



Photograph by Frances Howorth

“She has a great theme that has been tastefully executed. Everyone remembers her”



Casino Royale

The Captain

# Gregory Clark

Age: 52 Place of birth: West Virginia Previous yachts: *Mystic*  
Current yacht: *Casino Royale* Number of crew: 10

**What was your first taste of the sea?**

Growing up in Florida from the age of two, I was always playing in and around the ocean. My first yacht was an 8ft sailing dinghy with a pram bow that my dad bought me for my 10th birthday. We had to sand and prepare the fibreglass and paint it before it was usable, so I guess that saw me through my first yard period! A whole new world of exploration opened up for me – and the seeds of my future calling.

**Which ports do you most look forward to visiting?**

The list expands with each new region we visit. I very much enjoy researching the history and quality of a region. I find that every new area has its own special attributes and there is always something unique about each port we call at. Some of my favourites are Helsinki in the Baltic, Hvar in the Adriatic, Simi in the Aegean, and Bonifaccio, Portofino, San Tropez and Palma in the Western Mediterranean. Further afield, Mackinaw Island Quebec in the Great Lakes is special, as is St Michaels and Annapolis in the Chesapeake. I love Newport in New England, Victoria and Gig Harbor in the north-west of the States and San Diego in the south-west. In the Caribbean, Bequia in the Windwards, St Barths in the Leewards, and Bonaire are high on my list. There are so many.

**What are your favourite onshore hangouts?**

I really enjoy quirky bars with lots of character. In Manhattan the Frying Pan and the Trailer Park bars are both great. In Fort Lauderdale, Le Tub is the one to head to and I really like the Karakter bar in St Maarten and the Shell Beach in St Barths.

**What is the one place in the world you'd like to cruise to that you haven't already?**

I have wanted to cruise the Inland Sea of Japan ever since I spent a year living there as an exchange student in 1976. After that, the islands of the South Pacific and New Zealand hold real attraction.

**What do you like most about your current yacht?**

She has a great theme that has been tastefully executed. Everyone remembers the yacht, which is great for promotion and charter.

**Which is your favourite on-board toy?**

It has to be the bicycles. All the other stuff is great but I like going off on the bike to explore the areas we visit.

**What are the biggest changes you have seen in the industry?**

It has gone from being a fraternity of wealthy gentlemen who made their own rules to an industry, raising the level of professionalism and safety. The invention of GPS has made navigation safer for everybody

and V-Sat allows the working wealthy to justify becoming yacht owners. Zero-speed stabilisation has been a huge advance, making cruising and anchoring more comfortable for many guests.

**What is the most curious request you have had from a guest?**

When a large semi-truck full of golf carts pulled up to the crew house and the owner wanted us to ferry them to his private island, one at a time, on his 35-metre Broward.

**What is the worst weather you have encountered on board?**

Thirty-foot seas off the coast of Columbia River bar in Oregon in 1998. We had to turn around and sail back to Puget Sound.

**Who is the most eccentric/strangest/funniest crew member?**

Our award-winning chef Tarina, who is constantly talking to herself!

**What's the most stressful part of your job?**

On those rare occasions when I have to let a crew member go. I can't help but feel that their potential might have been realised if only I could have broken through or communicated with them better.

**What's the next big thing in yachting?**

Salt-repellent paint I hope, or fuel from the hydrogen in sea water.

**Any advice for an aspiring captain?**

Listen and think before you speak. Watch and learn from other captains. Always try to be humble, even if you are confident. Be predictable and consistent, especially with your crew. Manage crew through respect, by maintaining a proper balance between your obligations toward them and your responsibilities to the owner.

**What's the biggest cock-up you've seen another captain make?**

I remember watching from several docks away while a respected captain of a 30-metre motor yacht routinely manoeuvred into the yacht's covered boathouse. He had forgotten to lower his hydraulic radar arch. All of the yacht's antennas were broken off one by one, including the satellite dome, before realising what the snap-crackle-pop was about. Stupid, but it could happen to any of us.

**And yours?**

My yacht will not fit in to a covered boat shed, thankfully!

Captain Greg Clark was talking to Frances and Michael Howorth on board Casino Royale. The yacht is available for charter through International Yacht Collection for \$250,000pw, winter in the Caribbean and €250,000pw, summer Mediterranean. [www.iyc.com](http://www.iyc.com)