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SUPERSAIL CREW Daphne Morgan Barnicoat meets a chef striving for a work-life balance

Jodie Richards, chef

Jodie Richards is a trained chef, expert sailor, mother and self-professed jack of all trades. After 12 years of yachting alongside her partner, Jamie Connelly, she made the step that many women in the industry make at some point in their career – she moved ashore to have a family while her partner continued to skipper superyachts.

Richards and her partner recently ran the Baltic 112 performance cruiser *Nilaya* as a skipper and chef and two successful Swan racer-cruiser programmes before that. Aged 17, she trained as a windsurfing and dinghy instructor and worked for Sunsail in Turkey for a year then became a general assistant on the private island Caribbean of Necker.

Yet superyachting called her. So, she studied cooking in London under a three-star Michelin chef and sat a six-month course in basic yachting at an Isle of Wight sailing school, where she met Connelly.

Richards explains: "As a chef in a small team on a yacht, you have to be trained in all areas, especially sailing. On *Nilaya*, for example, if I was not cooking for guests, I was making up cabins or helping with the trimming and sail controls. Sailing and tender driving were a huge part of the job."

Like all good yachting chefs, she can make a gourmet meal out of whatever she finds in the street markets. "Flexibility and creativity are a must," she says. "Provisions



“ I was not great at anything in particular, but I was an excellent all-rounder and that stands you in good stead **”**

can be hard to come by in remote areas. I have had times when the oven and cooker have broken and have had to completely change menus and cook in the microwave, sandwich-maker or on the barbecue. It was a bit stressful but our team handled it and the food was enjoyed by the guests and they never found out... until now."

Richards says she would never go to sea without Tetley teabags (yes, she is British) and her tip to an aspiring superyacht chef is to be honest and hard-working. "Get a good team on board and keep them. I was nothing without my team behind me. We were all together for many years. Jamie and I owe

▲ Above: Jodie says a good support team and flexibility are keys to success
▼ Below: the Baltic 112 cruiser *Nilaya*

them a lot of our success in yachting."

She adds: "Be keen to learn to do everything. I was not great at anything in particular, but was an excellent all-rounder and that sets you in good stead. My dad taught me to be a jack of all trades, so many of the skills I have learned relate back to a shore-based job in yachting, catering or hospitality, which will be handy for the future."

"I have many friends who have settled into a rotation [between sea and land] and I know that works well. I will definitely do a little more yachting with our daughter Catalina in tow – she seems to enjoy being at sea as much as I do."

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