

Super yachts for the ultra rich

For those that plan to drop anchor at all the hot spots from St. Tropez to Sardinia, chartered yachts are the transportation of choice.

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NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- In the summer months, when the beaches get overrun with sun bathers, the super rich secure a yacht and head a little further out to find solace on the high seas.

Not only does a big boat provide a respite from crowded beach towns and some privacy from the paparazzi, but it also makes hot-spot hopping along the Mediterranean coast a breeze.



FROM: LIVERAS YACHTS

At 280 feet, the Alysia is one of the world's largest yachts for charter, and most expensive.

But for those that want the convenience of a yacht without the hassle of harbor fees and maintenance, charters are the choice.

"I can move from Cannes Film festival at the end of May to Monaco's grand Prix," said Lorre White, who is known as "The Guru of Luxury," and then on to St. Tropez for the second part of July and Sardinia at the start of August, she added.

Plus, with renting, as opposed to owning, it becomes possible to be on a sailing expedition in the Galapagos one week, then cruise off the coast of New England the next. If you spent July in the 'Med' but then needed a yacht in California for the weeks after, it would be impractical, if not impossible, to get your yacht back in time, White explained.

But convenience can be costly. While there is a wide range, charters charge from \$10,000 a week to up to a million.

In fact, the ultra-wealthy, whose household net worth tops \$10 million, will spend \$384,000 on yacht rentals this summer, up from \$317,000 in 2005, according to the 2007 Elite Traveler/Prince & Associates Summer Spending Survey.

Whether it's for next season in Sardinia or next year in Nantucket, yacht brokers will track down the precise charter to fit each client's needs. Some boats come fully loaded with jet skis and high-octane toys, while others are more geared toward lounging, with extensive sundecks and Jacuzzis.

But every high-end yacht has a full-service crew that includes (at the minimum) a captain, chef, engineer and several stewardesses to tend to your needs - which are mostly established in advance.

Before clients even step onboard, brokers request that they compose a detailed list of preferences to ensure that they have every wish granted, whether it's a daily desire for caviar or bologna sandwiches.

Maggie Vale, a broker with Churchill Yacht Partners, said one of her clients specified that he abhorred snails and liver. No problem. Another needed Cheerios for the children. Check.

Of course food and drinks are not included in the weekly rate - neither are fuel, dockage, and harbor fees. Those extra expenses usually run about 25 percent of the charter fee.

But if money is no object, then [here are a few charter options](#), with amenities like heliports, pools, theaters and dance clubs, not to mention breathtaking views. ■