

THE PANTAENIUS MAGAZINE

# YACHTING NEWS

2026/27

## **SUPERYACHT REFIT**

KEEPING IT SIMPLE  
A CIRCULAR APPROACH  
REFIT AND INSURANCE

## **BEHIND THE CLAIMS**

WHEN EVERY HOUR COUNTS

## **BARBADOS**

LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE



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*Cover: "Her Treasure at the Shipyard", Illustration: Hinnerk Bodendieck/Pantaenius*

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Do you have any thoughts, ideas, or questions about the  
Yachting News you want to share with us?  
*Feel free to write to [news@pantaenius.com](mailto:news@pantaenius.com)*



*Asia-Pacific Superyacht Summit 2026*

Editorial

## REMOVING THE FRICTION

Japan has long been one of Asia's great untapped cruising grounds: spectacular scenery, a vast coastline, unmatched safety and service. Yet for visiting superyachts it has remained a surprisingly difficult destination. That is changing – faster than many in our industry have noticed.

At the Asia-Pacific Superyacht Summit in Kobe in May – the first held in Japan – the consensus was encouraging: the remaining obstacles are the kind that can be removed.

The typhoon season is a planning question, not a barrier. Captains manage comparable systems elsewhere, and Japan's dense port network offers well-protected shelter. Regulation, too, is further along than its reputation: initial clearance remains formal, but yachts can now cruise between ports much like domestic vessels, and crew passes cover the entire stay. The genuine gap is charter – for foreign-flagged yachts the framework is still unresolved. Until it lands, Japan is primarily a private cruising destination; given what it offers, no small market.

What is still developing is the specialist layer around yachts over 30 metres: dedicated repair capacity, spares, experienced suppliers. And from an insurer's perspective: not every yard yet carries the liability cover common in established hubs. That is no reason to stay away – but a reason to check arrangements before work begins.

China is at an earlier stage, but moving. Hainan has become China's testing ground for a yachting economy, and since May a pilot scheme allows Hong Kong- and Macau-registered

yachts into nine Greater Bay Area cities without the customs guarantees that once made mainland cruising impractical.

The lesson is the same in both markets: the opportunity lies in removing friction. A quay takes years to build; a rule can change with a signature – and the signatures are being made. The Asia-Pacific may well be our industry's most significant opportunity of the coming decade.



Martin Baum  
Managing Director  
Pantaenius



*A River Yacht turning a new chapter with a major conversion. (Photos/Illustration: Navalmartin)*

Art of Refit

## KEEPING IT SIMPLE

**For naval architect Valentin Martin, the best refits aren't about adding more luxury, but making smarter decisions that keep owners on the water.**

For many yacht owners, a refit begins with a wish list of modernisation, plush interiors, upgraded beach clubs and hi-tech entertainment systems that all promise to breathe new life into their boat. For Valentin Martin, however, the most successful refits rarely begin with adding more. Instead, they start with one simple principle: restraint.

"We always advise to keep it simple," Martin says. "Simplicity is key."

It's advice learnt not just through Martin's decades of professional experience, but through a lifetime spent on the water.

A trained naval architect, Martin worked in classification and yacht design before co-founding Navalmartin alongside his wife, naval architect and chartered engineer Dr Daria Cabai.

The London-based firm specialises in yacht design, offshore projects, marine surveying and technical marine consulting.

Martin also grew up sailing on his dad's boat in the South of France and is himself a long-time classic boat owner, so understands the challenges that come with yacht ownership first-hand.

"I appreciate the realities of keeping boats seaworthy — and the value of simplicity when wanting to extend their use," he says.

After more than 20 years owning and racing the same classic wooden yacht, the 15m cutter St Christopher, Martin knows that maintaining a boat is an ongoing commitment rather than a one-off job.

"There's no hiding from it," he says with a laugh. "It's varnishing every year, it's injectors, winches, sails, wear and tear; dissimilar materials constantly jousting with one another." What's more, he oversees his own refits with a team he can deploy, a van full of tools and a schedule he tries to stick to — "otherwise you stop having fun".

Rather than viewing these tasks as a burden, however, Martin sees them as an investment in experiences.

"I don't think about it as money, it's a capital of experiences, time well spent and a good education for our young son who is starting to race," he says.

There's also the pure pleasure of sailing at sea. "It's the most glorious feeling of achievement, having crossed oceans on a boat you've dismantled, put back together and tested until the natural apprehensions give way to confidence" he says.

### STICKING TO THE PLAN

It's a feeling he wishes more people could experience for themselves. Part of Martin's role involves investigating refits that have gone wrong, often stepping in as the technical expert in legal disputes between owners and shipyards.

The reasons can be varied: "the boat is delayed, the class certifications don't land, the colours don't match or the anticipated charter revenues fail to materialise.", he explains.

In today's market, those risks are arguably greater than ever. Refit yards are busy, contractors are in high demand and scheduling has become increasingly challenging. "The yachting sector is fully busy," Martin says. "A lot of suppliers

are happy to take on projects, and once the vessel is in dry dock, things can escalate."

That is why planning, he says, is just as important as craftsmanship. Before a single tool is picked up, owners need a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and, just as importantly, what they are not.

"It's up to owners to really organise their decision process and their scope so that the program, hopefully, sticks to the plan," he says.

Any variation after work has started is an opportunity for timelines or budgets to shift, he cautions.

Realistic expectations — and communication — is also key.

"A lot of owners are not well prepared for the disappointment that comes with a boat not being ready for the season, or the boat not being completed according to the budget," he says.

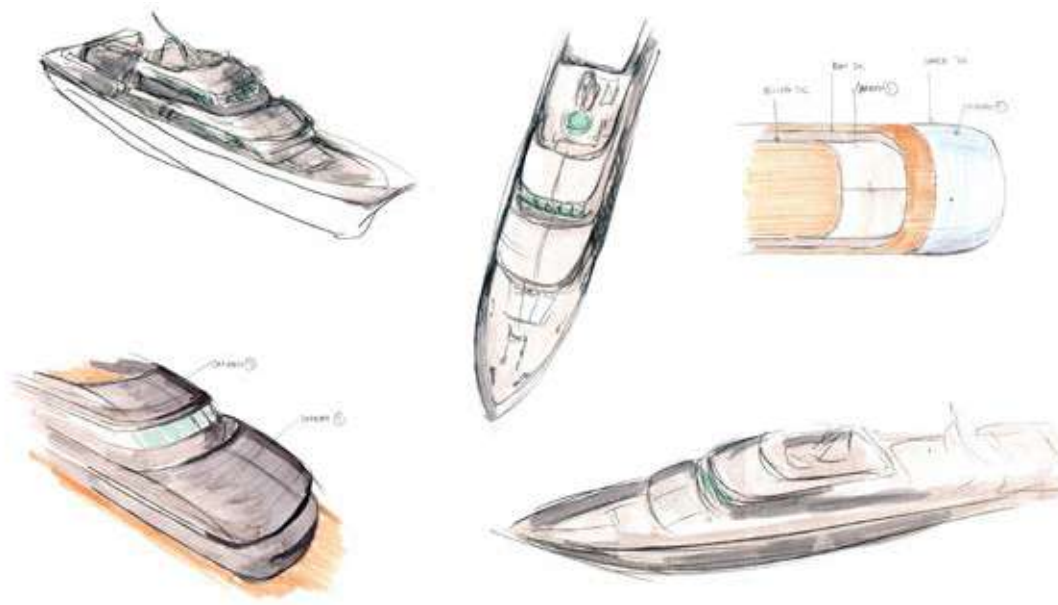
"Unfortunately, a lot of project managers might not have the experience to forewarn about the difficult conversations that come at the 11th hour."

That's why, more often than not, Martin and his team are called in to arbitrate "when projects begin to drift out of control".

### CLASSIC V CHARTER

But when it does go right, the results are incredibly rewarding, says Martin.

*Sifting through the concepts: What to retain and what to remodel*



Martin recently inspected the celebrated J Class yacht Shamrock V following an extensive restoration and the work undertaken by the late Feargus Bryan and under the sharp eye of Paul Spooner and Captain Beken demonstrates how well-planned and executed refits can preserve both heritage and performance.

"This is a beautiful vessel with the highest pedigree you can imagine," he says. "The work had been done so diligently."

As the only wooden yacht in the J Class fleet, Martin appreciates the challenges of Shamrock's refit and its return among a high performance fleet. "In order to still be relevant on the racing circuit, it has to paddle twice as fast because the other Js have the advantage of modern structures and composite sails," he explains.

But there was one distinct advantage as the historic vessel went into the yard after having been structurally compromised in 2017 in Bermuda: "an owner that is conscious of the significance of its pedigree," he says.

Restoring classic yachts can involve making tough decisions that might impact the authenticity of the vessel. "These refits come with tears, sweat and blood because it's painful to take everything apart, to lift everything and ask the hard questions: do we put it back to keep the authenticity? Or

do we replace and dilute the essence of the original vessel?" he says.

For more recently launched motor yachts approaching their half-life refit, the considerations aren't always the same.

"These refits have a slightly different scheme in mind," he explains. "It's about upgrading the surfaces, the soft furnishings, or amenities and technology."

While these might add value for a charter operation, it might not necessarily prolong the value of the yacht as a "timeless beauty" he says.

#### BABY STEPS

Martin's expertise is called upon to scrutinise refit specifications or to advise owners who are buying a vessel with the intent to refit immediately. "More often than not, we try to stay true to the identity of the vessel, its make and fabric," he says.

One of the biggest mistakes Martin sees is owners attempting to fundamentally reinvent a yacht rather than improve it. He compares the reality of extending decks, adding swimming pools, and other major changes to a long string of dominoes that are ready to tumble when you shuffle or redesign the vessel.

*In the wake of Hurricanes: The many remits of salvage: the triage of the candidates for refit vs disposal*





*Passenger yachts and converted ships: When pathways cross*

"It's always complex," he says. "If you make a significant conversion, you have to reclassify a vessel from new and that can instigate many foundational aspects to be revisited, such as certification, structural foundations, the load line length, the intact and damage stability or even operational limitations"

The advice he shares is always the same.

"Baby steps. There's always a string of winter works as opposed to a big, heavy, painful refit."

Rather than commissioning an extensive project immediately, Martin encourages owners to spend time living with the boat first.

#### **CLEAR VISION**

"Use the boat as it is, as imperfect as it might be and really narrow down what needs to be changed," he says.

Too often, he believes, owners create lengthy refit lists before understanding how they will actually use the yacht.

"Sometimes it's easy to produce a hundred-point refit sheet without having really gone through the good and the bad and asking ourselves what we have learnt from the use of the boat for half a season," he says. It's also essential for the owner to have a clear vision and not be swayed by what

others suggest are needed, particularly in terms of trends that are evolving in the charter market — for instance, the need for a tender garage to carry an array of tenders and toys. "You can hire them," he smiles!

Ultimately, he believes, every decision should come back to the same question: will it make yacht ownership simpler, more enjoyable and therefore more durable?

That's the key to a successful refit in Martin's book. Rather than judging the outcome solely by the quality of the paintwork, the sophistication of the electronics or the size of the investment, success lies in whether it gets owners back on the water with confidence.

"The greatest refit we see is when the owners actually go sailing again and catch their reward: the serenity of a sunset over the horizon enjoyed from the vantage point of a dependable boat."



**Valentin Martin**

*Valentin Martin is a naval architect, sailor, expert witness, salvor and all round boat enthusiast at Navalmartin, based in London, UK.*

Following the Ancient Voyaging Routes to New Zealand

# SUPPORTING PACIFIC CRUISING FOR SUPER- AND CRUISING YACHTS

**Whether your yacht requires a major refit or routine maintenance, Orams Marine in Auckland, NZ has become a key destination for Pacific cruising yachts and superyachts.**

**A**s the Pacific cyclone season approaches, many yachts begin the familiar migration south, tracing routes once navigated centuries ago by Polynesian explorers aboard Waka Hourua, the legendary double-hulled voyaging canoes that carried settlers across the Pacific to Aotearoa, New Zealand.

For modern superyachts and cruising yachts alike, New Zealand offers more than just a safe haven. It is a destination of dramatic landscapes, rich maritime history, world-class marine services, and some of the finest cruising grounds in the South Pacific.

Whether arriving from Tahiti on a south-westerly passage or sailing due south from Fiji, the journey to New Zealand is as memorable as the destination itself.

## LANDFALL IN THE BAY OF ISLANDS

For many sailors, the first landfall is the spectacular Bay of Islands. After days at sea, there is a moment every voyager remembers: the first scent of land carried on the wind.

New Zealand's subtropical native bush has a distinctive freshness, and after an eight-day crossing from Tahiti, it can seem almost impossibly vivid.

Approaching the Bay of Islands, arriving yachts are often welcomed by pods of dolphins playing in the bow wave. Clearance into New Zealand can be completed in Opuia, while larger superyachts may continue directly to Auckland and berth in the heart of the city.

The Bay of Islands holds a special place in New Zealand's history. Kororāreka, now Russell, was once the country's first capital and remains rich with colonial heritage. Nearby Waitangi is home to the Treaty Grounds, where New Zealand's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, was signed in 1840. Today, the beautifully presented cultural site includes museums, traditional carving houses, and the world's largest ceremonial waka.

Beyond its history, the Far North is a cruising paradise. White sand beaches, hidden coves, emerald islands, and

*Orams offers comprehensive marine facilities including 75-tonne, 85-tonne, and 820-tonne travel lifts. (Photo: Orams Marine)*



exceptional diving define the region. Divers can explore the famous Rainbow Warrior wreck, one of the Pacific's most iconic dive sites.

### **CRUISING SOUTH THROUGH THE HAURAKI GULF**

Heading south toward Auckland, yachts pass through some of New Zealand's most celebrated marine environments.

The Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve is internationally regarded as one of the world's premier dive destinations. Home to one of the planet's largest sea caves, the reserve teems with marine life including manta rays, eagle rays, schools of blue maomao, and countless subtropical fish species.

Further south lies Kawau Island, offering safe anchorages in nearly every weather condition. Bon Accord Harbour is a favourite stop, while Mansion House, once the home of Governor Sir George Grey, provides a glimpse into New Zealand's colonial past.

Entering the Hauraki Gulf, sailors encounter an extraordinary marine playground of islands, secluded beaches, and sheltered anchorages. Resident pods of dolphins and orca are frequent companions, while the gulf's countless islands offer endless opportunities for exploration.

### **AUCKLAND: THE SUPERYACHT HUB OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC**

At the heart of it all is Auckland — New Zealand's largest city and one of the Southern Hemisphere's leading marine destinations. With marinas catering to everything from small cruising yachts to 140-metre superyachts, Auckland combines world-class infrastructure with the convenience of an international city.

Located in the centre of Auckland's waterfront precinct, Orams Marine has become a key destination for Pacific cruising yachts and superyachts seeking maintenance, refit support, and a safe base during cyclone season.

Orams offers comprehensive marine facilities including 75-tonne, 85-tonne, and 820-tonne travel lifts, a slipway, 60m work sheds, and marina berths accommodating vessels up to 90 metres. The precinct brings together highly skilled marine trades in one location, including painters, boatbuilders, electricians, engineers, fabricators, riggers, and canvas specialists. With Craig Park at the helm since 1987, Orams has established itself as the leading superyacht refit destination in the South Pacific. The team combines extensive expertise from across the marine industry, including former Alloy Yachts craftsmen, ex-superyacht crew,

and highly skilled tradespeople, all united by a passion for the yachting industry.

For visiting yachts, the appeal extends well beyond technical capability. Orams also assists with New Zealand arrival clearance, provisioning, concierge services, and tender storage in its secure dry stack facility. Whether undertaking a full maintenance period or preparing for another Pacific season, yachts have access to everything required in one convenient location.

Whether your yacht requires a major refit or routine maintenance — from antifouling and driveline work to main engine service and pump overhauls — can be completed efficiently while owners and crew enjoy everything Auckland has to offer.

### **EXPLORING AUCKLAND'S ISLAND BACKYARD**

One of Auckland's greatest attractions is that world-class cruising begins just minutes from the marina.

Rangitoto Island, the Hauraki Gulf's iconic volcanic cone, rises dramatically from the sea as a protected nature reserve with walking tracks and lava caves to explore.

Only 20 nautical miles from downtown Auckland lies Waiheke Island, renowned for its vineyards, acclaimed restaurants, art galleries, native bush walks, and beautiful beaches. For many visiting yachts, Waiheke becomes an extended stop rather than a day trip.

Further offshore, Aotea Great Barrier Island offers an entirely different experience. Around 60 nautical miles from Auckland, Great Barrier is home to the world's first island Dark Sky Sanctuary, with vast stretches of native forest and pristine coastline untouched by large-scale development. FitzRoy Harbour provides secure anchorage in almost any weather and serves as the gateway to one of New Zealand's most unspoiled cruising destinations.

### **A NATURAL PACIFIC DESTINATION**

For generations, voyagers have crossed the Pacific guided by stars, currents, and trade winds toward the islands of the south. Today's cruising yachts and superyachts continue that tradition, discovering that New Zealand offers not only refuge from cyclone season, but a destination rich in culture, scenery, adventure, and marine expertise.

From first landfall in the Bay of Islands to the refit facilities of Auckland and the remote anchorages beyond, Orams Marine supports every stage of the Pacific cruising journey welcoming yachts to one of the world's great sailing destinations.

# A PROGRESSIVE, IMPACTFUL, AND CIRCULAR APPROACH

**Refit means that owners invest in the yacht's value and its prolonged lifecycle, while shipyards prolong their relationship with the client.**

Just as the concept and approach of luxury are evolving, so are yachts and their auxiliary services. For the latter, refit plays a crucial role, which aligns with the UN Environment Program's "R Strategies" on circularity. These cover the full life cycle of a material or product, including strategies such as rethinking or refusing during sourcing and production, repairing or repurposing during use, and recycling at the end of its life. While R Strategies are no longer solely focused on the fast-fashion industry, they are also gaining momentum and driving change across other industries. And luxury is no exception.

## "R" STRATEGIES AS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Whether automotive, fashion, or yachting, the concept stays the same: clients bring their product back to the brand, the manufacturer, who refreshes it for prolonged joy and usage. Ferrari has its Genuine Maintenance Program, Chanel and Hermès offer repair and maintenance services, and shipyards, such as Lürssen and Oceanco, are integrating "Refit as a service" into their offerings.

Enhancing lifespans and addressing lifecycles are forms of sustainability that, however, do not compromise customization, comfort, or experiences. And this is where the power of refit lies. Even after some operational time, a refit can address necessary regulatory requirements or owners' discretionary changes through an incremental

approach: from smaller (interior) changes to substantial transformations, such as a rebuild. Let's have a look at the luxury trends of (1) impact (also known as sustainability) and (2) wellbeing (including going back to nature) and how they can be integrated into refit.

## 1. IMPACT

Progressive luxury means going above one's hedonism and naturally contributing to society and the environment. Whether it is providing an impact through innovation, education, or contribution. All, which is achievable through refit. Examples from other luxury industries and from the yachting industry give inspiration for opportunities.

### 1.1 PRE-OWNED INTERIORS

High-end cars, handbags, and watches are already given a second life through pre-owned programs. So why not offer the same for yacht interiors? Instead of furniture and accessories ending up in storage, they could find a new home and even come with a story. Alternatively, objects on board can be refurbished. Dornbracht, for example, offers a ReCrafted program for its timeless icons. This, in turn, results in, e.g., a reduced carbon footprint and saved materials.

### 1.2 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION AND EDUCATION

In tropical resorts, marine protection initiatives are already integral. The Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru in the

*Dasha Moranova Designs developed the project "Senses" offering immersive digital and natural experiences.  
(Photo: Dasha Moranova Designs)*





Shipyards such as Oceanco are integrating “Refit as a service” into their offerings. (Photo: Oceanco)

Maldives, for example, has an on-island marine research center and is engaged in marine conservation programs. Linked to yachting, yachts can naturally contribute to scientific purposes while cruising, such as contributing to mapping the seabed. Non-profit organizations like the SeaKeepers Society support owners in integrating research initiatives on board. Children and (charter) guests alike can learn about the ocean, marine ecosystems, and their biodiversity, and can be part of meaningful measures.

## 2. WELLBEING

Luxury is a feeling. Thus, feeling good is as important on land as on sea, and wellbeing and longevity are key drivers of contemporary luxury. Hereby, nature plays a fundamental role. Either as a design inspiration or to be more connected to the naturally given surroundings.

### 2.1 SPACE FOR SPACES AND NATURE

When thinking about wellbeing, the spa and a multi-sensory approach take center stage. As water has a natural calming power (cf. Blue Mind Theory by Dr. Wallace J. Nichols), being closer to this given environment makes sense. Dasha Moranova Designs teamed up with Lateral, VBH, and Sonance for the project “Senses” offering immersive digital and natural experiences with features such as sound healing or a meditation pod, all enhanced by “Free Form Bulkheads” for an almost 360-degree ocean view.

Wellbeing can further act as a guiding principle throughout the yacht and its operations. While the latest sandstone-colored Technogym equipment or a cryotherapy chamber is fantastic, the holistic approach should also address crew spaces that affect their wellbeing. Only then are a yacht and the on-board experience truly aligned. The rebuilt Draak by Oceanco showcases exactly this, with enhanced and extended crew areas to support crew wellbeing. A state that can be further enhanced by nature-inspired design principles.

### 2.2 BIOPHILIC DESIGN AND BIOMIMICRY

Natural materials and light, round shapes, and earthy colors are scientifically proven to enhance harmony and health. This design principle is called biophilic design. The Maldivian resort Joali Being is built around a spa with a dedicated well-being approach and features biophilic design throughout the resort and villas. Beyond that, biomimicry is another discipline that draws on principles from nature that can be applied to design and even engineering solutions. Hereby, refit could be part of advancing new approaches and giving inspiration for new-build projects.

### THE REFIT IMPACT

Consequently, the forms and benefits (for the individual, the yacht, or the environment) of refit are manifold. Owners hereby invest in the yacht’s value and its prolonged lifecycle, which also offers the opportunity to become pioneers. While comfort on board increases, so does the attractiveness to charter guests.

In turn, refit-as-a-service supports shipyards in prolonging their relationship with the client and offers a progressive approach towards a more sustainable future. Those shipyards that understand the trends and mindset shifts stay ahead and can proactively offer co-creative opportunities with partners and concepts. Overall, the yacht could become not only a sanctuary that improves wellbeing for the owner, but also for the crew, everyone involved, and the planet. Because then, it is a true luxury with impact. And maybe even the greatest one?



**Dr. Julia Riedmeier**

*International luxury brand strategist and founder of Code \ Luxe. Since 2010, she has advised and taught across the luxury industry, focusing on brand transformation in automotive, hospitality, and yachting.*



Refit and Insurance

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS DURING A SUPERYACHT REFIT

Superyacht refits are increasingly complex projects, and for owners, captains, managers, and shipyards, insurance has become one of the most challenging elements to navigate.

Superyacht refits are increasingly complex projects, and for owners, captains, managers, and shipyards, insurance has become one of the most challenging elements to navigate. Understanding how the risk changes during a yard period is essential.

## HULL INSURANCE: PROTECTING THE PHYSICAL ASSET

Hull underwriters require detailed information about a refit, including the scope of work, contractors involved, the selected yard, hot-work plans, project timelines, and most importantly, the yacht's value at each stage. An outdated valuation exposes owners to the risk of underinsurance—especially during major refits where value increases incrementally.

Insurers will also ask if there are any waivers of subrogation in the refit contracts or any clauses limiting the insurers' rights to seek recourse against the yard. These waivers shift liability away from the shipyard and onto the yacht's insurer and often carry an additional premium.

## P&I AND CREW-RELATED LIABILITIES

Protection & Indemnity (P&I) cover remains in force during refit periods, but insurers still need to be informed. P&I cover remains essential, as the owner retains liabilities toward crew,

contractors, subcontractors, and third parties while in the yard. Overspray damage, fire spreading to adjacent vessels, or harm to workers can all generate substantial liabilities.

## HOW CAPTAINS AND MANAGERS CAN HELP

Captains and managers play a central role in creating a smooth and transparent process for all stakeholders. Best practices include:

- Never signing yard documents before receiving insurer approval.
- Sharing complete refit plans, timelines, contractor lists, and hot-work details as early as possible.
- Confirming whether crew or day workers will perform tasks during the yard period.
- Verifying that contractors carry adequate liability insurance.
- Updating insurers on any changes in schedule, scope, or vessel value.

Insurance is a strategic part of refit planning that protects owners, empowers captains, and supports shipyards in delivering exceptional results. With earlier conversations, better documentation, and shared expectations, the industry can transform refits from stressful undertakings into confident, well-managed projects.

Pantaenius Superyacht team are here to help and guide you through the refit process.

# KEEPING ANDIAMO'S TENDER SAFE DURING EXTENDED OPERATIONS AT NIGHT

**Protecting a superyacht tender or chase boat is about far more than knowing where it is. During towing and operations, understanding the tender's condition can be just as important as its position.**

Captain Jonathan Chell of M/Y Andiamo has been using the Yacht Trace tender monitoring system during operations.

Following a continuous 900-nautical-mile passage, Captain Chell said: "Throughout the voyage the system proved reliable, intuitive and unobtrusive, providing real-time awareness of our tender without adding complexity to bridge operations.

The two-way monitoring system continuously reports tow status, battery condition, bilge activity and the tender's position relative to the mothership, using its own dedicated communications network rather than relying solely on cellular coverage or AIS. This provides confidence that any developing issue would be identified immediately, even in remote operating areas.

From a practical standpoint, the installation was straightforward, the interface is simple to use, and after the initial setup the system quietly does its job in the background. Having completed a 900nm passage with it in operation, we are very happy with its performance and see it as another valuable layer of safety when towing, particularly during longer passages and night operations. It has given us greater confidence in our towing procedures and is a system we are pleased to have onboard."

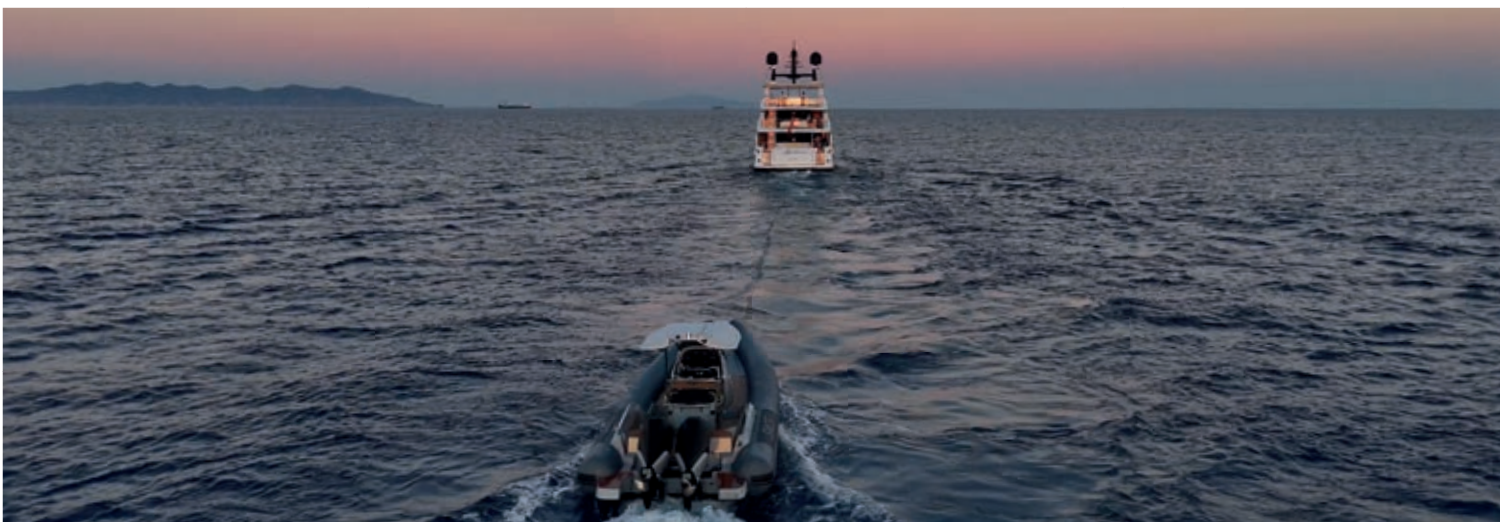
Developed by Dr Dan Rogers, who holds a PhD in Control Systems, Yacht Trace uses independent GPS receivers on both the mothership and tender, linked by a proprietary two-way RF communications network. Rather than simply displaying a tender's position, the system continuously calculates the live separation between the two vessels, providing immediate alerts if the tow distance changes unexpectedly or the tow line parts.

The system also continuously monitors bilge activity and battery condition. Water entering a tender can significantly increase its weight, creating additional drag and shock loading on the tow line.

In many cases, this increased load is a contributing factor in tow rope failure. By identifying unexpected bilge pump activity or rising water at an early stage, the crew can investigate and take corrective action before excessive loads develop or the tender is damaged.

Unlike AIS or conventional trackers, which generally report where the tender is after an incident has occurred, Yacht Trace is designed to provide pre-emptive monitoring, giving crews early warning while there is still an opportunity to intervene, to not risk losing the tender and having charters disrupted or face unnecessary financial burdens.

*Tracking systems like Yacht Trace provide real-time awareness of tenders without adding complexity to bridge operations.  
(Photo: Yacht Trace)*





*Water started dripping into the main saloon of a Sunseeker 131 during winter maintenance in Viareggio, Italy. (Photo: Sunseeker, showing a similar boat)*

Behind the claim

## THE LEAK THAT WASN'T WHAT IT SEEMED

**How a careful investigation saved a 40-metre Sunseeker from an unnecessary major refit**

**W**hen water starts dripping into the main saloon of a 40-metre superyacht, nobody takes it lightly.

That was the situation facing the management team of a Sunseeker 131, during winter maintenance in Viareggio, Italy. What initially appeared to be a straightforward water ingress issue quickly developed into a potentially costly and time-consuming repair project.

The first assessment suggested a worst-case scenario. Significant amounts of rainwater had found their way into the yacht's aft main saloon, causing concern about hidden structural damage.

The shipyard's proposed solution was extensive: remove the upper deck, strip away the teak decking, repair suspected delamination, relay the deck and reinstall furniture with new waterproof fixings.

While technically feasible, the repair would have involved substantial dismantling of the yacht. More importantly, it threatened to delay preparations for the upcoming charter season. For the owner, crew and management team, that was far from an ideal outcome.

Rather than immediately proceeding with the proposed works, Pantaenius decided to take a closer look.

### EXPERIENCED SURVEYOR

One of the advantages of having a dedicated in-house claims department is access to specialists who understand the realities of yacht construction and repair. Instead of relying solely on an initial assessment, the Pantaenius claims team appointed an experienced surveyor with a strong background in investigating complex water ingress cases. Despite the busy holiday period, the surveyor was quickly on site in Viareggio.

What followed was a detailed inspection that challenged the original assumptions.

The prevailing theory was that rainwater was entering through delaminated sections beneath the teak-covered upper deck. Yet during his investigation, the surveyor discovered that the location where water was appearing inside the yacht did not align with the area suspected by the yard.

Determined to identify the true source of the leak, he inspected every accessible void and compartment beneath the upper deck structure. Working alongside the captain, chief engineer and shipyard representatives, he traced the path of the water through areas that were difficult to access and largely hidden from view.

His findings pointed in a different direction.

Attention shifted towards a compartment housing the yacht's emergency batteries and generator systems. Further investigation revealed signs of older delamination within the compartment itself, as well as drainage arrangements that warranted closer examination.

#### CONTROLLED WATER TESTS

Instead of dismantling 48 square metres of teak decking, the surveyor recommended a series of controlled water tests before any major repairs were authorised.

A few weeks later, after a period of dry weather, extensive hose testing was carried out.

Large quantities of water were applied to the upper deck. Surprisingly, no leakage occurred.

The breakthrough came when water was introduced into an adjacent icebox locker. Almost immediately, water ingress was observed through a drainage pipe that lacked proper sealing. Combined with pre-existing delamination inside the emergency battery compartment, this created a pathway that allowed water to migrate through the structure and eventually appear in the saloon below.

The source of the problem had finally been identified.

The implications were significant.

What had initially appeared to require the removal and reconstruction of the entire upper deck could now be addressed through a targeted repair. The work focused on sealing the drainage arrangement and repairing the affected laminate within the battery compartment.

The revised repair scope was dramatically smaller than originally anticipated.

Most importantly, the yacht avoided months of unnecessary work and remained on schedule for the charter season.

#### ON SCHEDULE

Cases like this demonstrate that successful claims handling is about much more than approving repairs. Sometimes the most valuable service is ensuring that the right repair is carried out in the first place.

For yacht owners and managers operating around the world, access to experienced surveyors, trusted repair facilities and specialist claims handlers can make a substantial difference. Through its international network, Pantaenius is able to appoint local experts quickly, wherever a yacht may be located, while coordinating the process through its dedicated in-house claims team.

In this case, that combination of technical expertise, local presence and careful investigation transformed what looked like a major structural project into a straightforward repair.

A small leak remained a small leak. And a busy charter season could begin exactly as planned.



*Significant amounts of rainwater had found their way into the yacht's aft main saloon.*



**Ermes Franco,**  
*Claims Manager at Pantaenius Monaco, brings technical expertise and practical insight to yacht and superyacht claims.*



*Within four weeks after the fire, the yacht had been successfully lifted and transported to a shipyard for disposal.*

Behind the claim

## WHEN EVERY HOUR COUNTS

**How rapid action and local expertise helped bring a complex total-loss claim to a swift conclusion**

**I**n the early hours of 13 November 2025, a fire broke out aboard a yacht moored in Marina Zea, one of Greece's busiest marinas. Within minutes, the blaze spread to neighbouring vessels. Despite the efforts of marina staff, fire-fighters and emergency services, four yachts were engulfed by the fire.

Among them was a 77-foot motor yacht insured by Pantae-nius. By sunrise, all four vessels had sunk.

### BEYOND SAVING

For the yacht's owner and management team, the immediate reality was clear: the yacht was beyond saving. Yet while the fire itself had lasted only a few hours, the process of dealing with its aftermath was only just beginning.

A total-loss claim of this scale requires far more than an insurance settlement. Authorities must be involved, environmental risks managed, salvage operations coordinated and damages assessed. Every day of delay can add complexity, cost and uncertainty.

The incident was reported to Pantae-nius on the morning of 13 November. Recognising the scale of the loss, the claims team immediately activated its network and instructed Marine Claims Service (MCS), the company's specialist marine surveying partner, and the local surveyor S. G. Karamalis and Associates.

By the following night, an experienced surveyor was already in Athens. At 8 a.m. on 14 November, less than 24 hours after the claim had been reported, he arrived at Marina Zea to begin coordinating the next steps.

What he encountered was a highly challenging situation. The remains of the insured yacht lay submerged alongside three other vessels. To prevent environmental damage, anti-pollution booms had been deployed around the wrecks, while local authorities supervised the scene. Salvage planning could not begin in earnest until the position of all four yachts had been assessed.

One complication quickly became apparent. Another sunken yacht had come to rest directly on top of the insured vessel.

Before any attempt could be made to recover the yacht, the other wreck first had to be removed.

Coordinating such operations requires more than technical expertise. Salvage contractors, harbour authorities, environmental requirements and logistical considerations all have to be aligned. Thanks to the surveyors' presence on site and the close cooperation between the surveyors and the Pantaenius claims team, decisions could be taken quickly and communicated efficiently to everyone involved.

The first wreck was successfully recovered between 28 and 30 November. Only then could preparations begin for the salvage of the insured yacht itself.

On 3 December, following extensive negotiations regarding costs and contractual arrangements, a salvage agreement was finalised. Recovery operations commenced immediately.

### SUCCESSFULLY LIFTED

Three days later, on 6 December, the yacht had been successfully lifted and transported to a shipyard for disposal.

With the physical recovery completed, attention turned to the final stage of the process: establishing the total loss and concluding the claim.

Because survey work, documentation and salvage operations had been organised from the outset, the required information was already available when needed. The claim therefore progressed without the delays that often accom-

pany complex losses involving multiple vessels, authorities and contractors.

Less than two months after the fire, the case was fully settled on 9 January 2026.

For the owner, no insurance payment could replace the loss of a yacht. However, the speed and coordination of the response ensured that an already difficult situation did not become an unnecessarily prolonged one.

In a message following the settlement, the owner wrote:

"Thank you and all the Pantaenius team for the efficiency, responsiveness, and professionalism."

Cases like this highlight the value of combining a dedicated in-house claims department with local expertise on the ground. Through its international network of surveyors, salvage specialists and marine professionals, Pantaenius is able to respond quickly wherever an incident occurs.

When a yacht is lost, every hour counts. In Athens, those first hours helped set the course for everything that followed.



**Gideon Fey,**  
*Vice Global Head of Claims at the Pantaenius Group, handles superyacht claims for the Hamburg claims department. In addition, he also provides support to various Pantaenius branch offices in cases of more complex claims.*

*To prevent environmental damage, anti-pollution booms had been deployed around the wrecks.*





*Many yacht owners are unaware that a successful salvage operation is not simply a towing service.*

Behind the claim

## THE MOST EXPENSIVE QUESTION YOU WILL BE ASKED

**After a grounding, a simple request from a salvage company can have consequences long after your yacht is safe.**

**T**he grounding happened just after 5 p.m. Within minutes, the alarms started sounding. First the bilge alarm. Then the water-in-fuel alarm. One crew member had suffered serious injuries. A distress call was made on VHF Channel 16.

The first vessel to arrive was from the Italian Guardia di Finanza. While the injured crew member was taken ashore for medical treatment, the situation on board continued to deteriorate.

Seawater had entered the yacht through damage to the hull, contaminating the diesel tanks. Shortly afterwards, the yacht's main engine stopped. Then the electrical system failed.

The yacht was now without propulsion, without electricity and without bilge pumps. Water continued to enter the hull.

A diver confirmed significant damage to the keel. Fortunately, no diesel had escaped into the sea, but it was clear that the yacht had to be moved quickly before the situation worsened.

The captain called the Pantænus emergency line.

### REQUEST FOR PAPERS

After confirming that the yacht was covered under a hull insurance policy, he was advised that emergency towing and lifting costs would be covered. A tug was requested, together with a portable bilge pump, and preparations were made



*A professional salvor may be entitled to a salvage award that reflects the circumstances of the operation.*



*After having cleaned the bilge, a close look revealed broken weld seams.*

to move the yacht to the nearest shipyard with a travel lift. When the tug arrived, the crew were handed a contract.

Then came another request: "Can we see your insurance papers?" In the middle of an emergency, it seemed perfectly reasonable. The captain complied.

The yacht was safely towed to a nearby shipyard later that evening. Shortly before midnight she was resting securely in the slings of the travel lift. The immediate emergency was over.

### LENGTHY NEGOTIATIONS

The commercial negotiations, however, were only just beginning.

Many yacht owners are unaware that a successful salvage operation is not simply a towing service. Under international salvage law, a professional salvor may be entitled to a salvage award that reflects the circumstances of the operation. The value of the yacht is one of several factors that can influence those negotiations.

That is why experienced claims handlers advise owners and captains never to disclose the insured value of their yacht to a salvor, and never to volunteer insurance documents during commercial negotiations unless there is a legal obligation to do so.

In this case, Pantaenius took over once the yacht was safe.

Working on behalf of the owner, the claims team reviewed the salvor's demands and entered into lengthy negotiations over what constituted a reasonable salvage award. The initial positions of both parties were far apart, but

through negotiation a substantially lower settlement was ultimately achieved.

The case highlights an important point that is often overlooked. The emergency does not necessarily end when the yacht reaches the dock.

### PROTECTING THE OWNER'S INTERESTS

Once the crew are safe and the yacht is secure, a different challenge begins—protecting the owner's financial interests. Having an experienced claims team involved at an early stage can make a significant difference, not only in coordinating the emergency response but also in ensuring that commercial negotiations remain fair and proportionate.

#### THREE THINGS EVERY CAPTAIN SHOULD REMEMBER

##### CALL YOUR INSURER FIRST.

As soon as the immediate danger to life has passed, contact your insurer or emergency assistance provider before discussing commercial terms.

##### NEVER DISCLOSE THE INSURED VALUE OF YOUR YACHT.

Do not volunteer insurance documents or reveal the insured value during salvage negotiations unless there is a legal requirement to do so.

##### IF YOU MUST SIGN, USE LLOYD'S OPEN FORM.

Avoid privately drafted salvage agreements whenever possible and seek advice before agreeing to commercial terms.



*Barbados has yet to establish itself as a yachting destination.*

Island Time

## LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE

**Rum punch, barefoot lunches, sailing and sunsets show why Barbados' greatest luxury is learning to slow down.**

**L**iming is a way of life in Barbados, local lingo for doing very little except relaxing, enjoying food and drink (preferably rum punch) and good company.

It's one of the first words visitors pick up on the Caribbean island — and my case is no different.

I feel myself slipping into island time on my first morning on Barbados at Caboose in Speightstown, a laid-back seaside town at the northern tip of the island's famed Platinum Coast. Stretching up from the capital Bridgetown, these palm-fringed, buttercream sand beaches are among the Caribbean's most glamorous shorelines.

Caboose isn't a fancy restaurant — although there are plenty of them in these parts — but there's something totally luxurious about the setting: a feet-in-sand, breezy beach shack fashioned from a weathered, washed-up fishing boat. It's the kind of place that you can only find in the Caribbean, and that's part of why it's so special.

### CALYPSO CLASSICS

A lone steel pan player picks out calypso classics while the rum punch is flowing and groups chat under the shade of outstretched mango trees. We're here because we've been told that the fish cutters are the best on the island. Among the island's signature street food, this sandwich of



freshly fried flying fish tucked inside a salt bread roll with a generous dash of fiery Bajan pepper sauce is worth the wait. After all, we're liming.

Well and truly on the traveller's radar for its sugar-soft beaches, spectacular sunsets and vibrant Bajan culture, Barbados has yet to establish itself as a yachting destination in quite the same way as other islands in the Caribbean.

#### **LESS EXPOSED TO CYCLONES**

That's partly because, as the easternmost island in the Caribbean, it sits slightly apart from the region's main island chain.

While that means Barbados is less exposed to the tropical cyclones that can affect many of its neighbours, its Atlantic position also means it lacks the protected cruising grounds and easy island-hopping that have made destinations such as Antigua and the British Virgin Islands favourites with charter yachts.

That isn't to say the superyachts don't come. They do, just in smaller numbers. The few sleek motor yachts and elegant sailing yachts I can see from my beachfront seating at Caboose have the pick of the anchorages just outside Port St. Charles, the island's primary superyacht marina and an official port of entry.

They may have come ashore for lunch at Local & Co, a farm-to-table venue that we dine at a few nights later. With locally sourced ingredients, creative Caribbean cooking, an excellent rum selection and sunset DJs, the restaurant is polished but relaxed; as I've come to realise, this is the perfect Bajan blend.

Below the surface, there's another reason to linger. Offshore lies one of the Caribbean's finest wreck dives, the SS Stavronikita. Deliberately sunk in 1978, the 111-metre Greek freighter has become a thriving artificial reef, home to schools of barracuda, jacks, turtles and many species of reef fish.



*Palm trees of the island's rugged east coast*

I'm more nifty with a snorkel than a dive tank, and waste no time pushing off into calm turquoise waters that, I quickly realise, teem with wrecks and marine life like tropical fish, hawksbill turtles and southern stingrays.

A little farther south, near Holetown, lies Sandy Lane, the grande dame of Caribbean resorts. Opened in 1961 by former British politician Ronald Tree on the site of a former sugar plantation, the legendary beachfront address has hosted everyone from royalty to Hollywood stars. Today, it's as renowned for its refined afternoon tea as it is for its championship golf course, Green Monkey at Sandy Lane,

*Barbados' sunsets are spectacular*



an 18-hole course carved out of a former limestone quarry with sweeping Caribbean Sea views. As island chatter has it, Barbados' most famous daughter, Rihanna, owns an apartment in the exclusive One Sandy Lane residences next door.

## **LUXURY SCENE**

The luxury scene is ever-evolving on the island, as I learn while sipping a gin and tonic at Colony Club. Originally built as a private estate in the 1930s before becoming one of Barbados' most storied hotels, the property recently reopened following an extensive refurbishment under Marriott's Luxury Collection. The works have carefully preserved its breezy, whitewashed timber features and lush tropical gardens that surround the lagoon pool. Weekend brunches, accompanied by seafood platters, carving stations and a live steel pan, are a favourite with locals as much as hotel guests.

This stretch of beach is Caribbean perfection. A 20-minute stroll along the sand leads us to Lone Star, a roadside garage turned culinary hotspot with relaxed beachfront glamour, flowing rosé and tables spilling onto the sand. It's among the best vantage spots for Barbados' famed sunsets, when the sky is painted a palette of apricot, rose and lavender.

We are in town in the lead-up to Barbados Sailing Week, and there's a definite buzz of anticipation in the air. Held every January, the festival's headline act is the Mount Gay



*Brunch at Colony Club is a lively affair*

Round Barbados Race. Since 1936, yachts have lined up to circumnavigate the island clockwise, starting from the Barbados Cruising Club before racing up the west coast, rounding the island's rugged north and east coasts, before swooping back into Carlisle Bay, just south of Bridgetown. The current record was set in 2016: an impressive 2 hours, 37 minutes, 38 seconds.

### **BIRTHPLACE OF RUM**

Of course, if there's one colour that runs through Barbados' story, it's amber. The island proudly lays claim to being the birthplace of rum, its sugar cane fields giving rise to the spirit more than three centuries ago. At the Mount Gay distillery, the world's oldest continuously operating commercial rum distillery, I follow that history from the earliest pot stills to the smooth, oak-aged rums that have become one of the country's defining exports.

Mount Gay might be the name that's synonymous with Barbados, but a handful of smaller producers present different takes on the island's rum heritage. Set on a beautifully restored 17th-century plantation in the north of the island, St. Nicholas Abbey grows its own sugar cane and distills rum in small quantities using traditional methods. The distillery also has a charming heritage railway; a steam locomotive takes visitors around the property on an hour-long journey.

Another excellent producer, Stade's West Indies Rum Distillery, has a beachfront location just north of Bridgetown that showcases experimental and limited-edition releases alongside better-known brands like Stade's, Cockspur and Planteray Rum. It's the kind of place where you can linger long after the tour has finished on a lounge in the sand at the on-site Brighton Beach Deck and Bar. In other words, a place to practice liming.

Barbados might not have the scattered anchorages and easy island-hopping of other Caribbean cruising destinations, but learning about its proud history and experiencing its rich traditions are a fabulous alternative. And, while fine dining, golf courses and luxury hotels are certainly part of the island's appeal, it's Barbados' easy-going spirit that stays with me long after I've left.



**Chrissie McClatchie**  
is a French/Australian freelance journalist on the French Riviera who covers superyachts and the yachting lifestyle. An experienced freelance journalist, with nearly a decade working in the magazine industry, Chrissie contributes to outlets including *Travel + Leisure*, *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Robb Report*.



*Florida-based motor yacht Dione Sun partnered with the Perry Institute for Marine Science during the fourth leg of an ongoing initiative to protect coral species. (Photos: SeeKeepers)*

SeeKeepers' DISCOVERY Fleet

## **PRESERVING THE FUTURE OF CARIBBEAN REEFS: M/Y DIONE SUN SUPPORTS CORAL RESCUE IN THE BAHAMAS**

When Motoryacht Dione Sun cruised the crystal-clear waters of the Abacos in November 2025, the vessel became more than a luxury yacht – it became a floating conservation platform supporting one of the Caribbean's most urgent coral rescue missions.

**A**s a member of The International SeaKeepers Society's DISCOVERY Program Fleet, the 105-foot motor yacht based in Florida partnered with the Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS) during the fourth leg of an ongoing initiative to protect coral species threatened by Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD), a rapidly spreading disease that has devastated coral reefs throughout the Caribbean.

For more than six years, SCTLD has caused unprecedented losses across dozens of reef-building coral species. Particularly vulnerable species, including pillar coral, maze coral, flower coral, and elliptical coral, have experienced dramatic declines, with some populations now facing local or regional extinction. Scientists are racing against time to preserve the remaining genetic diversity before these corals disappear from the wild.

Over seven days, M/Y Dione Sun served as the expedition's mobile research platform, enabling scientists to conduct 18 dives across 16 reef sites throughout the Abacos. The vessel provided transportation, accommodations, dive support, and the onboard workspace necessary to safely process rescued coral colonies between dives.

Each expedition day followed a careful routine. After identifying healthy colonies of highly susceptible coral species, divers documented and collected small fragments for long-term preservation. Once back onboard, the corals were stabilized by the scientific team, carefully epoxied onto ceramic tiles, labeled, fed, and maintained in specialized holding systems until they could be transferred safely to permanent conservation facilities.

By the end of the expedition, 61 coral colonies representing 11 different species had been successfully rescued. While pillar coral had been a primary target throughout the broader project, no living colonies were found at any of the Abaco survey sites – a sobering reminder of how rapidly this once-iconic Caribbean species has declined and why rescue efforts have become increasingly urgent.

Following the expedition, the rescued corals were transported to two secure facilities in The Bahamas: an offshore coral nursery and a land-based gene bank. There, they will be protected, propagated, and preserved as living genetic repositories that can support future restoration efforts and scientific research.

For Dione Sun, the expedition demonstrated how a private yacht can play an essential role in marine conservation. The vessel's range, flexibility, and onboard capabilities allowed researchers to reach remote reef systems and safely transport fragile living specimens that required continuous care throughout the mission.

The expedition also represents the fourth successful phase of a long-term coral rescue initiative that began in 2024. As conservation organizations continue expanding genetic preservation programs throughout The Bahamas, partnerships with the yachting community are helping make this work possible.

Through SeaKeepers' DISCOVERY Program, yachts like Dione Sun are providing scientists with access to places, resources, and logistical support that can significantly accelerate conservation efforts. In this case, the result was more than another successful expedition – it was the preservation of living coral species that may one day help restore Caribbean reefs for generations to come.

### BECOME A DISCOVERY YACHT

The International SeaKeepers Society's DISCOVERY Program connects yacht owners with marine scientists conducting research around the world. By donating unused space onboard, providing transportation, or supporting logistics, yachts can directly contribute to ocean research, conservation, and education initiatives. Learn more about becoming a DISCOVERY Yacht by visiting [SEAKEEPERS.ORG](https://SEAKEEPERS.ORG) or clicking here to submit an application today!

Scan the QR code to read the full story of how M/Y Dione Sun contributed to coral conservation.



*The International SeaKeepers Society's DISCOVERY Program connects yacht owners with marine scientists.*





*The Superyacht Builders Association (SYBAss) makes up 73 percent of all yachts over 40m under construction; in terms of gross tonnage 80 percent.*

Superyacht Builders Association

## A SEAT AT THE TABLE

**As SYBAss enters a new chapter under Executive Director Robert van Tol, the association is strengthening its role as the collective voice of the world's leading superyacht builders.**

In 2007, when Feadship, Lürssen and Benetti called for a body that represented shipyards' interests, the others sat up and took note. Not only because three of the biggest shipyards in the world had come together, but because it was time: time for superyacht builders to have an international organisation that gave the industry a collective voice, or, as Robert van Tol calls it, "a seat at the table".

"Shipyards had grown out of their national representation, because they are global players and their yachts are travelling the world," says van Tol. "They needed a platform where they could exchange and collaborate and monitor, for instance, regulatory development."

The Feadship, Lürssen, Benetti trio are now known as the three founding fathers of Superyacht Builders Association (SYBAss), the association that emerged from their rallying cry. Alongside them are 21 other members. The criteria to join? Over a decade in business, and successful delivery of at least three yachts over 40m (or three sailing yachts over 27m) in the past decade. As of December 2025, its membership body made up 73 percent of all yachts over 40m under construction; in terms of gross tonnage 80 percent.

Van Tol, who co-founded non-profit Water Revolution Foundation in 2018, returned to SYBAss as Executive Director at the beginning of 2026; he previously spent over a decade at the association, including eight years as Operational Director. He's wasted no time charting a new three-year plan based around three strategic pillars: advocacy & global representation; industry standards & policy advancement; professional conduct & collective development.

### GROWING IMPORTANCE OF REFITS

It's the first time, he says, that the association has defined such a set of future-forward deliverables, and not only for its members, but also for the industry at large. High on its wishlist is a unified yacht code, "one set of regulations based on the recognition of yachts as a specific ship type at the IMO," van Tol says.



**Robert van Tol**  
*is the new executive director of SYBAss. Following his past 7 years successfully establishing and scaling up the Water Revolution Foundation, his appointment reflects a strategic shift towards a future-focused and proactive approach.*



One of the key aspects of the strategy is an economic impact study of the yachting industry, which emphasizes not only the jobs that shipyards generate but also the trickle down effect that touches the entire industry.

"It's not only delivering a yacht and the value of the construction, but also the whole life it starts with operational expenses, crew salaries, maintenance, refit, basically everything that comes afterwards for an undefined number of years" he says.

With record numbers of yachts having been delivered over the past 25 years, refits have become more important than ever. While established refit hubs in the Mediterranean and Florida continue to enjoy a steady flow of business, van Tol notes that the more complex projects are finding their way back to where they were built. "For these yards, it's really becoming another string to their bow," he says.

What's more, by their very nature, refits are shorter-term projects that can be slotted into the production schedules, allowing yards to balance out workloads and retain specialist talent. "There are only upsides," he says

#### **A ROADMAP TO NET ZERO**

Last year, Water Revolution Foundation unveiled its yachting roadmap towards net zero in 2050. Van Tol knows that it's an ambitious target, especially because there are currently over 6200 yachts over 30 metres in the global fleet, and that figure continues to grow. "By default, that means the trend line goes up, because more yachts mean higher environmental impact," he says. "But the trend line needs to go down in order to achieve net zero."

That's where refits come in. "Even if new builds would all be zero emission, it is not enough," he says. "We need to take care of yachts already on the water and refits are key for decarbonizing the existing fleet technology wise," he says.

Some of the solutions don't need any technical tweaks; swapping to HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil), a drop-in biofuel that offers emissions reductions of up to 90% is a "no-brainer that needs to be embraced by the fleet," he says.

Other potential solutions require not only innovation in the shipyard, but also advocacy on their behalf to ensure that the infrastructure is there to support such advances on the water. Marinas, for instance, need to be able to support yachts running on alternative fuels. While it may be too soon for physical infrastructure, SYBAss' role is to advocate to ensure the policies are up-to-date to take away future barriers for clients and shipyards to invest in non-conventional projects.

Policy, however, is only part of the equation. That's where insurance companies have an important role. While shipyards can develop cleaner technologies, insurance companies have an opportunity to accelerate their adoption through incentives and risk assessment. "I've always admired Pan-taenius, in particular, for their interest in technology and how supportive they are with sharing best practices among their clients," he says.

It's a reminder that while SYBAss was founded to give shipyards a collective voice, the industry's biggest challenges will be solved collectively.



*Training and development of crew is now seen as more important than ever. (Photo: Martin Baum)*

## Improving Crew Retention

# PUSHING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

**The superyacht industry is building stronger standards for crew wellbeing, training and fair working conditions. Pantaenius is supporting this progress by helping protect crew with comprehensive medical and accident insurance.**

**H**attie Nicholson from the Superyacht team in Monaco participated on a panel at the Quaynote Improving Yacht Crew Retention, Development & Welfare conference in Nice in March 2026, along with Jessica Barker.

The positive momentum to continuously improve crew wellbeing was evident from the day. A well-defined framework is being developed, driven by key players in the industry, with the help of The Superyacht Alliance and International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) and the Changing Tack initiative.

It was also evident from the conference that training and development of crew is now seen as more important than ever, however, the industry still needs a more consistent baseline, clear standards, fair conditions and accountability throughout the whole chain of yacht ownership.

Hattie and Jessica found it encouraging to see so many engaged voices pushing for positive change. At Pantaenius, understanding these challenges directly shapes how we support crew in the superyacht sector by providing fully comprehensive package of Crew Medical and Accident insurances.

## *Improving Yacht Crew Retention, Development & Welfare*



Changing the conversation around crew support

# WHO DO YOU IMAGINE NEEDING SUPPORT?

Many people would picture a young crew member navigating the pressures of their first season. However, the challenges of yachting do not discriminate by rank, experience or nationality. They can affect anyone, from a first-time stewardess or deckhand to an experienced captain responsible for an entire vessel and crew.

This is why services like YachtCrewHelp exist. Not just for certain crew members, but for all crew.

Operated by the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), YachtCrewHelp offers crew a free, confidential space to talk through whatever is on their mind. This might be a practical issue, a worry or concern, a challenge at work or in their personal life, or simply something that feels easier to navigate with someone to listen.

## 24/7 HELPLINE

The helpline is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, with support available in over 12 languages.

YachtCrewHelp often hears from senior crew and heads of department seeking guidance on how to support others, but the service is there for them too.

Leadership does not make someone immune to stress, uncertainty or difficult circumstances, and looking after personal wellbeing can help create a healthier, more supportive culture on board.

There is also a common misconception that helplines are only for emergencies or people in crisis. In reality, YachtCrewHelp is there for any concern, big or small.

Sometimes crew need practical guidance, sometimes emotional support, and sometimes they simply need a safe, non-judgemental space to talk.

## ANY CONCERN

Support should not be reserved for a particular rank, role or situation. Whatever a crew member is facing, YachtCrewHelp is there to ensure they do not have to face it alone.



## GET IN TOUCH WITH YACHTCREWHELP

Telephone: +44 203 713 7273

Live chat: [www.iswan.org.uk/yachtcrewhelp](http://www.iswan.org.uk/yachtcrewhelp)

E-mail: [help@yachtcrewhelp.org](mailto:help@yachtcrewhelp.org)

WhatsApp: +44 7514 500 153

## KEY THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN CHECKING YOUR YACHT CREW MEDICAL COVER

### • Does the cover include treatment for Pre-Existing conditions?

At Pantaenius, our Crew Medical insurance does not exclude any pre-existing conditions.

### • Does the cover have waiting periods for Therapy/Counselling, pregnancy or dental treatments?

At Pantaenius, our Crew Medical insurance has no waiting periods for treatment.

### • Is Home Country cover included? Are there any financial limitations? Are routine and elective treatments covered in home country or it covers emergencies only?

At Pantaenius, we include home country cover, including elective treatment, with a maximum number of days applicable for USA, South African and Australian nationals.

### • Is the cover available 24/7, 365 days a year?

At Pantaenius, our Crew Medical insurance is valid 24/7, 365 days per year, including when on annual leave or rotation.



Pantaenius on board

# WHERE WE'VE BEEN

St Barths Bucket © Martin Baum – Pantaenius



St Barths Bucket © Martin Baum



St Barths Bucket © Martin Baum



St Barths Bucket © Martin Baum



Monaco Yacht Show (MYS) © thestudioillumine



MYS © thestudioillumine



MYS © thestudioillumine



CNB Rendezvous © CNB Yachts



Pantaenius on board

# WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Cyclades Cup © kurtarrigo



Cyclades Cup © thestudioillumine



Cyclades Cup © kurtarrigo



Cyclades Cup © thestudioillumine



The Superyacht Cup Palma (SYC) © sailingenergy



SYC © sailingenergy



SYC © sailingenergy



SYC © sailingenergy

# TEAM SPOTLIGHT



## FABIAN SCHAPER

For Fabian Schaper, boats have always been part of life. Born in Flensburg and raised in Kiel, he grew up surrounded by sailing. His father ran a sailing school at the Olympic Sailing Centre in Schilksee, while his grandfather, a retired naval officer, spent countless hours sailing the Flensburg Fjord.

"I was practically raised on the water," Fabian says. Whether it was learning the basics in an Optimist dinghy or spending time around the sailing school, boating was a constant presence throughout his childhood.

That changed when his family moved to Hamburg. With the sea no longer on his doorstep, sailing gradually faded into the background. It was only years later, after joining Pantaenius, that he rediscovered his passion for the industry.

In fact, Fabian's connection to the company goes back even further. With his father having worked at Pantaenius for more than 25 years, he first joined as a school-age assistant, helping with various administrative tasks during busy periods. Later, while looking for a new opportunity, he returned for what was supposed to be a temporary position.

"I said I'd stay for six months and then move on," he recalls. "That was eleven years ago."

During that time, Fabian has worked across a wide range of departments, gaining experience in everything from policy administration and charter insurance to broker support and underwriting. Today, he focuses on superyacht business, a field that particularly appeals to his curiosity.

"What I enjoy most is that every case is different," he says. "There's always something new to learn, whether it's registry, classifications or the technical details behind a yacht."

His move to Palma de Mallorca was the natural next step. After spending time in the office to support the local team, Fabian quickly realised how closely connected the island is to the international yachting community.

"The boats are right outside the door," he says. "You're much closer to the people and businesses that make up the industry."

Outside the office, sailing remains an important part of life. He regularly heads out in a Laser dinghy and is currently learning Spanish while settling into his new home in Palma.

For someone who once planned to stay only a few months, the journey has turned into something much longer. And with the sea once again close by, Fabian seems right at home.



## HATTIE NICHOLSON

**W**hen Hattie Nicholson moved from Yorkshire to the south of France in 2016, she expected a new adventure abroad. What she did not expect was to build a long-term career in the yachting industry.

Her partner had accepted a job in Monaco, and together they decided to make the move. Looking for an English-speaking position, Hattie came across Pantaenius Monaco and joined the team just a few months after arriving.

Before that, her professional background looked very different. Having decided against university, she went straight into the world of work and spent six years in logistics with Yorkshire Tea, one of the UK's best-known tea brands.

At the time, boats played no role in either her professional or personal life. Yet the transition into yacht insurance proved to be a natural fit. Starting as an administrative assistant, Hattie initially worked on smaller yacht renewals during a period when much of the business was still paper-based.

As the Monaco office evolved, so did her role. Within a few years, she moved into the superyacht department, where she continues to work today. "The challenge is learning that every yacht is different," Hattie explains. "A sailing yacht, a motor yacht, a racing yacht - they all have different requirements.

You learn to look at each vessel individually." What she enjoys most, however, is the customer-facing side of the job.

"There's a real satisfaction in helping people quickly," she says. "Sometimes a captain expects to wait days for an answer, and instead you can solve the problem that same afternoon. Those moments are very rewarding."

That sense of responsibility becomes particularly important when clients face unexpected challenges.

Hattie recently worked with a vessel operating in the Middle East after changes to regional war-risk cover created an urgent need for alternative insurance solutions. Coordinating between insurers, brokers and the client under significant time pressure required careful communication and swift action.

"It's about making sure clients know they're supported," she says. "Even in difficult situations, they need to feel that someone is helping them find a solution."

Having traded Yorkshire's notoriously unpredictable weather for the stable sunshine of the Riviera, Hattie has embraced life in the south of France. Nearly a decade after arriving there, both Monaco and Pantaenius have become a place she proudly calls home.



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