



around town

Carolina Girl: Celebrate with Style and Sail Away

by Emily Auent

The Carolina Girl, without a doubt, lives up to her name. Charleston's premier luxury yacht, available for special events, is beautiful, elegant and the life of the party.

Carolina Girl has been designed specifically by owner and captain Bob Murray to deliver the highest levels of service, satisfaction and fun. "Nobody has a bad seat," he says of the middle deck dining area, which, with its paneled side windows, gives each diner a spectacular view. Nor are there spilled-drink or seasickness concerns due to the boat's size and smooth ride. "You're not even going to know you're on a boat. You're going to think you're in your living room," he says.

"Captain Bob," as he likes to be called, has spent half his life sailing and captaining tour boats in Palm Beach and the Virgin Islands. He grew up in upper New York state in the Champlain Valley, where he obtained a master's degree in education and taught college for 11 years, running a sailing school during the summer. When he started to make more during the summer than the rest of the year, he gave up teaching and started sailing full time. The first time he sailed to Charleston, he decided to make it his home base for a variety of travels and tours.

Captain Bob owned a variety of different boats before bringing Carolina Girl down from Booth Bay Harbor in Maine, where she was owned by the former captain of a destroyer, who custom built the boat based to be substantial, sturdy and, above all, a smooth ride. That said, Carolina Girl is as streamlined and elegant as her name and as classy as a boat can be, reflecting every moment of the 10 years, from conception to completion, that Captain Bob has put into the finest charter boat in Charleston.

Beginning with its unveiling on July 16, the Carolina Girl has been available for everything from weddings to anniversary and birthday parties to professional events, each of which is given the personal attention to detail necessary to make every occasion successful. Captain Bob is adamant about Carolina Girl's identity as a special-events yacht and not a touring one, enabling clients, decorators and caterers to spend the time necessary to create an ideal

party. "This boat is specifically a special-events boat," he says. "That's all we do."



Carolina Girl boasts a brand new satellite music system capable of playing different types of music on all three levels of the boat, which seats up to 150 for dinner or holds 200 for a more casual event. In addition to the satellite radio, it is compatible with CD, iPod or radio, and guests can take advantage of a state-of-the-art DJ booth or rent a band for the spacious walk-around top deck. Captain Bob knows the importance

of music at any gathering, which is why Carolina Girl's sound system "on a scale of one to 10 is a 12," in his words. Referring to the upper deck, he says, "Out here, you've got the Eagles in your backyard."

One of the best things about Carolina Girl is her flexibility. The three levels of the boat all offer a different feel, from the formal dining room, which seats almost 90, complete with a black marble and mahogany bar; to the "Key West" room with turquoise booths for up to 40 people, authentic maritime decorations and a decidedly "island" feel; to the upper deck, which can be open for dancing or offers seating for 30 as well as a splendid view and access to the sea breeze. Guests of all ages and personalities are sure to find their niche during any celebration.

Clients can also choose various levels of involvement in choosing catering and music. Carolina Girl partners with Duvall Catering and Event Design and Snyder Event Rentals for those who want a complete package without extra hassle, but customers are welcome to bring in their own caterers, decorators and musicians.

Carolina Girl sets sail year-round from the elegant and accessible Ripley's Point Marina within walking distance of four hotels, which makes it perfect for out-of-town guests, and its parking lot holds up to 100 cars.

Carolina Girl is clearly not only a product of Captain Bob's years of sailing and event expertise but also a labor of love. "I turned my hobby into my career, which is very hard to do," he says. But with Carolina Girl, he has been more than successful. "You gotta have good food, you gotta have good music," he says. And you've got to have a good boat, which Carolina Girl certainly is, and more.

For more information, visit www.carolinagirlrevents.com or call 843-818-2495. Carolina Girl is located at Ripley's Point Marina in West Ashley off Albemarle Road.



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