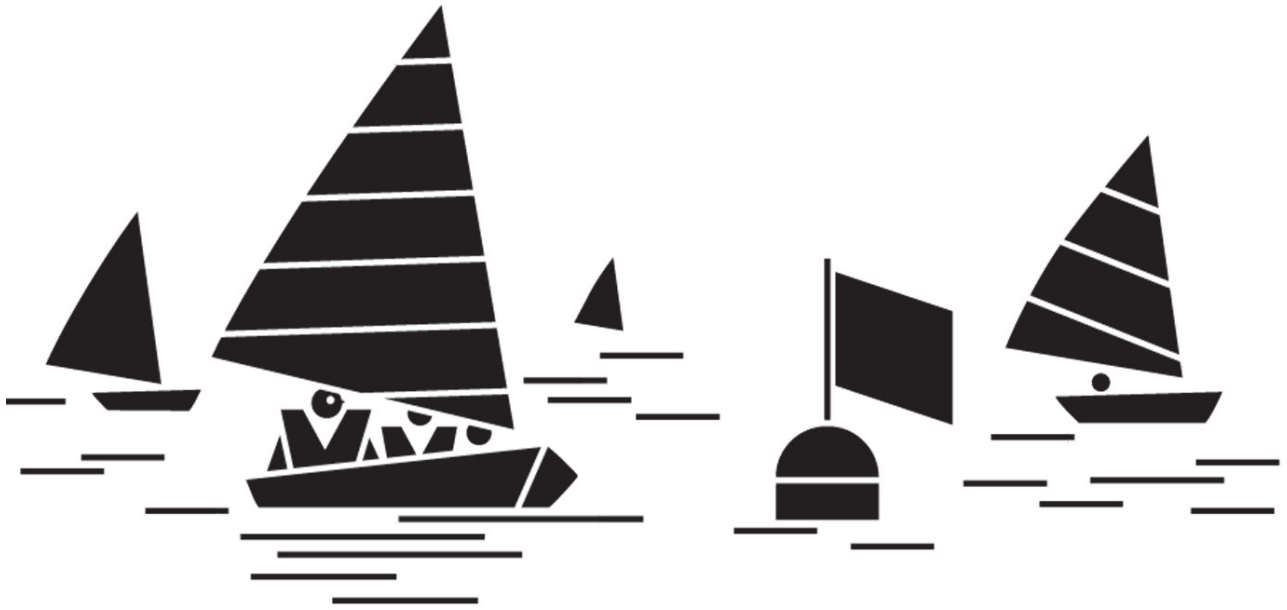


ST JAMES'S

LONDON



Super Yacht Adventures: Chris Cecil Wright

26.07.2016

There are people that have got it together. Who know what they're good at, what makes them happy, and what success really looks like. Chris Cecil-Wright is one of that rare breed.

He embodies living life as the big adventure, whether it's walking to the two poles or setting up one of the most exciting new super yacht brokerage companies in recent times. So we decided to pay a visit to his base on St James's Street to find out if life on the high

seas has really all been smooth sailing.

But first, a note of warning. "The thing about big yachts is that people only think there's one lifestyle." This is no behind-the-scenes, up-the-skirt look at a life of excess. No hedonistic odyssey of self-destruction and rehab redemption. No bronzed bikini-clad ladies of *Calypso*. No champagne corks bouncing off the sunburnt bellies of oligarchs. But what we can offer is an insight into the other world of super yachts – a port to the starboard of tabloid titillation.

"When you get to 60-metres-long, there's nowhere on the planet you can't go," Cecil-Wright explains the definition of what he prefers to call "big yachts." It's a class of boat that is all about unanchored freedom, able to carry enough fuel and provisions to make a more-than-comfortable trip anywhere and back. This is a new frontier kind of luxury lifestyle, and it's not for the faint-hearted. This is adventure yachting.

"You have to have the adventure bug." Cecil-Wright sets the scene: Imagine, if you will, someone who's about pushing his limits, who starts mountain climbing in the Peak District, or driving to the south of France to ski for the weekend. And then his fortunes changes dramatically – he now finds himself uninhibited by money and able to travel anywhere at the drop of the hat. The world becomes a very small place. "Time and space become much more condensed for these guys. The world is their oyster – it's just down to imagination."

Imagination is exactly what we might need here. "To a laymen like you and I, the difference equates to that between a Range Rover and a Land Rover Defender. The Defender isn't about a nice smart polish – it has rivets and the panels are almost wavy. And that's the adventure yacht too: a boat that can go anywhere – bash itself through ice, or be slammed up against commercial ports in Venezuela – yet inside has all the luxuries of a super yacht." Going anywhere

also requires a lot of equipment. Cecil-Wright lists an ark-load of off-road vehicles, mountain bikes, and support team trailers, not forgetting a landing craft to get one from t'other.



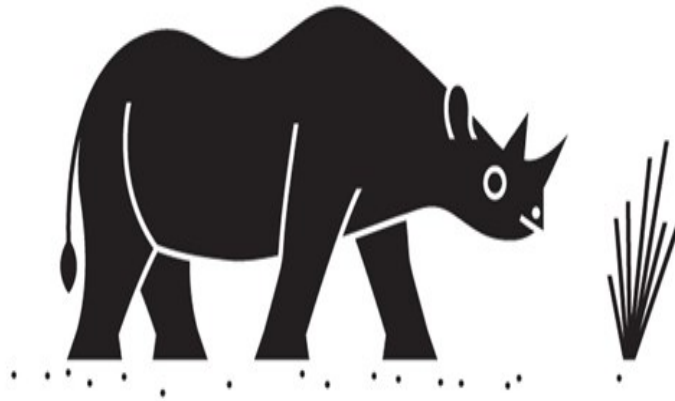
Sitting at his base in a St James's Street mansion block apartment, he rolls up his shirtsleeves to reveal elbows swollen to the size of tennis balls. It's the result of his most recent trip with a client and friend, where they ran and mountain biked a 600-kilometre circuitous route through the Namibian Desert. He gets out the computer and pulls up pictures of steaks cooking over a mountaintop fire at sunset, or regales of encountering a black rhino on their daily marathon – a truly incredible sight when you consider there are only a mere two thousand left covering the whole of southern Africa.

Cecil-Wright also remembers his first encounter with a big yacht as the real turning point. When breaking his back paragliding spelled the end of his promising army career – he had just started helicopter training at Middle Wallop – he then began working for boat builders Camper Nicholson by driving port-to-port in the south of France hand-delivering the company newsletter along with a copy of the FT. That's when he first went

aboard Talitha G – a 1927 motor yacht designed and built for John Paul Getty Jr. “It was the most mind-bogglingly glorious thing. And I remember thinking this is a totally different market.”

The new business – simply called Cecil Wright – only deals with the absolute top of the market, a lesson he said was learnt after twenty years working at Edmiston, also on St James’s Street. “Every buyer expects to feel he’s the most important man when he’s buying or building a yacht. But the market has become huge, so the only way was to look after a small group at the very top. Our mantra is fewer clients, serviced better.”

We ask him if he’s always sailed. After describing his earliest memories on a boat called Ajax with his father and brother “between Keyhaven and Cowes – extremely noisy and cold, being bashed around, soaking wet, and happy as Larry,” he goes on to add that adventure yachting isn’t all about thrills but family. “The discretion and the disappearing is a huge part of it. Just look at the Royal Family. In the biggest and most glorious yacht of its day, they’d take it up to deserted beaches in Scotland and barbecue on the sand. And that’s what goes on. There are lots of people you’ve never heard of, with yachts you’ve never heard of, who simply enjoy a big boat for all the kids and grandkids. I mean, once you experience the level of service, privacy, fun – it’s very hard to go back to a hotel.”



Hook, line and sinker – his sales pitch is compelling. Or that might be the imagination talking. But it isn't so much a pitch at all. Perhaps there's a little bit of pride in his business, and rightly so, but overwhelmingly there's just an ease that, one imagines, comes with living life to its fullest. And that doesn't mean grandiose body-pushing extreme achievements, but in recognising the value of all of life's adventures. We ask a little about his trips to the poles, but he's more alive talking about racing boats with his middle daughter Grace, which he does every Monday out of Lymington.

Many of us can probably stretch our imagination to commissioning a bespoke shirt, suit or shoes, but a yacht is something else entirely. But if you want some to go that extra mile, and ensure you enjoy the ride, you'd be best served by someone who understands the true meaning of adventure.

Cecil Wright
73 Little St James's Street, SW1A 1PH
cecilwright.com
@cwpyachts