

Intoxicating

For some a two-week holiday in Ibiza means an all-inclusive hotel deal on the promenade in San Antonio. For the Weldon family it means something quite different. Last summer they took a head-turning Princess V53 motor yacht across the water from Mallorca to Ibiza and had an altogether more sedate experience of the beautiful 'White Island'.

REPORT SARAH DRANE



IBIZA



Kerry, husband Paul, and children Elizabeth (12) and Edward (13) are seasoned boaters and big fans of the freedom afforded by a holiday afloat. With Paul, a proficient skipper, and the rest of the family on-hand as crew, they choose to use the waters around the Balearics as their playground and their Princess as their moveable hotel taking each day as it comes.

“With two long weeks at our disposal we were in no hurry to get directly to Ibiza so we planned some scenic stop offs along the way,” Kerry says, “leaving Puerto Portals on a sunny Sunday morning our first port of call was Sant Elm, a beach haven at Mallorca’s extreme southwest edge. Despite its tiny population Sant Elm is home to one of the most loved restaurants in Mallorca – Cala Conills. A lunch here always involves plenty of fine wine and fresh fish delivered daily from the nearby Port of Andratx.”

“Perched right on the water’s edge,” Kerry continues, “Cala Conills looks out across the bay to the lofty four-kilometre long island

of Sa Dragonera, a designated natural park renowned for its flora and fauna. Better still, the restaurant has an inviting turquoise swimming pool on the shorefront which entertains Elizabeth and Edward whilst we settle down to a digestif in the afternoon sunshine. We anchored here for the night ready for a bright start in the morning.”

Some six kilometres south of the White Island lies the lesser-known island of Formentera. Populated by less than 8,000 people and more known for its pristine Caribbean-like beaches than its wild nightlife, Formentera makes for an idyllic chill-out session before the relative vibrance of Ibiza. The Weldon family whiled away a couple of days exploring the Island’s sparkling clear waters, deep caves and inviting beach chiringuitos. Next stop - Ibiza.

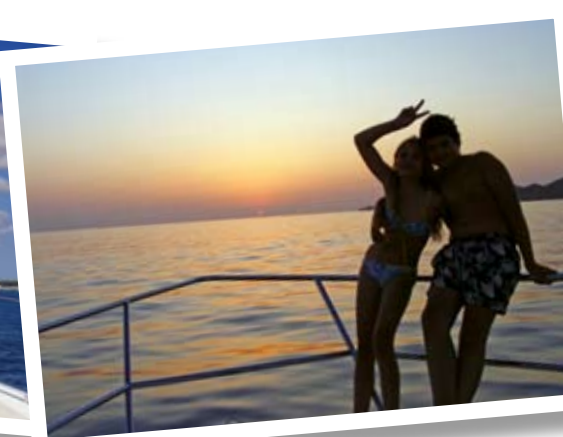
“On calm seas and at a steady speed, Ibiza is really only a couple of hours from Mallorca,” Kerry continues, “there’s no qualms about being lost at sea for as soon as Mallorca pales out of sight, Ibiza comes into view. That’s the beauty of boating around the Balearics, it’s quite effortless. After the tranquillity of Formentera we headed straight to Ibiza Town’s main marina, Botafoch, which was to be our base for the fortnight. This decision was made as not only did we have some friends staying onshore in the Town but we also prefer the security of having shore power, fresh water and a fuelling quay to hand without having to give it a second thought. Besides it’s the ideal address for exploring the rest of Ibiza.”

With no set routes or timetables, bareboat charter opens up the possibility for impromptu adventure every day. The Weldons skirted the coastline from Botafoch round to the highly fashionable celebrity-magnet of Ses Salines and then dipping in and out of the stunning coves and bays that pepper the western coastline of the Island.

These isolated coves backed by pine-clad mountains are ideal for scuba diving – music to the ears of the Weldon family. Paul qualified as an instructor in both waterskiing and scuba diving from an early age and these skills have been passed on to Elizabeth and Edward who are now both qualified open water divers. With the Princess fully loaded with scuba diving equipment the trio can be occupied for hours leaving Kerry to focus on a suntan and a good holiday read.

A must-stop for the Ibiza coastal tour was Villa Mercedes, one of Paul’s favourite restaurants at the heart of the Port of San Antonio. In stark contrast to the glare of the nightclubs, Villa Mercedes was once a traditional Ibicencan house which has been transformed into an elegant eatery with a fusion menu and polished service. With sprawling landscaped gardens and romantic views across the marina and San Antonio bay beyond, it’s a real retreat, especially with the flamenco chill music chorusing in the background.

“Although we dined out a lot in the evenings,” says Kerry, “we were just as happy rustling up meals on board with the



aid of the superbly-equipped and surprisingly roomy galley. Our yacht had an open-air barbecue perfect for simple meat and fish dishes whilst lunches were usually big healthy salads with ingredients bought from the fresh markets on the Island, all accompanied by a few glasses of wine – well we were on holiday.”

A 53ft by 14 ft space doesn't sound like the most grandiose of environments for keeping two lively youngsters entertained for two weeks but the truth is that Elizabeth and Edward are very easy customers. The three roomy cabins give the family plenty of space and privacy whilst there's plenty to amuse above and below deck.

“We're lucky, the children get on really well,”

continues Kerry, “and are exceptionally good at amusing themselves. Often Paul and I will retire after a long day whilst Elizabeth and Edward are cosied up watching a DVD. We always have a good stash of movies to fill those quieter moments and there are plenty of games too. And of course, being 21st century children, they have a PSP and DS each. Paul and I are more than happy with the boat's sophisticated sound system, a wallet full of cds and a library of good books.”

Not that staying indoors is very commonplace on a yachting holiday in the company of some of the finest weather in the Mediterranean. Scuba equipment aside, the Weldon's Princess also has canoes, waterskiing gear and a handy

tender for leading the water sports and nipping onshore to collect provisions or sample the menus of the many beach clubs sprinkled along the coastline. Boredom does not feature in the Weldon dictionary.

What was the highlight of a fortnight afloat on the Balearic waters? “Too many fantastic memories to mention,” says Kerry, “but a stand-out moment would have to be when we were sailing back past Formentera, the sun gently setting over the horizon, and we realized that we were being accompanied by a gathering of dolphins swimming alongside. It just seemed like the perfect way to close a special holiday.”



If you're planning a long break at sea, here's Vitesse Yachts' handy tips for making it a safe one.

CHECK LIST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE ▶

- ▶ Fuel tanks full
- ▶ Engine and generator checks completed
- ▶ Fresh water tanks full
- ▶ Instruments and systems checks completed
- ▶ Portholes and hatches closed
- ▶ All gear stowed away
- ▶ Ship's papers
- ▶ Weather forecast
- ▶ Paper charts and pilot book

SAFETY BRIEFING CHECKLIST ▶

- ▶ Lifejackets (check for non-swimmers)
- ▶ Life raft
- ▶ Flares
- ▶ Grab bag
- ▶ SRC/VHF Radio
- ▶ Fire extinguishers and fire blankets
- ▶ First Aid kit location
- ▶ Torches
- ▶ Bilge pumps
- ▶ Man overboard procedure including use of Danbuoys and throwing lines
- ▶ One hand for yourself above and below decks
- ▶ Use of anchor (hands and feet clear)
- ▶ Use of passarelle
- ▶ Appropriate clothing for season
- ▶ Sun block and sun screen
- ▶ Delegate crew roles for berthing