



THINK SURFING CHARTERS ARE THE SOLE DOMAIN OF RATTY-HAIRED, BEER-GUZZLING LARRIKINS MAROONED ON OVERSIZED DINGIES?

**M**et the Indies Trader IV, which launched in March 2005. Brainchild of the pioneer of surf charter travel, Martin Daly, the Trader is the latest in a long line of quality vessels (hence the 'IV' bit) servicing the Indonesian wave Mecca known as the Mentawais. While there are already some classy boats in the region, the Trader IV has truly upped the ante. With a spacious saloon area modelled on fashion guru Armani's new yacht, fully stocked bars, rooms boasting the latest in satellite communications and a helicopter pad, it's 34 metres of pure luxury vessel worthy of the most uppity aristocrat's admiration.

It's more *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* than surfing feral escapade like *Second Thoughts*, that's for sure. Kitted out with a 2700 horsepower engine, the Trader IV can read a mean speed of 21 knots, which aside from facilitating speedy delivery to destinations can also deliver massive chest-high wakes – perfect for a bit of yacht-wake-surfing if the waves aren't up to scratch. Resident chefs revel in presenting guests culinary delights ranging from sushi to soufflé, served al fresco on the observation deck or in the vessel's sumptuously appointed dining room. Rooms are five-star and boast ensembles, queen-sized beds, TVs, surround sound, DVDs, phone, email and air conditioning. Guests can escape on the sundeck, access tropical waters with ease from the swim platform, or access the working deck where toys like dive tanks, compressors, surfboards, jet skis, fishing rods and tackle are stored alongside the vessel's own BBQ.

Yet while you'd expect the luxury of the Trader IV to be luring in corporate trade from Quiksilver and the like, the private sector has also been providing steady business according to the boat's CEO Martin Daly. 'What we're seeing is many of our higher networth traditional customers willing to pay bigger charter fees for the Trader IV versus

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ARE THE GREEK ISLANDS FILLING UP WITH TOO MANY LOW-LIFE BACKPACKERS FOR YOUR LIKING?

other vessels in the fleet to gain the considerable added luxuries the boat offers. In the first year of operation, we've seen a number of "upgrades", along with the charter of the vessel as a production platform for surf movies. Accommodating 24 passengers, five support craft, two jet skis and the helideck makes it an ideal vessel for full production filming of surf, dive, fishing and travel-related movies,' Daly told Lifelounge.

While it'll continue to retain the title of 'ultimate surf vessel', Daly plans to extend charters on this opulent beauty to appeal to new clients as well. Are the Greek Islands filling up with too many low-life backpackers for your liking? Is Cairns getting oh-so-yesterday? Now travelling bourgeois accustomed to gluttonously feasting on the fat of the land at international hot spots can confidently turn to the sea instead, as the Trader IV will be welcoming charters from new quarters. After motoring around the Mentawais during the traditional surf periods, the Trader IV will be cutting a swath through exotic locations in style.

'We're expecting the vessel to spend the northern hemisphere surf season (May-Sept) in the Mentawais then travel east as far as the Marshall Islands in the off-season, where we'll be offering a series of group charters. We're close to filling a 14-day cultural and antique hunting cruise through the Ring of Fire Islands of Indonesia in September next year, with the famed adventurer/author Lawrence Blair as host. The vessel will embark from Bali then cruise through Komodo, Sumba, Alor and other destinations before terminating in Asmat, Irian Jaya. We also expect to announce an exclusive annual series of salt water Fly Fishing vacations in April next year in Papua New Guinea and Australia's Top End, as well as a Spice Islands cruise,' said Daly.

But while it sounds like full steam ahead, Daly reckons there's still plenty of 'down-time' for workers on the vessel. Typically running with a crew of four expatriates (the skipper, engineer, chef and first mate) and five locals who act as deckhands, stewards and help in the galley, they're all lured to the Trader IV to enjoy its enviable surrounds, 'All the expat crew are surfers, and we make sure they all get their share of surf and other activities providing, of course, business has been taken care of.'

PICTURED LEFT DEREK HO



As you can imagine the crew of the Trader IV are the envy of the surf travel industry. 'She's a very special boat,' says Daly. And what does he rate as the most luxurious feature of the Indies Trader IV?

'I'd say the Saloon and dining areas. It's very large and literally gobbles up a crowd. We've made sure there's plenty of leather lounges and the AV system is top quality. The dining area comfortably seats 20 passengers and there's two mini bars stocked with a range of refreshments, large panoramic windows on either side, and you can soak up the surroundings in air-conditioned comfort. Of course, if I had two picks, I'd tell you about the state-rooms!' he boasted.

And as for clients choosing to utilise the private helicopter pad, Daly assures us it's not just for show.

'We've used the Helipad extensively since commencing operations, and the *Young Guns 2* DVD proved just how awesome aerial footage can be. The chopper was also used for daily reconnaissance missions to seek out the best breaks quickly and minimise vessel time steaming between locations. Laird Hamilton and Gerry Lopez used the chopper on their recent charter, capturing large wave tow-in footage for their new movie which is currently in production.' He adds, 'on a more sombre note, having the helipad also means we're able to call for medivac services in the event anyone sustains critical injury. This is a common occurrence in the Mentawais, but most vessels have a 10- to 18-hour steam to medical support'.

It's a luxury that's already come in handy: 'On a recent trip to Lombok, one of our crew members received a potentially critical laceration to his neck surfing Desert

Point. We were able to call Air Bali to medivac him from the vessel to medical services in Bali, where he was then flown to Singapore for specialist surgery. So, as you can see, the helideck and helicopter fuel storage are very much key features of the vessel,' Daly reckoned.

And while he's got a point about the helipad, we're still certain the boat is way too pimpin' not to attract some freaky action. So what does Daly rate as the most outlandish purpose people have hired the vessel out for so far? 'I don't think we have had a wild request yet, though many would consider tow-in surfing pretty outlandish. We do have an enquiry from a bunch of 'Russian Businessmen' for a private charter. Not sure what that's about, but stay tuned!'

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