

# ASK THE experts

Get tips on taking the helm for clients seeking a sailing holiday, says **Alice Barnes-Brown**



PICTURES: G Adventures; Intrepid Travel/Robin Kersten; Dream Yacht Charter

# DESTINATIONS

## ACTIVE & ADVENTURE | SAILING

### 1 'Sailing routes are not scripted; clients need to expect the unexpected'

Darnley serves as G Adventures' national sales manager for the UK, Ireland and South Africa. He leads a team of global purpose specialists who support agency partners through sales, training, marketing and incentives, as well as helping to expand knowledge of community tourism among G Adventures' trade partners.



**Stu Darnley**  
national sales manager,  
G Adventures

We've been sailing in Greece for at least 10 years and we have introduced five new vessels to the region for 2025. These are focused on sustainability, but the trips themselves are eco-friendly anyway as you're typically using wind power.

We have a skipper on board, but if clients are signing on for this, then they can get involved. Some like to do a lot – maybe take the helm or do some of the rope work. Those that aren't as comfortable might do smaller tasks.

After breakfast on board, we set sail, because that's when the winds tend to be lower, and it gives us the best chance to get a good spot in the next marina – for lunches in tavernas or exploring on land. For example, with Naxos being such a big island, we spend an entire day there. That allows people to rent cars and provides a break from the water.

The actual routes of our trips vary due to the wind, the waves and mood of the group. The skipper will get out the charts on the morning of the crossing, or maybe the night before, and suggest a route. It's not going to be scripted; clients need to expect the unexpected.

**Book it:** Sailing Greece: Athens to Santorini is priced at £2,079 per person for 14 nights, with departures from May to September, excluding flights.  
[gadventures.com/agents](https://www.gadventures.com/agents)

### 2 'Sail on a traditional vessel to experience the culture'

Reeve is the head of partnerships at Intrepid Travel, managing direct and indirect sales. She is responsible for vision, strategy and budget implementation, with a focus on driving growth, securing new business and strengthening key trade and affiliate partner relationships.



**Jo Reeve**  
head of partnerships,  
Intrepid Travel

A sailing holiday combines excitement with the freedom of the open sea. Life slows down a little and clients can reach hidden spots they couldn't by land. With small groups of eight to 16 people, our trips offer an intimate experience, allowing clients to create unforgettable memories and lasting friendships.

Guests can dive into sailing by learning from seasoned skippers or simply unwind and soak up stunning views. All our trips feature regular swim stops and opportunities for snorkelling in places like Thailand, the Maldives and Croatia. A love of the water is recommended – we get customers of all ages on our sailing trips and a mix of solo travellers, couples or friends travelling together.

In the Maldives, we use a traditional dhoni boat. These are larger than the yachts we use in Europe, providing customers with a bit more space. All meals are included and cabins feature private en suites. Sailing on a dhoni lets customers experience the culture – the vessels were originally used for fishing, making them a significant part of the country's history.

**Book it:** Intrepid Travel offers a seven-night Sail Maldives itinerary from £1,819 per person, based on two sharing, for an April 20 departure. Includes meals and excursions but not flights.  
[intrepidtravel.com](https://www.intrepidtravel.com)

### 3 'Cabin charters are ideal for those who want to share costs'

Hirst is a passionate sailor with extensive experience in the marine, travel and hospitality industries, and has worked for Dream Yacht Charter for seven years. He leads the company's international team of dedicated charter experts and enjoys making sailing holidays more accessible to non-sailors.



**Sebastian Hirst**  
global yacht charter director,  
Dream Yacht Charters

Each of our travel agency partners will have an account manager to help them get familiar with the options – we love to educate our partners.

Skipped charters are ideal for those who want a skipper to navigate the yacht but prefer to handle their own meals. Our easy-crewed charters provide a skipper and include other expenses, like port taxes, insurance and fuel. Fully crewed charters come with a captain and host/cook. All meals on board and most beverages are included, as is watersports equipment and other necessary expenses. For those who want to share costs, our cabin charters are ideal for singles or couples and include the same things.

We also offer bareboat yacht rental but clients need sufficient experience to handle the vessel – either a qualification or proof of sailing experience.

The British Virgin Islands, known to be a sailors' paradise, are close to my heart. Short sailing distances from one snorkelling spot to the next, the vivid colour of the sea and the lively beach bars keep me coming back.

**Book it:** Dream Yacht Charter sells a seven-night skippered charter holiday in Grenada from £4,085 for six guests, based on an August 30 departure, excluding flights, meals and fuel. A seven-night cabin charter in Phuket departing May 17 starts at £1,238 per person, based on two sharing, and includes fuel, watersports and meals, but not flights.  
[dreamyachtcharter.com](https://www.dreamyachtcharter.com)