



# HOW TO BUY A SAILBOAT

WITHOUT  
GETTING SCREWED

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# How To Buy A Sailboat

## Without Getting Screwed

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## Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to request this guide. Before you start, I want to let you know who I am, why I wrote this guide and what my hopes are for you to gain from this guide.

### **Let me work backwards – this is what I want for you...**

I want you to get the right boat for the right value so that you can make your sailboat and sailing dream come true. And I'm hoping that during the course of your sailboat buying journey my family and I can help to entertain, educate, inspire and eventually connect with you at a beautiful tropical anchorage. Note: if your plans are to sail to the Arctic we'll have to skip the idea of physically meeting. I don't do cold...

Real quick about me/my family if you haven't bumped into us before - My family consists of my husband Simon (British), my daughter, Sienna (age 7 at the time of writing) and me – I'm Kim (American). In 2014 my family and I sold all our possessions, purchased our sailboat 'Britican' (British and American put together) and headed out to sea. We've been sailing around the world ever since. So far we've sailed over 18,500 miles and that includes circumnavigating the Mediterranean, crossing the Atlantic Ocean (took 18 days), enjoying our way up the Caribbean Islands and eventually taking a break from sailing (but not the boat) in Charleston, South Carolina.

Our plan is to head back to sea soon (November 2017) with the intention of sailing to the Pacific via the Panama Canal.

### **So let me tell you why I wrote this guide for you...**

Over the course of our travels we've meet hundreds of sailors. And due to our blog, YouTube channel, FaceBook page and other online hangouts we've met thousands of sailors (virtually) – new, old and those getting ready to enjoy the sailing lifestyle for the first time.

With all our travels and new friends we've not only experienced a massive amount but we've also heard story upon story – some good and some not so good.

So, this is my key message - the sailing community is full of great people. The people who work in the sailing industry (boat brokers, sailing service professionals, marina managers, etc.), however, are most often disingenuous, corrupt people.

**New and old sailors are getting ripped off all the time. And the place where they get ripped off the most is when they purchase a boat.**

But it's not just the marine industry 'professionals' that are to blame. It's also us sailors. There's so much information now days that it's hard to figure out what we need to know to make educated decisions. Buying a sailboat is NOT like buying a house and it's certainly not like buying a car.

That being stated, the rest of this guide will outline ten steps to buying a boat. With some of the steps I recommend that you upgrade and purchase one of my corresponding non-free guides. Yes, I do run a business and I do need to eat.

This guide is valuable in it's own right and I'm sure it will help you to avoid being ripped off. If nothing else you'll gain a clearer perspective about some of the issues involved with buying a boat so to be better prepared.

If you feel that this guide is valuable, please consider getting *even more value* by purchasing one of my other fifteen guides or buy the full collection (at a discount). My online shop is located at: <https://SailingBritican.com/shop>

Thank you,

**Kim, Simon & Sienna**

*Sailing Britican*

*Note:* I've included links in the guide to various resources. If you click on them and they don't work please copy and paste them into your browser.

## How To Buy A Sailboat

Buying, owning, maintaining and sailing/motoring a boat can be immensely rewarding. There's something so appealing about the thought of heading out into a great blue expanse. The soft breeze against your skin, the smell of the salty sea air and the fundamental absence of 'normal' life is so incredibly fulfilling.

With people doing more in less time, technology advancing by the second and the overwhelming amount of information overload that abounds in today's society, boating is now even more appealing than ever before.

Spending the weekends on a boat helps to recharge batteries, reduce stress and provide a reward for all the hard work that's done during working hours. And for those fortunate enough to take a sabbatical or sell up and sail away, boating provides an alternative lifestyle that supersedes any lifestyle lived before.

And I speak from experience. After spending eight years of seeking world dominance through my last company, I found myself burnt out, unhappy and approaching some sort of health calamity. The company was very successful but the success came with a price. With our young daughter in tow, my husband and I decided to make a break. As previously mentioned, we sold all our possessions, purchased a boat and started sailing in 2013. We've been sailing and living aboard our boat ever since.

Looking back, it was the best decision we could have ever made. Sure, we gave up the promise of financial security, the comfort of owning our own home and the approval of what society deems 'right,' but it was well worth it. For several years now we've experienced what it means to truly live life. To be alive in all senses of the word.

Back on land we were merely existing, or as a good friend of mine would say, we were, 'slowly decomposing.' Out on the boat, we experience incredible sights, meet the most fantastic people, sample incredibly delicious foods and take in the absolute stunning beauty that this world has on offer.

But it hasn't been easy. Things break all the time. We've been caught out in storms. We've watched our savings drain down. Things that are easy back on land can prove to be very difficult when living on a boat.

**Living full time is not easy but it sure is fulfilling.**

And although the sailing community is the best group of people I've ever met (sailors will do anything and everything for other sailors), the actual sailing or marine industry houses the most disingenuous, corrupt, evil, backward, greedy group of people I've ever come across.

The irony is incredible.

The problem with the boating dream is that 'you don't know what you don't know'. Or, the more positive spin on that saying is, 'you only know what you know.'

The journey *and* destination involved in buying a boat can lead to heaven or hell. Some boat buyers get the perfect boat, find service providers that actually give rather than take and grow smoothly into the boating lifestyle.

Others, however, are not so fortunate. Many current disgruntled boat owners have been sold the wrong boat. Perhaps the boat is too big for the owner to ever confidently operate? Or perhaps too complicated? In many cases the boat is in a terrible state and the boat owner finds out too late – after they own the boat.

Several readers responded to an email I wrote regarding experience with boat brokers. I could create a book on the feedback I received. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, I didn't get any positive emails.

This account seemed to be the most extreme, so let me share it with you just to give you an idea of how bad boat brokers can really be:

I have previously owned a monohull sailboat (bought in UK all good experience) and a catamaran (bought in Caribbean... actually we flew out to view, arranged meeting for 3pm, confirmed day before, got there and he was out!) so I know a little about buying a boat.

For the past 10 months I have been trying desperately to buy another cruising boat.

I have never in my life met such a shower of lying cheating back stabbing conmen (and women) in my life as the current boat brokers! I think that it would be doing our 'car salesmen' a disservice comparing them to boat brokers! I work in what you would call 'real estate' and there are a few sharks that I have met in this over the years.... all amateurs compared to your average boat broker!

I have flown to Spain to view a boat that had already been sold! Flown to Italy to see a boat that didn't exist and then flew to France to view a boat that had NO proof of ownership! I found a boat in Italy that had a lease on it being sold as unencumbered (very common in Italy...beware) flown to Croatia to see such a load of worn out rubbish you would not believe it (photos were given to be of a totally different boat)!



I have gone to view a boat as arranged (specifically a non-chartered/never chartered boat) to be told by the marina (when I couldn't find it) that it was, yes you guessed, out on charter.

Even the boats we have viewed in southern USA and Britain have in a lot of cases been trashed, the last one being a Beneteau 57 in UK that was so badly maintained I couldn't believe it actually floated.

So far I have agreed a price (subject to survey and viewing) on FOUR boats only ever to actually proceed to one survey. The one that I did have surveyed had severe osmosis that the broker should have known about.

Many adverts on Yachtworld have photos of ANOTHER BOAT - not the one you are going to look at or photos from several years ago. MOST ads on there are from 'brokers' who either are not listing that boat directly (they copy another listing change a few photos) and put a cheaper price or a boat that doesn't exist, or was sold months ago. It appears that ANYONE can be a broker!

Now after 'convincing' my other half to do a circumnavigation, us both getting excited and making plans FOUR times and then flying out and viewing a load of rubbish she has gone off the idea (I don't blame her) and I am sick of it.

Brokers are paid so highly that they don't need to try, don't care if they waste your time, the money comes in from somewhere sometime for that boat anyway, and this attitude is widespread.

I just don't get it, in sailing over 22,000 miles, I have never met a bad sailor - not one! All have been very helpful, generous, honest and good fun, but brokers are the exact opposite, with a few exceptions.

The gentleman that wrote me the above email wanted to remain anonymous. I wonder if he'll get a boat or if the dream is done?

And what about boat buyers that manage to get the boat but it's the wrong (for them) boat?

During our buying process our initial broker in the UK was fantastic. We felt him to be very genuine, helpful and up-front. When the time came to view the boat and do a survey, we were passed to another broker as the boat was located in Majorca, Spain.

Our second broker, from the same company, was terrible. We felt like we were inconveniencing him. When we asked a question we got a generic answer. Upon taking possession of the boat we enquired as to a run down on how the boat worked and the brokers' response was, 'Oyster owners tend to want to figure things out themselves...'

Not every broker is bad. The key is to know that there's a potential for dishonesty and shoddy work ethics in the boat buying industry and act accordingly. Buying a boat is like doing business back in the days of the Wild West.

My hope is to provide a blueprint of sorts - so to help you understand the steps involved in buying a boat. My aim is to, at the very least, attempt to decrease the gap between the unknown and known and possibly arm you with the right questions to ask or scenarios to consider.

# 10 Steps To Getting The Right Boat For The Right Price

## Step 1: Understand The Big Picture

Define where you are, where you want to go and what you want to achieve by becoming a boat owner.

Put aside any thoughts of what make and model boat you want. The important starting point, which many people miss out, is to define the end goal.

You don't just buy a boat for the sake of buying a boat. You're buying it for more freedom and/or connection to nature and/or family bonding and/or the ability to travel to particular areas of the world to enjoy amazing destinations and/or magical memories, or/and...

And unless you're buying the boat to sail alone, there's going to be at least one other person, or perhaps a whole family, that has to share the goal and be a part of the process.

The more specific you are with what you want, in alignment with your partner/family, the more likely you'll achieve it. The more you define what your expectations are, the more likely you'll ask the right questions to determine whether or not a particular boat is right for you.

**I've met too many boat owners that purchased the wrong boat for what they wanted to achieve.**

By doing so, they've been disappointed with the outcome. To spend so much time, effort and money only to get it wrong is a shame.

My husband and I know a lovely gentleman that dreamed of buying a boat upon retirement from his management consultancy business. His goal was to buy something very large so his wife would be happy with the space. He also wanted the boat to be safe so he decided a steel hull was best.

The dream was for him and his wife to sail around seeing the world by boat.

In the end, our friend purchased a 65' ketch, had it sailed from Europe to American, spent around \$200,000 to renovate it and then determined the boat was way too big and complicated for the couple to handle. The boat hasn't been sailed, it's now up for sale and it may take years to sell, if ever. The money is all tied up in the boat making it difficult for the couple to move on and enjoy their retirement. The dream is now a nightmare.

**If you don't know what you want someone else will tell you what you want.**

In other words, if you're not solid on what you want and why you want it there's a possibility that a salesperson will be able to manipulate your decision making process – and boat brokers are very good at this. There's a possibility that you'll be sold something you don't really need or something that is flat out wrong for you and your abilities and requirements.

## Step 2: Prioritize Your Requirements

It's massively important to understand as many boat variables as possible, and how they'll affect you/your partner/your family, to determine what is and is not a priority for your future boat and lifestyle. If you had to define your perfect boat, in relation to your end goal, would you be able to define it now?

In Step 1, I asked you to define the end goal for your sailing dream – what do you want to achieve by having a boat. In this step, I want you to start thinking about the particular boat that will help you achieve the dream.

Some boats are made for crossing oceans and others are more suitable for calm protected waters. Some boats have a cockpit that is safer for children whereas others are not suitable. Some boats get tossed around making the journey less comfortable and more prone to inducing seasickness on its passengers. Some boats are built to slice through the waves rather than bounce around.

Some boats require sailors to stay in the cockpit when handling sails whereas others require the need for a person at the mast or foredeck (even in a storm). Some boats are full of automation making it easy to sail whereas others are very manual and take quite a bit of manual labor.

Some boats can be acquired for next to nothing and others cost millions. And.... Some boats will be easier to sell, over others, when your time boating is done. The list goes on.

**Consider where you're going to be sailing in relation to the type of boat you purchase.**

If you're thinking of sailing the Bahamas, it's very shallow so a Catamaran might be worth considering. If, however, you're going to sail around the world, you might want a heavy displacement boat enabling a smoother and safer journey.

Look at where you want to sail and find out what the depth of the water is and the height of any bridges. If you want to sail America's Intercostal Waterway or motor through the canals in France, there are definite restrictions.

Also look at tides and complications regarding the sailing area. If there's a fast tidal stream, failing to prioritize bow thrusters as a key requirement might be detrimental.

**For every choice made on a boat there's a wide range of implications.**

It's important to keep in mind what you want to use the boat for and then go through key items like keel type, rigging configuration, cockpit layout, saloon setup, electricity/power, water tanks and maker, and so forth to determine what is and what is not important.

If you're buying a boat to sail in the Great Lakes, there's no need to pay the extra money for a heavy displacement boat. If there's no tide, special equipment to make boat maneuvering easier might not be necessary. If you're sailing across an ocean, you most likely don't want a galley that's in an open area – you'll want it in a corridor so there's something to hold you from flying across the boat.

There are endless options when buying a boat and they all come at a cost. Make sure to know exactly what you want and why you want it. Save your money on things you don't need for future servicing, maintenance and repairs.

As we grow up we might move house a couple times with our parents. Eventually we leave the nest and get an apartment or our own house. We then upgrade over time – each time refining our likes and dislikes more and more.

Unfortunately, however, with a boat it might be the only boat you ever buy. If you'd like a list of over 30 core considerations and how they might affect you and your plans, consider getting *Boat Buying: Choosing The Right Boat – Understanding & Prioritizing What Matters Most* **(Not published yet – email me if you want a copy of my draft. I'd be happy to send you a free copy before I launch this guide. In return, however, I'd like some feedback on the guide).**

### Step 3: Consider finances

So far we've looked at the ultimate end goal – what you'll be doing on your boat. We've also considered the particular boat that will best help you achieve the end goal. Let's start to now dig deeper into the detail.

Out of all the questions I get asked, the most frequent query I receive is, 'how much does it cost to buy, maintain and sail a boat?' And my answer is almost always, 'how long is a piece of string?' For years I've been pondering a way for potential boat owners to gain a grasp on costing's. What I've discovered is that the obvious costs can easily be located by searching the Internet or speaking with a boat professional or sailboat owner.

#### **It's the unknown costs that cause an air of anxiety.**

MASSIVE TIP: Whatever your total budget is, use 50% to 70% to acquire the boat and then keep the remaining aside to refit, update, and repurpose the boat. **You will need it.** And don't fall for the marketing spin when the listings say it's recently been refitted to sail around the world or 'recent refit for \_\_\_\_\_' (the reason your buying the boat). It's usually a total con. And, yes, it's something we fell for!

You don't know what you don't know, so I created a checklist to highlight many of the various costs involved with boat ownership.

It's important to determine how you'll fund the initial purchase, costs to prepare the boat for your sailing plans and on-going costs to maintain, repair and sail your boat.

If you want to get to grips with all the costs associated to buying, preparing and maintaining a boat make sure you use my *Boat Buying: Boat Ownership Costs – A Checklist For Budgeting/Forecasting* guide as it lists costs associated with buying the



boat, preparing the boat for what you want to use it for and servicing/maintaining the boat. Get a copy of that guide here: <https://sailingbritican.com/product/boat-buying-boat-ownership-costs/>

Also, if you're interested in earning an income while you sail, check out my FREE guide *How To Make Money While Sailing Around The world*. This guide lists ten ways to make money while sailing and was created to get you to think about how you can apply your experiences and current skillset in alternative ways to produce an income.

With my *How To Make Money While Sailing Around The world* guide my hope is that you'll get some definitive ideas or, at the very least, feel a spark of possibility. There are thousands of normal every-day people and families currently sailing around the world and generating an income. If they discovered a way to do it, so can you!

Get your FREE copy of this guide here: <https://sailingbritican.com/free-report-download/> (when you click on this link you'll gain access to the PDF guide instantly. Remember to save it to your computer).

## Step 4: Research boats

Start looking at as many boats as you can. The more you look, the more you'll determine what you like and don't like. You can check out boats online:

- Boat sales marketplaces (YachtingWorld.com, etc.)
- Ebay
- Craigslist
- Boat manufacturer websites
- Sailboat owner groups and forums
- Sailing bloggers
- Sailing Vloggers (videos on YouTube)

Look at boat layouts (floor plans), understand how different rigging options work (are the sails put up and down from the cockpit or is someone required to be on the foredeck)?

Grab some boating magazines and read owner reviews, flip through the boat sales pages. Keep asking yourself what you really want versus what you really don't want.

Attend boat shows and try lying on the beds, sitting at the saloon table and opening/closing doors and cabinets. The more you soak up the look and feel of different makes of boats the more you'll know what appeals to you most.

Walk around boatyards and marinas. If you see someone on their boat ask them what they love and what they hate about their boat. What would they change? How easy is it to motor? How easy is it to sail? Think about your reasons for buying a boat and quiz boat owners in relation to how you want to use your future boat...

Doing this will help you know what you want rather than being told what someone else wants to sell you.

## Step 5: Go sailing

At every possible opportunity, get out sailing to determine what you like and don't like about sailing, the boat you're on and the area you're sailing in. Go on sailing vacations. Make friends with people that own boats (we're always happy to take people out)! Rent boats - different types if you can. Join a local sailing club – even if it's dinghy sailing!

**Try before you buy and I mean that from every perspective.**

And when you're on a boat, new sailing area and/or new sailing conditions ask yourself what you enjoy and don't enjoy. Let's pretend that you're going to the British Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. During your one or two week vacation, considering asking yourself the following questions about sailing, the boat and the area:

Determine what you like and don't like about the boat you're on. Do you like...

- Pumping the toilet or would an automatic option be better?
- The ability to see forward while helming (Is the sail in the way or the sprayhood/dodger obstruct your view?)
- Having headspace to sit up in bed?
- Location of the galley – is it wide open or away down a corridor?

Determine what you like and don't like about the area you're sailing in...

- Are the views from the anchorage beautiful?
- How busy are the waters?
- What are the people like?
- How expensive/inexpensive is the area? Cost of food/drinks?

Determine what you like and don't like about sailing. Do you prefer...

- To sail close to land or have a 360 degree view of open sea?
- Short sailing journeys or long sailing journeys?
- Sailing close to the wind (sails are tight in and it's a very quick sail) or downwind sailing (sails are way out and the boat is being pushed through the water - crossing the Atlantic/Pacific is downwind)
- Being away from everything or enjoying sundowners (drinks at sunset) with other sailing cruisers?

The more experience you get before buying a boat the more you'll know about what will work best for you. And remember, it's not just the boat! It's also the area you're going to sail in and the actual sailing conditions that are important too.

To give you an example about conditions, the Mediterranean is not the best place for sailing conditions. It's either blowing a gale or there's no wind at all. However, if you like history and/or want to visit several different cultures the Med is amazing. On the flip side, the Pacific offers amazing sailing conditions, but instead of history you're 'stuck' with the most amazing lush tropical sights ever.

Furthermore, if you're new to sailing, the more experience you get the higher your confidence will grow. The more confidence you have the more likely you'll get out and really embrace the awesome world of sailing.

Do not wait to do this. The second you decide that being a boat owner is a future for you, get yourself/partner/family on the water!

Before we purchased our current sailboat, a 56' monohull, we bought a 35' sailboat to 'practice' with. We purchased the boat from Ebay for a very good price and went out every weekend to get to grips with sailing. We were able to make mistakes without worrying (too much) because the boat wasn't too expensive. By spending a

year or so playing around we were able to increase our confidence massively AND determine that, yes, buying a larger boat and sailing around the world IS something we want to do and can do.

## Step 6: Find Potential Boats To Buy

At this stage things are starting to get serious now! Start sending questions to boat owners that have their boat up for sale; or boat brokerages and boat manufacture sales teams to start the process.

You'll find that some sellers/brokers respond quickly and provide the information you want and others don't. Let this be the first test towards finding the right boat for you.

**If you don't get a good, professional, timely response, move on.**

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**Side note from a reader** - A reader of an earlier version of this guide sent me an email stating the following.

*'I had a friend who used to say "anyone worth their salt is hard to get hold of. It is the guy that is always available that you want to watch out for. The busy guy is busy because he is good and everybody is trying to get hold of him, the other guy is available because he isn't busy...'*

There's definitely some truth to this statement. As with everything in life things are rarely black and white. The concept of 'testing' a broker or boat seller first is to discover whether or not you feel you'll get the level of service necessary to achieve the end goal. I know several good brokers and they have systems and back office teams in place to make the boat buying process a pleasurable one.

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The whole buying process comes down to two parties working together for a common goal – if the seller's party can't start off on a good footing there's no sense wasting more of your time.

If you use my *Boat Buying: Choosing The Right Boat – Understanding & Prioritizing What Matters Most* guide (mentioned earlier) you'll be armed with a specification on what's a priority and what's not. With your spec you can ask boat owners and brokers whether or not the boat fits the bill...or at least comes close.

Alternatively, you can approach a broker and let them know what you want. They can then scour the listings and provide you with options. If you know someone that has purchased a boat and was happy with their broker, get the brokers details! I'm not kidding when I say that good brokers are very far and few between. Word of mouth recommendation is the best way to find a broker that will help you through the boat buying process.

**In many cases I think it's best to first find a good broker that you know will work for you and then allow them to help you find the right boat...**

I have a few excellent brokers I can recommend if you need help. Just email me at [Kim@SailingBritican.com](mailto:Kim@SailingBritican.com) (with your specification!) and Simon and I can help start you off in the right direction.

Anyway...there are a variety of reasons for an owner to sell a boat. Some owners are selling to trade up, others are selling because they need the money and many sell because they aren't using the boat anymore. Some owners want a quick sale and others secretly don't want the boat to sell at all (perhaps the owner's partner instigated the sale)?

Before taking the time to view a particular boat, it's best to do a bit of detective work to determine whether it's worth your time to book a viewing.

If you're considering a boat that's only a drive away it might not be terribly imperative to get too much data up front. On the other hand, if you have to take a flight, you may want to spend more time gathering information to avoid looking at a boat that does not adequately suit your needs.

Some questions to consider asking above and beyond what's listed in the specifications are as follows:

- Can the boat be financed? (If you need financing and the boat can't be financed there's no need to look at it, is there?)
- Are there any large repairs or maintenance costs required within the next year? (If there are large costs in the future, does the price of the boat reflect a reduction in the selling price?)
- Has the boat ever been hit by lightning? (If it has proceed with caution...the integrity of any electrics not replaced might be questionable)
- How old are each of the sails and what condition are they in? (If they only have a couple years left are you happy with buying new ones?)
- What are the terms of the current storage/marina facility? (Will the current owner pay the costs or will you be required to pick them up?)

Use my *Boat Buying: Pre-viewing Boats Questionnaire – Questions To Ask Before Booking A Viewing* guide to save time weeding out duds and save money making unnecessary trips. There are over 40 questions similar to the above to start the ball rolling: <https://sailingbritican.com/product/boat-buying-pre-viewing-questions/>

Keep in mind that this stage is all about putting feelers out. There are probably hundreds of boats available that might fit your requirements but if you can't find reliable, professional people to make the deal happen don't proceed.



## Step 7: View Boats To Buy

It's VERY important to understand that buying a boat is NOT about finding one you like and then leaving it up to a surveyor to tell you if it's good or not! Even if you're not a seasoned boat person it's imperative that you do your own viewing before making further commitments. I know people that buy boats without looking at them and I think they're flat out insane.

If you don't dig into the details it's very possible that unbeknown to you, you'll buy a boat that needs thousands of dollars worth of work right from the start!

Some issues should raise massive red flags like a hull with moisture/osmosis problems, doubtful keel bolts or rot around the chain plates. Most problems, as long as you know how to spot them **and** the cost involved in fixing them don't have to result in a dead deal.

The key is to remind yourself that you don't know what you don't know. It's your goal to find out what you need to know and then learn it! Here are some tips...

### **Helpful things to bring with you to the viewing**

- Magnet (if a magnet sticks to stainless steel hardware it isn't marine grade stainless... it's a cheap alternative. Indicates cheap work.)
- Inspection mirror (helpful to look around the engine)

### **What to look at on the hull (if the boat is out of the water)**

- Drive shaft. Look at the drive shaft – make sure there are no areas of pink or copper colored discoloration. If there is, it's a sign of dezincification. Dezincification is where zinc is removed from the alloy, leaving behind a porous, copper-rich structure that has little mechanical strength.

- Gelcoat. Look for any cracks and/or blemishes. Star shaped cracks indicate an impact; parallel lines indicate stress and spider cracks (very common) signify the gel coat was laid too thick.

### **How to inspect the upper deck**

- Winches. Rotate the winches to make sure they spin freely. Also wiggle them to make sure they don't move or wobble.
- Sails. Look for the areas that see the most sun and scratch the threads with your fingernail. If they break, the sail might be in poor condition. Same goes for any canvas items. New sails are very costly.

### **What to look for down below**

- Berths. Take pictures, note layout, headroom, storage space, etc. Test the beds – can you fit in them, are they comfortable? Are there lee cloths (fabric panels that hold you in during stormy seas) under the mattresses?
- Underside of the Deck. If possible, look above the headlining's to check out any through-deck bolts. If you see brown drips or stains dripping from the bolts it's a sign of a rotting deck. (Note: it's often not easy to get the headlining's off so only do this if it's inappropriate. Open some cupboards or closets to look for bolts first)

### **Questions to ask an outsider**

- When bad weather was forecasted did the boat owner, or a helper, visit the boat to ensure more lines were put out?
- Did you hear of any problems the boat owner had with the boat?

While viewing a boat, take pictures of anything that looks suspect and make a note of the brand and model. You'd be surprised at how expensive simple things, like exhaust hoses, pumps, rigging gear and even ceiling lights, can be.

Also, make a note of the make, model, and year of anything that has to be serviced and maintained. Jot down the engine, generator, navigation system, and so forth.

When you return home, you can do some research to understand some of the costs involved in replacing and servicing items. Furthermore, it's a good exercise to look up known problems that a particular item might have. For example, some engines have particular failures after X amount of hours. If the boat you're buying has that engine, you'll want to know when the engine might fail and the cost of fixing it.

Walk around boats ticking off whether your requirements are met/not met while looking for price dropping negotiation points or deal breaking issues.

If you need a checklist that includes over 50 things to look for when viewing a boat, grab my guide, *Boat Buying: Viewing Boats to Buy – A Checklist For Personal Inspections* here: <https://sailingbritican.com/product/boat-buying-viewing-boats-to-buy/> (This guide alone has the potential to save you ten's of thousands of dollars!)

## Step 8: Sea Trial And Survey

Most purchase/sale agreements and brokerage policies will require that a vessel be on contract and around 10% (or other negotiated figure) of the agreed purchase price be placed into escrow by the buyer before the survey/sea trial takes place.

Boat sellers do not want to take people out for a free boat ride. If you're serious about buying a boat, and using the time and energy of all the parties involved in selling the boat, you want to make sure you're very interested in making a purchase.

By the time you take a sea trial, you'll want most of your questions answered. The point of the sea trial is to make sure the boat works the way that you expect it to work. You'll want to verify the engine functions, the sails go up and come down in addition to testing out any and all operating systems.

In other words, test the showers to see the pressure, flush the toilets to ensure they work. Notice all the navigational readings – is the depth finder working?

AND make sure you, and whoever will be sailing with you, are happy with how the boat maneuvers in and out of the marina. Closely watch how the sails are raised and lowered. Ask about how reefing works?

The best thing you can do is to pretend that you and your partner/family are stuck in the middle of the Atlantic during the sea trial. What do you need to know to last for the next couple days and make it to land?

### **About the Survey...**

Do not buy a boat without getting a professional survey. Do not avoid the survey cost by using a professional survey completed for a previous buyer. This is one place

where you don't want to cut corners. Surveyors are trained to find issues. If the hull is not seaworthy you need to know.

**Massive Tip:** make sure to find a surveyor that has nothing to do with the boat owner, broker or anyone else that would benefit from the boat sale going through. You want to ensure that you get an independent, professional surveyor.

### **Why shouldn't you ask a broker for a recommendation?**

Well...a surveyor makes his/her money from doing surveys. If a surveyor is recommended by a broker, the surveyor knows that if he or she wants to keep eating he/she needs to make the broker happy. If the broker is happy the surveyor keeps getting recommended.

There are valuable resources available to help buyers select a surveyor. Two of these are the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors (S.A.M.S.) <http://www.marinesurvey.org/> and The National Association of Marine Surveyors (N.A.M.S.) <http://www.namsglobal.org/> These organizations' websites allow users to search for surveyors worldwide.

### **I would also recommend a dedicated engine survey.**

Boat surveyors will check the engine however they're not necessarily skilled mechanics. Looking back on our experiences both our engine and generator were in a terrible state but our survey didn't tell us that. (I overheard our 'bad' broker tell our surveyor that if he wanted more business he'd better make the survey go well... Talk about a red flag. Yes – we took the recommendation of a surveyor from our 'bad' broker. We lived and learned – don't you make the same mistake!)

If you have a friend or someone you know that is a mechanic, the small price paid to get him or her to have a look might ultimately save thousands in the long run. Leave

the state of the boat to a boat surveyor and the heart of the boat (the engine) to a mechanic.

## Step 9: Negotiations

As and when issues are found during the inspection, survey and trial, you'll want to determine if there's a legitimate request for a price reduction and negotiate accordingly.

When it comes to boat sales you are supposed to negotiate. Never, ever, ever, ever pay the price that a boat is listed for. Boats are priced to be negotiated down. Considering that we don't live in a country where negotiation is common many people find the process stressful.

### **Here are some tips regarding negotiating to help you out:**

1. Be optimistic and ask for what you want. Everything is negotiable and it's important to be assertive. Take care of your interests while maintaining respect for the other party. If you don't ask you don't get. Start with a low offer – you can always go up in price.
2. Do your research on the boat. Gather as much information as possible prior to serious negotiations. Have specific reasons why you're asking for a lower price. For example, find five other boats similar to the one you want and demonstrate that they're selling for \$50,000 rather than \$80,000. Another example, imagine wanting to buy a boat and discovering the rigging needs to change. The cost is \$10,000 – explain that you're happy to buy the boat but you want \$10,000 taken off or the owner to change the rigging before purchase.
3. Do your research on the seller. Figure out what the sellers needs are. What pressures are they feeling? What options do they have? Doing your research is vital to a successful negotiation. You can't make accurate decisions without understanding the sellers' situation.

4. Always be ready and willing to walk away. And keep in mind that you can usually walk back if you do walk away. By having the confidence to say 'no' to a deal you show that you're not desperate or emotionally overcome. Showing that you have other options (e.g. to find another boat) shows that you have inner strength. By doing so you'll be far more likely to get what you want.

5. Don't rush. Whoever is more flexible about time has the advantage. Considering that most people don't have patience, your patience will help the other party to offer more concessions to get you to say 'yes'.

6. Focus on the seller's worries and concerns more than your own. The seller is under pressure too so keep that in mind. We often think that the other person has the upper hand but that's not true. Understand what the seller is trying to achieve and see how you can help them achieve it in relation to getting what you want out of the deal. Look at the deal from the seller's perspective. Instead of trying to win the negotiation, seek to understand the other negotiator and show them ways to feel satisfied. By doing so, the seller will be more inclined to help you satisfy your needs. That does not mean that you give in. Keep in mind that satisfaction means that the seller's basic interests have been fulfilled, not necessarily that their demands have been met.

7. Make sure that whenever you give something away, get something in return. For example, if the seller won't budge with a price reduction for a particular fix, perhaps you can instead ask for the SSB radio to be included in the sale (if it was previously excluded). When you give something away without requiring the seller to reciprocate, the seller will feel entitled to your concession. The seller then won't be satisfied until you give up even more. But if the seller has to earn your concession, they will derive a greater sense of satisfaction than if they got it for nothing.



8. Don't get sidetracked with issues outside of the deal. Work with the concept of 'How can we conclude an agreement that respects the needs of both parties?' If the seller is difficult to deal with or you clash with their personality, work on understanding their behavior without taking it personally.

During negotiations it's important to be flexible and creative with options. In some cases you can conditionally accept the deal. So, you could ask the seller to address any issues (e.g. fix something) and then you'll move forward to purchase the boat OR ask for a reduction in price to fix the issues yourself.

Our negotiations were very stressful. We walked away once and then walked back. In order to seal the deal our 'good' broker came up with a very creative solution. Our negotiations story is too long for me to include but I've written about it here:

<https://sailingbritican.com/sailboat-negotiation-tactics/>

## Step 10: Buy the boat!

If a price is negotiated and/or all conditions are met, the rest of the journey is a matter of paperwork and formalities. The buying process usually takes a minimum of seven to ten days. Yes – more waiting, but it will be worth it when you're sailing in the sun :)

This is where a closing agent with a brokerage firm really helps out. The closing agent will gather all the ownership documents (vessel title, registration, dinghy title, registration, corporate documents if any) and then send out closing statements, the bill of sale, delivery affidavit, US Coast Guard requirements, sort out finances (lien, loans, etc.) and manage the paperwork through to the point of payment and hand over.

When all is said and done, congratulate yourself and bask in the knowledge that you're now a full-fledged boat owner. It's now that the fun really starts. All the hard work, anxiety and stress can now be dissipated by taking your new girl out for a calm, refreshing peaceful sail.

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Thank you for reading the guide. Hopefully the contents will help to steer you in the right direction. If you have any questions, please email me on [Kim@SailingBritican.com](mailto:Kim@SailingBritican.com)

## Preparing for Boat Ownership

Below you'll find other guides that I've written that help people *after* they buy a boat. If you have any questions, comments or feedback, please email me on:

[Kim@SailingBritican.com](mailto:Kim@SailingBritican.com)

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that at the time of writing, my entire digital/downloadable guide selection (those listed previously and all those listed below) are currently being offered for a massively discounted price when purchasing the full set. This offer is definitely limited and will not be offered forever.

View the offer here: <https://sailingbritican.com/product/guides-special-offer/>

View all the guides here: <https://sailingbritican.com/shop/>

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### Boat Safety: VHF Radio Broadcasts

'Boat Safety: VHF Radio Broadcasts' is a boaters must-have VHF Radio broadcast reference guide. When using the VHF to call another boat, marina or send a broadcast to all boats (MAYDAY, etc.) there are set steps to take and very specific words to use. This guide will help the user to:

- reduce mistakes
- lessen anxiety
- make speaking over the radio easier

### Boat Safety: Preparing for Seasickness

Seasickness sucks! I know first hand because I'm a massive sufferer. Even after three years of living full time on a boat I have problems. There are ways, however, for preparing for seasickness. Some people can avoid it, others can mitigate its affects and many are afflicted only mildly. This guide is for anyone afraid of getting seasick

or having to deal with someone who is sick. It's fast, hard-hitting and full of potential solutions.

### **Boat Owners: Choosing A Dinghy**

Choosing the right dinghy depends on a wide range of factors. If you've had a large amount of experience with dinghies you'll know what you like versus what you don't like. But what if you haven't had much experience?

- Save money by getting what you want rather than what a sales professional tells you what you want
- Save time trying to figure out what's best for you and your travel plans
- Avoid getting a dinghy that doesn't do what you need it to do

### **Boat Owners: Choosing A Marina**

Whether you're looking for a long-term home for your boat or in the process of finding a seasonal berth for safe keeping, this checklist will help you to get answers for over 60 questions - many of which you probably didn't know you needed to ask.

- Save time: choose the right marina for you and your boat
- Save money: understand the extra costs at each marina to determine what's best for your budget
- Remove unknowns: determine if your expectations will be met or not

### **Boat Owners: Selecting Insurance**

When looking for the best value for money it's important to call around and compare and contrast a few insurance providers. It's also imperative to know that the cheapest deal isn't always the best. Use the *Boat Owners: Selecting Insurance* guide to ask the questions necessary to make a final decision.

## **Boat Basics: Mooring Balls Explained**

Entering a mooring ball field can be intimidating at first. And in busy areas like the Caribbean and around several Mediterranean countries mooring fields can be jam-packed. Avoid getting laughed at by missing the mark. This 'Boat Basics: Mooring Balls Explained' guide will help you to:

- Properly prepare to moor safely and securely
- Set up good lines of communication
- Understand how best to secure the mooring
- Avoid making common mistakes

## **Checklists for Sailors**

Passage Planning, Sailboat Maintenance, Cleaning, Medical and more is a boaters must-have checklist reference guide. When you're first starting out you don't know what you don't know! These checklists will help you to:

- reduce mistakes
- reduce anxiety
- start somewhere and build on a solid foundation!

## **Boat Safety: Hurricane Preparedness**

Living in an area that has the potential for hurricanes or typhoons can be nerve wrecking, unsettling and down right horrifying. This 'Boat Safety: Hurricane Preparedness' guide was created to help you:

Save time researching how to best prepare your boat for an imminent hurricane

Save money knowing what to do, when to do it and how to do it

Reduce the anxiety and stress associated with hurricane planning

New guides coming soon. Visit my shop to see the full collection here:

<https://sailingbritican.com/shop/> (copy and paste the link into your browser if a page doesn't open)

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