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Come Sail Away

By Colleen Ringer

It's high time you hit the high seas.
Here we dive into the yachting world
and reveal the latest luxury amenities
and options for part-time sailors.

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oday, it seems that every megastar has a megayacht. And why not? These floating palaces are the epitome of luxury, not only because of the freedom they offer their captains, but also because of the privacy and seclusion that can be found onboard.

Just imagine sitting on the deck of your yacht as it cuts its way through the smooth waters of the Caribbean Sea. Complete darkness engulfs you, and there's not a light in sight—except the stars, of course. If that image alone doesn't make you want to go down to your nearest marina and purchase your own luxury liner, then perhaps our look at what's hot in yachts will. Read on.

Amenities at Sea

The latest luxury yachts are inviting all manner of amenities onboard. Basketball courts, helipads, movie theaters, full gyms—these are just a few of the extras yachters crave. And hot tubs, bars and lounge areas are all but assured from the biggest and best designers like Italian powerhouses Ferretti and Benetti, and New Zealand-based Alloy Yachts. "Increasingly, owners are focused on personal fitness, so gyms are much in demand," says Tony Hambrook, managing director of Alloy. "Onboard entertainment systems are often very sophisticated, with satellite TV and large libraries of movies and music." He notes that clients want their water toys close at hand as well, resulting in spaces for kayaks, water skis, even mini-submarines.

Ron Cleveringa, vice president of sales and marketing for Burger Boat Company, a custom builder based in Wisconsin, tells how one client ordered two identical vessels—one for use in the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding areas, and the other for cruising the Eastern Seaboard. "[These yachts] had saunas on board that had a TV on the exterior and a sound system on the interior, so you could sit in the sauna and watch television," he recalls.

Sumptuous amenities such as these are matched only by the opulent materials that designers are incorporating into their floating creations. Marble, granite and exotic woods are as plentiful at sea as they are in the country's most exclusive custom homes. "The level of detailing, comfort and luxury has increased dramatically in the last 15 to 20 years," Cleveringa says. In Burger Boat's newest vessel, the Ingot, back-lit white onyx takes center stage in the dining room and the salon, while a teak bar competes for attention with a sizable hot tub on the sun deck. Those who want to see for themselves can actually sneak a peek at the masterpiece in person: The Ingot will be featured

at the Monaco Yacht Show this September. "She's the most luxurious and sophisticated motor yacht we've built to date," Cleveringa says. Sounds like she's worth a trip across the Atlantic.

Members Only

If you're not looking to add full-time sailor to your résumé, but still want to feel the sea breeze on your face on a somewhat regular basis, fractional yacht ownership may be the way to go. "It comes down to a convenience aspect," says Nuno Alves, president of Vancouver, British Columbia-based One 4 Yacht Fractions. "When [our clients] do have time to get away, they're not doing things like oil changes and cleaning. They're just out there on the water."

While One 4 Yacht offers its members vessels almost exclusively located in British Columbia, the Global Superyacht Club (whose parent company Eusamarine is headquartered in the United Kingdom) manages yachts from California to Croatia to the Caribbean. "As a member of the Global Superyacht Club you gain a real sense of belonging," says Keith Smith, founder and managing director. "You have your own skipper and crew on your own home yacht." Memberships range from \$120,000 for a one-eighth share of a 55-foot cruiser to \$19 million and up for one-third ownership of a five-deck megayacht. So how do you know which level of membership is right for you? First determine how you will use the boat (business meetings, vacations or both?) and go from there.

Whichever way you choose to go—full ownership or fractional—the benefits of being out to sea are priceless. "There's just something about being on the water," Alves says. "It really is kind of a last frontier [for] getting away from it all. There's a lot to be said for being at the cottage or out of the city; but when you're on the water, you take that to a whole new dimension."

To Learn More

ALLOY YACHTS, www.alloyyachts.com.
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