

To read the whole feature, which includes insights learned from the course to help sailors of any level, see the July 2011 issue of Yachts and Yachting, on sale in major newsagents from June 9th, or subscribe for just £36 www.subscription.co.uk/yachts/WW17

Two in one

Race coaching is expensive, and something that only the elite receive, while holidays are a luxury, but what if you were to combine the two? Is it possible? And is it worth doing? **Rich Thoroughgood** investigates...

There are a number of holiday companies offering specialist coaching weeks, some focusing on particular classes. It seemed an ideal way to combine learning, and a holiday. While I have been sailing for years, my girlfriend, Claire, had only been catamaran sailing once previously. Our aim was to find something that would build her experience, and stretch me... a tough ask. A bit of research will throw up a variety of options, and we soon found our match.

Wildwind Sailing Holidays, based in Vassiliki Bay, Lefkas, Greece, has a strong

multihull tradition, and a special coaching week with Greek sailing legend Kostas Trigonis seemed perfect for us.

A warm welcome

Wildwind's entrance is unassuming. Set back from a typical Greek road, the only object informing you of the centre's existence is a weathered Hobie 16 hull carefully placed on the grass. The short walk from the entrance of the resort to your hotel room however, fills you with intrigue as to what lies beyond. Peer through the trees and you are greeted by views of crystal blue water surrounded by

green mountains, quaint fishing towns at their bases. The urge to grab your wetsuit and get on the water is almost irresistible!

A welcome meal, laid on by the resort staff at the beach-side bar, was a good way to meet our fellow guests. As sailors sharing a common interest we all had stories to tell, and friendships and crews were made for the week.

The following morning saw us on the beach bright and early for a quick introduction to the resort and staff from beach manager Joe Bennett. Wildwind has built a strong team of instruction staff that return to the resort year after year, and they introduce you to the resort and its procedures with reassuring ease. We then joined various groups depending on our experience

and interests - this meant Claire could join a beginners' group while I joined the advanced coaching course.

First taste of Vass

For those of use who had signed up for Kostas's coaching week, we had a day before he was due to arrive, enabling crews to pair up, and get acquainted with the resort's boats.

Vassiliki offers superb sailing conditions for sailors. A typical day sees a glassy morning, allowing you too sit and eat your breakfast at a leisurely pace,

“Sail with the heart, win with the mind”

watching the light Southerly breeze gently roll in. The Southerly holds until around 1400hrs, and then the local mountain breeze (Eric) kicks in, beating the gradient breeze back out to sea, and delivering a strong and constant breeze until the early evening.

Being a little too slow in sipping my morning Frappe, all the normal performance boats had been taken by the time I came to pick my steed. However, I spotted a Hobie Fox lurking in the corner of the compound. Rigging was a simple task, and my Dutch crew, Tjalko Jansz and I were quickly on the water for our first taste of Vass sailing.

The day's brief was to sail around as much as we liked, and the Wildwind instructors would offer advice as we went. Tjalko and I were quickly working our way up and downwind, throwing as many tacks and gybes at the instructors as we could before we decided to break for lunch and conserve some energy, ready for Eric.

We were not disappointed. At 1430hrs, we unhooked the Fox from its mooring ▶

BELOW Claire learning to cat sail on the Hobie Pacific with her instructor Rory. The goal for the week was to be able to crew the Tornado for Richard.



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