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RE: Letter of Recommendation for Igor Stropnik as Skipper

To Whom It May Concern

Igor Stropnik has been my skipper twice over the last 9 years, first on a 42' Catamaran on the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Croatia, and most recently on a 46' Catamaran on the Sea of Abaco in the Bahamas. Igor is so competent, so pleasant and so helpful that my wife and I plan our sailing trips around his availability. We intend to have Igor skipper our sailing adventures every two years from now on as long as we have the ability to get on and off a boat.

We first met Igor in 2006 through a friend as we set about planning a week's sail from Dubrovnik, Croatia up to Split. My wife and I are not competent blue water sailors, although we love the sport, so we need a real sailor to skipper the boats we rent. Igor lives in Ljubljana, Slovenia and grew up sailing with his parents throughout the Adriatic. He was just 21 when we first commissioned him to take our family of 3 teenagers, plus another adult friend, on a trip north along the coast. At his direction, we learned to sail a big boat that week – he had the boys and I hoisting sails, setting the anchor, docking, manning the helm, reading charts, plotting courses... He taught us proper operation of the dingy, how to listen to weather reports, respect for other boats, and how to tie a proper knot. When we handed the boat back over to the charterer and prepared to head home to the US, we felt like we were leaving a son and trusted friend behind.

We came home, bought small sailboats and kept sailing on inland lakes for the next several years, but longed for a Caribbean trip. Meanwhile, we watched Igor's blossoming sailing expertise as he earned licenses for larger and larger vessels, sailed single-handedly from the Arctic Circle past Norway and into Sweden, took Slovenian students on sailing adventures and, quite simply, lived the life I wish I could.

In 2014 we began planning a trip in the Bahamas and that same mutual friend arranged to fly Igor to Marsh Harbour to meet us in March 2015. We were able to surprise my wife, who cried when she saw he was again our skipper. He is just as competent, just as pleasant, even more helpful, but now he has a fabulous new skill: He filmed the trip and made a video log set to music for us. As much as I love his sailing style, I think it is his video work that is paying the most dividends for us. This time we were 3 couples with an average age in our Fifties and we laughed and sailed and ate... watching Igor's YouTube video of our trip puts my head right back on that boat. We will have no skipper in our future other than Igor Stropnik.

Igor speaks multiple languages. Slovenian and Croatian are his mother tongues, but his English is perfect and his sense of humor in English is superb. Igor will enjoy a beer after the boat is anchored for the day, but has no habits I would consider irresponsible. His behavior is appropriate for American and European families and adults. His attention to safety, trip details and the art of sailing are second to none.

I highly recommend Igor Stropnik as skipper of your sailing trips anywhere in the world. As I noted, we're building all future trips around his schedule.

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