



# SMOOTH SAILING

*In line with the rise of the share economy and ubiquitous social media scenes of lavish yachts in picturesque anchorages, charter is experiencing a meteoric boost, Jeni Bone discovers.*

STORY **Jeni Bone** PHOTOS **Supplied**



“It is not a packaged experience that is repeated, but a curated itinerary,” Jo continues. “A charter experience on a well-managed yacht is a completely customised experience which is tailored specifically to the group. From the itinerary to the menus and activities.”

A crewed yacht charter delivers the ultimate all-inclusive vacation on the water, says Peter Redford, Managing Director at Fraser Yachts.

“It’s a world where you can take the opportunity to relax, unwind, and enjoy special times with friends and family, while being pampered by a personal and professional crew onboard a private charter yacht anywhere in the world,” Peter explains.

“Charter vacations are appealing to a lot of people that are looking for privacy and to relax and have family time but also people that want to explore the world in total luxury and safety. A vacation on a yacht may conjure up images of billionaires and celebrities, but it’s not just for the rich and famous. If the cost is shared between family and friends chartering a yacht is definitely for everyone.”

“Your charter yacht is literally your private floating hotel where the location and scenery change daily as you relax and enjoy your itinerary at your own pace,” adds Jeni. “Yacht charter is ideal for family holidays for quality time together, creating life-long memories with no distractions.”



**B**oat owners and those who, either by inclination or situation, do not own boats are drawn to charter. Far from cannibalising the boat market, there’s a good many charter guests who’ll parlay their enjoyment into ownership at some stage of their lives. And for many owners, charter allows them to put their vessel to good use when they can’t use it, keeping their crew sharp and the boat in working order, while defraying some of the costs of maintenance.

Charter has broad appeal for the absolute freedom to pick a point on this blue planet and meet your private yacht there, with ‘step-on-step off’ convenience, professional crew trained in all kinds of specialties – from massage to submersibles – and totally tailored itineraries to whet your appetite for any kind of vacation you can imagine.

From extreme adventures in remote destinations, to equally stimulating sojourns in celebrity-strewn ports such as Cannes and Monaco, charter takes you there. Your location and backdrop can change daily, according to your mood, appetite or the weather.

There’s no trekking between hotels, no unpacking and repacking required and you are far, as they say, ‘from the madding crowd’ – especially those known to jam the streets at major events and tourist hot spots.

There’s no better vantage point for all the action on the track and none of the discomfort, than ensconced

aboard your luxury superyacht, moored on Monaco marina, Port Hercules. Privacy, exclusivity, delectable cuisine, five-star service, plus the option of setting off tomorrow to a secluded anchorage for snorkelling, sailing or simply relaxing with only the sound of waves lapping at the hull and ice clinking in the cocktails.

Locally-based charter brokers cater to a global clientele and report that charter in our region has reached a new zenith.

Founder of Luxury Charter Group, Jeni Tidmarsh says the unique appeal of a charter vacation lies in its personalisation from start to finish, no matter what your required level of comfort.

“Your itinerary, activities and every detail are entirely all about you,” says Jeni. “You don’t have to own a yacht or be an experienced sailor. Your yacht can be matched to your requirements and allocated budget, be it a 15-metre sailing catamaran or a 50-metre luxury motor yacht where the ratio of crew to guests means you can enjoy five-star service in every aspect.”

The allure of charter is that time on-board somebody else’s magnificent and professionally-run vessel “is an opportunity to create time with your family and friends that is more akin to a journey than a vacation”, according to Joachim (Jo) Howard, Managing Director at Ocean Alliance.



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE** Jo Howard, director Ocean Alliance; *Sahana*, available in Sydney; Charter Yacht *Big Fish*; Peter Redford, managing director Fraser Yachts; *Atoa*, available in Australia

**“A crewed yacht charter delivers the ultimate all-inclusive vacation on the water, says Peter Redford”**





“Unpack your bags once. There’s no carting luggage between locations, checking in and out of hotels, just relaxed cruising in the capable hands of your attentive crew.”

Locally, growing superyacht ownership means there are more vessels available in the charter fleet.

“The charter market is being stimulated by a number of factors: firstly, we are seeing an increase in owners basing larger yachts in the region with an appetite to operate those yachts commercially, and secondly, Australia and the South Pacific are becoming an increasingly popular alternative charter destination to the experiences offered in the Mediterranean and Caribbean,” says Jo.

Australia is rising on the radars of travellers looking to experience the South Pacific odyssey of their dreams.

“Visitors from overseas often come to Australia just once, and they want to visit several destinations, including Sydney, Uluru, the Whitsundays and the Great Barrier Reef,” Jeni says.

“In the South Pacific, Fiji and French Polynesia are five-star destinations in remote locations. Charter guests can dive, explore pristine islands, helicopter to shore and experience island culture. The islands of Tahiti cover the size of Europe, so the cruising opportunities are innumerable, and the water is two-degrees warmer than the air, which is sublime!”

Jo says he is seeing increasing interest focused around Sydney, the Kimberley, Whitsundays, Cairns and Lizard Island.

“The full length of the Great Barrier Reef is and always will be a big attraction for charter clients from around the world.

“We are also seeing strong growth in destinations such as PNG, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Tahiti. Many of these new destinations are opening up and our clients are seeking more unique experiences.”

“Australia’s beauty is an enormous driving force for the growth and interest in Australian yacht charters,” says Peter. “There is an overwhelming array of breathtaking destinations to be visited in Australia on a superyacht charter. A superyacht charter in Australia combines luxury with adventure.

“There’s nothing like cruising into Sydney Harbour by superyacht, with its iconic Opera House and Harbour Bridge, and amazing New Year’s Eve fireworks. Explore nature on the Great Barrier Reef, the white-sand beaches of the Whitsundays or the wilder northern shoreline of the Kimberley.”

Based in New Zealand, Debbie Wood from Ocean

**“Charter guests can dive, explore pristine islands, helicopter to shore and experience island culture.”**



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Queen Charlotte Sound, Marlborough Sounds; A great getaway without the burden of ownership; Port Orly Beach, Vanuatu; Debbie Wood from Ocean Independence

Independence says “NZ has some incredible cruising in all of Northland, Bay of Islands and the remote and picturesque Marlborough Sounds offering pristine scenery, luxury shore options, plenty of activities for the more adventurous, and the Majestic Fiordland National Park.”

In the spotlight ahead of the 36th America’s Cup, to be held on Auckland’s Waitemata Harbour in March 2021, New Zealand is already generating significant charter interest.

“The America’s Cup and Millennium Cup, including a special J Class regatta, will be great events,” says Debbie. “The myriad of cruising options are even more special when tied in to shore-based travel to the South Island and central North Island. If the traveller has two weeks, it allows for a very diverse trip.”

The South Pacific, which has endless offerings, continues Debbie. “Vanuatu has many active and spectacular volcanoes, pristine islands and dive sites. Fiji is always a popular destination with the Yasawas and Mamanucas. New Caledonia is another excellent charter destination.”

As well as extended stay charters of a couple of nights up to several weeks, the event market is enjoying a surge for special occasions, corporate lunches and spectator craft for major events, such as the Boxing Day start of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, or the Grand Prix, whether that be in Melbourne, Singapore, Dubai or Monaco.



**“It pays to trust your charter to experts with industry accreditation”**



**TOP** Bora Bora Island, French Polynesia  
**ABOVE** Jeni Tidmarsh, founder of Luxury Charter Group

With the rise of “disruptors” in every category, those seeking to create direct channels between consumer and product inevitably emerge. But in this rarefied realm where hundreds of thousands of dollars, or Euros, change hands and expectations are high, there’s a lot at stake. It pays to trust your charter to experts with industry accreditation from MYBA, the Worldwide Yachting Association which oversees and accredits members in brokerage, charter, technical management and superyacht construction.

Since 1984, MYBA has provided its members with guidelines on ethical standards, rules of conduct and the intricacies of diverse local rules, customs and contingencies.

“Accountability is the main reason we would advise using a MYBA-accredited charter broker,” Jo states. “When arranging such high value experiences, you want to deal with professionals. MYBA contracts are very protective of all parties and have been proven time and time again over a 30-year period.”

“Using a MYBA-accredited, independent broker, clients receive non-biased information on all the yachts available that meet their criteria,” says Jeni. “My team and I inspect more than 400 yachts a year and have access to over 3,000 charter yachts worldwide. Our clients benefit from our knowledge and 60 years’ combined experience of travel and charter.”



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