

OUR BOATS

Top tips from real boat owners in the MBY fleet

MBY'S FLEET

PRESTIGE 680

ARTEMISIA
MARK WEISS, Marina d'Arechi, Italy

PRINCESS 67

JENNYWREN
MIKE ROTHERY, Sant Carles Marina, Spain

DUCHY 27

ALCHEMY
PHYLLIS ROCK, Yarmouth, UK

FAIRLINE SQUADRON 78

MATCHII
JOHN WOLF, Antibes, France

FLEMING 65

VENTUREII
PHYLLIS ROCK, Yarmouth, UK

STEELER PANORAMA FF53

SYMPHONY
PETER CHESTER, the Netherlands

FPB 78

GREY WOLF II
PETER WATSON,
Guernsey, Channel Islands

SEALINE C330

LET'S GO
GILBERT PARK, Aigues-Mortes, France

PRESTIGE 500S

BREAKING BAD
NIGEL PICKIN, Port Hamble, UK

JEANNEAU NC14

DIANA
JOHN BRUNYATE, Port Solent Marina, UK

KARNIC BLUEWATER 2250

BOHEMIAN GIRL
HUGO ANDREAE, Poole, UK

DALE NELSON CLASSIC 45

ARLETTE
HARRY HORNBY, Badachro, Scotland

PRINCESS 61

BATEAU 9
HARRY METCALFE,
Port Saint Jean, France

NORDHAVN 46

ENVOY
LAURIE CRANFIELD, the Med

FLEMING 55

PLAY D'EAU
PIERS DU PRÉ, Guernsey, Channel Islands

PRINCESS 43

SAPPHIRE
GORDON CHRISTIE, Loch Lomond, UK

BÉNÉTEAU SWIFT TRAWLER 34

BLUE'S AWAY
JACK HAINES, Portimão, Portugal

SEALINE C330

Size isn't everything

Having made the decision to downsize, it's just a matter of finding their sea legs for Gilbert and Maire

Over the years I have been boating I have bought and sold many craft, all of them used. Increasing age and the degeneration that naturally occurs with it led me to spend some of the children's inheritance on a brand new boat for myself and my wife, Maire.

Why did we choose to downsize from a Sabreline 36 flybridge to a Sealine C330? There were several reasons. The Sabreline we had before was a great boat; it was comfortable, safe and spacious. However, it did need a bit of looking after and following a winter with an expensive generator repair, three days of polishing the hull and with the thought of more necessary jobs to come, I decided I wanted to do less maintenance and more boating. Living on the French canals for much of the year, we also realised that the Sabreline was too high for some bridges and the Caterpillar engines weren't enjoying a lot of slow-speed cruising.

So having made the decision to change to a smaller boat, why did we go for the Sealine? For starters, there is a Sealine dealer half a mile away from our berth in France, so we thought that would make any teething problems easier to solve. In fact, we ended up buying it through

Thames Boat Sales in the UK as we bumped into the broker who had sold us one of our previous boats at the Southampton Boat Show. He was working for Sealine at the time and TBS had a stock C330 that could be delivered in time for our late spring/early summer cruise. He offered us a tempting deal that included a handy discount off the new price and taking our Sabreline 36 in part exchange, so we went for it. We named our new boat *Let's Go* as it summed up our fresh approach to boating.

We wanted *Let's Go* delivered to the South of France and the part exchange collected at the same time. The first lesson we learnt was that moving boats this distance is not an exact science. Although, delivery and pickup were promised for a Wednesday in May, *Let's Go* wasn't in the water until the Saturday morning. However, we were grateful to 'Lenny the Lorry' for giving up some of his holiday to ensure the boat arrived in time for the weekend. The sun was shining and we were ready for the off.

VIP AFTERCARE

As part of the deal, we had arranged for the after-sales manager Chris to come down to Aigues-Mortes for three



Maire gets to grips with their new boat's handling under the watchful eye of TBS's aftersales manager

days to commission the boat and give us some instruction on her. This was easily the best part of the deal and one I would recommend to any buyer. Even if you are buying a used boat from a broker, don't just accept a brief handover at the dockside – insist on at least a day on the water as part of your deal. This means that any problems can be ironed out and you can familiarise yourself with all the boat's equipment and how it behaves on the water.

The first morning, Chris took me through every system on the boat, checking I knew where the stopcocks, water pumps and other key items were and how the electrical systems worked. Once done with the daily checks, we headed out to sea to play with the engine controls. These are so much more complex than the 18-year-old Caterpillars on the Sabreline and having Chris to show us how to make the most of them meant the learning curve was much quicker. We soon learnt how to trim the legs and when to use the tabs as well.

Both my wife and I benefited hugely from our time at sea, especially when it came to mooring up. We became much more confident at just using the engines and keeping the bow thruster in reserve.

We were planning to spend a night on board with Chris but never did manage to. Typically, on our first night alone, we couldn't find the light switch



Let's Go was delivered to the South of France by road



The saloon with the original high gloss table in place. It was replaced by a fiddled teak top

When not in use the nav seat or table top tucks neatly away in this technical space



With the table top removed a second forward facing navigator's seat is added to the reinforced pillar

in the heads (you press the light itself) and there was only lukewarm water from the tap (the mixing valve near the calorifier had been turned all the way to cold). Chris soon helped us sort it out over the phone but even he couldn't help us with the next issue – where the rubbish bin is. There isn't one, nor is there space for one in any of the lockers. A real triumph of form over function!

Before we bought the boat we did identify another problem for us – there's only one forward-facing seat. As Maire suffers from seasickness, we had to overcome this problem. With help from Hamble Yacht Services, we changed and reinforced the pillar for the saloon table so that we can mount a seat on it when underway. Once we're berthed, the seat stows neatly in a locker and the table top goes back on. The table supplied with the boat looked really beautiful but wouldn't work for us; it was too highly polished with holes in the middle and no fiddle round the edge. So we bought a standard teak tabletop to replace, which works brilliantly.

OUT WITH THE OLD

One of the benefits of buying a new boat is knowing that everything is covered by a warranty but although the Raymarine AIS and radar we had retrofitted came with all the correct paperwork, we weren't sure if the rest of the Raymarine kit that was already

fitted as standard was covered by an on-board warranty. As I write this, I am still trying to establish if the three year on-board warranty for the factory-fitted Raymarine equipment is in place. I am assured that the makers will register it, but I am still awaiting confirmation. In the future, I'm told it will be automatically registered using the hull number.

Thankfully the twin Volvo D3 engines and outdrives had been properly registered for warranty cover. I know this because there was a recall on them soon after we took delivery. The boat had to come out of the water to have the gearboxes fixed, postponing our plans for the summer. But at least I didn't have to pay anything.

The warranty also proved useful on a Bank Holiday Monday in Toulon. After fuelling at Toulon's only diesel pump, a warning came up saying the electrical steering had failed! Having read the handbook, I knew there was a 24/7 helpline in English, so I rang the number and a few hours later, a technician arrived and found a high-pressure hose had split and spurted oil into the bilges. We were allowed to use one engine to get back to our berth and a couple of days later, the part arrived and was fitted.

This experience led me to reread all the instruction books and I discovered I had to register several other parts of the boat such as the TV, entertainment centre, spotlight and so on to ensure the various warranties applied.

Since Chris left there have been a few niggling things such as a screw from the panoramic window going missing, but these are only to be expected with a complex piece of machinery. A replacement was swiftly sent from the factory in Germany and couriered to us in France. One of the great advantages of the time spent with Chris is having a contact point we know and trust. Nothing is too much trouble for him.

Now that the usual teething problems have been sorted, we are starting to really enjoy the boat and know how to have fun safely. Crucially, we also trust TBS to look after us and fix any issues that do arise – so now it's really just a case of LET'S GO! **Gilbert Park**



The Park's new Sealine C330 offers the kind of simple turn key boating that the Parks were looking for