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LUNA MAYA IS A NATURE GIRL AT HEART, BUT THIS LEADING LADY IS ALSO VENTURING INTO THE BUSINESS REALM

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SAILING IN PARADISE

*Travel by yacht through the beautiful and remote islands of Indonesia exploring stunning blue seas and oceans, great diving spots, and blend-in with locals and traditional culture, **Dewi Irma** writes*

Photography **TANIA ARAUJO** and **SEQUOIA**



WITH MORE THAN 17,000 islands, Indonesia is indeed the world's largest archipelago. While Bali or Komodo are usually the destinations most familiar or well-known for tourists or foreign visitors, there are many more equally gorgeous and fascinating islands to visit in Indonesia.

Even though lesser-known and generally uninhabited, these idyllic and remote destinations have a lot of treasures, from an

amazing variety of volcanic scenery, marine life, vibrant cultures, and sailing and diving adventures, all waiting to be experienced. And there is simply no better way to explore, snorkel or dive the remote islands of Indonesia and beyond other than through booking or chartering a yacht, especially if you love discovering the beauty of our country's hidden tropical and marine paradises.

And more new boats keep coming to Eastern Indonesia's waterways thanks to a surge in new passengers who are attracted to cruising and more immersive travel experiences. These include the *Sequoia*,

SAILING IN COMFORT

Clockwise from above: the Sequoia yacht, where East meets West; Sky Deck to enjoy sunset or alfresco dining; the Great Room with open-air style room; a view of the Master Suite



a new luxury yacht that was launched in August.

Yessi Maya Sari and her husband Kevin M. Corcoran manage the boat under Coral Triangle Safaris (CTS). Both are passionate about sharing with other people their love of the sea, nature, sailing, diving, and culture. As such, the boat sails to a wide range of destinations within Eastern Indonesia, including Lesser Sunda Islands, Maluku and West Papua, with the price starting from US\$5,000 all-inclusive while onboard.

In September, *Indonesia Tatler* boarded the *Sequoia*'s expansive 26-by-6.65-metre area and spent six days cruising along 460 kilometres from Maumere Bay to Alor Island in East Nusa Tenggara province. Once we set foot on the *Sequoia*, it was clear to see that this boat is Indonesia-themed, with all the wood sourced locally and fashioned by Indonesian carpenters from Tana Beru in Sulawesi. This is added to with the textiles and custom-crafted Indonesian accessories that adorn the interior.

Named after the giant Sequoia tree—one of the oldest living organisms on Earth—this yacht is indeed a modern-day interpretation of the traditional Indonesian *phinisi* ship: a marriage of Indonesia's 500-year-old history of wooden boat construction in the Bugis tradition with contemporary touches and



advanced American marine technology.

On our first day, we had not yet started sailing, but our trip started with exploring Maumere and we got a glimpse of the city's major points of interest, like Alok Market and Tanjung Beach. The next morning, we didn't forget to take time to enjoy the breathtaking

sunrise at Kelimutu National Park and visit the oldest church in Flores Island located at Sikka village, as well as witnessing the ancient handicraft production of *ikat* weaving.

Afterwards, we began sailing, moving and passing through from Babi Island to Pangabatang Island to Watupeni Island to Keroko Island, then Konawe Island, Adonara Island, Pura Island, Reta Island, and Alor Island. You may never have heard of these remote locations, but they have their own immense beauty. And among the sailing and island hopping, we enjoyed everything from water activities to island exploration.

DISCOVER UNDERWATER AND HISTORY

Clockwise from above left: Diving in Alor Island; the beauty of underwater life; the oldest church on Flores Island; various ikat at Alok Market, Maumere City



ISLAND EXPLORATION

Clockwise from left: An amazing view of the tri-coloured lakes of Mount Kelimutu at sunrise; a local from Takpala village with his traditional attire; witnessing the tradition of making ikat from the cotton separation to the weaving process



Yes, the *Sequoia* is well-equipped for divers who want to enjoy underwater encounters with vibrant coral reefs and playful fish, with a dive instructor and master on board and all the necessary equipment. But other than diving, there are also snorkelling, kayaking, water-skiing, tubing, paddle-boarding, deep-sea fishing to picnics on the beach. Even if you only want to laze, there's nothing like being on undiscovered stunning beaches with no other people. Chilling out in total privacy: it is truly a luxury.

Doing a bit of island exploration is also never dull, interacting with local tribespeople and learning about their traditional cultures and daily lives. Among memorable events for us was when the children of local villages sweetly welcomed and sang to us with enthusiasm and a group of local women, selling their incredible *ikat*, were excited to board the ship and kindly taught us to weave various handcrafts.

The experience was made complete with exquisite dining options that are available on board to enjoy. From Pan Seared Salmon with Truffled Pomme Puree, Portabello Arancini with Bechamel Sauce and Pomodoro, Prawn Coriander Roll with Avocado Salsa, Gohu Tuna Fish, to Selat Solo, there are dozens of fusion

dishes of Indonesian, Asian and Western to tantalise all taste buds; it emphasised fresh, local ingredients, and we could even ask the chef to cook what we just bought from the market.

After we tired of water activities and island exploration, we returned for relaxation in a cabin, in which there are two chic deluxe cabins (Master Suite and Guest Suite) with attached bathrooms, electrical power, hot water, AC, and satellite TV, making the *Sequoia* fit for a family charter or a small group of friends. We could also relax at the galley, or on an open-air sky deck or bow deck while enjoying the sunset. Luckily, we also spotted whales that suddenly appeared, as well as migrating bats in the dawn as they headed for their roosts.

Yessi believes that Indonesia has been reborn and is on the move in many ways; it is now changing as the world wakes up to discover the limitless potential of the fourth most populous country in the world. With her safari cruise to Indonesia's beautiful and remote regions, and the willingness to encourage more improvements to Indonesia's tourism potential, she hopes that both guests and local island inhabitants can benefit from the new opportunities in Eastern Indonesia. Bon voyage! 🌐

