

10 Ways To Make Your Boat Worth More

MOTOR BOATING & SAILING

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\$3.00

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Special Section
*100's of the Best
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GALÁPAGOS

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southern and eastern islands, finishing at Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz. The most populous island—with about 8,000 souls—was culture shock after the absence of people on the other islands. But it was certainly worthwhile visiting the Charles Darwin Research Station—where endangered species like the Galápagos tortoise are bred—and driving up into the rainforest highlands.

Of the many charters I've done, this was far and above the best. It was the perfect blend of relaxation, learning, and just plain fun.

Recommended: Bring along plenty of sunscreen since you'll be right on the equator. Also take a very good camera: We brought Minolta's autofocus 7xi, which takes high-quality photos but doesn't require you to be a pro yourself.

Everything But Weights

Also, if you're diving, you'll need to bring along everything but weights. I took U.S. Divers equipment, and highly recommend it because of its top-quality design and construction. I was delighted in particular with the way the Conshelf 21 regulator operated (easy breathing and no jaw fatigue) as well as with the Look mask's excellent facial fit and all-around visibility. I also liked the Calypso BCD, which is one of the best BCDs on the market for traveling. A full wet-suit—I wore the company's 6.5-mm jacket and bibs—is also a must since water temperatures are in the 60s and 70s. U.S. Divers' number is (714)540-8010. ☺

HOW TO GET THERE

American Airlines has daily nonstop flights from Miami to Quito, Ecuador. From there you have a choice of local airlines to the Galápagos.

Along with *Mistral II*, Quasar Nautica also owns three other boats—another 66-foot motor yacht, a 93-foot trimaran, and an 84-foot motor sailer. Prices on *Mistral II* vary according to the number of people on board. Per person rates run from \$1,575 for a full boat of 12 passengers to \$2,700 for 6 passengers. Weekly rental for the entire boat ranges from \$16,200 to \$18,900. Once you reach the Galápagos, there's a \$40 park entrance fee. Tumbaco, Inc., Dept. MB&S, P.O. Box 1036, Punta Gorda, Fla. 33951. (813) 637-4660.

MARTINIQUE

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the chain of jewels that runs from the U.S. Virgin Islands to Venezuela. We climb aboard a Jamaica 38 power cruiser fully found and filled by the Kiriacoulis Caraibes Yacht Charter Service with our most basic needs—rum, tonic, wine, cheese, fruit, boeuf bourguignon and cassoulet aux canard.

Costas Christou of the Greek-owned charter company promises us good times in the local casinos, quiet times in secluded coves, tasty times in the local restaurants where spicy dishes are served, and finally, romantic times as we roam the empty beaches and watch the sunsets while sipping our rum concoctions. He recommends a quick run to St. Lucia and on down to St. Vincent and maybe Bequia. The 25-knot speed and 300-mile range of this powerboat permits such cruises in short periods of time. He smiles, waves good-bye, and we are off for a week of cruising these turquoise waters, where flying fish explode like rockets off our bow and local fishermen haul homemade pots filled with the coveted Caribbean lobster known as langouste or crayfish. I feel the city stress lifting from my shoulders. No wailing sirens. No crosswalk confrontations with taxicabs. This is truly the antidote to civilization, as the local Club Med advertises.

Beautiful Bay

With U.S. charts of the region and local guidebooks in hand, we find our first dream cove only five miles from Pointe du Bout where we picked up the Jamaica 38. It's in Anse Noir (Black Bay) that we drop the hook for the night in 20 feet of crystal-clear water. I don snorkel gear and quickly check the set of our anchor and chain. It's during this swim that I see hundreds of tropical fish with colorations that seem to form underwater rainbows below our boat. I also notice that the blades of the starboard propeller have obviously come into contact with coral reefs or anchor chains during the previous charter. The blades are crimped and so, therefore, are our plans for St. Lucia and Bequia. (I had noticed a vibration as we left Pointe du Bout, and Costas had asked us not to run the engines at more than 2000 rpm.)

This setback, however, doesn't bother us at all. We have all the charts for all the harbors of Martinique and we feel very comfortable cruising in these waters, especially here at Anse Noir. Dur-

ing the week we will go on to Anse Grand d'Arlet, Petit d'Arlet, Cul de Sac Marin and St. Anne and pay a visit to *HMS Diamond*, a 600-foot pinnacle of rock jutting up menacingly off the coast.

In all these harbors we'll find quaint restaurants serving a combination of French and Creole food ranging from haut cuisine to beachside fare. We will sample flying fish filets, squid, shark, tuna, redfish, conch, crepe Suzettes and banana flambé. Here in Anse Noir we find our favorite bistro—L'Anse Noir, an unusual open thatched round house hidden among the coconut palms and lush greenery just behind the beautiful black-sand (volcanic) beach.

Powerboat Seasons

Here we enjoy a planter's punch to start, followed by grilled lobster tails and finished off with freshly opened pineapple topped with coconut shavings. It is here, too, that we enjoy the friendly company of Viviane Eglantine and Claude Castex who own this out-of-the-way restaurant, which is easily reachable but only by boat. Viviane and Claude are typical of all the people on Martinique—open, friendly and quick to smile, especially if you start any conversation with "Parlez-vous anglais?" (Do you speak English?) Most everyone speaks "un peu" (a little). Nevertheless, language is not a barrier.

It takes only 24 hours to establish our daily routine—French coffee and croissants for breakfast, a heavy meal at lunch followed by naps, and later cheese, fruit, French bread and wine for a light dinner aboard. Usually, we cruise from anchorage to anchorage in the early morning before the hefty trade winds (that come from the east at 15 to 20 knots this time of year) start blowing. But in a boat this size, such winds and four- to five-foot waves don't bother us.

Powerboat cruising in the Caribbean is perfect in the fall and spring seasons from October through December and March through June. Though the temperature varies only 10 degrees between summer and winter, the winds of 30 knots in January and February often make powerboating difficult in the open-ocean waters.

Our boat is well designed for charter work. It is a twin-engine convertible built by Gilbert Marine in France. With two staterooms and a convertible dinette, the boat will handle six, but that would be far too many, at least for American tastes. For two, honeymooners or others, the boat is perfect, as it