## TEST THE WATERS ON BOAT-SHARING **BOOKING SITE**

World's largest marketplace for watercraft rentals opens up the seas to all travellers



ROCHELLE LASH Hotel Intel

To go or not to go? Boating is a private, outdoorsy alternative to traditional lodging. Please follow government guidelines for inter-regional or international travel.

The website GetMyBoat.com opens up the world of water to anyone who would like a nautical outing. You simply have to surf the net to get your sea legs — and your preferred ride.

GetMyBoat is arguably the world's largest marketplace for boat rentals and all types of water experiences, with more than 130,000 outings in 184 countries that can be booked from the app or the website.

GetMyBoat co-founders Sascha Mornell and Rafael Collado pounced on the idea of boat sharing after seeing so many watercraft, large and small, sitting unused in marina slips at their home base in California. The enterprise grew from renting boats to offering every type of water experience.

Travellers can charter a catamaran in Costa Rica, a yacht in the south of France or a kayak in Croatia. GetMyBoat also has options in Mexico and Vancouver, and can sign you up for sailing lessons in Australia, Ibiza, Cyprus, Sicily and Ireland; diving excursions in Jamaica, Bali, Belize, Thailand, Israel and Greece; and deepsea fishing off the coasts of Florida, Dubai and

the Bahamas. Would you prefer to cruise and stay a while? More than 2,100 of GetMyBoat's craft are houseboats or power or sailing yachts that are outfitted for sleepovers, so you can hop from port to port along the French Riviera or take a cultural cruise through the Loire Valley, passing hilltop vineyards and quaint villages. If a staycation is your plan for this summer, GetMyBoat lists a new houseboat on glorious Lac St-François, a 45-minute drive west of Montreal.

To rent a craft, you must download the phone app or visit GetMyBoat.com. Enter your preferred destination; filter the choices by type, price and number of guests; and select dates. Once you have chosen a craft, the boat owner will respond with the price and you can confirm and prepay, or browse for another choice. Many boats are available



Listings on GetMyBoat.com include a houseboat available from Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. ROBERT DOERNER

with a captain, so you and your party can sit back and enjoy life at leisure while a professional pilots the craft.

If you are a hapless, hopeless landlubber and still want to be your own captain, most boat owners offer orientation and safety courses and help organize nautical permits, if required.

**Montreal area:** For excursions around Montreal or southeastern Ontario, the Sunset Dream is an appealing, easy-to-manoeuvre, 28-foot houseboat available for charter from its dock at Salaberry-de-Valleyfield.

The comfortable cruiser travels at 15 to 20 kilometres per hour. It was crafted by Daigno in Papineauville using sustainably sourced cedar and plywood set atop three aluminum pontoons. The Sunset Dream is brand new, although it has a rustic look, with wood-panelled interiors.

It is cleverly designed for overnights and is equipped with propane heat, air conditioning, a PlayStation, a Bluetooth sound system, a generator and solar panels for electricity. Those are welcome comforts, but a cruise is definitely shipboard living.

"Daigno's Koroc model is a floating house with a glamping vibe," said the craft's owner, Robert Doerner. "The below $IF YOU GO \dots$ 

GetMyBoat: 818-927-2148, GetMyBoat.com. Boats can be chartered with or without a captain. It's usually bringvour-own food and beverages. Add 10.5 per cent service fee for Canadian renters. **Sunset Dream houseboat:** 410 Victoria St., Salaberry-de-Valleyfield; starting at \$299 per night, for up to four people (May and Sept., weekdays), up to \$695 per night (June-Aug., weekends). Included are Wi-Fi, a barbecue and fishing gear. The boat can be delivered to other waterways within 100 kilometres, with a two-week

minimum. Orientation lessons are available. Bring your own bedding and towels. Salaberry-de-Valleyfield is a 45-minute drive from Montreal. Local tourism: 844-373-2214, beauharnois-salaberry.com, quartier-

gourmand.org. Tourisme Montérégie: 450-466-4666, 866-469-0069, monteregiejustperfect.ca.

deck seating area transforms into a double bed, and above deck, the outdoor canopy becomes a watertight tent with a queen

bed. We have a kitchenette with a two-burner stove, a fridge and a microwave, as well as a compact bathroom with a shower, a sink and a chemically activated toilet. At the dock, guests recharge electricity and refill water."

What to do: If you opt for the Sunset Dream, you can map out a short-haul excursion of two to three nights cruising Lac St-François, mooring for the night on the lake's shore in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, which in high season is a lively town popping with boutiques and outdoor cafés.

Parc Delpha-Sauvé has a water park with slides, a heated pool and tennis. Local outfitters can arrange paddleboarding, kayaking and guided fishing for walleye, bass, yellow perch and muskie.

Lac St-François is dotted with beaches that are popular for diving and swimming, and the cycling path of Parc régional de Beauharnois-Salaberry connects with 70 kilometres of waterfront

Other short-hop destinations from Salaberry-de-Valleyfield include Montreal, Lachine, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Oka and Montebello. Longer cruises of five to 10 nights can take you all the way to the Rideau Canal.

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