky almost dead ahead. Its reflection on the empty Mediterranean created a shimmering path leading on towards a clear horizon. Astern, it was just darkness: air and ocean merging into inky opacity. Except—yes—a faint masthead light, far off the starboard quarter, confirmed as a blip on the radar screen at 15 miles. A ferry, according to the AIS, bound for Palma, and going somewhat faster than us. She would pass well to the west.

The 8 p.m. to midnight watch is hard, especially after your crewmates have said their goodnights and disappeared below to get some sleep. But it's not as hard as the watch that comes next. Sitting alone on the flybridge in the small hours, scanning horizon, radar, and plotter, there is nothing much to do but observe the progress of the moon and concentrate on staying awake, which, like reading Proust and plastering, seems to get more difficult the harder you try.

Stepping down into the wheelhouse at the top of the hour to fill out the log becomes a welcome distraction: barometric pressure, heading, course, speed over the ground, wind speed and direction, GPS position, and finally the log reading, a metronomic record of *Langano's* steady progress at 9 nautical miles per hour. Then it's back up to the flybridge. With the instruments adjusted to their dimmest settings, my night vision slowly returns.

Daytime is easier. Everyone is up—whether on watch or not—preparing meals, making drinks, and scanning the empty horizon with binoculars in the hope of dolphins or a whale. Distant ships become familiar companions, remaining in sight for hours. Miles from the nearest land, birds pass over on a steady course, confident in their navigation, and sometimes wheel and swoop, riding our airflow and inspecting our wake.

*Langano* is a brand-new Fleming 78 that is usually moored in Port de Pollença, near the northern tip of the Spanish island of Mallorca. She was delivered in time for the 2016 season after her English owner, a man not only fortunate enough to have plenty of free time but also possessing some excellent ideas about how it should be enjoyed, had traded in his much-loved Fleming 65 the year before.

He didn't actually need a bigger boat, he told me when we met on board *Langano* at the Cannes boat show. But he was getting rather tired of being the sole captain, deckhand, cook, and cleaner whenever family and friends descended during the summer season. The thing about the 78, he explained, was that it had an excellent crew cabin in the stern. That space was now occupied by Gareth, a young Welshman with a sheaf of Royal Yachting Association qualifications, ready to take on whatever task was required.

Now, for *Langano's* return trip to Pollença after the boat show, her owner having gone home, Gareth was captain. Also on board was Will, an engineer from Fleming Europe, and so the three of us were able to run a civilized four-hours-on, eight-hours-off watch system. It's about 300 nautical miles from Cannes to Pollença. In the end-



The lighthouse at Port de Pollença stands atop the promontory that guards Mallorca's northernmost port. Prior to leaving Cannes, the crew enjoys the spacious flying bridge (below) of the largest model from Fleming (below left).





Scurvy is no problem aboard *Langano*, as this generous bowl of limes readily at-tests. Gareth shows us the galley is suitable for social times, as when the boat is on the hook (far right). The crew enjoys a bright morning in the pilothouse.



of-term atmosphere of the morning after the show's last day—and it was quite amazing how quickly the site of a slick, smart, and chic *salon nautique* was made to resemble the aftermath of an earthquake—we unplugged the power cables, slipped our mooring lines from the Quai Saint Pierre, and pointed the Fleming's handsome, flared bow toward the bay.

It was exactly noon. Gareth runs a tight ship, so after a brief interlude to note speed and fuel consumption at different engine settings, he dialed in our course. There didn't seem much point in taking a full set of noise measurements as there really wasn't much to measure, but we did record a whisper-quiet 56 decibels in the master suite at 9 knots, and 60 decibels in the saloon.

There was some wind in the forecast for later, mainly from the southeast, but the sea as we set off was glassy calm, and the red bluffs of the coast began to fade imperceptibly into the haze as we opened the distance. Thirty-three hours to go.

The 78 is Fleming's biggest boat so far, but a fair proportion of the extra length has gone into the crew cabin in the stern. Accommodation for owner and guests consists of just three well-organized but hardly opulent en suite staterooms, and none of them occupies as much space as the positively palatial engine room, which sits dead amidships on the waterline. This is how yachts used to be built, and it's how Fleming owners like it.

The saloon and galley occupy a vast area of the main deck, and here the 78's considerable beam can be fully appreciated. The seat-

ing areas are practical, human-sized, and interspersed with plenty of useful stowage spaces. The wheelhouse is just as comfortable. And the split-level flybridge exhibits the same smart thinking, with a raised helm area, an enclosed seating space amidships shaded by the hardtop, and a long boat deck aft.

One look and you can see that with its hard chine hull and shallow draft, the 78's vertical center of gravity is some way above the waterline, but as a forecasted wind arrived the following day, and with it a swell of 3 or 4 feet fine on the port bow, the TRAC stabilizers did their job and *Langano* felt as steady as the Rock of Gibraltar. That dramatically flared bow mostly managed to keep the sea where it belonged. The thump of a bigger wave was sometimes enough to splash some spray onto the deck, but up on the flybridge we were dry as a bone.

In lowering afternoon light, the faint gray smudge of Menorca passed to port, barely showing itself over the horizon. Then dead ahead the mountains of northern Mallorca, row upon row of them, began to separate themselves from the haze as we made our approach to the Badia de Pollença, and *Langano's* homeport.

It must be one of the world's most impressive landfalls. Gareth pointed out the towering mass of Cap Formentor, which guards the entrance to Cala Figuera, one of the most famous and spectacular anchorages in the Mediterranean. It is here, he explained, that *Langano's* owner likes to spend his holidays. Although barely 10 nautical miles around the Cape from the bustling port of Pollença and its



ALAN HARPER (LEFT AND BELOW RIGHT); FLEMING YACHTS (RIGHT)

partner in the bay, the busy beach resort of Alcudia, the unspoiled anchorage sits amid a giant amphitheater of limestone cliffs and offers an unparalleled haven of turquoise tranquility.

Incredibly, during the summer *Langano* might remain there, gently circling her anchor, for weeks at a time. All the while her owner lives comfortably on board, swimming, reading, snorkeling, and relaxing, using the RIB to commute to the nearby village of San Vicente for supplies, and to pick up visiting friends and family.

It is hard to imagine a better way to enjoy a boat—and with its comfort, space, and solidity, it's hard to imagine a boat more suited to being so enjoyed. □

Fleming Yachts, 949-645-1024; [flemingyachts.com](http://flemingyachts.com)

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE
700	5.7	3.2	4,809
1000	8.2	9.3	2,381
1500	11.2	28.8	1,050
2000	13.4	72.7	498
2260	15.0	105.4	384

**TEST CONDITIONS:** Air temperature: 88°F; humidity: 45%; seas: flat; load: 1,505 gal. fuel, 440 gal. water; 3 persons. Speeds are two-way averages measured w/ GPS. GPH taken via MAN engine monitoring system. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity.

