

Sailing: The ultimate vacation

By Larry Jones
special writer

Chartering is the ultimate sailing vacation. And, it's not quite as expensive as one would think.

And the charter business has erupted in the last four years, according to Hugh Rugeroni, owner and president of Burr Yacht Charters Sales. In business since 1967, Rugeroni and his trusty "charter lady," Jane McGraw, offer worldwide charters year-round.

Both are quick to point out that dollar for dollar, chartering a boat for a vacation is, and can be, the cheapest form of entertainment around. If you're a qualified sailor, Burr can charter you a "bare" boat (without crew) anywhere in the world.

Prime spots include the Great Lakes, including Traverse City, Toledo and Lake Erie, Michigan and Huron as well as the Virgin Islands, Tahiti and an as-yet-unknown, but gorgeous trip along the Baja peninsula and the Sea of Cortez.

Rates start at a very affordable \$1,050 per week, depending on the

location and the size of the boat. Ships with crews can be had for about 30-40 percent more, but in addition to a trained crew, you get full gourmet meals and beverages.

Seems high in price? Remember that most of these boats are equipped to sleep at least six, so you can immediately divide the cost with others.

AND IF THAT isn't enough to tempt you, ships with crews can go wherever YOU want. Find a secluded cove and snorkel for the day, or island hop, sipping champagne en route.

Burr Yacht Charters will even try and fix you up with appropriate crews. Needless to say, hip young yuppies wouldn't want to be paired with a 70-year-old sea salt, just about as much as a group of ministers wouldn't want a bunch of hearty partiers.

All ships with crews come with a captain who has full responsibility for the boat. (You don't want to get up at 3 a.m. and find the ship afloat somewhere because the anchors weren't set right.) And there's a

cook/deck hand who, rumor has it, can do wonders with fresh-caught swordfish.

The food on board these ships rivals those of cruise ships, said McGraw. So much for the diet.

McGraw and Rugeroni also are quick to point out that six people (or three couples) can charter a "bare" boat in the Virgin Islands for an actual cost of \$95 per day or a ship with crew for \$140 a day and that includes all your food and drink!

If the idea of chartering a "bare" boat for a great family vacation entices you, there are a few things you have to know and do before hand. Burr Yachts is chartering now for next year and you must be able to pass certain tests concerning the handling of a ship. This is where Captain Dick Hansen comes in.

Hansen owns and operates the Sunshine Sailing School and is certified by the American Sailing Association and holds a certified Coast Guard captain's license. He's been teaching sailing on everything from

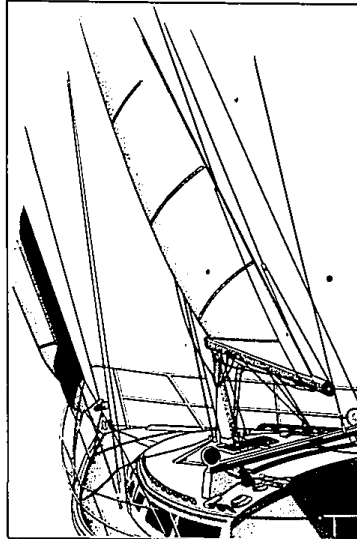
a molded Styrofoam dinghy to the largest sloops for the past 11 years.

A VOCATIONAL counselor with the Livonia Public Schools nine months a year, Captain Dick spends his evenings after school teaching the art of sailing. His summers are filled with all-day lessons on the Great Lakes.

Having taken a few lessons with Captain Dick, I can say his method of teaching is unusual. He offers classes and private instructions geared especially for the folks he's teaching.

If you need a start from the ground up or just need a refresher course on handling the rigging, this guy knows just about everything there is to know about sailing. Who knows he might even bring along some of his culinary treats.

Burr Yacht Charters/Sales is at 32575 S. River Road, Mt. Clemens. The phone number is 463-8629. Captain Dick's Sunshine Sailing School is at 10111 Carlee June Dr., Fenton, and can be reached at 632-7201.



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