

SPECIAL FEATURE

INSPIRATION FOR YOUR GETAWAY

SAILING
HOLIDAY
SPECIAL



My Big Wet Greek Holiday

By Georgie Corlett



Like many who enjoy messing about on the water, we're fans of finding more than one way to get afloat. A beach club holiday with Ocean Elements at its specialist windsurfing centre in Vassiliki, Greece was the perfect way to indulge that passion.

NOT only does the centre boast over 120 new-this-season boards, it also has a fleet of dinghies, including a number of performance craft.

Use of all of this fantastic kit (along with a fleet of kayaks and Stand-Up Paddle Boards, as well as mountain bikes) together with RYA windsurf and dinghy sailing instruction is included as standard in all Ocean Elements' beach club holidays.

Topping all this is the enviable location of this particular resort; the sweeping indent of Vassiliki Bay unvaryingly lies calm until after lunch, then is pommelled in the afternoons by 'Eric', a localised wind

that hurtles daily down the hillside to produce a cross-shore breeze that's reliably force 4+.

Situated directly on the beach front, Ocean Element's relaxed, traditional-style Surf Hotel offers value-for-money accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis, with all rooms enjoying an inspiring vista over the pool and gardens and across the bay.

For those travelling as a family, Ocean Elements offers a warm and affordable welcome at all its centres, with Kid's Clubs included in the price of the holiday, and sailing and windsurfing junior coaching also available.

Dinghy indulgence

With a team of energetic watersports instructors on hand ready to launch, on request, the dinghy of your choosing, we spent plenty of time powering across the bay in Lasers, or pushing the RS100 to its limits with kite run after kite run. As competent dinghy sailors, we certainly got our fix, indulging in a blast across the bay most days before lunch.

Meanwhile, novice and improver dinghy sailors were being put through their paces each morning with RYA tuition in a variety of dinghies, including the Pico, RS Feva, Topper 16 cat, RS500 and Laser Bahia. With three hours of tuition over five days available for every guest, it was great to see the dinghy sailing and beginner windsurf students gaining confidence over the week, and venturing further afield as the holiday went on.

Learning curve

After lunch it was our turn to take up our lessons. Afternoon sessions for improvers and advanced windsurfers were run in four groups, divided up by ability and to an extent, ambition! With no more than twelve students in each group and two instructors to each, the groups spanned intermediate to advanced, and covered everything from beach starts and basic harness work, to carve gybing and popping.

Confident, knowledgeable and

The perfect setting for a sailing holiday.
Credit: Josh Pitt



full of enthusiasm, our group's instructors, Laura and Doug, tailored our programme daily according to the wind and to the group's requests. After a short time at the beginning of each session spent on shore, with our coaches imparting their advice and demonstrating expertly on the simulator, it was time to hit the water and for us to put theory into practice...

Or at least, that's what we were attempting. Light wind days saw us refining first fast-tacks, then heli-tacks, then duck-gybes and the ultimate achievement – a follow the leader behind Doug, imitating all of these moves in sequence – with hilarious consequences.

Once the wind filled in, the focus switched to promoting planning – as one by one, we struck our 'super seven' poses to maximise mast foot pressure and whizzed off down wind.

After hitching a lift back up wind with one of Ocean Elements' safety boats more times that we could count, it was time to gather the group together in the shallows for another briefing, this time – thankfully – on how to control your board at speed. With some tentative foot strap work and plenty of positive encouragement from the instructors, improvements began to show.

Chilling out

Each exhilarating afternoon was topped off by celebrating achievements over a well-earned beer at the hotel's small beach bar, as we sat and watched the pros make the last of the sunshine. As for Eric, he quite often had a few hours left in him!

For us, however, needing to re-charge the batteries, a 20 minute saunter took us most evenings into the nearby

village of Vassiliki. Here, a number of restaurants ring the quaint little fishing harbour, offering a choice of seafood and traditional Greek fare, or substantial pasta and pizza dishes. The restaurant that won our custom on more than one occasion was Penguins, with the excellent fish platter and local wine.

Ocean Elements sets aside two or three nights each week when guests can opt to have dinner at the hotel. Themes for each vary from week to week, and can include charity casino nights, meze meals and pool Olympics – a great way of getting guests and staff together for a fun and easy evening.

The final night of our trip saw a delicious BBQ served, followed by light-hearted presentations from each of the groups and their instructors. After a few drinks to mark the end of a highly enjoyable holiday, a little dutch courage went a long way. Laughter rang late into the night as everyone swapped their tales and highlights of what had been a great week.

Winning formula

With a two-week Stay and Sail holiday - enjoy a beach club holiday in week one, followed by a yacht charter in week two – starting at Vassiliki in May 2015, we think Ocean Elements may have hit on the absolute winning formula for those who want to enjoy more than just one way of getting afloat on holiday.

A Stay and Sail package will also be available at the company's Nautica Bay Beach Resort in Porto Heli, Greece for 2015; whilst the popular and picturesque Pelion resort of Club Leda has been designated as the company's 'dinghy specialist centre' for next season.

www.oceanelements.com

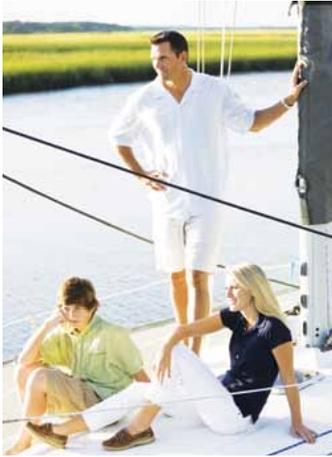
Students enjoying their tuition, and the sun.
Credit: Josh Pitt



As well as windsurfing there are dinghies, kayaks and paddle boards. Credit: Josh Pitt

HOLIDAY IN STYLE

Whatever your style, experienced long distance sailor or a weekend cruiser around the UK coast, there's a holiday out there with your name on it...



SAILING holidays are fantastic because they offer so many choices, not only in destinations, but boats, experience levels and activities too. Put together, this means you can create the perfect holiday for you and your family. Here we take a look at sailing options for 2015 and a selection of the destinations you might find yourself enjoying.

LEARN TO SAIL

What better place to learn to sail than under the glorious Mediterranean sun or even further afield. There are many sailing holidays that combine with a RYA course such as Competent Crew, while others choose to learn to sail on a flotilla holiday with the instructor on board.

However, this option isn't just for beginners. RYA Day Skipper is another popular course to take abroad too. It's a great way to get the whole family or group of friends learning together and having fun at the same time.

Here's a taster of where you could be headed in 2015:

In Europe: Turkey, Sardinia, Corfu, Greece, Croatia
The Caribbean: St Martin, Antigua, St Lucia & Grenadines
In the Far East: Thailand

CREWED YACHT

Perhaps you would simply like a wonderfully relaxing holiday without the sailing or learning? Choose a crewed yacht and step aboard to meet your professional skipper and crew who will take you and your family on the trip of a lifetime.

Here's a taster of where you could be headed in 2015:

In Europe: Greece, Gibraltar, Turkey, Croatia, Italy
In the Caribbean: St Martin, Antigua, St Lucia & Grenadine

BARE BOAT YACHT CHARTER

For experienced sailors chartering a fully equipped yacht, catamaran or cruiser is often the best option as there is an unbeatable sense of privacy combined with the freedom to explore the area at a pace to suit all those on board.

Your Day Skipper is needed and, depending on the location, an internationally recognised certificate of competence for the skipper such as RYA International Certificate of Competence or RYA Day Skipper Practical.

Here's a taster of where you could be headed in 2015:

In Europe: Greece, Croatia, Italy, Turkey, France, Spain, Sweden
In the Caribbean: Cuba, Bahamas, Florida Keys, St Lucia, Antigua, Martinique, Grenada, Belize, British Virgin Islands
In the Far East: Thailand, Seychelles, Tahiti, Malaysia
In North America: Canada

FLOTILLA

If the idea of a bare boat yacht charter sounds fun, but you like the social side of meeting new people or travelling with friends, then a flotilla could be just the ticket. You are the skipper of your boat, but sailing with a group of other yachts headed by a flotilla skipper. Spend the days and nights with the others or doing your own things; whatever takes your fancy that day.

This is the best of both worlds in many ways, and is especially popular for families. Sometimes you can also have a professional skipper on board for a few days or the whole week.

Here's a taster of where you could be headed in 2015:

In Europe: Greece, Croatia, Turkey
In the Caribbean: British Virgin Islands, St Lucia

SHORE TO SAIL

A holiday that combines sailing and exploring the local area is a popular choice. Many sailing holiday companies will happily arrange both aspects of the trip to include the land and sea activities and accommodation.

CLASSIC BOATS

For something a little different, we love the idea of a sailing holiday on a Tall Ship or wooden boat. There are worldwide destinations available ranging from Cornwall to Patagonia, plus incredible wildlife expeditions.

AROUND THE UK

So far we've mentioned sailing holidays abroad, but there are countless holiday spots around the UK, both inland and around the coast, where you can sail your own boat, charter a boat or perhaps it's time to take the plunge and invest in your own boat and sail the beautiful waters around the UK before heading overseas in the years to come.

FIND OUT MORE

- Nautilus Yachting: www.nautilusyachting.com
- Sunsail: www.sunsail.co.uk
- Ocean Elements: www.oceanelements.com
- Sailing Holidays: www.sailingholidays.com
- Seafarer: www.seafarersailing.co.uk
- Neilson: www.neilson.co.uk/sailing
- Classic Sailing: www.classic-sailing.co.uk
- Ionian Blue Sailing: www.ionianbluesailing.com
- Fairview Sailing: www.fairviewsailing.co.uk
- Bareboat Sailing Holidays: www.bareboatsailingholidays.com
- Star Clipper Holidays: www.starclipperholidays.co.uk

YACHT CHARTER AND BEACH CLUB HOLIDAYS IN GREECE

Ocean Elements offer Beach Club holidays and yacht charter in spectacular locations in Greece.

YACHT CHARTER HOLIDAYS

A sailing holiday in Greece is a fantastic experience for friends and family, where you can cruise to a variety of different islands and enjoy secluded bays and crystal-clear waters.

With Stay & Sail holidays you experience the best of both worlds: your first week at one of our Beach Clubs and the second week on a yacht.

Why not come and see us at the London Boat Show between the 9-18th Jan on stand E006

BEACH CLUB HOLIDAYS

Our Beach Clubs in Vassiliki, Porto Heli and Leda offer a haven for relaxation, along with an extensive variety of inclusive activities. All have been hand-picked for their suitability to sailing for all levels on the latest boats from Laser, RS and Topper, with RYA tuition provided by our expert instructors.



YACHT CHARTER HOLIDAYS

- ✓ Sail the South Ionian or Cyclades
- ✓ Wide range of yachts
- ✓ Two week Stay-sail option
- ✓ Base support

BEACH CLUB HOLIDAYS

- ✓ Beach-front hotels
- ✓ Dinghy racing & cruising
- ✓ Free RYA tuition & courses
- ✓ Free use of latest boats
- ✓ Free use of windsurf kit
- ✓ Free kayaking & SUP
- ✓ Free mountain bike hire
- ✓ Free mountain bike guides
- ✓ Free Kids Clubs (4 to 13yrs)
- ✓ Action & relaxation
- ✓ Social events & excursions
- ✓ Flight-inclusive packages

BEACH CLUBS

FROM ONLY
£480* pp
Includes Flights



YACHT CHARTER

FROM ONLY
£315** pp



Visit alpineelements.co.uk/allatsea or call: 020 3582 7363

*£480pp: For 7 Nts Hotel Accom in Vassiliki, in May. Includes Flights, Transfers, Breakfast, RYA Tuition, Kids Clubs, Windsurfing, Sailing, Kayaking, Paddleboarding and Specialized Mtn bike hire. Offers cannot be applied retrospectively, or combined with any other discounts. NB: Exact courses are resort specific, enquire for full details.

**£315pp includes 7 nights' hire of yacht, full handover and briefing on yacht systems, base support and marine insurance. Our charter pack includes: first-fill tank of diesel and water, basic starter pack with bed linen and towels, from £55 per yacht.

