

THE PANTAENIUS MAGAZINE

YACHTING NEWS

2025/26

AROUND THE WORLD WITH PANTAENIUS

LIGHTNING STRIKE IN THE BAHAMAS
BATTERY FIRE IN INDONESIA
TENDER COLLISION IN THE MED

SAFETY AT SEA

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

ARCTIC SEA

THE ACCIDENTAL ICE QUEEN



CONTENTS

AROUND THE WORLD WITH PANTAENIUS

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Lightning Strike in the Bahamas | 4 |
| Battery Fire in Indonesia | 6 |
| Tender Collision in the Med | 8 |

YACHTS

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| How Yachts are Advancing Marine Science and Conservation | 10 |
| Sustainable Interiors: Natural Selection | 14 |
| Redefining What's Possible: Zero, by Design | 16 |

TRAVEL

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| Arctic Firsts: The Accidental Ice Queen | 18 |
|-----------------------------------------|----|

ENVIRONMENT

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Citizen Science at Sea: From Collision to Conservation | 22 |
| Sea Grass Protection Enforcement: Hard Line on Anchoring | 24 |

SAFETY AT SEA

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Connected Intelligence: How Data is Changing Yacht Risk Management | 26 |
| The Human Element: Safeguarding Your Superyacht | 28 |

PANTAENIUS

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Where have we been? | 30 |
| Team Spotlight | 34 |

Cover: "Oh, what a wonderful world", 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



Editorial

AROUND THE WORLD

It may be something of a cliché to say that we all share one world. At Pantaenius Yacht Insurance, however, we like to think we bring a slightly different perspective. When we speak of “Around the world with Pantaenius,” we mean it – and, we believe, our clients can sense that.

It's not just that we maintain offices across Europe and in Australia, or that we offer our services in ten languages, quite literally around the clock. What truly counts is our ability to assist almost anywhere on the globe when things take an unexpected turn.

In this edition of Yachting News, we are pleased to share a few real-world examples of that commitment. Whether in the remote archipelagos of Indonesia, along the hurricane-threatened coasts of the Bahamas, or amid the busy harbours of the Mediterranean – our colleagues in the claims department work closely with our global network of 35,000 trusted specialists to deliver solutions that are as pragmatic as they are effective.

At the same time, these stories serve as a reminder that the very first line of response is – unsurprisingly – the crew. A well-prepared crew can make a decisive difference in limiting the impact of an incident. We have great respect for all those who work on board, often under considerable pressure, to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone at sea.

That work can, at times, be exhausting. For that reason, we are taking this opportunity to highlight the efforts of the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme – or CHIRP, for short. We encourage you to help

raise awareness of this important initiative. We are also supporting the ISWAN Crew Helpline and their Safe at Sea campaign. When it comes to mental health issues, no one should hesitate or feel ashamed to seek professional support. That's why our Crew Medical Insurance also covers access to psychological therapy.

As ever, we greatly value your thoughts and comments. Do feel free to get in touch – we're always glad to hear from you.



Martin Baum
Managing Director
Pantaenius Yacht Insurance



Around the world with Pantaenius

WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES: HOW CALM MINDS AND QUICK ACTION SAVED THE DAY

A lightning strike is one of the most feared — and least predictable — events a yacht can face. When an Oyster yacht was struck in the Bahamas in 2024, clear thinking, decisive action and steady support from Pantaenius UK helped the owner handle the immediate shock and steer a smooth course through a complex repair process.

If you were to ask a group of yacht owners to list their worst-case scenarios at sea, there's little doubt that a lightning strike would rank near the top. The damage caused by such an event can be sudden and extensive — and in many cases, invisible at first glance.

For those on board during a strike, the aftermath begins with immediate assessment. The immense electrical charge could compromise anything from the smallest LED fitting to navigation systems, water pumps, communications, or entire domestic circuits. For those returning to a yacht post-strike, the discovery is often both unexpected and overwhelming — and more than likely to put cruising plans on hold for weeks or even months.

No matter how the damage presents itself, contacting your insurer as early as possible is a crucial next step. While a lightning claim is never good news, experienced claims handlers are there to help steer owners through what is often a complex and stressful process.

Lightning strikes are among the most technically challenging types of marine claim. System diagnostics, approvals for specialist testing, sourcing engineers and replacement equipment — these are just a few of the hurdles to overcome. The following is one such case, managed by the Pantaenius UK team in 2024.

Without any obvious sign of a direct strike, all electronical systems failed (Photo: @the_saltycruisers)



In May 2024, an Oyster sailing yacht was hit by lightning while in the Bahamas. The owner quickly contacted their insurance company, Pantaenius UK, reporting widespread system failure: navigation, communications, hydraulics, and domestic systems were all down, with only independently powered devices still operational.

With the Named Tropical Storm Exclusion about to take effect in just ten days, the situation became urgent. The claim handler swiftly coordinated with surveyors and considered options for towing the vessel to suitable repair facilities. Local solutions proved to not be viable due to storm risks and infrastructure limitations. The client proposed a bold but practical plan: sail the yacht 800 nautical miles north to Annapolis, well outside the exclusion zone.

SAFE ARRIVAL IN ANNAPOLIS

Pantaenius agreed to cover the cost of two additional crew to support the transit, enabling manual sailing without instruments, auto-helm, or domestic systems. Emergency towing support was arranged along the route, navigational lighting and comms were re-rigged, and the voyage began.

After 14 days at sea, the yacht arrived safely in Annapolis in early June and was promptly surveyed. The resulting project was large and complex — but significantly driven forward by the owner's deep involvement. Estimates were approved rapidly, invoices paid promptly, and engineers got to work. Over seven months, 135 separate cost entries were logged. The repair ultimately accounted for 19% of the yacht's insured value.

To ensure peace of mind, Pantaenius offered a six-month warranty window for any issues proven to be related to the strike. No further claims were made, and the yacht was back in the water, cruising as intended. The claim was formally closed in June 2025.

PANTAENIUS ESSENTIALS

This case illustrates what Pantaenius believes is essential to successful claims resolution: clear communication, shared problem-solving, and proactive support.



Simon Firth,
Claims Manager at Pantaenius UK,
brings both technical understanding
and empathetic pragmatism to every
case - qualities that make all the
difference when the unexpected strikes.
(Photo: Pantaenius)



The Anambas Islands are a sought-after yachting destination, thanks to their remote location and vibrant coral reefs. (Photo: Rizky Ade Jonathan)

Around the world with Pantaenius

SECONDS FROM DISASTER: POTENTIAL LOSS AVERTED

What began as a routine anchoring manoeuvre in Indonesia quickly turned into a serious onboard emergency. Thanks to a composed and well-coordinated crew effort, what could have become a major fire was brought under control – and valuable lessons were learned in the process.

On 20 July, during an anchoring manoeuvre in Indonesia's remote Anambas Islands, a 21-metre sailing yacht experienced a near-catastrophic incident. As the vessel reversed under power, a nylon line fouled the propeller. The crew worked to free it, but 30 minutes later the bilge alarm sounded.

Water was flooding the battery compartment - 70 per cent full by the time it was discovered. Even more worryingly, adjacent compartments housing the yacht's lithium battery bank were also inundated. The crew swiftly shut off all power and began bailing. Moments later, two of the four batteries began to smoke and catch fire. Using fire extinguishers and blankets, and with assistance from a nearby yacht, the crew managed to remove and jettison the burning batteries overboard.

SAFE IN SINGAPORE

Remarkably, the yacht was able to continue to the port of Singapore on the remaining battery bank, and the owner

The yacht was in the middle of an anchoring manoeuvre. (Photo: Owner)



promptly contacted Pantaenius Yacht Insurance to report the incident.

The suspected cause: a shift in the shaft seal triggered by force on the shaft during the fouling event. This had allowed water to flood the bilges and reach the battery compartment.

DECISIVE AND CALM RESPONSE

Jochen Dahm, Head of Superyacht Claims at Pantaenius, noted: "The crew's decisive and calm response prevented a far more serious incident. A fire affecting all battery banks



The crew reacted decisively and calmly to the igniting batteries. (Photo: Owner)

would likely have been impossible to contain with on-board equipment."

The case also highlights the increasing presence, and risk, of lithium batteries on board. While highly efficient, lithium batteries can enter 'thermal runaway' in certain failure modes. When water or physical damage leads to internal short-circuiting, a chain reaction of overheating cells can occur, often resulting in explosive fire that's extremely difficult to extinguish.

FIRE CONTAINMENT SYSTEMS

Standard fire extinguishers typically fail against lithium fires, as the batteries produce their own oxygen. The preferred method of suppression is high-volume water, or purpose-designed containment systems like Raclan modules from Fisacon, which detect early warning signs and deploy extinguishing agents automatically.

Incidents like this highlight the importance of modern fire prevention systems and crew preparedness. With expert claims support and fast communication, the vessel was able to continue safely and the incident was resolved without further loss.



The crew managed to remove the burning batteries. (Photo: Owner)



Jochen Dahm,
head of the superyacht claims team
at Pantaenius Hamburg, celebrates
his 25th year with the company in
2026. "No two claims are ever the
same," he says. (Photo: Pantaenius)

Around the world with Pantaenius

UNCONTROLLED IMPACT

A €1.5 million claim highlights the consequences of a missing killcord—and why even the simplest safety procedures should never be overlooked.

In summer 2016, a 37.8-metre yacht was cruising the island of Formentera, the smallest of Spain's Balearic Islands, and a popular summer yachting destination, renowned for its low-key bohemian vibe and Caribbean-style beaches with buttercream sand and crystalline waters. The motor yacht had recently been insured by Pantaenius.

As the yacht quietly sat at anchor in a crowded bay dotted with a flotilla of pleasure boats, a sudden bang jolted it unexpectedly. Rushing to the point of impact, the crew saw what had caused it: a tender had collided with the yacht, punching a giant hole in a wide glass window in the starboard midship. The impact also damaged the hull around the opening.

Both the tender captain and a crew member accompanying him had been thrown from the vessel before the impact. Without anyone at the controls, the vessel had reportedly spun on itself for 15 minutes, before crashing into the yacht. Fortunately, there were only two crew and no guests onboard at the time, and no one was injured.

"The collision was caused by the negligence of the tender's skipper," explains Pantaenius' Monaco-based superyacht claims manager, Manon Belloeil. "He was operating the tender at high speed without having properly secured the killcord to his wrist."

A KILLCORD WOULD HAVE HELPED

Had the skipper followed necessary safety procedures and had the killcord clipped to his wrist, as he fell overboard the engine power would have been cut instantly, preventing the tender from running uncontrolled. A simple device with huge safety consequences, a lack of vigilance and a false sense of security on the tender meant, on this occasion, its use was overlooked.

The yacht manager sent a claim notification to Pantaenius within moments of the incident.

The total cost of the claim amounted to approximately €1.5 million and was fully covered by the Protection & Indemnity (P&I) insurance of the tender's mothership, as the incident

38m Custom Line motor yacht Lady Dia (Photo: Thierry Ameller)





This unmanned tender crashed into the side of the yacht after the skipper had fallen overboard. (Photo: Pantaenius)

was deemed an accident rather than an intentional act. P&I covers the third-party liability risks associated with owning and operating a yacht (P&I does not provide cover for the physical damage to the yacht itself, that falls under hull insurance).

The extent of repairs required ended the motor yacht's summer season, with charters already booked having to be cancelled. The payout covered repairs, accommodation for guests and crew and loss of charter income.

"The key lesson here is to wear a killcord," continues Belloeil. She adds: "If the skipper is thrown overboard, it's safer to simply cut the engine. Even crew members find it difficult to reach the controls at that speed when there's no killcord at play."

RARE BUT TRAGIC

Belloeil recalls another incident from approximately a decade ago, with a tragic outcome. "Three passengers, the skipper and two journalists, were on a tender during a demonstration during a boat show," she says.

"The captain, who was not wearing a killcord, was ejected along with one journalist. The remaining journalist jumped into the water. The boat, spinning on itself, ran over and killed that journalist."

Such incidents remain quite rare, fortunately, and can be easily avoided — "by following proper procedures and adopting the right reflexes," Belloeil adds.

Since the 2016 incident, digital killcords that can help prevent or limit these accidents have also flooded the market. When a skipper wearing a digital killcord bracelet is ejected from the tender, the movement out of range triggers the bracelet to cut the engine instantly.

Yet, as this incident shows, even the most advanced systems are only as effective as the habits and awareness of those using them.

For yacht owners, crew, and guests alike, the lesson is clear: vigilance, training and respect for even the simplest safety devices can mean the difference between a close call and catastrophe.

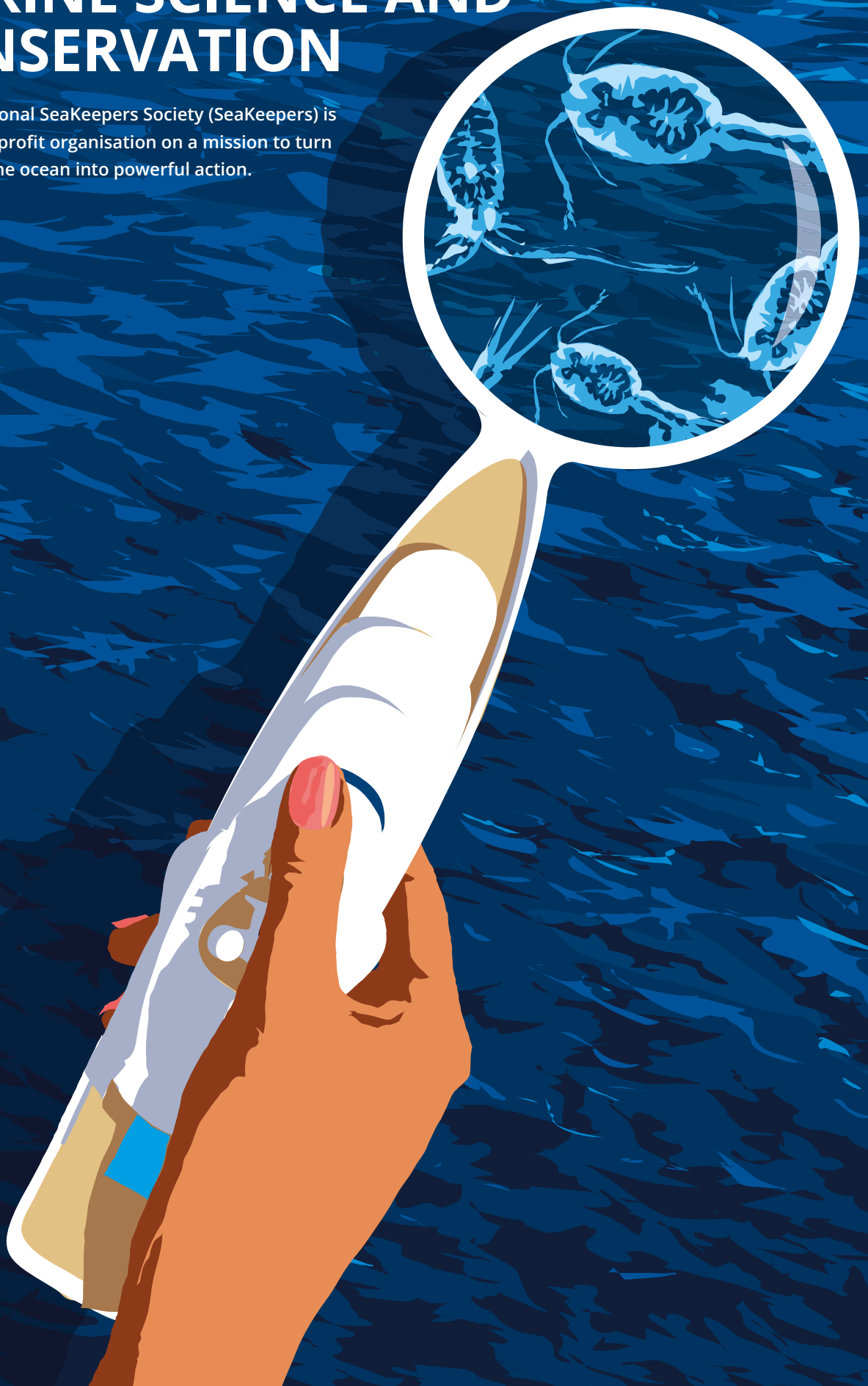


Manon Belloeil,
Claims Manager at Pantaenius
Monaco, handles yacht and super yacht claims for both the French and English departments. Due to her Spanish heritage, she can also handle claims involving Spanish-speaking clients. (Photo: Pantaenius)

Seakeepers' Discovery Fleet

HOW YACHTS ARE ADVANCING MARINE SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

The International SeaKeepers Society (SeaKeepers) is a global non-profit organisation on a mission to turn passion for the ocean into powerful action.



By partnering with the boating and yachting community, SeaKeepers drives oceanographic research, conservation, and education in ways few others can. Uniting the boating community with conservation and research opportunities, SeaKeepers fosters a shared commitment to protecting our ocean. At the core of this effort is the DISCOVERY Programme, a dynamic initiative made up of Scientist-Led Expeditions, Citizen Science, Educational Outreach, and Community Engagement. The programme encourages collaborations with organisations, academic institutions, and government agencies. Through DISCOVERY, boat owners, crew, and ocean advocates are empowered to become active stewards of the sea, directly contributing to meaningful marine science and raising awareness of the challenges facing our ocean.

Scientist-Led Expeditions offer vessel owners, guests, and crew the unique opportunity to take part in ongoing marine research while engaging with renowned marine scientists. One of the greatest challenges in ocean research is the high cost and limited availability of at-sea research platforms. To help bridge this gap, SeaKeepers mobilises recreational vessels that are part of the DISCOVERY Fleet – a completely free membership program for vessels eager to support ocean science. These DISCOVERY Yachts (D/Ys) play a vital role in advancing research while receiving year-round recognition, exclusive benefits, and the chance to be directly

involved in meaningful conservation work. Each expedition is thoughtfully designed to meet the specific needs of both the scientific objectives and the participating vessel.

Continue reading to learn about a few recent projects where Superyachts have played a critical role in supporting ocean science in partnership with The International SeaKeepers Society.

DISCOVERY YACHT (D/Y) NORTHERN SUN

Thanks to D/Y Northern Sun, the team from UNSEEN and Pattimura University, including technical divers, marine biologists, oceanographers, and mesophotic coral reef scientists, spent 20 days at sea exploring remote parts of the Asia-Pacific region. Their mission: to deepen the understanding and protection of coral reefs found at depths of 40 to 150 metres.

D/Y Northern Sun played a vital role in supporting the expedition by outfitting their tender with an echo sounder, which was instrumental in mapping the seafloor and selecting suitable dive sites. This was especially crucial, as each dive lasted 4-5 hours and could only be conducted once per day. The yacht also contributed to shallow reef surveys, helping investigate the diversity and health of coral ecosystems in remote, previously uncharted areas. The project established a valuable baseline of data to support long-

SeaKeepers Discovery Yacht Northern Sun outfitted its tender with an echosounder to support a scientific exploration (Photo: SeaKeepers)



term monitoring and conservation of these extraordinary mesophotic reef systems.

"Having SeaKeepers on board with UNSEEN was an excellent experience. We travelled to some very remote locations in the Asia Pacific and got to help the team extract scientific samples from multiple areas. This, along with diving some sites that have probably never been dived by humans before, made the experience unforgettable."
– First Officer, D/Y Northern Sun.

DISCOVERY YACHT (D/Y) UNBRIDLED

D/Y Unbridled provided accommodation, full support, and served as a mobile research platform for Misión Tiburón off the coast of Caño Island, Costa Rica. The team focused on studying highly migratory shark species such as the great hammerhead, linking inshore habitats to offshore sanctuaries, and expanding protections through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Using tagging and tracking methods, the researchers collected critical data on shark movement across varying depths, offering insights into migration routes and habitat use.

D/Y Unbridled served as a vital base of operations, enabling the team to work in remote waters and collect real-time data, greatly advancing our understanding of these elusive species and how best to protect them.

Privately owned vessels like D/Y Unbridled provide an invaluable platform for conducting at-sea research. By eliminating the high cost of vessel charters, they allow scientists and educators to allocate more resources to research efforts and project development.



Crew and scientists of SeaKeepers Discovery Yacht Noxoma. (Photo: SeaKeepers)

These expeditions not only further scientific knowledge, but also create memorable and enjoyable experiences for those on board. As Samantha McCririck, Chief Stew, DISCOVERY Yacht Unbridled shared: "That was the most fun I've ever had diving. I've seen manta rays on the TV, but actually seeing it there in front of you was mind-blowing."

DISCOVERY YACHT (D/Y) NOXOMA

The keen crew of D/Y Noxoma, after recently joining the DISCOVERY Programme, dove straight into the deep end by assisting with data collection led by SNO CORAIL / CRIOBE Lab in Moorea through the Polynesia Mana Programme, contributing to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network.

The expedition aboard SeaKeepers Discovery Yacht Northern Star aims to deepen the understanding and protection of coral reefs. (Photo: SeaKeepers)



As part of this effort, D/Y Noxoma sailed with project scientist, Gilles Siu, over 2.5 days from Gambier to Pitcairn in the South Pacific. Upon arriving at this remote and beautiful location, the captain became actively involved, supporting the team as a diver for the four dives conducted over three days. The dives included setting up equipment, performing coral surveys, and conducting a fish census.

Thanks to D/Y Noxoma, another vital dataset has been added to the long-term monitoring efforts of Pacific coral reefs.

Not only did this mission advance marine science, but it also provided the Noxoma crew with the incredible opportunity to explore a remote region and learn from Gilles Siu. As one crew member shared, "We enjoyed so much to have Gilles onboard with us. We learned a lot, and this experience has definitely made us look forward to more research expeditions in the future".

Join the DISCOVERY Programme today to discover the opportunities you can contribute to and the unforgettable adventures awaiting you, by visiting SEAKEEPERS.ORG and joining the fleet today.

PANTAENIUS PARTNERS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SEAKEEPERS SOCIETY

Pantaenius is proud to partner with The International SeaKeepers Society (SeaKeepers) to bolster the SeaKeepers' Global DISCOVERY Yacht Programme, dedicated to ocean conservation and stewardship.

Since its inception in 2014, the DISCOVERY Yacht Programme has successfully completed over 150 scientific expeditions aboard DISCOVERY Yachts. These efforts have directly engaged more than 2,700 students in ocean conservation discussions and indirectly impacted over 85,000 students through research and educational outreach. The success of these initiatives has been made possible by the unwavering support of industry partners and private vessels globally, which serve as platforms for SeaKeepers' programming.

ONE OCEAN

Pantaenius, Europe's leading yacht insurance specialist with 100,000 clients worldwide, is committed to promoting SeaKeepers to encourage broader participation in its ocean conservation programmes.

"We share one planet, one ecosystem, and one ocean. The oceans are the cornerstone of our business models. While we aspire to be altruistic and contribute to saving the world, we must also ensure that our businesses remain sustainable for the long term," says Pantaenius MD Martin Baum.

This new partnership, The International SeaKeepers Society and Pantaenius will collaborate to further promote marine conservation, research, and education on a global scale. Together, they aim to expand SeaKeepers' impact, ensuring a sustainable future for our oceans.

"This new partnership with Pantaenius marks a significant step forward in our mission to protect and restore the oceans," said Gill Rodrigues, Director of International Relations for The International SeaKeepers Society. "With their support, we can amplify our efforts in marine conservation and education, ensuring a sustainable future for the next generation around the world."

Michelle van der Merwe, Felix Zimmermann, Catherine Guenther from Pantaenius with Gill Rodriguez and Jay Wade from The International SeaKeepers Society (Photo: SeaKeepers)



NATURAL SELECTION

Recycled plastics, plant-based leathers and reclaimed teak leaves: the future of yacht interiors is being reshaped by sustainable materials – without compromising on comfort or elegance.

Onboard M/Y Santosha, a 57-metre yacht launched by Heesen Yachts in 2024, design elements such as faux leather produced without PVCs, plasticisers or other harmful chemicals, and stone surfaces made of carbon-neutral Dekton porcelain were the specific choices of owners wanting clean aesthetics, comfort and natural fabrics.

The yacht's interiors, designed by Harrison Eidsgaard studios, were conceived with environmental responsibility as a guideline, says the Dutch shipyard. "Eco-conscious material selection was prioritised throughout, reflecting the growing demand from owners for greener, more ethical solutions," says Heesen's PR & Press Manager, Sara Gioanola, of the yacht, which has been celebrated at both the BOAT Design & Innovation Awards and the World Superyacht Awards.

ACCELERATING TREND

Sustainable design is no longer simply a nice to have, in yacht design. "There is a clear and accelerating trend towards greater environmental awareness among our clientele," says Gioanola. Not only are clients more receptive to sustainable options, but they "are increasingly requesting them". This shift is driven by a desire for responsible ownership and an appreciation for the innovation that sustainable materials often represent, she continues.

At Heesen, high-quality engineering woods are a cornerstone; these often utilise faster-growing wood species or recycled wood content, processed to achieve durability and aesthetic appeal while minimising the impact on old-growth forests.

*57m Heesen design M/Y Santosha
(Photo: Georges van Wensveen)*



Winch Design Studio leads the way in developing sustainable materials (Photo: Winch Design)

Similarly, advanced performance leathers and leather alternatives have quickly become indispensable. These materials offer the luxurious feel and resilience of traditional leather but are often produced with more environmentally-friendly tanning processes or are entirely plant-based or synthetic.

Sunreef Yachts are another builder who are trailblazing in the sustainable interiors space, using natural materials such as fine wood veneers, stone, linen and ceramics. "We've introduced recycled PET foam into the interiors of our yachts," says Marta Kaszuba, Sunreef's Interior Design Department Manager. Made from up to 150,000 recycled plastic bottles, not only is this material repurposing a common waste, but it also reduces interior structure weight by 60 per cent compared to traditional plywood to improve fuel efficiency.

Sustainable solutions onboard the Sunreef 80 Eco and 60 Power Eco go further to include features such as Mosai-comicro tiles, made from discarded TV and PC screens, on bathroom walls, bed elements made from recycled textiles and floor carpets crafted from reclaimed fishing nets. Products like the award-winning 'Smile' armchair by Paola Lenti, which is crafted from waterproof, long-lasting and recyclable yarns, have also become a fleet favourite. "It's ideal for yacht environments and represents the kind of innovation we seek in all soft goods and furnishings," says Kaszuba.

Leading design studio, Winch Design, now includes a sustainable materials specialist among its in-house team. Some of their favourite materials to incorporate into the studio's designs include BeLeaf, a plant-based material crafted from real teak leaves that are naturally shed and responsibly harvested and are fully biodegradable and vegan. "Each

Marche. "We integrated a thoughtful selection of environmentally-friendly materials such as reclaimed seashell composite, eggshell-textured walls and Flax, a versatile natural fibre derived from the stem of the plant, used for everything from fine linen to durable rope," explains Dixon. The aesthetic, he continues, embraces earthy tones, matte finishes and organic textures, placing nature firmly at the heart of the design ethos. Delivery is scheduled for later this year.

LIMITED AVAILABILITY

While significant progress has been made, challenges persist, such as higher wear and tear of natural materials in marine environments, limited availability of some of the more artisanal products and inconsistent supply chain. Yet the day a yacht floats out with a fully-sustainable interior isn't a pipe dream.



Lounge and Study by Winch Design on board of the Flexplorer 146 (Photo: Winch Design)

sheet retains the unique veining and texture of the original leaves, resulting in a beautifully organic aesthetic. No two pieces are ever the same," says Jim Dixon, Winch Design's Managing Partner and Creative Director.

Though it has a delicate, natural appearance, BeLeaf is coated with a non-toxic, water-based sealant that adds strength, flexibility and durability. The material was chosen for the dining room chairs onboard Heesen's M/Y Sparta. "It brings a distinct sense of nature and craftsmanship to the space," Dixon continues.

One of the projects that best exemplifies Winch's commitment to sustainable interiors is the Flexplorer 146, developed in collaboration with Italy's Cantiere delle

"Achieving 100 per cent sustainability (in interior design) will ultimately depend on continuous innovation and the ongoing exploration of new, eco-friendly alternatives," says Dixon. "But a yacht with a low-impact, sustainable interior, featuring reclaimed, non-toxic, biodegradable or recycled materials is not only becoming more achievable but also increasingly desirable."



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.



Redefining What's Possible

ZERO, BY DESIGN

No fuel, no fallback, no compromise: the world's first true zero-emissions superyacht nears launch — and opens its plans to all.

How do you achieve what many consider impossible: a yacht that runs entirely without fossil fuels?

It turns out that the first step isn't about having futuristic technology, but rather having the right mindset.

"We never thought 'No, this can't work,' that's not the way we are wired," explains Vripack Yacht Design's Marnix Hoekstra of the enormous challenge. "Instead, we framed it as 'How might we get this to work?'"

There is, Hoekstra continues, something very powerful in that approach. Fortunately, it's an attribute shared by the trio of leading names involved in bringing Project Zero, the world's first yacht of her size designed to operate without any fossil fuels, to life: Vitters Shipyard, Dykstra Naval Architects and Vripack Yacht Design. The trio is being assisted with input from the open-source Foundation Zero, a non-profit founded by a group of impact investors committed to a future where renewable energy is the norm.

This can-do attitude has shifted mountains. Sailing yacht Zero, as the sleek 69m aluminium ketch will be named when launched, is no longer a dream or a bunch of sketches on paper. It is currently in the final phases of fitting out at Vitters.

This is one of the most challenging phases of the build, Hoekstra says. "All the design and technology is coming together now and, even for such an extremely large vessel, it's a lot."

If Hoekstra had to hazard a guess, he would say they are around six months away from a launch later this year or in early 2026. It's a debut that the eyes of the yachting world will be firmly fixed on.

ZERO FUEL AND ZERO COMPROMISE

Powered by hydro, solar and wind power, there's no combustion engine nor a single fuel tank on board the yacht. Zero is designed to operate autonomously for two weeks with guests on board without using any external energy sources. "So, completely off-grid, self-driven, self-harvesting energy," Hoekstra says. Even once it is launched, work will continue to refine the renewable energy systems, control software and other tech facets.

While zero-fossil has been the ultimate goal, it had to be achieved without compromising on aesthetics or comfort. "That's been one of the driving philosophies of this project," Hoekstra adds.

The result is a true world cruiser that blends cutting-edge renewable tech with all the elements you would expect from a yacht and a distinctive-looking, elegantly classic exterior design with modern hints.

"It fits definitely in the area where other yachts of its size are in terms of proportions, sheer lines, bow curves, etc.," Hoekstra explains. Yet, look closely and the level of detail becomes obvious. "I've never seen such a detailed design as the owners have allowed us to do here."

A wooden stern, bare woods that aren't treated with varnish, and Tesumo engineered wood for the deck instead of teak. "The thick bull-nosed saloon deckhouses with round curved windows and the structural glass protecting the main and owner's cockpits," says Hoekstra, "the list just goes on."

The rigs and masts have been made from carbon, as have the deckhouses, while high-tensile aluminium has been chosen for the hull.

Zero is, Hoekstra enthuses, a "state-of-the-art yacht with a look that makes you dream of times gone by."

AN OPEN-SOURCE APPROACH

Even more remarkable is that the entire project is open-source, meaning that every sketch, report, key system design and operational data measurement is available in the public domain via Foundation Zero's platform to serve as a driver for further innovation in responsible, sustainable sailing.

"We hope that a lot of people will use the open-source reports which Foundation Zero is publishing," Hoekstra says. "We hope more projects like this will happen and that people, in general, are inspired by the enormous creativity we have if we join forces and we bring out the best of everybody in the team."

Whatever the future brings, Hoekstra says little has compared to the realisation that: "Wow, this is really going to happen".

"Two weeks ago, I was on board with the owners and they're just so proud," he says. "I mean, I've seen people happy on board the boats we've designed — obviously we aim for everyone to react like that! But to witness their vision, setting that up and then inching closer to the finish line, that's just so cool."

"Nothing beats that."

Chrissie McClatchie



THE ACCIDENTAL ICE QUEEN

In 2022, Captain Maiwenn Beadle became the first woman to command an expedition yacht through the Northwest Passage a 10,000-mile journey through one of the most remote and unforgiving regions on earth.

In late 2018, Maiwenn Beadle received an invitation. Would she like to captain a 36m ice-class tug through the Northwest Passage, the legendary sea route through some of the harshest conditions on earth?

Since the first transit of the passage — defined as the navigation of the waterway from the Arctic Circle to the Arctic Circle in either direction using any one of several routes — by Norwegian Roald Amundsen in 1906 until the end of 2022, only 351 transits had been recorded.

FIRST FEMALE

Only a handful of those transits had been done by women. What's more, only around 30 superyachts have made the trip. If she said yes to the opportunity and completed the transit, she would become the first female to captain a superyacht through the Passage, and the first female commercial master to do so.

Talk about making history.

The invite was out of the blue — although, as a skipper of a small cruise ship sailing between Seattle and Alaska, she

had the background and experience driving through ice and watching wildlife.

FROM CALIFORNIA TO NEW ZEALAND

Born and raised near Reading, England, Beadle studied fine art in Newcastle before a trip on a sailing yacht from California to New Zealand in the 1990s changed the course of her career. Soon, she was working on yachts, rounding Cape Horn in her 20s and sailing her own 18-foot converted lifeboat the length of the Caribbean islands single-handed.

After working as a stewardess and chef, she earned her ticket as a captain, making several Atlantic crossings as master of a 29m sailing yacht before transitioning from sail to power and moving into small ship cruising.

Given her background, it's hardly a surprise that she accepted the invite.

After flying to the Netherlands to pick up the vessel from refit, Beadle then sailed it via Scotland and Iceland to Greenland and onto Point Inlet in Canada, traditionally considered the eastern gateway of the passage.

The expedition led from east to west through the Northwest Passage. Ice reports have to be monitored closely (left). The central part of the Passage is out of range of search and rescue services (top). (Photos: Maiwenn Beadle)



Everything was set to push forward with the trip, but then the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world and all plans were put on pause.

The following year, 2021, with the Canadian Arctic still closed to traffic, Beadle succeeded in steering the ship into Greenlandic waters, where it sailed up the west coast of Greenland to the edge of the polar ice sheet at 79 degrees north, around 600 miles from the North Pole.

The boat returned to Southampton for the winter, but the trip to Greenland had cleared the way for Beadle to make the attempt to sail to the Pacific in 2022.

*Wildlife makes for breathtaking moments.
(Photo: Maiwenn Beadle)*



The trip would take seven weeks in total, and the logistics had to be planned out with pinpoint precision to ensure adequate provision of food and fuel for an itinerary with almost no place to re-stock supplies en route.

IT'S A MATTER OF WEEKS

"Although global warming means that the Northwest Passage is more open than in Amundsen's day, the ice only clears for a matter of weeks in late summer and, in some years, cold weather or strong northerly winds mean that the Passage remains blocked to all but the largest icebreaking ships," Beadle says.

"Over the long central section of the route, there is no one around and, far beyond the range of search and rescue services, very little support is available in the event of a mishap. The constantly moving ice and the constant presence of polar bears add enormously to the risks of anchoring for the night."

Setting off in the footsteps of Amundsen, Beadle steered the vessel across the Arctic Circle on 17 July, 2022 and re-crossed into the Bering Sea on 28 August, arriving in Victoria, Canada, for the winter in September. Since leaving Southampton, Beadle had sailed 10,000 miles, or the equivalent of halfway around the globe in a straight line.

Passengers seized the opportunity to kayak in the wild. (Photo: Maiwenn Beadle)





Maiwenn Beadle led a 36m ice-class tug through the legendary sea route (Photo: Maiwenn Beadle)

Talking to Dockwalk about the experience, Beadle described the epic journey as “enormously stressful”, saying that it was quite overwhelming at times. “The trip itself ran into a blur in lots of ways,” she says. Ice reports, weather forecasts and satellite images became a constant focus, to ensure it was safe to push forward as concerns swirled that the ice would close behind them.

But that doesn’t mean there weren’t breathtaking moments from the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “The light was

incredible, and it was like a magical, mystical fairy wonderland — pinks and purples and it was midnight, but it was daylight,” she said.

After completing the epic journey, Beadle took time out to recharge under the warmth of the Antiguan sun.

“It was an exhausting and exhilarating experience to carry the responsibility for the vessel and crew over that time and distance, and I needed some time out to reflect on it all,” she said.

She now acts as an “ice adviser” and offers voyage planning consultancy, as well as continuing to captain vessels.

Does she consider herself an Ice Queen? “Maybe an accidental one.”

THE HISTORY OF THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

The Northwest Passage has captured the imagination of explorers over the centuries, with many ships and sailors lost as efforts were made to chart a navigable route between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean around the north of Canada. Most famous of all is the Franklin Expedition in the 1840s, when HMS Erebus and HMS Terror disappeared, taking 134 men with them. The official list of transits of the Northwest Passage is kept by the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University.



*Follow Maiwenn Beadle
on Instagram:
@theaccidentalicequeen*



Citizen Science at Sea

FROM COLLISIONS TO CONSERVATION

The Marine Mammal Advisory Group (MMAG) is turning strikes and near misses at sea into a global movement to protect marine life.

As a passionate round-the-world sailor who has clocked over 450,000 nautical miles of racing, Damian Foxall has had his fair share of collisions. Until 2016, he, like many, took it for granted that this was part and parcel of the profession. "Sometimes you hit things, or nearly miss something and sometimes you just see some fantastic whales," Foxall says.

The turning point nearly a decade ago was a transatlantic event where, despite some mitigating actions put into place by the competing teams, within 24 hours of leaving New York, 16 collisions had been reported. "When we say collisions or incidents, it usually relates to anything that goes bump," he continues. "It can be objects, it can be boats, buoys, wood, but also, of course, marine life."

It was a wake-up call for Foxall. "I don't think you can be an ocean professional without appreciating the sector that you're operating in," he says. "We have this amazing opportunity to be ambassadors for the ocean."

Today, Foxall leads the Marine Mammal Advisory Group (MMAG), a cohort of members who have come together to collaborate on protecting diversity and reducing the risk of vessel strikes, particularly involving marine mammals and other marine life, including sunfish, sharks and pinnipeds. Founding members include World Sailing, Imoca, The Ocean Race and 11th Hour Racing. The organisation has grown to count over 35 members, including marine and scientific ventures, events, teams and technical partners.

"It was very obvious to us that we needed a way to live report what we see, and have a platform that will allow us to do that in an anonymous way to generate a report immediately for boats in the vicinity and to collate that data for the betterment of marine science," he says.

FIVE PILLARS

The organisation has defined five pillars in its strategy: source and share information; conduct risk assessment as standard; observe and report live; push for technological developments; encourage citizen science.

Central to this is its Marine Strike Log Survey, which encourages people to confidentially report collisions at sea between sailing vessels and marine life. With over half of all reported incidents resulting in damage to vessels as well as harm to marine life, it's a critical lifeline of information to help identify high-risk areas and improve crew safety. The log also shines a light on the true scale of collisions, with the data tracking not only the number of reported strikes, but also what species are most likely to be involved.

While strikes from sailing yachts are only a small percentage of overall ship strikes, Foxall sees ample opportunity for the sector to be drivers of change. "We can be the canaries in the coal mine to not only collate the information on where this is happening, but our smaller boats are a fantastic testing ground for the technologies that are being implemented or piloted on ferries or bigger ships," he says.

SHIPS OF OPPORTUNITY

He adds that superyachts have a role to play in its citizen science objective as "ships of opportunity". "A lot of non-racing boats are using the opportunity to get people out in the water for the good reasons of being out in nature and seeing what's there," he says.

Foxall is buoyed by the changes MMAG has already helped drive in the racing world.

"We had two races in and out of New York last year that, with the support of MMAG, identified that the continental shelf was extremely busy with big whales, so much so that they moved their start and finish line more than 100 miles off the coast of New York," he explains. Despite the commercial ramifications of spectators not being able to view the boats coming into the port, it was decided the risk was too high to justify keeping the start line where it was.

"Five years ago, it would have been impossible to imagine that ocean races would even identify exclusion zones," he continues. "Now it's become part of the protocol to consider where the areas of risk are and to identify if it's possible to avoid them."

Next up is a global survey in five languages to collate historical data about what skippers and sailors have collided with across their careers to help build out a bigger picture of where strikes are happening. "We would love everyone to participate in it," Foxall says. After all, as he says, if you're an ocean user, you should be an ocean steward.

"That transition is one of the key points that we're trying to instil and facilitate."

Chrissie McClatchie

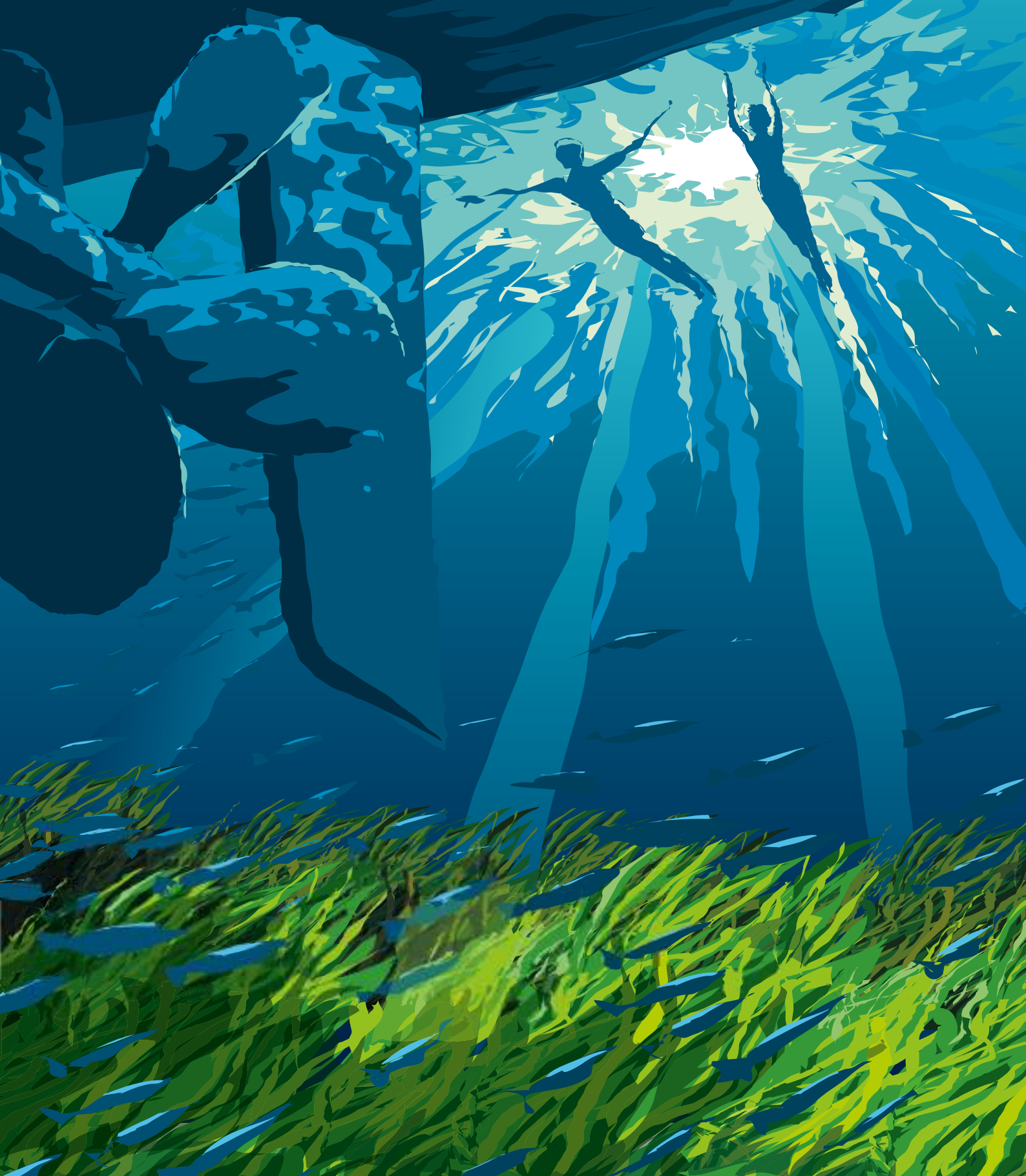
Scan the QR code for more info, and to participate in the survey of the Marine Mammal Advisory Group.



Seagrass Protection Enforcement

HARD LINE ON ANCHORING

French courts issue fines and compensation orders for seagrass damage, signaling strict enforcement of Posidonia protections.



In October 2023, a landmark ruling was handed down in the Marseille Maritime Court. A 26m yacht had been found anchoring in Posidonia seagrass zones around Cannes and Saint-Tropez three times between 2021 and 2022. The captain received a €20,000 fine and a one-year ban on sailing in French waters.

In the follow-up civil ruling in November 2024, with two environmental associations — France Nature Environnement and the Ligue de Protection des Oiseaux — as the civil parties, the captain was ordered to pay €86,537 in compensation for ecological damage to seagrass meadows and €5,000 in moral damages to the associations. The compensation payout was handed to the Rhône-Méditerranée-Corse Water Agency to finance Posidonia restoration and protection initiatives.

On the same day, a captain of a 51m yacht was ordered to pay €15,000 in fines and over €22,000 in compensation for similar actions.

This case was significant as it shows French authorities mean business when it comes to enforcing Decree 123/2019 issued by the French Maritime Authority, Préfecture Maritime de la Méditerranée, which prohibits yachts over 24m from anchoring in defined Posidonia zones, unless they anchor at buoys, use dynamic positioning or organised anchorage.

Even further restrictions apply for yachts over 45m, which are required to notify authorities before anchoring in these zones, while yachts greater than 80m must obtain official authorisation to do so.

Between 2020 and 2023, 17 separate prefectural decrees along the Mediterranean coastline implemented this decree.

What's more, the ruling demonstrates a recognition of the presumption of harm — that once a yacht anchors in a banned zone, ecological damage is assumed.

Endemic seagrass plays a critical role in the Mediterranean ecosystem, supporting biodiversity, coastal protection and carbon removal. In recent decades, meadows have shrunk by around 30 per cent due to anchoring, trawling, coastal development and pollution.

Other Mediterranean countries have since introduced similar legislation, including Monaco, Italy and Spain. In fact, the Balearics are considered to have the strictest regulations of the entire Mediterranean, with a fleet of boats patrolling waters inspecting anchored yachts. Last year, 180,867 inspections were carried out.

For captains and crew, the DONIA (donia.fr) app pinpoints the location of 10 eco-mooring buoys in Cannes, Antibes and Beaulieu-sur-Mer, which can be booked through the app. Twenty per cent of the cost goes towards REPIC (REstaurer la Posidonie Impactée par les anCres), a programme run by Andromède Océanologie. Another reference is Medtrix (medtrix.com), a government-backed platform with interactive habitat maps that allow captains to identify no-anchor zones and sand patches.

THE INSURANCE ANGLE

In some cases, liability insurance might cover fines for damaging a protected seagrass meadow, however, the captain would have to demonstrate that they took steps to avoid the event giving rise to a fine and that it was an accidental breach. Captains should also be aware that yachts are often held by authorities until fines are fully resolved. To avoid legal complications, minimize environmental harm, and stay in compliance with Mediterranean regulations, we recommend following ECPY association guidelines: anchor only on sandy seabeds or use tools like the Donia and Medtrix apps, and when retrieving the anchor, bring the yacht directly over it to lift it vertically rather than dragging it.

Chrissie McClatchie

ANCHOR GUARDIAN

As regulatory scrutiny increases in regions such as the Balearics and the French coastline, technologies that enhance anchoring precision are becoming more valuable than ever. AnchorGuardian — Swiss Ocean Tech's innovative response to one of yachting's oldest challenges — is now Lloyd's certified and available for installation. Embedded in the anchor chain, the smart

system continuously monitors movement and provides real-time alerts to the crew if the anchor begins to drag.

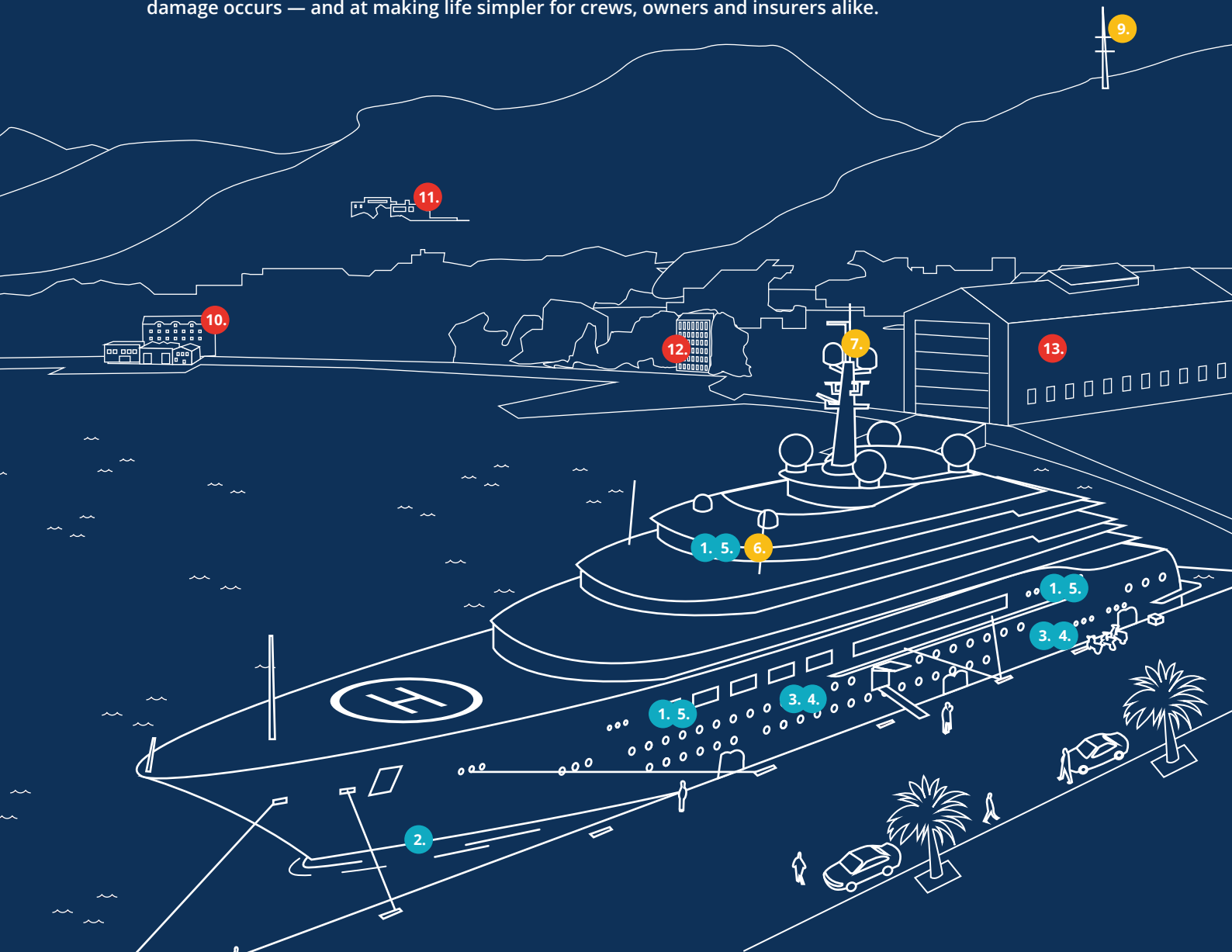
Scan the QR code to read the full story.



Connected Intelligence

HOW DATA IS CHANGING YACHT RISK MANAGEMENT

From real-time alerts to AI-powered diagnostics, Yacht Sentinel's YS Pro aims at preventing claims before damage occurs — and at making life simpler for crews, owners and insurers alike.



SENSORS ON BOARD

- 1. Air quality
- 2. Bilge
- 3. Heat
- 4. Smoke
- 5. Humidity

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- 6. YS Pro
- 7. Antennas
- 8. Cloud
- 9. Cell Tower

RECEIVER SPOTS ASHORE

- 10. Yacht Club
- 11. Owners House
- 12. Yacht Management
- 13. Shipyard

Locations are examples

How can technology help prevent claims before they ever happen? That's a question Romain Devismes and the team at Yacht Sentinel have been thinking about for nearly a decade. Yacht Sentinel operates in the connected boat space — a marine version of the black box technology that many insurance companies are installing in cars in exchange for a reduced policy cost. "What we're doing is bringing boats into the big data and AI age," Devismes, the CEO of Yacht Sentinel, says.

The product, YS Pro, is a smart, compact box installed on board, but the value is in the ecosystem that surrounds it. "The box does three things," says Devismes. "It acts as a Wi-Fi router, as a boat security system and as a data hub."

On the security front, if something goes wrong with your vessel while you're away, it sends you alarms. "If the boat is drifting away, if the boat is sinking, if the tilt is wrong, or if your bilge pumps are running, then you can save your boat," he explains.

Similarly, entry and motion detectors and wireless sensors for the bilge, air quality, heat, smoke and humidity are triggered in case of anomalies or intruders on board. "The idea is to send a notification to the owner, but also the captain or marina manager — even a friend — if something goes wrong with your boat while you're away," he continues.

Real-time data via the boat's NMEA2000 captures thousands of critical data points daily around GPS position, battery voltage, bilge water level, water depth, shore power status, engine hours, temperature and tilt & trim and sends it to the cloud, where it can be monitored, analysed and acted upon.

"We can create value with all the data we collect," he says. In the case of an accident, the data can be used to understand what happened.

SLOW GROUNDING IN TURKEY

One incident illustrates just how significant this can be. A yacht in Turkey experienced a slow grounding — barely enough to raise an alarm — the day the delivery crew took over the vessel to skipper it to the Côte d'Azur for last year's Cannes Yachting Festival. But over the following three days, the engine temperature gradually rose, culminating in a catastrophic engine failure in Greek waters. "Without YS Pro, it would've been impossible to connect the incident to the later damage," Romain explains. With the system's data, both the cause and timeline were clear, saving time and cost in the claims process.

Originally launched in 2015 as a B2C boat security system, YS Pro has evolved in line with NMEA2000 technology. "We

have slowly matured from selling B2C to offering a B2B product that also serves insurers, charter companies, fleet operators and yards," he says.

There may now be other products on the market, but Devismes draws upon that decade of experience, as well as its smart all-in-one trio of WiFi, security and data, to set it apart in the market.

NO CONFIG NEEDED

The other distinction is ease of handling. "It has a touchscreen, is installed via two wires - power an NMEA 2000 - and no configuration is needed. We also collect everything, whether your boat is a motor yacht or sailing yacht and whether it has one engine or four, or solar panels with six batteries," he says. An app allows boat owners to remotely access data in real-time. Other advantages of the system are low power consumption and waterproof casing.

It's not just about data for data's sake, either. YS Pro creates meaningful insights that prevent loss, enable proactive maintenance and streamline operations. Charter clients, for example, can receive automatic fuel consumption reports directly into their billing system, removing the need to estimate use at the fuel dock.

Yacht Sentinel's goal of creating a global platform for telematics solutions was given a boost with recent news that it had secured \$150,000 from Microsoft for AI sponsorship (with a further \$220,000 to come).

In a world where prevention is becoming as important as protection, Yacht Sentinel is giving the marine industry the tools and data to steer into a smarter future.

"Boats are used far less than cars but cost far more," Devismes adds. "It only makes sense that they be just as connected — if not more."

Chrissie McClatchie

Scan the QR code to see the Yacht Sentinel website.





The human element is an essential factor for the safe management of any yacht. (Photo: Ceri Breeze)

The Human Element

SAFEGUARDING YOUR SUPERYACHT

True luxury isn't just found in fine finishes — it's in the confidence of a safe return. CHIRP Maritime explains how smart safety practices preserve the freedom, privacy and performance that define the superyacht experience.

In the luxurious world of superyachting, freedom and adventure define the experience. But beneath the surface lies a more serious reality: even minor incidents can lead to significant losses of equipment, reputation, or even life.

"A proactive focus on safety isn't just about compliance; it's a smart investment in protecting people, assets, and operations," says Dave Watkins of CHIRP Maritime (Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme).

CHIRP plays an important safety role in the superyacht industry by offering a confidential platform where crew,

officers, and others can report safety concerns without fear of retribution. Watkins explains how a proactive mindset can help prevent losses in the first place.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT: LEADERSHIP SETS THE TONE

Approximately 35% of superyacht incidents stem from poor leadership or supervision. "The captain's influence is critical — not just for issuing orders, but for creating a culture where safety is prioritised, not sidelined, under pressure," says Watkins. Empowering every crew member to speak up, report concerns, and stop work when necessary is essential — even if that means questioning a superior.

Incidents like working aloft without PPE or diving without permits have occurred because no one felt empowered to intervene.

Anonymous reporting channels like CHIRP's Superyacht Feedback are vital for spotting risks early. Normalising their use helps prevent near misses from becoming costly accidents.

PAPER DOESN'T PREVENT LOSS — ACTION DOES

Safety Management Systems (SMS) are only effective when they are followed and regularly verified. "Too often, procedural drift creeps in — alarms aren't tested, doors are left unsecured, permits are skipped," says Watkins. "These lapses erode safety until something goes wrong."

Procedural drift is silent, gradual and dangerous. Regular, realistic drills — watertight door checks, engine room scenarios, PPE compliance — help verify whether systems work as intended. Task-specific training and internal audits also help spot and correct drift early.

For high-risk tasks (like hot work, diving or working at height), a permit-to-work system must be non-negotiable. "It's about control, clarity, and accountability — not just paperwork," says Watkins.

TALK CLEARLY. CONFIRM EVERYTHING.

"Miscommunication is one of the most preventable causes of loss," says Watkins. On superyachts, where small teams handle complex tasks, structured communication is critical.

Closed-loop communication (repeating back instructions) and two-person verification before key actions

(like confirming shell doors are secure) can prevent major incidents. "Don't assume — confirm," Watkins adds. "Assumption and rushed conversations have no place in high-risk environments."

DESIGN INTEGRITY: SYSTEMS MUST SUPPORT SAFETY

Not all risks come from human error. Technical issues, like unreliable alarms, poor sensor placement or single-point failures, are frequent contributors to accidents

"A weak alarm system is like a broken compass," says Watkins. Similarly, if a sensor can't detect the hazard in time, it's not protecting anyone. Maintenance and system reviews are essential. If a hatch sensor only alerts when it's already fully open, that's a fixable design flaw.

"Consider retrofits and system upgrades as part of a strategic safety plan," he adds.

THE REAL LUXURY IS SAFETY

For owners, captains and management companies, a mature safety culture is a legal necessity — and a competitive advantage and form of loss prevention. "Safety isn't a cost. It's an insurance asset," he says.

By learning from past incidents and adopting a proactive mindset for loss prevention — through strong leadership, open communication, verified practices and robust systems — the superyacht community can enjoy the journey without compromising what matters most. "The real luxury isn't speed or space," he says. "It's getting home safely."

Dave Watkins

WITH ISWAN'S SUPPORT, SAFER YACHTING STARTS WITH US ALL

All crew members deserve to feel safe, respected and welcome on board. Yet the unique environment of yachting can intensify the impact of harmful behaviours like bullying and harassment.

In 2023, the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) found that women were over three times more likely than men to contact its helplines about abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. In response, ISWAN launched Safe at sea...it takes all of us!, an awareness and behaviour change campaign co-funded by The Seafarers' Charity and UK P&I Club, highlighting the importance of allyship in creating safer conditions at sea.

So how can you be an ally to a crew member who feels isolated or mistreated? By listening, challenging inappropriate behaviour and offering support. ISWAN's video and guidance offers practical advice on what to say and how to say it, and how to help restore safety in tense situations. Learn more at www.iswan.org.uk/our-work/safe-at-sea-campaign.





Cyclades Cup 2025



Cyclades Cup 2025



Cyclades Cup 2025



Pantaenius on board

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Part of the Cyclades Cup 2025 fleet.



Cyclades Cup 2025



Cyclades Cup SUP race 2025



Cyclades Cup 2025



Cyclades Cup SUP race 2025



Pantaenius on board

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The Superyacht Cup Palma 2025



The Superyacht Cup Palma 2025



The Superyacht Cup Palma 2025



The Superyacht Cup Palma 2025



The Superyacht Cup Palma 2025



The Superyacht Cup Palma 2025

SAFE SUPERYACHT RACING

The SuperYacht Racing Association (SYRA) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting safe and fair superyacht racing. Open to yacht owners, organisers, and industry professionals, it serves as a central voice in rule development, safety protocols, and best practices. Guided by an expert committee, SYRA supports consistency across regattas and encourages broader participation in the sport. Members can actively shape policies and influence key issues within the superyacht racing community. By joining, they contribute to the growth and integrity of this unique sector of the industry.



TEAM SPOTLIGHT



VICTORIA BRAND

Meet Victoria Brand, a key member of our sales team in Monaco—and one of the rare few who can say they were born there. Though both her parents originally hail from the southeast of England, they met in the south of France, where Victoria spent her early childhood in the charming village of Roquebrune, just west of Monaco.

“I have really fond memories of Roquebrune,” she recalls. “It was classic small-village life—running around with friends, riding my little bike everywhere.” Growing up in France also meant attending local schools, which is why Victoria is now fluent in French—an invaluable asset in her role working with international clients.

At age ten, Victoria and her family moved into Monaco, and apart from a brief stint in the UK for university, it’s been home ever since. She completed a BA in Fashion Styling and Production in England, but quickly realised that while she enjoyed keeping up with trends, the fashion industry wasn’t quite the right fit. “I didn’t think I had what it takes to work in that world,” she says.

Returning to Monaco, it was a friend already working at Pantaenius who introduced her to the Team Lead, Michelle van der Merwe. Victoria joined the team in 2021 and has steadily grown her role to specialise in superyacht insurance

sales and service. Today, she provides tailored quotes and expert guidance for owners and operators of large yachts - bringing care, precision and a deep understanding to every client interaction.

“I take real pride in building strong, lasting relationships,” Victoria says. “Our clients need to feel supported and confident, every step of the way.” She particularly enjoys the chance to connect in person at international yacht shows, like those in San Remo and Monaco: “It’s great to finally meet the captains you’ve only ever spoken to by email.”

Sailing is also part of Victoria’s story. “I’ve known how to sail since I was about seven—it was part of PE lessons in school,” she says. “Put me in a dinghy, give me a sail, and I think I could still show people how it’s done. But a 30-metre yacht might be pushing it!”

Today, she prefers walking, especially along her favourite local route: a scenic trail that winds from Monaco to Menton. “It’s perfect—right by the sea and surrounded by greenery. It’s my go-to for a breath of fresh air.”

(Photos: Pantaenius (left) - Studio Illume (right))



CHRISTOS KONTOVASILIS

Christos Kontovasilis is the Managing Director of Pantaenius Greece, located in Marina Alimos. The marina sits just a short distance from central Athens and the bustling port of Piraeus, while also offering easy access to the picturesque islands of the Saronic Gulf.

It was on the Cycladic island of Andros that Christos first discovered his passion for yachting. His father, who had taken up sailing in his thirties, decided to buy a boat, and the family began spending much of their free time on the water. Over the years, Christos developed a strong enthusiasm for windsurfing, a sport he still enjoys today.

Around this time Christos first encountered the company he would eventually come to lead. In 2000, when his father upgraded to a larger yacht, he turned to a client and friend, Yiannis—who also happened to be an insurance broker—for advice on insuring the vessel. Sadly, not long after, the yacht was lost. Contrary to the family's expectations, the insurance claim was handled swiftly and without issue.

That positive experience left a lasting impression, and Pantaenius quickly became a trusted name in the Kontovasilis household. So, when Yiannis began looking for someone to take over his brokerage business in 2008, Christos didn't hesitate to apply.

"I don't really see myself as an 'insurance guy,'" Christos says. "I just love yachting, and I enjoy working with people who feel the same way. That's what I found at Pantaenius—this spirit of shared passion. It feels like family."

Christos started out on his own, but as the Greek market developed, the business steadily grew. Today, he leads a dedicated team of four.

With its rich maritime history, Greece is not only a seafaring nation but an increasingly important yachting hub. The Aegean is one of Europe's most popular charter destinations, and islands like Mykonos remain iconic summer hotspots in the Mediterranean. In June, the country hosted the Cyclades Cup, a superyacht regatta held on the island of Antiparos - for the second consecutive year, proudly sponsored by Pantaenius.

Given this momentum, the decision to establish a full subsidiary in 2022 was a natural next step. As Managing Director, Christos takes great pride in the consistency of his team.

"Keeping the family spirit I've come to love at Pantaenius is so important to me," he says. "I believe that sense of connection and care is part of our DNA - and our clients feel it too."

OUR SUPERYACHT SALES TEAM WORLDWIDE



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