

Sail to the sun

A beautiful resort with its own marina is the perfect holiday destination for the yacht owner. **Kate Lauer** casts off and discovers what's on offer at a host of luxury resorts



To set sail in a yacht is to have the freedom of the seas, a pace as unhurried as you please and the ability to drop anchor at any pretty cove that catches your eye. But of course you will need somewhere to dock your pleasure boat, so we've rounded up the best yacht-friendly resorts with their own marinas.

The Andaman Sea bathes the western coast of Malaysia, >

Below: The Mariner House, Scrub Island, BVI



Portfolio

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lapping at the shores of hundreds of tiny islands. Rebak Island is one of the 99 that make up the Langkawi archipelago, and its resort is drenched in tropical romance (rebakislandresort.com). The hotel has the only fully equipped marina in Malaysia – which can accommodate vessels up to 30m in 259 berths – and is the place to head to for some serious rest and relaxation. If you're feeling adventurous, there are mangrove tours and the chance to spot monitor lizards, or you can just kick back in your hammock then sip a sundowner on the veranda of your timbered villa, scents of local herbs rising from the surrounding green.

Hemingway responded to the Bahamas' siren call back in 1935, making the seductive out-island of Bimini his home. One of 700 secluded spots scattered off the coast of Florida, Bimini is known as the world's big-game fishing capital, and visitors can follow in the sport-loving author's footsteps, taking a tour with one of the many experienced local fishing guides. Park up at the Bimini Bay resort (www.biminibayresort.com) which features two state-of-the-art marinas – Fisherman's Village Marina for boats up to 128 feet and the Mega-Yacht Marina for vessels up to 203 feet. This pastel-pretty resort, featuring clapboard buildings stretched out along a spit of ivory sand, offers visitors plenty of first-class restaurants, casual cuisine plus a lively selection of bars and live entertainment. The ocean is also good for dolphin sightings and a variety of water sports.

Abu Dhabi's Yas Viceroy Hotel & Marina in the Persian Gulf is one for the thrillseekers (www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/abudhabi). The only hotel in the world 'on' a Formula One racetrack, its space-age, steel-and-glass structure houses two towers linked by a bridge that crosses the Yas Marina Circuit and offers daily views



of high-speed races and practices. The super-yacht marina has 175 berths for boats up to 150m, adjacent to the track. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi theme park, the Yas Mall and the open-air du Arena round out a resort high on entertainment value.

First discovered by Christopher Columbus nearly 500 years ago, Scrub Island in the British Virgin Islands (www.scrubisland.com) served as a stopping point for European explorers en route to the New World, who are said to have dropped anchor to 'scrub' barnacles from their well-travelled hulls. Today's sailors can take a berth in the resort marina, a short stroll from the restaurants and shops of Marina Village and with

55 slips for boats up to 170 feet. Cruise the surrounding coves and hit beach-bar happy hours then drift back to your villa perched on the hillside.

Sailors navigating the busy waters of the South China Sea can find safe and serene harbour in Hainan, China's answer to the French Riviera. Raffles Hainan (www.affles.com/hainan) offers a 200-berth marina and the traditional service of a hotel group that has been welcoming travellers for nearly a century. Golfers in particular will be kept busy: the resort is flanked by not one but two championship par-72 golf courses at Clearwater Bay Golf Club.

The Whitsunday Islands off the coast of Queensland,

Australia, exert a powerful pull. The magnificent Great Barrier Reef surrounds 74 islands, with only eight of these inhabited. Hamilton Island (www.hamiltonisland.com.au) has been luring yachties since the early 1980s and its marina, situated next to the Yacht Club, has 245 berths for boats of up to 60 metres. The island's 740 hectares are home to a wide variety of accommodation options and each August sees the Audi Hamilton Island Race week, Australia's largest offshore sailing regatta. ■

Above: Hamilton Island Yacht Club and villa

Below: The Master House, Scrub Island, BVI