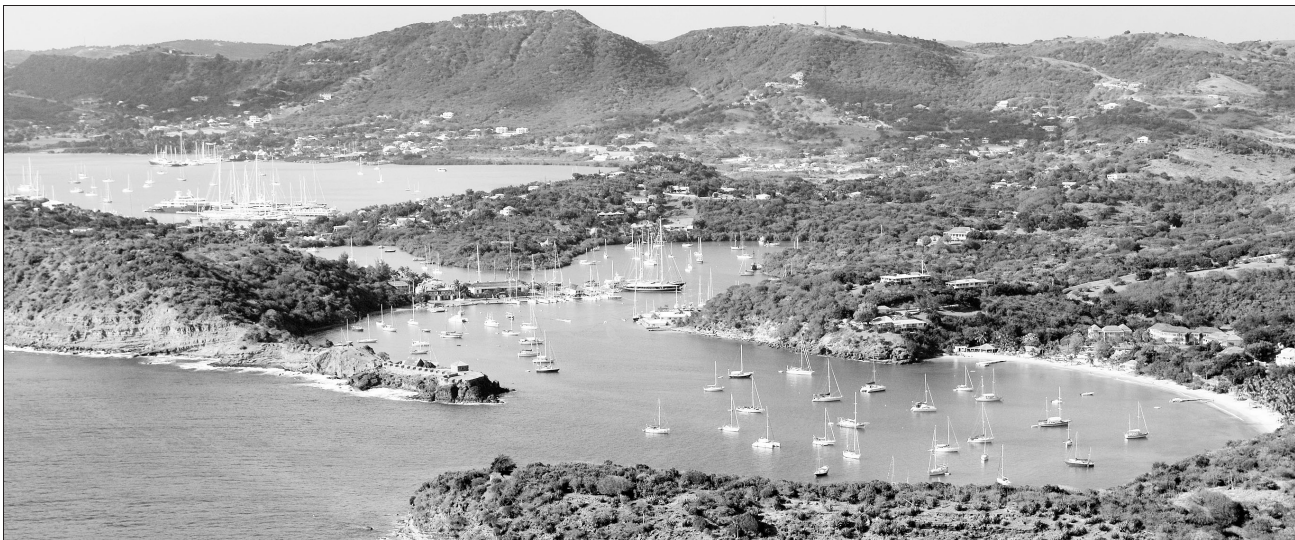


# Yachts



English Harbour on the southern tip of Antigua: the island is a popular destination for transatlantic sailors, with good hotels and one of the longest runways in the eastern Caribbean

## A brilliant base but with a few drawbacks

### ANTIGUA

The island has many advantages but drugs and petty crime are problems, says Frances Howarth

The island of Antigua is a hub of superyachting in the Caribbean for many reasons. It is an easy destination for transatlantic sailors. It has good hotels, cheap flights and one of the longest runways in the eastern Caribbean.

The first Caribbean charter businesses were set up here in the early 1960s and many superyachts, especially sailing boats, now use the island as their main regional base.

A good deal of effort goes into attracting yachts finishing their Mediterranean season to winter there, and the Caribbean season traditionally begins with the island's annual Charter Yacht Show, held in December.

Started by the Nicholson family as an encouragement to charter yachts to use the island as a cruising destination, the show now attracts about 100 yachts annually.

One of the racing rounds of the Superyacht Cup takes place immediately after the show.

Antigua Race Week began as an informal race in April for classic charter yachts to celebrate the end of the Caribbean season.

Now it has been split into two world famous events: the elegant Classic Yacht Regatta and the more exuberant Sailing Week.

For years it was not all plain sailing for superyachts visiting the island. Many bureaucratic procedures and practices dated back to the days when not only was there no competition from other islands but there were fewer visitors.

John Duffy, president of the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association, has worked with government to ensure practices are updated with simplified immigration forms and more relaxed customs procedures.

He says: "Both the Association and the Ministry of Tourism are working to smooth the path and correct some of the erroneous impressions formed over recent years that Antigua is an expensive destination. It is not the cheapest but many items are available to yachts tax-free and the situation will get better when the 'duty free zone' is instigated."

The shoreside businesses that attract superyachts to the island, offering all forms of marine services, from maintenance to yacht shipping and delivery, are almost exclusively owned and run by expatriates.

Advanced New Technologies has developed a 3D cinema for larger yachts. Lauderdale, Florida, found its superyacht clients were looking for more reliable and affordable communication.

So the group developed MCG-101, an Iridium single-channel satellite communication system based on IP technology. This provides a telephone, internet portal, GPS device, SMS, RS232 and CAN device in one package, weighing less than 2 kilos.

Inmarsat has launched the FleetBroadband 150, a mini version of the previous FB250, to provide voice and high speed data delivery.

Navigation Digital Yacht has also found a niche market for its AIS technology on yacht tenders. The

### Intelligence and preparation are vital in the fight against piracy

It is only a matter of time before a superyacht off the African coast becomes a high-profile target of Somali pirates, according to Paul Kerr, managing director of Proform Marine, a security firm based in Scotland that employs former UK military personnel.

Luxury yachts, owned by some of the world's wealthiest people, currently move between the Mediterranean and the cruising areas of the Seychelles, Mauritius and the Maldives via the Suez canal, passing through the pirate-infested waters off Somalia.

"Pirates have better, faster boats and are able to operate at night, up to 300 miles off the coast," Mr Kerr says, adding, "if they can pick off a container ship doing 25 knots with a high freeboard they can certainly attack a shiny white superyacht that sparkles in the sunlight offering a very rich-looking target."

The company has seen a surge in demand for its services over recent months as piracy has made headlines again.

As well as training superyacht crew on how to deal with attacks, the company provides escorts and advises on the use of deterrents such as Sea Owl, high-pressure water hoses and long range acoustic devices that have been used successfully. They are currently investigating ways of linking Sea Owl into non-lethal but highly disruptive laser devices.

Intelligence "Pirates are getting very good intelligence on vessels and are learning about those heading to and from the Suez Canal," says

Graeme Gibbon Brooks, chief executive of Dryad Maritime, a company that researches the nature, behaviour and problems posed by pirates and sea-going drug and people traffickers.

While no superyacht has yet been attacked, pirates have targeted "lookalikes", such as the French passenger vessel, Le Penant, which was seized while sailing without passengers from the Seychelles to the Mediterranean.

The threat that a superyacht will become a target has prompted some owners to instruct captains to embark armed guards. The carrying of arms on board puts owners into complicated legal situations, but some see it as necessary.

The 64m Perini Navi yacht Felicia West was in the Red Sea, on passage to the Seychelles, when the two armed security guards were contacted by colleagues on a ship two days ahead. Pirates had attacked their ship and the security guards were forced to jump into the sea in fear of their lives. Felicia West immediately diverted to Sharm el Sheikh and there, after discussion with her owner, turned round and returned to the Mediterranean.

Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat US senator, has called for US-flagged shipping vessels operating in the Gulf of Aden, the Straits of Malacca, or any other high-risk piracy zone to have armed security teams aboard.

US lawyer Michael Moore who specialises in superyacht work agrees: "I believe in peace through superior firepower. If my clients are planning to travel through areas frequented by pirates, I recommend having



Full metal necklaze: a gunman on guard

crew trained and armed. The captain should be given the flexibility to commence firing as soon as he or she perceives a threat from an unidentified vessel, which approaches and refuses to turn back." Not exactly a conventional point of view, but one says Moore: "That has worked with 100 per cent success to date."

Profiting from piracy at sea Custom and immigration services in countries around Somalia, from Egypt to Oman, are reportedly preventing protection personnel who are going to join vessels crossing pirate-infested waters, from transporting security equipment through their airports.

The Djibouti government requires security teams to register with a company called Djibouti Maritime Security Services, a government-appointed liaison service, and to have a special licence. Fees are set at \$15,000 a month, \$80,000 for six months and \$150,000 for a year. Weapons can only be hired from the Djibouti armed forces.

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but none boarded. Douglas Hinkley managing director of Joint Contract Bodyguards believes the unarmed approach is a more prudent and ultimately better route to follow. He says the aim is to give peace of mind through heightened security measures provided by an experienced team.

The company has a close relationship with Dryad Maritime. Together they offer trained guards supported by a constantly manned operations room that provides live intelligence, plus advice and information during the passage through a high-risk area.

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Michael Howarth

day before the shooting but on a couple of occasions Mr Taylor and his guests had felt less than comfortable.

He says: "The drug problem on the island is huge and we had to dismiss a crew member who had been unable to resist the temptations the island has to offer."

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John Maginley, Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism indicated that the country's yachting industry remained surprisingly resilient. The 2008-09 season saw no real drop in the number of visiting superyachts.

He says, "The services provided to the yachting sector are now an essential part of the country's economy, with yachting contributing a significant percentage of GDP."

As such, the government has done everything possible to ensure the safety and security of our yachting tourists. Antigua has always been a safe yachting destination and our goal is to minimise the chances of any incident occurring."

Looking to the future, Mr Duffy of the Antigua & Barbuda Marine Association asks: "What will happen next season?"

He answers his own question saying: "As yet we don't know. Much will depend on how many yachts book in for the Charter Yacht Show in December."

"So far, 67 have booked in which is about 85 per cent of the usual total and about par for this time of year."

These new plans are not as a direct result of the incident but winter weather. Nero had left Antigua the

scene of the crime, which was always a troublesome area." To date though, the promised CCTV cameras surveying the area have not been installed.

Superyacht owners have also, in some cases, decided to direct their vessels away from the island.

Will Kaye, captain of the motor yacht Big Aron says: "The reality is that it needed something as drastic as this murder to happen for the Antigua government to sit up, notice and take serious action."

"From what I have heard they have gone a long way to addressing the security situation especially around

radar transmitters for the majority of users. These transmitters aim to provide superior detection and resolution.

Engineering One innovation that has changed the superyacht world is the invention of "ZeroSpeed" stabilisation by Quantum Marine Engineering of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

This much mimicked dual-purpose technology permits yachts to be stabilised both when under way and at anchor.

The company has continued to upgrade its patented variable geometry MagLift rotary system. This is based on the physical effect noted by the German chemist and physicist Heinrich Gustav Magnus (1802-1870), whereby a spinning object in a fluid creates a whirlpool around itself and experiences a force perpendicular to the line of motion.

Quantum's stabilisers can be folded away when not needed so reducing drag.

Security Proform Marine has introduced laser technology into yacht

## Where innovative concepts first see the light of day

### TECHNOLOGY

Superyachting often pioneers systems that then filter down to everyday use, writes Michael Howarth

Superyachting is to sailing what Grand Prix Formula One is to motoring. It is at the top end of each activity that technology is pioneered and then filters down to everyday use.

Superyacht owners have the purchasing power and tendency to one-up-manship that drives them to seek out newer and better onboard technology.

The high-tech systems used for navigation, communications and entertainment make up a large part of the cost of a superyacht.

Even more money is spent on such things as security devices, stabilisers that ensure the yacht does not roll even when at anchor, and dynamic positioning systems that keep yachts stationary without the need to anchor.

### Entertainment

The global economic situation has affected everyone. Even those wealthy enough to afford superyachts are thinking twice before investing in a new vessel.

As a result, they are more likely to upgrade and refit.

News feeds, streaming TV, podcasts, YouTube, Twitter, and Skype are sought by those who live aboard superyachts. This often requires an upgrade or refit of the audio-visual/IT system.

The refit business is one of tight schedules, having to make use of the limited downtime when the yacht is not in use. Quick-to-implement systems that use existing cabling infrastructure will therefore be favoured, for example an Internet Protocol (IP) system.

Despite the economic climate, Linn Products, the maker of music and home cinema systems is doing quite well in the superyacht market. Its Linn DS players, for example, access and play back music files securely stored in an external network storage device.

Lantic Entertainment Systems is another developer and sup-

### Communication

Many superyachts operate as businesses and are used by businesspeople, so there is a demand for reliable communications.

Marlink provides, reliable internet and voice services.

Digital Yacht of the UK has created a selection of long-range access devices that allow superyachts to hook into land marina internet access points when up to five miles offshore.

"Accessing a local wi-fi hot spot costs \$5-\$10 a day compared with \$10 a minute for satellite access," says Nick Heyes, managing director for its AIS technology on yacht tenders. The

Global Satellite USA of Fort

### Navigation

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