

Big Beard's Adventure Tours Goes "Green" With New Boat

By Carol Bareuther, R.D.



The surrounding seas are one of the main attractions for visitors to St. Croix. Now, sightseers can enjoy this wondrous water world in an eco-friendly way aboard Big Beard's Adventure Tours new 'green' power catamaran.

"We've been a sailboat company," says Captain John 'Big Beard' Macy, an Oregon native who transplanted to the island nearly thirty years ago. "However, we wanted to offer our customers the option of a catamaran that moved more quickly. In these times of environmental concern and rising fuel prices, we felt a power catamaran that was a hybrid vessel was the best way to go."

Being designed and built by St. Croix based Gold Coast Yachts, Macy explains just what 'hybrid' means. "The vessel is powered by two diesel engines and two electric motors. We will use the diesels to power us out to Buck Island and at the same time they will be charging a bank of batteries that energize the electric motors. When we come into a pristine lagoon, or harbor, we will shut down the diesels and come in under the electric engines silently and pollution free."

Forty-two feet in length, the longest size vessel allowed in the Virgin Islands' National Park waters surrounding Buck Island, Big Beard's new power catamaran can carry up to 49 guests aboard. There's the option of sun or shade as the vessel plies the Caribbean waters on its cruise from the Christiansted Boardwalk, in front of the Caravelle Hotel, en route to Buck Island.

Another of the new cat's cool features is the opportunity for glass bottom viewing with the ability to lower and raise its glass bottom box. This prevents a natural green mossy growth from building up and blocking the awesome undersea view.

Big Beard's Adventure Tour's most popular day sail is to Buck Island where the snorkel gear is divvied up and the crew gives how-to snorkel instructions before a guided tour along the underwater trail. A full-day or six-hour tour includes a stop at an uninhabited beach on the north shore of St. Croix on the way back to town where the captain and crew serve up an all-you-can-eat barbeque along with fruit or rum punch.

Other options are a half-day tour aboard the 40-foot catamaran, Flyer, sunset sails and private charters. Big Beard's Adventure Tours also hosts weddings afloat. Captain Macy, also a licensed minister on St. Croix, has presided over nearly 1,000 nuptials.

Be it on a sailing or power catamaran, sailing with Big Beard is a way to visit some of the world's most magnificent waters in an eco-friendly way.

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