



1001

THERE ARE MORE THAN 1,000 ISLANDS LARGE AND SMALL OFF THE COAST OF CROATIA, INCLUDING THE SPECTACULAR SUNKEN LANDSCAPES OF THE DALMATIANS. CAPTAIN **NICK LINE** OF MOTOR YACHT VA BENE EXPLAINS WHY SO MANY OF HIS CHARTER GUESTS COME BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND WHY HE IS SO GLAD TO BRING THEM.

DALMATIANS



Croatia is a place that surprises everybody. It blows away any preconceived ideas you may have and whenever we take people there for the first time they are just amazed. Croatia always exceeds expectations.

If you're the sort of person who enjoys being on a yacht, as opposed to being seen to be on a yacht; if you want to enjoy the boat, the sea, the place - then go to Croatia. This is where you can really relax and just enjoy being on the water.

For anyone used to the buzz of the Côte d'Azur, the Dalmatian Coast is a haven of tranquillity. Instead of fiercely competing for berths, you'll probably be the only big yacht tying up alongside an ancient stone quayside. In just a few paces you can find yourself in a medieval walled city, meandering through a maze of cobbled lanes, surrounded by immaculately

preserved history and architecture.

This relative solitude is a major attraction of the area: in any of the harbours, you might only see one or two other large motor yachts. With hundreds of islands providing an endless supply of coves, great anchorages, inlets and islets, there are simply more choices, more places to go. You can almost always find a place to yourself, if that's what you want. Many of the nicest bays are too deep for smaller sailing yachts to anchor, and you can tie up for the night, stern to the rocks and be undisturbed.

Of course, if you're feeling sociable there are also ports and towns with plenty to do ashore. Hvar, Split and Dubrovnik all have good restaurants, shops and nightlife. From the crew's point of view, it's getting easier to obtain fresh supplies in Croatia and we tend to pick up our fine wines and other

specialities in Venice, which is a great place to begin the cruise. For me the highlight islands are Trogir, Vis, Korcula - which competes with Venice for the title birthplace of Marco Polo - and Mljet, famous for its pine-scented honey.

For anyone on board a yacht, the great bonus of Dalmatian geography is that, whatever the weather does, you can always find shelter among the islands. The scenery is breathtaking: turquoise seas, wooded islands, with a backdrop of towering mountains on the mainland. As you go further south, the scenery becomes more and more spectacular and there are fewer and fewer people. Everyday our guests wake up and go 'wow!' At which point I generally say: "Just wait, tomorrow will be better." And it always is.

Overleaf, we take you through a 2 week itinerary in Croatia with Captain Nick Line >>

