



THE TRITON

NAUTICAL NEWS FOR CAPTAINS AND CREWS



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Local knowledge of Haulover. **A12**

Saxon speaks
Business wisdom from a pioneer.

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Couples work
Some say harder, happier and longer.

C1

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February 2009

Christmas charters fall up to 50 percent

By Dorie Cox

When Capt. Greg Clark and his entire crew moved aboard the 161-foot charter yacht *M/Y Lohengrin* last year, they were ready for lots of guests and entertaining charters.

Instead, they spent the holidays docked in Ft. Lauderdale.

"We're just sitting," Clark reported in mid-December, a time when charter yachts are normally en route to the Caribbean.

"Keeping the boat in tip-top shape, catching up on mini projects, organizing weekend outings together, getting ready for the next showing, and looking forward to the Miami show.

"It isn't what most of us signed up for, but we're doing our best to keep busy and keep our spirits up."

Instead of waiting in the Caribbean for a charter, *Lohengrin's* owner decided to dock in South Florida, where dockage is relatively cheaper. If the yacht gets more than a couple of charters booked, it will head down island.

Until then, Clark and his crew wait for the phone to ring.

"I tell the crew to look on the bright side," he said. "In all industries and careers, it is unrealistic to never expect down time. This is just the first time for yachting. ... We are at the mercy of forces beyond our control."

Captains in the Caribbean report a mix of charter experiences this winter, but for the most part, they admit things are slow. Charter captains and brokers report a decline in bookings of as much as 50 percent. Some yachts had no charters at all.

More than a few yachts have cut crew, keeping a skeleton crew to keep the yacht clean and showable.

Holiday vacancies common

Yachts that are typically booked six months in advance of the winter holidays were available as late as the St. Maarten charter show in early December.

See **CHARTERS**, page A21



Stew Julie Brunet, left, and Stew Laura Ball spent part of January detailing *M/Y Lohengrin's* tender instead of tending to guests. **PHOTO/DORIE COX**

Pay the bills; get owner to pay you back

The topic of getting in debt with the boss has come up quite a bit lately. Lawyers talked about it at our monthly networking event, friends talked about it over my dinner table.



FROM THE BRIDGE
LUCY CHABOT REED

So we decided to ask captains how often it happens.

To be clear, we're not talking about being owed salary. Yacht crew, like most employees, work first, get paid afterward.

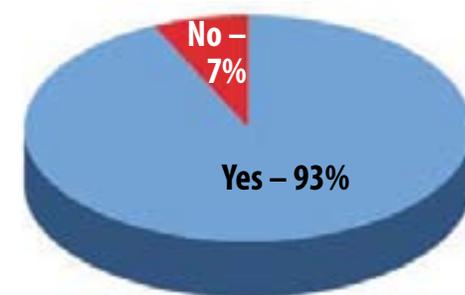
For the purposes of the discussion at our monthly From the Bridge luncheon, we talked about just those times when captains pay for something that is clearly boat-related – provisions for a trip, dockage, fuel, even crew wages – out of their own pocket on the belief that they will be reimbursed.

A quick poll revealed that five of the six captains in attendance had, at some point in their careers, fronted the yacht or the boss money. (That near unanimity was mirrored in our monthly

See **BRIDGE**, page A16

TRITON SURVEY

Have you ever fronted the boss or the yacht money?



It didn't take a mortgage crisis or market crash for megayacht captains to pay for expenses related to the yacht under their command. Most of captains in this month's poll – 93 percent – acknowledged that they have fronted the boss or the yacht money at some point in their career. Surprised? Read more from this month's survey, page C1.

– **Lucy Chabot Reed**

The victorious owner, guests, race crew and standing crew of the 45m *S/Y Timoneer* after winning the 2009 Superyacht Cup in Antigua in December. For more details from her cruising captain, Capt. John Campbell, see page A3.

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She's moving



The keel on S/Y *Legacy* has been lifted somewhat. Find out what's next. Page B5. **PHOTO/CAPT. TOM SERIO**

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Photo courtesy of Trinity Yachts

More than moving across the water, real sailing soaks your soul

I have just finished editing Capt. John Campbell's story about the Superyacht Cup Antigua (at right) and I'm humbled.



LATITUDE ADJUSTMENT
LUCY CHABOT REED

I know it wasn't a huge race – in importance or size (just five yachts started the race).

Still, I was struck by how little I know.

I've been around boats for a while now, visiting them at

the dock, getting tours at boat shows, even taking trips up the river. I've even worked a delivery on a motoryacht.

But for some reason, it never felt like sailing.

Probably because it isn't.

I know Webster's considers sailing "the art of navigation," the not-so-simple act of moving a vessel through the water. But when you read Capt. Campbell's recap of the race, or stories like those that floated around as the 10th anniversary of that frightful year the Hobart race claimed six lives, you realize there's so much more to sailing than hitting the throttle.

My first real taste of sailing came three years ago in Antigua aboard a different sailboat with Capt. Campbell, a long-time friend of my in-laws. The yacht did list a bit, but there weren't any crew scrambling about, hoisting or setting sails, harnessing the wind and the waves to make their craft move forward. Though a sail was up, it was more motoring than sailing.

It all seemed so seamless, and safe.

I got my first real taste of sailing fear in the BVI over our Thanksgiving holiday in late November. My husband

was at the helm. David grew up on a sailboat and spent his formative years in those very waters, so when he suggested (finally) that we take a busman's holiday on a 39-foot Beneteau, I knew he could handle it.

My in-laws joined us, giving the boat some 60 years of sailing experience. I wasn't worried, and was even ready for the first 48 hours of seasickness that had struck me on a previous trip.

The afternoon sail from Tortola to Peter Island was lovely. Holding my 6-year-old daughter in my lap, watching my husband drape his hand over the wheel, feeling the sun on my face and smelling the wind, I could see how people get jobs on boats and never go back. Work and stress were already a world away and our biggest concern was where to anchor for lunch.

After lunch, though, we beat to windward.

The afternoon sail from Peter Island to Bitter End made me rethink my romantic thoughts of sailing. I shot David pretty serious daggers as if to say "knock it off and drive the boat right." I put a foot on the side of the helm station to keep myself upright, convinced the boat was going to tip over and ruin my holiday.

I looked at my father-in-law, casually propped against the aft lifelines, talking about something that had nothing to do with life and death. My mother-in-law was in her element, arms outstretched on the back of the settee, identifying every outcropping of rock and telling stories about them from 20 years ago. She wasn't even holding on.

It took me a while before I realized I was the only one worried. Even Kenna took our angle as a matter of course and instead counted the number of times the sea splashed her face. She finally stopped counting – and laughing about it – somewhere around 26.

Eventually, I stopped being afraid. This boat wasn't going to tip over. David knew what he was doing. Sailboats are meant to heel over. I wasn't happy, but I was safe.

Seeing photos of the Superyacht Cup (www.thesuperyachtcup.com) brought it all back, the wind, the water and the power at being heeled over, even a little bit. My heart raced reading his story because even though I only knew a tiny bit of what he spoke – I had clear skies and calm seas on my little sail – at least I knew a tiny bit.

It's awesome to be on a craft that merges with the water and the wind to move you through space. And while we're not yet ready to sell our house and escape somewhere on a sailboat, we are talking about where to go sailing this summer, even if it's just a little sail.

Have you made an adjustment in your latitude recently? Let us know. Send news of your promotion, change of yachts or career, or personal accomplishments to Editor Lucy Chabot Reed at lucy@the-triton.com.

S/Y Timoneer wins Superyacht Cup

By Capt. John Campbell

The Superyacht Cup Regatta was held immediately after the Antigua Charter Show. Unfortunately, inclement weather delayed several boats from arriving on time, including defending champion S/Y *Sojana*. Boats coming from the Mediterranean fared no better than those coming south from the United States; it was a tough trip for both groups.

Just five boats came to the start line, with S/Y *Timoneer* at 45 meters being the biggest, and the W class sloop S/Y *Wild Horses* the smallest at 24 meters.

All the Superyacht Cup races are pursuit races, where each boat starts at a given time according to the allocated handicap. If the handicappers do their job correctly, all the boats would cross the finishing line at the same time.

The Superyacht Cup organizers have adopted the so-called "bucket" handicap, devised by Jim Teeters. It

considers many aspects of the boat; not only measurements, but if you have to furl the headsail to tack, for example.

Teeters fine-tuned the handicap as the races progressed and the racing could not have been much closer. In the final race, the first three boats finished within three minutes of each other. A remarkable achievement.

The racing rules are modified a little on safety grounds. You cannot have yachts worth \$20 million banging into each other. Safety is paramount and protests are strongly discouraged.

The forecast for the first race was for 17-20 knots of wind. This was reasonably accurate, but what was not expected was that there would be strong squalls of 35 knots or more on each leg of the race.

Normally, we sail *Timoneer* with six or seven crew, but for the racing we had 28 crew as well as four guests. The owner is 88 and still loves his

See **TIMONEER**, page A4

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Skilled sailors, time penalty give *Timoneer* the Cup win

TIMONEER, from page A3

racing. From the pilot house he can join in the tactical discussions and monitor all aspects of the race. For the regatta he brought a friend who is 94, who also enjoyed the racing.

Such a large team requires good organization. In overall charge and running the hydraulics was Phil Wade. He has worked for these owners for 17 years. He manages the boat and skippers the boat for the races. On the helm was Barry Jones, the skipper of *Klosters*, a Perini Navi.

As tactician we were lucky to have Tomac from North Sails. Tom "Tomac" McLaughlin is a world-class tactician and not only do we appreciate his sailing skills, but he has the most wonderful way of explaining his tactics and the positions of the other boats to the owner.

When asked if we are catching another boat, Tomac likes to tell the owner that we are not only catching them, but about to crush them like a bug.

North Sails has always provided all the sails for *Timoneer*, and the owner likes to give Tomac a hard time if any boat ever manages to pass us, telling him that North must learn to produce faster sails or give him a bigger discount. It is wonderful to watch this relationship that has developed over many years.

We had just one day to practice and allocate tasks before the racing started, although many of the race-crew are regulars on board for the regattas.

Signe was the first boat away, and we, on *Timoneer*, were the fourth to start. The lead given to *Signe* proved to be insurmountable, although we tried hard.

We were not able to carry the spinnaker on any leg, but we did set the mizzen staysail a few times. It seemed that every time we set it we got yet another rain squall and had a few battles to get it down in one piece. We managed to finish about three minutes behind *Signe*, who did benefit from a lucky windshift on the beat to the line.

For the second day they gave us two shorter races. The first race saw a fair amount of drama. We snapped the mizzen sheet and cracked the boom as it hit the shrouds, so we were tentative about using the mizzen until we could assess the damage.

Wild Horses was not so lucky. In the big seas and squally waves she cracked a bulkhead and had to retire from the series. We managed to pull back the lead of 22 minutes that we had given to *Tenacious*, and we won the morning race.

Conditions were similar for the afternoon race, but the course was more favorable for us to set the

spinnaker. With spinnaker and mizzen staysail both pulling hard, we once again overhauled everybody to win the afternoon race as well. *Tenacious* lost her main halyard and was forced to send somebody aloft in difficult conditions. Despite heroic efforts of the crew aloft, they were forced to retire.

The final race would decide the overall winner between us, *Signe* or *Kalikobass II*. It was all to play for. The handicap had been fine tuned, and we were last boat away. *Signe* appeared to be almost half way around the course



Timoneer bashing to windward.
PHOTO/CAPT. JOHN CAMPBELL

before we started. *Kalikobass* started close ahead of us, and we caught up with her on the first reach.

Our crew worked miracles and set the spinnaker and the mizzen staysail at the same time and we eased through the lee of *Kalikobass*. We set off in pursuit of *Signe*, but she proved impossible to catch. We managed to stay ahead of *Kalikobass* and second place would have clinched the title for us.

We got close to *Signe* and in their enthusiasm they tacked just a moment too soon. They got perilously close to the buoy on the finish line, tried to luff around it but touched, right under the watchful eyes of the committee. She was awarded a time penalty, which was enough to ensure that we won the final race and the series overall.

Kalikobass finished just a couple of minutes behind us. A very close race, and one that the owners and guests enjoyed immensely.

Capt. John Campbell has been yacht captain for more than 20 years and a sailor all his life. He is currently in command of the 45m M/Y Timoneer. Comments on this story are welcome at editorial@the-triton.com.