



She's entertained Hollywood legends and starred in the television series 'Ocean Quest'.

You could be forgiven for thinking that we are talking of a glamorous Hollywood film actress, but no, this sophisticated lady is the luxury charter yacht 'Yonder Star'. Originally named 'Oz', the beautiful pilothouse steel ketch, designed by New Zealander Don Brooke, was launched in 1980. Built on spec by New Zealand's Thackwray Yachts, she was designed to be a world cruising charter yacht. Her dimensions of eighty-seven feet in length, twenty-two foot beam and 80-ton displacement make her big, solid and very seaworthy - ideal for the luxury charter market.

A Floating Film Studio

In the summer of 1982 at Fort Lauderdale, film producer Peter Guber took delivery of 'Oz' and set about transforming her into a nautical film studio. Some of Peter's more notable films are 'The Deep', 'Midnight Express', 'Flashdance', 'Gorillas in the Mist' and 'Batman'. Whilst she remained a luxury yacht, there were numerous additions and alterations made to her working areas to accommodate the needs of film and dive crews. For example, the engine-room was reconfigured so that film cameras, lights and dive equipment could be worked on. In her aft master stateroom a unique underwater photographic viewing port was let into the floor.

Peter felt it was imperative to retain the yacht's high degree of comfort - indeed luxury. "The boat is a creative environment - inspirational, clean, well-lit - just a fine environment for people to do creative work," he said. "Writers, actors, technicians are regularly aboard and it may be that they have had no experience

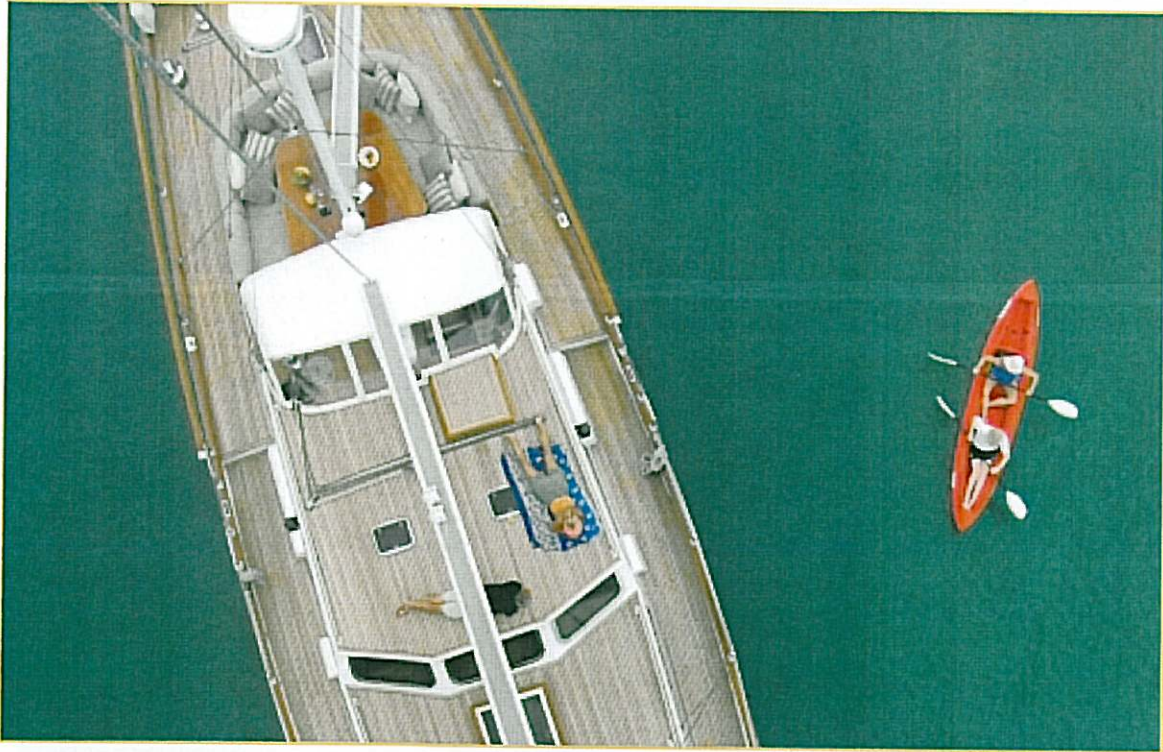
at sea. You must be at your best, the idea is not to rough it; it's to be able to do your work and do it well".

Following her hardworking career she was completely rebuilt in 1999. Seven foot was added to her length, new equipment installed and a complete interior refit carried out, in fact she emerged a completely new vessel.

Treated like Hollywood Stars

In 2003 Tom and Ann Sturgess, who immigrated in 1996 to the beautiful Nelson region of Golden Bay from the US, purchased Oz and returned her to New Zealand waters. Renamed 'Yonder Star', Tom and Ann offer her for charter and, in keeping with her heritage, guests are treated like Hollywood stars. From the time we were met to the moment we disembarked, the crew of 'Yonder Star' treated us to unashamed luxury.

Carolyn, Tom's personal assistant, met us at Nelson airport and whisked us off to 'Yonder Star's' berth in Nelson marina. She is a big vessel and makes a spectacular sight with her glistening white hull reflecting the calm waters of the marina. In view of her size a special berth had to be constructed. Once aboard we were greeted by Tom and introduced to the crew - skipper Grant and crewmembers Bud (also a sail maker by trade) and Stephen, a delightful group of people. Grant, originally a boat builder from Auckland, relocated four years ago to Nelson and recently took up the position of skipper. As Grant shows me around the boat it is immediately obvious that his boat building skills have been put to good use. A new teak deck has been laid and is absolutely stunning



With large flat deck areas fore and aft, the teak work is a functional and practical showpiece. Another of Grant's additions is a gem of mechanical mastery. At the touch of a button, folding steps and swim platform emerge from the stern enabling guests to graciously descend to the water for swimming or utilising the water toys available, such as kayaking, snorkelling, water skiing plus more- everything to make the experience more than just a sailing adventure.

Although we are only aboard for the day, we are given the use of the master stateroom aft. The sense of peace and tranquillity you get from watching the marine life in an aquarium is emulated in the unique underwater viewing port in the floor - a window to the world below. The ensuite, equivalent to that of a five star hotel, has been refitted with the latest in bathroomware and the in-laid pebble floor is a veritable masterpiece.

Words cannot do it justice

As the sails are hoisted and we set course for Tasman Bay, Stephen, who is also the onboard Chef, serves us espresso coffee and finger food on deck. 'Yonder Star' is a motor sailer and, although there is little wind, we are oblivious to the fact that we are cutting through the water at an average 10 knots. Consumed by the feeling of relaxation and adventure it seems that we arrive at Tasman Bay in no time at all. It was a moment in time that could have gone on forever. The glorious surrounds of a bay off Adele Island was to be our anchorage (named after French explorer d'Urville's wife - Adele). Words can hardly do justice to the picturesque bay in which we drop anchor. The call of the native birds from the

LUXURY CHARTER

bush above the cliffs that tower over a golden sandy beach, the crystal clear turquoise waters and the absolute tranquillity perhaps go some way toward describing it. Drawn to the amazing clarity and colour of the water, I can't resist a quick dip before lunch.

Lunch surpasses many exclusive restaurants
Lunch is served in the sumptuous formal dining saloon where we enjoy pre-dinner flutes of French champagne. Stephen, who is a formally trained London chef, had prepared a menu that you would expect to find in a high-class restaurant. In my opinion, the meal, wine (which Stephen had personally matched to the food), ambience and service surpassed that of most of the exclusive restaurants I have dined at.

Enjoying the company and hospitality of our hosts over a flat white, Bud explains the history and highlights of the Tasman Bay area. A piece of New Zealand coastline that captured the hearts of early explorers such as Able Tasman and Dumont d'Urville, Tasman Bay remains one of New Zealand's jewels.

Regretfully time has slipped by and our day draws to an end. It has been one of those days in your life that you wish could go on forever. The sail back to Nelson is tinged with sadness as we realise that our time aboard 'Yonder Star' amidst the warm and friendly hospitality of everyone on board must end.

A memorable moment

Upon reflection, our day 'far from the madding crowds' was as therapeutic as it was pampering - the perfect prescription for alleviating the stress our fast-paced world. Our only wish was to have spent a longer time with our hosts.

We would prescribe time away on 'Yonder Star' to anyone who is looking for a sense of adventure, relaxation, pampering or maybe a recharge of the batteries. You'll come back relaxed and ready to take on the world.

Tom, Carolyn, Grant, Bud and Stephen, our sincere thanks for such a memorable day. For more information call Yonder Star Ltd (03) 545 7600

