

The Superyacht

TRUTH • OPINION KNOWLEDGE • IDEAS AND EXPERT INDUSTRY ANALYSIS



REPORT

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Yacht agents are an essential logistics tool for captains. They not only provide a fundamental support network for captains on board yachts cruising off the beaten track, but they also work with crew to consistently ensure the safe and smooth operation of their vessels. As more yachts begin to travel through unchartered waters it is becoming increasingly essential to support them through their journeys and ensure that they are as straightforward and hassle-free as possible; a large part of this comes down to the choice of agent. To construct this peer review section *The Superyacht Report* designed a short survey where captains were asked to share their experiences of the agents they have used. Obviously, these are the views of the captains, and not of *TSR* itself; however, we believe it is important to facilitate open and honest sharing of information within the industry.



WHO IS THE BEST AGENT YOU HAVE EVER USED AND WHY?

Here we include some of the most pertinent comments that accompanied the captains' recommendations of the best agent they have used. All agents mentioned in response to this question are listed in the accompanying box.

Tahiti Ocean. Due to the distance travelled and the relatively short period of time one is cruising these waters I think you need as much help as you can get when visiting French Polynesia. Etienne Boutin has over 20 years' experience and he never tires of stopping by the vessel daily to make sure everything and everyone is happy – from the owner/captain through to the junior laundry staff. Being that far from home it's a nice feeling to know you are being very well looked after. He was like that when he started his business and he is still like that today.

Carol Dunlop, Yacht Partners Fiji. She's an expert and has all the contacts, waypoints, excursions, plans, options to choose from ... everything. I'd highly recommend her. The cruising guide she personalises for each yacht is second to none.

Jeanette Tobin, Asia Pacific Superyachts NZ. She delivers an extremely personal service where you think you are her only yacht. She is very passionate about her company, country and yachting, and goes out of her way to make you feel welcome and fully supported whenever you visit New Zealand and anywhere else in the Pacific. She always goes the extra mile.

Jane Midson, Jane's Yacht Services, Antigua. Because nothing is too much trouble and she is like family now!

Sotiris Konstantakis and all the staff from **Cape4 Agency** in Athens, Greece. He is very professional, offers good advice and is at your disposal 24 hours a day.

Yacht Help, now called **Evolution**, in Palma, and **Yacht Chandlers** in the USA. They both provide top service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with a smile. No matter how ridiculous or small the request is, they will deliver time and time again.

Australian Superyachts/Australasian Superyacht Services offer a solid knowledge of Australian procedures.

It's a tie ... **Tomaso Moreno** from **Catalano Shipping** in Monaco and **Federica Tilocca** from **Nautica Assistance** in Porto Cervo. Both hold stressful positions in the summer, and they are always calm, extremely knowledgeable, can sort anything and they know everyone.

37 South, Auckland. The staff are ex-captains and engineers, they know the job and the country and they help crew a lot. They are nice people as well.

Seal Superyachts. Their transparency in invoicing, prompt responses, efficient service and charity efforts are their best qualities.

Indo Yacht Support (member of the Yacht Support Group). Indonesia is a vast country, the size of the whole Mediterranean sea area, so it takes a special agency to fulfil top-level logistical and shore support in remote places.

Kass Johnson at **Dockside** in St Maarten. Nothing is too much trouble, she is always on the ball and thinking ahead. She frequently achieved the impossible and never let us down.

Begüm Yachting, Turkey. A very warm, friendly and genuine welcome is always extended by Begüm Doğulu and her representatives. They are available 24/7 and always come up with the goods.

It's a difficult question because, on the one hand, you have service and, on the other, you have price. With larger agencies, you can deal with one employee and have a great result and with another you may have a poorer result. It depends on a lot of things and I have to say that none stand out as the best (although I could certainly tell you the worst by a mile). Good agencies are generally not cheap: **SYS, CYC, J Luise and Sons, Allservices**, for example. I use all of these at times, but they are not always necessary. If you are in Viareggio, I would recommend **Superyacht Services**. In Tunisia, using the services of an agent is essential, but you must take extreme care with everything.

Best agents mentioned

- 37 South, New Zealand
- Adrian & Adrian Jr Lugnani, Gibraltar
- All Services, Italy
- Alphaship, Tenerife
- Asia Pacific Superyachts NZ
- Australian Superyachts/Australasian Superyacht Services, Australia
- Begüm Yachting, Turkey
- BWA, Croatia
- BWA, Worldwide
- C2C Inc, California, USA
- Cape4 Agency, Greece
- Catalano Shipping, Monaco
- CCS, Antigua
- Dockside, St Maarten
- Evolution, Spain
- Forus, Croatia
- H&H Management, Italy
- Henry's Safari Tours, Grenada
- Indo Yacht Support, Indonesia
- Jane's Yacht Services, Antigua
- Karalis Yacht Services, Sardinia
- Kirton & Co, Malta
- Kronos Yacht Agency, Rhodes, Greece
- Luise Associates, Sicily
- Lunautica, Nice/Hamburg/Valencia
- Maersk, Sweden
- Mansueto Marine, Italy
- Nautica Assistance, Sardinia
- Nord Ship, Norway
- Pesto Sea Group, Italy
- Sea Land and Sky Management, Monaco
- Seal Superyachts, Thailand
- Shore Support, Caribbean
- Superyacht Services, Italy
- SYS, Sardinia
- Tahiti Ocean, French Polynesia
- Yacht Partners Fiji, Fiji
- Yacht Chandlers, USA

WHO IS THE WORST AGENT YOU HAVE EVER USED AND WHY?

Interestingly, 30 per cent of the agents listed in the worst category were also mentioned by name in the best category, reinforcing the point that one individual's experience with a particular agent can differ wildly from another's. Forty of the captains who responded to the survey were happy to share with us their insight into the yacht agents they deemed the worst, with 15 agents being referred to by name – we have only printed the names of the agents that were referred to on more than one occasion to rule out the possibility of isolated incidents skewing the data.

Although we have chosen to print a list of the names that were mentioned by the captains, the key points to take away are the reasons *why* they were nominated as the worst that the particular captain/captains had encountered.

The issues that arose in the feedback can be put into four categories: attitude, familiarity with the yachting industry specifically, value for money and, lastly, transparency in fees and commissions. Negative feedback regarding the agent's attitude were repeatedly rude and arrogant behaviour, with some captains complaining of agents being "full of self importance".

Using an agent unfamiliar with the superyacht industry with limited knowledge of how to handle our specific set of requirements led to comments such as, "Most agents who don't know the yachting industry are pretty poor". However, we have to understand that "Actually they are ship agents and although they might be very good as agents for ships, they are not for yachts." Although constrained by the options available in certain locations, using ship agents who are not dealing with superyachts on a day-by-day basis is more likely to result in a sub-standard service.

Worst agents mentioned

- AI Yacht Trade Consortium S.A., Greece
- Asia Pacific Superyachts
- BWA, Croatia
- BWA, Turkey
- JLT, Italy
- Pesto, Italy