



About 500 B.C., these columns at Priene were located on the coast of the Gulf of Latmos, which has since silted over.

A stately schooner explores the ruins of Asia Minor

Chartering the Turkish Coast

by Libbie Johnson

Photographs by Dave Johnson

Under six working sails and always in sight of the rugged sparse hills and serrated coastline of Turkey, we cruised for two glorious weeks through the clear indigo waters of the eastern Mediterranean Sea, from Kusadasi southeast to the small island of Gemili.

Our vessel was the 51-year-old staysail schooner, *Carrina*, the first ever to carry the unusual "wishbone" aloft on the foremast. *Carrina's* rigging was further distinguished by the long foremast spar for square sail and raffles, making it easy to locate her in a crowd, even among the disorderly thicket of masts facing us in the old harbor of Rhodes, our final destination.

We wanted to see the ancient ruins of Turkey and search out the sites of three of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Most of the time we explored in the company of goats, donkeys, and rock nut-hatches rather than tourists, and after our daily ramblings we dived off the boat and doused our fatigue in cool, salty waters.

Our adventure had its beginnings seven years ago while cruising aboard *Carrina* in the Cyclades Islands of Greece. We had asked John Staniland, the British owner and captain, if there was another place in the Mediterranean that could compare with the Cyclades in cruising beauty. He and the crew, his wife and son, spoke of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas as well as other islands in the Aegean but dwelled at length on the uniqueness of cruising the unpopulated Turkish Coast. They recalled the ruins along the shores, the quiet anchorages, the feeling of being at one with past civilizations.

The more we reflected on it over the years, the more the idea of cruising along the Turkish Coast captured our imagination, too. And so, September found us

with our longtime sailing friends, Nancy and Jerry Lawson of Denver, Colorado, flying to the island of Samos, Greece, and stepping aboard *Carrina* in the harbor of Pythagorion. The Turkish mainland lay barely a mile distant across Samos Strait.

Changes had taken place since our first cruise on *Carrina*. John Staniland and his wife had retired, and the captaincy of the 54-foot schooner had passed into the able hands of their son, Ian, who had been raised aboard *Carrina*, held a Master's License, and knew the quiet, safe places to gunkhole and browse among ruins.

While we usually prefer to sail the boats we charter ourselves, we didn't care to chance unknown Turkish waters on a bareboat charter. We struck the ideal compromise with the captain. Since we were *Carrina's* last charter of the season, he reduced his crew to one and let us hoist and lower sails and anchors and get the feel of the helm. For starters, it was up with two 35-pound plows and under way in a 30-knot breeze, out the harbor of Pythagorion, and a port tack northeast toward Kusadasi, our port of entry in Turkey.

A 41-foot Rhodes Reliant was the largest boat the four of us had handled together, and by the time the first five sails were up it was clear that everything on the *Carrina* was bigger and heavier. Sail area of 1,650 square feet was a lot. The rig seemed topsy-turvy and unconventional, but the foresail riding in the wishbone looked good as we sped through the narrowest spot between Samos and Turkey at better than 7 knots. An outpost topped by a Greek flag lay to port, while to starboard lay a point of land marked by a lighthouse flying the crescent and star on a field of red, designating Turkey.

We attempted to familiarize ourselves

with the proper procedures for sailing a 35-ton yacht. The rigging appeared complex and very different from modern, conventional yachts. One would look in vain for self-tailing winches, cam cleats, slides, snaps and the variety of stainless steel go-fasts we have come to regard as essential for efficient boat handling.

We were impressed also with the sheer strength required to raise sails, achieve halyard tension acceptable to the skipper, and with the dexterity needed to make lines fast to bits in the one "right" way. One never jammed a line or cleated it in a manner that did not allow it to be thrown easily free despite the tension resulting from the large sail areas and high winds.

Kusadasi was one of only three yacht harbors we visited in Turkey. On all other occasions we sought infrequented anchorages, often those of ancient and long-deserted cities. Kusadasi is a thriving town and an increasing number of the people are involved in tourist trade. There was a spanking new harbor for the accommodation of more than a hundred medium-sized yachts.

It was 7 p.m. by the time we tied up, too late for the captain to clear customs. We had to stay aboard for the evening and await official clearance in the morning. *Carrina* was one of only five boats in the new facility. New hotels and town houses lined the harbor and backed up the hills along the coast. A large cruise ship was anchored outside the breakwater ready to off-load its passengers on the morrow for the half-hour ride to the extensive ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus, the site of the famed Temple of Diana. The sunset lent a pink flush to the haze, and a breeze whipped the official papers of the handsome and friendly young harbor master who