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FROM HONG KONG TO MIAMI, THE BEST CITY STOP-OFFS BY BOAT

# YACHT IN THE CITY

Some of the world's greatest cities are best visited by boat. Here, four ocean-loving locals make the case for why their home towns should be top of your bucket list. Which will you cruise to first?

## HONG KONG

*This seductive and playful melting pot of a metropolis has left Daven Wu charmed*

Hong Kong confounds on every metric. For a start, it has that jaw-dropping skyline: a futuristic tableau that mixes neon-charged skyscrapers with the grand blue-on-blue sweep of Victoria Harbour. And just beyond that are strings of tree-cloaked hills and granite mountains, cut through with hiking trails, nature parks and multimillion-dollar mansions.

It's an intoxicating mix, this lovechild of a one-night stand between New York and Hawaii. And its striking good looks are particularly evident from the water, whether sailing through Victoria Harbour or serenely anchored, a little more discreetly, in the crystalline waters of Tai Long Wan.

For Hong Kong's yachting industry, Covid-19 has been an unexpected boon. The shuttering of global airports and the uncertainty of air travel have introduced cabin-fevered locals not just to the joys of sailing, but also to Hong Kong's long under-rated maritime attractions and unheralded private beaches, such as Double Haven, Clear Water Bay, Grass Island, and Long Ke Wan.

Over the past year, demand for yachts has outpaced supply. "Everyone wants one," says Anthony Rendall, a Hong Kong-based yacht broker. "Especially since they can't get to Phuket or Langkawi, where all the superyachts are generally kept."

For now, only the Gold Coast Yacht & Country Club and Lantau Yacht Club have marinas equipped to house superyachts – a state of affairs that has mainland Chinese billionaires pursing their lips with dissatisfaction since sailing out of China is complicated, involving restrictive regulations and tedious paperwork.

All eyes are now on the Greater Bay Area, an ambitious project that aims to turn Hong Kong and Macau and nine neighbouring Guangdong cities into a trading zone and economic powerhouse that's conservatively valued at \$1.6 trillion (£1.1tn). Why? Because there are currently no shipyards or infrastructure in Hong Kong in which to build superyachts. The smart money is on Qingdao and Zhuhai in China, whose large-scale, industrialised facilities can be

PHOTOGRAPHY: NIKADA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Clockwise from right: the newly renovated Man Wah restaurant at the Mandarin Oriental; Art Basel in Hong Kong; the Lantau Yacht Club on Hong Kong's Lantau Island. Bottom right: Po Toi Island. Previous pages: skyscrapers line Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour



## Top spots

Hong Kong's many-splendoured charms make it one of the world's most remarkable destinations. Here are some of our favourite places to visit

- Drop by **Popinjays** for sunset cocktails and bracing views of Hong Kong's skyscrapers. Named after the neighbourhood's sulphur-crested cockatoos that swoop over the surrounding green canopy, the rooftop glass pavilion also houses a first-rate pan-Asian restaurant.
- Hong Kongers have swapped the city's mega malls for the nearby hills. Not far from Central in Pok Fu Lam is **Mount High West**. At the weekend, hike up to its 500-metre peak for a 180-degree sweeping view of Cyberport, the soaring ICC tower and West Kowloon, the entire tableau framed by the sea and an armada of sailing ships.
- Set sail for rugged **Po Toi Island**, jokingly referred to by locals as Hong Kong's South Pole for its location at the edge of the southern border. The granite geology has produced a moonscape of surreal rock formations, making for a fascinating hike before a seafood lunch at Ming Kee by the pier.



tailored to purpose and which, more importantly, will be accessible through the Greater Bay Area. And when that happens, says Rendall, the number of superyachts in Hong Kong – mostly owned by local and mainland Chinese tycoons – will probably triple from the current six or so. “That’s when Hong Kong will become the Monaco of China,” he predicts.

Not that Hong Kong needs any sobriquet to validate itself. This metropolis of 7.5 million thrums to its own beat. You feel it particularly in its extraordinary food scene, a joyful mash-up of heaving local eateries serving fragrant roast goose and braised beef brisket noodles, alongside first-rate newbies that have defied the pandemic, travel bans and gathering restrictions to become overnight gastro-sensations.

At Mono, for instance, a grilled Landes duck foie gras paired with handmade molé is the star of the mod-Latin American kitchen. At the Japanese-Argentinian Andō, try the arroz caldoso made of Yumepirika rice and Spanish baby squid. And at the Mandarin Oriental's renovated Man Wah, pair dizzying 25th-floor views of Victoria Harbour with aromatic fish broth topped with French caviar.

If you're looking for a piece of modern art to brighten up the saloon of your yacht, Hong Kong's art scene is thriving, helped along by out-of-town shows like Art Basel. Galleries to note include local players Galerie du Monde and Grotto, alongside outposts of global heavy hitters White Cube and David Zwirner.

Our advice? Set course for Hong Kong now.



Left: Casa Marina Key West, a Waldorf Astoria Resort. Above: the Tierra Santa Healing House spa in the Faena Hotel Miami Beach



Clockwise from top left: David Grutman; Jamie Reuben; Karolina Kurková; Jennifer Lopez; David Beckham

## MIAMI

Jordana Reuben Yechiel loves this flourishing super-city with a waterway to the hot spots

Miami has always been a boom-and-bust kind of town. Right now, it's enjoying a definite boom – and it's easy to see the appeal.

Of course it has the sunshine, the blue skies, long beaches and coconut-laden palm trees. It has the East Coast time zone too, which works perfectly with New York, and makes a day's work in the UK, Paris or Zürich manageable. And its sandy, lazy-town vibes have started to erode as newcomers have loomed into view.

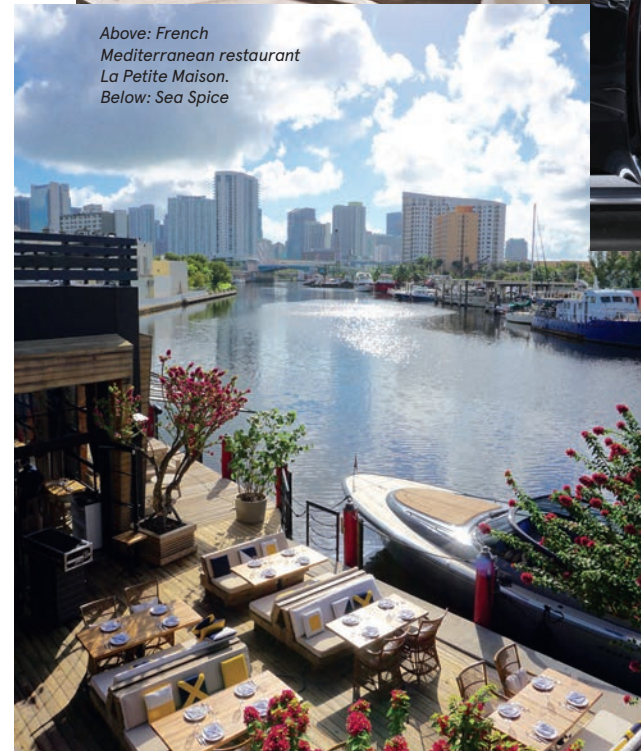
The political and economic turmoil in some South American countries drove their wealthy elite to Miami's best buildings over the past decade, forcing up demand for quality restaurants, design studios and boutiques. You name the restaurant, Miami's got one – from big names like Cipriani, Zuma and La Petite Maison, to new it-crowd favourite Carbone, an import from New York City. In fact, Miami is so hot right now that its crown jewel, restaurant and members' club Casa Tua, has just been copy-and-pasted into the newly bought hotel The Surrey in NYC's Upper East Side, while the Miami fashion set's favourite restaurant, KYU, is also set to open a branch downtown. Then there's Len Blavatnik's Faena hotel and residential building, with a list of tenants that reads more like a copy of *Forbes* magazine.

The pandemic, too, has shed new light on

PHOTOGRAPHY: OLEG LIPALNIK/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; SOPA IMAGES LIMITED/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; WOW PRODUCTIONS/COURTESY OF MANDARIN ORIENTAL; COURTESY OF LANTAU YACHT CLUB; CASA MARINA; A WALDORE ASTORIA RESORT; FIENNA HOTEL MIAMI BEACH/NIK KOENIG; MICHAEL FISHER/LA PETITE MAISON; COURTESY OF SEASPACE; ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES FOR SIMPLY STYLIST; DAVID M BENNETT/DAVE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES FOR MONDRRIAN SHOREDITCH; GETTY IMAGES/BFC/GETTY IMAGES FOR BFC; ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES; JASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR RUNART



Above: French Mediterranean restaurant La Petite Maison. Below: Sea Spice



## Miami's famous faces

- David Beckham (co-owner of Inter Miami CF)
- David Grutman (nightlife king of Miami)
- Jamie Reuben (British financier)
- Jeff Soffer (developer)
- Miky Grendene (Casa Tua owner)
- Karolina Kurková (model)
- Jennifer Lopez (musician)

Miami. New Yorkers packed up and headed south in a frantic search for outdoor space when Covid-19 first hit. Many landed here – something that's caused house prices to nearly treble in one year. At the highest end, grand homes in Palm Beach now have new neighbours, while sleepy Boca Raton, north of Fort Lauderdale, is having a revival of its own as one of the last beachfront spots with large homes that open onto the water.

Miami trod its own path this past year too, leaving the world amazed as businesses remained open. Shops, bars and nightclubs have been buzzing, and visitors who've enjoyed the warm weather, tropical breeze, and open, outdoor space are finding it hard to go back.

All this, and the Exuma Islands – where you'll find the bluest waters, the whitest sands and the most wonderful wildlife – are just an hour away from Miami port. Forget the pictures of those pigs being fed on a desert island – there are caves to explore, sunken wrecked planes, nurse sharks to swim alongside and tiny sandbanks to linger on. There are no hotels in sight, no gift shops – just nature and crystal-clear, shallow water.

There's the Intracoastal Waterway system too, which is perfect for yachting. You can spend the day in Miami Bay, then cruise down to restaurants such as Sea Spice, Zuma or Kiki on the River, where you can moor directly up to the dock and hop onto your table with margaritas waiting. Or cruise north to Fort Lauderdale and have lunch at the famous Houston's restaurant on Atlantic, where you can also make a reservation and book a dock space. Sometimes I like just to cruise up and down and stare at all the beautiful homes from the water – there's the famous Fisher Island where Madonna used to have a home, and Tony Montana's house in *Scarface* on Star Island too.

A brisk 45-minute cruise south and you end up in the fantastic Florida Keys. There's a lazy-island holiday feel on the main island where boat life is the norm. Local hotels here have been around for generations, such as Waldorf Astoria's Casa Marina Key West, Ocean Key Resort & Spa and Pier House. Watch Netflix show *Bloodline* for a taste of the Keys unique vibe.

There are plans for a glistening development at the Aventura Yacht Club, a small and upmarket marina in Turnberry. A complete regeneration with a marina, restaurants and boutiques as well as upscale apartment complexes is on the cards. Insiders are whispering that the mayor of Bal Harbour is approving an extension to the dock there too, right in front of the newly bought Ritz-Carlton, with plans for a beach club with boat access, and there's talk of Formula 1 racing in the city in the near future.

Meanwhile the Bitcoin and tech crowd are fast choosing Miami as their gathering spot of choice. Bust? It seems very unlikely.

# BARCELONA

*With an elite marina, this Spanish city merges culture with cool, says Sally Davies*

Among the great coastal cities of the Mediterranean – Marseille, Nice, Naples, Palma de Mallorca – there are crucibles of culture and there are hubs for high-rollers, but there is no one place that quite rivals Barcelona’s unique fusion of heritage, architecture and gastronomic prowess with bleeding-edge facilities.

The city’s importance as a maritime axis was cemented centuries ago, and it was on the steps of Barcelona’s former Royal Palace that Columbus was received by Ferdinand and Isabella on his return from the New World. Nowadays, its clout as a trading hub is somewhat reduced, but Barcelona has bloomed as a destination for the international yachting community.

Over the past 15 years, the Port Vell marina has seen a spectacular transformation. Once a sleepy little harbour of fishing boats and schooners, it’s now a playground for the well heeled, housing vast superyachts such as Roman Abramovich’s 162.5-metre *Eclipse* or Alisher Usmanov’s 156-metre *Dilbar*.

Much of this is down to MB92, established for Barcelona’s Olympic Games in 1992 and now a leading shipyard that provides refit, maintenance and repair for 100 superyachts a year. Its 200 metres of dry dock have just seen capacity increased with a 4,800-ton shiplift, and the company has attracted a wide local network of top-class designers and suppliers.

At the root of this burgeoning industry, however, are two major factors. Firstly, the city’s unique geographical position. “It’s perfectly located, opposite the Balearics and close to the Costa Brava. You can start your season in Barcelona, head off up to the Côte d’Azur, go round the Italian coast and finish the season here,” says British yacht captain Alasdair Purves. “Maybe do a bit of refit work before heading off across the Atlantic to Antigua.”

The second, of course, is the city itself. Arrive in Barcelona by sea and you’ll see seven kilometres of beach stretching into the distance. Disembark in the marina and you’ll step directly into the heart of the medieval quarter, a tangle of narrow streets flanked by merchants’ palazzos and centuries-old churches.

The forested hills of Collserola, criss-crossed with running, hiking and cycling trails, form the backdrop to a dramatic skyline pierced by the spires of Gaudí’s Sagrada Família and the Gothic



Left: the Fundació Joan Miró. Right: One Ocean Port Vell Barcelona. Below: nearby you can find the impressive facilities of Pendennis’s Vilanova shipyard



Clockwise from top: the Museo Picasso; Frank Gehry’s Peix; Mercat de Santa Caterina; the Torre de Collserola. Left: Parc Güell



## Architectural hits

*Some of the biggest names in design have shaped Barcelona’s famous skyline...*

**MACBA**  
Barcelona’s modern art museum sits in a colossal white edifice designed by Richard Meier, in the heart of the Raval.

**Edifici Fòrum**  
Herzog and de Meuron created this triangular blue building in the Fòrum area, to house the natural history museum.

**Las Arenas**  
Richard Rogers oversaw the transformation of this disused bullring at the Plaça Espanya into a modernistic shopping centre.

**Torre de Collserola**  
The telecommunications tower, designed by Norman Foster, sits on a hill overlooking the city.

**Peix**  
Frank Gehry’s huge glittering fish graces the seafront.

**Torre Glòries**  
Known wryly by locals as “the suppository”, this 38-storey skyscraper in Poblenou was the work of Jean Nouvel.

**Mercat de Santa Caterina**  
Known for the Scottish Parliament Building in Edinburgh, the late Enric Miralles was also behind this Gaudiesque market building in the Born.

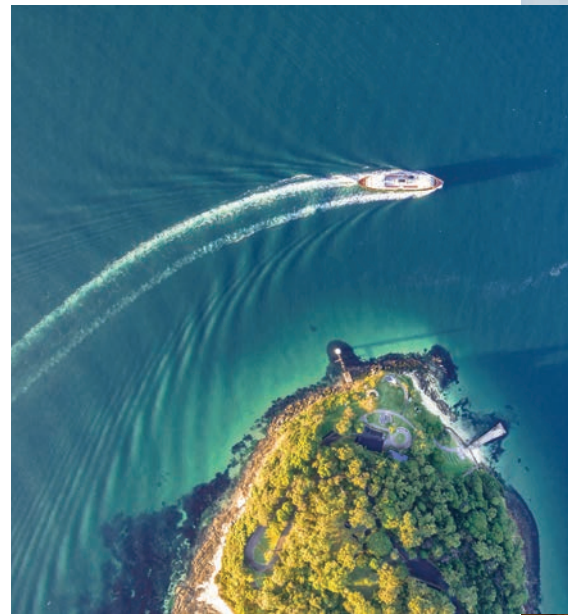
cathedral. Barcelona’s artistic legacy is evident in the gallery clusters in the Old City and the Eixample district; and museums such as the Museu Picasso, the Fundació Joan Miró and the Richard Meier-designed temple of modern art, the MACBA.

As the home of game-changing superchefs Ferran and Albert Adrià, Barcelona has become the gastronomic match of any city in the world, with a constellation of Michelin stars. The restaurants of the Adrià empire are currently on hiatus thanks to the pandemic, but for some of the same molecular magic – false “olives” that explode in the mouth and red peppers made from chocolate – Disfrutar is every bit as thrilling.

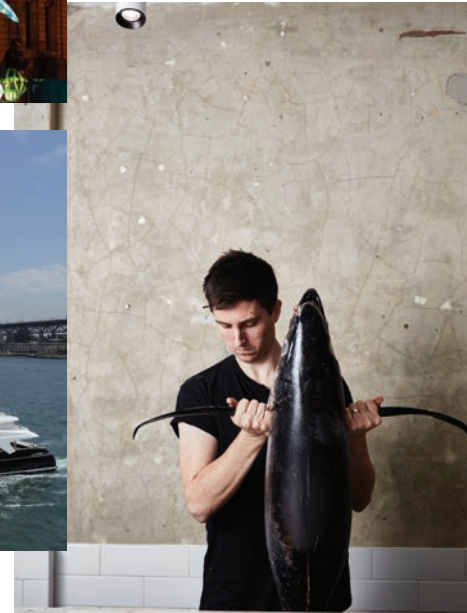
A similarly Wonka-esque approach informs the cocktails at Paradiso, a speakeasy-style cavern entered through the fridge of a pastrami bar. Like so much of what makes Barcelona special, it combines the playful, the mysterious and the world-class.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JORG GREUEL VIA GETTY IMAGES; DANIEL KLOE VIA GETTY IMAGES; JOHN KELLERMAN/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; TRACY PACKER PHOTOGRAPHY VIA GETTY IMAGES; ROSIE IRENE BETANCOURT/JEFFREY GREENBERG/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY ISAAC GREENBERG 67/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; HEMS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; COURTESY OF PENDENNIS

Below: Bradleys Head. Right: Quay restaurant in Sydney Harbour serves nature-inspired cuisine. Bottom left: Camp Cove is one of the city's finest sandy beaches. Bottom right: Store Beach



Clockwise from above: Vaucluse Bay; fish eatery Saint Peter serves sustainably sourced seafood; 54m Baglietto Mischief cruises the harbour; Vivid Sydney is an annual festival of light, music and ideas



## SYDNEY

*This city of two halves offers the best of both worlds, says Daisy Dumas*

There are few cities in the world that offer performances of Verdi's *La Traviata*, complete with pyrotechnics and a 3.5-tonne chandelier, on a floating stage by night and empty, bush-lined coves by day. Sydney – and its burgeoning superyacht industry – knows its luck.

The lifeblood of Australia's largest city, Sydney Harbour presents 55 square kilometres of sheltered waters dotted by 13 islands and 240 kilometres of beach-fringed waterfront. "It's such a deep-water harbour, you can find pockets in Sydney where you could feel like you were in a bay in Sardinia," says Joachim Howard, managing director of superyacht experience company Ocean Alliance. Alongside the Biennale, Vivid Sydney festival and the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, wilderness lies within reach. "It's one of Australia's biggest cities but you can have a backdrop like you're in a deserted national park. It's just spectacular."

Plastic surgeon Peter Maitz spends more time on his 26.5-metre sloop *Epicurus* than he does on



### Sydney's coolest coves

- Little Manly Beach
- Store Beach
- Athol Bay
- Sugarloaf Bay
- Camp Cove

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## Best of the rest: 10 more cities to set course for

New York / Vancouver / Auckland / Singapore / London / Nassau / Boston / Dubrovnik / Venice / Amsterdam



land, thanks to a lifestyle choice that he believes would be impossible anywhere else in the world. "Sydney is always compared to Cape Town and San Francisco," he says. "There is no comparison. We spend our weekends as if we were somewhere in the Caribbean." While Rozelle's Sydney Superyacht Marina and Jones Bay Wharf in Pyrmont offer berths, the harbour is for cruising and, come summer, moorings at Rose Bay, Bradleys Head, Vaucluse Bay and Store Beach are put through their paces.

Sydney loan magnate John Symond, who sold 73-metre Feadship *Hasna* last year, says the world superyacht community sees Sydney as the city that "has it all" and as the gateway to Australia – and regulatory realities have really helped fuel the scene. "It's becoming easier to cut through government red tape to encourage superyachts to visit Down Under, and boating facilities have greatly improved," he says.

Indeed, one of Sydney's trump cards lies in regulation. Australia's survey rules around charter yachts mean there is no 12-person limit on yachts that operate as domestic commercial vessels, so there is a thriving charter industry. "Sydney Harbour is arguably the best day charter destination in the world," says Ellie Malouf, who, as CEO of her family business, the Ahoy Club, oversees the family's 54-metre Baglietto *Mischief*. The yacht seats 100 guests for a formal dining experience and the backdrop of Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House "never gets old".

Ocean Alliance regularly organises seaplane trips, onboard wine tastings and surf lessons on Bondi Beach. Whale watching is a seasonal highlight and the Hawkesbury River is just 16 nautical miles away. Some of the country's most awarded restaurants, such as Quay, sit a stone's throw from the water; lesser-known stand-outs include Saint Peter for Australia's most revolutionary fish and chips, or LuMi for its exquisite tasting menu.

But it's what came before that really grounds the harbour in human life. Greater Sydney is home to over 5,500 Aboriginal heritage sites and some of the very best rock art is to be found on the waterfront. Take a tender to Grotto Point to see ancient sandstone engravings of a giant kangaroo and fish.

Covid-19 has proved an unexpected boon to local superyachting, with owners bringing their vessels home, or others deciding to buy yachts during periods when international travel remained off-limits. As any Sydneysider will attest, there are worse places to be holed up. ■