



IN THE

PINK

Once a must-go spot for the world's elite, Bermuda somehow got lost. Now, says *Sophia Wilson*, thanks to the America's Cup, that pink-white sand and its cool, natural beauty, the "little rock in the Atlantic" is back in business for superyachts

PHOTOGRAPHS - 4CORNERS IMAGES



Legend has it that dozens of ships and planes have disappeared without good explanation in the Bermuda Triangle. Unfortunately, after the 1970s, Bermuda's reputation as a luxury tourist destination did a similar disappearing act. While the likes of St Barths lured the superyacht elite with a string of opulent hotels and restaurants, a series of luxury development projects in Bermuda failed to break ground.

In December 2014, however, the island was given a new lease of life when it was named, unexpectedly, as the host for the oldest international sporting event – the America's Cup. Far more than just the chance to put on a prestigious event next May, when the Louis Vuitton America's Cup Qualifiers take place, and

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then in June with the 35th America's Cup match itself, Bermudans saw this as an opportunity to put the island back on the map and once again lure the superyacht market to its pink sand shores.

“They really wanted this event and they want to be able to showcase what Bermuda can do and what a great sailing destination it is,” says Sir Russell Coutts, CEO of the America's Cup Event Authority (ACEA). “They are very proud of the island and want to show it off to the world.”

From taxi drivers to hoteliers, Bermuda has regained the mojo that was missing following the depression. This can be seen in the vigour with which America's Cup preparations have got underway – including the reclamation of nine acres of land in the Royal Naval Dockyard, which will become the America's Cup village, as well as the



revamping of some of the ritziest hotels and restaurants. “There are only 65,000 Bermudan residents and the entire country has embraced this,” adds Bill Hanbury, CEO of the Bermuda Tourism Authority (BTA). “This is our Super Bowl, our World Cup. This is the maximum event that we could host in our wildest dreams and we will use it to take us to places we could never go on our own.”

THE PINK PALACE

At the heart of the island, the iconic Hamilton Princess hotel, complete with beach club and marina, is a striking symbol of regeneration. Bought by the Green family in 2012, it has undergone a \$100 million renovation and is the official hotel for next year's event. The Greens have also paid plenty of attention to the 60 berth superyacht marina.

Restored to its former glory, the “Pink Palace” is a comfortable launch pad for any visit to the island. Perched on the water's edge at the southern end

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of the pastel hued capital city, its vast infinity pool looks out across Hamilton Harbour. Inside, its airy spaces with classic Caribbean louvres are punctuated with modern art,

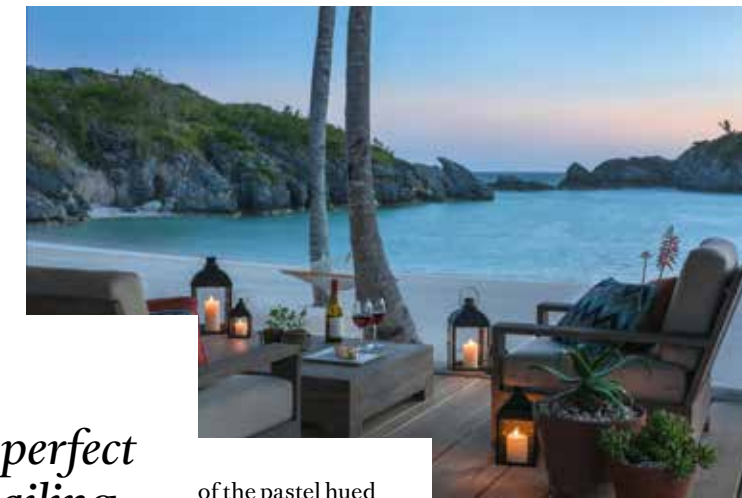
including original pieces by Andy Warhol and Liu Ye. The new Exhale Spa offers barre, yoga and cardio classes in the poolside pergola. Top off a session with a glow body scrub and massage or, for the more active (or brave), loosen out any tension with the America's Cup sports massage.

The hotel is also now home to Marcus – the Bermudan outlet of celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson. The Ethiopia-born, Sweden-raised chef gives Bermudan cuisine a quirky twist. Start the evening with a darker & stormier, a spin on the Bermudan classic rum cocktail made with the restaurant's homemade ginger beer, then fill up on jerk pork belly, fish chowder bites or chicken and waffles.

SETTING SAIL

The main lure of Bermuda is sailing – perhaps unsurprising for a country of only 21 square miles, but which has a coastline that stretches for 75 miles. “We love to say we are the perfect place for sailing,” says Leatrice Oatley, Royal Bermuda Yacht Club (RBYC) commodore. “We race all year round in Bermuda, because we can.”

The conditions are perfect for the America's Cup, with teams already seen zipping up and down the Great Sound, but for the first time next year ▶



Left and above: dine and relax at the Hamilton Princess. Below left: live on the water at Daniel's Head. Previous page: Jobson's Cove at dawn



PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY

superyachts will race in Bermuda for the America's Cup Superyacht Regatta (12-15 June), organised by Boat International Media. Run in collaboration with the ACEA and RBYC, superyachts over 24m LOA and J Class yachts will battle it out to dethrone 55 metre *Adela*, who won the event in San Francisco in 2013.

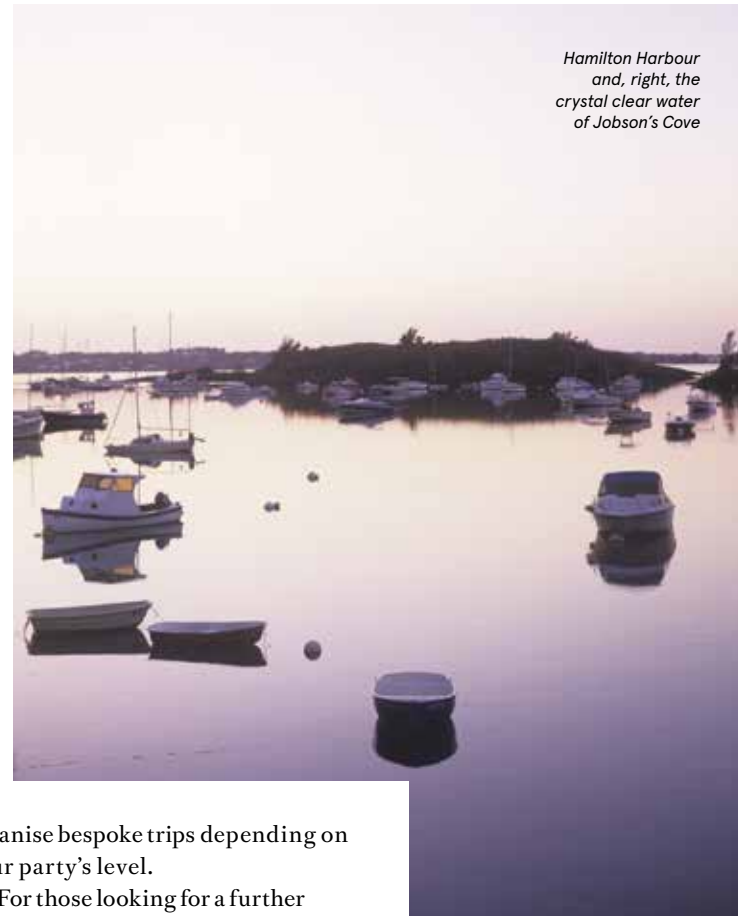
"It's an incredible sailing venue and it makes you wonder why there hasn't been a superyacht race there in the past," Coutts says. "I think Bermuda is going to be rediscovered through this process. People who go there will be surprised at what a fantastic island it is. It's obviously quite different from the Caribbean islands. It's got the same beauty but Bermuda also has sophistication."

While racing for the America's Cup will take place in the natural amphitheatre of the Great Sound, superyachts will enjoy the exhilarating racing conditions off the east coast.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Bermuda's aquamarine waters and pristine beaches are the perfect excuse to fill your Instagram account with a stream of envy-inducing "#nofilter" photos. Its coast is lined with more than 50 pink and white sand beaches. However, you should avoid the well-known names - Horseshoe Bay has been overtaken by the cruise market and resembles Brighton beach during a British heatwave - and instead head for Church Bay in Southampton or Jobson's Cove in Warwick.

Bermuda's charms also extend into the sea. Sitting in the depths of its transparent waters are reefs full of aquatic life, including grouper, barracuda, spiny lobster, parrotfish and blue angelfish. It is also considered to be the wreck capital of the Atlantic, with more than 300 lurking on the seabed waiting to be explored. The sheer quantity of wrecks means that all levels of diver can enjoy them - from a quick snorkel around *HMS Vixen*, which lies just offshore from Daniel's Head at the west end of Bermuda, to the vast *Cristóbal Colón* off the north of the island. Local companies such as Dive Bermuda (bermudascuba.com) are used to working with superyachts and can



Hamilton Harbour and, right, the crystal clear water of Jobson's Cove

organise bespoke trips depending on your party's level.

For those looking for a further adrenaline kick, Bermuda's jagged cliffs have spawned the locals' favourite activity - cliff jumping. This must understandably be approached with caution but Admiralty House Park is a popular location. Situated on North Shore, the "Canon" is a seven-metre jump that allows you to swim through an underwater cave.

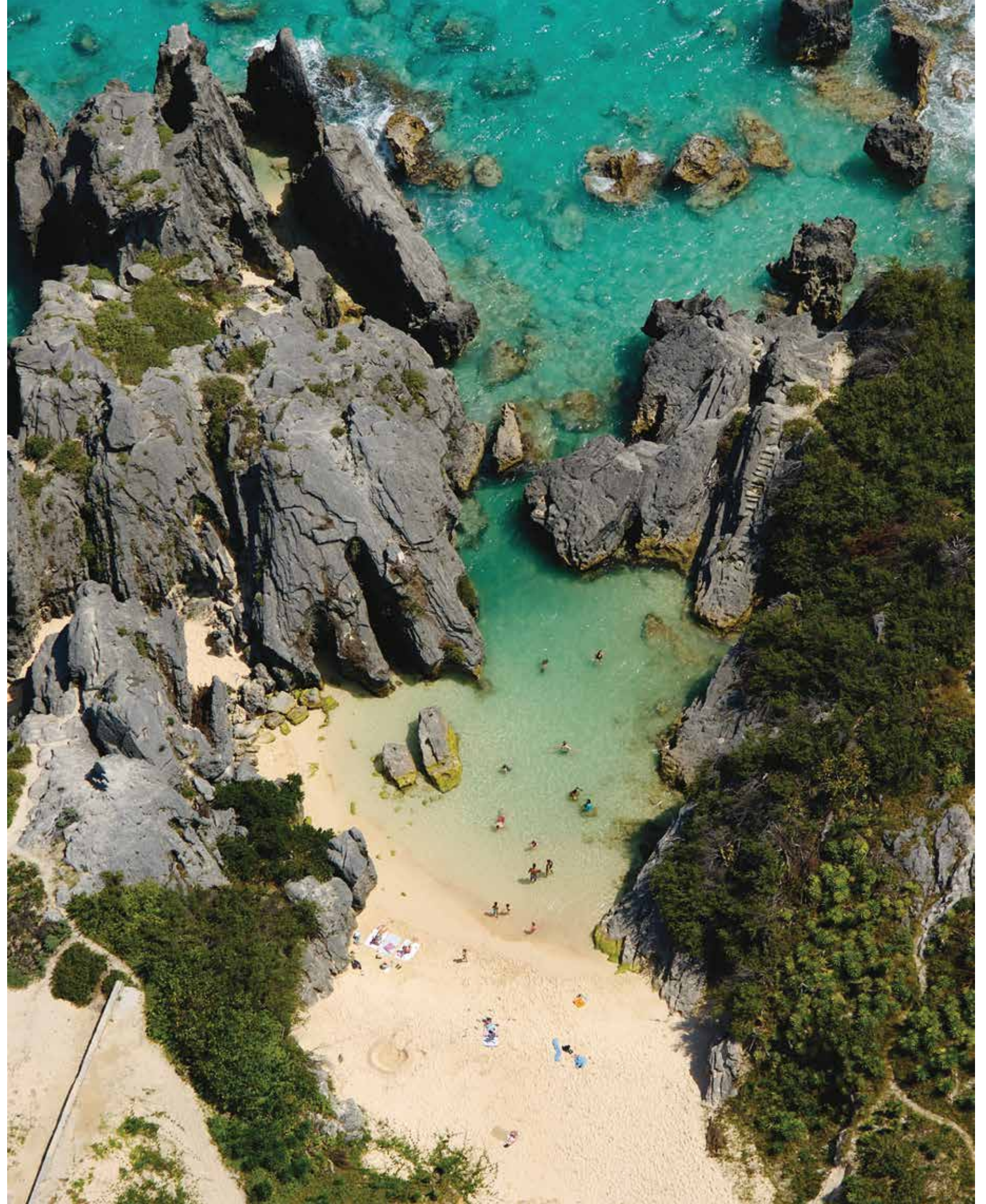
If you don't fancy throwing yourself off rocks but would rather relax inside one, then head to Prospero's Cave in Grotto Bay. Natura Spa offers treatments inside the cave, which, with its luminous mineral water and dramatic stalactites, beats any conventional treatment room.

ON SHORE EXPERIENCE

Life on dry land is not lived in the fast lane, figuratively and literally - the maximum speed limit on the roads is 35km/h and visitors are not permitted to hire cars.

Bermuda is split into nine parishes, all of which have a distinctive feel. Its capital city of Hamilton is the epicentre for business and finance while the UNESCO ▶

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PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES

Right: the stunning Tucker's Point hotel, at the exclusive eastern end of Bermuda. Below right: the nearby "billionaire's row"

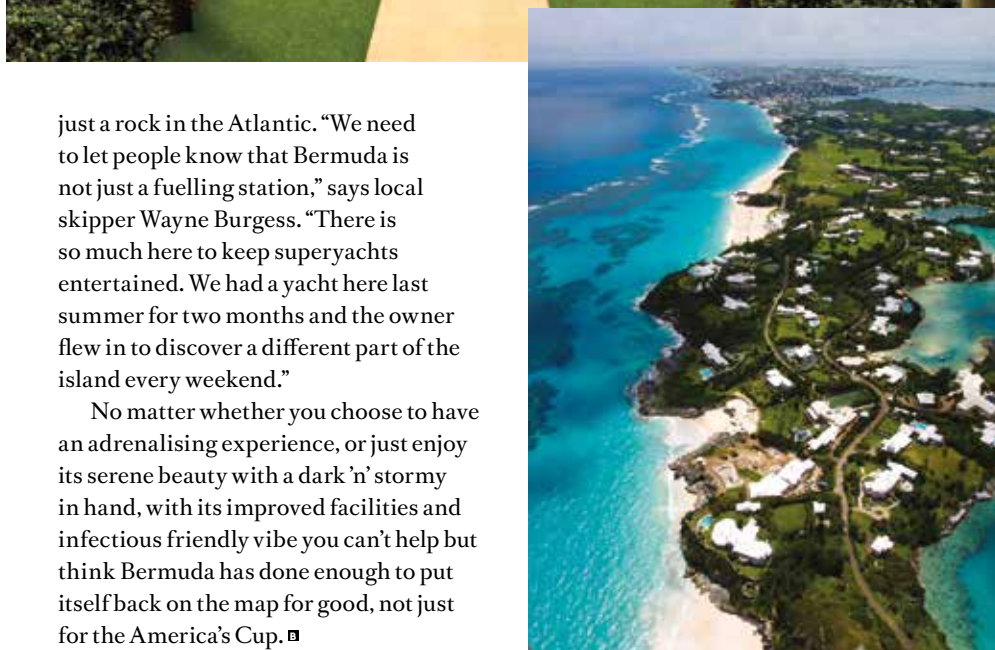


World Heritage Site of St George's has architecture dating back to the 17th century. Bermuda's super elite are nearly all found on an exclusive peninsula of this parish - nicknamed "billionaire's row". Access is strictly controlled and, with its sprawling mansions and beautiful vistas, it's not surprising that Silvio Berlusconi and Michael Bloomberg have bought property there.

Also located in this prestigious part of the island is another of Bermuda's finest hotels, Tucker's Point. It is worth going for dinner at the hotel's The Point restaurant just to take in the stunning murals that depict the world's major ports of the 1880s in the style of Eurasian artist Gerard Henderson. For the full experience try the 10 course Murals Experience menu, which draws inspiration from the ports featured.

The island is peppered with a mixture of traditional Bermudan cuisine and fine dining. For the best steak on the island head to the chic Red Steakhouse & Bar on Front Street in Hamilton or, if sushi is your thing, stroll down the road to L'Oriental and order one of the restaurant's signature oceana rolls, packed with soft-shell crab and seaweed salad, and topped with crab-stick tempura and spicy crunchy tuna.

The variety that the tiny island has to offer is something locals are keen to get across, so that it is no longer dismissed as



just a rock in the Atlantic. "We need to let people know that Bermuda is not just a fuelling station," says local skipper Wayne Burgess. "There is so much here to keep superyachts entertained. We had a yacht here last summer for two months and the owner flew in to discover a different part of the island every weekend."

No matter whether you choose to have an adrenalinising experience, or just enjoy its serene beauty with a dark 'n' stormy in hand, with its improved facilities and infectious friendly vibe you can't help but think Bermuda has done enough to put itself back on the map for good, not just for the America's Cup. ■



ROYAL BERMUDA YACHT CLUB, HAMILTON

Located just metres away from bustling Front Street, the 130 berth marina welcomes yachts up to 45 metres. Established in 1844, the RBYC is one of the oldest yacht clubs in the western hemisphere and it will give you a true feeling for Bermuda's sailing heritage. rbyc.bm

BERMUDA YACHT SERVICES, ST GEORGE'S

The superyacht dock in St George's is managed by Bermuda Yacht Services, who can arrange for yachts up to 90 metres to tie up, either stern-to or side-to. Captain Mark Soares and his wife Sandra, who run the company, are a one-stop shop for all your nautical needs. bermudayachtservices.com

THE PRINCESS MARINA, HAMILTON

In the heart of the newly refurbished Hamilton Princess & Beach Club, the 60 berth marina can accommodate yachts up to 150 metres. The full service marina has a dedicated concierge service and arriving vessels can clear Bermudan customs on site. thehamiltonprincess.com/marina