



CYS Boat Show a Success

“The sea is still beautiful, fewer boats chartering, but they are busy”

With 22 boats and 35 brokers registered, the spring show, held at Village Cay, is traditionally smaller than the November show at Nanny Cay, according to Janet Oliver, executive director of the Charter Yacht Society of the BVI. This year, there’s another twist. For the past 10 years, she said, the spring show has been put on by clearinghouse CharterPort, who bowed out this year in favour of the Charter Yacht Society. “They decided this year they would trust us with the show,” said CYS Chair Ruth Ross, “and ask us to run it.”

Words by Heather Skards and Elton Callwood

Ms. Oliver said she thought there were a few more boats this year than would normally be seen at a spring show, “but a lot of that has to do with the fact that we’ve really pushed people into being in this show, because November was quite small.”

“This show, we’re in the middle of the

season, and there are a lot of boats that can’t come to it because they are actually out chartering,” she added.

In fact, the passage of Hurricane Irma has made the show, though small, more important than ever. If a boat wasn’t seen by brokers at the November show, it’s a chance for them to be recommended to clients. “If they have a damaged boat or a boat that was written off from Irma, and they’re

back with another boat, it’s an opportunity for them to be seen before we go into the charter season,” said Ms. Oliver. “If a broker sees them in May, they start putting them forward for November, December, January. It gives them an opportunity to start collecting bookings well ahead of the season.”

“The one in the fall is a preseason show, so it takes us into the charter season,” she added. “Usually we have about 75 yachts

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Biff and Amy of Gypsy Princess. Top Right: Dining area and (Bottom) one of the cabins Photos by Elton Callwood

that participate in that show, and about 130 to 140 agents or charter yacht brokers who come.”

According to her, there are 40 crewed yachts actively operating in the territory right now, out of a total of 75 registered with CYS, and a total of 350 bareboats operating across the major charter companies. Around 80 percent of the VI’s estimated 900 boats were damaged or destroyed after Irma, according to a government estimate.

Present at the show were Amy and Biff, a spirited and relaxed team who lost twenty-one of their twenty-four charters they had from the devastation due to Hurricane Irma, but remains resilient. Lucky enough, they were able to get Gypsy Princess a 41 ft. crude yacht that lost its mask while on dry dock at Nanny Cay and keep it in the programme. According to Biff, “Irma sucked it off.” However, they continue to refit her

while on the fly. Biff explained that the boat next to Gypsy Princess was crushed to pieces and added, “Even the sun shines on a dog’s behind some days.”

Biff and Amy have been living in the BVI for the past four years and are proud participants in local charities such as FSN (Family Support Network), Seed of Love, PAW (Promoting Animal Welfare) and Adopt a Roof. For over three months after Hurricanes Irma and Maria they worked with a local charity, Free Food for Kids, providing 180 meals a day at the Domino Gas Station in East End.

Even onboard their boat, they are environmentally active in reducing waste by supplying reusable water bottles for their guest. Reusing what they can such as jars, yoghurt pots etc. recycling glass and aluminum. Their on board can crusher is a big hit with their guest. “We crush about 500 beer cans per charter and our guest all

want to go back home and buy their own,” Biff explained.

In the future, they will be working with VI Plastics to take water samples whilst on charter to monitor plastics in our waters and trailing a bucket & enzyme compost system onboard. A project in collaboration with Full Belly Farm who will swap their compost for discount off their veggie account.

Presently they give 50% of their gratuity to grassroots charities, supporting the redevelopment after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. In addition, they provided food for the brokers at the boat show and Amy makes a banging mango and coconut cake. Their philosophy is ‘come as guest, leave as friends’.

On the other hand, owners of Allende, a 44 ft. catamaran, Kristiann and Graham and their dog Friday story is much different. A couple days before the hurricanes, they decided to