

# The ABA Beacon®

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## Cruising The Galveston/Houston Area

by W. Lynn Seldon Jr. - Boating Writer

Like the rest of Texas, they do things big in the Galveston/Houston area when it comes to boating. Not surprisingly, Galveston Bay is one of the biggest bays in the nation. That means there's a boatload of great boating and more at this Gulf of Mexico destination.

The Galveston Bay area is the oldest deepwater port on the Gulf of Mexico west of New Orleans. When Galveston's port is combined with nearby Houston's, they become the largest port in terms of tonnage in the U.S.

Running about 30 miles in length to about 17 miles in width, Galveston Bay is actually made up of four separately named bays. There are East Bay and West Bay in the south, Galveston Bay proper in the south and northwest, and Trinity Bay to the northeast.

The depth of the bay is generally 10 to 12 feet, with the one unusual exception near the center (between Redfish Island and Smith Point) where an ancient collapsed salt dome is at about 115 feet. The bottom is generally flat and muddy, thanks to years of shrimp trawling. Tides are minimal (one to two feet), though strong southerly winds can raise the water levels in a hurry.

The *Southern Waterway Guide* provides an excellent introduction to Gulf boating, as well as specifics about everything along the coast (see details on page 3 for discount information). The coverage for Galveston Bay is extensive, though it obviously doesn't replace detailed charts for boating.

The Galveston area is a great base for exploring all of Galveston Bay. There aren't a ton of transient slips in the area, so it's definitely best to call ahead for reservations. There are more than 10 possibilities in the Galveston area and another 15 or so in the Clear Lake vicinity of Houston.

Up until 1900, Galveston was actually the largest and wealthiest city in Texas. However, a huge hurricane swept through the city in that year, with loss of life set at more than 6,000 and loss of financial power immense. It took almost a century, but now Galveston has returned to much of its former glory.

Old Galveston is generally preserved and renovated, with the architecture taking center stage. The Old Strand (409-765-7834, [www.galveston.com/thestrand/](http://www.galveston.com/thestrand/)) section of the city is a comfortable walk from the marina area, with shops, restaurants, and Col. Bubbie's (a giant military surplus store 409-762-7397, [www.colbubbie.com](http://www.colbubbie.com)) among the many highlights. Visiting boaters should be sure to see Ashton Villa, (409-762-3933,

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## ABA Theme Park and Zoo Discount Program Saves You Money

As an Associate Member of ABA, you can take advantage of discounts ABA has negotiated for its members at major amusement parks and zoos across the country. Discounts are available at some of the most visited parks and zoos in the country: Sea World®, Busch Gardens®, Universal Studios®, Six Flags®, Paramount Parks®, Hershey Park®, Sesame Place®, the San Diego Zoo®, and the Los Angeles Zoo®. Please visit [www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org) for a comprehensive listing of the participating parks and to order your free discount coupons or call 508-432-8846. ■



Photo courtesy of Greater Houston Conventions and Visitors Bureau

**Kemah Boardwalk**

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# CRUISING AS A WAY OF LIFE - IS IT FOR YOU?

by Mike Anderson - ABA member and full-time cruiser

At some time, almost everyone who owns a boat has the urge to just leave it all behind and take up full-time cruising. Most people just dream about it while some make it a reality, like my family and me. My wife and I and our three children sold the house, quit the job, and moved aboard



the *SV Moonraker*, a 1974 Durbeck 46' cutter-rigged ketch. We've been at it for over a year now and have discovered that the cruising life is not what you imagine it to be, but it is a wonderful and life changing experience. It is not an endless vacation of margaritas in the cockpit in some exotic location. It is hard work and long hours. We get to play jack-of-all-trades and are on call 24 hours a day. We've learned what it truly means to be self-reliant and to challenge ourselves to do things that we never thought we could or would do. Oh, and yes, there are definitely some margaritas in wonderful locations.

The cruising life takes time to adjust to. It is very different from the land-based lifestyle. Things that are taken for granted in everyday life change dramatically. A quick run to the store is a thing of the past. When cruising, it means dropping the dinghy, finding a place to land and walking to the nearest store. That store may be the first one that you have had access to for several days. Knowing that you can only carry so much requires careful selection. Needs and wants are quickly separated. Getting mail and communication from family and friends also requires planning. Problems require quick action. If the basement leaks in a house, it is not that big of a deal. When the basement leaks in a boat, you've got problems. Things that go bump in the night normally require immediate attention. Convenience is definitely a thing of the past.

The cruising lifestyle is about freedom. It allows you to go where you want, when you want, weather and draft permitting. You visit places that you would never see otherwise. You meet wonderful people and make friends that you may never see again. You become part of a community of people that care about one another.

Cruisers help each other, even if they are strangers. They believe that what goes around comes around. If a cruiser can help, he will, knowing that one day, he may be the one that needs help. He knows that he can count on his fellow cruisers to be there for him. Several people in an anchorage will respond to a boater's request for help with a problem (other than a plugged head, which can bring an eerie silence to the VHF). It is common for them to offer needed parts and materials for nothing more in return than a sincere "Thank you" and the knowledge that they helped someone out of a bind. There is a strong bond of camaraderie and support in the cruising community that is sorely lacking on shore these days.

Most of all, cruising is a lifestyle. It is a slower pace that gives you a chance to enjoy life more. If you find you don't like a neighborhood, you can pick up your anchor and move. You solve your own problems and feel the satisfaction of doing the job right. It is the experience of a lifetime. So the next time that urge to go off cruising finds you, don't just dream about it, go for it. It will change your life.

Follow Mike and his family's cruising adventures on ABA's website, [www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org).

## ABA Members Save Money at Marinas

ABA members can take advantage of numerous savings at marinas nationwide through the American Boating Association's *Marina Alliance Program (MAP)*! Discounts vary by marina and may include discounts on the following goods/services: transient dockage, fuel dock, service & repair shop, marina store, towing service, pump out service and restaurant.

A comprehensive list of participating marinas can be found at [www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org). In addition to listing the discounts offered to ABA members, the website also gives other pertinent marina information which includes address, phone number, and manager's name. Other information may include an e-mail address, website for the marina (with a direct link), GPS coordinates, types of docks, hookup availability, and services offered. ABA is actively working to expand the marinas participating in *MAP*, so be sure to check out *ABA Online*<sup>sm</sup> often for an up-to-date list. If your favorite marina is not listed, send ABA their name, address, phone number, contact name, and we will contact them. ■

## ABA Members Receive Discount On Royal Caribbean Cruises

Did you know that a Royal Caribbean cruise vacation gives you the opportunity to explore places like the Caribbean, Europe or Alaska? It's like no vacation you've ever experienced! Imagine unpacking just once and still exploring many of the world's most breathtaking places-all in the same trip!

Did you know that your cruise vacation price is mostly inclusive? This includes fabulous onboard meals, whether formal or casual, ShipShape® Fitness Center, Adventure Ocean® Youth Activities Program, Broadway style shows, and much more!

Did you know that as an ABA member, you receive an exclusive members-only discount on Royal Caribbean or Celebrity Cruises? Simply call **888-226-2100** and our knowledgeable cruise counselors will be happy to assist you. You must reference your ABA membership to receive this exclusive discount. Visit [www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org) for further details. ■

# ON THE HORIZON

## Boat Shows

Representative boat shows are listed below. For a full boat show listing and to link to boat show websites, please visit

[www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org).

**May 2-6, 2001**

**Newport In-Water Boat Show, CA**  
(949) 757-5959

**Springfest Boat Show, MD**  
(410) 213-1121 (starts May 3)

**Cape Cod In-Water, MA**  
(508) 775-5662 (starts May 4)

**May 12-13, 2001**

**Downtown Hampton Boat Show, VA**  
(757) 727-1276

**May 16-20, 2001**

**Seattle Fleet of Dreams Superyacht Show, WA**  
(206) 748-0012

**Boat Show USA, MI**  
(313) 884-1776 (starts May 17)

**Newport Used Boat Show, RI**  
(401) 846-1115 (starts May 18)

**St. Petersburg Spring Boat Sale, FL**  
(800) 940-7642 (starts May 18)

**Anacortes Waterfront Festival, WA**  
(360) 293-7911 (starts May 19)

**May 30 - June 3, 2001**

**Spring Boat Show, CA**  
(714) 633-7581

**June 6-8, 2001**

**NYS Spring Charter Yacht Trade Show, RI**  
(401) 846-7720

**June 8-10, 2001**

**Old Saybrook Boat Show, CT**  
(860) 395-0867

**South Florida Boat Show, FL**  
(954) 946-6164 (ends June 12)

**June 16-17, 2001**

**Riveredge Resort In-Water Boat Show, NY**  
(315) 482-9917

**June 22-24, 2001**

**Wooden Boat Show, MI**  
(800) 273-7447

**June 28 - July 1, 2001**

**Marina del Rey In-Water Boat Show, CA**  
(310) 645-5151 ■

## *Cruising The Galveston/Houston Area - continued from page 1*

[www.galvestonhistory.org/plc-ashtonvilla.htm](http://www.galvestonhistory.org/plc-ashtonvilla.htm)) an Italian-style mansion built in 1859, as well as Moody Mansion, (409-762-7668, [www.galveston.com/historichomes/moodymansion.shtml](http://www.galveston.com/historichomes/moodymansion.shtml)) and Bishop's Palace (409-762-2475, [www.galveston-online.com/maps/bishopspalace.html](http://www.galveston-online.com/maps/bishopspalace.html)) if time allows.

About a mile from the marina area, Pier 21 is a bustling development definitely worth a visit (or stay). Along with dining, shopping, and strolling, the possibilities include visiting the 1877 iron barque *Elissa* berthed at the excellent Texas Seaport Museum (409-763-1877, [www.tsm-elissa.org](http://www.tsm-elissa.org)), and the Harbour House (409-763-3321, [www.harbourhousepier21.com](http://www.harbourhousepier21.com)) complex (dockage is available for those dining at one of the restaurants or those spending the night at the Harbour House Hotel).

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## ATTENTION ABA MEMBERS!

Get your *Southern Waterway Guide*, *Mid-Atlantic Waterway Guide*, or *Northern Waterway Guide* for only \$35.96. That's a 10% savings (normally \$39.95)! To receive this discount, phone your order to: 800-262-1954, use promo code UWGABA; or fax to 800-633-6219. Include the name of the guide, your name, street address, phone number, and credit card number with expiration date. Also include the promo code of UWGABA to receive the discount. Please allow 2 weeks for delivery.

*Offer good until 6/30/01.*

**ABA members receive the lowest available fare AND a two cabin category upgrade with Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises - an exclusive ABA benefit!**

For absolute lowest prices, visit [www.associationcruiseclub.com](http://www.associationcruiseclub.com) to view members only specials and to register to receive regular e-mail notification of exclusive ABA members-only prices!

Call **1-888-226-2100** to book your cruise vacation and reference your American Boating Association membership.



**You've paid your dues for this vacation.**





## ***Cruising The Galveston/Houston Area - continued from page 3***

While in the area, boaters also shouldn't miss Offats Bayou

(<http://users2.ev1.net/~barr/offats.htm>, for help and map), which resulted from dredging Galveston Bay to raise the level of Galveston Island. Here, Moody Gardens, (409-774-4673, [www.moodygardens.com](http://www.moodygardens.com)) is a must-see, with an incredible aquarium, tropical rainforest, an IMAX theater, dining, and much more. The nice Moody Gardens Hotel & Marina (409-741-8484, [www.moodygardens.com/hotel](http://www.moodygardens.com/hotel)) is a great base.

Heading up to Houston (and who wouldn't?), the goal is the city's Clear Lake (281-488-7676, [www.clearlakearea.com](http://www.clearlakearea.com)) waterfront. The area has a big boating presence, with more than 10,000 locally registered boats of all types and a wide range of facilities all along the shore. There are many major marinas in the area, including Kemah Harbor Marina (281-334-2284, [www.kemahharbormarina.com](http://www.kemahharbormarina.com)), Watergate Marina (281-334-1511, [www.watergatemarina.com](http://www.watergatemarina.com)), Waterford Marina (281-334-4400, [www.waterfordharbormarina.com](http://www.waterfordharbormarina.com)), Blue Dolphin Yachting Center (281-474-4450), South Shore Harbor (281-334-1000, [www.sshr.com](http://www.sshr.com)), and Marina Del Sol (281-334-3909). The Hilton and the South Shore Harbour Resort Hotel (281-334-7919) at the western end of Clear Lake also feature dockage. Dining possibilities abound, with the south side of Clear Lake offering some of the best options.

A list of Houston highlights has to begin with the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (281-483-0123, [www.jsc.nasa.gov](http://www.jsc.nasa.gov)), where boaters can learn all about another type of 'ship' that travels through space, rather than water. For a unique boating experience more than 50 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, Buffalo Bayou runs right into the midst of the Houston's skyline (it's the fourth largest city in the U.S.), passing by Allen's Landing, where the city was founded, and the restored battleship, *Texas*.

Thus, from the Gulf of Mexico all the way to downtown Houston, it's clear to see why Galveston Bay offers some of the best of America's boating.

### **DETAILS**

As mentioned above, the *Southern Waterway Guide*, (800-233-3359, [www.waterwayguide.com](http://www.waterwayguide.com)), regularly \$39.95, but just \$35.96 for ABA members is a great resource for Gulf of Mexico cruising. They also publish the *Mid-Atlantic Waterway Guide* and the *Northern Waterway Guide*.

For information about the Galveston area, visit their website at [www.galvestoncvb.com](http://www.galvestoncvb.com) or call (888- GAL-ISLE). For the Houston area, visit their website at [www.houston-guide.com](http://www.houston-guide.com) or call (800- 4-HOUSTON). ■

## **BOATER'S QUIZ**

### **Match/Makers...**

Can you match the production boat models listed in the first column with the names of their designers or builders in the second? Tiny clue: five are sail, and five are power.

Boats	Makers
1. Atoll	a. Boston Whaler
2. Vector	b. Carver
3. Constellation	c. Vanguard
4. Ensign	d. Chris Craft
5. Fairform Flyer	e. Dufour
6. Montego	f. Gulfstar
7. New York Thirty	g. Herreshoff
8. Outrage	h. Huckins
9. Sailmaster	i. Pearson
10. Sundancer	j. Sea Ray

Key to answers: 1e; 2c; 3d; 4f; 5h; 6b; 7g; 8a; 9f; 10j

## **MEMBER BENEFITS**

- Knights Inn, 800-682-1071;
  - Ramada, 800-462-8035;
  - Travelodge, 800-545-5545;
  - Wingate Inn, 877-202-8814
- ABA Discount Calling Card: 800-657-4711, I.D. #ABA
  - ABA Theme Park and Zoo Discounts: 508-432-8846
  - Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruise Line Discounts: 888-226-2100, I.D.#ABA
  - Movie Discount Program: 800-565-3712 or [www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org) Reference code CORP073100 and member I.D. #99110303
  - Passport Health: 888-499-PASS (7277) I.D. #ABA
  - Citizens Against Crime Discounts: 800-466-1010
  - ABA Travel Safety and Advisory Pamphlets: 508-432-8846

***For a complete list of benefits, visit us at:  
[www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org)***

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ABA members can now enjoy a 5-15% discount off rental rates when they rent through Hertz! Hertz offers special membership savings on your business and leisure rentals. The name Hertz means more service in more places around the world. To receive your membership savings, use your Hertz **CDP#1290122** when making a reservation. For reservations or for additional information, call Hertz at **800-654-2200** or visit [www.americanboating.org](http://www.americanboating.org). ■