

ISSUE 63
EARLY SUMMER 2013

The Crew

CAREER • TRAINING • TECHNOLOGY • MONEY • OPERATIONS • ADVICE



REPORT

DELIVERING THE GOODS

A team of industry experts explain how to achieve a smooth new build delivery.

MIA ELISE

Captain Ron Woods of busy charter yacht *Mia Elise* explains how his crew achieve the highest standards.

MILLENNIUM CUP

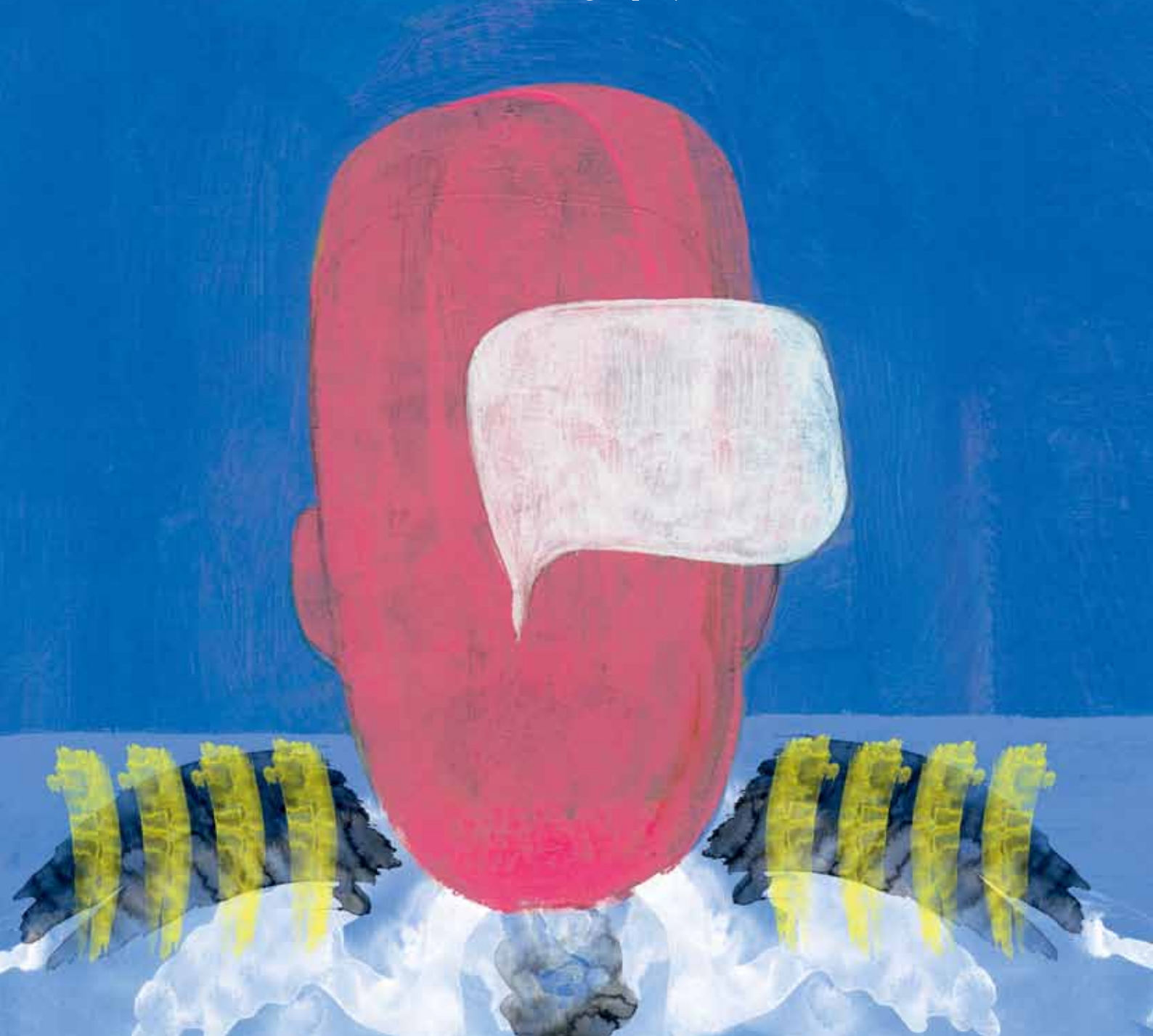
We interview the captains of New Zealand's regatta and speak to winning owner and captain of first timer *Zefiro*.

SOCIAL SECURITY

We tell crew how they can find out if they should be making social security contributions under the MLC.

CAPTAINS' COMMENTS

An influx of new training facilities and courses coupled with an increased focus on professionalism in today's industry means there is now more pressure on captains and owners to provide crew with attractive training packages. Six superyacht captains share their views on who holds the responsibility for the time and cost of training superyacht crew.



**CAPTAIN CARLO
SUMMONTI OF 65M
MOTORYACHT NATALY**

This is a very complicated issue, but as a general rule I think that necessary basic standard training should be a crewmember's personal issue; I maintain that any suitable candidates need to have valid STCW training. On my yacht we do not have a management company to handle crew and administration matters, as the owner prefers me to take care of this directly, so I organise crew training matters on board.

However, any particular training that needs to be held by a crewmember in order to maintain the boat's certificate and comply with rules will be paid for or reimbursed by the owning company. For example, in order to comply with rules and keep the boat's validity, it was necessary for the chief mate to attend Ship Security Officer training. Also, for all stews it is now compulsory to be certified for food preparation and handling. We establish that 50 per cent of reimbursement will be refunded to the crewmember after six months of service on board; the remaining 50 per cent after one year's service, or upon contract completion for seasonal workers.

I am lucky since my boat, thanks to the owner, has a permanent crew of 11. Since the boat's delivery in spring 2011 not one of the permanent crew has changed, and four of them have been with the owner

and I since the previous boat five years ago. This means that the money that has been invested in crew training has not been wasted. And this is another issue related to crew training: owners and captains are afraid to pay for training a crewmember who may disembark after just a few months.

With regards to 'periods of leave' for training, I have never considered these periods to be counted as holidays for my crewmembers. I do not think that this is correct, as unfortunately training centres are not like Disneyworld. I experienced such a situation myself when I was working on board a gas carrier. I spent eight to nine months on board and three to four months ashore on a rotation. During my period off the company was sending me to a training centre. This was good thinking in terms of preparation and money, since they were paying for highly specialist training, but it was terrible for my personal life and family.

**CAPTAIN ANTONIO
GERINI OF 43M
MOTORYACHT MONALIZA**

This is something I have thought about for a long time. I will say that often owners are averse to paying for training courses or spending extra money, especially on crewmembers. Due to there being plenty of people in the yachting industry, owners prefer to keep crew on board that are already certificated in order to avoid extra expenses, and of course to keep people on board without giving out free time to leave the yacht.

In the last few years I have conceded to this and I have started to understand why rich people have money and how they get more. They save money from the first moment they start something and, with regards to owning a superyacht, crew training courses are a good starting point to save money. I believe that in the future we will finally have to become realistic about our prospects; owners will never pay, so we must be prepared to keep our hands in our wallets. »

“ Owners and captains are afraid to pay for training a crewmember who may disembark after just a few months. ”
– Captain Carlo Summonti

Q Crew training: who should be paying for it and where should the time come from?

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**CAPTAIN ROGER HARRIS**

At the very least a captain should have a training policy in mind, preferably approved by the owner or their representative. If no agreement prevails, then the captain has to ask himself a few questions. Importantly, why do we need the training? Is it for improvement of service? Reduction of accidents and risk? Regulatory requirements? An increase in efficiency? Development of the individual? Reward and recognition? Certificate renewal? The tendency is to see training as one area of expenditure, but it can serve many different purposes.

This question depends on whether one sees training as a corporate or personal responsibility. I am a lifelong trainer and teacher and I believe fundamentally in the value of training to the industry. Part of this belief is that an industry will benefit if it takes an active role in preparing workers for available posts. The tendency, however, can be to make it an issue of morality, of right and wrong. This is a mistake and will, without doubt, lead to a situation where 'principles' become involved. It's not about that, it's about a better industry.

Training is a great way of rewarding crew and making them feel valued. I recently did a transatlantic crossing on a well-known 50m-plus sailing yacht. The crew are valued and well trained, rewarded regularly and treated as individuals. I don't think I've ever seen a more committed and hard-working bunch. The boat values them and they value the boat.

Whatever your view on who should pay, and on whose time it should happen, I would advocate the following: first, agree a training policy and budget with the owner; second, make crew aware of the policy; and third, apply it across the board without favouritism. With no clear policy and understanding your only option is negotiation at the time the issue arises – if you haven't plotted a course beforehand, you'll steer into trouble.

**CAPTAIN MIKE HITCH
OF 80M MOTORYACHT
GOLDEN ODYSSEY**

To better answer these questions, we must look at other industries and how yachting compares with them.

In years gone by, people tended to work for the same shipping company. The company would help you with training costs and generally pay you around 50 per cent of your salary while you were ashore.

We can also look at the aviation industry, where most aspiring pilots have to get themselves all the way to an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) qualification before the airlines will look at them. This will normally be funded by the individual, with an average cost of \$80,000; entry level pilots earn an average of \$22,000 per year.

The yachting industry is one where a junior deckhand or stewardess can earn as much or more than the UK average national salary. The industry pays for all your food and drink on board, giving a good, disposable income. The entry fee to this industry is about \$3,500 to obtain your deck-rating certificate, including training in deck operations and sea survival. The next level would be the OOW for Yachts Less than 3,000gt. The price for this? Around \$17,000. On the basis that you require three years' sea service and will generally earn upwards of \$120,000 in that period, it doesn't seem to be a big price to pay.

Yet, in all fairness, we have to look at the other side. Yachts require qualified people; people who are familiar with the yacht and its equipment. Changing crew is expensive and it takes time to build a cohesive team. In my view, it is unrealistic to ask crew to complete courses in their vacation time, regardless of whether they continue to be paid or not. Crew, like most people, need 'down' time; they need a change of environment after weeks or months in a confined space with people they may

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I believe fundamentally in the value of training to the industry. Part of this belief is that an industry will benefit if it takes an active role in preparing workers for available posts.

– Captain
Roger Harris

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not get on with. Some yachts offer only 30 days' leave a year, which makes training impossible.

So here's a solution: insist on a year's service on board at least. By that time you will know whether that person is suited to the yacht – and to the owner – and is worth investing in. Give them some study or training leave on the basis that a further year must be completed on board after the study period is finished. Pay for the courses, but if the person leaves before a year this cost can then be recovered on a pro-rata basis.

We need qualified people in the industry, but we also need new, young recruits coming in at the bottom, keen and interested in making yachting a career. If we don't, we will remain a transient industry – amateurs in the eyes of some – and the quality of crew will diminish. »



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CAPTAIN HERBERT MAGNEY OF 43M MOTORYACHT AT LAST

Off the vessel we do not pay for crew training in the form of schooling, but we do pay for endless hours of on-the-job training. Included in this is the time and effort taken to set up and maintain a Training Record Book, the countless hours of doing the multitude of tasks and providing the reading materials within a safe haven with great food and plenty of off-duty time to read, study and practise. Each boat is an academy, and some boats are more exhaustive with better professors (crew) than others.

I felt that I did not require someone else taking the reins of my destiny. I make the money, plan the time off, schedule my courses, pay for the courses and then I get on with getting a job. I have paid for all of my own training from day one when I was 15 years old and paid for my scuba classes by working part-time.

I have worked with plans and policies as directed by the person who owns the boat as to how this is to be structured. Often the on-board policy will mirror their business practices. I grew up with my father's large electric motor repair facility where he had a policy for his 20-plus employees whereby an agreement was drafted that the business would pay for classes and the employee would do home study or night school; he would purchase the tools and after one year the employee would pay back the advance and own the tools.

But there are those who feel they are entitled to education and certification, plus attaining this all while on the dollar of the owner, or rather, paid leave. Well, it's the owner's dollar; let's ask the owner if they want to spend it on you.

In reality, the one who pays will be whoever will benefit from the training the most. If the owner is of the perception they will benefit from the crew undertaking additional educative adventures, they will pay. If the employee has it in their minds they want to continue with the process and stay on top, have an advantage in the workplace and stay sharp of their own volition, those are the ones who will just get on with it.

And where should this time (time – the most elusive of all commodities) come from? Simple: whoever has the time to give. Seek opportunities in the interview stage to state that you are willing to take unpaid leave to pursue training and start the conversation as to how this is currently handled on board. If you are going to go anywhere with your hand out, have something in it to give.

CAPTAIN BEN CRAIG-CAMERON OF 65M MOTORYACHT WHITE CLOUD

This subject will always be contentious both in the eyes of the employer and crew alike; many will feel that the owner should pay for everything, while others would prefer the freedom and satisfaction of knowing that their qualifications have been achieved 'off their own back'.

On the last three yachts I have run, we have actively promoted crew training and used the following structure, in various guises, in order to help crew further their knowledge on board:

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“Some use training as a way of offering incentives for new crew to join them, and in the current economic climate it's a smart move.” – Captain Ben Craig-Cameron

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1. All course fees, travel, accommodation and associated reasonable costs are initially paid for by the crewmember.

2. Time off to do the courses does not come out of the crewmember's holiday allowance; it is counted as course time, which is paid.

3. Upon successful completion of the course, the owner reimburses the crewmember by a twelfth of the total costs for 12 months. So if the crewmember remains on board for one year following the successful completion of a course, they will have had all cost paid back to them in full; if they leave before this they will have been paid back on a pro-rata basis.

4. If the crewmember fails the course, retakes and associated costs are paid for by themselves with no reimbursement,

and time off is taken out of their holiday allowance.

I have actively encouraged owners to adopt this scheme because I firmly believe we have a responsibility to help train our crew and to invest time and resources in them; it promotes loyalty and helps to ensure that the crew that work on board are motivated to learn more.

We have a rule that the courses a crewmember wishes to take must be relevant to the yacht and to their position on board. Last year we sent a few of the interior crew to do a Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) course, and at the time of writing I have one crewmember completing his OOW, two completing their Yachtmaster Ocean, a chef about to go on a sushi course and the engineers are about to get on-board MTN training – all of this will benefit the owner, as well as making the yacht operate at a higher level.

Some use training as a way of offering incentives for new crew to join them, and in the current economic climate it's a smart move; pay rises can be expensive in the long run, whereas course cost, in comparison, may be more economical.

I've often heard crew complaining that "on my last boat" they weren't allowed to take time off for training, nor was there any question of the yacht helping to assist with the costs. To me this is incredibly short-sighted of both captain and owner, and when asked why they left, the reason was usually because they wanted to continue their courses – surely if this was made possible, both crewmember and yacht would have benefited not only from a better trained crewmember, but from the continuity and longevity gained? Some might even say that the satisfaction of helping someone achieve their goals would be an equal reward. ■

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