

## THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON RECREATIONAL SAILING

**PRESS RELEASE - May 2020**

*The COVID-19 outbreak has caused unprecedented disruption on health, economic and above all, human levels. The pandemic nobody was prepared for still remains at large in many parts of the world and has halted many industries including travel and tourism, events, logistics... and of course, the yacht charter industry. Many fear that this unprecedented health crisis may trigger an even more paralysing economic crisis...*

*One question remains: once recreational sailing eventually makes a return, what are the prospects for the sector in the months and years to come? With closed borders and health/travel restrictions in place, how can summer cruising actually happen this year? How much will boaters and yachting enthusiasts be prepared to spend on their next sailing holiday? What measures or new services will boaters expect from charter professionals to guarantee their safety so they can sail with peace of mind?*

*The travel industry is continuing to adapt itself in abiding by various regulations and instructions that governments have introduced to help businesses stay afloat and to save the thousands of jobs that are at stake. How people get through this difficult period will also be important to decide on what will be the most effective pathway out of the crisis.*

*Sailing during and after the coronavirus wave seems terribly tempting after spending months in lockdown. Is there a reason to avoid sailing? What should be done to ensure the safety of all crew members when sailing during a pandemic? These are just some of the questions that are being voiced in many nautical circles today and that have raised doubts in some groups, including boaters. The summer of 2020 is on our doorstep, high temperatures and stunning weather simply will inevitably beckon us to come out on the water. On the other hand, the coronavirus has stopped all day-to-day life activities, including marine activity.*

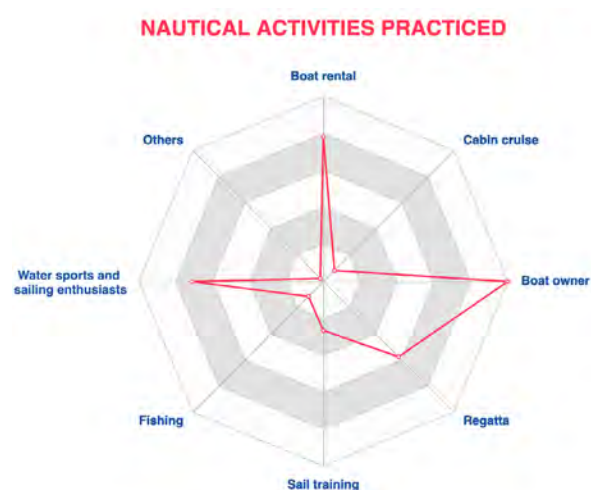
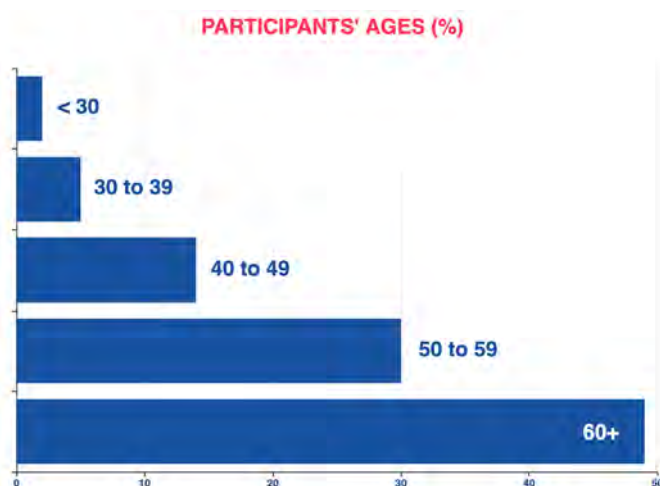


Here at GlobeSailor, we asked ourselves the same questions... We circulated a questionnaire from **27th of April to the 17th of May 2020** to the UK and North American boating community and to our own database of English-speaking clients. **We received a total of 1271 responses to the survey.** In this article, we are sharing our findings with you which we hope will give you a better insight into the market and future trends.

## Our sample

The **average age of our sample is 58 years**. Here is a graph representing the age distribution of the participants. On the second graph, we detailed the spread of our sample across various boating segments.

The majority of our sample charter a boat for their holidays and about 50.6% of them normally charter boat with or without a skipper.

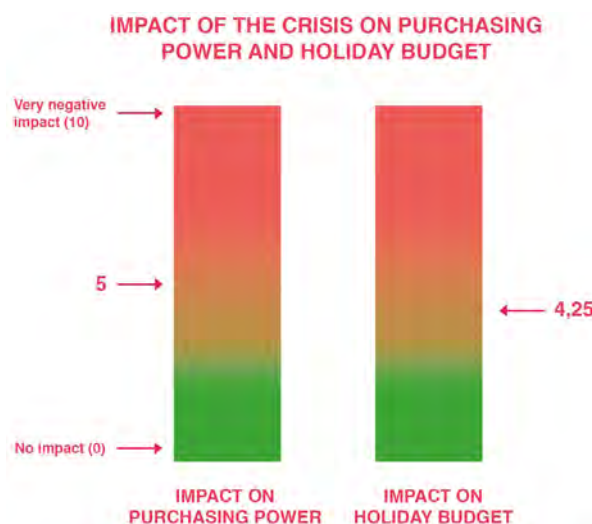


## Has consumer purchasing power suffered?

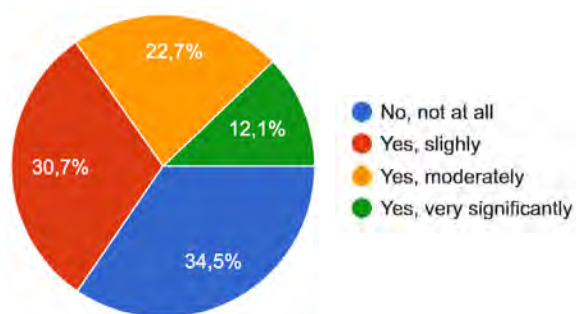
It is interesting to note that consumer confidence in a rapid economic recovery (by the end of 2020) is pretty low, at just 3.74 out of 10 (10 being the most confident), yet **their purchasing power seems less eroded**.

**65.2% of those polled believe that the crisis will have little or no impact on their purchasing power.** Most of them, however, envision a slow economic recovery between 2021 and 2022.

We asked our sample if the pandemic would reduce their planned holiday budget in the coming months.



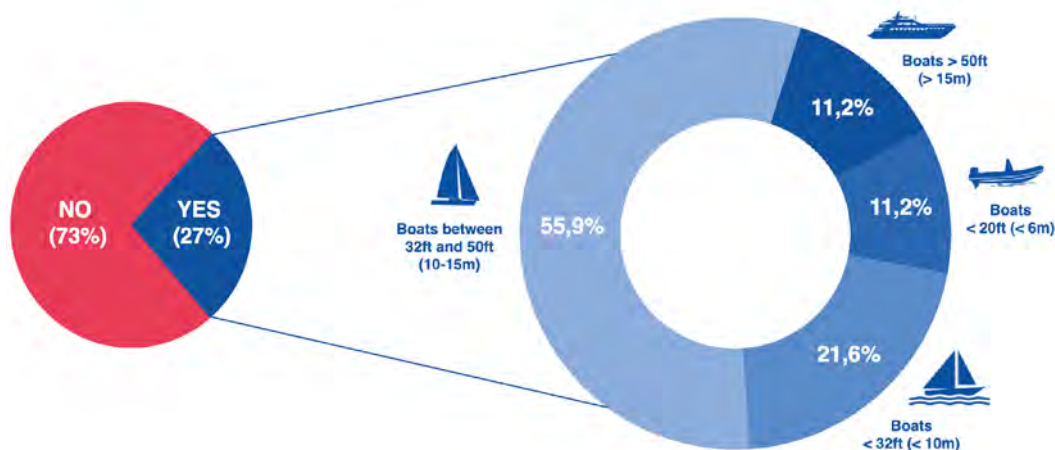
The good news for tourism professionals is that consumer **vacation budgets seem less impacted** than their purchasing power in general. Here are the details:



## What about yacht purchases?

Regarding yacht-goers' plans to buy a boat, has the crisis delayed or even shelved them? Of the boaters surveyed, 27% said that they had plans to purchase a boat. According to our survey, more than half (58%) of them will not postpone their purchase. These deferrals mainly concern the purchase of vessels between 10 and 15 meters (55.9%). On average, **purchase delays by boaters are estimated at just over 20 months.**

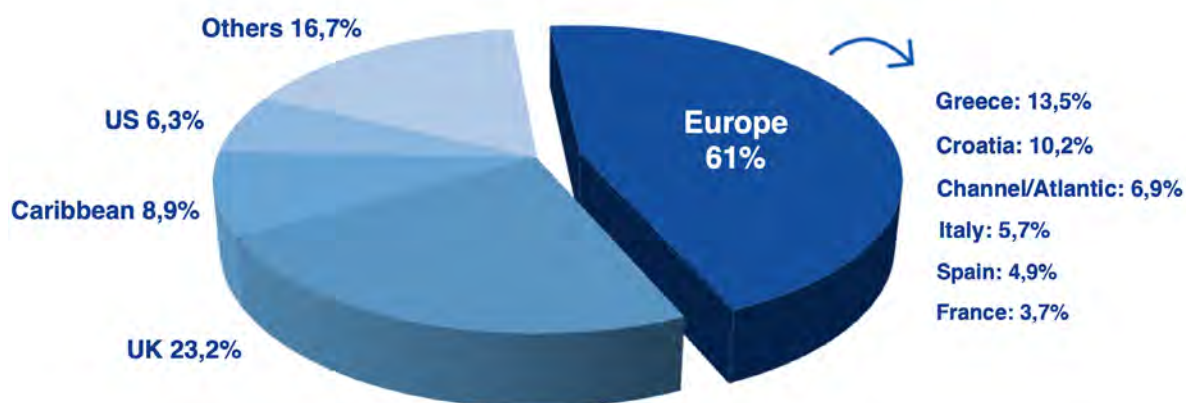
### BOAT PURCHASES POSTPONED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC



## The desire to sail... Is it stronger than the desire to #stayathome?

It is very encouraging to see that almost **62% of boaters want to sail immediately after the lifting of travel restrictions.** 18.3% of them prefer to wait until late summer / autumn 2020, and 3.5% will opt for a cruise in a warm winter destination. 27.9% of those questioned prefer to postpone their holidays at sea to 2021 and 2.8% to 2022.

### DREAM DESTINATIONS OF NEXT SAILING HOLIDAY



In terms of destinations for their next cruise, **Europe won most votes with 61% of the responses.** The sailing zones in the **United Kingdom** were selected by 23% of the sample. Not surprisingly, **Greece and Croatia** take the top spots for Mediterranean locations. The good news is that **yacht charter in Croatia is already possible**, which recently opened its borders for tourists without the condition of self-quarantine upon arrival. Borders are partially opened to travellers from certain countries in Greece as well. West and East Coast US as well as the Great Lakes were indicated as desired sailing grounds by our American clients in case of inability to travel abroad.

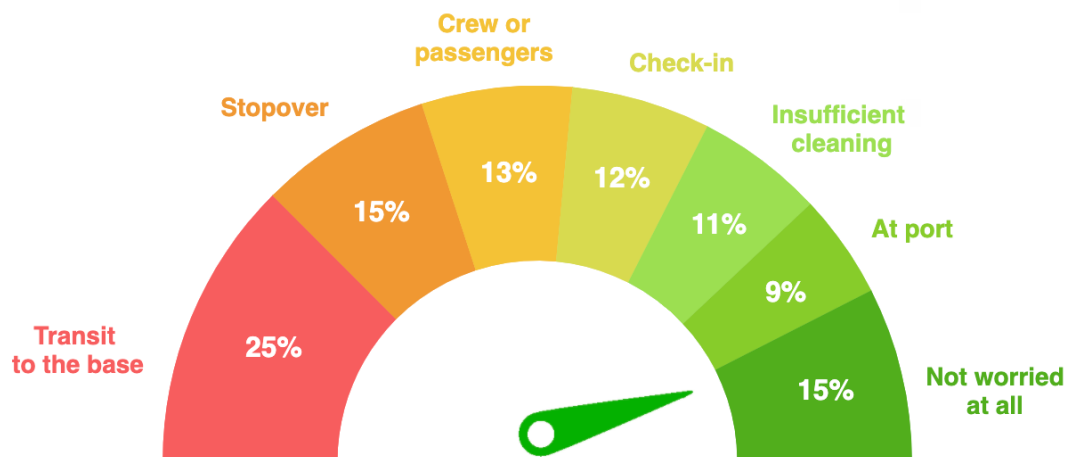




## Rent a boat, yes... *but* only with reinforced health & safety procedures in place!

Asked about their potential fears about sailing this summer, **only 15% of boaters were not worried at all** about contracting COVID-19. It is **during transit** to the base and during **stopovers** that the fear of being infected is highest (40%). One can imagine that many boaters will prefer the car to the train for example to get to the port of departure. It is therefore important for marinas and boat rental companies to prepare themselves to be able to **offer secure parking spaces** to clients.

### WORRIES ABOUT GETTING INFECTED



Regarding the charter itself, 12% of those surveyed fear being infected during interactions with the technician during the check-in/boat inventory. **11% of boaters consider the standard of cleaning/disinfecting of the boat to be another risk factor.** It is essential for them that the boat is well disinfected and ventilated between each rental and if possible, to know the details of the cleaning procedure or see a **cleaning certificate** in the boat.

And it is indeed useful to be reassured about the health status of your crew members before spending a week confined in a boat with them! 13% of the sample say they are worried about being infected by their friends/family whilst on board or by the skipper/hostess.

A **health and safety certificate** is often requested by charterers, who wish **to be informed as much as possible** about the health protocols implemented on board their boat.

## Willingness to undergo tests before chartering

We asked the participants if they would be prepared to undergo tests, such as temperature tests before boarding; 96% said yes.

# Meticulous quality standards... The only shield against the virus?

Asked about their future expectations when sailing, the boaters in our sample proved to have **several important demands** that centred around **four main themes**. Meeting each of these criteria will be essential to regain the trust of customers:



**HYGIENE AND CLEANLINESS** (disinfected boat, impeccable bedding, sanitised tableware, impeccable port sanitary facilities, etc.)



**FLEXIBILITY** (cancellation insurance, short-term rental, last-minute booking, etc.)



**COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY** (high-quality charter, explicit cancellation conditions, signage demonstrating barrier gestures and health protocols, advice in case of illness on board...)



**ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY** (recycling, use of ecological products, carbon offsetting, destinations to reduce navigation time, limiting the use of plastic, etc.)

As charter operators have been severely penalised by the crisis due to the closure of ports, as well as the ban on sailing and global travel, it is **very likely that these new demands will only be achieved by increasing charter prices**.

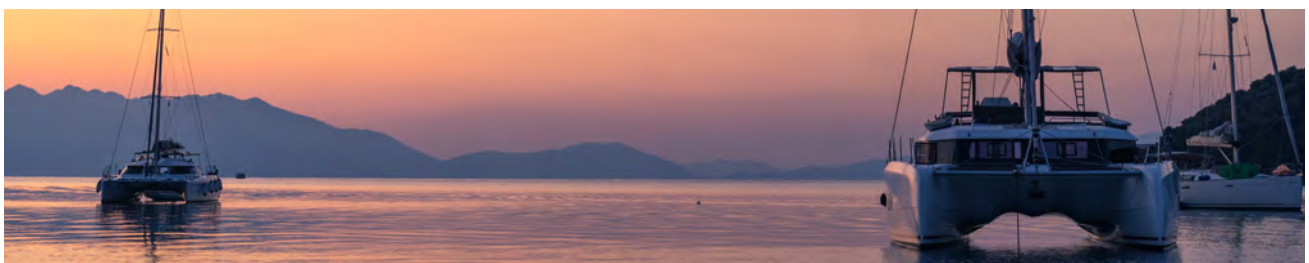
## Borders

It is not yet known when the various international travel bans will be lifted and there are still fears that this health crisis will return in the form of several 'waves'. **Charter companies are counting on local tourism**, so many will find themselves rediscovering the beauty and sailing grounds of their own countries.

This trend implicates not only charter companies, but also the tourism industry as a whole. As the world 'unlocks', the challenge for each charter operator in the sector will be their ability to offer a **high-quality and professional service** in the hope that the tourism sector can start to rebuild itself.

*Survey and analysis carried out by GlobeSailor SAS.*

*GlobeSailor is a yacht charter and cruise agency. With its HQ in Paris, it has been operating for over 10 years in more than 180 destinations serving an international clientele.*





## Meet the sailing holiday experts

GlobeSailor was created in 2008 and caters mainly to sailing on small-scale vessels: monohulls, catamarans, traditional sailboats, motorboats and luxury yachts. Having conquered the yachting sector, where it is now one of the market leaders, the agency has expanded its offering to include crewed, cabin, private and themed cruises. Its goal is to make yachting accessible to all through package offers which comprise the cruise itself as well as flight tickets and other travel extras if requested. In addition, GlobeSailor offers 24/7 concierge service at sea, day trips and other activities specially curated for its clientele.

Find out more about [our cruises here](#).

Request an on-board press trip!

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