

travel

A voyage of discovery as we set

If you long for the adventure of exploring new climes by sail but equally want to chill out in style, then SCIC Sailing may just be able to make your holiday dreams come true. **EMMA KNIGHTS** and **OLI FRANZEN** set sail on two voyages of luxury on the Aegean Sea.

The Maiden Voyage on Naviga I – Emma Knights

Stepping on board one of SCIC Sailing's majestic wooden yachts is a truly liberating experience.

There can surely be no greater feeling of freedom than having the wind blowing through your hair as you cruise along the water watching unfolding landscapes and the occasional dolphin passing by.

Add to this all the luxuries associated with a boutique hotel and you quite literally have a holiday made in heaven.

We were lucky enough to spend a week relaxing SCIC-style as we meandered along the Turkish coast from our departure point in Bodrum and explored a few of the nearby Greek islands along the way.

Our home and transport for the week was an 90ft traditional wooden ketch named Naviga I. She was simply beautiful and seriously swift with her vast sails that her captain Hakan proudly told us made her a very real contender in the hotly-contested Bodrum Cup regatta.

While the thought of sailing often conjures up images of aching limbs and roughing it in cramped conditions, nothing could be further from the reality with SCIC (pronounced chic with the letters standing for Sailing Cruises in Comfort).

Everything on board was very, well, chic with everything, right down to the smallest detail, fitting together as perfectly as an exclusive designer dress.

There was plenty of room for ourselves and the other passengers to kick back, relax, and enjoy our own space, and while we did not know the other guests before the trip it was not long before we were all friends together.

On the foredeck we enjoyed lounging on the sunbeds watching the ever-changing vistas of mountains rising from the turquoise waters, while at the stern we would curl up amongst giant comfy cushions and relax with a good book.

Below deck each of the spacious eight guest cabins offered us all the creature comforts we needed including plenty of room for a six-footer, air conditioning and an en-suite bathroom with hot running water.



Bodrum Castle

The splendour of our stunning vessel was superbly matched by the exceptional service given by Captain Hakan and his three crew members.

From the moment we were met with a glass of champagne in Bodrum harbour they could not do enough for us. Whether it was setting up the surfboard, giving us a lift to the shore in the tender or greeting us with our favourite drinks on our return to Naviga I, nothing was ever too much trouble for them.

And the food prepared on board by our chef Ali was simply sensational.

Every morning after a refreshing wake-up swim in the crystal clear water we were served a colourful breakfast of local fresh fruits, cheeses, meats and more. And for lunch and dinner we savoured a delicious selection of Turkish dishes.

At the start of each day Captain Hakan would also give us a briefing where we would discuss the adventures that lie ahead, and while it was difficult to tear ourselves away from our beautiful yacht we did also enjoy a number of trips on land.

Among the highlights was the Greek island of Nisyros where we set foot in one of the craters of the island's volcano. It was an awesome experience to see the steam still rising from the crater and feel the burning ground beneath our feet.

And afterwards, when we visited the pretty mountain village of Nikeia, we were treated to the most amazing panoramic views of this natural wonder.

Symi gave us a completely different Greek experience. We felt extremely glamorous as our beautiful boat arrived in the harbour to join a vast array of other expensive boats all moored up around a stunning backdrop of colourful and completely traditional Greek buildings climbing up the striking mountainside. Here we enjoyed an evening wandering through the quaint yet very chic streets by the harbour and had a delicious waterside meal, before the next day heading to the impressive monastery of Michael of Panormitis.

The third Greek island we visited was Tilos, a quiet and charming island full of history and largely untouched by tourism. When we went to explore the St Panteleimon monastery we were the only group there and this was a wonderful way to savour the architectural and spiritual delights of this 15th century gem. The journey to and from the monastery was also spectacular in itself as we enjoyed breathtaking views of the island's rugged coastline.

On our return to Turkey we stepped back through the centuries to visit the ancient city of Knidos where an array of ruined temples, churches, old streets and a wonderfully well preserved theatre beckoned us to explore them.

And during our last day we continued our historical adventures by visiting Bodrum's Mausoleum, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, before marvelling at Bodrum's vast and majestic castle.

Our final hours on holiday were spent

relaxing in the luxury of Bodrum Marina, enjoying a dip in marina pool while also savouring impressive views of the vibrant town that is fast becoming the St Tropez of Turkey.

If it is sun, adventure, liberation and luxury you are after, then we would thoroughly recommend setting sail for a SCIC vacation straight away!

travel facts

- SCIC's fleet of different sized ketches can accommodate six to 16 guests. All cabins are en-suite.
- Fourteen different sailing routes are offered along the southwest coast of Turkey and some Greek islands.
- Prices vary depending on time of year. Our one-week trip on Naviga I in May cost 830 Euros per person including all soft and alcoholic drinks, breakfast, lunch and five evening meals. Our one-week trip on Jelka in July cost 3675 Euros to charter the eight cabin boat, plus 315 Euros per person for all food aboard the boat and 30 Euros per person for reservation costs. Prices exclude flights, transfers and a surcharge if sailing in Greece. People who book for next year by October 1 2009 will pay this year's price for the sailing cruise. For more information call 020 8510 9292, email info@scicsailing.eu or visit www.scicsailing.eu



Emma and Oli on Naviga I



Captain Hakan on Naviga I