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# UPSCALE SAIL ABOARD THE TROPICAT

A cruise on Cabo's 65' luxury catamaran, built specifically for Los Cabos in St. Croix, is one of the best ways to enjoy the spectacular vistas at Land's End.

By: L.D. Cortés  
Photography Courtesy of Tropicat





JAZZ &amp; WINE SUNSET TOUR AT THE ARCH

## What's a trip to Cabo San Lucas without a leisurely boat spin around the infamous Arch, that ancient, majestic rock structure that dominates the view from Médano Beach?

There are countless ways to experience the pristine Cabo bay up close. City-long cruise ships, pontoons, enormous yachts, sailboats and even semi-subs gather at Land's End. But all boats are not created equally. The sleek, state-of-the-art 65-foot catamaran known as Tropicat is one of only several vessels in Cabo's boat-speckled waterway created specifically with Cabo in mind. It is one of the smoothest rides in town, thanks to its grand size and modern engineering. The Jazz and Wine Sunset Tour aboard Tropicat skimps on nothing, from freshly-prepared food to quality wine and jazz.

Indeed, what sets Tropicat apart are the same qualities that drove its owners, Steve and Annie Murphy, to commission it to be built in the first place. While the storied booze cruise is a Cabo experience unto itself, a ride on the Tropicat is all about catering to a more discriminating passenger. The sunset cruise is a relaxing, noteworthy detour that deserves an early evening slot on every well-planned Cabo itinerary.

Interestingly, while the Tropicat vessel is a relative newcomer to the charter scene here, the business' longtime owner, Steve Murphy, is not. Long before he met wife Annie, who currently manages the business end of their charter company, Murphy made waves by helming one of the first charter tour boat companies in Cabo San Lucas.

In 1983, when Cabo was still a tiny fishing village attracting only the most adventurous tourists to its mostly-unpaved, charmingly slipshod downtown watering

holes, Steve Murphy partnered up with his uncle and the owner of a brand-new catamaran so the three men could try and jump-start a charter tour business. It was a concept that had worked well in places like the Caribbean, where the tourism industry was firmly entrenched. Before settling on Cabo, Murphy's partners needed to be convinced. Why Cabo? Was the Southern Baja really ready for such a business?

But Murphy had an inkling of where Baja, and specifically Los Cabos, was going.

"I'd been here previously in 1976," he recalled, "mostly surfing and fishing, and I knew that Fonatur [the Mexican government's tourism development agency] was going to invest a lot of money here and that it was going to be Mexico's newest, biggest resort. So when my uncle and the boat's builder approached me I said, 'Boys, I think we should take this boat to Mexico.'" History

has vindicated his predictions; in 2009, it's almost unimaginable that Cabo's future as an internationally renowned resort was even a question.

Luckily, Cabo, even then, spoke for itself. His partners were enchanted with the phenomenal, temperate weather, warm waters, and unique positioning of the area, which lies near the Tropic of Cancer, at the very spot where the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific mix at Land's End. After some hurdles (e.g., charter law on the books at the time mandated that all charters operating in Mexico be built in the country), and a few phone calls to a buddy's father at the San Carlos Marina, he arranged for the Pez Gato I's construction. The first catamaran in Murphy's Cabo fleet, it was built entirely in San Carlos, México and sailed to Cabo in 1984, making it the first boat of its kind in the area.



**STEVE MURPHY**  
OVERSEEING PRODUCTION OF THE  
TROPICAT IN ST. CROIX

"We used to sail up and down Médano Beach looking for tourists to hop on the boat with us," Murphy explained, bemused. At that time, as he remembers it, the marina was mostly "sawdust." Pez Gato II and III were acquired in the 90s, by which point Murphy was making a tidy business with relatively few competitors in town. But after years appealing to a certain market—and with his brand new wife Annie in tow—he got the inspiration to do something a little different.

As Annie Murphy explains it, "My vision was, I wanted to have a boat that served nice wine, and had nice music, and none of the boats were doing that."

Her husband agreed. "We got a new partner and we went out and built the boat in St. Croix," he said. St. Croix is an island in the Caribbean, part of the Virgin Islands. They commissioned a boat that mirrored the same changes taking place in Cabo San Lucas. Something luxurious, spacious, and better equipped than the average pleasure cruiser. They wanted a boat that would appeal to a more refined clientele—the kind of people who were starting to flock to Cabo's shores in droves.

"We wanted to design something that me and my wife actually wanted to get on ourselves. We were over the booze cruise and the party boats," he said. Within four and a half months, their Virgin Islands builder

had created a luxurious catamaran unlike any other boat in Cabo. By commissioning something that looked and felt different than what was already on the market, Steve and Annie had, perhaps unwittingly, created what would become their flagship vessel. The Tropicat gets rave ratings from everyone who steps on board.

Because of its size—at 65 feet long and 30 feet across—the Tropicat provides what might be the smoothest sailing trip on the Cabo bay in a catamaran-style vessel. What's more, its select appointments and details, including a waterslide, two restrooms, and enough state-of-the-art safety and communications equipment to rival any private yacht, make the trip safe and comfortable, too.

It's not all about the boat, either. The Tropicat cruise will leave your palate (and your ears) sated. The Jazz and Wine Sunset Cruise features premium wines, delectable Mexican hors d'oeuvres and finger foods (a smorgasbord including roasted carne asada, vegetarian beans, and plates of sumptuous appetizers, cheeses, crackers, fruits and more), not to mention a great selection of contemporary jazz music on the superior sound system. The elements all come together to create an ambience that complements the spectacular scenery and jaw-dropping sunsets.

When we asked if Steve had ever considered taking his expertise to other points in Mexico and beyond, he admitted he had been asked—but had yet to relocate his heart or his business elsewhere. "I specialize in Los Cabos, in Baja, this is what I do," he explained. "There's not many places on the map that afford this many things. I see Cabo always remaining the premier destination in Mexico."

To make reservations on the Tropicat or one of the company's other charter catamaran or trimaran boats, call 624.143.3793 or email [pezsailreservations2@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:pezsailreservations2@prodigy.net.mx). The Tropicat has a 90 person capacity and can also be booked for private events. ☑

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