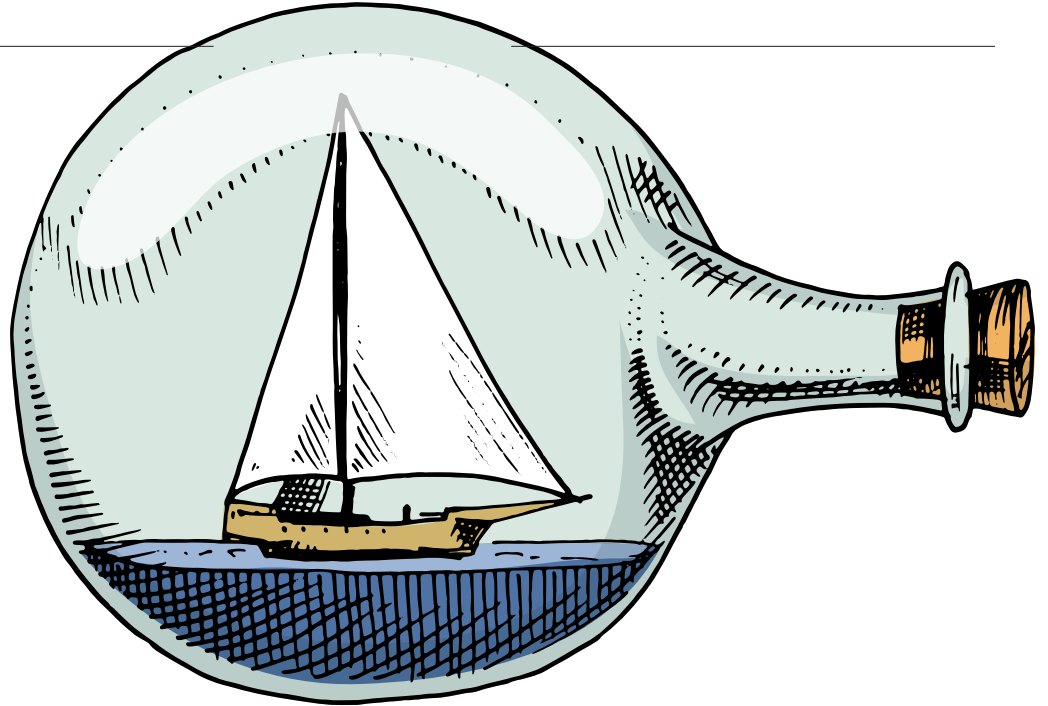

Boating with Missy

By Melissa Gervais

Time in a Bottle



It was a glorious morning, not a ripple on the water nor a breeze in the air. I was enjoying a mimosa on the dock with my friends and no one was speaking. The temperature had dropped, and fall was most definitely in the air. We all were enjoying the solitude of the moment in full denial that summer was coming to an end.

Just the night before, one of my long-time boating friends announced that this would be her last weekend of boating. Her boat was going up for sale, she was giving up the club membership, and she was getting out of boating. It was a somber moment, but a reality for all of us. There is a lot of heavy lifting, maintenance, and less than perfect weather to battle as a boater. It wears on the body. In my less than scientific observation, I have noticed that people usually face this decision in their mid-to-late seventies. For the first time in my life, it occurred to me that there was a timeline.

I don't have many regrets in life, and a bigger boat, more time off or more money would not make my life on the water better. Don't get me wrong, the extra amenities are nice! But for me, it is all about the smell of the ocean, the tranquility of the wind in my hair, and the feeling of the sun on my face. It had never crossed my mind that one day, I wouldn't be boating. It got me thinking, was there some way to preserve my memories for when I was no longer boating?

I am a live-in-the-moment, make-the-most-of-each-day, take-a-big-bite-out-of-life kind of person. When I decided to get

into boating, I didn't wait until I could find the perfect boat. I found the perfect for right now boat and I got out on the water. What John Lennon said is true, "Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans." Along the way, I have taken lots of photos, but memories are more than just pictures; there is a feeling that goes with it. That is what I want to capture. My friend was leaving boating, and the reality was that we could never re-create this exact moment again. All of us gathered on the dock, a perfect morning with our boats as the backdrop. All we could do is hold on to it.

It may sound like a bit of a mid-life reminiscing, but it affirms what I have always believed. For me, the secret lies in genuinely living in the moment while it is happening. It can't last forever and nor should it. Recognize the present and revel in it. I will return to that mimosa moment for years to come, captured like time in a bottle.

Just thinking that reminded me of Jim Croce's iconic song. Then I had to laugh because, even though I knew all the words by heart, the first time I heard the song was on *The Muppet Show*. That's the thing about memories.

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.