

BOATING

ASIA
PACIFIC

FEATURES

FAR OUT MAN: THE STORY OF THE EXPEDITION ENTREPRENEUR | SAILSPOTTING: HONG KONG'S DRUG REHAB YACHT | JAPAN'S BEST KEPT SECRET: THE SETO INLAND SEA

YACHTS

PRESTIGE'S X70 | BLUEGAME'S BGX70 | DAMEN'S *LA DATCHA* | PLUS: NAVETTA 30, LAGOON 50, *AQUA BLU* AND *YILDIZ SUNRISE*



EXPEDITION YACHTS:
EXPLORING THE LIMITS
IN LUXURY

THE BIG BLUE

Aqua Blu is the latest addition to the Aqua Expeditions fleet of explorer style vessels, and the first to be dedicated to oceans rather than rivers. The yacht was extensively modified by Dutch designer Cor D. Rover and offers extremely flexible guest arrangements in one of the world's most biodiverse marine environments

—
STORY BY RYAN SWIFT







Pristine destinations: Amazing scenery and rich biodiversity, Indonesia remains one of the Asia-Pacific's hidden gems



As good vaccine news continues to emerge, guests are already looking to the summer charter season of 2021 with hope that cruises will be back in action. People wanting to explore Indonesia now have a spectacular choice this year with *Aqua Blu*, the newly refurbished charter yacht from Aqua Expeditions.

Aqua Expeditions made a name for itself with its small fleet of luxury river cruise boats that make exploring the Mekong or Amazon Rivers a dream. The latest addition to Aqua's roster is *Aqua Blu*, a former British Navy hydrographical research vessel, the HMS Beagle. The Beagle was acquired in the 2000s for £750,000 and converted into a superyacht, M/Y Titan, reportedly by a European aristocratic family. It was sold in 2019 with an asking price of £9.75 million.

Aqua Blu emerged from this process as a purpose-built charter vessel and flagged in Indonesia, which means it is one of the few yachts - apart from a fleet of local phinisis - for charter in one of the world's most amazing cruising destinations. The yacht started service in November 2019, making it the newest entry to offer luxury charter in Indonesia.

Aqua Blu's toys and tenders include scuba diving equipment, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, fishing gear, and a selection of RIBs. The crew of 25 include a cruise director, dive instructor and dive guides, an on-board paramedic, and English-speaking guides for shore excursions. Given *Aqua Blu's* dedicated cruising waters in eastern Indonesia, this makes for

a potentially amazing experience. Aqua Expeditions has a policy of maintaining a one-to-one crew to guest ratio to ensure higher standards of service.

A key aspect of a great expedition yachting trips is the on-board tenders. *Aqua Blu* boasts four main tenders: two 4.2m RIB rescue boats and two 7.5m tenders with 225hp engines. The two guest tenders can carry up to 16 people in comfort and at speed to any beach or dive site.

Of course, one of the most important ingredients in any charter experience is the food. *Aqua Blu's*

executive chef is Australian Ben Cross, a veteran of restaurants with three Michelin stars. Cross has also been based in Bali for over a decade and says his favourite method of cooking is over hot coals. The Australian was recruited by *Aqua Blu* to create a menu for guests.

Thanks to its history as an expedition vessel, *Aqua Blu* has enormous deck spaces and service areas to ensure guest comfort. The main saloon can be cordoned off to suit smaller guest groups or opened into a large space.

On the upper deck, there is a library and media



↑ **Cool inside and out:** Elegant interiors and wide open deck spaces: *Aqua Blu's* provenance as an expedition yacht makes for generous areas



“
Aqua Blu
emerged
from this
process as a
purpose-built
charter vessel
and flagged
in Indonesia,
which means
it is one of the
few yachts for
charter in one
of the world’s
most amazing
cruising
destinations”



room, with a sky lounge bar. The upper deck also has a sheltered terrace and massage room as well as the yacht’s jacuzzi, which is surrounded by sun pads. There is even a gym on the bridge deck for those who need their fitness fix in the early morning, before a day of swimming, surfing and diving. Next to the gym is the spa area with massage tables.

The upper deck bar opens up aft onto a dining terrace with a large round table that accommodates up to 12 guests for informal, alfresco dining.

The sundeck offers 360-degree views to guests wanting to soak up the Indonesian seascape. Equipped with a barbecue, outdoor seating with umbrellas and wrap-around lounge sofas, guests can do yoga in the morning and stargazing at night.

Dutch yacht designer Cor D. Rover, known for his interiors on Horizon Yachts, was recruited to design



15 guest suites for up to 30 guests across a four-deck layout. Each one is en-suite with individual design flourishes.



Charting a new path: The one-time hydrographic vessel has now been reborn as one of Indonesia's premier superyacht charters

Aqua Blu can be booked by room for pre-arranged itineraries, or the whole yacht can be chartered. For those wishing to charter the whole yacht, there are guest arrangements suited for a small group of families or even just one family grouping. The bridge deck has an inter-connected

master cabin and double cabin, perfect for families. The fore-castle deck has another connected master and double cabin. There are three categories of guest cabin available.

The yacht is great for large party charters, with flexible living arrangements. Aqua Blu is normally positioned near Bali and Komodo for April through to September. In October and November, the yacht is positioned near the Spice Islands of the Banda Sea, and then moves to the Raja Ampat from December



**TECHNICAL
SPECIFICATIONS:
*AQUA BLU***

- LOA**
60M
- BEAM**
11.4M
- DRAUGHT**
4.2M
- BUILT**
1968
- BUILDER**
BROOKE MARINE
- REFURBISHED**
2019
- CABINS**
15 SUITES
- GUESTS**
30
- CREW**
25
- ENGINES**
4 X LISTER 660HP
- GENERATORS**
2 X VOLVO/NEWAGE STAMFORD 260
- MAX SPEED**
12KTS
- CRUISING SPEED**
10KTS
- RANGE**
7,000 NM
- CLASS**
RINA CLASS / SOLAS CERTIFIED

AQUAEXPEDITIONS.COM
CAMPERANDNICHOLSONS.COM



**The bridge deck has an
inter-connected master
cabin and double cabin,
perfect for families**

though to February. Each location offers fantastic scenery, great diving and watersports activities, plus cultural excursions. Relocation fees apply to charter parties wanting to explore out of this itinerary.

Aqua Blu started out as a hydrographic vessel chartering underwater terrain in far flung locations. After several refurbishments, its new mission is letting guests explore Indonesia's most sought-after marine destinations in comfort. It's a fitting next chapter in this boat's history.