



“It’s a question of finding the ideal owner rather than the ideal yacht”

The Captain

Paulo Guedes

Age: 28 Place of birth: Australia Previous yachts: *The Lady J*
Current yacht: *Sweet Escape* Number of crew: 7



What was your first taste of the sea?

At the ripe old age of six, I remember sitting on the aft deck of a commercial fishing boat steaming out to the fishing ground off the coast of North Queensland feeling a little seasick – the first and last time I have ever been that ill, thank goodness!

Which ports do you most look forward to visiting?

Camden in Maine is stunning and quite unlike most superyacht ports (which are generally centred around drinking!). This place has something special. Every time we dock in the harbour we manage to get the small floating T-head right at the back of the basin, which leaves our stern about 100ft from the cascading waterfall, giving guests a perfect view of the surrounding mountain ranges.

What are your favourite onshore hangouts?

Coco’s in Fort Lauderdale because their lychee martinis are the best in the business. For fun I like looking for calm water and strong winds in Islamorada, Florida Keys, where I can kite the day away.

Where would you’d like to cruise to that you haven’t already?

Alaska, because it’s unique, and Mexico, for the outstanding spear-fishing opportunities. Either would be great. On second thoughts, why not do them one after the other? (Hint, hint, boss!)

What do you like most about your current yacht?

The entertaining golf tee on our boat deck – it is great fun, although we could all do with some lessons followed by practice!

What would your ideal yacht be?

It’s more a question of finding the ideal owner rather than the ideal yacht. It is the captain’s relationship with his boss that determines whether or not the yacht is ideal. I’m lucky to have that.

Which is your favourite on-board toy?

The 27ft Cape Horn towed tender is definitely top of my list. It gives guests the ability to island hop in comfort, and off charter the crew can steam away in it, getting completely free from the whole scene in port.

What would you change about the superyacht industry?

The carbon footprint. I think it’s time yachting started to take this issue more seriously. For example, why are most yachts still using bottled water? We have taken numerous small steps, including the introduction of filtered water throughout the yacht for use by guests and crew. On a grander scale our owner is heavily involved in creating a cleaner form of energy for yachts – it’s a long process but in the coming months we should see the first prototypes implemented on board.

What’s the most curious request you have had from a guest?

Once, a group of young guests refused to get out of the tender unless they were taken to a white sandy beach, but the dangerous swell lasted the whole week they were aboard. That charter was an ordeal.

What’s the worst weather you have encountered on board?

Eleven years ago off the coast of Papua New Guinea at the beginning of the cyclone season – the wind set in at 65 knots, and the full moon meant tides were ripping between the Arafura Sea and the Coral Sea, creating such a confused sea state. A truly memorable occasion.

Who is the strangest/funniest member of your crew?

Our chief stew has an amusing and strange way of expressing herself! I would love to give you an example but I don’t think it’s appropriate.

Who’s the most troublesome crew member?

If you believe my wife, who is the chef on board, the answer is me. While I can be tricky at times, I think her judgement is a little harsh!

Any advice for an aspiring captain?

Keep up with your certificates and qualifications, and don’t take no for an answer. I have so often heard: “you are too young” or “the yacht is too much of a big of a step for you.” So my advice is: work hard and prove the critics wrong.

Who would be your top five fantasy charter guests?

I’m from the Outback, so I would choose five of my closest friends from home – it would be such an awesome experience to be able to share all this with them, although I am not sure if the Caribbean has enough rum available to support the trip!

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

I’ve seen one captain run aground on the same shoal patch four times in the same day! He was trying to dock at a fuel wharf in the Bahamas. Though entertaining, it was not good publicity for our industry.

And yours?

That would have to be on Montserrat. While waiting for guests to arrive back from a walk ashore through old lava flows, I decided to play in the surf using the jet-tender. Just as they returned I shipped a huge wave over the bow and converted the one and only tender we had into a submersible. But I managed to get it going again and they forgave me.

Captain Paulo Guedes was talking to Frances and Michael Howorth on board *Sweet Escape*. The yacht is available for charter through Churchill Yachts from \$75,000pw. www.churchillyachts.com