

Happy days

As anyone with children knows, a holiday just isn't a holiday unless the kids are having fun too, so when it comes to chartering a superyacht it pays to get the details right. The Burgess team of charter brokers provide their tips for a happy family holiday at sea

WORDS: MIRIAM CAIN



All children love exploring and messing about in water and a superyacht charter is a fantastic way to indulge them in their favourite pastimes. From the moment you step on board a superyacht, the fun begins.

A superyacht provides the perfect setting for a family holiday: it's small enough to bring everyone together, but big enough to give everyone their personal space. For example, spacious superyacht decks can be multi-purpose. While you are on the aft deck chatting and sipping cocktails, your children can be in the sky lounge, main saloon or even in the on board cinema with access to the yacht's movie library. And while you relax in the beach club, they can be taking a dip in the ocean or splashing about in the jacuzzi. Evenings can be equally flexible, with adults socialising in the main saloon and the sky lounge becoming the 'kids' zone'.

The mobility factor of a yacht also means there is something new for the children to see every day, along with plenty of watertoys on board to entertain them, leaving parents free to relax and unwind.

FLOATING ASSETS

From large, multi-deck motor yachts to contemporary sailing yachts, there is a wide choice of superyachts to cater for families with children. "I always encourage a family to charter a yacht that feels like an extension of their current lifestyle," says Bianca Nestor, a charter broker based in New York. "A less formal environment in which a family is comfortable and the children feel at ease is usually a good option."

A large, modern motor yacht is best for first-time charterer families, says Diana Meza, a broker from the Miami office. Spacious, stable and designed for comfort, it is equipped with watertoys, entertainment facilities and, generally, accommodation for up to 12 guests. According to Diana, "The youngest of the brood are sometimes not very steady on their feet, so winches, ropes and other hazards on deck are not the best way to instil confidence."

For those who are keen to sail, catamarans can be a good alternative. They have more stability and the 'trampoline' between the hulls is always a popular spot for burning off some energy.

While the type of yacht is a key consideration, so is the layout. "Shade on deck is important, particularly over any deck pool or jacuzzi as these areas always attract younger children," explains Monaco-based charter broker Seonaid Thomas. "Some yachts also have a guest cabin close to the master suite, allowing young children to be close to parents if required." And on board some charter vessels, twin bunks and drop-down pullman bunks can also add an element of adventure and excitement for siblings.

For many families, on board safety is equally important. "I always look into the safety features that make a yacht particularly family-friendly, including the access, the stairs and the deck layout," says charter broker Marie Molls, who is based in Athens. Head of the Moscow office, Vilena Pavlova, agrees: "Child-proof barriers on stairways and decks are a must."

FUN AND GAMES

The 70-metre (229.8ft) *Feadship Joy* is a delight for families with children of all ages due to her well-equipped toy box, which includes two SeaBobs, an inflatable slide, kayaks, wakeboards and tows. A games pitch on the foredeck for football and basketball activities provides hours of fun, while the beach club houses a large video wall and transforms into a kids' zone with bean bags and games station

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MAGIC MOMENTS

A superyacht is big enough to give everyone their own space and small enough to spend quality family time together, whether it involves the beach club, watersports or watching movies on deck in the evening

AT A GLANCE

How to make the most of a family charter

TYPE OF YACHT

For pure comfort, many of the most impressive large motor yachts have been built and designed with family charters in mind. A jacuzzi with shade is a good option to keep children entertained during longer passages, while a beach club allows for easy access to the water.

CABIN CONFIGURATION

Look for twin cabins and nanny cabins, as well as convertible cabins that can be configured to suit your needs.

WATER TOYS

The best family charter yachts carry a variety of inflatable toys for younger children and motorised equipment for teenagers.

EQUIPMENT

Good audio-visual systems are essential for quiet times when the sun is at its hottest or to keep the children entertained after dinner with an outdoor cinema.

CREW CREDENTIALS

Choose a yacht recommended for families with a child-friendly captain and crew, who can enhance the entire experience. Families with young children are advised to bring a nanny on board.

SUITABLE CRUISING GROUNDS

The ideal destinations offer calm waters and a lot of attractions within a small area, so only short cruises are required between locations.

CREW IS KEY

When organising a family charter, Burgess charter brokers always look for an energetic crew with a reputation for engaging well with children. “A crew that can transform even a rainy, grey day into one filled with exploration and fun, and a chef that can exceed adults’ every expectation while also turning simple children’s dishes into creative ‘wow’ moments, are essential ingredients in a successful family charter,” says Beverly Hills-based charter broker Louise Tilley. The chef might even take children to choose ingredients at a local market, and then help them to create delicious dishes back on the yacht. That said, charterers are always advised to travel with a nanny as the crew have many responsibilities and cannot dedicate themselves exclusively to the children.

ON BOARD FACILITIES

Superyachts generally have a good selection of watertoys, from inflatables and waterslides to snorkelling gear, kayaks and waterskis, providing hours of fun for everyone. “Watersports equipment is often a deciding factor when it comes to selecting a yacht for a family charter,” says Palma-based charter broker Karen Martensen. Older children can try paddle boarding and wakeboarding and some yachts have PADI-accredited dive instructors in the crew.

Families with teenagers may want the latest game consoles and a good selection of games on board. “Good audio-visual systems are essential for quiet time when the sun is at its hottest,” adds charter broker Chris Gregory, from the London office.

Many of the larger yachts also have gyms, which are popular with adults and teenagers. The same

room can sometimes be used as a spa for treatments, or a playroom for younger children. Most of the best yachts can accommodate younger children, providing toys and other essential equipment, such as cots and high chairs, and anything extra can most likely be procured on request.

BROADENING HORIZONS

There are many cruising grounds worldwide that have a broad family appeal. “Charters can be as hectic or as relaxed as you like,” explains Summer Osterman in Beverly Hills. “Swing from hammocks under palm trees, drift along the beach collecting shells. Alternatively, there’s always something interesting to discover and explore ashore for a change of pace from life on board.”

Seonaid Thomas adds, “The most popular itineraries involve short daily hops without too many long transits between anchorages. A variety in what the destination has to offer in terms of activities and culture is also good – as are beautiful, clear waters.”

The cruising grounds of the Caribbean are popular for winter charters and the picture-perfect Grenadines offer ideal conditions for young families. Each of the islands is only a short cruise away, so children continuously feel stimulated because it avoids the long passages that make them restless. The Exumas in the Bahamas are also a good choice – and they have a welcoming climate most of the year, with spring and early summer being prime time.

During the summer months, the Mediterranean offers countless possibilities, especially for those looking for some European culture. Monaco-based charter broker Lesley Excoffon recommends the South of France for its range of family activities, and



Corsica and Sardinia for its many beautiful anchorages, which are ideal for watersports.

Charters that venture beyond the traditional cruising grounds combine culture with adventure. “Try one of the ‘off-the-beaten-path’ destinations such as Alaska, Thailand, French Polynesia or Antarctica for something a little out of the ordinary,” suggests Bianca Nestor. And for those in the Southern Hemisphere, or families ready to travel further afield, charter broker Gaye Joyeau-Bourgeois, who is based in Monaco, recommends her native Australia as a favourite for families with children of all ages. “The Whitsunday Islands and lower Great Barrier Reef offer comfortable inshore cruising with an abundance of colourful tropical fish that are accessible to even the youngest of snorkellers,” she says. “Step ashore and you will find amazing wildlife and endless deserted beaches for everyone to enjoy.”

ADVENTURES ASHORE

From beach barbecues and forest picnics to scavenger hunts and adrenalin-charged sports for the older children, the crew on most of the larger yachts are used to organising unique activities ashore to keep the most active young guests entertained. Think *Pirates of the Caribbean*-themed treasure hunts, obstacle courses on the water or the beach and themed picnics. Just about anything is possible on board a superyacht.

More than anything, family charters are about the time you spend relaxing together and sharing fun activities. “It’s extremely special for children to see their parents out of the usual context and with time to share,” says New York charter broker Craig Cohen. “There is no better way to spend quality time with your family, exploring different places, educating the children on the various locations, with amazing food and crew to look after your every need.”

BEST CHARTER YACHTS FOR FAMILIES

GALAXY Younger guests on the 56-metre (183.7ft) *Galaxy* will love the crew’s treasure hunt and famous Galaxy Olympics. Older children can enjoy waverunners, wakeboards, stand up paddle boards, a flyboard, kayaks and inflatable towable toys, along with a private cinema and studio-effect sound, Xbox, PlayStation, and an entertainment system with over 1,000 movies.

HEMISPHERE The vast outdoor deck areas on board the 44.2-metre (145ft) *Hemisphere*, the world’s largest sailing catamaran, comprises the ultimate sun deck dominated by a jacuzzi, while the two 4.8m-wide trampolines make great play areas. The yacht is also a PADI-recognised dive training centre with a 16.4m (53.8ft) chase boat, and her crew includes two PADI dive instructors.

LAZY Z Despite its name, the 51.8-metre (170ft) *Lazy Z* encourages guests to be active with all you could imagine for the perfect family charter.

MEAMINA After a day enjoying 59.3-metre (194.6ft) *Meamina*’s swim platform and inflatable slide, kids can watch a movie in the main saloon’s cinema, while adults relax in the sky lounge with music from the self-playing grand piano.

MY SEANNA The 56.4-metre (185ft) *My Seanna* boasts an outdoor cinema screen, waterfall jacuzzi and new beach club area with access to a plethora of watersports equipment. Inside, a state-of-the-art curved TV is connected to a submarine camera showing the ocean beneath.

ODESSA With an experienced crew of 10, a huge toy box and expansive deck areas, the 48.8-metre (160ft) *Odesa* is a family-favourite charter yacht.

SEANNA Guests will be drawn to 65-metre (213.3ft) motor yacht *Seanna*’s beach club, while her child-friendly crew ensure the children are entertained with the huge selection of watertoys.

SILVER DREAM Younger children will love the pirate-themed parties on the 43.8-metre (143.7ft) *Silver Dream*, while older children can mess about above and below the water with a host of toys.

TALISMAN MAITON The 54.2-metre (177.8ft) *Talisman Maiton* will keep the family entertained with her SeaDoos, flyboard and array of towable toys. The accent is on children’s fun, but adults will be equally delighted with her fantastic outdoor spaces, including an enormous open-plan sun deck.

TITANIA The 73-metre (239.5ft) *Titania* has a complete water park, including an inflatable slide, trampoline and climbing frame, deployed from its beach club. The swim platform offers easy access to a vast inventory of tenders and watertoys.

TRIPLE SEVEN Watertoys on the 68-metre (223.1ft) *Triple Seven* include a flyboard, two laser sail boats, an inflatable slide and climbing wall, as well as a beach party and barbecue set-up to enjoy ashore. There is also a cinema screen in the sky lounge and a projector screen on the sun deck.

DESTINY The 37.3-metre (122.4ft) *Destiny* has a wonderful sun deck with jacuzzi surrounded by fitted lounging pads and shaded dining for casual family lunches, as well as plenty of watertoys and a children’s cabin with two sets of bunk beds.

Contact your Burgess broker for your next family charter or email charter@burgessyachts.com. For more about the above yachts, see page 133.