



HEADING:

Adjusting to Life Ashore

When mixing with people from outside the yachting industry it is not unusual to hear people ask ‘how can you live on a yacht’. Then a few years later it is not unusual to think ‘how can I live ashore?’ and ‘why live ashore?’ Why live ashore when we have to contend with making our lunches; vehicle insurance, health insurance, contents insurance, AA bills, child sponsorship (which mum used to take care of), tax, commuting to work, gym membership, visiting the supermarket, cooking, cleaning, washing, and a number of other things fighting for our personal time and earnings? Living on a yacht was simple. The basic needs of food and shelter were well take care of, most communication with family was via email and the off phone call or text, there was always some cash to burn, some new people to meet, hot looking guys to say ‘hi’ to when taking out the trash. It can seem like bliss. So why leave? This question must cross the mind of every yachtie at some stage. Some people seem to have quite a calculated and planned approach while others just seem to jump ashore and wonder what to do next, often ending up in their local crew placement agents offices looking for land based opportunities. How can one prepare for the changes in moving from living on a yacht to living on land and what is in store?

Talking to people who have moved ashore one finds they made the move for a variety of reasons, one ex stewardess said it was time to come home and get a "real job" before hitting 30yrs, as well as finding that there was a tiredness from living out of a backpack in such a small space and the politics associated with crew life. That coupled with wanting to have a base to go home to create a home life and garden as well as ‘find somewhere to put all the trinkets collected whilst traveling, instead of wondering how much could cram into the bilges!’ There is also the desire to share the lives of family and friends. Captain Ralph and chef Heather Lucas have come ashore after 22 years of permanent employment in yachting. Their first attempt to come ashore was after 13 years. They had seen many of their friends try and retire but for a

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number of reasons, the main one being lack of funds, they all ended up back in the industry. Being determined not to make the same mistake Ralph said they worked a few more years to ensure they were financial stable. However they were wrong, having lost touch with how expensive it is to live ashore. Even with new jobs they found it extremely difficult to earn money similar to that earned yachting. They found that even being strict on expenditure has its surprises and Ralph commented that ‘I completed my first tax return and decided the amount of money I still had in the bank was ludicrous for the amount of work I had put in. We were back on boats in about two weeks.’ nine years later they have found themselves more financially secure with their own business and with aging parents have decided they want to be ashore to support them.

What advice do ex-yachties have for crew interested in coming ashore?

- *‘I think that everyone in yachting knows when their time is up, when it has stopped being fun it is time to go, otherwise you will bring everyone around you crashing down and it is not fair. When you are having fun and all around you are, it isn't a chore. So get out sooner rather than later whilst your memories are all the good ones!’* Emily Davy chef extraordinaire.

Life can be lived in seasons and when on boats crew can often tell when it is time for a personal change. Maybe the season is ended and the boat is going to be in the yard for the winter. Perhaps the vessel is for sale. Or you have just mastered your role and would like more of a challenge. The time to move ashore can be something of an internal desire for change from the lifestyle of cruising as crew to creating a career path on land and making a base. One stewardess, nick named Six, had always said to herself ‘I will do two years and two boats’ When she was on her second vessel she was having a great time as they did a circumnavigation. To have left after one year of that journey, before the vessel reached its final destination just seemed wrong. So she decided to stay then resigned having completed the mission as the boat and team came to a conclusion and the vessel was put on the market. Looking back Six said ‘I am glad I got out of the industry having had three great years on wonderful vessels. It is hard to not go back but I think it would be harder continue to have such good experiences.’

- *‘Do not leave yachting until you have either; a very clear plan on how you will generate income to live a comfortable life, or work in the yachting industry until you have twice the amount of funds you feel it would take to live on land, or until you have another source of funds organized.’* Ralph Lucas

This comment is real wisdom – easier said than done! The resounding cry from people who have moved ashore is that the biggest challenge is finances. The challenge is having to manage money, cash flow and

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payments for almost everything which fights against the well nurtured urge to splurge cultivated on yachts. To be well organized with finances and self-controlled in spending are mighty virtues, ones that would certainly assist in making the transition ashore easier.

- *‘Decide what job you really want, and allow the time and finances to make it happen.’* Six

Finding a job that is creative, exciting and varied can be quite a challenge. Crew get off boats being very resourceful and having a wide variety of skills. A suggestion would be to decide which skills you really enjoy using and try and develop them for future job opportunities. Some crew have come ashore to begin businesses and careers in semi-related areas for example an adventure travel business, yacht agent, yacht manager, project manager and crew training courses. Others are doing quiet jobs and enjoying creating a home life, or working in industries relating to the training they had prior to entering the yachting industry. Another option is using hard earned money to study in an area of interest.

- *‘Just take your time settling in, it gets easier - try to resist the temptation to rush back because you miss the money!’* Stewardess who got out before turning 30

It is tempting to go back, especially since it can take about two years to get into the swing of not being on the move, with an office job, bills and banking. After about two years one settles back with family and friendships and things take longer to change. To get back to the adventure journey of yachting and beautiful locations can be enticing. Others are just over it, not at all tempted finding that ‘It’s refreshing to realize there’s more to life than the demands yachting takes’. There can be a sense of enjoying taking charge of ones life. There is also the possibility of delivery work to keep a hand in the industry.

Talking to crew agents, it is unusual for crew to come ashore with a real plan of attack. Many know their time is up and that they want a change however they are also uncertain of what they want their future to be. In these circumstances the easiest thing to do is to visit the local crew agent and ask for temp or delivery work. This can be good or bad depending on your ability to resist temptation. While one ex-captain likes doing deliveries to keep a hand in the industry another said ‘I could not go back and do any deliveries at all because I loved it so much I would be back on yachts fulltime.’ If you get the opportunity to return to yachts for a short time after having moved ashore you may find yourself, as Six did, thinking ‘this is not my life anymore, I do not want to be a stewardess when I grow up!’ Thoughts like these are a good reminder of why in your yachting career you stepped ashore, and an incentive to stay there.

The final piece of advice is:

- *‘Do it, the real world is rewarding and means something!’* Stewardess Michelle B

‘Having a life back to yourself, being able to plan weekends and holidays without worrying about a last-minute charter turning up!’ Was the best thing about coming ashore for the Stewardess who got out before

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turning 30. And ‘knowing in your down time you do not need to count the sleeps until going back to the boat’ are the best things about being ashore for Emily the chef who was in the industry ten years. There seems to be an odd allure for being responsible for ones own life again which brings people ashore. The desire to rise to the challenge and enjoying getting back to the everyday – making lunches, driving to work, belonging to a gym and planning weekends away. It is all part of the ‘I can make things happen, I can look after myself attitude’ which provides and energy and incentive to live on land and make ones own life.

ENDS

1600 Words

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Random job opportunities for ex crew:

- Become a distributor for some yacht related product which is not available in your home town.
- Invent a cool crew uniform.
- Start up a course for potential crew.
- Set up a specialist crew agent for deliveries, engineers, Philipinos etc.
- Become a charter broker.
- Become a yacht agent is a remote part of the world that you know well.
- Begin a business in photography, under water videography.
- Become a yacht sales broker specializing in Asian built vessels – the soon to be latest and greatest.
- Work for a yachting magazine as an accounts manager.
- Work as a project manager for your favorite yard.

Images

Figure 1: Things we enjoyed: Cooking on a bbq with a beautiful view

Figure 2: Things we miss from yachting: A beer in paradise, Tahiti

Figure 3: Memories of beautiful mornings before the guests get up

Figure 4:Time out, swims in stunning locations Seychelles.

Figure 5: Exotic locations

Figure 6: Things we enjoy ashore: family dinners

Figure 7: And remember the beautiful blue water.