

SEA BREEZES





Tradition Plays its Part

Travel writers Frances and Michael Howorth have spent much of their working life on the water. In the course of their travels, they have sailed in superyachts, cargo ships, river barges and ocean liners, journeying the world in search of their next story. Together they have sailed the North West Passage and rounded Cape Horn. They have voyaged to Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean, Europe and the Mediterranean, India, and plenty of islands in between. These include such variety as Tristan da Cunha, The Seychelles, St Helena, and the Maldive Islands. From mighty rivers to canals large and small, no stretch of water seems to have escaped their attention. Along the way, they have encountered strange happenings, wonderful people, and life-changing events all of which have enhanced the stories they have to tell. The variety of the craft they have voyaged in and the seas on which they sail are all so very different, yet each 'Voyage of a Lifetime' details a journey they have made and an aspirational journey the reader can still undertake. Here is the first in, what will be for Sea Breezes, a new bi-monthly series.

BY FRANCES AND MICHAEL HOWORTH (ENGLAND)

If ever proof was needed that traditionally built sailing craft can still play a part in the luxury vacation market in Asia, then you need look no further than Prana by Atzaro. Designed with the utmost luxury, this stunning superyacht offers guests space and comfort in nine elegant suites, each with their own private ensuite bathrooms. Owned by the Atzaro Group, whose other ventures include a luxury hotel in Ibiza the yacht's savvy owners have taken great care over both the yacht's interior and exterior details. Fully soundproofed, the suites are decorated with sumptuous vintage fabrics and contemporary linens in a sophisticated palette. Wellness is a key element in the Prana by Atzaro ethos, with her own yoga deck, and two spa therapists to administer treatments on deck, in-room or inside the peaceful Atelier de Beauté, using Anne Sémonin products. The ancient boat-building traditions of the seafaring Bugis tribe inspired her design and this masterpiece, built of ironwood and teak, was constructed using those same time-honoured techniques. The yacht took 21 months to complete, from the laying of the keel, hull and bulkheads to finishing the superstructure, decks and soft furnishing.

THE SHIP

Launched in 2018, Prana boasts nine spacious ensuite cabins spread across four decks. The yoga terrace, numerous indoor and outdoor living and dining spaces, a dedicated spa, a water sports platform and a cinema under the stars all help make her one of the most frequently requested yachts in the area. Her appeal as a yacht available for charter is enhanced by the immense social areas offering over 900sqm of useable space for her onboard guests to enjoy.



Prana is a phinisi (the H is silent and not pronounced). Built on the beach at Bira, just as her cargo-carrying ancestors were in the south east corner of Sulawesi close by Bulukumbé. This flat-bottomed craft that draws just 3.7 metres is larger than the average. With her two-masted ketch rig, she is over 55 metres overall including her elegant bowsprit and overhanging stern. Her massive 11.6 metre wide beam gives her a fat lady look on the water and her big bony accommodation makes her look top heavy as she sails along. Step on board, however, and wander through the well-appointed staterooms and you will instantly agree with us, that this lady is built for comfort. To be a phinisi, the craft should carry seven sails, only two of which are carried on the mizzen. Made of white cotton duck canvas they are nowadays more for show than action but fortunately, the single Yanmar 850 engine and four-bladed propeller pushes her 411 gt bulk along at a handsome 8 knots which is fast enough around this part of the world.

We enjoyed a week-long voyage on board in the Raja Ampat Islands. Famous for their Jurassic-like beauty, these islands embrace over 1,500 rambling Indonesian islets encompassing over 40,000 square kilometres and are set among cays, coral reefs and shoals like rough-shaped jewels in a cerulean sea. Located off the northwest tip of the island of Papua in the northwest seas of the Indonesian Archipelago, they lie at the point where the Pacific becomes the Indian Ocean. The resulting currents stir up nutrient-rich water in the tropical climate, nurturing magnificent coral reefs and unparalleled marine life. Depending on the time of year Prana sails through several of Indonesia's exotic Eastern destinations, including Komodo National Park, the Banda Islands and Raja Ampat which is where we joined her.

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VOYAGE OF A LIFETIME



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THE VOYAGE

With its iconic limestone outcrops, Wayag and the marine sanctuary that surrounds it, have become the poster child of Raja Ampat, seldom do travellers omit at least one stop across the lagoon from up on high. The vista typifies the islands that have been formed into surreal conical-shaped karst islands by the dissolution of soluble rocks before being scattered across an endless sea. Our itinerary included calls at Aljaji Bay on the western end of the island of Wayago. Here we anchored amid murky, murky waters to visit the Atlas Pearl Farm, a far-flung yet gorgeous location where some of the world's finest South Sea pearls are to be found. Touring the farm, we learned more about these natural wonders from a well-informed member of staff who allowed us to watch technicians removing pearls the size of chickpeas from inside the still-living mollusc.



Next was the small yet beautiful island of Arborek. Here we simply plunged into the water from the pier and were instantly engulfed in a glittering array of spectacular coral fans and walls of fish, just below the surface: with turtles, stingrays and schools of snapper and fusilier fish one wonders why scuba gear is at necessary. The local people here are both welcoming and industrious, creating unusual handicrafts from sea pandan leaves. They live as they have done for thousands of years and are just one of many indigenous tribes within the region. After our run ashore we return to Prana clutching trinkets ready to be engulfed in the luxury of a massage in the spa before being served sunset drinks and a delectable fine dining feast frequently served on deck. Wellness is a key element in the Prana ethos; with her own yoga deck, and two spa therapists to administer treatments on deck, in-room or inside the peaceful Atelier de Beauté, using Amie Sémonin products.

ACCOMMODATION

Prana is a sensational choice for ship lovers be they singles, couples or a large group of family or friends. She features nine cabins, air-conditioned cabins accommodating up to 18 guests. On the upper deck behind the bridge guests will find the sumptuous Botévie master suite, with its super king-size bed, double wardrobe, lounge and sitting desk. Huge wrap-around floor-to-ceiling windows open out onto its own spacious 20m² private deck overlooking the stern. The ensuite bathroom features a double rain shower and twin toilets.

Also located on the same upper deck is the 37m² Uluwatu VIP suite, which we occupied, with its super king-size bed, dramatically large windows on both sides and an en suite bathroom. We were very comfortable living here. Below decks, four more double suites call for private ensuite bathrooms, mini-fridges, Smart TV and sound systems although quite what the TVs are used for, no one on our trip ever found out!

On the main deck, there is a vast open plan saloon with an impressive dining table for entertaining, where Fazio our chef served Western and Asian fusion dishes with fresh local ingredients, paired with fine wines from the extensive cellar selection. Outside, there is a yoga deck on the upper deck (which can also be converted into a cinema under the stars) and oversized



sun loungers up here catch the ocean breeze and offer the best view of the passing scenery. On the main foredeck, guests will find ample space dotted with large daybeds and alfresco dining. At the after end, there is a water sports deck equipped for diving, snorkelling, kitesailing, paddle boarding, water-skiing and wakeboarding. Oversized gangways and 4 spacious decks with king-size daybeds scattered on every open deck offer abundant places to retreat and relax. The main deck features inside and outside living, a water sports deck aft and a further bedroom suite.

GREAT CREW

Our 18-strong crew included a Cruise Director, Dive instructor, several chefs, stewards and expert spa therapists; all on hand to deliver a seamless experience and to ensure all needs are met. With fine dining, unlimited water sports, onboard spa treatments, unforgettable diving and the chance to visit some of the world's most beautiful heritage sites, Prana encapsulates a perfect union between ancient craftsmanship and contemporary luxury.

The cuisine on board, carefully created by the yacht's chef, includes both Asian Fusion and Western dishes. Everything is made from the freshest, local ingredients and served by discreet staff alfresco under the stars, in the cool of the air-conditioned onboard dining room or, Robinson-Cruoe

style, on a powder white sandy beach. After dinner, you can relax at the open-air cinema or indulge in a pampering spa treatment. In the morning, as the wind catches the sails, take a yoga class on the topmost deck - sun salutations will never be the same again.

SAIL IN OUR WAKE

A voyage on Prana offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It combines the opportunity of sailing a traditional craft crewed by real seafarers who understand ships and the sea with the prospect of exploring one of the world's most exquisite coral reefs at Komodo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, or the chance of visiting prehistoric caves and primordial tribes on the 1500 islands that make up Raja Ampat. Fly to Sorong via Jakarta with Garuda International to board the vessel. Book using the website pranabayazaro.com

A suite on the Prana by Atzaro costs from US\$1,120 a night. Charters cost from US\$12,500 a day, inclusive of meals, local beer, soft drinks, one spa treatment, transfers from the airport to the yacht and all activities. Voyages of a similar nature can be undertaken sailing aboard Phinix operated by Sunda Islands in Germany and in a motor yacht run by Aqua Expeditions on board Aqua Blu a ship that began her life as HMS Bulldog and was later converted to become a superyacht named Titan. 🌟

