

CAPTAIN'S PROFILE



Captain Greg Russell talks about his job on board Lady J to Frances and Michael Howorth

What made you join the super yacht industry?

Pure luck I guess. I was working and hitch hiking through Europe, and made my way to Nice. I bumped into yachties at the youth hostel, who convinced me to go to Antibes where there was tons of work. Sure enough, within an hour, I got a job on a brand new Swan! After a few weeks, the Captain asked if I wanted to sail across to the Caribbean? I said sure, where is it? And that was 23 years ago!

What was your first super yacht and when did you join her?

After the crossing, I worked for Swan International delivering yachts up and down the coast. My first real sailing yacht was **Ipanema**, the Windship 92 where I did four trans-Atlantic crossings. My first real super yacht was **Namoh**, the Cheoy Lee and I joined her in Sept 1997 and stayed for almost 5 years.

How does being a Captain affect your family life?

Well I know it's definitely affected my kids (in a good way!) When they know I'm coming home, they will spend days cleaning and organising their room. They know full well it's hard for me to take my Captain's hat off! But it is hard being away, I'm lucky that many Owners have allowed my kids to come with me on several delivery trips. When they do, we have a blast!

What makes your yacht special?

Lady J has an amazing amount of deck space, making the guests' choice for outdoor living and entertainment quite a difficult task because they don't know which level to be on! The ease with which we can release our toys is one of our biggest assets.

What do your crew do really well?

I've never had to get involved in the interior they do such an amazing job. The interior crew have a collected talent for beautiful table decorations, theme nights and costume parties.

What is your attitude to employing couples on board?

It's a double-edged sword. I did try earlier on in my career, but it didn't work so I tend to shy away from hiring couples.

What's the most curious request you've had?

We were on charter last summer with a celebrity onboard, she got a little tipsy, I was asked to help her out of the hot tub. She was of course, totally naked but I managed to keep my calm.

What's the best idea you've ever copied from someone else?

Years ago I did a New York Yacht Club Cruise in New England. Traditionally they held a lobster bake, so I kind of stole that idea and now we do them regularly for my guests on the beach, they love it!

What have you ever learned from your crew?

I have learned that every crew is unique, they bring so many varied talents and expertise to the table, and you really have to keep nourishing them because they are your biggest asset onboard!

What makes you stand out as a Captain?

I think it's always been my hard working, tough can-do attitude. There's a saying "work hard, play hard" and I expect that from all my crew.

How would you like to be remembered as a Captain?

I think for being supportive and generous, I've seen lots of my crew go on to bigger and better things, or make careers for themselves outside yachting. I've always enjoyed teaching and showing them the ropes, I have a lot of experience and like to share it.

How do you think your crew talk about you behind your back?

I think it would be along the lines of "does he ever stop?" I push myself, and I tend to expect that from my crew but the proof is in the pudding, when the tips come in or the Owner comments about the boat, then it's all worth it.

What would you like to do when you cease being in command of a super yacht?

Perhaps Admiral of the Fleet!

Quick Fire

Favourite Motorcar: My own Audi A8! Best car ever!

All Time Favourite Movie: Gladiator

Favourite Book: Sailing Alone Around the World, Joshua Slocum, everyone should read this!

Favourite Movie star: Johnny Depp

Favourite Music type: Blues, alternative,

Favourite Music track: Been Awhile by Aaron Lewis, just good lyrics.

Favourite Super Yacht: I think Pelorus is still one of my ultimate favourites, it's so well designed, sleek and slender!

Favourite City: London

Favourite Super Yacht destination: Maine, closely followed by the Bahamas

Favourite Classic Super Yacht: The classic schooner Mariette, I got to race on her many times.

Captain's CV

Name: Greg Russell

Age: 46

Nationality: Naturalised American, originally Zimbabwe

Previous yachts as crew: Ocean Mermaid, Sarah Kate

Previous yachts in command: Namoh, Ipanema

Current yacht: Lady J

Number of crew: 9

Charter Central Agent: Churchill Yacht Partners

Charter Fee per week: US\$109,000+ Low season and

US\$120,000+ High season