

# SEASON IN THE SUN

This 43-metre stunner will be basking in the Med this summer. So does it have the perfect mix of technology and treats to make your trip round the Rivas truly unique?  
Frances & Michael Howorth



Photos by Jim Raperoff & Frances Howorth

As our helicopter lifted off at Monaco's helipad, darting quickly past the port en route to Nice at the end of our charter, we had a glimpse of the superyachts cheek-by-jowl in the harbour. It was a shame to be leaving all this behind, and particularly *Big City*, the brand-new 43-metre three-deck yacht from Trinity Yachts that had been our home for the past few days. Herein lies the beauty of chartering: you arrive on board a yacht with the worries of the world on your shoulders, but from the moment the chief stewardess places the first chilled glass of bubbling champagne in your hand you can forget about the rat race and relax. This is certainly the feeling we had when we stepped aboard *Big City*.

With an interior by Patrick Knowles, she has a refreshingly light feel inside – the perfect place to relax. Luxurious touches, of course, embellish the design, not least in the huge full-beam master suite, which boasts a delightfully discreet office as well as a palatial bathroom. Four further cabins are located a deck below, and there is an uncluttered sundeck to make the most of your surroundings.

Though escape is top of the agenda, a charter yacht is perhaps one of the few places busy business minds can take a proper holiday without losing touch completely. Our yacht had Wi-fi throughout and mobile phones worked, too – and when they don't, the yacht's satellite communications kick in.

Leaving our starting port of Genoa behind us, we set off for San Remo – a port much loved by superyacht captains for its ease of entry, and also for the superbly

efficient team of ships' agents based there whose job it is to make the impossible possible. Need a berth in St Tropez for the night? Need fresh yellowfin tuna for sushi or wagyu beef for dinner? No problem, just call All Services and ask for Mrs Fixit (otherwise known as Xenia). It's odds on that Xenia can quickly and efficiently arrange it – she's saved many a charter from going sour.

We cruised on westwards, leaving the Italian Riviera to starboard and passing close by the coastal towns of Cervo and Imperia, even getting a glimpse from seaward of La Mortola, home of the famous Hanbury gardens. We slipped around Cap Ferrat and dropped anchor off the port of Villefranche.

For dinner on deck our chief stewardess Pam made the perfect choice of wine, matching a Domain Ott Coeur de Grain from Château de Selle to delicious lamb cutlets served perfectly pink on a paysan of beans and chorizo, with a chutney of aubergine and tomatoes. Sipping the cool rosé, we watched the sun sinking below the horizon, inking the sky a ruby red and listened to the tinkling sounds from the beachside restaurants ashore, whose patrons chose to eat there because they get a chance to watch the superyachts at anchor.

A swell rolled into the bay towards the end of the evening and *Big City*, goaded into it by the elements, began a gentle roll. With a flick of a switch, Captain

Barry Bramhill engaged the zero-speed stabiliser system and instantly the yacht's movement stopped. Those yachts anchored nearby without this facility continued to roll in what appeared to be a peaceful anchorage.

Antibes was our next port-of-call. Entering Port Vauban is a yacht-spotter's dream. Lined up, their sterns to the International Yacht Club de Antibes, were some of the most famous names in superyachting folklore. On the day we arrived we found *Kingdom 5KR*, *Dilbar*, *Virginian*, *Gu*, *Ice*, *Kogo* and *Eminence* residing. We, however, were in the harbour for other reasons. The daily market in the square is a must-visit, even if, like us, you don't have to worry about where the next meal is coming from. The fresh fruits and vegetables are laid out like works of art, and stalls with fresh fish, cheeses, herbs and olives add to the sensory overload. Michael, our yacht's charismatic chef, was soon ashore to sort out a sumptuous haul for tonight's dinner. We went on to explore more of the town and visit the quaint Picasso museum high on the walled ramparts.

Lunchtime the following day saw *Big City* anchored off the famous Hôtel Eden Roc at Juan le Pins. As the Mediterranean sun bronzed our backs we set up the beach club to try out the yacht's magnificent array of water toys. Our crew set about giving us lessons in the art of high-speed PWC driving.

*You can arrive with the worries of the world on your shoulders yet from the first moment you step aboard you INSTANTLY RELAX*





Facing page far left, from the top: The sky lounge on the bridge deck; the sundeck with its tempting hot-tub – jump in and turn the bubbles up high; gloriously grand bed in the master suite.

Facing page, main photo: *Big City* at anchor off Villefranche, a much-beloved spot among charter yachts.

Above left: Bubbles, bubbly and fine views from the sundeck.

Left: Freshly baked croissants served for breakfast on the aft deck under the shadow of the ancient Fort Royal, with its famous prison that includes the cell of the Man in the Iron Mask.

Top: *Big City* under way at 10 knots heading towards Cannes.

Above: The bathing platform in beach club mode.



**Left:** Ever-attentive crew stand by to assist guests using the water toys. It is the captain's policy to have the yacht's tender manned when guests are having fun on the water.

**Below left:** The after end of the bridge deck is a cosy and intimate place to enjoy an evening cocktail.

**Bottom:** Charter manager Terry Hines sat amongst *Big City's* crew.

**Facing page, main photo:**

A peaceful evening anchorage off Ile St Honorat, which is famous for its monastery, abbey and castle.

**Facing page, from the top:** The food on board was sumptuous; polished until you can see your face in it!; Captain Barry Bramhill.

### *Charter facts*

**Length**  
42.97m (140ft 1in)

**Beam**  
8.53m (27ft 9in)

**Engines** Twin Caterpillar C32

**Cruising speed**  
17.5 knots

**Guests** 10

**Crew** 10

**Summer destinations**  
West Mediterranean

**Summer prices**  
€175,000

**Winter prices**  
\$175,000

**Contact** Terry Hines at International Yacht Collection  
Email: [thines@iyc.com](mailto:thines@iyc.com)  
[www.iycyachts.com](http://www.iycyachts.com)



We had already discovered the need for speed, having cruised from Antibes not in *Big City* but in her offspring *Small Town*, a 10-metre Intrepid sportsboat that took us around Cap d'Antibes at speeds close to 50 knots. Though she doesn't live on board, *Small Town* accompanies the mothership everywhere she goes and her use is fully covered by the charter fee. "It's a case of charter one, get one free!" says Barry. Another delicious lunch and lessons complete, it was time to sit on the swim platform, doze in the afternoon sunshine and read a book. It was approaching 6pm, and we were just thinking about calling for cool mojitos when they suddenly appeared on a silver tray, ice chinking and nicely shaded from the sun under their very own cocktail umbrella. Absolutely magical.

Next morning we descended on Cannes – a town busily preparing for its famed film festival. Charter yachts had already begun to stake their claim for the best seats in the house. Cannes may be all about nightlife, but just a few miles offshore lies one of the prettiest anchorages in the area. Set between the Lerin islands of Île St Marguerite and Îles St Honorat, it is – except at the height of summer – wonderfully tranquil. Densely covered in pine trees, these unspoiled islands are part of a national park. After the day-trippers leave, they are almost completely deserted and a wonderful place to walk, working up an appetite for chef Michael's next gastronomic onslaught.

Sadly, our cruise was drawing to an end and we would soon have to turn back east. Our destination was Monaco, with stops at Nice and Beaulieu sur Mer. The joy of chartering is that it is the guest who sets the pace and while we could so easily have gone further, visiting

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St Tropez, St Maxime and maybe even Port Grimaud, the fact is that in a fast-moving world the real luxury is to dawdle.

Arriving in Monaco we cut in close to the land. The rock face drops away so steeply that it is almost possible to reach out and touch the façade of the Oceanographic Museum. Monaco was preparing for the Grand Prix as we arrived and the harbour was filling up with yachts separated by a fender's width. Captain Bramhill looked at the tiny space allotted to him and we all wondered if he could get the yacht into the berth without incident. As if the pressure wasn't already on, we were allocated the dock alongside *The One* – ex-*Carinthia VI* and voted No1 in *SuperYacht World's* list of the most beautiful yachts ever built. Her dark blue topsides were pristine, and this is how we hoped they'd stay. But Barry effortlessly slotted *Big City* stern-first into her space. A quick burst on the engines, a flick sideways with the bow thruster, and the port's officials handed over the ground lines; like everything on board *Big City*, it was no trouble whatsoever.

Our cruise had come to an end and it was back to a normal working life. *Big City* and her crew had done an impeccable job of soothing away the everyday strains during our stay. This may be one of the most popular routes to charter a yacht in the world – 'the milk run', some cynics call it. But if this was the milk run, then we had just tasted the cream. **SXW**

*Frances & Michael Howorth's helicopter transfer from Monaco to Nice was facilitated by Heli-Air Monaco [www.helairmonaco.com](http://www.helairmonaco.com)*

