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Skipper's View

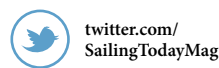
THE ATLANTIC MAY SEEM A CURIOUS PLACE TO EMBARK ON A CRUISE IN COMPANY, BUT THEN SAILING CAN BE A CURIOUS BUSINESS



I WAS OUT IN LAS PALMAS for the start of the 33rd Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, or ARC as it is better known, and I was deeply impressed by the supreme organisation of the whole thing. In fact I went away thinking what a great event it was, although not all dyed in the wool sailors see it this way. I remember talking about it with my friend Nick Skeates, a sailor of some repute who has sailed across the Atlantic more times than he can probably recall. Discussing the event over a few rums, he observed: "Oh I love the ARC! If you're in Las Palmas when it's on then the bin rummaging is second to none. I got two perfectly good batteries and a solar panel last time I was there with Wylo (Nick's boat)."

To be fair, Mr Skeates is a rather singular man with very clear views on what he wants from his sailing. I have, however, heard his views echoed by a few other particularly salty skippers and on one level I can see where they're coming from. The Atlantic Ocean is a peculiar place to undertake a cruise in company. How about Croatia?

Yet, ultimately, we are not all Bernard Moitessier. Sometimes you need someone to hold your hand as you cross the road. I did the ARC in 2012 and, after an endless round of drinks receptions, I was starting to feel the adventure was becoming a bit prosaic. Yet 48 hours out of Las Palmas and skimming before a huge Atlantic swell, I knew these suspicions were unfounded. There was no way the Atlantic was going to let itself become humdrum. I vividly recall the second day out listening to the chatter on the VHF between 'chums' in different boats slowly peter-out. Eventually we were within range of only one yacht, Snugglebums or some such name. For five poignant minutes the crew plaintively called up boats that were now lost to them in the vastness of the Atlantic. The last harrowing call; 'this is Snugglebums, Snugglebums, is anybody ouuut there!' Silence. The Atlantic swallowed up 200 yachts like a handful of dust thrown into a lake. The reckoning had begun. Hats off to the ARC for giving sailors a helping hand on their various voyages of self discovery.



CONTRIBUTORS



CLIVE LOUGHLIN is a journalist, retired engineer and sailing instructor who works for Five Star Sailing



TOM CUNLIFFE is an author, journalist and TV presenter, and one of Britain's best-known cruising sailors



SAM FORTESCUE is a former editor of Sailing Today who has decamped to Germany to write a novel





Oriental delight

TRYSTAN GRACE

Hong Kong is not a cruising ground that is generally on the radar of cruising sailors. Yet, with its generous scattering of islands, once the hideouts of the opium clippers, there is plenty here for the intrepid sailor. This intriguing seascape is toward the south end of the Sai Kung East Country Park, in the background is the impressive wall of the High Island reservoir, built following water shortages in the late 1960s

Ebb and flow

EVENTS | NEWS | TALES FROM THE SAILING COMMUNITY

DRIVERLESS CAR LANDS A DOUBLE WHAMMY ON BISCAIY-BOUND BRITS



A snagged mooring rope in Sainte Evette, Brittany, set in train a disastrous sequence of events for Milford marina berth holders Steve and Steph McGrath last season.

The entanglement happened on the couple's first stopover en route from Milford to the Bay of Biscay, and brought up their Sigma 38 Gwawr so suddenly her engine was ripped from its mountings. Following a tow into harbour by Les Sauveteurs, the engine was remounted. Then the couple faced a lengthy wait for a promised trailer so the vessel could be lifted out so that the twisted propshaft could be replaced.

When it arrived after many weeks, the trailer proved too small for Gwawr, and the boat was eventually berthed alongside a drying wall – an option denied previously by the harbour

authority – so the propshaft could be dealt with.

Having determined the engine could be used for short periods even with the damaged shaft, the McGraths decided to cut their losses and set sail for home

10 minutes before departure Steve was sorting out the stern locker, when Stephy yelled "Car! Car!" – a warning not often heard on a boat.

A driverless car was rolling backwards, heading for the harbour wall where Gwawr was moored, while its elderly lady owner tried stop it.

Steve pulled the lady out of the way, but the car went crashing over the harbour wall to land on Gwawr's stern. Fortunately, damage was limited to the liferaft and the stainless steel pushpit, and Gwawr sailed home without further ado.



DARTMOUTH ROYAL REGATTA NEEDS YOUR CASH

The organisers of Dartmouth Royal Regatta are appealing for donations from event supporters to make sure the Regatta is a success in 2019.

Last year saw significant changes due to cost-cutting and the popular air displays were dropped. Regatta committee member, Kevin Pyne said: "I'd like to ask the locals and regular visitors alike to donate £1.75 a month so that we can hold a basic regatta.

"Over the year that wouldn't be much more than a round of drinks for four during the festivities."

You should visit dartmouthregatta.co.uk if you'd like to contribute to this worthy cause.



CARRIEFOUR/SAIL IONIAN/WCC JAMES CLARKE/EMCT/PAUL WYETH/JOHN HEAD/WAR/SILA/DEREK HARPER COMMONS/STEPH MCGRATH/ASHLEY ROSE

Skipper faces court over death of 'hallucinating' crewmember

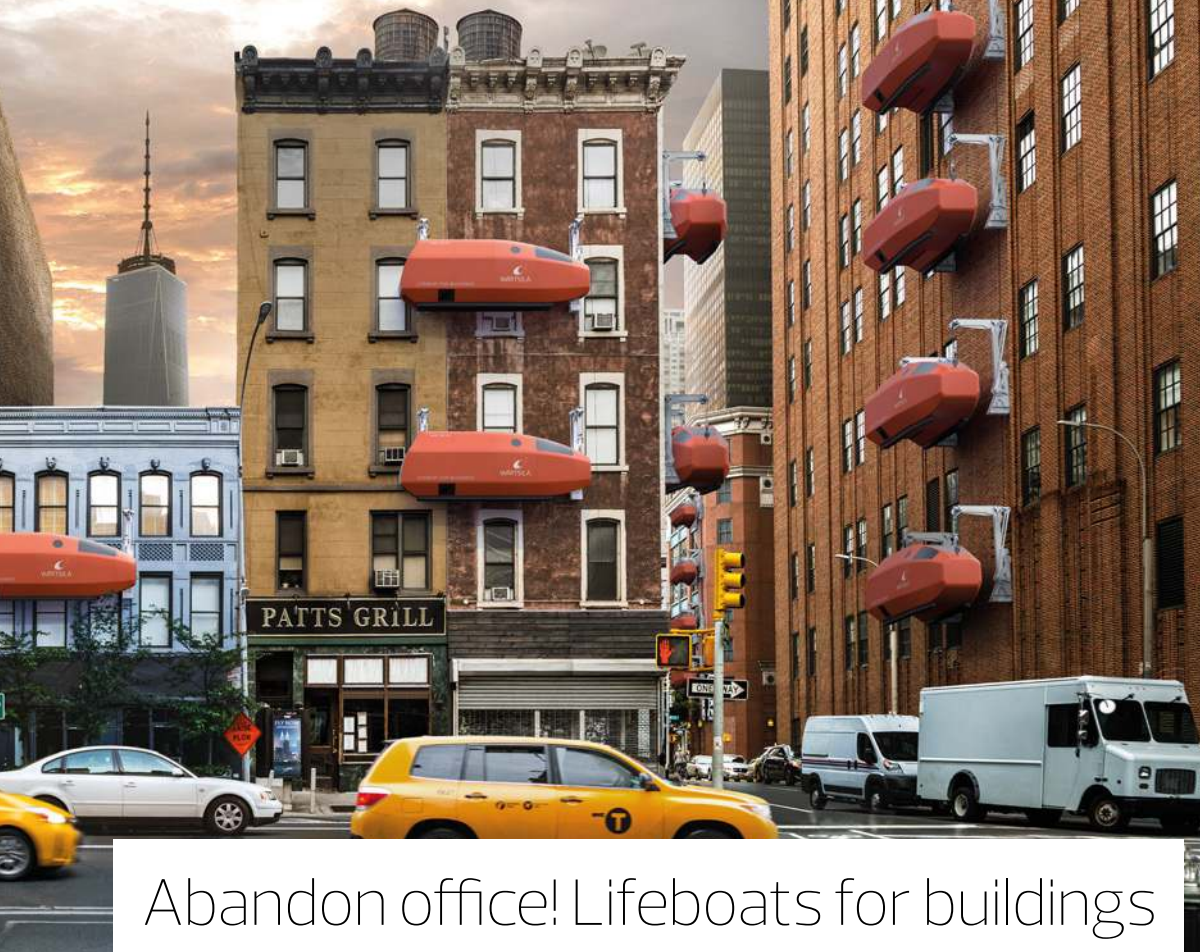


US authorities have indicted skipper Rick Smith with "misconduct, negligence and inattention to duties as captain" following the death of a crew member who jumped overboard and was lost at sea.

Smith had not met crewmember David Pontious before picking him up in North Carolina. Pontious replaced another crew member for a cruise to the US Virgin Isles on Smith's 43ft yacht Cimarron in 2015. After days of erratic behaviour, with Pontious reportedly hearing voices and hallucinating, there was a violent

stand-off between Pontious and Smith in the early hours. Shortly afterwards Pontious is said to have leaped overboard and was lost in the darkness. A US coastguard report in 2015 said Smith and two other crewmembers handled the incident "as best they could," and no further action was taken at the time.

Smith, was awaiting his day in court as Sailing Today closed for press. Government documents allege Smith "failed in a number of areas to ensure Pontious' safety and to properly report the incident".



NEWS



Thanks to a generous donation from the Trinity House Charitable Trust, there is a new north cardinal buoy in position marking the dangerous Voose reef on the South side of the Helford River



Some 57 volunteers have been recognised for their exceptional dedication and achievements in boating at the RYA Volunteer Awards. 49 awards were presented by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, President of the RYA.



More than 100 cyclists will support young people recovering from cancer as the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust stages its first Largs to Cowes Charity Cycle in May.



The Kid, owned by Jean Pierre Dick was first to finish in the ARC, having surfed across the Atlantic in just over 11 days to cross the line in Rodney Bay Saint Lucia at 12:52 local time on Thursday 6 December

Abandon office! Lifeboats for buildings

Technology group Wärtsilä surprised a tech convention in Helsinki with its 'lifeboat for buildings' concept, designed to be used for severe flooding and rising sea levels caused by climate change. It's not a real product, of course, though Wärtsilä Ship Design says it does feature existing smart technologies such as autodocking, dynamic

positioning and wireless charging. The autonomous lifeboat concept is (theoretically) powered by 100% renewables, with synthetic fuels and solar energy.

"This hypothetical lifeboat is a way for Wärtsilä to amplify the need to move climate change discourse to action," says the company.

GREEK CRUISING TAX DELAYED AS CA INTERVENES

The Greek Government announced on November 16, 2018 that it had implemented the TEPAH, commonly known as the Greek Cruising Tax. Initially it gave vessel owners just 10 days to pay the tax, but thanks to intervention from the Cruising Association (CA) this date has now been delayed to April 2, 2019. The annual tax runs to 100 Euros per metre for larger boats, but to date



there is no information on how the tax will work, other than it will run under the TAXISnet system – part of the Greek tax system. It is supposed to be an E-tax and conducted online.

The CA understands that all vessels will have to register at the www.aade.gr website and pay the tax online. The website is in Greek and the CA believes it is not yet set up for this tax.

DUBAI LAUNCHES SAIL-THROUGH SUPERMARKET

A new Carrefour 'sail-through' supermarket has opened three floating branches in Dubai, offering 300 'carefully selected items to waterborne customers on Kite Beach, Jumeirah Public Beach, and Al Sufouh Beach.

The shops stock a range of hot and cold snacks, ice cream, beverages, fresh and dried foods, and non-food items such as sunscreen. They'll be open from 10am to 6pm – subject to weather – and small boats are encouraged to sail alongside to order and collect their shopping.

Larger vessels can order by phone or app, and a skiff will deliver the groceries within 45 minutes.



What's on

EVENTS | DIARY DATES | PLACES TO VISIT

DÜSSELDORF BOAT SHOW



19–27 JANUARY,
DÜSSELDORF

Boot Düsseldorf – as those in the know like to call it – is an extravaganza for sailors, with dozens of new boats to ogle, and all the world's major boatbuilders and kit manufacturers in attendance. We're going too – so see you there!

● boat-duesseldorf.com



BASIC ROPE WORK COURSE

9, 16, 23 JANUARY, LONDON
The Little Ship Club's Basic Rope Work Course takes place over three evenings at Club HQ. It costs £90 for non-members

● littleshipclub.co.uk



IMAGE: VISIT SOUTH DEVON

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● salcombegin.com



SOUTH OF THE RIVER: LONDON'S CRADLE OF POWER

6 FEBRUARY, LONDON

A talk by Jeremy Batch on the rich history of South Bank of the Thames 1900hrs, £7 for non-members.

● therca.org.uk



50 YEARS OF CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG UNTIL 3 NOVEMBER, BEAULIEU

With a boat-tailed body and amphibious credentials, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang celebrates 50 years at the Beaulieu Motor Museum with a collection of never-before-seen memorabilia.

● Beaulieu.co.uk



FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS TOUR 16 FEBRUARY TO 31 MARCH, UK

Have a salt-water gargle, stick a finger in your ear and join Port Isaac sea shanty legends Fisherman's Friends on their latest tour of the nation.

● thefishermansfriends.com

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Classic Boat

- 2019 Awards shortlist revealed
- Canadian flagship that was a groundbreaking yacht
- Tom Cunliffe: my worst night at sea



Yachts & Yachting

- On the rocks: Route du Rhum drama for Alex Thomson
- Sail choices: expert advice on what to look for
- J-Class racing in Palma

NEXT MONTH IN SAILING TODAY

ON SALE JANUARY 25

The March issue of Sailing Today ushers in the new sailing season, with features on the east coast and the rivers of Brittany. In addition, there are boat tests of the Bente 39, a forward thinking cruising yacht from Germany, and the bewitchingly quick Italia 9.98. Meanwhile, our Gull's Eye marina guide heads to Baiona on Spain's rugged Costa Verde to explore this stunning stopover.





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Fischer barograph

Ease the pressure with this special barograph

If you're one of those sailors who struggles to fill the hours between October and April, why not consider installing a scientific grade barograph on the windowsill of the study? Whole hours may be usefully whiled-away gazing at the 'needle' scratching its spidery trace across paper, and the thrill of witnessing the onset of that first high pressure of the sailing season will be indescribable. This fine instrument is produced by Fischer of Germany, and is engineered to perform accurately on board ship. Polished brass and mahogany ensures it will look the part in your study – or your superyacht's stateroom.

- Fischer-barometer.de
- €2,484



ONAK 2.0 Origami kayak

A world of exploration unfolds in front of you

OK it's probably more suited to life on a houseboat than under a bunk on the average cruising yacht, but we can't help admiring this origami-style folding canoe that's being promoted on Kickstarter.

The ONAK 2.0 is made from a honeycomb polypropylene composite – stiffer by weight than aluminium – and has flexible fold lines that can be folded and unfolded thousands of times. Packed for storage, the canoe forms a trolley-like box that's 123cm x 43cm x 28cm, and that weighs just 15kgs. You can shove it in the boot of your car, tow it by (folding?) bicycle, or tote it by hand.

Unfolded, the Onak measures 4.6m and will carry two people or 250kgs, and the designers reckon its stiff hull makes it much faster on the water than inflatable alternatives.

- €1,695
- Kickstarter.com

The Harpy Houseboat

Floating home drenched in history

We're not sure if anything that floats can actually qualify as a pied-à-terre, but if you're planning a trip to London and are bored with fancy hotels, then you might want to give The Harpy Houseboat a try.

It's just possible there's no residence in the whole of the capital that's more spectacularly sited for iconic views. Moored a few hundred metres downriver from Tower Bridge, the former HMS Harpy was launched in 1904 by HM Customs and Excise as a floating office, and she remained in the service of The Crown until 1980. Recommissioned by her current owners as a luxuriously appointed four bedroom home, The Harpy is now available for short term and holiday rentals. The owners reckon the house is suited for up to 8 people – although it's also unsurprisingly proving popular with couples.

We're told various Hollywood celebs have stayed aboard The Harpy too.

- theharpy.com
- £600-£900 per night (min 3 nights)





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AWARDS
2018

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**SAILING
TODAY**

The votes have been counted and winners selected in the very first British Yachting Awards

For the very first time this year Sailing Today has partnered with our sister magazine, Yachts & Yachting to bring you the British Yachting Awards, truly a celebration of every aspect of the sailing world – from Caribbean cruising to high tech racing.

This genuinely was a people's vote and clearly the talent on offer inspired you, the sailing public, with thousands of you voting for your favourites in a diverse range of categories, from Cruising Grounds to Racing Performance. The votes in many cases were extremely tight, reflecting the strength of the sport and also its

increasing diversity.

With the winners picked by you, the boating public, the nominees decamped to the lavish environs of the Royal Thames Yacht Club on December 11 to find out the result. The gongs were duly dished out, with Tom Cunliffe laying on a virtuoso keynote speech which kept the punters chuckling, while compere Tracey Clarke ensured the evening ran smoothly. As the champagne flowed, all was revealed and there were plenty of interesting selections. Beneteau picked up best cruising yacht, while Discovery Yachts made a welcome return in the Bluewater Cruiser category with their all new 54. There was


also a pleasing win for the British Virgin Islands, which has recovered from the mauling it received at the hands of Hurricane Irma.

Elsewhere, gender parity and the need to redress the historic imbalance has been a hot topic. From the Volvo Ocean Race's introduction of a gender rule, which actively encouraged female participation, to the continued drive to see the sport represented equally at the Olympic Games, we are seeing more women than ever before being given centre-stage. Fittingly, proceedings were rounded off by Tracy Edwards MBE, who gave a speech which provided a fascinating retrospective on her varied career.

Presented by: **Musto, Yachts & Yachting, Sailing Today**

In association with: **Bruntons Propellers, Culture Sailing, GAC Pindar, Ocean Sailing Scotland, Pantanaenus Sail & Motor Insurance, Poole Quay Boat Haven, Porto Montenegro, Seafarer, Seago, UKSA**



In association with 

PORTO MONTENEGRO

CRUISING YACHT

BENETEAU OCEANIS 51.1

Beneteau will be breaking out the fizz to toast its win in this closely fought category, and doubtless attributing at least some of its 2018 Cruising Yacht of the Year Award to the innovative forward chine of the Oceanis 51.1 which gives the boat a unique 'champagne glass' hull section.

It's all in the pursuit of extra internal volume, and the results are fairly spectacular. The Oceanis 51.1 offers positively palatial accommodation below decks, whether configured for charter work or with a luxurious owner stateroom up forward. There's plenty of light down below too, thanks to the very many ports in the hull and coachroof, while Beneteau's brushed oak interior décor adds to the premium feel.

PHOTO: BENETEAU YACHTS - ALAMY PHOTOGRAPHY

CHARTER DESTINATION

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

What do we want from our annual charters? Guaranteed sunshine, beautiful anchorages in crystal-clear waters fringed by sandy white beaches, fair winds and a rollicking rum punch... Yes, our readers have rated the British Virgin Islands as their favourite charter destination of 2018.

With sheltered waters, and short line-of-sight passages between palm tree-fringed islands, the BVIs are the perfect destination for crews seeking to unwind with a bit of stress-free sailing and the heady delights of iconic beach bars like Willy T, Foxy's and Soggy Dollar. Throw in wonderful opportunities for snorkelling and sight-seeing ashore, as well as spending time on some of the world's most beautiful beaches, and it's not hard to see why the BVIs clinched the category. It's a great result for the welcoming BV islanders who've worked hard to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Irma in 2017, and a vote of confidence from charterers too.



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EVENT OF THE YEAR

VOLVO OCEAN RACE

The 2017-18 Volvo Ocean Race was a triumph. The iconic 45,000nm offshore event long ago earned the accolade 'the Everest of sailing', but the latest edition looked beyond the extreme performance with an agenda designed to promote and encourage gender equality and youth opportunity. It was a pioneering approach that paid dividends, and VOR enthusiasts – of which there are many, both dedicated and casual – will be

hoping that the best elements of the 2017-18 cocktail will emerge again when the VOR returns. The racing action was epic as always but it was the finish that will cement the recent event into ocean racing legend. With three boats still battling for overall honours in the closing miles of the race and the closest ever finish, it's no wonder the Volvo Ocean Race has been voted the inaugural British Yachting Awards Event of the Year.



UK MARINA

WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND MARINA

Marina operator Dean & Reddyhoff has a bit of an advantage here, with two distinctly different venues combined in a single destination. Together the twin marinas of Weymouth and Portland offer pretty much all the cruising sailor could ask for in this popular West Country stop-over. Located in the heart of Dorset's Jurassic Coast – itself a world heritage site – Weymouth and Portland present all the attractions of a traditional seaside town on the one hand, with the state-of-the-art facilities on the other. The Weymouth branch of operations has 300 berths, while the town offers sandy beaches, restaurants, shopping and a cinema. Head round to the Portland branch and you'll find another 500 berths, plus a modern boatyard with full marine services.



NIKKI HENDERSON

The inaugural Under 30s Outstanding Achievement Award goes to Nikki Henderson, who became the youngest ever skipper to complete the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race. Not only that, but she led her largely amateur team on board Visit Seattle to an impressive second place overall in the tough 40,000nm race.

The editorial panel has awarded this accolade in respect of the skill and determination Nikki showed, including exemplary leadership and the ability to motivate her team.

BOATBUILDER

HANSE YACHTS

With a comprehensive range of boats from 30ft to almost 70ft, there's a consistent philosophy that runs through the entire Hanse range. The unifying elements are fast, elegant hull lines and high performance sail plans, easy short-handed sailing with self-tackers and minimal deck clutter, and a luxurious design aesthetic that gives the marque its characteristic feel. The latest Hanse models really hit the sweet spot, and the Hanse 458 provides the perfect blend of performance, style and quality. For consistency and quality across the range, we think Hanse has the opposition licked.



PHOTO: HANSE YACHTS, JESU REBDO, OJ DEAN AND REDDYHOFF RENE DOWLOV OCEAN

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RS21

The RS21 is a refreshingly simple yet modern design optimised for sailing clubs and training organisations who want a sporty, easy to sail boat that's cost-effective to buy and maintain, while providing plenty of excitement for sailors at all levels.

It definitely looks racy on the pontoon, and a 10 out of 10 score for sailing performance in a recent Yachts & Yachting boat test.

We all know there's a requirement to attract new and younger sailors to our sport, and great design means the RS21 has a rugged strength and simplicity that makes it easy – and affordable – to own and maintain. It also boasts an industry-leading approach to environmental issues, as it's built using organic resins and features a neat Torqeedo electric auxiliary that outmodes petrol outboards at a stroke.



BLUEWATER CRUISER



DISCOVERY 54

Discovery Yachts have long been one of the heavyweights of the blue water cruising genre and the 55 set something of a blueprint. The arrival of the new Discovery 54 is a direct result of their takeover of Southerly, and in fact it's a new sister-ship to the Southerly 540. The two share a common hull but the Discovery 54 features a deep rigid keel instead of the Southerly version's lifting set-up. Both sister vessels have been treated to the same level of build quality and material finish that Discovery is known for, and both feature the same twin furling headsails for easy handling. The new Discovery 54 offers more headroom than the original Southerly variant too, as well as styling updates that give the model a crisper, more contemporary look.

There's no shortage of pedigree, as the Discovery 54's lines were penned by the late great Ed Dubois. He has done Discovery proud with a yacht that positively oozes class from the moment you set eyes on her.

MULTIHULL

In association with



LAGOON 50

The Lagoon 50 is a consummate cruising catamaran with a thoroughly modern appeal for owners and charterers alike. The upright wraparound windows of the main deck saloon set the scene for an interior that's more akin to a luxurious waterside apartment than a yacht cabin, yet the crisp contemporary lines of the boat give her an elegance at anchor or on a passage that belies the onboard accommodation.

She's a boat made for blue water cruising, and a well thought-out rig is optimised for fast passage-making while being easy to handle. The mast is well aft, allowing a self-tacking jib, and the mainsail is set on short boom yet has a high aspect ratio to maintain performance.

The flybridge-style helm provides great visibility, and there's a large area for socialising immediately aft so the skipper's never far from the party. In similar vein, the large panoramic windscreen in the main saloon is retractable, giving access to the forward lounging area between the hulls.



PHOTO: CO BRNEBAU/OLIV HARESC/OLAGNON

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DINGHY

FLYING MANTIS



Plaudits go to British designer Jamie Stewart for seeing the opportunity to bring the excitement and technology of foiling to a broader audience via his exciting 'two boats in one' concept.

The Flying Mantis is a lightweight 14ft carbon fibre trimaran that can be sailed on the water with a rudder and daggerboard, but when conditions are right can go airborne on its easily removable foils. You don't need to be built like a jockey to 'fly' the Mantis either, as it will take sailors up to 120kgs in weight.

Lightweight and easy to disassemble, the Flying Mantis is readily transported and stored at home. As its triumph in our Dinghy of the Year Award category suggests, the ability to sail in tri-configuration has a wide appeal to sailors, many of whom have yet to master the skills of foiling and don't want to risk an 'all or nothing' approach.



PERFORMANCE YACHT

J/121

J Boats reckons its J/121 is the best short-handed racer the company has built. The 40-footer is designed to be sailed by five or fewer crew, which J reckon – and we agree – makes life a whole lot easier for racing skippers fed-up with rounding up 8 or 10 bodies every time they want to compete.

She looks the part too, boasting low, sleek lines and an easy to use cockpit with everything to hand - features that clearly proved popular with voters.

There's an 840-litre water ballast system built-in to compensate for extra crew bodies lined-up along the rail, and the low drag hull offers straight line speed with high form stability.

There's a standard suite of five sails plus the usual J Boats retractable jib, and thanks to a comfortable fit-out down below the J/121 is an ocean-capable racer that also functions beautifully as an adventurous daysailer, weekender or fast cruiser.

PHOTO: RICK TOMLINSON; RUPERT HUGHES; ALEX IRWIN/SPORTSCOMMUNITY



AMATEUR SAILOR OF THE YEAR

In association with



MARIA STANLEY

Maria Stanley won this year's RS200 National Championships in a highly competitive fleet. The regatta was sailed as a part of the RS Games – a celebration of 20 years of RS racing with all fleets competing over the course of August in Weymouth and Portland.

The RS200 is one of the most competitive fleets of any kind in the UK, with the nationals entry limit of 100 boats usually being reached well ahead of regatta start – and this year was no different. Olympic sailors regularly step into the class to get some big fleet racing practise – and for the legendary socials – another factor that makes it a tough one to win. In winning the event Maria became the first female helm to win an adult RS national championship in 20 years – enough to warrant inclusion in the award nominees list in and of itself. That Maria has also won a raft of other events in the season, including the class Inland National Championship shows this win was far from a one-off.

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PRO SAILOR OF THE YEAR

DEE CAFFARI MBE

The sole British skipper in the 2017-18 Volvo Ocean Race returned to the pinnacle of round the world racing for the second time in her illustrious career, but as befits a bona fide sailing role model she put personal ambitions on the back burner. Instead of looking for personal glory – she has garnered plenty of that stuff already – Caffari took on the role of skipper and mentor to the first mixed-gender youth team to participate in the race. As if that wasn't a noble enough endeavour, she was racing aboard Turn the Tide on Plastic as ambassador for a United Nations Environmental initiative that's close to every sailor's heart, Clean Seas. While a racer of our Pro Sailor of the Year Award winner's calibre could hardly help wonder where a more competitive VOR entry might have finished, Caffari's commitment to passing on her own knowledge and helping to enable and empower the next generation is laudable. We'd like to think this award, voted on by thousands of sailing enthusiasts, is a vote of thanks.



In association with

YOUTH SAILOR OF THE YEAR

MUSTO

EMILY MUELLER

The 15-year old winner of the Optimist British Championships in 2018 is only the third girl to clinch the British title in the 71-year history of the class. Emily Mueller's winning form hasn't stopped there, as Y&Y and Sailing Today readers have also made sure she'll go down in history as the first ever Youth Sailor of the Year in the inaugural British Yachting Awards. Emily sails with Royal Lymington Yacht Club, and faced stiff competition in her final major competitive Oppie outing. With 154 boats in the senior fleet alone, she showed grit and determination – as well as plenty of skill – to take the overall title.



TRACY EDWARDS MBE

Tracy Edwards MBE is the recipient of our prestigious Award for Outstanding Achievement in recognition of the huge contribution she has made to sailing. Her most recent endeavours have included restoring her 1989-90 Whitbread Race entry Maiden to embark on a round the world voyage to raise awareness and funds for girls' education. The editorial panel felt that Tracy's own tenacity, combined with the inspirational impact of The Maiden Project, more than merited this Award. To read more about Tracy and her unique achievements, see last month's issue of Sailing Today.

PHOTO: BRUNTONS PROPPELLERS/VOLVO OCEAN RACE/ CHESTER, E. ANDY GREEN

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RACING PERFORMANCE

DONGFENG RACE TEAM

We've never seen a closer climax to a Volvo Ocean Race than the thrilling final leg that wrapped up the 2017-18 edition of the world's premiere round the world racing challenge.

Everything hung on a 970-mile dash from Gothenburg to The Hague, and with three teams neck and neck on points at the start of this final leg there was all to play for.

Dongfeng skipper Charles Caudrelier boldly called an inshore route and split from the rest of the fleet. It looked initially as though his gamble had failed, but with less than 100 miles to go the weather routers were predicting the top boats would finish minutes apart.

In the end it was Dongfeng that slipped ahead of the rest of fleet to take their first leg win – and the overall race victory.

“We always trusted each other. Nobody thought we were going to win this last leg, but I had a good feeling,” said an emotional Caudrelier. “I said ‘we can't lose, we can't lose, we can't lose’... and we won!”

EQUIPMENT INNOVATION

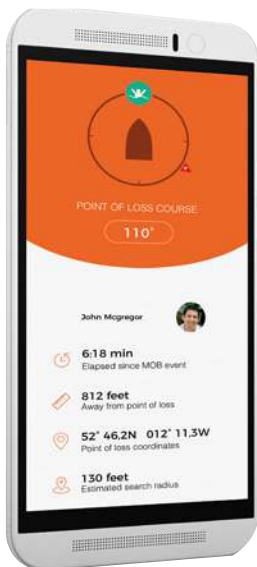
WEEMS & PLATH CREWWATCHER BEACON AND APP

CrewWatcher is a smart alarm system that constantly monitors if everyone is still on board using your phone, tablet or iPad, and up to five beacons – which are designed for crew members but can also be usefully attached to the dinghy, or the dog.

In case of a man overboard, the app is designed to sound an alarm within 6 seconds, then provide those on board with intuitive rescue guidance. Zero input is required.

If an activated beacon detects water or loses its signal, the app will automatically sound an alarm and voice the words, ‘man overboard’ at maximum volume, even if the phone or tablet is in silent mode.

Once rescue mode is activated, CrewWatcher uses a virtual MOB compass to visually guide you back to the point of loss. The MOB icon moves relative to your boat until the MOB icon points straight ahead, and the app screen turns green when the beacon's signal is found, and you know you are within a few boatlengths of the casualty.



CLOTHING INNOVATION

MUSTO D3O IMPACT SYSTEM

Musto has released a high-tech range of impact protection padding, the D3O Impact System, which uses flexible molecules that stiffen on impact to dissipate energy. The pads can be slipped into specifically designed pockets in a number of Musto wetsuits and clothing to significantly reduce impact forces if the wearer hits something at speed.

The system provides a welcome level of additional protection from bumps, bruises and potentially more serious injuries for dinghy sailors, while it's flexible ‘relaxed’ state means it doesn't impinge on freedom of movement when worn in day to day environments.

Along with other innovations in design and technology, the new material has allowed Musto to create a uniquely effective dinghy collection. Cutting-edge eco-friendly, limestone-based Flexlite Alumin neoprene has been used to create pieces that supply a superior level of warmth, stretch and a lighter weight, while every wetsuit and steamer in the collection features internal pockets on critical zones for D3O impact protection.



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SIMPLY SUPERIOR



Tom Cunliffe

Tom reflects on the pleasures and pitfalls of chartering a yacht

ong ago in a world where folks were more inclined to take the rough with the smooth I had a chum universally known as Typhoon Charlie. Charlie was something of a reprobate, sailing the seas in a 60-foot ketch coincidentally named Typhoon. The yacht had been paid for by his wife, a businesswoman from southern Europe who wished him no ill but for reasons of her own didn't want

him around any more. Like the rest of our little group of sailors, Charlie was permanently short of cash and always kept a weather eye open for casual charterers. He was in a bar in Bequia when he ran across a bunch of loud young men behaving obnoxiously towards the locals. One of them had seen him come ashore and asked him casually if he did any chartering. Charlie rubbed along well with the Caribbean people and he didn't think much of the way this crowd had been

carrying on, but needs must, so he agreed to take them on an overnight trip to Barbados, so long as they paid up front. The proposed passage involved a notorious upwind thrash undertaken by few, but he was on his uppers for funds so he bundled his guests into the dinghy. Out in the anchorage they loaded their dunnage and Charlie settled down to wait for sunset. Below decks, the drinking continued undiminished and the general abuse levels rose to



PODCAST

Catch up with Tom's ST columns now and in the future at sailingtoday.co.uk

ILLUSTRATION: CLAIRE WOOD; PHOTOS: TOM CUNLIFFE



such unprecedented heights that by the time he was ready to weigh anchor, Charlie had an alternate plan.

The charterers all passed out shortly after dark, the trades were blowing their hearts out and the idea of a 60-mile dead beat was singularly unattractive, so rather than hack out through the Bequia Channel into open ocean, he bore away and spent the night running down to leeward of the Grenadines in relative comfort. In the morning Typhoon rounded up in Prickly Bay on the south shore of Grenada and when the hung-over charterers assumed it was Barbados, Charlie didn't bother to put them straight. Instead, he dinghied them ashore to the nearest bar where, true to type, they got into trouble by insisting that they were on a different island altogether and calling liars any who disagreed. A fight soon broke out and the police turned up to march the drunks off to jail, still shouting about being in Barbados.

Charlie had kept his head down during the fracas. Now he buzzed out to the boat, rounded up the kit of his erstwhile guests, dumped it at the police station and sailed back to Bequia. Nobody ever found out what happened to the loudmouths,

'A fight soon broke out and the police turned up to march the drunks off to jail'

but the general view was that they got what was coming to them.

In our more enlightened era of licensing and codes of practice, it seems unlikely that any reader of *Sailing Today* will fall victim to an operator who dispenses private justice like Typhoon Charlie. Nonetheless, charter boats – in particular bareboats in exotic venues that are booked back-to-back in high season – do not always measure up to the standards we hope for. The best operators do what they can, and in places like Northern Europe and the UK where turnarounds are often slower, they manage well. All, however, are subject to the menace of 'the previous charterer'. On leaving the boat, each hirer is supposed to fill in a form noting down any jobs that need attention. It only takes a few minutes to do this properly, yet people don't seem able to manage. Setting aside the wretches who can't be bothered, I suspect the reason the majority fall short is that they leave the task to the end of the week. If I

ABOVE
Marigot Bay in St Lucia, a hotspot for charter yachts

do this I'm bound to forget half the stuff that should be noted. The only answer is to keep a slate running and jot things down as they go wrong. That way, when you hand in the list, the bosun has a fair chance of sorting matters out for the next guy. When one of the fridges isn't working at full capacity, for example, which seems the case in more than half the boats I've chartered, he's not telepathic and can't be expected to find out if nobody tells him.

If you're chartering for more than a weekend, it pays not to go tearing off to sea on the first evening. Send the crew to stock up instead, while you take a cynical look around. Batteries suffer a serious hammering on charter yachts. The boat will be plugged in to the marina when you take over. If that's how you'll be spending your time, the batteries aren't an issue, but if you're planning on overnight anchoring it's a different story. Nobody knows whether the batteries are holding their charge →

properly because when the bosun comes aboard they are always hooked up and showing 14 volts. The previous charterers may know less about battery health than they do about the dark side of the Moon, so you're on your own. A good plan is to unplug the yacht at dinner time then see if there's any juice left at breakfast. If the fridges have flattened the power overnight, they'll do the same at anchor and you'll spend the week running the generator or the main engine to keep the beer cold. Complain in a polite, understanding way, but insist on a decent set of accumulators before you leave.

Wherever you can, hoist the mainsail and check the battens. Several times I've found some missing. How my predecessors can have sailed without them is a mystery. And what about reefing pennants? Out in the Caribbean, I once had to re-rig the whole reefing system to shorten sail beyond rolling in the baggy genoa. Not being forewarned, I only discovered the lash-up I'd inherited while flattened by a white squall in the overfalls at 'Kick-em Jenny' north of Grenada. The shambles would not be recommended for innocents promised an idyllic cruise in the sun.

After the main has been passed as generally seaworthy, start the engine, run out all the anchor chain then winch it back in again. If the windlass is defective it'll spoil your holiday for sure.

Another area for consideration is the tool kit. One well-known operator told me that there were no tools on board because they didn't want charterers 'messing things about'. Should anything fail, I was to call head office on VHF so that they could send out a mechanic. Unbelievable. Nowadays I take my own basic tool kit, just in case.

Do you like to wear a life jacket when sailing? When you plan your next trip to the Caribbean, ask what are supplied, then be ready to take your own. The ones provided are often Kapok-stuffed horrors of the sort favoured by Noah on his ark.

The list goes on, yet chartering can get us to places we'd never go in a month of Sundays in our own boats.

RIGHT
A good looking classic schooner shares a Caribbean anchorage with a charter yacht

BELOW
Charter barter in the Caribbean islands



'After downing a couple of 'pain-killers', the boys were up for a song'

There's even something to be said for cashing in the family yacht and spending the money saved on two or three glamorous charters each year. It'd never work for me because my boat is part of the family and owning her seems to define me, but it'll be a long time before I forget a night in Jost van Dyke with a crowd of pals on a big charter boat. The six of us had gone ashore for a sundowner in Ivan's Stress-Free Bar. Two were ex-choristers and the others were strong of lung and willing. After downing a couple of what the shining barmaid called 'pain-killers', the boys were up for a song, but the ghetto blaster was churning out reggae at Force

Ten. The reggae caused us no direct offence, but we were in the mood for a few Welsh hymns. Ignoring the ambient racket, we struck up Cwm Rhondda. By the time we'd reached verse three, the music had been shut down. This was followed by 'Jesu, lover of my soul', with its reference to the rolling water, the tempest and the glorious tenor line. Many of the island people are 'chapel raised' and it brought the house down. We drank free that night as the trades rustled the palms, and we made a lot of friends. Sailing is a broad church and chartering is part of the big picture. It can open all sorts of improbable doors. ✦



TOM CUNLIFFE
Since his first sail in 1961, Tom's been Mate on a merchant ship, run yachts for gentlemen, operated charter boats, delivered, raced and taught. He writes the pilot for the English Channel, a complete set of cruising text books and articles for sailors worldwide





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Paul Heiney

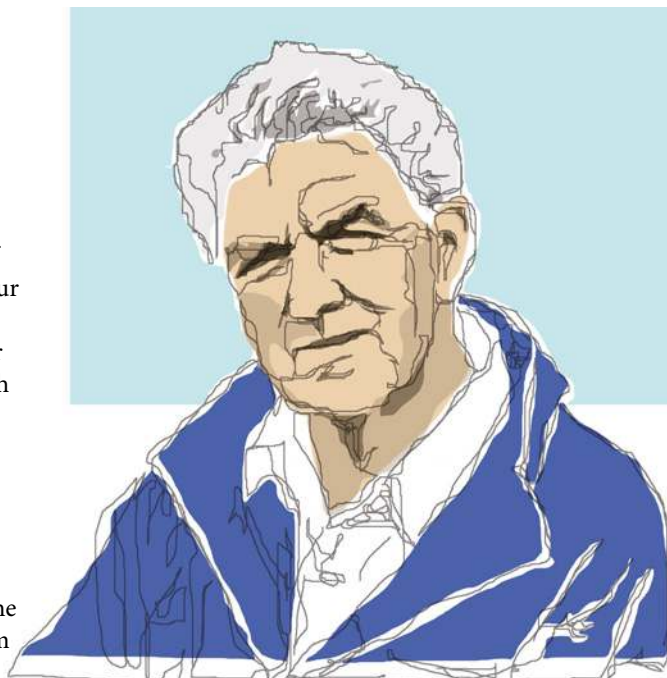
How do you get on with your boatyard? Like many of us, Paul has endured a good few ups and downs over the last few years, with the emphasis on the downs...

Yes, it's true, It will soon be time to be phoning the boatyard again. The conversation usually goes one of two ways. You suggest a date for your relaunching and they can agree, or they'll offer you another one. Either way, you'll put the phone down with a certain degree of unease because you've been here before - a date in the diary, as signed and sealed as the Magna Carta, but come the day the boat remains as hard ashore as if you'd run her onto the Shingles Bank. You curse, thinking it's just the way boatyards are. So you ring them again. And on it goes.

How do you get on with your boatyard? What's the relationship, and how would you prefer it to be? Some like it to be rather distant; as emotional as booking a Tesco delivery. They don't want much personal contact, simply a service, like airport valet parking. Others want the boatyard to feel part of their family, given that the boat is as vital to them as a beloved child. And so whatever they ask of their boatyard they want it to be done in a spirit of care and friendship, as if they were handing the old boat into the loving arms of a child minder.

When that doesn't happen quite as expected, we boat owners can get tetchy. A friend of mine once bought an elderly, but stylish old yawl, built with great skill from the pen of a distinguished designer. But the survey showed rot in the cockpit and the boatyard was tasked to fix it. He went to see how they were getting on and on arrival heard the unmistakable growl of the chainsaw. Sawdust was flying high in the air as a shipwright took chunks out of his lovely old boat with the subtlety of a lumberjack enjoying the felling of a few old pine trees. He could have cried. In fact, the boatyard was doing exactly the right thing. It was the cheapest and fastest way of doing the job, even if my friend came away with the wounded feeling of watching a surgeon attack his mother with a blunt Black and Decker. But the boatyard was right, although he'd never admit it.

Looking at it from the other point of view, I've often wondered how boatyards feel about the customers. It is said that a venerable east coast boatyard proudly displayed



'Sawdust was flying high as a shipwright took chunks out of his lovely old boat'

a sign which boldly stated: Labour Rates: £5 per hour, £7 per hour if owner watching, £10 per hour if owner helping. Whoever wrote that was undoubtedly speaking from the heart, weren't they?

Boatyards never really tell us what they think of us, and perhaps that's just as well. I've often wondered how they really feel about us peering over their shoulders. In fact, I've wondered why we do it at all. Can't we just leave them alone? We don't hover around the garage while the car is being serviced. It must be to do with the special place that boats occupy in our hearts. They are not merely means of getting us from one side of the bay to the other; they are our means of escape. Whatever might be happening in your life, once you are on the water you instantly leave an old life behind even if only for a couple of hours. That's why we hover; it's because we don't want anything that might cause our escape

mechanism to fail when we most need it.

Which was why I was forced to curb my tongue when an enthusiastic young engineer came on board a few years back and we were discussing the fuel tank and how it might be enlarged. 'No problem,' he said, airily waving his arms towards the galley. 'We can strip most of that out and put it there.' I rocked on my heels. Did he not know that the soothing effect of the singing kettle, the inner warmth that only a pan of boat stew can bring, were a vital part of my escape and he was going to rob me of it? From an engineering point of view, of course, he was dead right. From my point of view, this was just another damned boatyard that thought it knew better than I did.

I like it when I have a good working relationship with a yard; when I know the names of lads and can joke about this and that. But I'm never certain if that's what they want, or if I'm taking bread out of their mouths by changing my own anodes and they resent it.

Am I in the way? Would it better if I'd stuck to clinical email and left it there?

And do you know, having written this, I'm beginning to feel a bit sorry for boatyards. They have a job to do and, in general, it gets done - it's not their fault our boats are more than just an inanimate object. I must confess, that's a sentence I never thought I would write.



HAVE YOUR SAY

How do you get on with your boatyard? Are you conflicted like Paul, or do you take a more resolute view?

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The squirrel sailor

Cruising yachts are sometimes dismissively referred to as 'floating caravans' but, as **Jess Lloyd-Mostyn** relates, blue water cruisers are often more like sheds-

In a floating world where self-reliance and ingenuity rule, it pays to be prepared. Living in a state where both your plans and the weather can change on you is one thing, and you never quite know what issue or challenge might crop up on a boat. But how can you be ready and equipped for this type of unknown? For some cruisers, the answer is to develop hoarder mentality, becoming akin to a seafaring squirrel.

A boat's bits and bobs take many forms and there are sensible, standard pieces of gear that are essential to each type of sailing. If you're going bluewater you need a lot of practical solutions for extended offshore time; if you're a racer you need to investigate the lightest kit available; and if you're coastal hopping you'll require a different kind of stuff again. But, when you're living full-time onboard, there is a tendency for your yacht, or at least parts of it, to be transformed into the aquatic equivalent of a garden shed. And, like the typical shed, the organisation of myriad odds and ends, can easily slide into a shambles.

So what exactly are we collecting? A large amount of it is tools: power tools for when you're plugged into shore power, and hand tools for a when you're not. Spanners, sockets, drills, hammers, screwdrivers and allen keys – and you end up needing all of them in both metric and imperial sizes. All this along with screws, bolts, nuts, clips, nails and shackles – some brass, some galvanized, some stainless steel. Gizmos and spares for your engine and sails: extra prop, filters, pumps, impellers, belts and gaskets along with sewing needles, tape and patches in all grades. Ropes and line for all manner of things have to go somewhere too – mooring lines, running rigging spares, lanyards, floating line, high spec dyneema line, washing lines – in fact there are few jobs on board that don't require a handy bit of string. Also torches and headlamps, with the countless bulbs, batteries, different gauges of wire and connections. Plus you'll no doubt be storing some paints, glues, oils, varnish and cleaners, just to keep on top of the maintenance. Add to that any reference books, engine manuals, or 'how-to' guides and you can quickly see how even the minimum essentials can become a veritable quagmire of cruising chaos.



'Sometimes it turns out the items you've squirrelled away are simply nuts'

Often when you purchase a used boat, you buy it with a substantial inventory of supplies included. This was very much the case with our yacht and, as it was our first sailboat, it meant that opening every cupboard or drawer became a journey of strange discoveries. After identifying and sorting the vast majority of all these implements I remember still being left with a rather substantial pile of doo-dads, thingamajigs and whatsits. Peculiar-looking objects that were clearly intended for a specific, albeit mystery, purpose sat sadly in a heap while we scratched our heads in vain.

And, of course, you cannot simply ditch the puzzling items. We were convinced that we would stumble into some unforeseen sailing quandary when one or more of these enigmatic thingies would prove to be our absolute salvation... if only we had a clue what to do with it. So we

kept them because we were inexperienced and more than a little bit nervous about the life that we'd just embarked upon. We hung on to them for years, along with so many other things under the guise of "you never know". Until, that is, we were introduced to two things that changed all that: our first child and swap meets.

Suddenly we needed to rethink some of the gear we were stashing so it was there that we offloaded the romantic but impractical gas lamps and paraphernalia; the numerous wine glass holders; the spare covers that didn't actually fit anything we owned on board. We'd schlepped around a hugely oversized and ridiculously heavy fisherman's anchor that, while perhaps useful for laying a mooring ball, was entirely unusable and pointless for our boat. We'd had vague thoughts that it could be handy in a storm but reasoned that in reality it was far more likely to put a hole in our hull in the process of deploying it. And we finally parted with the strange hook that was nothing to do with sailing at all but designed to lift industrial sized bags of flour – clearly high up on the previous owner's "just in case" list.

Ultimately, it's good to be prepared for lots of sailing eventualities, and a healthy 'spares' inventory but sometimes it turns out the items you've squirrelled away really are simply nuts.



JESS LLOYD-MOSTYN

Jess and James left the UK in 2011 in their Crossbow 42 and have sailed halfway round the world, growing their crew en-route. Follow their journey at water-log.com

ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL PARKIN

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Going Coastal

Clive Loughlin describes the planning, execution and successful completion of a challenging five day RYA Coastal Skipper Course.



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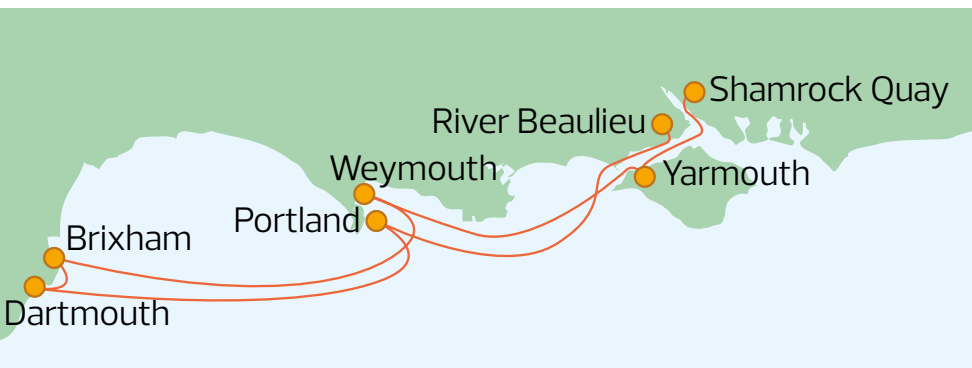


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The RYA Coastal Skipper qualification is the next step up from Day Skipper and while the Day Skipper is designed to show that you are able to take charge of a small cruising yacht by day in familiar waters, the Coastal Skipper extends these boundaries to longer passages and night time sailing.

The particular course described in this article is probably more adventurous than most, and so it should not be taken as 'typical'. An instructor will always take many factors into account when planning a course and these will include the experience of the crew, the boat, the weather and viable cruising destinations.

I hope the following will give anyone considering doing a Coastal Skipper course a good idea of what to expect and the reasons for doing it in the first place.

On this course I had four people doing Coastal Skipper and one doing Competent Crew. Our boat 'Manhattan' is

a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 379.

Why go Coastal?

I see the Coastal Skipper course as an opportunity for crew to experience a wide variety of sailing activities under different weather conditions. I like to push the boundaries and expand each crew's comfort zone. The idea of this is not to give everyone a hard time, but rather to equip them with the tools and experience they are likely to need at some stage of their sailing careers.

You don't have to sail for long before something will inevitably go wrong, or at least not go fully according to plan. The ability to think coolly about a problem and come up with a seamanlike solution is to me what the Coastal Skipper qualification is all about.

Advance planning

In many ways planning a Coastal Skipper course is very like planning a charter holiday. The start date is fixed and the boat needs to be returned to base by a certain date and time. You also want to have as much fun as

ABOVE
Team Coast Busters tacking like a well oiled machine in the Needles Channel

BELOW
Don and Henry hard at work passage planning

possible and do a bit of exploration.

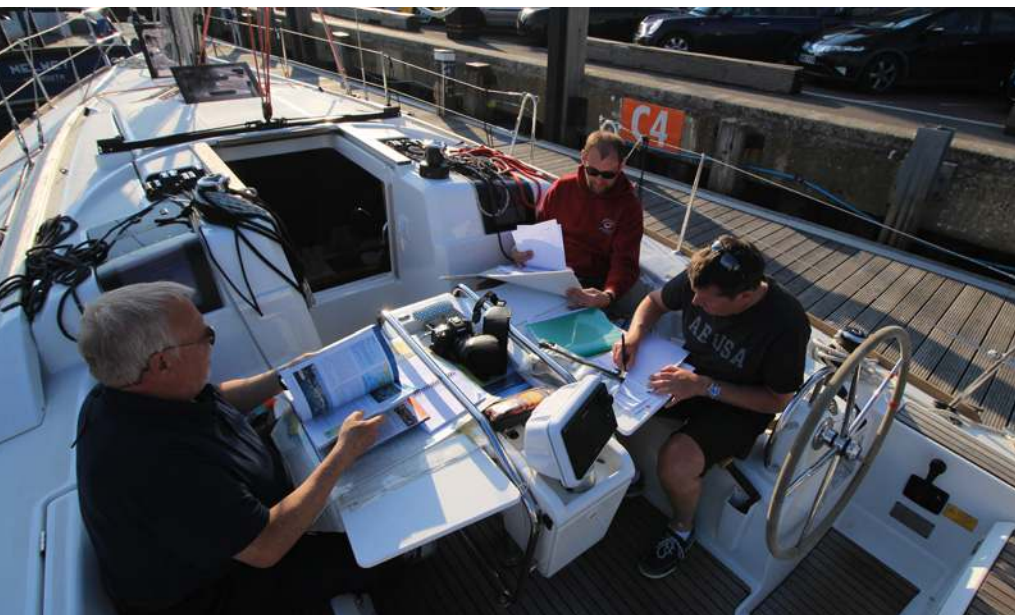
The more research and preparation you can do before the holiday the more likely you are to get the very most out of it. You can decide on the best harbours and anchorages to visit, and those to avoid, and come up with at least an outline plan of what to do and when.

For this reason, rather than leave all the passage planning until the start of the course, I prefer to give crew the opportunity and the required information to do a rough outline plan for the whole 5 days a few weeks in advance. This is strictly voluntary, and only if they have the time and inclination. I find this also helps get people in a nautical frame of mind, and most crew consider it to be worthwhile.

Of course I do my own passage plan as well, but it is always good to see what the crew come up with.

Mission assignment

I wanted to give each of the four Coastal Skippers the chance to be in the hot seat for a passage of 45-55nm. Such a passage may be →



Passage Planning Primer:

- The aim is to get from A to B safely in the shortest time
- Check access limitations (height of tide) at A and B
- Get hour-by-hour tidal stream data for the route
- Check for hazards and how to avoid them
- Aim to ride the tide as much as possible
- Aim to avoid going against the tide as much as possible
- Get a weather forecast
- Consider wind-over-tide implications
- Plot where you expect to be by when
- Regularly plot position to see if ahead or behind schedule
- Keep a log, and operate a watch system on longer trips
- Have backup plans and alternative destinations
- Is the passage viable and sensible?



'I came up with four missions and we drew lots to see who would get which'

Manhattan's log

Monday: Shamrock Quay to Yarmouth (25nm), N/NW F3-4

Safety brief, provisioning and pilotage refresher course and boat familiarity

- 1230 Departure for refuel up River Hamble and pontoon practice.
- 1530 Depart Hamble for tacking, gybing and MOB practice in West Solent.
- 1700 Pilotage into Newtown River and mooring buoy pickup.
- 1900 Arrived Yarmouth. Detailed passage planning and meal on board before visit to Bugle Inn.

Tuesday: Yarmouth to Weymouth (45nm), N/NW F3-5

- 0930 Departure and Needles Channel with last of the flood tide before it turned.
- 1700 Arrived Weymouth. Fish and chips and revised passage planning.
- 2200 Depart Weymouth for night passage to Brixham. 2 hours on, 2 hours off watch system imposed.

Wednesday: Weymouth to Brixham (52nm) N/NW F3-5

Dartmouth to Portland (60nm) NE/E F3-F5

- 0500 Arrive Brixham.
- 1000 Depart Brixham for short trip across bay to Torquay and anchoring.
- 1300 Arrived Dartmouth, sailed past Naval College.
- 1530 Depart Dartmouth. 2 hours on, 2 hours off watch system imposed.
- 2300 Portland Race left to port in F5 wind-over-tide.
- 0130 Arrived Portland Marina.

Thursday: Portland to Beaulieu River (50nm) E/NE F3-4

- 0700 Depart Portland, egg and bacon butty breakfast under way.
- 1200 Off Needles Lt Ho, short tacking against ebb tide.
- 1600 Entered Beaulieu River, moored Bucklers Hard.

Friday: River Beaulieu – Shamrock Quay (20nm) F3 variable

- 1000 Pontoon practice prior to departure.
- 1200 River Hamble to re-fuel and practice ferry-gliding.
- 1400 Arrived back at Shamrock Quay, boat cleaning.
- 1530 Missions completed!

Total 295nm, 48 hours at sea including 11 night hours, winds F2-F6

expected to take around 8 hours and as such imposes a very different mind-set to that needed for a shorter passage. Furthermore this is not just one passage of 8 hours, but a series of four 8-hour passages in close succession, and with a few shorter passages of 5-10nm thrown in for good measure.

I came up with four 'missions' and when we met up at Shamrock Quay the evening before the start of the course, we drew lots to see who would get which mission.

For each mission I just stated the proposed start and end locations. The 'skipper' for each leg was advised to assume all responsibilities for the boat including such things as getting the weather forecast, preparing the boat for sea, and all instruction of the crew for departures and sail handling, arranging berths, etc.

My aim was for me to do as little as possible so that the skippers were making the decisions as if I was not there. I just answered any

questions that came up and quizzed them on possible alternatives. All departure timings were left to the skippers to work out, and they also had to work together to make sure everything 'joined-up'.

My plan

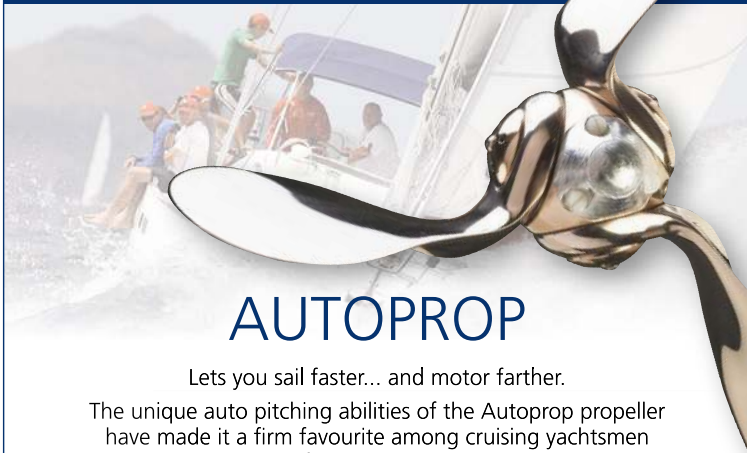
The following summarises my thought processes in coming up with a plan for the course and this is what I conveyed to the crew on the first evening to give them some guiding principles (also see Passage Planning Primer).

I decided to set quite an ambitious target and had the aim of getting from the school's base at Shamrock Quay in Southampton, to Dartmouth and back within the 5 days of the course. This is a distance of at least 240nm.

With such a long passage to accomplish it was tempting to think we should set off straight away on the Monday morning or even the night before, but I →



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decided it would be better to spend Monday getting used to the boat and practicing manoeuvres. I also wanted to position the boat in Yarmouth at the western end of the Solent ready for the start of the voyage-proper on the Tuesday.

The basic idea was to ride the tide whenever it was flowing in the right direction, and to hole up and rest in a safe haven while it was going the wrong way.

I also wanted to include at least one passage to be undertaken at night, with the somewhat romantic experience of a dawn arrival.

An instructor is always conscious of the necessity to get the boat back in time for the next course, and the same deadline applies if you are on a charter holiday. With this in mind I wanted to get the long passages over with as early as possible, so if we were held up for any reason (engine problems etc.), we would have some time in hand to recover the situation.

This meant that the plan soon evolved into an easy first day, followed by a pretty intensive Tuesday and Wednesday and then a more leisurely Thursday and Friday. As it happens this also seemed to work well as far as tiredness was concerned. We were certainly all tired by the time we

docked up on the Wednesday night, but we could then afford to relax a bit and recharge the batteries during the rest of the course.

Why Dartmouth?

Weymouth, and the adjacent harbour at Portland, are conveniently situated about halfway to Dartmouth and make obvious stopping off points.

With the Needles Channel, the races off St Alban's Ledge and Portland Bill, and an active firing range to negotiate, this is a challenging stretch of coast that deserves respect.

As such, it is in my view a perfect area for an adventurous Coastal Skipper course.

Not just mile-building

Time on passage is never wasted, and there are always opportunities to do additional activities like three-point fixes, to go over safety equipment like flares and EPIRBs, and become familiar with the chart plotter.

What about the Comp Crew?

Although nominally a Coastal Skipper course we also had Competent Crew Joe coming along with his friends Henry and Neil. I always like to push everyone on the course as much as possible, but it is important to make sure that the basics of seamanship such as might be covered in a dedicated Comp Crew course are not overlooked in favour of more Day Skipper tasks.

I gave Joe ownership of various important duties such as switching off the gas bottle at night, all foredeck duties like anchor deployment and mooring buoy pickup, and the traditional deployment of our



ABOVE Daniel works on a noon sight (left); Don at the helm as we head off to anchor in Tor Bay (right)

BELOW Neil on the helm as we leave the Solent behind

ensign. And of course he was fully involved as crew for sail handling, helming and coming alongside.

I also tasked Joe with being our skipper for the final day of the course – this gave him four days to pick up enough knowledge of passage planning and pilotage before being in the hot seat himself.

One very important aspect of being a skipper is explaining what is happening to the crew, and nothing tests your own knowledge better than trying to explain it to someone else. I was therefore delighted to see all the skippers involving Joe in the planning processes.

Highlights

I asked the crew what their highlights of the trip were and these included both the best and worst conditions. On the way to Brixham we had simply perfect conditions, with a northerly F4-5, and could sail on a beam reach at typically 9.5 knots over the ground, with slight seas. Add to that the thrill of sailing through the night and the company of a dolphin, and it was some of the best sailing I have ever experienced. We only had to tack twice in over 100nm!

The worst conditions were on our way back to Portland, with the now easterly wind being exactly wrong for the passage, but such is the nature of cruising, that some motorsailing is inevitable. This also gave us a wind-over-tide situation as we were skirting the Portland Race as midnight approached. In the F5 wind and steep waves the boat was slamming down. I asked helm, Daniel, if he was OK and got the reply: "I am having the best day of my life!"



CLIVE LOUGHLIN Clive Loughlin is an RYA Yachtmaster Instructor and regular Sailing Today contributor. Clive teaches for First Class Sailing in the Solent area (and beyond!)



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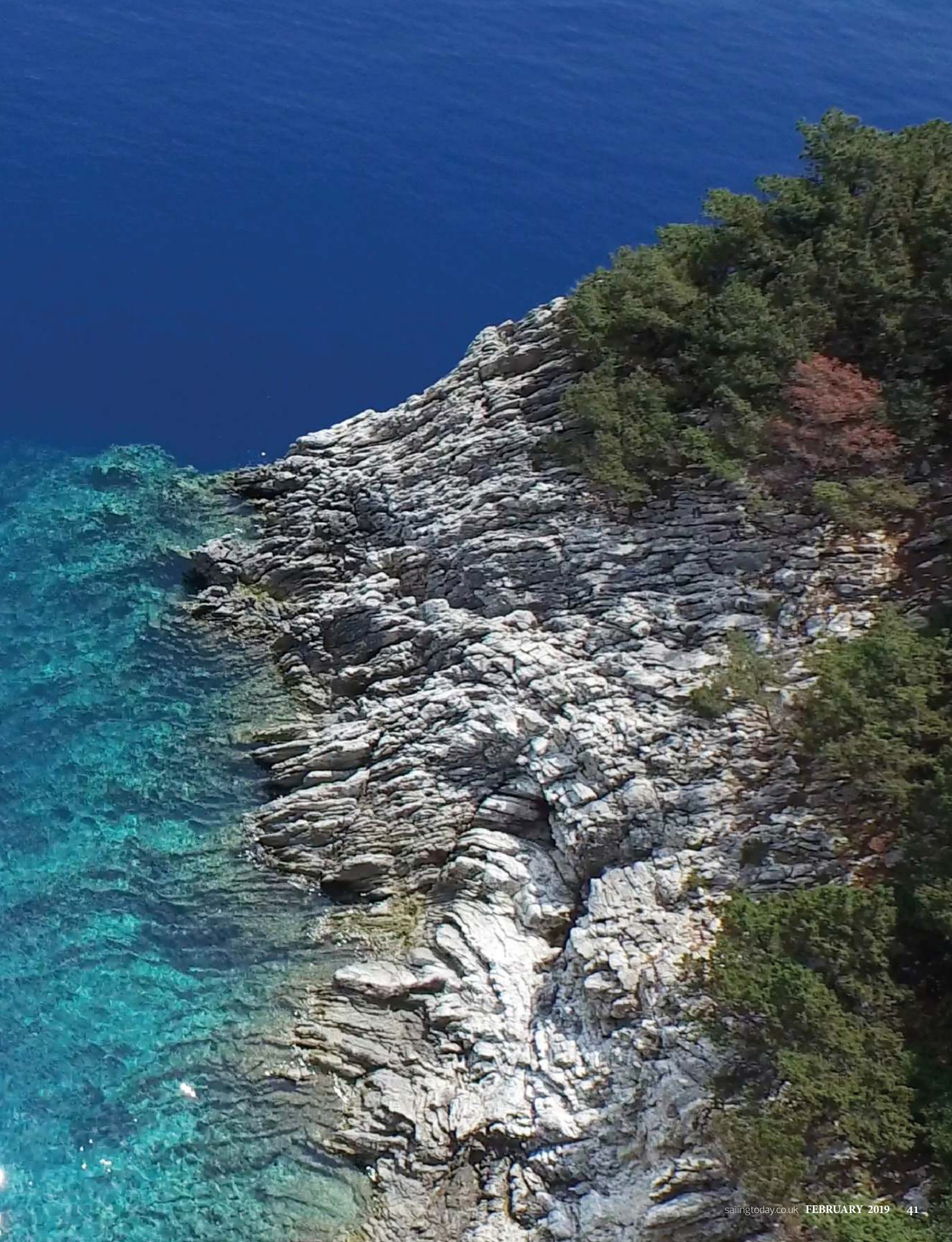
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Solitude is bliss

A spot of local knowledge is always good when exploring a new area. Sail Ionian's chief instructor Craig Thornley gives us his top ten anchorages in Greece's southern Ionian







The well-known cruising ground of the Southern Ionian is becoming more and more popular year-on-year – perhaps to the liveboard community’s dismay but certainly to the taverna owners’ delight. If you’ve sailed the Ionian or visited the likes of Lefkada, Ithaca or Kefalonia you will know that it really is a sailor’s paradise. And the reason it’s so popular? The ease of hopping between islands with line of sight navigation, predictable weather patterns making afternoon sailing exciting and discovering a new swimming spot around every corner to bathe in warm turquoise waters – to name a few!

The summer months of July and August bring in many a charter yacht so apart from avoiding the unmarked shoal between Scorpios and Meganisi, we also like to avoid the crowds. Harbours fill up as early as noon for those wanting the most sought-after spaces on the quayside (give me longlining outside the harbour any day of the week) and on a calm day, the wind can only kick-in during the late afternoon.

Dotted around all of the seven main islands of the Southern Ionian, you will find amazing protected

anchorages and Sail Ionian’s usual chart briefings on arrival emphasise anchorages to enable guests to enjoy fantastic long summer days out on the water. In this article I am going to give you a rundown of some of our favourites but do take the time to ask your charter company or friends – local knowledge can certainly make a good holiday into an amazing one. There are so many anchorages to choose from that this list could easily be fifty-strong. I have varied the anchorages to give you a mix of lunchtime swimming stops and overnights on your own, and a couple close to a taverna to give you some dinner options if you are not up for cooking onboard.

1: AsprogiAli Beach

First on the list is AsprogiAli beach located on the north east corner of Kalamos island. Anchor, dropping between 4-10m in sand. The water is crystal clear, holding is good, and with nothing to avoid on your way in, it’s a nice easy one. It does get quite busy mid-summer, so I aim to

PRECEDING PAGE
Cliff Bay, Atokos

ABOVE
A pristine anchorage off Formikula

BELOW
Peri Pighadi anchorage in southern Ithaca

be there early morning to avoid the lunch time rush. If you do get there and it’s packed just head north-west around the corner and there is another little bay with a church which is lovely and usually quieter.

2: Agios Aimilianos

On the east coast of Kastos island you will find the picturesque beach of Agios Aimilianos, located a couple of bays south of the northern tip of the island. The water is an amazing limpid turquoise and it’s usually empty. The anchorage is easy - big and open with a sandy bottom. You can just anchor here with no lines ashore needed. There is a cave (Fokotrypa cave which remains a secret to the tourists) located to the right of the bay. It goes in around 30m and is like a tunnel, so if you’re claustrophobic give it a miss, but it’s well worth a look. It used to be home to local monk seals, but they seem to have migrated slightly south around Kefalonia and Ithaca.

3: Formikula

Formikula is a very small group of remote, uninhabited islands located south of Kalamos. You can anchor →



Anchoring Tips

- The amount of anchor chain you drop should be at least four times the depth of water
- Drop head to wind and slowly reverse
- Don’t put pressure on the anchor too early and rip it out
- To test your anchor is holding slowly add revs in reverse until you reach 1800-2000 RMP, then hold and take transit
- In sandy weedy bays drop your depth in anchor chain first on a sandy light patch, then reverse

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Cruising ~ Ionian anchorages

on the east side of the main island though care is needed on your approach as there are rocks scattered either side of the bay. Once in, the water is bursting full of marine life making this bay one of the best for snorkelling with the family. There is also a small underwater tunnel going through the rock on the right-hand side of the bay which you can swim through. The holding is good, and the bay is sheltered from the prevailing wind.

4: Cliff Bay, Atokos

The uninhabited island of Atokos is home to the stunning Cliff Bay. Surrounded by spectacular vertical cliffs, the swimming pool blue water is usually a winner with guests, and I often stay here overnight. You can anchor on either side of the bay taking a longline ashore. I prefer being on the left as you go in, longlined to the beach. It's a little on the deep side, around 10-15m and weedy which can be challenging for yachts with small anchors and limited chain. At Sail Ionian we use Rocna anchors and have a generous amount of chain on each of our yachts to make your lives easier. Care needs to be taken to get plenty of chain down and make sure your anchor is through the weed and holding well – look for a sandy patch and drop the depth of water in chain before reversing. It will be busy during the day, but most people depart late afternoon leaving you in peace overnight. The only sounds you will hear are the goats traversing the cliffs and the water lapping the shore. It's also an amazing place



for stargazing with shooting stars aplenty!

5: Scorpios

World famous Scorpios island is next on the list. If you don't know the story, Scorpios is a private island made famous by Aristotle Onassis, the Greek shipping magnet who married Jacqueline Kennedy – former first lady to US President John F Kennedy. A Russian businessman now has the island on a long-term lease. On the south-west coast, Onassis built a beach house for Jackie as it was her favourite bay on the island. This is the only place on the island where you are allowed to anchor making it quite popular with

ABOVE
Longlining ashore
off Kastos

OPPOSITE PAGE
Papageorges Bay - also
known as Number 7
Bay – on the southern
tip of Meganisi

BELOW
Cliff Bay, on the
deserted island
of Atokos

yachts and day tripper boats, but it is possible to avoid most of the crowds if you head there early morning or just after lunch. You are anchoring in around 10 metres, but its good holding and protected from the prevailing wind, it is a lovely bay but it's the story of the island that adds to the charm.

6: Foki Bay

Foki bay is located a couple of bays south of Fiskardo on Kefalonia. It is very popular in the summer with superyachts, but it is possible to anchor and take a long line ashore. This is a great anchorage for an overnight stay so long as the forecast is settled. A scenic ten minutes by foot – or five minutes in the dinghy – will bring you to the incredibly popular Fiskardo town, which has a



Crosswind Longlining Tips

- Flake the windward longline in the back of the dinghy first, before dropping anchor
- Attach the windward line and row out, making sure to stay up wind as you row
- Then drop anchor, a little further out than normal and reverse up to dinghy
- Receive windward line from dingy at windward aft cleat and attach
- Test anchor is holding by reversing on it
- Attach leeward line

'Dotted around all of the seven main islands of the southern Ionian, you will find amazing protected anchorages'

number of high-class restaurants and boutiques. The bay itself has crystal clear water home to sea turtles and is surrounded by Mediterranean pine trees. It has a huge cave with several chambers you can walk around. Its worth getting to the bay early to get a good spot, I usually longline on the south shore as far in toward the beach as possible, but be careful in high season not to go through the buoyed swimming area.

7: Peri Pigadi

On the east coast of Ithaca toward the south of the island you will find Peri Pigadi – a large cove a little off the beaten track. There is a small island you can long line off on the west side, but I prefer to anchor further south, in the bay away from the island. The holding and shelter are good, and you will struggle to find clearer or cleaner water. This anchorage coined the local acronym ACS or Alarming Clarity Syndrome as when you pass through the 4m deep passage between the small island and Ithaca it looks rather shallow. A superb overnigher if you want to get away from the crowds, and it's a nice easy one.

8: Egremni Beach

Egremni beach located on the west coast of Lefkada is like stepping

in to paradise. The transparent aquamarine and pristine water of Egremni has earned it the title of one of the best beaches of the Mediterranean. Now the beach itself is empty as an earthquake a couple of years ago blocked the road, leaving it only accessible by boat. Due to the prevailing wind it is only possible to anchor on a settled morning before the afternoon breeze kicks in. Although this year we had lots of easterly winds which opened up the west coast to explore. The bay is big, open and easy to anchor in with good holding in the sand. Certainly check with your charter company before heading here as they may wish to brief you on exploring the West Coast of Lefkada first.

9: Papageorges Cove

Papageorges Cove, or as we know it Number 7 Bay, on the southern tip of Meganisi just opposite Kithros island, is a small cove sheltered from the prevailing wind with incredible rock formations towering overhead. Drop anchor in around 8-10m in sand, good holding but you'll need to take a long line ashore as there isn't much space to swing. It's a small cove and only takes a couple of boats to fill it so I recommend arriving early.

10: Polis Bay

Last but not least we have Polis Bay on the west coast of Ithaca opposite the busy port of Fiscardo on Kefalonia. It is a great overnight anchorage with a traditional Greek



village at the top of the hill called Stavros. In the square is a model of the nearby ruins believed to be Odysseus's palace. The bay is quite deep, and you can longline on the north or south shore, or free swing in the middle. Mooring can be challenging as you will be anchoring in 10-20m and the bottom is quite weedy, so check your holding.

Charter contacts

- themoorings.co.uk
- sailionian.com
- dreamyachtcharter.com
- nisosyachtcharter.com
- dragondrascombe.com
- theglobesailor.com
- nautilusyachting.com
- sunsail.co.uk
- tenrag.com
- seafarersailing.co.uk
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Craig Thornley is chief instructor with Sail Ionian. They own a fleet of charter yachts and are based in Vlikho Bay on the island of Lefkas. The company offers RYA tuition in addition to skippered and bareboat charters sailionian.co.uk





Chartering with novices

You don't have to be a pro sailor to charter a yacht – particularly in the Ionian in summer. Mike Trippitt took an inexperienced crew along for a trip around the Ionian islands

“My sailing holiday starts with a curry.”
My golden rule of sailing is not in any RYA training manual, charter boat brochure, or pilot guide. But when it comes to taking friends sailing, it serves me well.

If truth be told, a Chinese or pizza will work just as well, but getting together for a night out to talk boats is important if you have previously spent no time onboard together. It is a time for a skipper to get to know his crew, learn what experience they have and understand what they are seeking to get from the charter.

So over bhajis, bhunas and biryanis, we began planning a week's charter sailing in Greece that was still over 12 months away.

My wife Clare and I would be taking friends Marie and Cameron, their 15-year old son Jack and new mutual friends Paul and Lis to the Ionian Sea for a week in the sun, and to give them all a whole new experience.

Until 2018 primary school teacher Lis had done no sailing, but

did an RYA Day Skipper theory course over the winter. With husband Paul, she completed the Competent Crew practical course in May. It made a difference.

“The week made me realise I do love being on a boat,” says Lis. “I love sailing, I do not get seasick and I was happy being on a boat 24-7 with complete strangers. Having been on the Competent Crew course, I can't wait to learn more by going on another boat, and to continue to learn more about how to sail.”

But Paul's enthusiasm and how he saw his involvement was very different: “I'm kind of a hanger-on!” he said smiling. “I'm happy to do it because Lis enjoys it, but it is not a passionate hobby of mine. I've got no passion for spending lots of money or time, because I don't envisage having a boat at the moment.”

I knew Cameron had sailed over 20 years ago with work colleagues in his native Scotland: “We were known as ‘The Botchit Boys’. Apart from the skipper, we were all relative novices. We would go sailing regularly on the Firth of



ABOVE
Snugly Med moored by a taverna in Kalamos harbour (left); light wind sailing as we beat up to Kalamos (right)

Clyde, round the islands, across to Ireland and up the West Coast.”

He had even owned his own boat (a 2ft Sea Wych Mistral), and although he'd introduced Marie to sailing, she says it was something she “tolerated”. The word “enjoy” was too strong. Cameron recalls “she did not embrace the fun and excitement of a force 5 or 6!”

So with our friends having different levels of inexperience and all happy being called ‘novice’ we



had to ensure that not only would we sail safely in conditions within their capabilities, but also deliver on their own holiday expectations. After all, they were each paying Sunsail £1,200 for the pleasure.

Clare and I felt we should charter from Lefkas. We know parts of the Ionian well, so we would not be sailing into the unknown. It was our holiday too, and we were also paying £1,200. I did not want stress!

To help us decide whether to go north from Lefkas up towards Corfu, or sail south out of the Lefkas Canal to the more numerous, but closer islands in the Inland Sea, I studied Rod and Lucy Heikell's Ionian pilot guide. Clare and I have been to most places around Lefkas, Meganisi, Cephalonia, Ithaca and Kalamos, so when deciding our destinations, we knew we could not go to every pretty harbour or anchorage in a week.

I was encouraged that Cameron had worked out for himself which harbours were better than others, taking account of winds and local conditions. I was happy to go with his suggestions.

After 12 months of anticipation, some thought and a little preparation we arrived eagerly at our charter yacht 'Islamorada' on a Sunday evening in July.

Differing expectations

I was pleased we had taken time to understand our friends' abilities, limitations and expectations. We had chosen a boat, destination and itinerary that might challenge them,

but would keep them within their comfort zone. All I had to do now was stay safe and give them a holiday of a lifetime. No pressure then!

After Sunsail's evening briefing ('Loos and Lights' as Sunsail rep Mylie so aptly described it), I gave my own skipper's briefing, running through the four dangers we would encounter as soon as we left the marina: the winches, the boom, the anchor windlass and the sea. On the subject of crew tasks, I said that I would rely on the crew to do as I asked quickly and effectively, especially when mooring close to other boats. I said I was always happy to discuss the reasons why we do something afterwards, but the skipper runs a sailing boat, not a committee.

The wearing of lifejackets can be a prickly subject, especially with children. The onboard lifejackets were fully functional but cumbersome. No-one ever really wants to wear one. I have never burdened crew with a list of rules of when they must wear lifejackets

ABOVE
Anchored off One House Bay, Atokos (left); the Sunsail fleet moored up for an evening of Mythos beer and Greek Salad (right)

BELOW
Claire, Lis, Jack, Marie and Cameron breakfasting at Tranquil Bay, Nidri

(fog, one-reef, night-sailing, etc.). Instead, I adopted my usual line:

"There are just two circumstances in which you must wear a life jacket: anytime you want to, and anytime I ask you to."

So with briefings over and the yacht provisioned, we pulled away from the dock into a gentle breeze and Greek Island air you could almost taste. I was relaxed and content. Our friends were prepared for the week ahead and I was sure none of us would let the others down.

I had worried about our first night mooring in the weeks leading up to the trip more than anything else. We had never been to Nidri on Lefkas before. Heikell says it is busy in the summer, so I was concerned that we would be unable to get a space at the quay. Even though we came into harbour at 5pm there was no room at the dockside. Consequently, we anchored off in Tranquil Bay and used the tender to go back and forth.

Nidri bustles at night and whilst the lights and noise from the tripper boats and numerous tavernas are not representative of the Greece that Clare and I love, Nik the Greek's waterfront restaurant, the oldest in Nidri, was delightfully typical. Service was slow, a little hit and miss, but the food beautiful. Just what island life is all about.

Light winds

At the end of the week we would perhaps look back and wish we had had more sailing and stronger winds, but on day two between



Feature ~ Chartering with novices

Lefkas Island and the more easterly island of Kalamos the crew were upbeat. In light westerly breezes of 7 to 10 knots Islamorada had eased along happily.

“We’ve had a fantastic sail from Nidri to Kalamos,” Cameron reflected. “Two hours of good sailing. I think Lis achieved the speed record of five knots under sail, which is quite impressive. I thoroughly enjoyed the day.”

Even Marie enjoyed the time on the water in near perfect sailing conditions: “The scenery was lovely, the weather was great and I didn’t particularly want it to stop!”

The following day dawned under a blue sky, and the temperature soared rapidly. Sailing around the eastern tip of nearby Kastos before a westerly passage to Vathi on the island of Ithaca proved something of a frustration. A short spell of motor sailing was all that was possible in the lightest of airs. For most of the day, sails were conspicuously absent on any survey of the oily calm waters of the Inland Sea.

But less than 24 hours later, the



Greek chartering law

Greek law requires that to charter a boat there must be at least one certified skipper and one experienced crew member. For English sailors, certification is RYA Day Skipper practical or above, or an International Certificate of Competence (ICC). An ICC is available after completion of the ICC Assessment or to RYA members who hold Day Skipper practical or above on application. The crew member must hold a RYA Competent Crew qualification or an equivalent issued by any recognised sailing association. Some charter companies issue their own certificates on production of a ‘cv’ of satisfactory sailing experience.



wind picked up. Within minutes it had increased from 5 knots to a steady 17 knots. White horses showed themselves for the first time, and Islamorada’s sails unleashed their power.

“It felt like we were finally doing what I wanted to do here,” said Lis at the end of the day. “Sailing with just the sails, sailing fast, pitching and going with the waves. It was really exciting. I could hear only the sails, the sea and the wind. Wonderful!”

The 47-foot Jeanneau is the largest boat we have chartered, but she sailed easily in light winds. She had a surprising turn of speed in the force five.

That evening, at a restaurant in Agia Eufimia, a charming harbour on the eastern coast of Cephalonia the mood was different. We had sailed hard and fast, and for sure, it felt like our friends had got what they came for. If we are anything like fisherman, the couple of hours at 7.8 knots in 17 knots of wind will, in the telling over the years, morph into 10 hours at 12 knots in a 50-knot gale. It was great whilst it lasted.

Sadly, we would not see wind like that for the rest of the week. Despite this, the wind and location certainly matched Cameron’s expectations:

“You don’t come here to sail as such. You come for the variety.”

Sitting in Islamorada’s cockpit back at Sunsail’s base in Lefkas, protected from the sun by the bimini but still in the midst of baking heat, Cameron, Lis and I looked back on the week that was coming to an end.

Teamwork

I was pleased to observe how the crew came together as one unit during the week. As we came to moor, each would go to a task they



ABOVE
A peaceful anchorage off Kalamos (left); Paul and Lis after swimming and snorkelling (right)

were familiar with, and perform it efficiently. Anchoring and mooring were carried out smoothly, as each person’s role became clear. Everyone had done as much or as little as they wanted, but were a better crew by the end of the week. It is the prospect of stern-to mooring that worries first time charterers more than anything else, but with competent crew and a helpful restaurant owner or fellow sailor ashore offering to take lines, it is usually straightforward enough.

But Lis felt that she would have preferred more open seas. She had been surprised how close together the islands were, giving her the feeling of “sailing on a very large lake rather than the sea.” She also agreed with Cameron that by staying at a different port every night they had had something of a whistle-stop tour, and it would have been good to stay in places longer.

For my part, with five friends to look after, I had not found it easy to separate my role as skipper, from that of trip organiser. In the past, when we have taken friends for a weekend’s sailing on our boat, I have not given too much thought to whether they were enjoying it. But with everyone paying the same amount for the holiday, I felt under a duty to provide enjoyment. “Are they enjoying this?” preyed on my mind more than “Are they safe?” That was a surprise.

But it was once again a thrill to be in this beautiful place, and rewarding to facilitate a holiday that our friends could not do alone. So in those respects, my expectations were fulfilled.

After saying our goodbyes, Paul and Lis travelled south to Sifnos for a week in a Greek hotel. A few hours later I received an email. Paul, the photographer, the hanger-on, and the man who had no passion for sailing had detoured to look at an ex-Sunsail yacht that was for sale in Athens. I had not expected that!



MIKE TRIPPITT
Mike Trippitt is an RYA Coastal Skipper, RYA VHF Assessor and RYA Inland Helmsman Instructor. He sails in East Anglia and charters in the Greek Islands.



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Disco diva

Discovery Yachts' range has expanded rapidly in the last year or so. Their new 54 is fresh on the scene and Sam Jefferson has put her to the Sailing Today test



Last year Discovery Yachts took the bold move of acquiring Southerly Yachts which for many complex reasons had gone out of business a couple of years before. This financial catastrophe certainly had little to do with the quality of their yachts which were, by and large, excellent swing keel cruising yachts that were just as at home crossing oceans as creek crawling. The reason I am opening this boat test in this rather oblique manner is that one of the big spin offs for Discovery Yachts was that they could bolster their own range of excellent blue water cruisers with some of the Southerly designs. They did this by retaining Southerly branding for the swing keel models but also offering a fixed keel option that could then be branded as a Discovery. Complicated, but it's an important detail. Prior to this, Discovery was a relatively small operation with its biggest seller being the elegant Ron Holland designed Discovery 55.

I tested the 55 a few years back and she's a lovely sailing boat, no question. I was therefore intrigued by the addition of the new 54 to the range – close in size but presumably very different in character. Presumably? Read

BELOW
The new Discovery 54 has a swing-keel Southerly sister-ship



definitely – this is the fixed keel version of the Southerly 540 which in a previous life was the Southerly 535. This yacht was designed by Ed Dubois and was launched not so very long ago – in 2013 to be precise. Are you still with me? I realise all this is horribly complicated. In summary, the Discovery 54 is a fixed-keel evolution of the original Southerly 535. Phew!

So, what's new? An awful lot to be fair. For starters the swing keel is gone to be replaced by a substantial bulb keel with a thick chord width. Internal ballasting has also been tweaked. Meanwhile, the twin rudders are retained but the foil shape is understandably different, as the yacht is no longer required to rest on its rudders when drying out. Despite these radical alterations, many things also remain the same; the 54 has precisely the same sail area as the original design and, although certain mouldings in the cockpit are different, Discovery has wisely retained the secure yet spacious twin wheel 'mid' cockpit configuration. So, in theory, this should be the best of all worlds; an Ed Dubois designed classic

that has been tried, tested and then refined and updated. The proof would be in the sailing.

Aggressive looks

A 2013 Ed Dubois designed hull is no bad thing – it certainly doesn't look dated. There is a tad more rake perhaps at the bow and stern but ultimately it pays not to pander to every single modern trend as you end up with a boat that looks dated two years down the line. Dubois was confident enough in himself as a designer not to do this. That said, this is an imposing looking yacht. I tested hull number one, which was dark blue and that in itself can have an effect. Yet, whatever the colour, this is a purposeful looking yacht. As mentioned, Discovery has stayed true to the Southerly's original cockpit layout and that is followed through in the rig, which retains the 'slutter' or more palatable 'Solent' rig of a big genoa set outboard of a smaller self-tacking headsail. This is married to a powerful mainsail that gives you an absolute plethora of different options and is also the ideal set up for someone fancying a bit of downhill trade wind sailing, where





LEFT
The raised coachroof and canvas provide protection for the twin helms

BELOW
The Discovery deckhouse offers space, light and warmth!

two poled out headsails are often the most effective rig set up. It's also a great rig for short-handed sailing and close manoeuvring under sail, where the self tacking headsail means your crew doesn't have to stir as you throw her through the tacks. The only obvious disadvantage is that you have to furl the genoa every time you tack. Although electric furlers take a lot of the donkey work out of that side of things.

The cockpit layout was good back in 2013 and remains good now. There is enough size and width on this boat to have a centre cockpit with twin wheels and that again is something that is important for those of us planning ocean

passages. You feel nicely enclosed in here but certainly not cramped in at all. Sail controls are all push button from the steering pedestal and the boat I tested had in-mast furling on the main and electric furlers for both inner and outer headsails. The cockpit was a very comfortable space and there was excellent storage in the aft lazarette with a good deal more at the bow and modest amounts under the cockpit seats. In terms of dinghy stowage, Discovery has wisely plumped for davits as opposed to desperately trying to shoehorn a dinghy garage into the transom. The yacht I tested also had a fairly substantial bimini arrangement

which, although it spoilt the look of the boat a tad for our photos, we were inclined to keep up due to the chilly weather. It worked a treat.

Aside from that, there are a few of those nice little quality Discovery touches such as the solid stainless steel guard rail aft of the shrouds with the boarding ladder beautifully built into it. It's definitely a boat that has an air of quality about it.

Down below

So far, although impressed with the overall look and feel of the 54, there wasn't a drastic difference between the new boat and the old Southerly – aside from what was going on under the water of course. Stepping down below is where things really changed. Southerly always had a decent reputation for quality, but there is absolutely no question that Discovery is a real step up. The company has always had an excellent reputation for the quality of its woodworking and this was very evident on the new 54. I recall that, two years ago at the Southampton Boat Show, Discovery brought one of the original Southerly 535's along as a bit of a placeholder. I remember thinking then that I wasn't that impressed with the interior. The transformation that Discovery has done is really quite something. It may seem a bit harsh on the old Northshore Southerlys but the quality of the fit out feels like you are moving from flat-packed IKEA furniture and buying some beautifully crafted heirloom furniture instead. Quality is often an almost intangible thing, but ultimately you can just tell that the carpenters at Discovery don't cut any corners – in the metaphorical sense anyway. →





With a 54' yacht of this quality and in this price bracket you are definitely moving into the semi custom end of the market when it comes to layout. The favoured layout – and the one that our test boat featured – is three cabins with a palatial aft suite with an ensuite shower and heads slightly forward and to starboard. This also gives you a generous guest suite forward with an ensuite bathroom, plus a bunk room situated just aft of this and on the port side. The main saloon is very roomy and Discovery has narrowed down the mullions on the coachroof windows, allowing for even more light in here. It appeared to me that the windows were also slightly lower than they were on the old 535, allowing for better visibility. Of course, this is one of the greatest assets of the deck saloon layout. The saloon space is simply a lovely area to sit and watch the world go by while the chart table is situated to starboard and offers a commanding view out forward. That means you could confidently take your night watch from this position of comfort given that the autopilot is linked up to the chartplotter here. The boat we tested actually had a chartplotter in every single cabin which seemed a little bit of overkill to me, but I was assured that his was an owner's specification.

In common with most Discoverys, the galley was a longitudinal affair that is on a lower level than the main saloon seating area on the way to the master cabin. Some might not like this proximity to the main cabin due to cooking smells etc but from a practical sailing point of view, there is little doubt that it is the most sensible solution. It means you have

an excellent enclosed space with many bracing positions, meaning that cooking at sea is far less fraught than it is on yachts that go for the 'Med-style' L-shaped arrangement.

Overall, the general 'feel' of the Discovery is excellent. The ambience down here is very pleasant and while the old Southerly 535 interior felt like something of a functional necessity, on the 54 it feels as though it has been designed. It has ambience and is a thoroughly pleasant place to be. As a final addendum, engine access is via the owner's suite heads compartment which sounds a bit weird but is actually excellent as it offers a full height door so you can actually step into the engine room. From a yachtie's point of view this truly is living the dream.

Under sail

The day of our test was forecast to be a glorious, bright early November day in the Solent. It didn't quite pan out that way and low grey cloud became even lower as the day wore on until it was pretty much fog.

ABOVE
There's plenty of room to cook up a storm in the good-sized galley

BELOW
The bimini top may not flatter the lines, but doesn't she look snug?

The good news was that the wind kicked off the day blowing about 8kn and by the end it was gusting 25kn with a nasty bit of short Solent chop. Absolutely ideal for testing purposes. We motored out of Lymington almost silently and put the sails up. With a displacement just shy of 25,000kg, this isn't a light boat by any means, but she dealt with the light airs with aplomb and as the breeze began to build she really started to come into her own.

This is definitely a powerful boat and she slipped along very nicely, hitting 9kn on the wind with no problem at all, while the twin rudders gave her plenty of grip even when we overpressed her in order to show off for the photos. Sail handling is extremely simple as you would expect from a yacht with this set-up and the building breeze underlined the versatility of the Solent rig. This being hull number one, there were a couple of small issues with the set-up that I have no doubt will be remedied – two of the winches on the coachroof were too close together, and the vang adjustment was slightly intrusive for the helmsman. But these are minor points that I was assured were being dealt with on this boat before she is handed over to her owner. I guess the big question is whether bolting a fixed keel onto a yacht originally designed as a swing keel works. I'd have to say in this case, it's a definite yes. She seemed poised, comfortable, stiff and quick. →





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SAM'S VERDICT

Overall, I was impressed by the 54. The step up in quality since Discovery took over production is marked and makes for a lovely product. I couldn't really fault her sailing either. She was good fun and didn't feel like a big, heavy boat – which she essentially is. It's intriguing that Discovery now has a 54 and a 55 in their range but – while both are blue water yachts – there is more of a crossover with

the 54 between the 'med style' cruisers and the serious blue water boats. Some dyed in the wool blue water cruisers would frown if you don't have a skeg hung rudder, for example. For those sailors, the 55 works admirably while the 54 is arguably more versatile and will appeal to a broader audience.

LOOKS: ★★★★★

BLUE WATER CAPABILITY: ★★★★★

COMFORT: ★★★★★

THE SPEC

Overall Length: 16.83m (55'2")

Length Waterline : 14.93m (49'0")

Beam: 4.8m (15'7")

Draft: 2.23m (7'3")

Displacement: 24,860kg (54,806lbs)

Sail Area: 180.36m² (1,941ft²)

Main: 83.06m² (894ft²)

Self-tacking jib: 51m² (549ft²)

Furling genoa 140%: 97.30m² (1,047ft²)

Mechanical

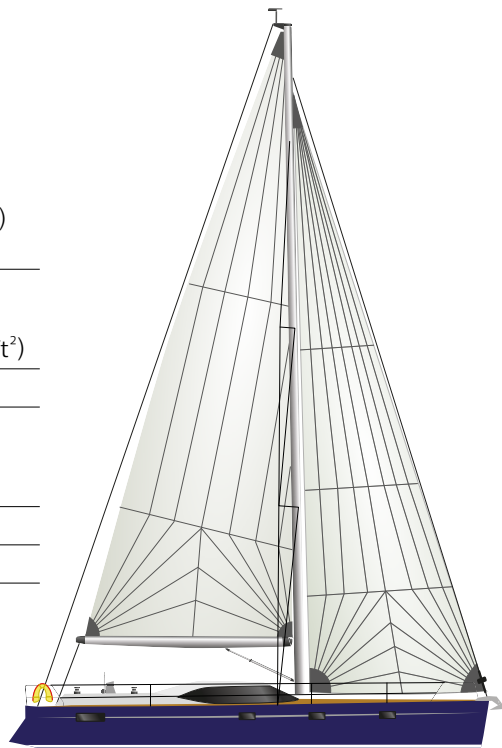
Engine: Yanmar 160hp

Fuel: 970 litres (213 US Gals)

Water: 800 litres (176 US Gals)

Price: £1,095,000

Contact: discoveryyachts.com



OYSTER 565

The last model launched by Oyster before its restructuring and the successor to the Oyster 56. This Rob Humphreys design is the baby of the range and she features the option of a fixed keel or a stub keel with a centreboard.

oysteryachts.com



CONTEST 57CS

Dutch boatbuilder Contest has a burgeoning reputation for high quality yachts. The 57 has been around for almost a decade now but remains a stylish yacht that features a similar blend of quality, blue water potential and speed to the 54.

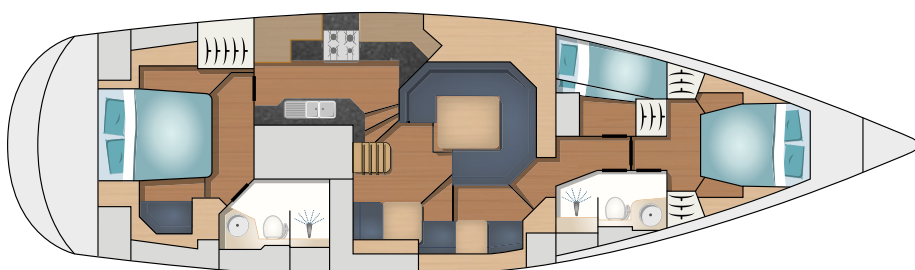
contestyachts.com



SOUTHERLY 540

Perhaps the most obvious alternative to the Discovery 54 is the Southerly – given that they have the same lines. The big difference of course is that the Southerly features a swing keel which gives this boat the potential to explore shallow creeks.

southerly.com



CALISTA PAXTON

There's a new man behind Sweden's best-kept yachting secret. Sam Fortescue went to meet the new owner of Arcona UK

Ian Dighé is sitting in the cockpit of an Arcona 380 looking very at home. Proprietorial, one might even say. We're bobbing amongst a forest of masts in the marina at the Southampton Boat Show, where he has been enthusiastically launching the Swedish yard's newest addition: the 435. That he is new to the game of selling boats, you'd never guess.

He talks enthusiastically about the new boat's wider stern, creating a bigger aft cabin with more headroom than the old 430. "It hasn't compromised her sailing abilities," he tells the assembled members of the fourth estate as we scribble furious notes. "She just wants to go fast." Ian has been at the helm of Arcona's crucial UK operation for less than a year, acquiring it from the widely respected Tony Bottomley for an undisclosed sum in early 2018.

If you haven't heard of Arcona Yachts, and are concerned that this gap in your knowledge might be shown up at the yacht club bar - don't worry: you're among the majority of British sailors. That is all likely to change soon, though, as Ian is pumping money into the UK dealership to broaden its reach. But just in case it does come up over a pint of Christmas ale, here is the Cliffs Notes version.

Arcona was until very recently a family-run business building yachts in the sweet spot of the independently-minded cruising sailor, from 34ft to 46ft. The brand sits plumb in the middle of Sweden's great tradition of building comfortable, seaworthy sailing boats. Except, that is, for one detail: they lacked the heavy displacement that



Dighé for victory

yards like Hallberg-Rassy and Najad are known for. Designer Stefan Qviberg has seen to that, penning lines that are stable and fast, while top quality build ensures that not a kilogram of unnecessary weight is added. Since the first Arcona 32 was launched in 1982, the designer has drawn 10 further yachts only - all for Arcona. It is rare enough for this kind of relationship to last into a fourth decade, but unheard of for it to be a monogamous one. As a result, all the boats have a remarkably coherent look.

Long before he bought the UK business, Ian Dighé had admired the work of the Scandinavian yards -

ABOVE

Ian Dighé pondering a promising future for Arcona Yachts

from the perspective of a boatowner. He bought a Sweden Yachts 45 in the 1990s when his career as a corporate financier was booming, then downsized to an Arcona 430 in 2013. "I got to know what is special about these yachts," he says of his period as an owner. "The 430 had a steel frame in the bilge which gives up a bit of weight up but meant she didn't handle like a flighty yacht. She was cleverly designed - it started my love affair with Arcona."

You could say it's a classic case of 'I like the boat so much, I'll buy the company'. But it hasn't been entirely plain sailing. When the deal to buy Arcona UK was agreed



in late 2017, the company was still owned by Torgny Jansson, whose father had established a shipyard in the Stockholm Archipelago in the late Sixties. “At the heart of it, Torgny has an incredible relationship with Stefan [Qviberg] the designer. Over the last 15 years, they have

produced a series of brilliant yachts.”

So it must have come as rather a surprise when, in early April last year - before feet were really under desks - the Swedish boatbuilding business of Arcona was sold to an investor. And not just any investor, but a certain Hakan Eksandh, already

ABOVE
Ian's Arcona 430
Madcap in action

owner of Najad - the well regarded luxury cruiser builder that has had a troubled recent history. “The change of ownership came as a shock - as in unexpected,” Ian says quickly. “But we took it in our stride.”

Production of Arcona's smaller yachts remains on the Estonian island of Saaremaa, but the 435 and 465 have since moved to the same Swedish subcontractor that builds Najads - Sailyard at Uddevalla in the islands north of Gothenburg. “The change means that Najad and Arcona goes from three production sites to two efficient and modern facilities,” explains a spokesman for Eksandh. But all parties insist that the Arcona DNA will remain intact.

In fact, Torgny will stay on at Arcona as an ‘in house consultant’. What that really means is that he is easing the transition to the new ownership, and ushering in a new generation of Arcona yachts, after it became clear that his children weren't interested in running the business. “Torgny's move was about succession planning,” says Ian. “I think it is for the better.”

It is welcome news to the tight-knit community of Arcona owners, as well as those eyeing up one of the yachts for the future. “You couldn't buy one and not have a relationship with Torgny,” he adds. He says that once it became known that Torgny was staying on at the business, “you saw all these owners suddenly re-engage with their yacht builder”.

Obviously that's important for Ian Dighé, as the man who has just spent his hard earned cash on something of a lifestyle business. A poor succession and brand confusion would not make a very enjoyable gift to himself. “We had to invest in rebuilding UK confidence in the Arcona operation,” he admits. But it's also important because of his plans for the business. The UK is already by far Arcona's largest market outside Sweden. And he has plans to grow it - something he has already started to do by boosting investment in people. Not only has he appointed two directors, in the form of Simon Rosier and Alasdair Marshall, but he has set up a dedicated brokerage wing, overseen by Susie Yates.

“Tony [Bottomley] recognised





that the market was changing,” says Ian. “It needed a scaling up of effort to maintain the brand in the UK.” A key part of the expansion plans is a move to a new building on the same site at Hamble Point Marina. For years, Arcona UK has been based out of an office that

looked as if it owed something to the Portkabin. “We’re moving into a new office in early 2019 - a signal of confidence in the brand, the business and very important for would-be buyers to realise this business is stable.” The marina redevelopment by

ABOVE
Stefan Qviberg's first design for Arcona, the 32

BELOW
Qviberg happy at work in his studio

owner MDL runs to eight state-of-the-art sales units in what it calls “the UK’s centre for boat sales”.

All this ties in with vague plans for Arcona to introduce a larger flagship. Fairly uniquely among successful boatbuilding operations, the company has been conservative on introducing new models – just 11 have been launched in more than 35 years. And, unlike both Najad and X-Yachts, Arcona has been reluctant to follow the trend for super-sized 50- and 60-footers. But that may be due to change. “There’s a whiff of a longer boat in Torgny Jansson’s mind,” says Ian.

He is hoping to return gradually to the sales levels seen 15 years ago when Arcona first launched in the UK. “There’s very strong brokerage activity and evidence of new buyers coming in,” he says, but warns, “we’re not a volume producer.” Then there is the question of who will sell Najad yachts in the UK – something Ian is eyeing up after the relationship with the previous UK dealer ended.

Sadly, since Ian Dighé spoke to ST, Arcona’s dedicated designer Stefan Qviberg has died after a long battle with illness. The news strikes at the heart of Arcona, but Ian remains sanguine. “We greatly mourn the loss of Stefan Qviberg,” he says. “But the heritage of his designs and developments lives on and his philosophy will influence Arcona’s future product launches.”

Stefan Qviberg

Swedish yacht designer Stefan Qviberg, best known for his collaboration with Arcona Yachts, has died aged 69 after a long struggle with illness.

His work with the brand’s founder, Torgny Jansson, helped position Arcona among Europe’s serious sailors as one of the world’s best-respected builders of cruiser-racers. The yachts he drew attracted attention as much for their sleek lines and Scandinavian pedigree as they did for their strong race performances.

Jansson paid tribute to a man he considered a close personal friend after 36 years of work together. “Stefan’s passion for sailing and yacht construction have greatly contributed to the success of Arcona yachts and the company’s strength in the performance sector.” He went on to describe the “absolute privilege of having his talents only to the service of Arcona,” and described him as “one of the absolute best in the industry”.

Qviberg trained in the shipbuilding industry in the late 1960s, but quickly decided to move upstream into timber. He bought a sawmill, but carried on designing yachts as a hobby until



Arcona took off. At that point he left the sawmill to his son Ulf and turned his full attention to boats, although he only ever worked for Arcona. In total, he designed 11 Arcona yachts, including the new 435, that was launched earlier this year (see ST December for a review).

Ian Dighé, owner of Arcona UK, told ST: “His legacy of superb design with Arcona is immense. He was a great supporter of all that we are doing here in the UK. He will be greatly missed. Rather poignantly he had arranged for [us to have] a model of the 435 hull, which will have pride of place in due course.”

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Dare to dream

Many sailors nurture an ambition to sail around the world but Jimmy Cornell is a man who has actually done it – many times. Here are his passage planning tips for those of us who dream of the day...

One of the most frequently asked questions at my lectures and seminars is when is the best time to leave on a world voyage. To anyone looking over 50, my answer is: as soon as you can, while to younger ones is not to leave it too late. However, I always make the point that I am hardly the right person to answer that question having left my job at the BBC World Service in 1975 aged 35 to set off on a six-year voyage with my wife Gwenda and our two young children.

Our voyage was a great success; we covered some 68,000 miles, visited over 60 countries, and would have continued if the children hadn't reached the age where they needed to complete their education ashore. Shortly after our return home I organised the first ARC and its success led to the first round the world rally. The route and timing of the rally was chosen carefully to take advantage of favourable seasons and weather conditions along the projected course. Also, knowing that most participants wanted to accomplish a circumnavigation in

the shortest time possible, the rally was to last less than two years. This was a rather tall order but, in the end, proved to be the ideal solution and was not altered for subsequent round the world rallies. Some people might regard this as being too fast and they are probably right. However, those rallies were organised events and the sailors taking part in them wanted above all to realise their dream of completing a round the world voyage and therefore were prepared to move at a relatively fast pace. For anyone short of time, the timing is quite realistic as it coincides with the safe seasons in the various oceans.

The majority of round the world voyages undertaken by cruising sailors are sailed from east to west for the very good reason that such a route benefits from mostly favourable conditions. With good planning the prevailing wind systems will ensure that most sailing will be done in trade wind conditions, and the timing also avoids being in a critical area during the tropical storm seasons.

The number of cruising boats attempting an east-about circumnavigation against the

ABOVE
Tonga's northern group of Vava'u offers the best of the South Seas, from spectacular anchorages to diving with whales.

BELOW
Santa Cruz Marina located in the centre of Tenerife's capital is an excellent place to prepare for the forthcoming passage

prevailing winds is very small. Similarly, round the world voyages in high latitudes are almost exclusively the preserve of ocean races. There are therefore few cruising sailors who can boast of having sailed south of the three symbolic Capes: Horn, Leeuwin and Good Hope. Only the latter is passed regularly by cruising boats, as the vast majority of circumnavigations are accomplished by way of the Panama Canal. Those who are determined to forgo that convenient shortcut can reach the South Pacific by way of the Beagle Channel and Southern Chile. Those planning to sail the Panama Canal route have two basic options:



ALL PICS: JIMMY CORNELL



- A route via the Eastern Caribbean, Panama, South Pacific, North Indian Ocean, Red Sea, Suez Canal and Mediterranean;

- A route via the Eastern Caribbean, Panama, South Pacific, South Indian Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope. In the South Atlantic boats bound for Europe have the choice of returning home by a direct route via the Canaries and Azores, or a longer route via the Eastern Caribbean.

Both routes have advantages and disadvantages. The former is easier to plan to take advantage of favourable seasons, enjoys better weather conditions, the offshore passages are generally shorter and there are more convenient stopover places. Unfortunately, safety concerns in the North Indian Ocean and Red Sea have deterred most sailors on a world voyage to sail this route in recent years. This is shown by the statistics obtained from the Suez Canal, where the number of northbound transits by cruising boats has dropped from 171 in 2010 to 14 in 2017, while Cape Town has seen an increase in northbound voyages from 150 to 236.

By comparison, the Cape of Good Hope route needs more careful planning to benefit from favourable seasons and winds, the offshore legs are longer, and sailing conditions

BELOW
Landfall in the spectacular Marquesas Islands: gateway to French Polynesia

can also be more challenging.

Although sailing around the bottom of Africa may appear to be daunting, given the meeting of two great oceans takes place here, with patience and good timing that challenge can easily be overcome. It is telling that scores of cruising boats safely pass through those waters every year.

Two-year voyage

For voyages whose point of departure is Northern Europe, the recommended time for leaving is summer when optimum conditions can be expected in the North Sea, English Channel, and across the Bay of Biscay. Departures from Mediterranean ports and Gibraltar can be left as late as October. By →





'The distance between Panama and the Torres Strait is over 9,000 miles and this vast stretch can be sailed during one safe season'

that time anyone planning to cross the Atlantic should be on their way to the Canaries, whether sailing directly, via Madeira or Western Morocco.

The earliest time for an Atlantic crossing from the Canaries along the NE trade wind route is after the middle of November, as such a departure ensures that landfall in one of the Caribbean islands is made in early December at the beginning of the safe winter season. Those who wish to stick with the two-year schedule can only spend about two months in the Eastern Caribbean, as the favourable timing dictates that the Panama Canal is transited in February or early March. The reason for such a tight schedule is the simple fact that the distance between Panama and the Torres Strait is over 9,000 miles and while this vast stretch can be sailed during one safe season, a sustained rhythm must be sustained at all times. There are however too many attractive landfalls en route to tempt the faint-hearted and I would be the last to blame them as I still regard the South Pacific to be the most enticing cruising area on the planet.

There are two basic options to reach French Polynesia from Panama and each could fit into the overall schedule. The traditional route to the Marquesas via the Galapagos Islands has been losing its popularity due to the complexity and cost of strict formalities imposed by the Ecuadorean authorities. The simpler alternative is to sail nonstop to the

Marquesas, and in March-April favourable sailing conditions should be found by staying initially just north of the equator. Either route will reach Tahiti by early June and the start of the safe season in the South Pacific. From there on, a steady pace will need to be kept while passing through the Cooks and Tonga. As these are the months when the SE trades are at their most constant, these long passages can usually be made at good speeds. Passages from Fiji onwards should be timed to pass through the Torres Strait before the end of August or early in September if planning to take the Cape of Good Hope route.

The passage across the South Indian Ocean will have to be made in a similar rhythm, with long periods at sea and little time to spend in the islands en route. The start of the cyclone season in November indicates a departure from Mauritius or Reunion for the passage to South Africa not later than the middle of October. The next leg to Cape Town is best made between November and December, when conditions around the tip of Africa are considered to be the most favourable.

Voyages returning to Europe via South Africa have three options for a return home: a shortest route via St Helena, the Cape Verde and Canary Islands, an intermediate route directly via the Azores, and a longer route via Brazil, the Eastern Caribbean and thence to the Azores. On all these routes,



ABOVE LEFT
Port Circumcision
in the depths of
the Antarctic

ABOVE
Egmont Atoll, Chagos,
in the middle of
the Indian Ocean

BELOW
Jimmy's inaugural
round the world
rally in Papeete,
French Polynesia

Northern Europe could be reached in July or August, exactly two years after the start of the voyage.

Those planning to take the northern route to the Mediterranean, provided the safety situation warrants it, have the advantage that the passage across the North Indian Ocean can be done in January or February, which allows a longer time to be spent earlier in the Pacific. This means that the Torres Strait need only be passed in September or even October so that there is enough time to call at Darwin, and possibly use it as a base to see some of Australia's interior, and later also stop at some Indonesian islands en route to Singapore.

The end of the year will be celebrated in Western Malaysia or Thailand, while preparing for a





winter crossing of the North Indian Ocean, when the NE monsoon provides excellent sailing conditions. The subsequent passage through the Red Sea and transiting the Suez Canal in March or April will allow the boat to complete its circumnavigation in less than two years after having left Europe.

As most sailors soon find out, there are so many temptations on the way that often voyages end up stretching into three, four or more years.

However, the main purpose of the hypothetical voyages outlined here is to show that it is indeed possible to plan a two-year circumnavigation in complete safety and with good timing and discipline to be always in the right place at the right time.

Three-year voyage

There is no doubt that the suggested voyage can be much more enjoyable with more time available. After the Atlantic crossing, the first part of the voyage is similar and although more time could be spent in the Caribbean and the Panama Canal transited later, the most rewarding option is to stick with the two-year schedule and use that extra time in the South Pacific to be able to savour the islands of French Polynesia at a more relaxed pace. After Panama, a challenging but most rewarding option is to bypass the Galapagos Islands and set course for Easter Island, if necessary stopping in mainland Ecuador. The attraction of this ambitious detour is

to make landfall in one of the most fascinating locations in the world with the added bonus of also calling later at rarely visited Pitcairn Island.

Landfall in French Polynesia can be made at the Gambier Islands, from where the shortest route to Tahiti cuts across the southern Tuamotus. However, missing the Marquesas is a shame so that from Pitcairn it is possible to sail directly to the Marquesas and cruise the Tuamotus later, on the way to Tahiti. Leaving the Society Islands before the end of July makes it possible to spend some time in the island groups en route to Fiji, and allow detours to such places as Suvarrow, Niue, Vava'u and Samoa.

At this point a decision must be made as to where to spend the approaching cyclone season. There are three options: remain in the tropics and leave the boat unattended in a local boatyard; continue cruising but stay within reach of a cyclone shelter; or leave for an area not affected by tropical storms. Although there are places in the tropical Central South Pacific where it may be possible to spend the cyclone season, in view of the effects of climate change, such a decision should not be taken lightly. In any case, most insurance companies are no longer prepared to provide coverage during the critical period. The third option, of sailing to New Zealand, which is outside the cyclone belt, is both the safest and most attractive and also the most popular choice. Another advantage of such a detour is that New Zealand has excellent repair and servicing facilities.

Passages from the tropics to New Zealand are normally undertaken in October. Most boats spend the entire cyclone season in New Zealand and resume their voyage by sailing for the Torres Strait and Indian Ocean in May or June the following year. Such a departure allows them to visit some of the island groups bordering on the Coral Sea, such as New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and even Papua New Guinea. The alternative is to sail from New Zealand across the Tasman Sea to Southeast Australia in February or March, spend some time there and, at the end of the cyclone season, continue inside

BELOW
Easter Island in the middle of the Pacific is an iconic stopover for many blue water cruisers



ABOUT JIMMY CORNELL
Jimmy Cornell is a Romanian-born British yachtsman. He is bestselling author of *World Cruising Routes*. Other books published include *200,000 miles, World Cruising Destinations* and *Cornell's Ocean Atlas*

the Great Barrier Reef towards the Torres Strait. An earlier arrival in the Indian Ocean would allow more time to be spent at various places along the subsequent route.

The onward Indian Ocean route calls at Cocos Keeling and Mauritius, although with good timing it is possible to sail a more northerly route by stopping at Chagos and possibly the Seychelles. From Mauritius or Reunion the southern route to South Africa stays east of Madagascar, whereas those who have sailed the northern route and have continued to the west coast of Madagascar will continue to South Africa through the Mozambique Channel. From that point onward, the timing coincides with the two-year schedule.

Although not recommended at this time, a return to Europe by way of the North Indian Ocean has the advantage of not only being shorter but also allowing more time to be spent in the South Pacific as the Torres Strait need only be transited by late September or early October. The coming winter would be spent in Western Malaysia and Thailand before the North Indian Ocean is crossed during the NE monsoon in the early months of the year.



Sea change

The ARC is an annual migration of yachts across the Atlantic that has been going on for 33 years. But what motivates people to go? Sam Jefferson assesses whether ARC entrants are rich and/or strange...



Back in 1492 Christopher Columbus headed off from Las Palmas and sailed across the Atlantic for the first time. It's lauded as a mighty achievement. True, once he got across, he thought he had found Japan – that takes the sheen off things a bit – but nevertheless, top marks for effort. Mostly though, what a lucky swine. He lived in a time when the world was a mystery. One quick leap of faith, a gentle trundle across the Atlantic with the trade winds and, bingo – you're a bloody celebrity. No Instagram, no hordes of followers on Twitter all he had to do was set off across an unknown ocean which many believed ended in a giant waterfall. These days you have to try a whole lot harder. Which brings me to the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers – or ARC as it is better known. It has been

running for 33 years now. Every year a fleet of around 200 cruising yachts gathers in Las Palmas in the Canaries and prepares for a trip across the Atlantic. The event is organised by the World Cruising Club and they have it absolutely nailed these days. It's incredibly well run, with a rolling programme of seminars, excursions and drinks receptions. It's a set up that has coaxed countless sailors across the Atlantic within the safe framework of a cruise in company – these days about 800 or so like minded yachtsmen and women take part.

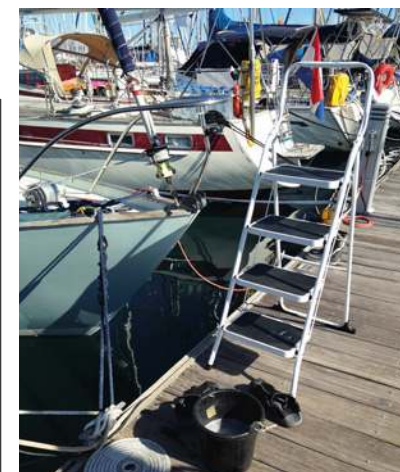
I love the event because it's a voyage for our times. While Columbus's trip heralded an age of discovery, the ARC is about something much more vital – the age of self discovery. It cuts to the heart of the modern human condition. Who am I, and what the hell am I doing here? Is there more

ABOVE
The ARC fleet makes its departure from Las Palmas in pristine conditions

BELOW
Silliness on the pontoons

to life than drizzle and Lidl and Waitrose and Netflix, Amazon, Kwik Fit, Fitness First, Southern Rail, Dunkin Donuts, profit warnings, warnings from prophets, Brexit and sitting at your desk on a Monday morning wondering what happened to your life? ARC entrants don't need to sail across the Atlantic in any sort of hunter gatherer survival trip – it's not like you are trying to escape conflict or poverty – people





humans to legitimise it – to make it feel safe. It’s a weird dichotomy and one that is utterly compelling.

So this was what I was interested in. What pushed people to take part: what had pushed them here? Who were these people and what were they escaping from? With this in mind, I opted for a Hunter S Thompson style total immersion and infiltration technique. I was going to have to drink an awful lot of rotten cocktails to get to the heart of this story. To my disgust, I noted that I had just missed the ‘Night in Rio’ themed cocktail party so I was going to have to launch straight into the ARC farewell drinks. I had a day to get through before that though, so I tramped the pontoons hunting out interesting people. I wanted the dreamers, the seekers and I asked but one question: why?

ABOVE
The ARC has become so successful it now runs three routes; ARC from Las Palmas to St Lucia, ARC+ which also takes in the Cape Verdes, and this year there is a third route which takes entrants via Cape Verdes to St Vincent

RIGHT
(top) Tim Butler with his girlfriend on the eve of the trip and in a mellow mood; (below) Tim’s special bio-hazard foot cleaning contraption

BELOW
Tim bidding farewell to Las Palmas and unwelcome journalistic intrusions

forgotten to take my shoes off. His eyes blazed with real fury. I started to back off; muttering that I was a journalist and I was sorry. He saw me off with all the righteous ire of a Norfolk farmer who has just caught you red-handed on his land with a brace of pheasants in each fist. I fled. Later, returning cautiously, I noted that his boat had some elaborate Foot and Mouth style biosecurity footwash system set-up, that you were meant to use before stepping aboard. There was no going back; the crime I had committed was unforgivable. So that was Tim; sadly, I caught him at an iffy moment. An Atlantic crossing will no doubt mellow him. I am going to insist that my colleague report on how he got on when he arrives... He has his own blog too: todayboughtabout.com

just do it because they can; in search of a few moments of beauty and joy.

There’s more too; think about it, this is an event that is all about heading off into one of the last great wastelands – so what do you do? Sail in company with 200 other yachts. It makes no sense but it cuts right to the heart of the human condition. I want to be alone, I want to escape the shackles of normal life so I’ll surround myself with other

Tim Butler: small boat enthusiast and foot hygiene enthusiast - Excalibur, Halmatic 30

I thought a good place to start would be Tim Butler, owner of the smallest yacht in the race, Excalibur, a Halmatic 30. Tim sounded like prime fodder; a digital designer who had some sort of epiphany and headed out to sea. He had a blog too that speaks of leaving London being like ‘having a heavy weight lifted off his chest’. I hopped aboard Excalibur and tapped respectfully on the cabin top. Tim emerged and the sight was both reassuring and worrying; Huge hair, huge beard, pyjama bottoms and no top. “I’m terribly sorry, did I wake you up?” I said (it was around midday). Immediately I realised I had made a bad break. Of course he hadn’t been sleeping, he was preparing his boat for the bloody ARC, he growled. Already riled, he padded forward and then stopped dead, eyes bulging in disbelief. I had





The Ballantynes: a family afloat - Hullabaloo, Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 46

I spent most of the rest of the day in a sort of existential funk. Too shaken by Tim to do anything. Eventually, however, I met a lovely family aboard Hullabaloo and asked them the question that had been in my mind all day – not just about the ARC but also about my career as a journalist following this bruising encounter - why? Here was something different again because this was a family trip. Husband, wife, two kids, plus family friend Megan as crew. I spoke to Jennifer first and discovered she was a reluctant sailor who actually got seasick.

“I’m doing it in part because it has always been my husband’s dream and partly because I wanted to take the kids away from modern life.

“This is my husband Neil’s dream. He travelled a lot as a child and always had it in his mind. I have taken a year break from work and am home schooling the kids.

“We actually set off from Venice and have been doing this for nine months. For most of that time our kids, Finley and Conall have complained bitterly about missing Wi-Fi and their PS3s. It’s only recently that they have started to appreciate the trip more.

“This is important to me. I want them to grow up understanding that there is more to life than social media, mobile phones and Wi-Fi.

“As for me, Initially I was going to fly across to the Caribbean after the crossing but then I felt that this was something we should experience as a family.”

Harvey Allpress: social media sensation and anti-Russian sandwich thief - no boat

After that it was time for the ARC drinks party. This was my chance. Donning a pair of soft brogues and chinos, I strode out into the warm Las Palmas night. Things went far better than I could possibly have hoped for. First up I met Harvey Allpress; early twenties, hair in a topknot and beard. Not what I was expecting. He approached me in a circumspect manner and said he was looking for crew. He was on a Russian boat that was loaded with vodka and had problems with the mast. “Why would I want to be crew on that?” I asked, bewildered. Turned out he was one of the crew but was looking for a new boat and thought I might be a skipper. He was swiftly disillusioned, but I listened to his story with interest: He was hoping to make it from the UK to LA without spending any money. “I’ve been living out of bins these past few days,” he explained. So why the ARC? Aside



ABOVE
(Left) The Ballantynes plus extra crewmember Megan on the left

BELOW
(Right) Harvey’s ‘crew needed’ poster. Attributes listed include ‘strong fishmonger skills’ and ‘huge social media following’; (Left) Harvey’s makeshift camp on the beach

from being a free way to cross the ocean, Harvey had a lot of Thoreau-esque clichés on communing with nature, escape, drinking the wave not the water, gathering rosebuds while you may, live deep and suck the marrow out of life, carpe diem etc. In other words, he found his job boring and I think he wanted to be a hit on social media. To do that, he had struck upon the concept of travelling for free. I urged him to go back to the Russians and their boatload of vodka, pointing out that ‘to catch the ultimate ride, you had to pay the ultimate price’. I don’t think he had seen Point Break but he liked that. I saw him later in the evening too in a bar where he was loaded up with a huge box of rapidly decaying sandwiches he had stolen from the ARC drinks party. Anyway, it turned out later that he had never been the crew on the Russian yacht and the vodka thing was an outrageous





ARC factfile

- The aim is to get from A to B safely in the shortest time
- The first ARC was organised by Jimmy Cornell back in 1986 when 204 yachts made the trip from Las Palmas to Barbados
- Since 1990, the voyage has concluded in Rodney Bay, St Lucia
- The trip is 2,700nm and generally takes 3–4 weeks.
- The ARC course record is 8 days, 6 hours, 29 minutes and 15 seconds, held by Rambler 88, Juan K canting keel maxi (George David, USA), set in ARC 2016.

Contact:

World Cruising Club: worldcruising.com

slur. What was true was that he was sleeping on a beach under a tarp. I know that because I saw him being moved on the following morning by the police. **Follow him on Instagram @harveyallpress**

Max Fercondini: big in Brazil– Ananta, Najad 390

Now, so far, most people were in a sort of existential crossroads but few more so than Max Fercondini. Nice chap in his early thirties. He looked quite a bit like Brandon Flowers from the Killers – if that means anything to anyone – with a very finely honed moustache. Anyway, he's quite famous in his native Brazil as a star of TV and film. He had been invited to crew on Ananta via a friend of a friend and 'couldn't turn it down.' Fair enough, the call of the ocean etc... yet there was more, much more. Max had absconded to Portugal from his native Brazil following some romantic complications. He had bought a boat there and is planning to sail to Turkey next summer. He would be filming that trip – and this

one – on YouTube. So two strings to this really – first fame – or at least continued fame but much more importantly the search for a cure for heartbreak. What more noble reason is there out there? He was excited about doing the Atlantic crossing but also concerned about doing the crossing in the company of a couple – however nice they were. I couldn't help wondering if an Atlantic crossing would be a cure for a broken heart or a reckoning – all will be revealed on the other side. **Follow Max on Instagram @maxfercondini**

Fond farewell

Two days later, I waved my new found friends (probably not Harvey) off. It was a pristine day that fairly glowed with beauty. The fleet was ushered gently out into the Atlantic, carried forward by a benign breeze that caressed the sails and affectionately ruffled the water. Back on land, the marina felt strangely desolate and empty. The hangers on were gone, the bunting was coming down and there was that terrible

ABOVE
Gennakers flying on a stunning departure day

BELOW
Max preparing for departure aboard Ananta

gnawing feeling we humans often get that something was happening and now it has gone. Meanwhile, out on the ocean, the yachts were soon swallowed up by the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean. I have often heard sailors complain that the ARC has rendered the Atlantic crossing mundane. It hasn't. As the fleet scatters to the wind, the contestants will soon find themselves in splendid isolation and the reckoning begins – because the Atlantic will not lie down and be prosaic. The ARC has coerced entrants into one of the world's great wildernesses and, to run wing and wing before the trade winds and rolling swells of the Atlantic is something beautiful, timeless and unforgettable. Once out there, comes the ultimate realisation that, in a world where we cling to people, information, mobile phones, TV, social media... name your poison – we can still ultimately bear to be alone and face the terrifying beauty of our oceans. That is the gift of the ARC: 500-plus years on from Columbus' frantic search for sushi in the Bahamas, there is still a mystery and magnificence to the Atlantic that no toga party, beer, safety briefing, GPS or fleet tracking device can take away.

Did Tim make it across without lynching a crew member with dirty feet? Did Harvey get beaten up for slandering a bunch of Russian sailors? Did Finlay cope without Wi-Fi, and did Max find a cure for heartache? Find out in the March edition of Sailing Today when our intrepid reporter heads to St Lucia in search of rum punch and the truth. ✦





GULL'S EYE

ROYAL QUAYS MARINA

NORTH SHIELDS

Newcastle itself lies
13km up the Tyne

NEWCASTLE

54.99.58° N, 01.45.06° W

Newcastle Royal Quays
Marina offers some of the best
boating facilities in the north east, and is the
perfect place from which to start a North
Sea passage writes **Sue Pelling**

BOATYARD

Featuring a 40t travel
hoist and hard standing

MARINA OFFICE

CAR PARK

CAFE

RIVER TYNE ENTRANCE

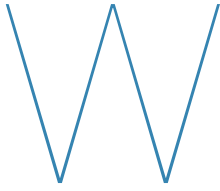
The Tyne is a deep water port so no draft constraints for yachts



PORT BUOY



Royal Quays Marina Newcastle



When you sail into River Tyne after a tough day on the North Sea you can

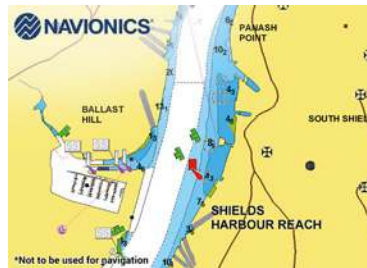
be sure of a warm welcome as you make your way two nautical miles up river to Royal Quays Marina. Snuggled away in a sheltered location on the north side of the Tyne, and built around Newcastle's historic Albert Edward Dock, Royal Quays Marina offers the cruising sailor the perfect base from which to explore the north-east coast of the UK. With its all-tide access, it is operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a friendly and knowledgeable team headed by Matthew Simms the Marina Manager, and has top class facilities including new luxury washrooms, all maintained to a high standard throughout the year.

The marina is also part of an annual berth-holders scheme that offers free reciprocal berthing between all six Quay Marinas around the UK, which makes it a highly attractive, cost effective holiday option for UK-based cruising sailors.

Royal Quays' convenient location with excellent transport services including nearby Newcastle International Airport just 15 miles away, has also turned it into an international gateway for those preparing for, or arriving from, a North Sea passage. With The Netherlands and its beautiful cruising ground of the IJsselmeer a 36-hour sail away, or a bit further to southern Norway, Royal Quays Marina is fast becoming the preferred stop-off option



ABOVE
The sea lock at Royal Quays Marina with a good view of the new cafe and harbourmaster's office



for serious cruising sailors.

Although the big ship building industry on the River Tyne has ceased to flourish, the River remains important commercially with the Port of Tyne handling 100s of ships a week, including a huge contingent of cruise ships using the cruise terminal's four cruise berths adjacent to Royal Quays Marina.

Out and about from the marina you'll find one of the most interesting, and convenient places to visit other than Royal Quays outlet centre and restaurants/cafes on the 'doorstep', is North Shield Fish Quay, a 25-minute walk away, and which dates back to the 13th Century. Apparently the town of North Shields took its name from the shielings or shiels – fisherman's huts. Now, not only can you enjoy some top

rated fish and chips in this buzzing quayside town, or snap up fresh fish from docks but there is also plenty of opportunity to relax in one of the many, pubs, restaurants and cafes.

It is also worth paying a visit to The Old Low Light heritage centre at Clifford's Fort to find out more about the history of the Fish Quay or enjoy The North Shields Town Trail, which is a two and a half mile circular walk that links many local heritage locations. For a good leg-stretch after fish and chips, the promenade walk from the Fish Quay to Tynemouth is rewarded with fantastic views of the mouth of the river from the ruins of Tynemouth Priory and Castle, which dominate the headland.

For a bit of an adventure, a trip into the historic city of Newcastle on the Metro is worthwhile. From the marina it is a 10min walk to the local Metro station, then just 20 minutes by Metro (train) to the centre of town. It is even possible to head eight miles upriver to the City by boat and moor up for the day at Newcastle City Marina, located on the Quayside between the iconic Tyne and Millennium Bridges.



54.99.58° N,
01.45.06° W



RON FRASER, S/Y GIANNA, BAVARIA 49

"I brought Gianna to Royal Quays Marina after buying her in Holland in 2015, since when I have cruised her extensively on the local North East coast, as well as further afield to Scandinavia, the west coast of Scotland, and the South Coast and Channel Islands.



Wherever our cruises take us, I realise that few marinas compare with my home berth at Royal Quays Marina. The new showers and toilet facilities are the best I have come across, the marina is always tidy and well maintained, and the staff are friendly and helpful. Plus there is a great new cafe."

MARINA GUIDE

The marina is easily accessible at all states of the tide through a locking system and there is always plenty of space for visitors on the fully serviced pontoon berths.

Super-duper new shower/bath and toilet blocks with disabled facilities are located adjacent to the cafe bar restaurant and can be accessed by the same security system that controls access to the pontoons. At the height of the season additional 'overflow' facilities are available on the ground floor of the marina office building.

The laundry is also situated on the ground floor of the marina office building and the equipment is operated by tokens, which along with soap powder, can be purchased from the office. An ironing board is also available from the office.

Like all Royal Quays Marinas, owners of visiting yachts to this Newcastle base can feel confident about yacht safety with the round-the-clock monitored security CCTV surveillance, controlled security access, and regular security patrols of the marina.

Royal Quays also has good boatyard facilities, and the secure storage plus 40 tonne boat lift with jib crane, makes it an ideal option for lay-up/fitting out. There are plenty of marine chandlery services available locally too, including Storrar Marine Store, and PA Lynch Captain's Locker.

With such a lot on offer it is not surprising Royal Quays Marina Newcastle is recognised in the Yacht Harbour Association's Gold Anchor Award Scheme with five Anchors – the only coastal marina in the North of England to have this accolade. The marina was also runner up in the Marina of the Year Award in 2015 and 2018. →



FACTFILE

ROYAL QUAYS MARINA

Website quaymarinas.com/our-marinas/royal-quays

Tel: +44 (0)191 272 8282

Mob: +44 (0)776 4254214

VHF: Ch 80

Launch call sign: Royal Quays Marina

Charts: Admiralty Charts 1934, 152, 156

Max yacht draft: 4m

Berths: 350

Wi-Fi: free everywhere

Electricity: 240 volt A/C electricity is available at all berths together with fresh water.

The electricity bollards are operated by a pre-payment card token, available in values of £1; £5; or £10 from the marina office.

Water: free

Fuel: from the fuel pontoon 24 hours a day. Payment – credit or debit card on the pontoon, or cash/cheque at the marina office.

Pumpout: No

Waste: general waste/oil disposal and recycling facilities available

Laundry: Situated on the ground floor of the marina office building.

Showers and toilets: onsite, with

disabled facilities

Carpark: onsite parking is free

Trolleys: from trolley park with £1 coin (refundable)

Boatyard and liftout: 40 tonne mobile hoist on site

Supermarket: Tesco, 1.5 miles from marina

Nearest cashpoint: Royal Quays outlet centre, plus branches of Barclays, and Lloyds in North Shields town centre

BERTHING CHARGES

Visitors

Daily (minimum charge £21.50) £2.70 p/m

Weekly £15 p/m

Monthly £43.75 p/m

Short stay before 1900hrs (max. period of stay five hours)

£11.75 p/m

Annual

Budget fingers (up to 6m loa) £212.25 p/m

Standard £283 p/m

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MAILING ADDRESS

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North Shields
NE29 6DU



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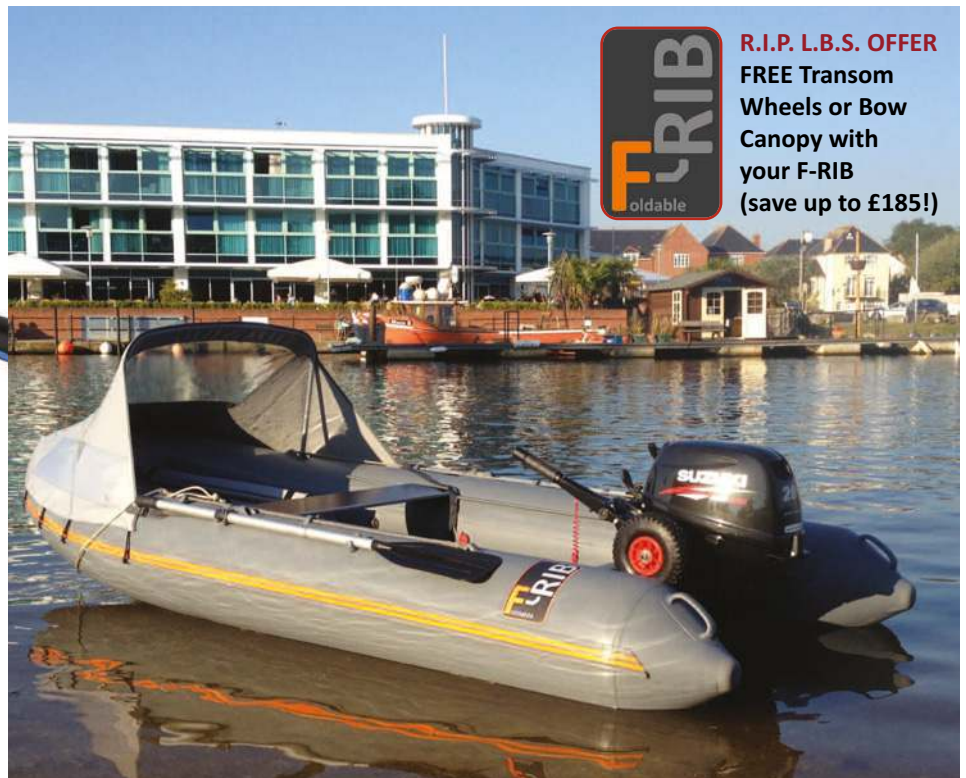
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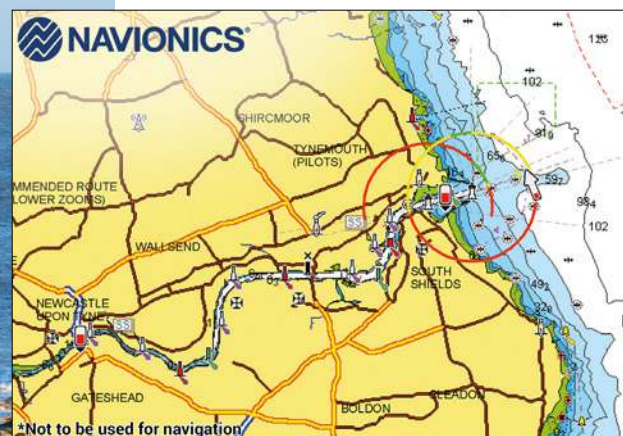
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PASSAGE PLANNING

Busy commercial shipping operations make good communications with VTS essential

To ensure the safest possible entry and exit into the River Tyne, skippers of all vessels under 20m LOA which are carrying a VHF radio are requested to report in to Tyne VTS on VHF channel 12. When approaching the pier-heads use 'Tyne VTS, this is vessel *'your boat's name'* piers to Royal Quays, over'. The same applies when leaving: 'Tyne VTS this is yacht *'your boat's name'*, Royal Quays to sea, over'.

Access to the marina basin is via double-sector lock gates, so it pays to take a look at the marina website for simple entry/exit instructions. Shipping movements in the area, particularly the cruise ships which frequent the Port of Tyne cruise berths adjacent to the marina, may dictate your approach/exit but connecting with the Tyne VTS will give you a good idea of what to look out for. Also watch out

for the Shields ferry, which runs between North and South Shields.

To ensure the marina staff can prepare for your entry to the basin, call Royal Quays Marina on VHF Channel 80, 15 minutes before the time of the required lock and before leaving your berth. As a quick guide, locking-out is possible on the hour and half hour, while locking-in is at quarter-past and quarter-to the hour. When the levels of the river and the marina are equal there may be times when both pairs of lock gates are open for 'free flow' traffic.

APPROACH

The entrance to the River Tyne from the sea is fairly straightforward because the harbour entrance is 360m wide and lies between the well-indicated North Pierhead lighthouse (F1 (3) 10s 26m 26M horn 10s) and the South Pierhead grey

round stone tower lighthouse (0c WRG 10s 15m 13-8M Bell (1) 10s).

From the entrance, the dredged channel is clearly marked by light-buoys that run west-south-west to the narrows. From here, progress upstream, keeping to the starboard side of the channel. The entrance to the marina is 2.0nm from the pierheads and you'll find a starboard light marks the lock waiting pontoon.

DEPARTURE

If heading seaward, watch out for ships on the move and when clear, cross the main shipping channel at right angles ready to proceed seawards on the southern side of the channel. If after exiting the lock it is not clear, turn to starboard and progress upstream on the north side of the channel until it is clear to cross to the south bank.

For those wishing to head upstream towards the City centre, turn immediately to starboard and progress upstream on the north side of the channel. →



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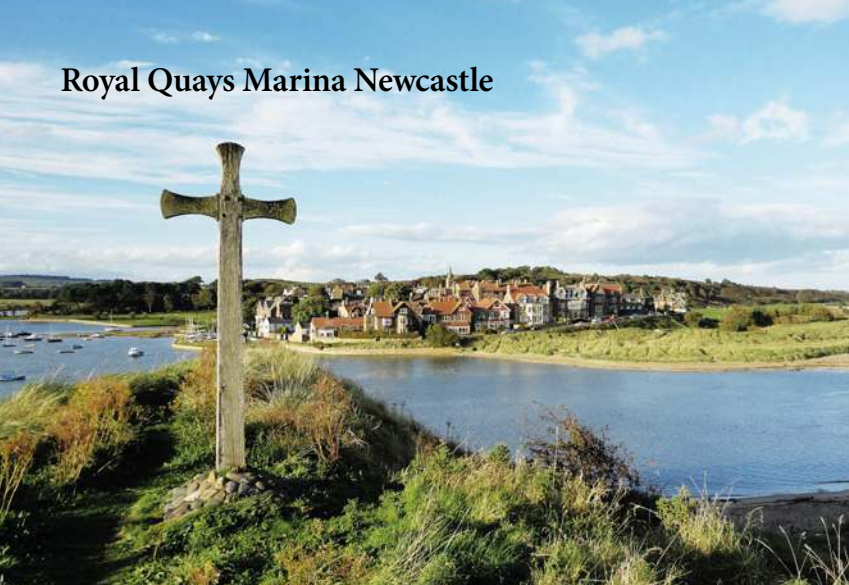
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CRUISING GROUNDS

Visit pretty ports and anchorages such as Blythe, Amble and Berwick-on-Tweed

As well as an ideal location from which to start a North Sea passage to places like Den Helder and Ijmuiden – the two main entry points for boats crossing to Holland – Royal Quays Marina is in the perfect position for cruising sailors wishing to discover the beauty of North East Heritage Coast.

This largely unspoilt coastline stretching from just north of the River Tyne to the Scottish border is an ideal area for exploring. Visit some of the pretty ports and anchorages such as Blyth, Amble, Berwick upon Tweed, or south to Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby. Discover the rich history that makes Northumberland's beauty spots such as Farne Island, Holy Island and Seahouses so famous. Or for a longer passage, sail further up Scotland's East coast to Eyemouth and as far as north as Peterhead and Aberdeen.

For a relatively short day cruise,

head to Blyth, which is 9nm to the north and check in at the visitor pontoon at Royal Northumberland Yacht Club, in the south harbour. For a slightly longer trip, the attractive fishing village of Amble is a good option at 24nm away.

Although there is no marina there, Newton Haven 34nm from Newcastle, offers a good anchorage and delightful beaches. The dramatic group of islands lying between two and five miles offshore, 42nm from Newcastle, make up the Farne Islands. This is where you'll see plenty of wildlife including puffins and seals.

Further on, 47nms from Newcastle, is Holy Island, distinguished by its castle set on an elevated rocky point, and Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve. There is fairly sheltered anchorage but in fresh west-south-westerly winds it can become fairly uncomfortable.

ABOVE
(left) Alnmouth in Northumberland and (right) Dunstanburgh Castle are just two of the rich landscapes to enjoy on a cruise from Royal Quays

A great place to cruise to slightly further north is the historic town of Berwick, where you can berth alongside Tweed Dock on the south side of the River Tweed, or Eyemouth, a busy fishing harbour that welcomes visiting yachtsmen. The advice here though, is not to attempt entry in strong north to easterly winds.

Heading 9nm south from Royal Quays Marina is Sunderland. Recent developments have transformed the waterfront and visiting boats can berth in the marina. From here enjoy a good day of sailing to Hartlepool, or slightly further afield to Runswick Bay fishing village, which has a good anchorage with pubs and restaurants close by.

28

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USEFUL CONTACTS

Port of Tyne Harbourmaster: Tel +44 (0)191 2572080

Marine services

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on site with 40 ton mobile hoist

Storrar Marine Store, NE7 7RR. Tel +44 (0)191 266 1037

PA Lynch Captain's Locker, NE61 6JT

Tel +44 (0)1670 512291

Taxi: Eastcoast/Foxhunters Tel: +44 (0)191 2533777

Buses: run from outside Royal Quays Shopping Outlet

to **North Shields. Traveline:** +44 (0)871 200 2233

Rail and Metro: National Rail +44 (0)3457 48

49 50 or Metro +44 (0)871 200 2233

Car hire: Enterprise Rent a Car +44 (0)191 266 3300

Cycle hire: Cullercoats. Tel +44 (0)191 251 9412

DFDS Seaways: Tel: +44 (0)871 522 9955

Sailing school: Northumbria Sailing +44 (0)191 281 2018

Marina cafe, restaurant, bar: The Lock.

Tel: +44 (0)191 2575753

Other local marina: Newcastle City Marina
newcastlecitymarina.co.uk



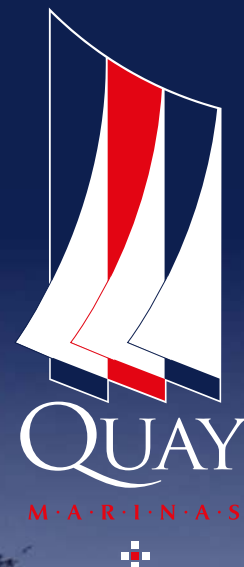
FLICKR-BAZZADARAMBLER/VISIT NORTHUMBERLAND/ALAMY

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Rhu Marina
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Penarth Quays Marina
02920 705021



Royal Quays Marina
0191 272 8282



The advent of AIS looked likely to make radar largely irrelevant to sailors, but a flurry of technical innovation has kept it on many wish-lists. And no wonder: radar fills the main gaps left by AIS, notably providing visibility of smaller boats that don't carry transponders. It can also pick up coastline, floating objects as small as a Portuguese pot buoy and even rain.

Though installing radar is not cheap, the price has fallen in recent years as the technology develops, and there is now a strong offer for the sub-60ft sailing market. You can add this capability to your boat for around £1500, plus or minus a bit on installation costs. Gone are the days when you had to buy a dedicated radar display, but you will still need a multifunction display (MFD) of the same brand as the radar or, in the case of Furuno's wireless DRS4D, a smartphone or tablet.

The four main marine electronics brands dominate—Raymarine, Navico (owner of B&G), Garmin and Furuno, but there are a couple of other manufacturers on the fringe of the sailing boat market. Humminbird is best known for fish finding electronics pitched at the US angling market, while ONWA is a small Hong Kong brand.

Radar is broadly available in two varieties: solid state and magnetron. The latter creates microwaves using the same technology as your oven, based on principles developed 100 years ago. It takes some time to 'warm up' and the magnetron itself is a relatively heavy chunk of rotating iron halfway up your mast. "A magnetron is like a car tyre," says Daniel Conway of Furuno. "It has a limited life span and needs replacing when it wears down."

Solid-state, aka broadband, CHIRP, or frequency modulated continuous wave radar uses a featherlight printed circuit board to send a precise, stable signal of increasing frequency. Traditional radar emits a very short, powerful burst of radiation, whereas CHIRP radar produces a longer wave at much lower power - as little as 20W, making it safe to mount at head height.

Both systems listen for a return echo reflected off distant objects,

but because the broadband unit uses a narrower range of frequencies, it usually receives a crisper signal with better definition. On the downside, its range tends to be shorter than traditional radar - typically around 24 nautical miles. You can increase the range of broadband radar, but only at the cost of resolution closer to the boat, which is obviously of great interest to sailors. Thus far, only Navico has cracked this conundrum by using a series of pulses of growing wavelength, then stitching the results together into a single picture. Then again, the curvature of the earth is the biggest limit to range - at 15nm distance, you can only see 20m above the horizon.

ABOVE
A selection of
radars in situ

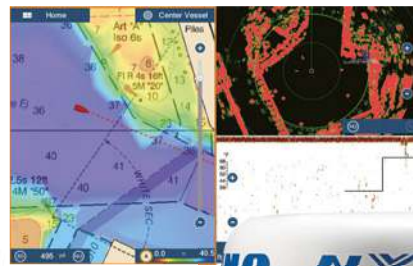
In both types of radar, range and resolution is a function of the size of the radome - the bigger the better. Typically, an 18in scanner will have a 5.2 degree horizontal beam width, whereas a 24in array will be more tightly focused at 3.9 degrees. If several objects fall within the beam width at the same range, they will show up as a single echo. However, clever signal processing and filtering allows many units to effectively sharpen their beam width, pinpointing multiple targets better. On a B&G radar, for instance, setting target separation control to high reduces the effective beam width to 2.6 degrees.

Besides range and resolution, another desirable feature in a radar is



Radar Love

RADAR IS A FIENDISHLY CLEVER PIECE OF KIT THAT CAN PROVE INVALUABLE – **SAM FORTESCUE** SCANS THE LATEST DEVICES



Doppler technology, which can detect miniscule shifts in wave frequency from the radar echoes that indicate whether an object is moving towards you or away. Some will automatically acquire and track targets for you, like commercial grade ARPA, colouring them red or green to indicate whether they represent a risk. The best MFDs also allow you to overlay chart and AIS data, so you can instantly see the target details, call sign and MMSI number.

Some units have a function that allows you to identify radar echoes from flocks of birds – useful as a fishing aid. And some operate on a semi-wireless basis, which means you don't have to run and install a data cable from the mast fitting to the back of the MFD. Finally, look at for dual range functionality, which allows you to keep a very close eye around the boat and look a long way ahead at the same time.

Raymarine Quantum 2

Though not the first to market with solid-state radar, Raymarine has

made up for it with its feature-rich Quantum unit – now in its second generation. Originally launched in 2016, Quantum is able to detect targets as close as 6m away for zero-vis operation, and the effective range can be pushed out to 24nm. Target separation is excellent, and sharper in the new Quantum 2. You can overlay data on charts and AIS.

Quantum 2 plots 'tails' on each target to show you where it has been and illustrate the direction of travel. However, the main improvement in Quantum 2 has been the addition of Doppler technology. The software automatically tracks each moving object, colouring it red or green on the screen to show whether it poses a risk or not. The only slight problem with this feature at the moment is that it requires Raymarine's new Lighthouse 3 operating system on the MFD. And Lighthouse 3 doesn't yet support the advanced sailing tools available through Lighthouse 2. So if you buy a Doppler radar from Raymarine, you have to choose between MARPA or extra sailing data.

The 18in-equivalent radome consumes just 20W on average, with 17W peak transmission power. Both Quantum and Quantum 2 can be connected to your Raymarine MFD using Wi-Fi, so there is no need for a separate data cable. Quantum works with all the Raymarine MFDs and Quantum 2 only works with the Axiom displays.

£2,195 (Quantum 2)

£1,845 (Quantum)

raymarine.com

Raymarine HD Colour

Raymarine still offers traditional magnetron radar from 4kW up to a whopping 12kW, giving a range of 48nm up to 96nm. Realistically, only the smaller radome unit will be of interest to cruising boats below

ABOVE
Raymarine's HD Colour system, Furuno's DRS4D-NXT

around 60ft. On the more complex Colour HD, the rotation rate increases to 48rpm inside a 3nm range, to give faster updates. Both units are compatible with older Raymarine MFDs, as well as the new Axioms, and must be connected with a combined SeaTalk power and data cable.

£1,995 (18in HD Colour)

raymarine.com

Furuno DRS4D-NXT

The Japanese commercial boat specialist has a very capable small boat radar offer, in the form of its new 24in solid-state radome (also available as a 1.0m-1.8m array). It got to market first with the red-green Doppler target identification, and also offers a rain mode which paints rain clutter blue on the screen, making real targets easier to spot, and a high-gain bird mode.

Targets can be automatically acquired within a 3nm range, tracked and an alarm sounded in case of a collision risk. There is also a RezBoost function, which sharpens the image on the screen to better separate targets and eliminate clutter.

The radar must be connected via Ethernet (or a special adapter for retrofits) to your Furuno MFD. Their current crop of units is the sleek TZ Touch and Touch2, available in 9in to 15in sizes.

£2,317.20

furuno.com

DRS4DL+

Also in convenient small-boat radome format is Furuno's entry-level 19in magnetron unit. It offers greater range than the solid-state product, as well as an automatic target tracking system that can keep an eye on up to 10 other boats. It must be hard-wired to Furuno's TX Touch and Touch2 displays, but all the wires are in a single cable for easier installation.

Honourable mention also goes →



to Furuno's First Watch, a 4kW magnetron radar that sends imaging data to a paired phone or tablet via wireless. This puts radar in your hands for around £1,300.

£1,680

furuno.com

Garmin GMR Fantom

Available in both 18in and 24in versions, Garmin's Fantom radar packs a lot of features into a small box. Its MotionScope technology uses the Doppler effect to highlight targets moving towards you, while echo trails left on the screen help to illustrate the direction targets are taking. There is dual range built in, with support for a second radome altogether if you want it. Range can be set as far as 48nm out, but Garmin says this is mainly just to spot big weather systems, not other vessels.

Fantom must be wired directly to a Garmin multifunction display – they range from 7in to 24in in size. The radar output can be overlaid with chart and AIS data, and beamed to a smart device via the ActiveCaptain app.

Garmin also makes a 4ft and 6ft magnetron radar, but it is an open array rather than a radome, making it unsuitable for sailing boats.

Garmin GMR HD+/xHD

Available in 18in and 24in scanner sizes, the xHD series from Garmin is based around a 4kW magnetron array. It offers many of the same features as the Fantom, including dual range and MARPA support, but not Doppler technology. It also has a compact 18in HD+ unit which comes at a lower price and doesn't offer dual range.

£1,450 (18HD+)

£1,790 (18xHD)

£2,320 (24xHD)

garmin.com



B&G Halo 24

Halo 24 also appears in Navico's other marine brands (Lowrance and Navico), but it is all the same box of tricks on the inside. Claiming to be 'revolutionary', the system combines the best features of solid-state and magnetron radar, with great target separation and a long range. The secret is in the clever way the machine uses pulse compression. It send out five pulses of differing frequency, each one looking progressively further from the boat, then the echoes are all stitched together into a single coherent picture. "A short CHIRP gives you excellent resolution but it's not great for long range as it loses energy quickly, where a long CHIRP gives excellent range, but has poorer resolution," explains product manager Mark Harnett.

Halo can also rotate faster than any other leisure radar out there – once per second at 1.5nm range, giving you faster updates. It also offers dual range, VelocityTrack Doppler target identification, ARPA tracking for 10 targets and a bird mode.

In fact, the only downside to these industry-leading features is the highest price on the market.

bandg.com

£2,769.60

B&G 3G/4G

At a lower price point, but still compelling on the features front, are B&G's 3G and 4G radomes. They are both 18in solid-state units, with excellent short-range resolution, running up to about 24nm out. Both also offer TrueMotion mode which colours still and moving targets differently. Plus you can set guard zones and there is MARPA and AIS vessel



ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT
Garmin's GMR Fantom, the ONWA set and B7G's 3G/4G

tracking. Great for smaller boats.

£2,230 (4G)

£1,730 (3G)

Bandg.com

ONWA

This Hong Kong-based brand is big in the Asian fishing fleet, but less so in Europe. It offers a businesslike 24in magnetron radome with a dedicated display varying from 9.7in to 15in.

Features include echo trails and MARPA tracking for up to 30 targets. A useful economy mode halves power consumption to 30W, and it offers guard zones and a watch mode.

The downside to this set-up is that you have to buy a dedicated radar display, which makes it more expensive and bulkier. The advantage, though, is that the radar system is then entirely independent of your MFD.

£tbc (KR-1008)

Onwamarine.com

Humminbird HB2124

US outdoors giant Johnson is behind this brand, and it is mostly pitched at fishermen, but it nonetheless offers a capable CHIRP radar with MARPA target tracking. It is compatible with the Helix and Onix MFDs, which are optimised for fishfinding sonar input. This gives it a useful AIS overlay function to see data about targets, and offers proprietary and user-generated mapping.

£2,300

humminbird.johnsonoutdoors.com



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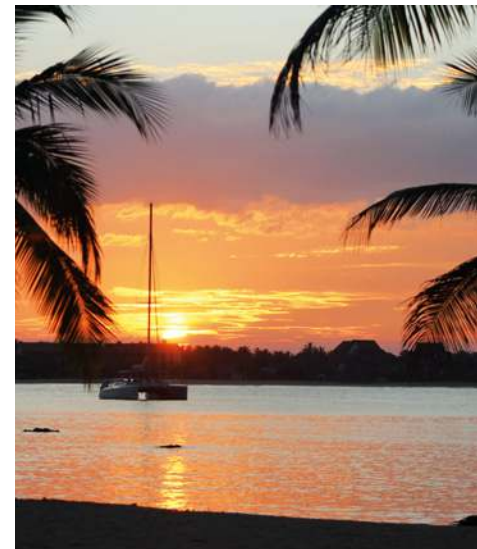
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Cruising ~ Sri Lanka



Unchartered waters

Chartering doesn't just have to be in Croatia, Greece or the Caribbean – Ivory Hackett-Evans takes a walk on the wild side in Sri Lanka

Sailing to farther-flung, and lesser-known locations has become an obsession of mine. But alas, these pristine bays are becoming ever harder to find. Often the reality is arriving at what the almanac describes as a peaceful anchorage on a Caribbean island, only to find it chockablock with yachties roasting a cow on the aft deck. I stumbled upon Sri Lanka while looking for a 10-day cruising holiday that was within my time frame and budget. It was perfect. Sri Lanka is an island nation, positioned just above the equator. Tropical monsoon winds guarantee sunshine to all corners of the country throughout the year. With 1,340km of coastline, it seemed perfect for sailing.

So why has this paradise not been invaded by flotillas? Somewhat perversely, we have Sri Lanka's recent and painful past of a civil war that lasted from 1983 to 2009 to thank for that. The war has meant that much of this beautiful island is not touched by mass tourism. Even to this day, to obtain permits to sail Sri Lankan waters is incredibly difficult, and you cannot sail to Sri Lanka on your own boat.

Sail Lanka is the only organization which has the permissions to sail in the north, south, east and west of this island. The company was set up by a Belgian, Pierre Pringiers, who started work in Sri Lanka following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. His vision was to develop a new form of livelihood for the islanders to help them to recover. Tourism was an obvious choice, so he established a boat building business to promote sailing as a new eco-friendly tourist activity for the islands. Sail Lanka was a natural



spin-off for boat building company.

Eco-friendly, sustainable tourism at its best. The liberal hipster in me was sold! Sail Lanka is the first sailing company to operate cruises all around Sri Lanka. They offer flexible charter packages based on renting a cabin, or a whole boat. I opted for a cruise in the east that was advertised as having vast swathes of unexplored golden beaches. I wasn't disappointed.

Unruly Heffalumps

I landed in Colombo as the sun was setting. I spent one night in a hotel close to the airport, and the next day started the six-hour drive east. Six hours? Boring? Not at all, en-route I watched monkeys play and saw wild elephants for the first (and sadly probably only) time.

We arrived in Trincomalee, a non-descript seaside town, at 3pm. Four 40-50ft catamarans were lying at anchor in the vast and empty bay.

We were met by the crew on the beach and took a short RIB ride to our new home for the week. One safety briefing later and we were sailing to our first bay and anchorage. It is worth noting at this point that I was not originally interested in joining a crewed boat. I am a competent skipper, have worked as a charter captain, and

RIGHT:
A map of Sri Lanka showing the various stop offs and seasonal cruising variations

OPPOSITE PAGE:
A montage of different sights on the coast of Sri Lanka

I did not want all of the fussing over me – prefer to be left alone. I quickly realized that this would have been foolish. When you go to the unknown, you really need a local to show you round, or how do you find the really magical places? We were looked after wonderfully all week and ate incredible local food prepared by the onboard chef. The crew turned out to be the most important part of this adventure, and of course these four Sri Lankan men were very entertained by the small blonde girl insisting on steering the boat.

Along with the four crew, there was a total of five guests. We made an odd mix of myself and Andrea (aka photographer), an instagram star and her boyfriend, and an entrepreneurial blogger born and bred in Sri Lanka. However, we quickly found much in common and before we knew it were laughing over a delicious dinner of Sri Lankan curries as the waves lapped against the boat.

The next morning I was woken by a tinkling bell at 0730 sharp. 'What hell is this?' I wondered. An excellent breakfast of coffee, fruit and eggs soon had me revived and before I knew it we were sailing again, this time out to sea. As we crossed a deep ocean trench our skipper Andrew informed us that we might see dolphins. Sure enough, the boat was soon surrounded by playful dolphins and Bryde whales breaking the surface for air. I became particularly excited at the prospect of seeing the elusive Blue Whale, but alas no such luck this time.

The wind was a brisk 25 knots on the beam and I was impressed that this large catamaran was sailing at a good 7 knots. My main experience of large catamarans is painfully motorsailing into a

headwind. As a design I found these boats to be efficient for sailing, while very roomy and comfortable. Despite nine people being on the boat, it felt as though it could comfortably hold more.

When I saw our lunch anchorage I could not believe my eyes – golden sand beach with no sign of civilization as far as the eye could see. This became the norm for the coming week. After yet another good meal (I cannot go into how many good meals I ate) we continued south to our night anchorage. This was a bay with a small fishing village sheltered by a peninsula of sand and palm trees.

We launched the two paddleboards, the blogger on one and myself and the photographer sharing the other. Heading towards the shore we quickly lost the blogger. I found myself following the barked commands from the photographer perching lazily at the front as I wobbled and sweated with the paddle. Slowly we made headway to the beach. Waves were breaking angrily on the shore. 'This will be exciting' I smirked as I paddled us in furiously, hoping to both catch a wave and catapult my ungrateful crew up the beach (no such luck). We arrived laughing as the sun set. Our walk was over before it began. We realised that the sandy reef protecting the bay was not a beach after all. It was a spit of land made entirely of mountains of dead coral. When we returned to the boat we asked what had happened. The tsunami damaged some, and as the sea has got hotter the rest is dying. Coral bleaching is something that I am aware of, but seeing the effects was deeply sobering.



Sustainable fishing

The next morning we were in for another early start. On the cards was a trip to a beach famous for birds. Giant eagles circled overhead as we sailed in and we kayaked ashore to walk in the woods looking for snakes. We came across an amazing sight; a whole community, men and women alongside each other, were on the beach working in unity to pull in a giant net. I have never seen a community work like this to survive off the land and I was amazed to see this small unit surviving with no reliance on modern technologies.

That evening we travelled to Passikudah, a famous beach where the only luxury resorts of the east coast can be found. It is a great place for a shore visit to a fancy cocktail bar. This did however set us on the wrong track and all of us stayed up late after dinner drinking and chatting nonsense.

I woke up with a sore head. I have never had much capacity to drink large quantities. After a miserable breakfast we sailed north to an abandoned bay. Here we were taken snorkeling. An hour in the water, snorkeling over a coral reef, undiscovered by the rest of the world and I felt better! I wanted to stay for hours, but we had a packed schedule. We returned to the boat, were fed again, and headed north to a bay protected by huge island rocks jutting out of the sea. Here we were taken on a short hike to visit a local monastery. This monastery was perched on a cliff with panoramic views.

ABOVE
Pigeon Island provided some magical snorkelling

BELOW
An entire village working in unity to pull in the day's catch

We walked back to the boat in the dark and over dinner the crew informed us that we would have a BBQ on the beach the next night. Now I am a fan of BBQs, but typically for me they involve swearing at an instant BBQ in the rain on some Cornish beach, before admitting defeat and eating a sandy roll in the car. I thought to myself that I would prefer to stay on the boat.

At the BBQ spot (the most beautiful of all the bays) we entertained ourselves leaping from the top decks to the sea as the crew set up the BBQ. They did an amazing job. Tables and chairs were provided, cold drinks, fresh caught fish and a giant fire.

We awoke to our final day; a trip to Pigeon Island, a national park with famed coral reefs. The crew snorkeled with us and led us away from the crowds in the shallow waters. I can quite honestly say I have never seen anything like what I saw on Pigeon Island. Huge coral, with every variety of fish you can imagine, giant turtles swam lazily by and sharks darted quickly underneath. It was the most magical experience and it made me still sadder to think of all the mountains of dead coral we had seen earlier that week.

Our final night was spent back in Trincomalee and, after exploring the town, we returned to the boat that night for our final supper. The five of us talked about our experience from the trip. We all agreed, that it was quite like nothing we have ever done before.

Contact:
sail-lanka-charter.com
+94 71 440 5000



IVORY HACKETT-EVANS
Ivory Hackett-Evans is a Yachtmaster, sometime charter skipper and dinghy sailing instructor. She currently works for a charity providing humanitarian aid and support to the Burmese Rohingya refugees trapped in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh



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SHORTLIST

ANCHORS



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Rocna

A reliable new generation anchor that features a roll bar for correct orientation, the Rocna features concave flukes and a chisel tip. Resets within its own length in most conditions.

- £641 (25kg)
- marinefactors.co.uk



Fortress

Often seen on motorboats, the Fortress is made of super lightweight aluminium-magnesium alloy.

- £539 (6.8kg)
- Fortressanchors.com



Vulcan

Also by Rocna, the Vulcan has become a popular modern anchor and is designed without the roll bar for easier stowing on the bow.

- £812 (25kg)
- marinefactors.co.uk



Spade anchor

This French made anchor is a simple shape and is designed to dig in to the seabed fast, and keep digging when under heavy load.

- £814 (25kg)
- spade-anchor.com



Manson Supreme

New anchor with a spear head tip, roll bar and a 'rock slot' in the fluke so a fouled anchor can be freed without a tripping line. Available galvanised or stainless.

- £598 (27kg)
- mansonanchors.com



Ultra

A thing of beauty in stainless steel. Has a hollow shank to concentrate weight at the lead-filled tip, plus sharp nose, side wings and non chain-foul bar.

- €2,303 (27kg)
- ultramarine-anchors.com



Lewmar Claw

Since the Bruce Anchor Group stopped producing small boat anchors, Lewmar has taken over with the claw type anchor. Popular for its simplicity and low price.

- £130 (20kg)
- Lewmar.com



Lewmar CQR

Still popular, this anchor is characterised by the hinge between the shank and the fluke which helps it to reset. This versatile anchor is good in most bottom types.

- £392 (27kg)
- Lewmar.com





Is your anchoring a bit of a drag?

Fit either of these anchors and you will rarely drag your anchor again.

The **Rocna** anchor was designed by New Zealand sailor Peter Smith, who has been designing, building, and sailing boats since the early 1960's. Over 100,000 nautical miles of cruising, Peter experienced the same anchoring problems that are still prevalent today – needing to carry a variety of anchors to suit various sea beds, yet still the anchors dragged and boaters felt insecure. "Your anchor should provide you and your crew with reliability, security, and confidence," says Peter. A lifetime of nautical experience worldwide was poured into an anchor – initially conceived for Peter's own use – which became the **Rocna**.

FEATURES OF A ROCNA ANCHOR



The new **Vulcan** anchor is Rocna's first major design development since the launch of the highly successful and acclaimed Rocna anchor itself. Following on the success of the Rocna, designer Peter Smith was often approached by customers seeking to experience the exceptional holding power and setting performance of a Rocna, but who had difficulties accommodating the roll-bar design on their bow. After years of testing and development, Peter has come up with a design that meets the needs of these customers. — the **VULCAN**

FEATURES OF A VULCAN ANCHOR



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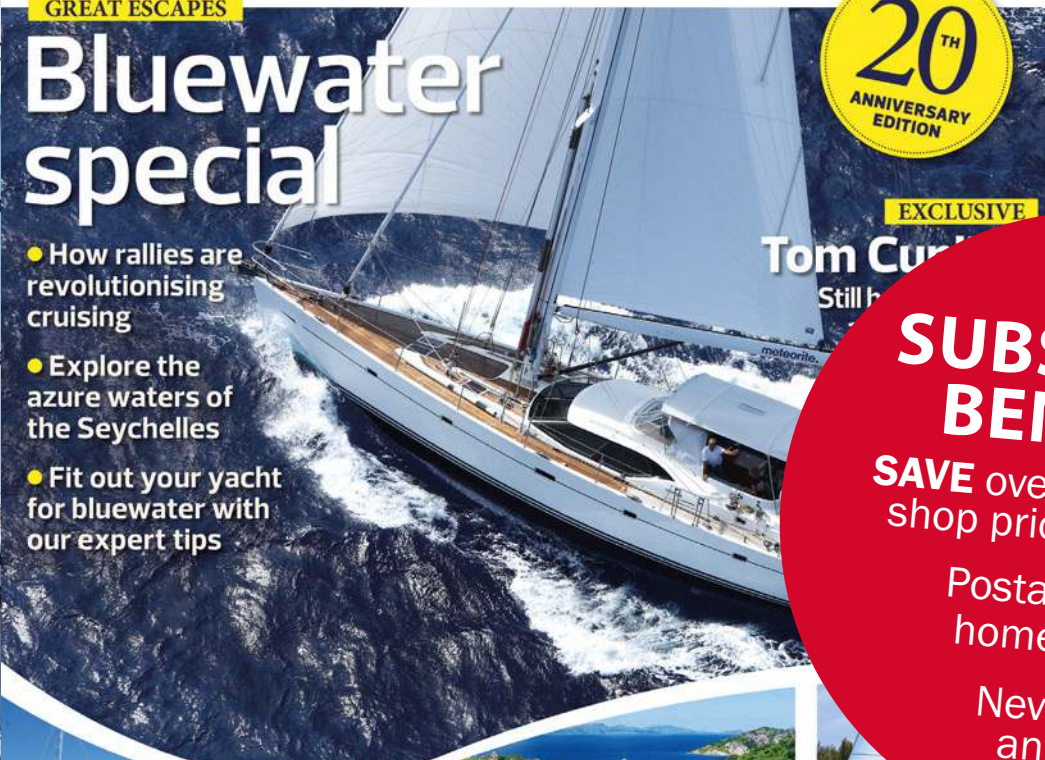
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Crewsaver ErgoFit+ with halo sprayhood

It has long been known that the addition of a spray hood inside a lifejacket can significantly enhance the wearer's safety. It increases visibility, helps retain heat and protects the airway to reduce the risk of water inhalation. Enter the Crewsaver ErgoFit+ and its halo hood system inspired by developments made in association with the renowned search and rescue (SAR) organisation, Les Sauveteurs en Mer. The result is a fully self-supporting hood, which once deployed, forms a spacious chamber above the wearer's face. The hood also includes an internal barrier protecting you further against any water ingress, while doubling up as an anti-glare panel to shield your eyes from the flashing lifejacket light. In addition, the ErgoFit+ incorporates a new buckle system. With its slimline design, the quick lock buckle makes the lifejacket easy to don and accommodates the use of a single loop harness attachment point for ease of tethering.

- from £220
- crewsaver.com

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Flushed with colour

Having not undergone much in the way of a redesign since late Victorian times, the vendors of the classic Blakes sea toilet are hoping to make a splash with news of new colour options. The toilets, which were first designed in the late Victorian era for classic racing yachts, have featured various colours in their long and well-respected past although most were made in white. But now Blakes' bowls can be made in any single colour imaginable. "Traditionally porcelain was not white," says Graham Brown, managing director. "Pastels were the fashion for a long time during the 1960/70s and then white became the high-end look. That's changing again. Colour is coming back into designer bathrooms onshore, and we're bringing it back to Blakes. We're delighted with the results."

- From £5,361
- sea-sure.co.uk



Support 'les sauveteurs'

Many cruisers heading to France will already have an RNLI T-shirt or two tucked into their kitbags, but why not do your bit for the *entente cordiale* and support their French counterparts? Wear this polo (€22) with the flags of the Société Nationale de Sauvetage en Mer proudly emblazoned on your chest, and you'll be feted even by members of the local scallop fleet. Other items we like on the SNSM website include this vintage-style yachting knife (€129) by Farol – perfect for opening the contents of that free sack of scallops thrown cheerfully onto your deck from the quayside.

- snsrm.org
- rnli.org





'World first' touchscreen marine hi-fi from Fusion

Claimed to be the world's first touchscreen marine stereo with Apple AirPlay and built-in Wi-Fi, the Apollo RA770 also features over-the-air software updates and a one-piece waterproof glass display. It's designed to make it simple to customise audio entertainment with superior sound quality in any area of your boat, reckons its maker Fusion.

The RA770 makes it possible to stream high quality audio seamlessly via Apple AirPlay over Wi-Fi from your compatible Apple device. With its 4.3" LCD colour touchscreen display, you simply tap the screen to pause and play, or swipe through your playlist to your favourite song – fiddling around to locate the right button is now a thing of the past. The RA770 also has an IPX7 rated water resistant front panel, and has been tested to a high level for protection against salt fog, temperature, vibration and UV.

- £799
- force4.co.uk



Navico integrated 'dashboard' for yachts

Yacht owners troubled by a hodgepodge of different displays on their instrument consoles can take heart from this new innovation from Navico. It's a sleek new multifunctional dashboard that integrates information from all onboard systems, and it works with kit from all Navico's sub-brands – Lowrance, Simrad, B&G and C-MAP. "Information displays are the realisation of a long-term goal shared by both boat builders and Navico – a sleek, custom, fully upgradable, automotive-like, bonded-glass display capable of sharing information from all systems on board a boat," says Leif Ottosson, CEO of Navico. "The days of cluttered, mixed-brand dashes with varying user interfaces are now a thing of the past."

- £642-£2,817 (exc. VAT)
- ww2.bandg.com/

Barton removable mainsheet track

This removable mainsheet track system is designed to span the cockpit seats when sailing but is easily removable to ensure cockpit space is not compromised when you want to relax on board. The removable track is available in two sizes and can be used on yachts up to a maximum of 11m (36ft). It has a maximum unsupported length of up to 700mm (28ins) and can be fitted and removed in seconds, the maker Barton says. It's simplicity itself to fit. Just screw a couple of end plates into the cockpit sides and the track slides into place and locks automatically. To release the track simply push in a locking pin on either side, lower the track and slide it out of the way.

- (from) £480
- bartonmarine.com



Spider 4D sailing shoes

U-Sail's Spider sailing shoes are already established at home in Italy, where the company is an official supplier to the Italian National Sailing Federation. Their notable claim to fame is the highest grip co-efficient of any sailing footwear out there, and they've just upped the ante with new ranges – Spider Shoes 4D and Spider Shoes Total Grip – said to offer peak non-slip performance on any smooth or wet surface. Fresh from a 'special mention' at the Marine Equipment Show Design Awards in Amsterdam, U-Sail is looking for a UK distributor. Meanwhile you can pick up a pair of Spiders online.

- €169
- usail.it



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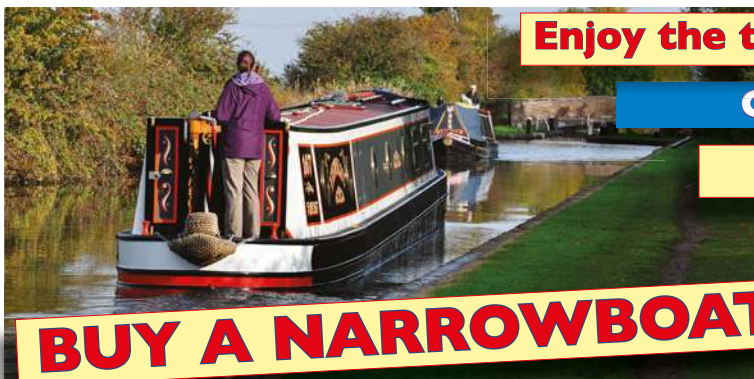
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ARCONA 460 | AQUAVIT

The Arcona 460 is a relatively light performance cruiser designed to be sailed comfortably by a couple or a family. Aquavit has been used as a family cruiser since her launch, and has been well maintained and upgraded over the years. The teak decks are in an excellent condition, while the gelcoat areas of deck and hull were professionally overhauled in 2016. She has a four cabin layout with a long linear galley on the starboard side and two heads. With a classic mid-blue interior and curved settee, she is stylish as well as comfortable below decks.

Aquavit's X-drive Carbon sails were new last year, while the main has a furling boom system and there's a self-tacking track. She is equipped with an asymmetric spinnaker, a retractable bow-thruster and 36-watt solar cells on deck. Aquavit has been continuously upgraded with a full cockpit tent, new instruments, shorepower and

inverter, central vacuum cleaner and Nespresso coffee maker to name but a few of her optional extras. This is a very rare opportunity to acquire a very well-kept and updated Arcona 460, that has spent her winters wrapped up in a heated shed in Sweden.

● arconayachts.com

LOA: 14.20 M

Beam: 4.2m

Draught: 2.44m

Year built: 1989

Berths: 8

Construction: GRP



ELAN 434 | WORTHY FRIEND

This Rob Humphreys-designed Elan Impression 434 boasts a semi-deck saloon with a welcoming ambience boosted by panoramic windows and light wood interior.

Worthy Friend offers nine berths, in a four double and one single cabin configuration, including a master cabin with ensuite heads and separate shower. Two aft cabins share a second head.

The broker tells us the vessel is exceptionally well-maintained, and the Volvo MD55E 55hp inboard four cylinder sail drive diesel engine has just 400 hours. The current owner regularly single-hands, and all lines are led aft. The emphasis is on safe, fast passage-making alongside exceptional seaworthiness, making this Elan a desirable blue water cruising boat.

● michaelschmidt.co.uk

LOA: 13.4m

Beam: 4.18m

Draught: 1.9m

Year built: 2010

Berths: 9

Construction: GRP

£129,995



MOODY 35 | SERENA

This Moody 35 was built in 1994 by Marine projects in Plymouth to a design by Bill Dixon. She has been well maintained in her present ownership and is lying ashore for the winter, we're told by Partnership Yacht Brokers, who are currently seeking Serena's next owner.

The vessel is well equipped for long distance cruising, with comfortable accommodation, state of the art electronics, and 40hp Volvo auxiliary power. In her present ownership she has been cruised to the North of Scotland and around Ireland.

Down below the accommodation is spacious and comfortable with original upholstery and storage and an attractive wood finish. There is a large drop leaf table, and she offers a total of six berths in three cabins. An owners suite in the aft cabin boasts a large double berth, a settee and vanity unit, plus plenty of room to stand. There's direct access to the heads compartment which can also be entered from the saloon.

Pressurised hot and cold water is plumbed to the heads and galley, and the galley features a two burner gas stove with oven and grill, plus a 12 volt fridge.

● clarkeandcarter.co.uk

LOA: 10.52m

Beam: 3.62m

Draught: 1.6m

Year built: 1994

Berths: 6

Construction: GRP







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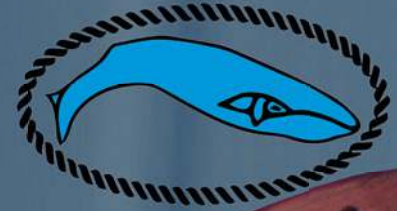
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Dispatches

GREECE | ATHENE OF LYMINGTON



In like sardines...

Not many Ionian yachtsmen ploughing the well-worn furrow from Corfu down to the so-called Inland Sea divert to the Amvrakikos Gulf just inland from Preveza.

In late season (early September) it is possible to be alone in many of the anchorages of this 40km by 15 km stretch of water, as Cruising Association members Gordon and Soophy Knight found in their Oyster 435 Athene of Lymington.

It's a site steeped in history, since it was the location of the famous Battle of Actium, when Octavian – later the emperor Augustus – defeated the combined fleets of Anthony and Cleopatra as they exited the gulf. It's also teeming with marine life, as pods of dolphins come in to feed in the tranquil Autumn waters of the gulf on the plump sardines that shoal there. The ancient Greeks believed that dolphins were inhabited by the souls of drowned sailors, so some of the ones they saw in the gulf might have been descendants of Odysseus' crew...

You can enjoy the sardines too, grilled and sprinkled with olive oil and lemon juice, at the various waterside tavernas dotted around the gulf.

theca.org.uk

Athene of Lymington Oyster 435

LOA 43' 3" (13.22M)

Draft 6'0" (1.83M)


Launched 1987.

Skipper Gordon Knight

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