

# Girls on Deck!

Today speak with Megan Venter, aka Megs. Megs is the founder of the Girls on Deck community. Girls on Deck is a platform she created for female yacht crew wanting to enter the superyacht industry in a deck position rather than the “conventional” interior role. Megs has been working on deck in the superyacht industry since 2018 and recently left her position within Sheik Mohammed Maktoum’s (Vice President of UAE) superyacht fleet.

Throughout her last 3 years in the industry, Megs has come across many of the challenges women often have to face when choosing to work out on deck. From struggling to get a position at all to men making inappropriate remarks today, we talk to Meg about the challenges she has faced so far and how she has handled them.



Megan Venter (Megs)

## **How and when did you get into the superyacht industry?**

My family is the owner of SY Shakti, and they charter in the Indian Ocean. During our holidays, I would be extremely excited to get on board and learn as much as possible about sailing and working on deck. I absolutely loved learning new knots, driving tenders, general maintenance and interacting with guests. My mum mentioned I should not settle down for a

desk job, as I hate being indoors. That was the moment I decided I want to be a deckhand. I also decided there and then, one day, I wanted to have my own sailing yacht and run surf charters.

## **What made you choose a career on deck instead of an interior role?**

Being inside has never interested me. I did my first PADI qualification in 2013 and had been diving ever since. My biggest passion is being in the ocean, whether I am surfing, scuba diving or swimming. Being on deck allows me to do what I love the most, and my favourite part of being outside is getting to drive big tenders. There is also nothing quite like being out in the sun doing maintenance. Although, I do love bridge watch and doing chart work as a bit of verity.

## **What courses did you complete before entering the industry as a deckhand?**

After finishing my first degree, I dedicated 2 months to complete as many deck courses as possible. I knew to even have a chance of entering such a male dominant position, I would need to make my CV look attractive. The course's I completed were:

- STCW
- PDSD
- PWC Instructor
- PB2
- SS0
- RYA
- VHF Radio
- SYSA Deckhand course

I also had my PADI license and completed the SYSA stew course to increase my knowledge of the superyacht industry. During my

courses, I learnt how detailed you needed to be to succeed in this industry and the need to work efficiently under pressure and with the limited time you have.







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**girls.ondeck** Why do you love being a deckhand?



## **How did you land your first deckhand position? And what was the boat?**

I landed my first position because I had 7 tickets as a greenie, and I also come from a sailing background. My first superyacht was 35m SY Sea Wave. I did about 6000NM whilst sailing through the Mediterranean. I had a lovely Captain who encouraged me to become a Chief Officer one day.

## **What challenges were you faced with when you were trying to get your first job?**

The biggest challenge was the crew agencies. They had no interest in helping me find my first deck gig because I had no experience. I found this extremely frustrating at the time, but I have learnt a lot from this experience, and it has inspired me to create my own crew agency that will never turn down a greenie. It also encouraged me to create the Instagram page [@girls.ondeck](https://www.instagram.com/girls.ondeck). I wanted to create more awareness that females can also be successful deckhands, bosuns, and officers. On top of this, I would like it to become a platform that will help protect women and encourage them to talk about tricky situations they have dealt with when working out on deck.

Currently, I am focused on building my website, which is called "Aloha Yachties". This site will cater to all genders, and I aim to help and advise green crew on everything they need to know, from designing their resumes, getting their seaman's discharge book or just helping them land their first position. It will display a subsection of girls on deck to show the achievements of other women in the industry and hopefully inspire others to do the same.









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## **What has been the most challenging part of your career in yachting so far?**

I accepted a gig for 1 year in Dubai and worked for Sheik Mohammed with a fleet with over 500 crew. I was the only female deckhand in the entire fleet, which resulted in unwanted behaviour from my bosun. A few months after this happened, I made the WhatsApp group for girls. I felt like I had to protect the other girls in the industry. Through this, I sadly learnt that several other people had been through a similar experience.

## **Are you continuing with your training? Would you like to be a yacht officer or captain?**

I recently accepted a new position where I can fully commit to finishing all my tasks in the training record book, gain more sea time and complete the rest of my OOW modules. I want to be a Chief Officer within the next 3 years. Overall, my dream is to be captain of my own 84ft Sunreef Catamaran running surf charters.

## **What has been your biggest lesson during your career on superyachts?**

Listen to your HOD and do exactly what they say. No matter how terrible the situation is, you have to do it. I soon mastered the art of patience. Working on a 134M vessel with different cultures and religions, I quickly learnt to adapt and interact differently to what comes naturally to me. Most importantly, I learnt to stand up for myself!









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## **What are you looking to achieve with the girls on deck community?**

My goal is to create a community where women can openly discuss their experiences of working on deck and feel they have a place to go if times are getting tough onboard and they want someone to share it with. On top of this, I would like to create a crew agency that provides opportunities for green crew to get their first deck role. In 2019, when I was new to the industry, I got turned down by over 3 agencies because I had no experience.

## **If you could give one bit of advice to all the girls looking for their position as a deckhand, what would it be?**

My advice for those looking to be a deckhand or transitioning from being a stew to working on deck is to know what position you want and go for it. As a female, do not be afraid to be a deckhand and ask plenty of questions during your interview. Be brave enough to demand more and be disciplined enough to work hard to show you are capable.

*If you are looking for general advice, get in touch with Meg on her Instagram [@the.saffa.deckhand](#) or join her community [@girls.ondeck](#) for inspiration from other female deck crew throughout the industry.*

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