



Perfect blue: Catalada Adasi ('fork island') is a popular scuba-diving spot



Photo: Charlie Stevens

Sailing towards Turgutreis – and some nightlife for the livelier crew!



Restaurant in Kormen on the shores of the Gulf of Gokova



We quickly adapted to the subtle differences in sailing the catamaran

Common ground

The Stevens family revisit Turkey, but this time they're sailing a catamaran – and the itinerary must find time for exciting sailing, shopping, nightlife, adventure and ruins! It's a delicate balance, as Caroline Stevens finds out



MAIN PHOTO: Anchored beneath the amphitheatre and remains of Knidos' ancient city. LEFT: Flying the nest but still finding time to sail together, the Stevens children with parents Tom and Caroline

Photos: Tom Stevens unless otherwise stated

Ha, well it'll be interesting to see what happens to all that crockery with this wind,' said Tom smugly, glancing with an experienced eye around the gleaming galley of our catamaran, which looked rather like a display kitchen from the Ideal Homes Exhibition. Knife block on the worktop, china and glassware sparkling on the shelves and hardly a fiddle in sight. Fifteen minutes later, with 23 knots of wind across the deck, a rather grudging voice was heard to mutter from the cockpit, 'Well, I am quite impressed – hard on the wind doing 7½ knots, pointing as high as any monohull, and we're steady as a rock.' My dyed-in-the-wool monohull sailor husband was on the way to being converted!

Between the various members of our family we have sailed everything from square riggers through to Optimists, but like many others have always been rather scornful of catamarans. It was not until we were invited for drinks on board a neighbouring boat last year that we were tempted to try one out. It was the space that sold it. Despite our children, (Matt, 25, Charlie, 22, Ed, 18, and Sarah, 16) being grown up and gradually flying the nest we still endeavour to get all of them together at least once a year, but they take up so much room now – a catamaran seemed the perfect answer.

Tom has known Rob Underwood of Broadblue Catamarans for a number of years and Rob has always tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade him to try out a multihull. Now that our appetite was whetted, he suggested we booked a charter with Broadblue

Charters, a small company specialising in catamarans in Turkey. The charter company is owned and run by Malcolm Taylor, whose enthusiasm for catamarans is infectious – 'I have met thousands of people who have converted from monohulls to catamarans, but I have yet to meet a catamaran sailor who has become a monohull sailor'. Never say Tom is totally intransigent, but those slightly raised eyebrows gave it away. As well as enthusiasm, Malcolm has years of experience and he and his small

'I have yet to meet a catamaran sailor who has become a monohull sailor...'

team are devoted to providing the very best service to charterers. The boats, all privately owned, are maintained and equipped to a high standard with great attention paid to detail – the galley, for instance, was the best equipped I have ever come across on a charter boat and the sheets were positively luxurious.

RICH AND FAMOUS

Broadblue Charters are based at Yalikhavak, a picturesque town on the north-west corner of the Bodrum peninsula and only a 40-minute transfer from Bodrum/Milas airport. As a starting point, Yalikhavak offers numerous possible itineraries with beautiful and varied cruising grounds in every direction to suit all tastes. Just to the north, for example, is the Gulf of Gulluk whose lively southern shoreline offers the opportunity to mix with Turkey's rich and

famous, whereas after passing the bustling town of Bodrum to the east, the holiday villages quickly peter out and are replaced with tiny hamlets and hidden coves. For those who want a taste of ancient civilisation, you can visit the ruins of Knidos which lie to the south, at the tip of the Datca peninsula, before exploring the hundreds of coves and inlets in the Dorian Gulf.

It is even possible, after completing port formalities, to combine a Greek and Turkish cruise by heading to the Dodecanese islands, a short hop away to the west.

ITINERARY INTERESTS

Given the mix of ages and interests in our family, planning an itinerary always makes for lively discussion – I want ruins, Tom wants exciting sailing, Matt wants high cliffs to dive off, Charlie wants adventure, Ed wants nightlife and Sarah wants to shop. Luckily we do all love the sailing. →



Time for a dip in an empty anchorage off Küçük Cati



swimming and generally being on a boat! Using Malcolm's local knowledge and experience we planned a rough itinerary which would take us east into the Gulf of Gokova for the first week, ending in Bodrum, where we would exchange Matt for Sarah's friend Katrina, then head south into the Dorian Gulf, visiting the Greek island of Symi in the second week. This would give us a mix of scenery, sailing, towns and anchorages which would hopefully suit everyone.

Yalikavak, in addition to being well positioned, is a bustling town with a maze of tiny streets set beneath bamboo canopies and packed with market stalls, bars and restaurants which buzz with life in the evenings. After you have dined out and wandered around the town, soaking up that heady eastern atmosphere, so much

the hall mark of Turkey, it is a short stroll back to the peace and quiet of the marina which offers excellent facilities including shops, restaurant and swimming pool. An ideal place to unwind and adjust to being a family on board again.

Tom wanted exciting sailing – last year we had no wind – and he was not disappointed. We soon found ourselves bowling along, close hauled in a stiff northwesterly giving us a swift introduction to multihull cruising. We adapted quickly to the subtle differences in sailing the catamaran and really enjoyed being able to wander around the deck, sunbathe or prepare lunch, enjoying the panoramic views in the saloon while still tearing along to windward. The wind remained constant throughout our trip; gentle breeze in the morning, picking up



LEFT: Approaching the Greek island of Symi in the Dorian Gulf. **ABOVE:** The need for speed – Matt and Charlie zip along in the 'best tender' the Stevens family have ever used. **BELOW:** A trip into the unknown – the jungle-like environment of Amazon Creek



sometimes strongly in the afternoon, then dropping in the evening – we hardly used the engines at all, only for that very impressive manoeuvring into berths. No more shouts in a strong crosswind of, 'The bow's paying off!' Given the speeds we were maintaining – seldom below 6 knots – we had plenty of time



to search out those high cliffs for Matt to dive from and look for adventure for Charlie. Even though we have visited this area before, we still made many new discoveries. Amazon Creek was one of these. There we took a trip into the unknown, navigating the jungle-like creek in the dinghy by torchlight in search of a remote campsite restaurant.

REMOTE EATING

Eating out is always a highlight of any charter and in Turkey the options are numerous. We particularly enjoy the informal beach restaurants and every year we go in search of the most remote. This year we really excelled ourselves with Ali Baba's place in Kargilibuk.

Ali senior and his tiny barefoot wife are semi-retired and Ali junior has taken charge. We happened to hit on opening night for the season. Food and ice arrived with Ali in the back of a taxi, a few tables were arranged outside an old container which doubles as a kitchen and a magnificent meal was cooked over a barbecue pit. There is no running water – washing-up is done at the well! There was plenty of good wine and



Grub's up at Ali Baba's in Kargilibuk



ABOVE LEFT: High-flier Charlie gets his adrenaline rush. **ABOVE:** Ali junior conjures up a feast from his barbecue pit. **LEFT:** Every day is pancake day in the small hamlet of Cokertme

entertainment supplied by Ali and his wife, who warned us sternly that we should book in future to avoid disappointment.

Nightlife and shopping can be found aplenty and we visited several of the larger towns, including Turgetreis, Bodrum and Datcha, so that Ed and Sarah could indulge themselves, but perhaps their most successful night out was strangely enough in the little village of Palamut. There we were warmly greeted by the harbourmaster who was keen to advise us of local facilities – the tiny town appeared to

have everything, including a disco. He promised to escort the young there and introduce them to some of his 36 nephews and nieces. Needless to say, a very late night was had and some sad

farewells made the next day.

We always shy away from revisiting old haunts, but there was one place where we had to make an exception – the little Palmyre hotel/restaurant at Orhaniye. The small family run business headed by 'Mama', the cook, made us so welcome five years ago, letting us use their swimming pool, and taking us to visit local sites. Expecting to be disappointed, we made fast at their jetty and it was as though time had stood still – there was 'Mama' enveloping us in hugs and a wonderful evening was spent catching up with all the family.

And yes, I did get to see my ruins. We spent our last but one night at Knidos, anchored beneath the amphitheatre and remains of the ancient city. There we ambled around the ruins, snorkelled over the submerged harbour walls

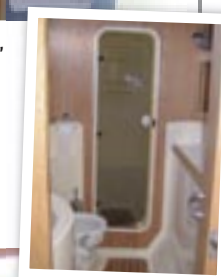
» TOP CAT



On deck: The Broadblue 385's cockpit and helmsman's seat (above). Sun worshippers gather on the spacious foredeck (below)



Down below: The bright, deck-level saloon and galley provided a fine view for the cook. **RIGHT:** Even the heads got a five-star rating from the crew!



and climbed up onto the headland to watch the dramatic sunset over Kos. A successful family holiday was drawing to a close.

And the verdict on the catamaran – the young and I are totally converted. As for Tom – well, he still claims a stout loyalty to monohulls, but I did catch him sneakily reading through Broadblue's charter management brochure the other day and doing sums with his calculator! ▲

• For your chance to win a Broadblue charter for four, see the competition on p14

TURKEY FACT FILE

The season: From April to November.

The weather: The wind generally blows from the north-west, building in the afternoon and dying at night. This year we had several days and nights of reasonably strong winds, making for great sailing.

Marina costs: We paid an average of £35 for marina berths, which included shorepower, water and spotlessly clean, marble-floored showers. All the small bays are free, including those with pontoons off restaurants, and often include shorepower and water. You will be invited, with no obligation, to eat at the restaurant you are moored off.

Eating out: Prices ranged from

£6 to £16, per head, for three courses and drinks. Often the very remote bays were more expensive as everything has to be shipped in by boat. We always have supplies on board in case the anchorage is so remote that it doesn't have a restaurant.

Flights and transfers: We flew with Excel Airways, from Gatwick, for £189 each. The transfer to Yalikavak took about an hour and cost £80 for all six of us. Turkish visas cost £10 each and are paid for in cash at the airport.

Prices: The boat, an eight-berth Broadblue 385 cost £2,250 per week in early July. The price also included the best tender that we have ever had, a small RIB with wheel steering

and 15hp outboard, all slung from davits. The yacht's inventory was also the best we have come across. Transit log, berth tax and cleaning are also included. Flights and transfers are not.

Best bits: Berthing stern-to in strong crosswinds. The boat is a delight to handle with an engine in each hull and can be accurately put anywhere. I particularly liked the fact that the saloon and galley were at deck level so I could see out when preparing food, and the ventilation was brilliant.

Our youngest son is prone to seasickness but because of the catamaran's lack of heeling motion

he was not affected by *mal de mer* at all. Best of all was having the family together.

Worst bits: Delayed flight at Gatwick got the holiday off to grumpy a start.

Must dos: Take a dinghy safari up 'Amazon Creek' to arrive at the cheapest restaurant we found. Anchor for a lunch stop in Kucuk Cati, and swim in the crystal-clear water. Eat out at every opportunity. **YM rating: 5/5**

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