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SUMMER CHARTER SPECIAL

- Add even more magic to your experience
- The mistakes to avoid when choosing a yacht



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SUMMER CHARTER

words: Doug Thompson, Shaw McCutcheon

Diving instructor Rodolphe Holler knows the look – eyes twinkle and search the big TV screen, and laughter is continuous as the HD video plays to an eager audience in the superyacht's main saloon. After days of astounding diving around Moorea, French Polynesia, his students watch a meticulously edited video presentation of their trip just 12 hours after completing their last dive.

The wonder of seeing a big whale or shark in the tropical waters is relived in superb detail and this is the exclamation point of Holler's guide service. It includes the laughs, the gaffes and reflects the guests' wonder as they get close up to nature. Viewing the video while

still anchored in pristine waters makes it all the more special – the memories are hours old and the trip home is still on the horizon.

'The final movie makes us different,' explains Holler, who runs Tahiti Private Expeditions from the high island of Moorea, located about 11 miles from Tahiti. 'Everyone on a charter trip has a camera on board. Pictures are taken by everyone, but no one knows what to do with the pictures after the trip. Each day we are compiling

video and pictures and making the final product. When we show the video, the impact and emotions are incredible, so much higher right on the boat, and not two weeks later watching it from their office.'

Holler has focused on superyacht diving trips since 2005. He's worked with charter guests on *Big Fish*, *Lady M*, *Octopus* and scores of others, and he'll travel worldwide to be the dive master on yachts.



WATCH A DOCUMENTARY OF YOUR DIVE JUST HOURS AFTER A SHARK ENCOUNTER, LEARN TO WATER SKI WITH A PRO COACH OR HIRE A POP STAR FOR A PRIVATE CONCERT – YOUR NEXT CHARTER COULD BE EVEN MORE UNFORGETTABLE

Preparation is key

Having an expert like Holler can add a whole new dimension to a trip, transforming it from a relaxing holiday into a life-enriching experience. This practice of bringing in outside experts and guides is known as 'rendezvous activities' in the charter world. These can also include sportfishing and watersports such as waterskiing, kiteboarding and personal watercraft riding.

For example, 'Instead of the yacht having to carry all the fishing rods and lines and hooks, you hire a local expert who picks up your guests for a half day or full day of fishing,' says Mark Elliott, a yacht consultant and charter agent for International Yacht Collection. 'The goal is to hire the best guide or company you can find in the area, and we have preferred guides and companies that we work with depending on the location.'

THE PERFECT EXPERIENCE

A week aboard a chartered luxury yacht can be a perfect experience. Everything can go right: the weather will be impeccable, the interior furnishings pleasant, the food delectable, the crew always available, all the systems running, and the cruising totally relaxing. It all sounds so easy.

It's not.

Complex advance work begins with a

lot of discussion between the client, the charter broker and the yacht captain before all the right elements come together to make a memorable charter experience. The client, who's prepared to spend a lot of money on the trip, has certain expectations and desires. It's the charter broker's job to track those desires and find the right vessel.

Often, however, the broker finds him or herself correcting wish lists, fitting that round peg of the

client's desires into the square hole of what's available or best for them. And even when the almost-right match is found, sometimes unforeseen or uncontrollable situations can interfere with the perfect trip.

The key to finding that right cruise is all about creating the right expectations. Notes Robin O'Brien, a senior charter broker with Fraser Yachts: 'Flexibility is the name of the game.'



‘When we show the video, the impact and emotions are incredible’

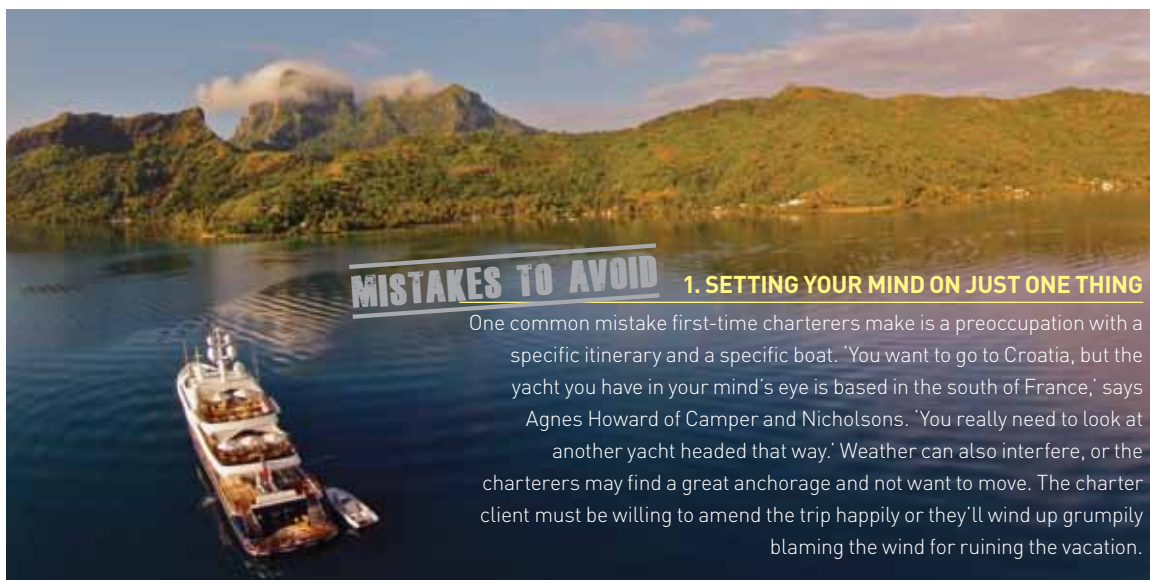
Diving instructor Rodolphe Holler and guests enjoy a diving video presentation aboard the yacht – the perfect way to relive the excitement of a dive

Finding a reputable sportfishing guide who knows the local waters requires research. ‘The IGFA (International Game Fish Association) has representatives in different countries and is a great resource,’ says George Poveromo, a renowned saltwater angler, writer and television host. ‘The captain can talk to the IGFA and get recommendations, and then learn all about the sportfishing guides who work that part of the world and the fishing they do, including what type of boat they have. It’s also important to know

the migration patterns of the fish, whether the marlin or tuna fishing is good depending on the season and where the charter is headed. Through phone conversations, email and word of mouth, the yacht captain can line up the trip well in advance,’ Poveromo continues. ‘You never want to go to a place without preparation.’

Inspiration included

Zenon Bilas has trained people to waterski, wakeboard



MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. SETTING YOUR MIND ON JUST ONE THING

One common mistake first-time charterers make is a preoccupation with a specific itinerary and a specific boat. ‘You want to go to Croatia, but the yacht you have in your mind’s eye is based in the south of France,’ says Agnes Howard of Camper and Nicholson’s. ‘You really need to look at another yacht headed that way.’ Weather can also interfere, or the charterers may find a great anchorage and not want to move. The charter client must be willing to amend the trip happily or they’ll wind up grumpily blaming the wind for ruining the vacation.

High Energy

28m

and barefoot ski for more than 30 years, and now he's offering rendezvous waterski coaching to superyacht guests. In addition to providing high-calibre professional training in slalom, trick, wakeboard and barefoot skiing, Bilas – a seven-time US barefoot waterski champion – performs for the guests.

'My barefoot show includes a wide range of skills that I have learned,' Bilas says. 'This excites the guests and students in a very positive way, often inspiring them to try just a little harder on their next set.'

For the regular folk, he adapts his programme to the individual's skill level. The programme capitalises on the trend of using ski boats as yacht tenders instead of traditional inflatable or centre console boats. Malibu, MasterCraft and Nautique ski and wakeboard boats are among the leading brands yacht owners are purchasing for both tender and recreational use. He can also adapt his programme to the type of tender aboard the yacht.

'My work begins well in advance of the trip,' says Bilas. For example, if the yacht only has a centre console outboard-powered boat as a tender, Bilas can set the boat up properly for optimum waterskiing and wakeboarding. Bilas makes equipment recommendations and assists the captain in acquiring any needed gear such as waterskis, wakeboards or accessories. For

example, barefoot coaching will require the tow boat to have a training boom for quicker learning, while for wakeboarding, a tower on the tow boat is beneficial.

Working with the needs and abilities of individual guests is crucial. 'Every student is different, but typically my students make rapid progress,' Bilas says. 'I employ a relaxed, very positive, motivating and easy-to-understand coaching style. By closely observing each skier, I can build on what they are already doing correctly and suggest subtle changes for even greater success.'

'For example, a 77-year-old student could not run the slalom course when we first started training. By implementing changes to body position and slowly replacing bad technique with a better technique, he now successfully runs the slalom course.'

Exceptional service

Working with charter guests necessitates stellar people skills. 'International exposure has challenged me to coach creatively,' Bilas says. 'I have had situations in China and Japan where students spoke little or no English yet I successfully coached through example and demonstration, or with a single word or two.'



This brand new 28 metre yacht from Sunseeker will be available for charter in the South of France for the summer of 2014 at prices starting from €55,000 per week. Accommodating up to eight guests in four cabins (a master suite, VIP and two twins) she offers charterers the chance to cover a lot of ground with a cruising speed of 20 knots and a top speed of 26 knots.

BROKER:

Sunseeker Charters

t: +44 1202 682890

w: www.sunseekercharters.net

MORE DETAILS ON CHARTERFLEET.COM

RODOLPHE HOLLER

The practice of bringing in outside experts and guides is known as 'rendezvous activities' in the charter world



'It's important to know the migration patterns of the fish, whether the marlin or tuna fishing is good and where the charter is headed'

Taking experts on your charter (such as Ocean Blue Fishing, pictured here, which does rendezvous fishing in Vanuatu) can truly enhance your charter experience



Sherakhan 69.5m



Originally built in 1965, *Sherakhan* was rebuilt as a luxury yacht in 2005 and further refitted in 2008. Since then, she has enjoyed adventurous cruising and chartering throughout North and South America, the Antarctic and the Mediterranean. Available in the Med this summer, she offers luxurious accommodation for up to 26 guests in 13 cabins. Her extensive amenities include a giant 18-person spa pool, sauna, extensive toys, and a beauty salon.

BROKER:
Y.CO
t: +377 93 50 12 12
w: Y.CO

MORE DETAILS ON CHARTERFLEET.COM

Holler chooses his diving instructors carefully, putting them through a four-month apprenticeship before allowing them to interact with guests on their own.

'You must be a nice person and most importantly, you must be flexible,' Holler says. 'If the guests want to go dive at 2am, then yes, it's possible. We have a contract with our instructors, and our instructors have a contract with us. They must follow the rules, because every set of charter guests is different.'

Some guests are friendly and want to interact with the instructors, others are more distant. Either way, the

instructors must adapt to what the guests want and comply with the captain's rules.

'Getting the absolute best experience for our owners and guests has been our constant goal,' says Captain Gordon Scott, who has worked with Holler and his team in the past while running several superyachts. 'Having Rodolphe or one of his team aboard has aided us with this and surpassed my owner's expectations.'

Extra time

Hiring an expert to join a charter for the entire week can

MISTAKES TO AVOID

2. FOCUSING ON AGE

Many clients want a new boat, believing new means better. But a new build or new charter yacht can be still in 'shakedown mode', ironing out systems or crew synergies. An older vessel can have all the features of a new yacht – the latest communications, toys and entertainment systems – with a well-seasoned, unified crew, often for up to 20 per cent less cost. '[Older yachts] can be exceptional value, especially if well-maintained,' says Agnes Howard. Older yachts, moreover, develop a reputation – some of the busiest charter yachts have been well known for years in the industry – with multiple references and predictable success ratios. You know what you're getting with an older vessel.



MISTAKES TO AVOID

3. SEEING ONLY THE BOTTOM LINE

What creates the best value in a charter yacht? In large part, value is in the eye of the beholder: one client likes lots of toys to play with, another prefers a four-star chef, or a minimalist interior. Some clients, brokers say, focus mistakenly on price to determine value, when a lot of other factors – number of toys, availability at a certain time and place, crew compatibility, the quality of the food – are more important.

One of the most popular, relatively inexpensive yachts in the charter business is a Broward with red sofas and leopard carpets. People love it, however, because the crew is so good to the guests. The weekly rate, moreover, is just a base figure; when you include fuel, food, beverages, transport and tips the final tally can add another 50 per cent to the bill. Fuel use, particularly, can sometimes surprise a charterer. He may remain at anchor for days thinking he's saving on fuel, but forget the generators suck up a lot of diesel.



This modern classic sailing yacht offers comfortable accommodation for up to seven guests in master, double and twin cabins. Her elegant interior – with luxurious fabrics and walnut panelling – combines with her two cockpits to provide a perfect sailing charter. Available in New England, US this summer, she also offers the chance to escape the Med milk run. Per-week charter costs start from \$54,000 low season.

BROKER:
Churchill Yacht Partners
t: +1 954 527 2626
w: churchillyachts.com

[MORE DETAILS ON CHARTERFLEET.COM](http://www.charterfleet.com)

JEFF BROWN/SUPERYACHT MEDIA

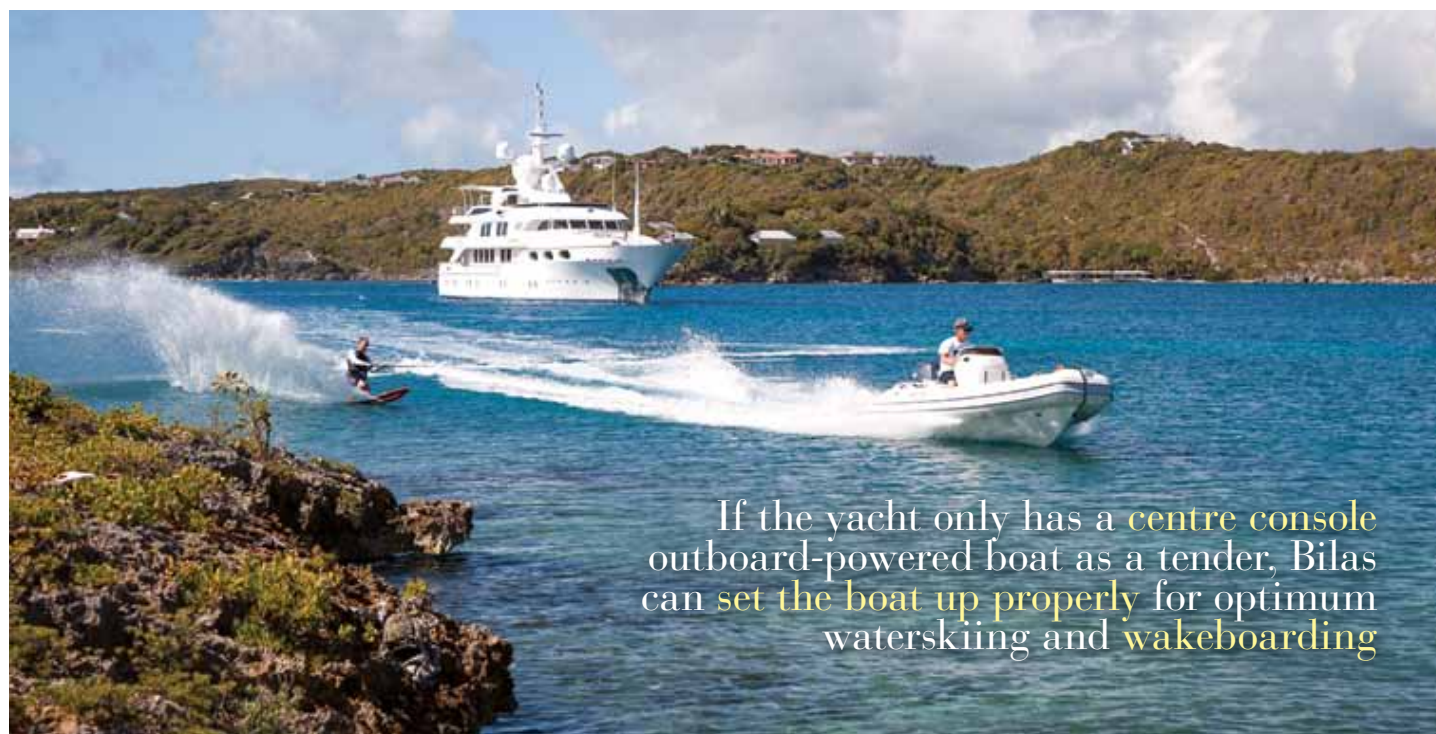
open realms of discovery far beyond what a day visit can provide. For example, kiteboarding is a demanding activity not easily mastered in one or two sessions.

'I use a pro or an expert trainer for a week with sports like kiteboarding and surfing,' says Captain Carl Sputh of the 54 metre Benetti motor yacht *Starfire*, which charts in the Baltics, Caribbean and Mediterranean. 'It can work out if the trainer is flexible and understands the charter experience. With kiteboarding, unless the person is really good already, they need to stick with one person to learn.

For a truly deep dive into the history of an area, even college professors can be added to the crew.

'We did a trip in Turkey and I hired a professor from Columbia University (New York) to be part of the crew for a week,' Captain Sputh says. 'He specialises in Greek and Turkish history, so while we hired local guides on tours, the professor made it special while aboard the yacht. At dinner the guests discuss the tour and ask questions, and it was fascinating.

'That's also how it works with a kiteboarding instructor



If the yacht only has a **centre console** outboard-powered boat as a tender, Bilas can **set the boat up properly** for optimum waterskiing and **wakeboarding**

Dream

60m



Recently lengthened in a refit, *Dream's* Zen-like interior style is perfect for relaxing. Accommodating up to 12 guests in seven cabins, she offers every amenity from a state-of-the-art entertainment system and extensive toys to a spacious VIP suite on the bridge deck with separate spa pool and shower. She is available this summer for charter in the Mediterranean at prices starting from \$425,000 per week.

BROKER:
Northrop & Johnson
t: +1 954 522 3344
w: northropandjohnson.com

MORE DETAILS ON CHARTERFLEET.COM

Working with guests' needs and abilities is crucial. 'Every student is different, but typically my students make rapid progress,' Bilas says.

aboard for a week,' Sputh continues. 'While on the aft deck at sunset they discuss the day's training: did they turn upwind at the right time, what technique should they use in this situation? You would never get that in just a few hours.'

Star power

Sputh says he once hired a famous standup jet ski pro for a charter. 'It was more than just great; the charter

guests were able to ride a jet ski with their hero,' says Sputh. Charter guests' heroes are not always athletes; rendezvous extras can even include A-list musicians.

'One boat wanted (US rock musician) Jimmy Buffett to play,' Elliott says. 'So we got Jimmy Buffett and he sang all the songs. It costs one million dollars whether you want him for one or three hours. Other charters want magicians to perform at a party, and we can set that up.' ►

MISTAKES TO AVOID

Many clients ask the obvious questions – price, available toys, itineraries, things to do on and off the boat – but the quality and number of crew is critical in a successful cruise.

'A crew can make or break a charter,' says broker Nicole Caulfield of Robert J Cury. 'If you have a great crew and a so-so boat it can be a fabulous charter. If you have a fabulous boat and a so-so crew it's a so-so charter in [the client's] mind.'

Crews vary widely from yacht to yacht, and the captain usually dictates the tenor of crew service. In getting-to-know-you conversations with charter clients, brokers will develop a lengthy profile of the prospective charterers' likes and

dislikes. Are they planning to bring children or family aboard? What sort of dining do they expect? Are they snorkellers or fishermen? Do they like a casual, or a more formal crew? Putting reserved charter guests on a yacht with a relaxed, casual crew can come back as a negative.

Equally important is the number of crew; the bigger the number, the better the service. Crew compatibility can also have an impact – is there tension or do they connect well?

Brokers are divided on how important frequent crew turnover is in the charter industry and how it impacts a charter. Crew lower on the food chain come and go; with the captain and chef, it can be different.

Fine dining is often a major part of a successful charter, and while individuals may not be important, the fact that they're five-star quality is. Knowledgeable repeat charter customers sometimes choose a boat

simply because they like the captain or the food. It's important that charter clients know what's going on with the crew. Fortunately, brokers personally inspect most of the yachts and crews they recommend.



Ocean's Seven² 32m



Offering the perfect mix of comfort and thrilling sailing performance, Ocean's Seven² has a unique accommodation offering: catering for up to eight guests, each of the four cabins features a king-size bed that splits to form two singles. Further, the two forward cabins can be combined to create one giant master suite with centreline bed. This versatility, combined with outstanding sailing performance, makes her a perfect charter choice.

BROKER:
Yachting Partners International
t: +377 99 99 97 97
w: ypigroup.com

MORE DETAILS ON CHARTERFLEET.COM



BARBARA STOIA CHEVALLARD

Those little extras

Holler's video presentation encompasses more than just whales, sharks and divers. It's a high-quality documentary that chronicles the trip for the guests and provides a lasting keepsake.

'Rodolphe documents these guest experiences onto a Discovery Channel-quality DVD for their continued enjoyment and later bragging rights,' Captain Scott says. 'Rodolphe also organises shore excursions to the most

beautiful pink-sand, coconut palm-fringed beaches, Tahitian dances – the list is endless. This is not just a trip with the best big animal diving you will ever experience, it includes cultural and terrestrial experiences as well.'

Making the dive trip part of the big-boat charter experience includes working with crew to make sure guests are comfortable – which includes being well fed.

'It's important that the rendezvous company coordinates with the chief stew to make sure the right beer, sandwiches and snacks are sent out on the journey,' Elliott says. 'That makes the activity feel as if it's a part of the charter. You are obviously out of the water between dives so having the right food is important.'

Holler's planning helps yacht captains ensure their guests are ready to go, yet even the best plans must be tempered with the reality that charter guests are on holiday, and plans can change on a whim.

'I like to say that anything is possible,' Holler says. 'We are in the business of helping people have the best vacation of their lives, and we take pride in making their trip exciting, lively and memorable.'



RODOLPHE HOLLER

RESOURCES

International Game Fish Association
igfa.org

Motor yacht *Starfire*
mystarfire.com

Tahiti Private Expeditions
tahiti-private-expeditions.com

Zenon Bilas
zenonbilas.com

All you need for charter
charterfleet.com

MISTAKES TO AVOID

5. BOOKING LATE

Book early. For several years, as the charter industry declined with the recession, it was relatively easy to get a yacht a couple of months out or even closer to the date. Recently there's been a surge, and clients should think months in advance.

One broker said two of her clients stayed home last Christmas because they waited too late. But then, they were very particular, inflexible customers.

Finding the right vessel for that perfect cruise depends as much on the client's attitude as it

does the yacht. The interior's wonderful, but it's in The Bahamas and you want it in Antigua, for example. A good broker can manage the compromises so you'll get mostly what you want, ultimately ending up with a great experience.



JEFF BROWN/SUPERYACHT MEDIA

HEALTHY RIVALRY

words: Janine Ketterer

photography: Rhoderick Grimes-Graeme

AT THE 2013 ANTIGUA CHARTER YACHT SHOW CHEFS IN THE CONCOURS DE CHEF VEGAN CHALLENGE DISHED UP FAR MORE THAN LEAFY GREENS

This year's 'plant-based haute cuisine Caribbean luncheon challenge' was an adventure in vegan cooking methods for participating chefs. Many took the challenge further, preparing raw and gluten-free dishes and experimenting with gadgets such as dehydrators to perfect dishes. Many also locally sourced ingredients, showcasing their provisioning talents and ability to incorporate local flavours.

A panel of five judges, comprising vegan chef Chad Sarno, of the Rouxbe Online Cooking School, executive chef Mitchell Husbands of Nonsuch Bay Resort in Antigua, Wilbur Edwards of Caribbean airline Liat, Anne Vandromme-Hood of *Yacht Insider's Guide* and *Dockwalk* magazine's Janine Ketterer, whittled down 30 entries to three top talents in each of three categories. Dishes were judged on presentation, taste, originality, plant-based ingredients, health and overall impression.

For Gisele Lannamann of *Aurelius*, winner in the Yachts up to 30.5 metres category, this was her first vegan cooking. 'I love challenges,' she says. 'I learned about substitutions and food options. I am going to introduce some of my menu items into my regular cooking rotation.'

In the 30.8 to 48.5 metres category, winner Jake Luke of *Crowned Eagle* says, 'That's usually how I cook: I offer a lot of smoothies and low-carb options,' he says. 'But I also wanted to pretend I was offering 'normal' food when it is vegan, to keep the ingredients [true to themselves].' Anders Pedersen of *Altitude*, winner in the yachts over 48.8 metres category, says, 'I had a month's notice to come up with ideas, and tested food on friends.'

The winning chefs produced very impressive dishes, while many involved are keen to carry a vegan element into onboard menu planning.



'I was so excited. I love a challenge and I've never cooked vegan before. I also love to do research so I spent a lot of time reading'

Gisele Lannamann, *Aurelius*

The winners

YACHTS OVER 160 FEET (48.8M+)



First:
Anders Pedersen
– *Altitude*

Second:
Dave Hawkins
– *Sealyon*

Third:
Tami Ayers
– *Marie*

Anders Pedersen's menu

Butternut pumpkin, coconut, tamarind, and chili cappuccino soup served with coriander foam

Low-carb Caribbean-style maki sushi with soy sauce, wasabi and beetroot pickle ginger. Tri-colour vegetable ravioli filled with slow-roasted bell pepper and served with a rustic tomato, basil ratatouille and white almond foam

Cashew panna cotta with passion fruit couli served with fruit caviar, pineapple, mint foam and crispy almond tuiles



YACHTS 101 TO 159 FEET (30.8–48.5M)



First:
Jake Luke
– *Crowned Eagle*

Second:
Tracy Ireland
– *Safira*

Third:
Nathan Cox
– *Lady J*

Jake Luke's menu

Pea shoot bundle in semi-dried papaya and fermented daikon, with a poppy flaxseed cracker, sprouted almond spread, raw butternut, plantain and coconut butter purée and West Indian cherry syrup

Forty-eight-hour roasted sunflower root in coconut oil confit, oak-smoked shitake and Swiss brown mushrooms, enoki chips, crispy cavolo nero, wheatgrass and young basil and onion truffle mud

Bay rum leaf sorbet, coconut lemongrass mousse and poached star fruit and golden apple in sugar cane with honey beetroot dust



YACHTS UP TO 100 FEET (30.5M)

First:
Gisele Lannamann
– *Aurelius*

Second:
Caro Uy
– *Skylark*

Third:
Adrian Martin
– *Matau*



Gisele Lannamann's menu

Tomato cannelloni, hearts of palm with cilantro gnocci and fresh white asparagus

Bamboo rice and quinoa infused with passion fruit dressing and a tofu cup with warm morel and black trumpet mushrooms

Tarte with fresh mango, chocolate ganache, fresh red grape gel and crumble

