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Zingara

Top Dog in the Cat World

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Friday, 30 November 2007

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Top Dog in the Cat World - Sometimes your first impression of a boat makes your jaw open just a little wider letting in a tad more breeze. We are at the Village Cay Boat Show and there are large cats by the clowder -load, but Zingara stands out by miles. It's not just her looks, though, that set her apart - she represents an epitome. If you were to entertain the idea of a tropical paradise holiday in the BVI with five star megayacht service, limitless water sports opportunities, unbelievable cuisine and an experienced, professional crew, then Zingara's your girl. In her maiden season the crew has been proudly credited with an unprecedented 29 weeks of charter; with an achievement like that, things could be said to be going really rather well.



Setting records is a Zingara speciality. On her passage from Cape Town to Miami, she set an unregistered record of 29 days to complete the 8300 mile journey, hitting speeds of 22 knots. Captain Mark Wehrly reflects the steadiness of the vessel under speed, "If I was to tell you the champagne glasses on the bar never even moved on that trip you can imagine how smooth it feels to sail this yacht."

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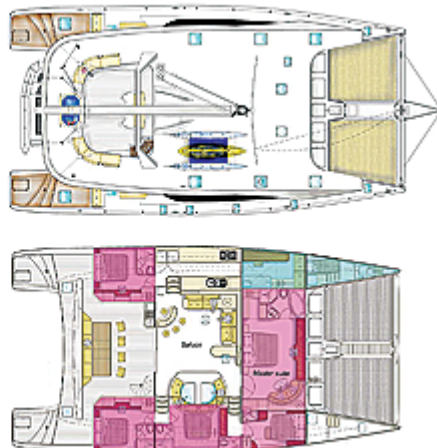
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And smooth sailing she has been – from the very beginning. Zingara (hull number two to Akasha, also in the BVI) is the brain child of Peter Wehrly and Matrix Yachts, and she's designed to be absolutely rock steady. She was custom-built for BVI sailing, catering to the diverse range of experiences of those looking for a bit of a blue water sailing adventure whilst idling in the lap of luxury. If Commander Bond came aboard for a week of luxury cruising he'd certainly get the thrills, but chances are his martinis would have to be stirred!



When it came to incorporating this purpose built luxury yacht designed to sail in the British Virgin Islands, Matrix Yachts saw no reason to venture away from the BVI. As Captain Wehrly states, "The BVI has become our home – everything we need is here, so we felt she should be a BVI incorporated business. The services and infrastructure necessary to maintain and provision the yacht are right here; the sailing is incredible and our custom guest packages can be tailored to these islands. There's something for everyone and we love to do it right".



Zingara is a Silhouette 76 built in South Africa, where Matrix Yachts are currently completing their third set of hulls. She has ten berths, comprising the owner's king-sized suite, four queen guest suites and separate captain and crew quarters, and additional private office space for the captain. All berths are linked to the chilled water air conditioning system for comfortable sailing in tropical climes. Conveniences and appliances, including the refrigeration, washing and storage units are state of the art, ensuring exacting standards from a service perspective.

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High aspect sails allow her to cruise smoothly at 10-12 knots, and she can be cranked up to 20 knots with the same steady glide. The boat's intelligent sail handling systems and design (in boom furling and self tacking jib) requires a minimal input from the crew while underway, enabling them to spend more time pampering the guests'. Details are in aesthetics, and the hulls are high to produce a clean water line. The captain's fly bridge towers high above her hulls to provide panoramic views of the islands, and these wonderful views can be enjoyed from the hot tub up here – who said the night watch had to be boring? She looks, and feels, like a luxury resort in motion - an incredible concept.



As I walk through the main cabin, I whisper to myself that there is something different about this yacht. I am about to ask what the designers had done to make the on-board experience so peaceful and relaxing when Mark pre-empts my question and leads me to the master cabin. 'Astonishment' is probably the only way to describe my reaction; and I have seen a few boats in my time. Herein lies the answer: the marble floors have a soundproofing quality that seems alien in a boat, and the walls comprise specific exotic materials chosen for their soundproofing qualities. In the master suite, where the view from the king size bed passes over the top of the trampoline and disappears into the horizon, a high definition TV shows images from prior trips. Waking up to a view of the day's sail must be an incredible sensation. The en-suite with its hot tub and separate shower room is as large as one you'd find in a luxury apartment! It is apparent that space has been planned with a considerable degree of decadence; and yet the layout remains extremely practical.

A team of four is on hand to offer 24hr service to guests, helping them to experience a sailing vacation that goes beyond what would be expected in a week on a traditional megayacht. "In my experience," beams Mark, "Megayacht experiences are centred on food and relaxing; we also like to be active. We encourage our clients to enjoy the water in every way they can. With three diving instructors aboard, a diving adventure is part of our five star service. Our modus operandi is to get as much enjoyment out of the trip as is feasibly possible."



A megayacht's service rating is highly dependent upon its crews' ability to work together and pay attention to detail. Zingara's success can be attributed to the fact that it is essentially a family business, and every member of the family is trained in all aspects of service to the highest level and to take a personal interest in every part of business. On talking to the crew, it is apparent that they are as proud of this yacht as their Captain. John Yoxall will shortly be taking the reins over from Mark, who is confident that the project is moving along as planned.



Although yachts of Zingara's size can often seem out of place in the charter industry, her captain and her crew have proved that it is perfectly feasible to be the biggest and the best in terms of luxury sailing charters. The levels of enjoyment and luxury they are offering seem to be bang on target for setting the standards and sustaining a long and prosperous career in the BVI charter industry.

Administrator

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