

The Yachting Lifestyle

Is it for you?

BY GREGORY MARLO

When you picture yourself sipping on a drink, sunning under the open sky and drifting away from your everyday life, it's hard not to get swept away by the luxury of the yachting life. Whether you're a water lover with a strong pair of sea legs or a newbie looking for a floating getaway, yachts can open up opportunities to explore interesting places while meeting new people along the way. But before you sail off, there are important factors to consider. Do you want a power yacht or a sail? How much do you want to spend? Does size matter? How much will it cost for upkeep and do you have enough experience to keep afloat? To help you make the right decision, we have compiled a sailor's cheat sheet to help you decide – are you in for a 'nautical' life or will you bid Bon Voyage to your dreams of sailing away?

CHARTERS

Don't want to invest in budget-busting boat? Charters are a great way to get your feet wet in the world of yachting. Whether you try out a yacht for a day, week or the season, charters offer the opportunity to experience boating whether crewed or captained yourself.

YACHT TIMESHARES

Forget about condos, invest in timeshare for a yacht. Programs such as SailTime's Fractional Yachting program (<http://www.sailtime.com/>) promote all the benefits of yachting without any of the typical hassles of ownership, including cleaning, routine maintenance and putting the boat in and out of the water seasonally. Newbies can get a taste of the yachting life with well-equipped, late-model boats available at a fraction of ownership cost. For instance, with SailTime, instead of splurging on a \$200,000 vessel, you can reap all the advantages of ownership for less than \$5,000 a year. And should you decide yachting is not your schtick, you can simply walk away after a season.

CORPORATE EVENTS

Want to make a splash at your

next work function – rent out a yacht. Perfect for team-building, all hands will need to be on-deck to achieve optimal speed and efficiency. Whether you anchor and dine seaside at a favourite resto or eat onboard, entertaining staff and clients is a great way to bond with employees while testing out new waters.

COMPETITION

Get your heart and boat racing with competitive yachting. Popular with yacht and sailing clubs across Canada, these fun, fast-paced events are offered weekly. You don't need an offshore racing boat or multi-million catamaran to enjoy the ride of a lifetime.

TRAINING

Before you hit the seas, you'll have to hit the books. Learning to navigate through the waters of boat operation requires special licensing and training. Unlike smaller boats that just require a Pleasure Craft Operators Permit, sailing yachts require certification of an accredited program such as those administered by the Canadian Yachting Association. There are numerous programs that provide classroom and hands-on instruction in order to get your credentials, which are good for life and recognized in other parts of the world.

Getting into the yachting lifestyle has never been easier and the vast amenities and options available on boats offer no compromise to a luxurious means. Whether you want to disconnect from the hustle-and-bustle of city living, anchored at a nearby bay or are itching to set sail on the open waters, every yachting adventure is yours for the taking. You just have to decide which direction you want to set sail.

See you on the water!

Gregory Marlo is an avid sailor and power boater while working in the boat charter industry. He loves to organize trips abroad to destinations in the Caribbean and Mediterranean year-round and shares his passion for travel and being on the water.

