



LADY AT THE TOP – JANE BUFFINGTON

INTERVIEW AND EDITORIAL BY COLIN SQUIRE

PILOT, HARPIST, RANCHER, HUNTER, HOSTESS, COOK,
FISHERWOMAN, WIFE, MOTHER, GRANDMOTHER, SECRETARY,
TELEVISION PRESENTER, FILM PRODUCER, TRAVELLER,
BUSINESSWOMAN AND THANKFULLY ONE OF THE MOST
WONDERFUL BROKERS THIS WORLD HAS EVER SEEN!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY: JANE BUFFINGTON, COLIN SQUIRE
& LIVERAS YACHTS

TAPE TRANSCRIBED BY RICHARD MORRIS

PREVIOUS PAGE: CS: Jane and I are in the main saloon aboard the amazing Annaliese with Andreas Liveras. They have known each other for 20 years and... can you tell us how you first met?

BELOW: THE FABULOUS ANNALIESE
JB: I met Andreas through the chartering of Princess Tanya and through mutual friends that live in Alexandria, Virginia, who brought us ever closer, Pamela and Gregory Copley. Many would remember them for the Capital Ship magazine that they ran in the early 90's.

AL: Of course Jane would find me some wonderful clients for Princess Tanya, including the most intriguing in the last ten years who was this lady that spent money like water. One day Jane and I were summoned to meet her in the Caribbean where a month long charter was to begin. We met the night before our planned rendezvous and spent it with caviar and Crystal champagne, Jane, what a night to remember!

Due to bad weather her private plane was several days late getting in and because of business commitments I had to return to Greece and missed her. A few days later she went to the Captain 'Captain, I understand Mr. Liveras came to see me. Can you ask him to come for dinner on Thursday?' He mentioned that I was now in Greece, to which her reply was 'So'.

JB: And so?

AL: He called me and I said 'Of course I will come and have dinner

with her.' I went, we had dinner in the best restaurant, drinking the most beautiful wines... and chat chat all evening... then the next morning I went back to Greece again.

JB: Like all the ladies she thought that Andreas was the tops. Another year she chartered Princess Tanya for Christmas docking at Fisher Island off Miami. She took another 124 ft yacht for the security guards. Now that was really something!

AL: You know Jane, I tell you, I have seen things in this industry that I could never believe. We began a charter in July with Annaliese that was supposed to be for 26 days and it ended up at 45, we couldn't get our guests off the boat. We are talking about 120 thousand US dollars a day... plus their food, their drink.... It came to about 150 thousand a day. You know where they went? They went from Cannes to Ibiza and back and that was it.

JB: How many people?

AL: It is supposed to be 36 but there were more than that in the ports, and people were following them everywhere, and so there were many people using the boat at different times.

CS: Do you find the low dollar is affecting your business?

AL: Of course it is affecting us because we are paying most of our expenses in Euros.



JB: *When Andreas first got the idea for Annaliese, he was looking for another yacht similar to Princess Tanya. Neither our Fraser Yachts network of brokers, or any broker for that matter, could find the perfect yacht for sale. I gave Andreas the seed of an idea to actually build a perfect charter yacht. I knew of an excellent yard in Chile and eventually he went to visit ASENAV.*

AL: Yes... they are great but they didn't realise how big the boat was. They could only build a yacht to 60 m. They wanted to build but as we developed the plans the boat grew bigger and bigger.

CS: As they do. But you then decided to build in Greece. Why was that?

AL: It was really because I speak the same language and I have Nico there, who is married to my niece, he is the Naval Architect who went with me everywhere for quotations. It suited us to build there and I'm not unhappy with that decision. It just took a little longer than planned, 36 months not 22. It was frustrating and unrealistic to build something like Annaliese in 22 months.

CS: For a vessel of this size she certainly is exceptional. She appears to have found the middle ground between cruise ship and yacht, but with the luxury of a yacht.

AL: Today there's so much disposable money around and people want to treat themselves, especially in America. Now with the dollar going down, they are starting to spend more and more. Everybody is competing to see who is going to be on the most beautiful boat, on the biggest boat, or the newest boat. Annaliese is our first 85, our second 85 is finishing next month and we are now also building two of 107 metres each, but I think by the time we finish our operation we will have a 120 metre.

CS: How do you get on with the safety requirements? Does that become a greater problem as your boats get bigger?

AL: Not when you're building new... it's only when you try to convert

CS: All of your previous yachts have been brokerage yachts haven't they?

AL: Yes.

CS: Do you find it a relief to own a new yacht? It must be like having a new car with no problems.

BELOW RIGHT:
JANE BUFFINGTON
AND ANDREAS
FRASER

AL: With the new regulations and building you know exactly what authorities need, you finish the boat and you go. With many old boats, you can't go to America, you can't go here, you can't go there and the rules are getting tighter and tighter. Safety rules especially are getting tighter and I don't think safety is as bad as they are making it look.

JB: Right, I think that the authorities like to hear themselves talk.

CS: I see us in a world where people get into a position of power and they have to prove their power by changing things. If there is no change they are being ineffective.

AL: England started this business with more than 12 passengers because the shipyards in England were going bankrupt. Every year now they are making money, money, money.

JB: Money.

AL: You know we were lucky to survive, but a lot of owners had to sell their boats because of the MCA and so on... I owned Rosenkavalier, a classic yacht, not a ship, it was impossible for me on a commercial viability basis to make it MCA compliant, I had to sell, what to me was the most beautiful yacht in the world. I have to say it. That boat went seven times around the world, and they were trying to tell me it wasn't safe!

JB: It wasn't safe... that's what the English say! You hated to lose that boat.

CS: Jane, what do you think of the Annaliese concept?

JB: The concept is very strong and when the word spreads, which

takes time, more and more people will enjoy the luxury. The people that chartered it first, they're all aware and they had the desire to stay. There are lots of people and corporations in the United States that I know will want to do this trip. Debra Blackburn, who works for Fraser Yachts, just went to a major show for companies that plan corporate events and she was swamped with people wanting material. Now you realise that those people have to go back to the corporations, then the board must decide for the following year. Next year there'll be a big demand for Annaliese and Alysia with corporations wanting to entertain their big clients and

holding meetings for 36 guests. It ... it's a new era? Andreas we have to go, we're off to lunch. Thank you Andreas.

AL: Thank you both.

CS: Jane here we are at Harmony Hall, sitting on top of the Sugar Mill, having had the most stunning lunch. I am going to try to worm out of you a few of your life's stories. How you have become such a wonderful broker, renowned within the industry. Can we start with where it all began. When and where were you born?

JB: I was born in Annapolis, Maryland long ago.

CS: Tell us about your father. I believe your father died when you were quite young?

JB: My father was in the family business, which was real estate and he ran our Hopkins Furniture Company on Main Street. We had a house on one of the creeks in Annapolis with an Elko at the Dock in the backyard. My father was out on the boat with his fishing pals for the weekend when his appendix burst and peritonitis set in. This was before penicillin, and he died when he was 27 years old.

CS: You were three.

JB: Three years old.

CS: You were very young; did you have any other brothers and sisters?

JB: I had a new brother, Spencer.

