

# PARTIES, PERKS, AND PRIVILEGES

How today's superyacht marinas court captains and crew

by Louisa Beckett



Camper & Nicholsons Marinas. Top: Cesme Marina, Turkey; bottom left: Port Louis Marina, Grenada; bottom right: Yoga class

In the past, a quiet berth, reliable Wi-Fi, proximity to shore-side services, and 24-hour security often were enough to ensure that a yacht would homeport for season in the same marina year after year. But the growing number of superyacht facilities opening up around the world has led to increased competition for the same vessels, which they need to fill their new slips. Savvy marina owners and managers, realizing that superyachts now have other berthage options in the Med, Caribbean, South Florida, and other popular yachting destinations, are adding parties, perks, and loyalty programs to “typical” on-site amenities such as access to swimming pools, gyms, and private lounges. While some of these programs are geared to yacht owners, most of them are designed to attract the yachting industry’s key influencers: captains and crew.

“We LOVE crew!” says Aeneas Hollins, director of yachting for Christophe Harbour in St. Kitts, a former superyacht captain himself.

Here is a look at some of the ways today’s superyacht marinas are



enticing captains and crew to come and stay.

## Par-tay!

It has long been common practice for marinas around the world to show their appreciation for the yachts that homeport

with them by throwing parties for the crew. These events typically are held at the start or end of the season or at other times when captains and crews are less busy with owner trips or charters, although many marinas hold smaller crew parties monthly throughout the year.

“We have to make it fun; we allow for decompression,” says Bert Fowles, vice president of sales and marketing for Island Global Yachting (IGY), which owns and/or operates 19 marinas in 10 different countries. Each of these facilities holds regular crew dock parties where hard-working yachties can get together and blow off a little steam.

“OneOcean Port Vell organizes monthly thematic crew parties (except summer since the crew is very busy during the summer season),” says Lukas Maticka, marketing & communications executive for the



CrewFest at Christophe Harbour combines social events with workshops in a four-day annual event. IGY's water volleyball (top right) and Hungry, Hungry Hippos (bottom left) at their Crew Olympics. Crew parties help create a community at a marina.

superyacht marina located in Barcelona, Spain. "They are sponsored by known marine-related companies and have more than one hundred fifty crewmembers attending at a time."

Christophe Harbour holds a monthly Full Moon Party on the private beach it reserves for crew use. On a larger scale, in January the marina, in conjunction with professional crew association ACREW, hosted Caribbean CrewFest 2018, a four-day event combining educational sessions with island excursions and social hours.

Some crew appreciation events, like Caribbean CrewFest, which is in its third year, are so successful that they gain a permanent place on the yachting industry's calendar. For example, Grand Harbour Marina in Malta, a Camper & Nicholsons Marinas facility, hosts an "infamous" Halloween Party each October. This themed costume party, which features "spooky" food and professional entertainment, has grown to include guests from local shipyards in addition to yacht crew in the marina.

Part party, part athletic contest, IGY's Crew Olympics lets yacht crew compete against each other for prizes. The concept has turned out to be so popular that IGY now hosts annual Crew Olympics at different marinas throughout its network.

For the past 20 years, marina owner/operator Westrec has held its annual themed Captains & Crew Appreciation Party in April at Sunrise Harbor Marina in Fort Lauderdale. "More than a thousand people turn out – decked out in costumes befitting the theme – and enjoy entertainment, dining, drinking, and dancing," says Gary Groenewold, Westrec vice president of the southern area. The huge turnout is due to the fact that Westrec invites yachties not just from boats that homeport in Sunrise Harbor, but rather from all over the world. "Marketed to every possible yacht in the superyacht fleet through social media, personally delivered invitations at all major yacht shows from Fort Lauderdale to Monaco, and by word of mouth, the majority of attendees are captains and crew," Groenewold says. "Legendary, the annual party continues with the chief aim of appreciating the crew whose day-to-day work reflects the greater industry."



Below: Westrec's themed parties attract around 1,000 captains and crewmembers. Right: IGY's concierge app for crew



At superyacht facility Porto Montenegro in Montenegro, “Our marina yacht concierge caters not only to the owners but to captains as well,” says Jovana Zivkovic, marina marketing manager.

“OneOcean Port Vell’s Reception team is delighted to provide [a full] range of VIP services,” says Maticka. “Yacht agents based in our Gallery building are likewise highly experienced in providing top concierge service for crew and VIP clients.”

Island Global Yachting aims to take crew concierge services to a whole new level with



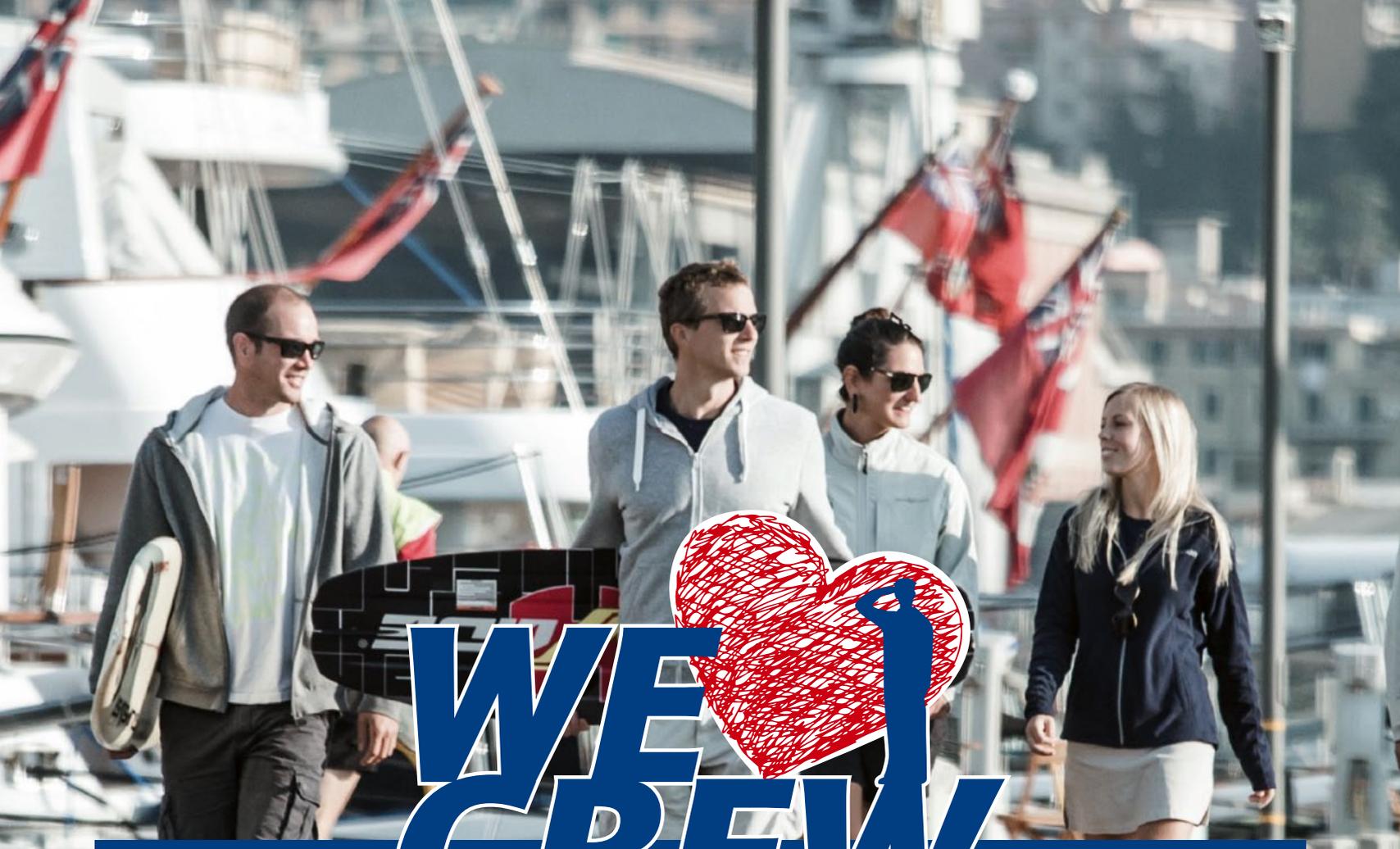
its new IGY Yachting Services App powered by Boatyard. The company recently launched the new app, which lets crew access local service providers with their cell phones, at IGY One Island Park – Miami Beach and plans to implement it at IGY Yacht Haven Grande, St. Thomas, in time for the winter charter season. “We are thrilled to be advancing this technology with the goal of taking our class-leading customer service to even new heights and will be constantly refining [it] based on client feedback, to help link crew to key service providers in each IGY marina’s location via their smartphones,” says Fowles. “If we can make it just a little bit easier for the captain and crew, it allows them to have a better experience.”

The relationships that superyacht marinas forge with local service providers season after season also has enabled many of them to negotiate discounts for the captains and crew who patronize their facilities. Christophe Harbour, for example, starts by giving each new yacht a “Crew Happenings” briefing that includes local information about St. Kitts. “What we locals do, and when [are the] [barbecues], sports, cinema, etc.,” says Hollins. “All the stuff that ain’t in the tour guides’ repertoire.” In addition, the marina has organized a crew discount program for bars, restaurants, hotels, and tour guides around the island, and provides a courtesy shuttle and bicycles to help yacht crewmembers get to these venues.

## What Can We Do for You?

Concierge services provided by superyacht marinas to the owners of vessels berthed at their docks, such as making travel, dining, and tourism arrangements, is the norm throughout the yachting industry. “First and foremost – our policy is that a happy owner makes for a happy crew. Thus, any requests that normally the crew would have to care for, we make it our priority to help and assist as best as possible, be it for restaurant, spa, entertainment bookings to hairdresser rendezvous, and anything else they might need,” says Monika Geanta Paraskevaides, sales and marketing manager at Sani Marina, a C&N facility in Northern Greece.

Today, however, many superyacht marinas are offering additional concierge services specifically tailored to the needs of captains and crew. These include helping to organize customs and immigration clearance, anchoring permits, fuel bunkering, and provisioning. A complimentary crew concierge is one of the benefits Christophe Harbour provides to superyachts that berth there.



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- **Newsletter** for the best hints in town • **Free shuttle** • **Ski** and **golf** resorts nearby • **Apartments** for crew
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## Join the Club

Taking crew discounts a step further, today many superyacht marinas offer loyalty programs to superyacht captains and crew with valuable incentives that add up as long as the yacht berths there. These programs take various forms, including clubs and card memberships that offer discounts, perks, and gifts in exchange for a yacht's loyalty.

"...We have ongoing Crew Club membership (complimentary to all crew in our marina) that involves special offers in the village, weekly events for the crew, and helps create a community out of the crew in the marina. It is a great networking platform, especially for new boats," says Zivkovic of Porto Montenegro. "As part of the Crew Club, we have [a] winter ski chalet available to all crew, and captains can even bring their families for a stay there, all free of charge."

C&N Marinas' Cesme Marina in Cesme, Turkey, has a loyalty program for annual berth holders called the "I am Happy Here" Privilege Club. In addition to incentives aimed mainly at yacht owners, it also features captain-friendly perks like a free polish for the yacht's stainless steel, annual maintenance of onboard electronics, and a pre-season check by local shipyard Pianura Marine.

C&N-managed Porto Lotti in La Spezia, Italy, offers both a Crew Card and a Captain's Card to yachts berthed in its facility. The Crew Card allows access to on-site amenities such as the swimming pool and gym, plus discounts at many local services, like car and scooter rentals, fitness centers, etc. The innovative Captain's Card program adds a variety of pre-paid vouchers for mountain weekends, dinners, tours, etc. that they can take advantage of personally or use as an incentive for the crew.

At Port Louis Marina in Grenada, C&N Marinas recently rolled out a card in its own brand name, the CNM Privilege Card, which gives berth holders discounts at a range of local services, including restaurants, spas, resorts, and a diving concession.

Perhaps one of the most established superyacht marina loyalty programs is the IGY Anchor Club, which launched six years ago. Open to yacht owners and captains, it allows members to accumulate points for docking at participating IGY marinas. Collect enough points and you can redeem them for free gifts such as electronics, jewelry, clothing, yacht services, etc. "Vessels have been able to get patio furniture, cameras for the boat, etc.," says Fowles, adding, "We also have responded to crew requests to donate points to charity."

## Time to Give Back

One of the most successful "perks" that marinas offer captains and crew is the opportunity to give to charity either through the Anchor Club or directly, "via sweat equity" as Fowles puts it, referring to IGY's "Inspire Giving Through You" program, which allows crew to participate directly in community causes. "Never underestimate the true spirit of the captain and crew," he says, adding, "Giving back by the captain and crew is part of giving to the crew."

Groenewold also reports that Westrec supports many of the superyacht industry's philanthropic organizations and associations. "Westrec executives sit on boards and contribute through membership and in-kind donations whenever and wherever possible. Organizations include ICOMIA, ISS, MIASE, SeaKeepers, USSA, and YachtAid Global among others," he says. "This kind of work benefits all." 



Top: Crew mingling in Cesme. Bottom: Island excursions (with superheroes!) and yoga are part of Christophe Harbour's CrewFest on St. Kitts

