

# Travel/Turkey

## Home brew views



### SALCOMBE

The name of a property often reflects a moment in its past and the 4\* Brewery Cottage in Salcombe is a case in point. This imposing four-storey building is one of the original brewery cottages behind the old Shipwrights Arms. Architecturally designed and furnished to a very high standard, it sleeps eight adults, has excellent water views and is available for seven nights from September 6 for £680, a saving of £315 on the original price. Book through Salcombe Holiday Homes (01548 843485 salcombe.com). Alternatively, travel a little further along the beautiful South Hams coastline and stay in historical Dartmouth – 19 Clarence Hill is a pretty cottage not far from the town centre and all amenities, well equipped and comfortably furnished with lovely views over the town and river. The cottage sleeps six and is available for seven nights from September 6 for £565. Book through Dartmouth Holiday Homes (01803 833082 dartmouthuk.com).

## Tiny and tempting

### THE LIZARD

For couples seeking a cottage hideaway in one of England's most romantic regions – south-west Cornwall – Little An Skyber is a superb one-bedroom barn conversion on the edge of the picturesque wooded valley of Gweek Drive and within easy reach of several lovely countryside walks, the South West Coast Path and the beaches of the Lizard Peninsula. A week's rental starting September 13 costs £265, while seven nights from September 20 or 27 are £218.

Book on 01326 240333, or cornishcottages.co.uk.

## Dart delights

### DARTMOUTH

Dartmouth residents this week had the chance to see for themselves the stunning restoration work at a 17th century Grade I-listed Merchant's House in the centre of Dartmouth, damaged in a devastating fire in 2010.

A £1 million project has painstakingly restored the timber-frame fronted building to create two chic coastal apartments and an open day on Thursday offered the opportunity to see the scale of the project.

Among the historic features restored and reinstated are the circular newel oak staircase, the ornate Charles I plaster ceiling, reputed to be one of the finest examples in the country, 17th-century fireplaces and panelled friezes.

5 Higher Street will shortly be available for short breaks and seven night stays with Blue Chip Holidays (bluechipholidays.co.uk).

# A dozen strangers at the start, but a group of good friends by the end

A Turkish sailing holiday around the Aegean and the Mediterranean – what image does that conjure up for you? **Chris Robinson** climbed aboard

If your first reference point is couched in terms of bobbing about in the English Channel on choppy seas, under grey skies, with little or no land in sight, then think again, because we're talking about blue skies, smooth seas and scores of little land masses, some of them inhabited, some of them not – we're also talking about weaving in and out of these sun-baked islands with barely another soul, or sailing vessel in sight.

Indeed, although these so-called Blue Voyage sailing holidays out of Bodrum and other similar locations are now extremely popular it's remarkable how few of them actually sail – most of them motor and some don't even sport sails, even though the traditional wooden gulets are designed for them.

However Sailing Cruises In Comfort (SCIC) offer the full package. But don't expect the kind of holiday you would get on a big luxury liner pootling from port to port around the Med. No, this is altogether more liberating, more intoxicating.

Every day offers a different itinerary. Having anchored overnight in some uninhabited harbour you will take breakfast on deck with your fellow travellers after which the group will be consulted by the captain about where you all would like to sail to next.

Fortunately, if you're like me, and are happy to be guided by the skipper, then there are a number of options he can offer. And quite frankly that seemed to suit most of our party. A typical week-long tour will take in a small coastal village, a bustling little resort, plenty of idyllic, out-of-the-way anchorages and an ancient ruin, or two... or three. Turkey is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of its unexcavated antiquity.

On one expedition we passed a fascinating few hours in Knidos. Today it is home to less than 100 people, however, wind the clock back a couple of thousand years and this was one of the busiest ports in the world, boasting an indigenous population of around 70,000. Gradually the old city is being mapped: here was a fabulous temple to the naked and beautiful Aphrodite, a huge market and two massive amphitheatres, one with a capacity to seat 20,000, the other, still largely intact, could hold 5,000.

Nor is Knidos unique, the coastline is littered with ports that previously boasted much more life than they do today. Bodrum itself, the ancient Halikarnassos, and home of the original Mausoleum (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) is another.

The middle ground of medieval and earlier Mediterranean empire builders, Turkey has been something of a battle zone throughout civilisation, but through it all there is a good case for contesting that Turkey, and in



particular the Anatolian region around Bodrum, is the rich well from which all western culture and indeed all Indo-European languages descended nearly 10,000 years ago.

Interestingly enough it has tended to be British archaeologists, or British educated individuals, who have led the way in the exploration of the area's amazing heritage. It is a process that has been ongoing since the mid-19th century and yet many of the finds have been relatively recent.

This is particularly true of the underwater investigations, which, over the last 40 years or so, have seen some spectacular treasures raised from the deep (many of which are on display at the endlessly interesting Bodrum Castle Museum).

So it is that when sailing from one group of tiny islands to the next, with no distractions other than a paperback or a Kindle, it is easy to imagine yourself back in time, several hundred or several thousand years ago –

the scenery has changed so little.

There is a wonderful timelessness about the whole experience. Having determined to ignore all e-mails and outside communications for the first two days, it was an easy jump to extend the self-imposed restriction across the rest of the week – and what a good decision that is if you truly want to relax and unwind.

All meals are included, apart from two on land during the week and even those are organised for you – ours were excellent affairs, both al fresco, one at the delightfully secluded Bozburun Yacht Club, the other at the much livelier Bodrum Yacht Club. And there are no real decisions to make from the moment the airplane deposits you in Turkey to the moment the transport takes you back at the end of your stay. This is the ultimate way to chill in a warm climate.

Of course there are inevitably still plenty of minor decisions to make: should I go for a swim or a snorkel

## Fact file

■ SCIC Sailing is a Dutch/English operation and was established in 1983.

■ Their sailing season is from the end of March through to early November.

■ Prices start at 899 euro (currently around £768) per person per week and includes all accommodation, drinks and meals, on board, but excludes flights and two evening meals taken on shore. Cabins, compact and comfortable, are double or twin and all are en suite.

■ For further information, images or a brochure, please contact Loes Douze on: 07583 001766 or e-mail info@scicsailing.eu or visit their website: scicsailing.eu.

before or after breakfast/lunch/supper? Should I lie back and let the warmth of the sun send me to sleep or should I read, or chat to one of my fascinating fellow passengers (never more than a dozen and they all have stories to tell)? Should I have another glass of wine, or beer, or have I had enough already? Should I buy anything when we go ashore and visit a market or shopping area, and if I do, should I haggle? (Yes).

So if you've long wondered about having a foreign adventure but are worried that you'd struggle with the language, the currency, the food, the tipping etiquette, the travel arrangements once there, or whatever, then this could well be for you.

While no holiday comes with a full guarantee, Loes Douze, who's been running SCIC sailing for many years, says that around 70% of her bookings are repeat customers and that one client has been coming back every year for 20 years. It's easy to understand why; with all meals taken communally around one big table you soon get to know your fellow travel companions and anyone attracted to that sort of holiday tends to have more than one or two common interests. It's totally stress free, the atmosphere is healthy, the food is healthy, very Mediterranean... and it's fun. Some weeks are themed – around cooking courses or art or whatever, but for the most part they're just an ideal way to get away from it all.

No telly, no touts, no noise, no louts – easy paced and peaceful, wonderful and restful, and highly recommended. During the course of our stay I had a birthday to celebrate, not a big one, but it felt special – the Captain put into a secluded bay, and, with the crew, ferried low tables, large cushions, cutlery and crockery ashore and we all enjoyed a beautiful barbecue on the beach under the inky black sky bejewelled with the brightest stars you've ever seen (no clouds or city lights to diffuse the effect). The evening was quite magical and as we sat and sipped, we looked out on our floating holiday home and counted ourselves very lucky.



An idyllic view of The Nemesis, above, and below, Chris Robinson (in hat, left) and his new friends enjoy local fare; a belly dancer comes on board; in the back row of the Amphitheatre at Knidos and the view from Bozburun Yacht Club

