

### Find Your New Boat in 2012

You can picture her. Sitting at your dock looking shiny and new. You imagine climbing aboard on a perfect spring day with a cooler full of goodies for a day sail or a duffel bag for a weekend. Maybe you have dreamed of wintering in the islands or summering in New England onboard...

This could be your year to buy that dream sailboat. But where do you begin? We asked some experienced yacht brokers and new boat buyers to share their expertise.

### Know Your Goals

It's not as important to know which boat you want as it is to know what kind of sailing you plan on doing. "We sit down with new clients and find out what their real vision is. What is their experience? What is it they hope to do?" says Kate Christensen of Rogue Wave Yacht Sales in Annapolis. "Who will be sailing with them—kids or a dog? Who will visit—grandparents? All that stuff matters. Then, we work to find a boat that supports their vision."

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Written by Molly Winans, SpinSheet Editor

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Christensen, who specializes in bluewater-capable sailboats, asks whether clients envision sailing down the Intracoastal to Marathon, FL, or to the Caribbean or Maine, or even to do a circumnavigation. Such goals require unique qualities in boats. Sailors who plan to remain on the Chesapeake and Potomac and only sail locally on weekends also have different equipment needs, as well as shallower draft boats that sail well at home.

What is your sailing vision? Write it down. Ask yourself if you're missing anything about the lifestyle you envision onboard.

### Get Expert Advice

You may not know exactly what your goals are, but as you talk about them with an expert, they will become clearer. In the beginning, that expert tends to be an experienced yacht broker. Christensen, along with her partner Bernie Jakits, have owned a dozen boats between them over the years, ranging from Kate's first boat, a Laser, to the largest boat they owned and cruised together, a Hallberg Rassy 53. Having sailed from Maine to Bermuda and the Caribbean and to many ports in between, they understand what it feels like to buy and sell boats as well as sail.

Annapolis Yacht Sales broker, Tim Wilbricht, who has sold boats for 14 years, has owned two boats, lived aboard one of them for nine and a half years, and sailed and lived up and down the East Coast from Boston to Florida and in the Caribbean. "It's not that people can't find boats to

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buy,” he says. “It’s that they don’t always know what questions to ask. They may fall for flashy boat names or pretty interiors, yet still be naïve about what their own needs are.”

Since the broker spends his or her day focused on the local market, they know it better than most buyers and can help them sift through the options time-effectively. Wilbricht starts by showing buyers in a limited geographic area “a broad array of boats of various sizes, shapes, ages, and price ranges... Then we narrow it down to a type and whittle it down to a model. Once we find the model, *then* we can expand the search geographically for the right one.”

Bill Ranson recently bought a Jeanneau 42 from Mike Lynch at Norton Yachts in Deltaville, VA. He didn’t need a broker to find a boat for him; he found a shiny new Jeanneau in the boatyard, as he was hauling his Hunter for a hurricane, and Lynch helped him with the process.

“I like going through a broker/dealer who has a relationship with the manufacturer,” says Ranson, who has bought multiple boats, new and used, from brokers and individuals. “The broker is definitely a benefit if you trust them. They can become like family.”

Scott Evans of Laguna Beach, CA, calls himself a “poster child for new boat buying.” A Californian who aimed to buy a boat—out of Annapolis—learn to sail her, and sail to the Bahamas for a year with his family did just that after finding a Morgan 44 through Rogue Wave Yacht Sales. Evans, who sold his boat within three weeks of returning from his one-year adventure, says, “You really do need a consultant if you are new to boat buying. They can help

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you buy it *and* sell it.” Evans one-year adventure situation is extreme, but according to the brokers we spoke to, all boat buyers need to consult experts about the resale value of their boats as they buy them.

### Avoid Common Buyer Mistakes

The brokers and buyers we interviewed don't have anything against websites, such as *yachtworld.com* but they all commented that they were no substitute for going aboard many boats personally. “*Everything* looks great on the Internet, but people don't have a sense of space until they've boarded the boat” says Christensen. “A 36-foot boat can be teeny or spacious inside. It depends on the layout.”

Evans agrees. “Looking at boats on websites is incredibly misleading,” he says. He also advises against listening to advice of sailors who do other kinds of sailing than what you aim to do. A prospective long-term liveaboard cruiser may get some good advice from a casual daysailor, but some of it may be off-base. “Everyone has an opinion. Their idea of sailing may be different than yours. Consider the source of advice and consider what you want to do with your boat.”

Christensen reminds buyers to not get too hung up on a boat based on price. “There are no bargains,” she says. “Get a smaller boat if you don't have enough money to buy the bigger one. Less is more if you buy a high quality boat.”

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The greatest buyer mistake according to Wilbricht is to “chase down boats that really are not what they’re looking for and to travel too far and look for the wrong boat for too long.”

### **Follow Friendly Advice**

When asked what he would advise his best friend about buying a new boat, veteran boat buyer Ranson says, “Do all the research you can. Write down everything you want in a boat. And go to the Annapolis Sailboat Show,” as he does every Columbus Day Weekend. “It’s an amazing resource. You won’t find it all, but you’ll come close. Then look at your budget