

To sail or not to sail?

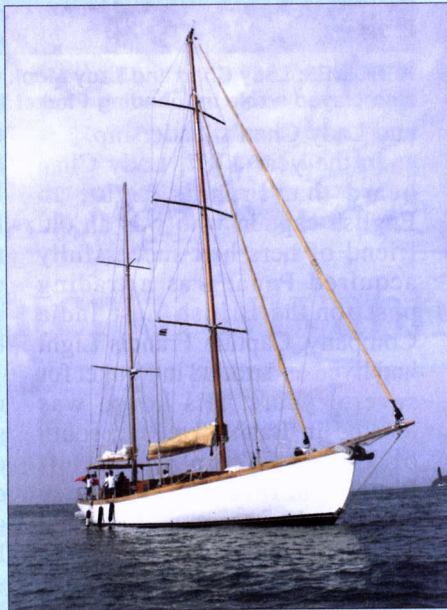
HERE I am, like many before me and many more to come. Water around me, blue skies above me, wooden deck under my feet, sun in my eyes, gazing at the beauty of Cape Panwa's lush green shores, at the deep blue hue of the Andaman sea – cutting through the waves, taming the power of wind.

I am surrounded by elegant, classic design, modern technology and attention to detail on a state-of-the-art yacht made with expensive materials, teak and mahogany. A yacht where sails are risen with a push of a button and cold drinks are served on demand. A yacht destined for the successful, rich and powerful willing to widen their horizons, open their minds up and think outside the box in the relaxing atmosphere of a luxurious cruise. At a couple dozen thousands Euros per week, chartering *Aventure* is a choice for a few. "The boat's design was inspired by 1930s' blue-prints but constructed with modern materials. It's a classic but it works like a modern yacht, says Guillaume Chaillot, Marine Industry Consultant and manager of VIP cruises.

"It's a VIP boat, we want to make special programs, invite celebrity chefs, organize jazz evenings, make it an interesting place to make business in a relaxed atmosphere. We want to show people that a better lifestyle is within the reach of their hands, he adds.

I can't deny it, it feels great to walk barefoot on the teak-wood deck, munching on

mozzarella and sipping mojitos. But we didn't come here just to sample the "hi-so" lifestyle. We're sailing through these exact waters at this



Modern classic boat. Photo: Mark Knowles

exact time for a reason. Just a few hundred meters from *Aventure*, a large group of yachts is taking sharp turns in perfect accord, as if following an invisible route. And when a loud siren breaks through the air, they all set out in the same direction, racing for glory. They are on the same sea as we are, using the same wind to move around but how different their sailing is from our sailing.

Here on *Aventure* all we care for is not to spill our drinks and not to get sunburned. There, every second counts, every inch of the sail, every member of the crew works in perfect harmony for one goal only to get to the finish line first.

Looking at the Phuket Race Week regatta, I wonder where I'd rather be here: chilling in the sun, enjoying the soft rocking of the waves, or there, cutting through

them with surgical precision, celebrating sportsmanship, teamwork and taming the elements? This though takes my mind for a trip to the past, the old times when I used to sail across the Baltic sea and the English Channel on a boat not longer than 10 meters. There were not buttons to be pushed, only lines to be pulled. No drinks and snacks, just crackers and tea, no eager-to-please hostesses, just a couple of friends trying not to give in to the raging wind and crashing waves. It wasn't easy – the cold, the fatigue, the ever present seasickness, yet my mind goes back to these days whenever I see the skies turning dark and the wind grows strong.

It all seems so different now – us, here, chilling in the sun on *Aventure*; them, there, mastering teamwork in an effort to win the race. My friends and I back in the day trying to get from Amsterdam to London or from Stockholm to Gdansk.

Or the lone sailors circling the globe on whatever floats, the explorers reaching for the horizon, the families on sailing holidays, the kite surfers I see flying on the wind near the shores of Phuket.

Yet it all goes under the same name – sailing. and we're all in it for similar reasons, driven by the urge to get closer to nature, to become part of it, use it to our advantage.

To sail or not to sail? There is no question or as the ancient Latin saying goes: *Navigare necesse est.*

– Maciek Klimowicz



RELAXING TIME: Wind and water is what girls like. Photo: Maciek Klimowicz

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