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Five extreme sailing adventures that will change your life

Photo courtesy Mahina Expeditions



By Valerie Meffert

PELAGIC EXPEDITIONS

If one of the items at the top of your bucket list is to have an adventure fully engaged with the wild side of the world, Pelagic Expeditions is just the place for you. Their fleet of two expedition sailing vessels is available for group charter or individual crew participation to high latitude destinations in both hemispheres, including Antarctica, Cape Horn, the Falkland Islands, Norway, Iceland and Greenland. Ideal for sailors who want to combine their passion for being on the water with extreme hiking, diving, skiing or

wildlife viewing, trips range from two weeks to 35 days.

Skipper Skip Novak, perhaps best known for his participation in four Whitbread races, decided to combine his mountaineering skills with sailing back in 1987, when he built the first *Pelagic*. Since then, he has spent every season in Antarctic waters, frequently leading combined climbing and filming projects.

Both the 54-foot *Pelagic* and her 74-foot younger sister *Pelagic Australis* are suitable for adventure sailing expeditions, wildlife cruises, dive excursions and building sea time.

Rock the Boat

In addition, *Pelagic Australis* sails from Punta Arenas, Chile every May to make a 42-day delivery to Cape Town, South Africa, and experienced offshore sailors are welcome to join the passage. The RYA Yachtmaster Course is included.

www.pelagic.co.uk

MAHINA EXPEDITIONS

Dreaming of Tahitian sunsets and freshly caught Mahi Mahi rather than icebergs and krill? Mahina Expeditions can help with that. With a combined experience of 544,000 miles and 69 years, John and Amanda Neal have taught nearly 1,000 students on *Mahina Tiare III*, their Halberg Rassy 46. The Neals' enthusiastic, stimulating teaching style and unique curriculum attracts motivated sailors who want to master ocean-voyaging skills including boat handling, navigation and heavy weather tactics.

The Neals believe that each student should have an equal chance to be involved in all aspects of operating and maintaining a modern ocean-cruising boat, so crewmembers alternate steering and standing watches, trimming sails and reefing, anchoring, cleaning, provisioning, preparing meals with local ingredients, and performing ongoing maintenance. Above all, John and Amanda aim to give students an opportunity to experience true ocean sailing so they can decide whether the cruising lifestyle is for them. Following the completion of each

Opposite, *Pelagic Australis* stopped by sea ice at 67 degrees South in Crystal Sound, top; *Mahina* crew hiking in Whangamumu, NZ, bottom. This page, Modern Sailing at the Rock of Gibraltar, top; one of the 2009-10 Clipper Race crews, bottom

expedition, “graduates” have ample knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the purchasing and outfitting of their own boats.

www.mahina.com

JOHN KRETSCHMER SAILING

Let’s get one thing straight: John Kretschmer Sailing is *not* a sailing school. As Kretschmer himself notes, there are plenty of those around, and they do a fine job of teaching students basic to advanced skills. Instead, he aims to do something much more unique by making hands-on offshore training passages to unbeatable destinations ranging from the Med to the Galapagos Islands

Each passage on board *Quetzal*, a 1987 Kaufman 47 performance cruiser, is made up of crewmembers with varying levels of experience. Kretschmer, who started sailing full-time nearly three decades ago and has since logged 300,000 offshore miles, takes an approach of active participation. Crew stand watch in both fair and foul weather and help out with everything from repairs and navigation to cooking and cleaning. Everyone takes away something different; one person’s favorite part may be mastering celestial navigation, while another revels in learning to bake bread. Kretschmer also focuses on teaching students to pace themselves. As he says, “Passagemaking requires a mix of philosophy and skills, and one thing I know from experience—you will have a lot of fun and make profound friendships.”

www.yayablues.com

MODERN SAILING SCHOOL & CLUB

Modern Sailing School & Club has two lofty but simple goals. First, they provide sailors with expert instruction that will give them the ability and confidence to sail solo anywhere

www.bwsailing.com

in the world. And second, they aim to give students a chance to learn these skills in spectacularly breathtaking environments such as Greece, Turkey, Mallorca, the Canary Islands and the Straights of Gibraltar.

Modern’s “Adventure Sailing” expeditions are led by USCG Master 100 Ton Captain John Connolly, who has over 45 years of sailing experience in oceans all over the world. Connolly puts students through the paces, cramming every session with lessons that can be applied in any venue, including meteorology and storm tactics; cooking and provisioning; coastal, GPS and celestial nav; boat systems; and advanced anchoring techniques. Connolly has taught more than 100 advanced courses worldwide, and his classes are so engaging that more than half of his participants join him on future trips.

www.modernsailing.com

CLIPPER ROUND THE WORLD YACHT RACE

The Clipper Race is the only event in the world where organizers supply a fleet of 10 identical, 68-foot, stripped down racing yachts—each sponsored by a city, region or country—and man them with fully-trained skippers to lead up to 450 people safely around the planet. As their website states, taxi drivers rub shoulders with chief executives, vicars mix with housewives, and doctors team up with rugby players.

Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, founder and chairman of the Clipper Race, is the first man to sail solo, nonstop

around the world. Participating in his race can take from weeks to nearly a year depending on a participant’s time constraints. The overall racetrack is 40,000 miles long and takes 11 months to complete, but the event is divided into a series of eight legs, so sailors can race one leg, a combination of legs, or the whole shebang. The next adventure will start from the U.K. this month and cross the Atlantic Ocean, the South Atlantic, the Southern Ocean, the Java and South China Seas, and the Pacific, rounding the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Leeuwin and visiting New Zealand for the first time in Clipper’s history.

www.clipperroundtheworld.com



Photo courtesy Modern Sailing School & Club



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