

OWNER | Stephen and Sharly Chun

# DYNAMIC DUO

*Sports car lover Stephen Chun and his wife Sharly are hands-on owners of an Absolute 58 Fly, which they keep between Aberdeen and Sai Kung, and take out up to four times a week.*

WORDS NICK HUNG PHOTOS ABSOLUTE MARINE





Both Stephen and Sharly enjoy driving the Absolute 58 Fly, which is powered by two 600hp Volvo Penta D8-IPS800 engines

When you see Stephen Chun at the wheel of his Absolute 58 Fly, you see a man who loves to drive. After all, before he and his wife Sharly owned a boat, Stephen owned a black Ferrari 430 Spider, a car notable for many things including a top speed of 315kmh.

The Italian sports car may have been Stephen's pride and joy, but after the pair married, Sharly was quick to mention that the sleek speedster wasn't the most family-friendly vehicle.

"Sharly told me a sports car is only for two people and we have to think about our family. It made sense to have a boat instead of a sports car, so we started looking into it," says Stephen, who turns to his wife. "Then what happened?"

"We started having our own kids and our friends had started buying yachts, small ones," says Sharly, not missing a beat. "We realised owning a small yacht doesn't cost that much, especially if you get a licence and drive it yourself, like we do. You don't need to hire crew, except maybe part-time to keep it clean."

As their interest firmed up, Stephen started researching yachts online just as he had researched sports cars. But before deciding on a yacht, they needed somewhere to keep it, so were fortunate when a friend offered them a swing mooring in Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter.

"It's very hard to get a berth in Hong Kong, so we were very lucky our friend was able to rent a mooring to us cheaply," says Stephen, who works in



the garment industry. "This reduced one major cost."

It also influenced the size of their yacht as the mooring only allowed for up to 50ft. After a lot of research, Stephen found a pre-owned Ferretti Yachts 500 that fit the bill, buying the yacht in 2013.

The pair both obtained a pleasure vessel operator licence, but needed a little time and help to become confident of making their way in and out of the crowded Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter.

Says Stephen: "We had a part-time boat boy who assisted us for the first month as we were driving the boat. We were a bit nervous at first because the typhoon shelter is so tight, but after a month we got used to it and were confident enough to do it by ourselves after that. We drove the boat ourselves for five years."

#### ABSOLUTE CONVERTS

During this time, the pair – who regularly attend the Cannes Yachting Festival – became increasingly aware of Absolute. Many of their friends owned models by the Italian builder, represented by Absolute Marine in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong since 2014.

"I'd seen many Absolute models such as the 45, 50 and 52 Fly because my friends had them. I found them very spacious. The 45 was bigger than our Ferretti 500," Stephen says. "I started liking the brand and their designs. We found out the boats were very stable, with easy maintenance. Two of our friends had the 58 and we went on their boats many times."



Both Sharly and Stephen have powerboat licences, although they initially hired a captain when they bought the 58 Fly

Sharly recalls the 58 Fly making a strong impression on them, so they started visualising having their own. Then they began talking details with Thomas Woo of Absolute Marine, which has sold 40 Absolute yachts in the last seven years.

"When we were visiting our friends' 58, we started looking at the options we wanted for when we moved into our own," says Sharly, who works in finance. "Thomas gave us a lot of suggestions such as a hard

top with an electric sunroof and an extendable sunshade at the back. The price was very reasonable, good value for money."

The yacht arrived in 2018, just two months after they finally secured a mooring at Aberdeen Boat Club after being on the waiting list for six years. As the 58 Fly was brand-new and a bit bigger than they were used to, they hired a full-time captain and boat boy to drive and maintain the boat.



The couple met in Hong Kong, having both studied abroad – Stephen in the US, Sharly in Australia and New Zealand





Stephen says it can sometimes take just 15 minutes to get from their home in Kowloon Tong to Aberdeen Boat Club, where they keep their Absolute 58 Fly most of the year

Stephen and Sharly still both drove as often as they could and said an initial challenge was switching from shaft drives to the Volvo Penta IPS system, then in its third generation.

"We weren't too familiar with IPS, but once you get used to it, it's easy, especially for the berthing, Sharly says. "You can choose which side to be when you park because the flybridge helm is on the left and downstairs it's on the right. Also, the visibility of the lower helm station is really good compared to other boats and I love having a door there because it helps with lines and berthing."

**FAMILY TIME**

The family lives in Kowloon Tong, which has good tunnel access to Aberdeen, while in the summer, they sometimes berth the boat at Club Marina Cove for access to Sai Kung.

After receiving the 58, they used it regularly, once or twice a week, yet last year they began to use it even more often, up to three or four times a week.

"We go out a lot. From Kowloon Tong, it can sometimes take only 15 minutes to drive to Aberdeen without traffic," says Stephen. "From Aberdeen, we often cruise to Deep Water Bay or if we're in Sai Kung, we love going to Tsam Chuk Wan. It's a different experience in Sai Kung to the South Side."

Like many in Hong Kong, Stephen and Sharly have enjoyed many more overnight trips since last year and their favourite activities include fishing at night, including for squid in May and June.

The whole family enjoys swimming and playing with their water toys, which include a Sea-Doo jetski, paddleboard, kayaks and an inflatable Fiesta Island, which is ideal for kids – and adults armed with champagne.

"We do a lot of overnights," says Sharly. "Our kids love it and it's like going on a vacation. The kids love kayaking and paddling. All of us love the Fiesta – we let the kids go first and have fun, then once they've finished, the adults go in and drink our 'bubbles'."

Although it's typically only the four of them who stay on overnight trips, Stephen and Sharly often invite their parents, brothers and sisters for the day and hook up with other boat-owning friends, many of whom have an Absolute.

"Sometimes when we take my family and Sharly's family, we can have 12 or 16 people on board in the day," Stephen says. "Sometimes, friends join us and we all park together. It's a fun crowd."

**HONG KONG FRIENDLY**

Sharly enjoys hosting family and friends, and says the 58 Fly is ideal for entertaining in Hong Kong, where many enjoy the outdoors but not direct sunlight.

Just the flybridge itself has three separate social areas. Add in the large foredeck, the covered aft cockpit and the swim platform, and there's plenty of places for cocktails on board, once you've had enough of floating in the Fiesta.

Says Sharly: "The extra cover on the flybridge is really useful, especially for me and my friends because there are many places in the shade we can go when it's happy hour! It's really good for my female friends, who don't want too much sun. We have so many areas on the boat we can hang out."

As the couple have become comfortable driving the 58-footer by themselves, they've only had a boat boy look after the yacht since last year and don't employ a captain anymore.

Viewing the boat's design from both the perspective of owners and crew, they highlight the engine-room access from the aft crew cabin as another key feature.

"A lot of other boats this size don't have this and they need to enter the engine room from a cockpit hatch, which is not ideal if you have guests," he says.

"Overall, it's easy for us to take the boat out. Most of the time I drive while Sharly looks after the kids. Our only regret is not ordering the sky anchor (Dynamic Positioning System). When we ordered the boat, we thought a captain would drive the boat most of the time, but now we're doing it all ourselves."

As happy as the couple are with the 58 Fly, it doesn't stop them casting an eye around for another yacht in the future.

They've already taken a strong fancy to Absolute's new Navetta 64, which debuted in late 2020. The model has already received over a year's worth of orders due to its many innovations including the option of an interior beach club in the stern that can convert to a waterfront cabin.

"We like the Navetta 64. We love the beach club. It's the first time we've seen this," Stephen says. "One day, if we upgrade our boat, we'd like to use it in and around Italy before it comes over to Hong Kong. We've been to the Cannes show many times and we love this part of Europe."

After all, Stephen has a track record of upgrading within a brand. He may have given up his 430 Spider to get his first boat, but that didn't stop him from buying another black Ferrari last summer, this time a 488 Spider, packing over 600hp and a top speed of 325kmh. It seems like you can take the boy out of the sports car, but you can't take the sports car out of the boy. ☺

[www.absoluteyachts.com](http://www.absoluteyachts.com)

The large swim platform (below) is a hub of daytime activity and a comfortable area for drinks and relaxation, as is the flybridge (above)

