

“We identified the opportunity to charter 20m-40m yachts with the top-end service associated with larger yachts”



RICHARD LAMBERT

The office of Richard Lambert, managing director of OceanStyle Yachting Ltd, is based in Pall Mall, one of London's best-known thoroughfares leading from Trafalgar Square to St James's Street. He has been in charge of developing the company since it was launched in 2005 and with a global reach that includes offices at Palma, Monaco and Athens in Europe, Miami in the US and Mumbai in India, it is now the only major yacht broker specialising in the niche market for chartering yachts in the 20m-40m range. He spoke to *Superyacht Business* in a conference room replete with models of luxury yachts in glass cases and although OceanStyle is a very modern operation, it was not hard to link the knowledge and capability of his staff with earlier skills needed in Nelson's fleet.

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF OCEANSTYLE, RICHARD LAMBERT, HAS ESTABLISHED THE COMPANY IN A FAST GROWING NICHE IN THE CHARTER MARKET

DAVID YOUNG REPORTS

OceanStyle is part of the Burgess group, which was founded 35 years ago and covers almost every aspect of the superyacht world. So why was it necessary to launch the company as a separate operation with a distinct identity? “The original slogan of Nigel Burgess was ‘the large yacht specialist’. Burgess became well-known for its expertise in the purchase, sale and charter of both motor and sailing yachts of 40m, 50m, 70m and above, but five years ago a new market emerged for semi-custom yachts,” explains managing director Richard Lambert.

“They were not prepared to wait for up to three years for delivery of a fully custom-built craft, but one year for a standard production model from an established yard with many features tailored to their specific requirements was perfectly acceptable.

“We initially operated as a sales broker in this niche, but then identified the opportunity to charter 20m-40m yachts complete with the top-end service previously associated with much larger boats. This side of the business has grown fast and the London Boat Show saw the launch of our 92-page 2011 Charter Directory.”

Yachts for charter in the new Directory range from *Be Zen*, a 19.3m Azimut 62, to *Ti Voglio Tanto Bene*, a 41.6m ISA. Is OceanStyle proactive in seeking new yachts for the company's charter fleet?

“We actively promote our services to yachts,” explains Lambert. “The benefits of charter are not just financial, but ensure that a boat is well-maintained to keep its value, and that captains and crew are retained for future cruises by the owner.

“There are a number of basic parameters that OceanStyle charter yachts have to satisfy and these are an age of under ten years, a professional crew, good condition and the correct paperwork.”

A private island

On why people choose to charter, Lambert says: “Chartering a yacht from OceanStyle is like renting a private island, offering high standards of luxury, top cuisine, watersports facilities and, above all, it bestows the gift of freedom to share the best sailing areas in the world with family and friends onboard. Our charter managers are naturally keen on yachting, but also need to be personable and able to communicate their love of the cruising lifestyle. When a potential client contacts us,

they must also ask the right questions to establish the type of boat and cruising itinerary to ensure a successful charter.

“For example, the manager needs to ascertain whether a client is looking for the high life in Monte Carlo or quiet seclusion in a bay on the coast of Croatia. It's in this area that we also rely on the knowledge of the captains, who will always have up-to-date local knowledge. In turn, we relieve them of the administrative work in setting up a charter by fielding telephone calls, confirming bookings, co-ordinating charter schedules and other administrative tasks.

“It can be difficult to find a berth in popular marinas in such the Balearics, but this can usually be solved by early booking. If not, then the captain can be relied on to find an alternative harbour in the area or moor in a sheltered bay.”

OceanStyle has wide horizons. Future developments outside traditional markets are planned. “We're still a young, enthusiastic company. We now have an office in India and it would be logical to expand in other emerging markets such as the Far East. As always, we'll be led by requests from our clients for new cruising itineraries and experiences,” Richard concluded. ●