

# Boating with Missy

By Melissa Gervais

## How To Be Invited Back Onto the Boat

I often say that my boat, a 34-foot Bayliner, sleeps six but holds two. I know how fortunate I am to be able to visit places that you just can't get to by car, and I want to share these experiences with my friends. However, the boat can get very small with additional guests and sometimes the close quarters do not bring out the best in people. Posting a list of rules didn't seem very inviting, so I thought I would share some of my keeping-it-real observations. Feel free to share them with your potential guests.

First up, do you remember the 80's band 'Til Tuesday? Well, it is true. Voices carry. It's scientific. The water cools the air above its surface and this slows the sound waves, which cause noise to be amplified. Add a few libations with a loud stereo, and you are instantly a bad neighbor. Instead of using the main stereo with numerous speakers, try using a small Bluetooth speaker and place it on the table where everyone can hear, but the volume is low. As the day wears on, be aware that you may be laughing louder and louder at the same joke. There is an unwritten rule that the generators don't start until 0900 hours and everyone should be inside or quiet by 2200 hours. Respect the serenity.

Also, respect the freshwater. I often remember a certain sister, who shall remain nameless, running the water while she cleaned a bucket of strawberries. Pausing every now and then to chat or sip her wine, the water kept running. At the same time, her sister was running the water on the back deck waiting for it to get cold. News flash: the water supply on a boat is finite and will not get cold. If you are a guest, use the shower saver, bring a reusable water bottle and use it to brush your teeth. Rinse plates or pots in a bucket of saltwater before washing them in the sink. Most boats have two small galley sinks, so wash in bulk and rinse in bulk. Seriously, we can hear the pump from 1,000 paces.

Then there is the business of business. Why do boaters refer to the toilet as the head? In the days before power boating, there was only the wind. A sailing ship cannot travel directly

into the wind, which meant that the bow or head of the boat was always downwind, thereby providing instant odor elimination. The technology has come a long way, but the name stayed. The key thing to remember is that nothing should go in a marine toilet except human waste and a few squares of highly dissolvable toilet paper. Absolutely nothing else. When the toilet is flushed, either manually or automatically, a macerator liquifies the waste, however, it doesn't take very much to cause this delicate flower of engineering to become stuck. Obviously, this affects the entire crew.

A few other notes. Don't stand in the doorway. Don't leave the fridge door open. In the words of journalist Mary Schmich, "wear sunscreen." Learn the difference between port and starboard. I was told that if you drink all the port red wine, you will have none left. Port is red and refers to the left-hand side of the boat. Starboard is green and refers to the right. Not a lot of people smoke anymore, but if you feel you must, remember that you are sitting on a few hundred gallons of gasoline. Ask first. If you think you might just sneak ashore and light up, double don't. It is fire season and most islands have no firefighting resources.

If you are going for a few days, ask if you can bring some food. It is usually easier for the hostess to do all the shopping at once, so offer to bring an appetizer like a meat and cheese platter. Most boats have an endless supply of alcohol, but be polite and bring something. The general rule is to bring twice as much as you can drink. Boating is a communal affair and, instead of walking back to their own boat, boaters will drink your open, chilled bubbles. Offer to bring a jug of bottled water, staying hydrated makes us smile. And the perfect hostess gift? A simple bag of ice.

Don't bring a lot of packaging with you. Excessive wrapping paper, "disposable" containers and plastic water bottles take up room. A huge box of Fruit Loops for an overnight trip is not a good idea. There is no garbage collection on the water, what you take in is what you take out. The ocean is not a dumping ground, and nothing should be thrown in the water! Also, if you see garbage floating in the water, pick it up. If you are only on board for a few days and are getting dropped off at a marina, offer to take a bag of garbage. A group hug will ensue.

The only thing better than a good friend is a good friend with a boat. The chances of being invited a second time are directly related to your behavior the first. The captain is responsible for your safety, so listen to her. She also chooses the music, so be prepared to live with that. **NWY**

Boats like Missy's Bayliner have limited space, and bad guests get in the way - fast. Good ones become de facto members of the crew!



Missy grew up boating with her family in the Gulf Islands. She works for a yacht services company based in Vancouver, B.C. and boats most weekends from April to October. A self-proclaimed weekend warrior, she enjoys blogging about everything cool for women who boat at [missygoesboating.com](http://missygoesboating.com).