

# Aquacast

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**Beaufort**  
CHARTERS

## Thanks for a good year

As this is written we have more or less finished our fishing year and what a year it's been.

It has been our best yet with no sign of a recession and many thanks to all our customers who have supported Aquavitesse. It's great to see so many of you coming back time after time and thanks also for referring your friends to us.

The coverage we have received in the press and on television has certainly helped, read all about it in the attached articles.

Please look at the new feedback section on the website, comments like those certainly makes the skipper feel good.

[www.aquavitesse.co.uk/sea-fishing-comments.php](http://www.aquavitesse.co.uk/sea-fishing-comments.php)

We have many things left on the boat such as jackets, fleeces etc and over the year the loose change that has been "lost" on the boat has been collected and after Beaufort Charters matched the amount we were able to make a reasonable donation to the R.N.L.I.. Many thanks from the Brighton lifeboat.

The 2010 calendar is now on the website, along with our 2010 prices, so if you want the best tides now is the time to book.

We look forward to seeing you all next year, and in 2010 will you be able to make it into the famous "AQUAVITESSE" best of the month" photos?

[www.aquavitesse.co.uk/sea-fishing-photos.php](http://www.aquavitesse.co.uk/sea-fishing-photos.php)



# Casting out for the catch of the day



**BY EWAN FLETCHER**

**A**ny viewer of those Boy's Own-style TV adventure shows like *Trawlermen* and the deadliest *Catch* knows fishing isn't all about sitting by a foul-smelling canal catching shopping trolleys.

But while the *Perfect Storm*, shredded nets and oilskins may seem far away from London, they can be found (well some of them anyway) an hour's train ride from town. It is easy to forget the proximity of the capital to the waves. Beyond the Thames Barrier is the North sea, while 50 miles south lies the Channel. And the ports dotting the coast boast small armadas of boats on which you can answer the call of the ocean.

## The Skipper

I opted for Brighton, having heard a tale (not from a toothless mariner, but via the internet) of a knowledgeable skipper who hunted monster fish, including conger eels, sea bass and cod, lurking in the hulls of wrecks far out to sea. He only keeps fish that will be eaten that day. The others are returned unharmed, making the most sustainable method of fishing. Surprisingly, Noel West turned out to be no relation of tuna king John, nor was he concerned about my lack of a beard, or ocean-going skills. After I'd signed up he offered one warning "there's a bit of a breeze forecast," he said, "so the sea might be a little lumpy". Luckily, I'd followed his advice to take a seasickness pill the night before and drink plenty of ginger beer in the morning. For those who failed to heed it, including the *Lite* photographer, a day of queasiness awaited. For me it was superb fun.

## Tactics

Noel took nine of us, ranging in age from 16 to 68 and from novices to experts, 13 miles out into the Channel. His boat is extremely powerful, making the journey a speedy thrill in itself. On arrival in the shipping lanes, with vast tankers and warships steaming by, he announced our quarry for the day: "Great big cod". We were given rods, reels, lines and hooks, and Noel positioned the boat to drift over a wreck - a Second World War cargo ship. At the exact moment we passed over the wreck we lowered our hooks until they hit its deck. Then we slowly reeled them in, trying to entice predatory fish out of their hiding places in the hull. Noel kept one eye on the computer screen and excitedly called out when we drifted over the far edge, telling us to lower the lines again. Feeding fish - the ones most likely to try biting the bright rubber fish we used to disguise our hooks - like to shelter from the tide behind the wrecks so this was the best moment to catch.

## Taking the bait

Of course, fishing isn't that easy, and after a couple of drifts I'd caught nothing, so Noel suggested I change bait. A pink jelly fish was exchanged for an orange rubber worm. As he tied it on he told me his father had given him this particular lure 20 years ago so I should be careful. It had a lot of sentimental value. Lowering it on to the wreck I felt a tug. The heavy rod started bending, "I think I've got one," I yelled. But the only thing I'd caught was the sunken ship itself. There was a snap.

Oops. But my fear of being keelhaunched soon turned to laughter as Noel's angry expression vanished and he pulled out an identical lure from a large bag. I'd been the victim of a nautical joke.

## Success

Ten minutes later the rod bent double again. I had a fish, and a big one at that. Pulling it up 50 metres was surprisingly hard work and my arms soon ached. But the excitement of knowing I was battling a mysterious sea monster was thrilling. Finally it hit the surface and was netted by Noel. I had a 14lb. cod. Enough to make 200 fish fingers. Having been dispatched with a wooden club known as a priest because "it administers the last rites" it was put in a coolbox and fishing resumed.

## Total Haul

By the end of the day the nine of us had 20 cod and a few mackerel, whiting and pollock. Everyone had caught something and even those feeling a bit green around the gills could say they'd enjoyed their time at sea. Afterwards, popping into a pub in Brighton for a beer with my crew mates, I felt like a real fisherman. The passengers on the train back to London noticed I smelt like one too, but the prospect of the freshest of fish that night made it worth it.

# Top restaurateur goes to sea in search of “wild food”

**BY JULIAN LEEFE-GRIFFITHS**



*Julian with some nice “pan size cod”*

*Julian’s restaurants are:  
The Black Pig and Dining Room  
Tunbridge Wells 01892 523030  
and The George and Dragon  
Speldhurst Kent  
01892 863125*

Now if you like wild and organic, the sea is not a bad place to start. I’m not saying the English Channel is perfect, but while I was out there, I did not see anyone spraying pesticides or spreading dodgy fertiliser - just wild fish in a wild sea.

I actually went wreck fishing with my fellow chef Kris Gorniak from The Black Pig restaurant, on board Brighton based Aquavitesse skippered by Noel West.

We left Brighton on a clear bright day and headed out into the blue yonder. we were hoping for a mixed bag of fish, which the channel can really deliver as all around Britain we have the most diverse fish stocks.

First catch of the day was the ever helpful mackerel, enticed onto the hook by shiny feathers. It did its best to play the game and soon we had caught over 25. The next fish was not quite so ready for the pan; sea bass is one of the more difficult fish to catch and it lived up to its reputation.

So time to move on.

On the next wreck, an old WW11 warship, we changed bait and started on the cod and pollack, which lept into the boat as though it could not wait to get on the menu.

After 15 fish or so the waves got up a bit and the sky started to blacken. Time to make for port and home after a very successful day sea-foraging.

The good thing about this type of fishing is that it is low impact. No big factory ship destroying everything in its wake, no damage to the seabed and no disturbance to secondary sea life. All sustainable, all organic, all fresh.

Noel the skipper of Aquavitesse is really helpful and is both knowledgeable, friendly and caters for everyone, be they sea-angling experts or complete beginners.

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**Thanks for a good year**  
*see you in 2010*

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