



LIFE'S A BREEZE

*When motor yacht devotee **Kate Reardon** stepped aboard the elegant sailing yacht **Victoria of Strathearn**, she was forced to leave her prejudices on the quayside.*

There are motor boat people and there are sailing boat people. OK, both persuasions involve nautical pursuits, but surely it's absurd to compare the two? It's like trying to liken a hot-air balloon ride with a spin in a Mig fighter jet. Yes, you are airborne in both, but that's where the similarity ends, and I know which I'd prefer, thank you.

There are those who think that sailing is all hard work and pokey cabins. I have news for all of you – a sailing yacht can offer just as much glamour, elegance, luxury and modernity as a motor yacht.

To prove the point, I have come to visit **Victoria of Strathearn**. She was launched in 2001, and the sheer beauty of her classical design is breathtaking. She lives up to the sailing boat cliché in that her interior couldn't be more traditional, but she is, as her captain, Simon Farmer says, "a modern classic. So it's all high tech systems, a powerful MTU main engine, generators, air-conditioning and so forth."

I HAVE NEWS FOR YOU: A SAILING YACHT CAN OFFER JUST AS MUCH GLAMOUR, ELEGANCE, LUXURY AND MODERNITY AS A MOTOR YACHT

Victoria of Strathearn is one classy boat, not the sort that any C List celebrity would choose to be photographed on by the paparazzi. There is no jacuzzi, no built-in sunloungers and no jetskis. Instead there are fabulous proper deck chairs (in one of which I instantly fall asleep, such is my dedication to reviewing the whole experience), a wonderful al fresco dining area and an enormous cushioned aft cockpit where everyone likes to congregate when the yacht is zooming along under full sail. This is a boat for people who like to sail, rather than those who ask the captain how long it's going to take to arrive in Mustique before the yacht has even moved.

On a sailing yacht you are surrounded by the workings of the boat. There appear to be miles of creaking halyards, lines and ropes, and you can hear the pleasing flutter of the sails. It would be a sacrilege to turn on the wallpaper of sound known as *Café del Mar* or any other ambient music when you have this natural symphony. Sailing is more dignified than that. I guess it's a maturity thing.

ON A YACHT LIKE THIS, YOU'RE AT ONE WITH THE BOAT, MORE A PART OF IT, YOU REALLY FEEL THE WIND IN YOUR HAIR

Although don't think you've rolled over and died if you choose a sailing boat. Recent designs are pushing the envelope way out, with some fantastic cutting edge sailing yachts being commissioned that are really innovative and very technologically advanced.

Still, among the uninitiated, there are prejudices about sailing yachts. 1: You'll get seasick. Well, I can get sick looking at a painting of a boat, and I was fine. The

reason being that the deep keel draws more water, resulting in a fluid, stable motion when underway. Or so I'm told. 2: The size thing. For "romantic" do you read "small"? Well, as with all things in the world of superyachting, the sky's the limit and while sailing yachts don't have multiple deck levels and helicopter landing pads, you can still be in the absolute lap of luxury on a large sailing yacht. 3: It's hard work. Do all those lines and shiny winches look intimidating? Don't worry, you don't have to touch them, any more than you'd have to cook your own breakfast at The Ritz.

NIGEL
BURGESS

Victoria of Strathearn

LOA 130.41 ft (39.75m)
Builder Alloy Yachts, New Zealand
Year 2001
Cruising speed about 10 knots under power
Guests 6/7 in 3 cabins
Crew 5
Summer 2007 Mediterranean
Charter rates from €59,500 per week

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR SALE



A SAILING YACHT INSISTS YOU RELAX - THERE IS NO URGE TO WOLF DOWN LUNCH SO YOU CAN PACK IN THE ACTIVITIES

As Simon Farmer says, "Most people come because they like the glory of sailing and they like being seen on a big classic sailing boat which has got character." He adds, "There's just something more evocative about sailing. A motor yacht is more of a floating hotel. On a yacht like this, you're more at one with the boat, more a part of it, you really feel the wind in your hair."

It's true. On a motor yacht, moving can be the boring bit that has to be endured. On a sailing yacht, the journey is the point. When under sail there is a feeling of real speed and exhilaration, you feel intimately in touch with the silent, awesome power of nature. Not only that, but the sailing yacht insists you relax - there is no urge to wolf down lunch so you can pack in the activities, charging around on water toys like a teenager with a hormone imbalance.

There is a difference in the crew, too. Farmer says, "We're very hands-on, the boat has more systems due to the rig and the sails, everyone is multi-tasking the whole time." As a guest, you see the crew actually sailing the boat, (which is nice if you enjoy the view of a fit young man doing strapping work). And of course they melt away silently when you are at anchor. By the way, the level of quiet, efficient service is the same as on any equivalent luxury motor yacht.

Best of all, there is something deeply cool about sailing in these more eco-aware days. There is a smug satisfaction in not burning a million litres of marine diesel, and much of your holiday being genuinely wind-powered. Perhaps this new eco-consciousness accounts for the fact that sailing yachts, once the preserve of the more traditional yachtsman, are rapidly becoming hip among a new affluent generation of owners and charterers.

Ideal sailing charter destinations

So where should you go? Captain Simon Farmer says unequivocally: "The Caribbean. A sailing yacht like this is just made for it, because you can blast along between the islands and put as much sail up as you want. In the Caribbean you get a constant tradewind which is pretty predictable."

#1

The St Barths, St Kitts, Nevis, Antigua run. St Barths is glitzy and the ladies love it, and then you get Nevis and St Kitts, which is back to West Indian basics with lovely plantation houses and no pretensions. Antigua has great anchorages and is considered the sailing yacht capital of the Caribbean.

#2

The Grenadines down south. Bequia, Mustique, the Tobago Cays, Union Island and PSV. That's where you get your classic sandy beaches and turquoise water. Then carry on all the way down to Grenada.

#3

The British Virgin Islands are wonderful, with no long distances, which is especially good if you have young kids.

Please contact your Nigel Burgess charter broker for further information on Victoria of Strathearn and our worldwide sailing yacht charters.

Victoria of Strathearn is under charter management with Nigel Burgess.



> SAILING FOCUS <

