

# QUAY CREW

A guide to  
**JOINING THE  
SUPERYACHT  
INDUSTRY**



# SO YOU WANT TO JOIN THE SUPERYACHT INDUSTRY?

GREAT!

Working as superyacht crew is often a once in a lifetime experience that enables you to earn a decent amount of money, often tax-free, while travelling to some of the world's most exotic locations and making friends for life.

However, it is not necessarily an easy industry to get into (or out of) and is a uniquely challenging working environment.

In this guide, we will give you an introduction to the superyacht sector, the types of vessels and how they operate and the crew roles onboard.

We will also detail the kinds of skills, experience and mindset required to be a successful crewmember.

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# WHAT ARE SUPERYACHTS?

Superyachts are officially classed as luxury leisure boats ranging from 24 meters in length to a huge 180 meters.

Also referred to as megayachts in some instances, the majority of them are motorised, although there are some impressive sail superyachts too.

Predominantly owned by high-net-worth individuals, they are used both privately by the owners and their families and available for charter (rent).

Generally speaking, these yachts tend to cruise the Mediterranean in the summer season and Caribbean in the winter season, but yacht usage is changing massively.

Some owners keep their yacht nearby and only use them locally at the weekends while other yachts are used all-year-round and for world cruising.

Many yachts, often called explorers, will roam as far as the arctic down to Australasia.





# PRIVATE VS CHARTER

As mentioned above, private yachts are usually reserved for use by the owner, while charter yachts can be purely to charter or a mix of both. Often owners have set periods of the year that they know they won't use the yacht and charter it out.

Recent research estimates that around two thirds of yachts are private with nine in 10 of all yachts being either dual season or used all year round.

The roles on both types of yacht are largely the same.

Typically, private yachts will operate at a slower pace, or whatever pace the owner prefers, and cater to their likes and dislikes. For example, it could be owned by people with a young family who are into watersports, a single bachelor who hosts weekly parties onboard or a retiring billionaire who likes to spend a lot of time at anchor.

During charter, activity will be dictated by the guests and can be different each time. As these yachts have a commercial focus, they will be cruising or on charter the majority of the seasons to maximise profitability and can therefore be busy.

Unlike private yachts, crew can potentially increase their earnings significantly with tips.





# WORKING ON A SUPERYACHT

## DEPARTMENTS

The Bridge – In control of sailing the yacht, this is where the Captain and Chief Officers are usually based.



Deck – has full responsibility for maintaining the exterior of the superyacht, tender runs and any outside activities such as watersports or toys.



Interior – made up of service, laundry and housekeeping, and responsible for maintaining the inside of the yacht and looking after guests in these areas.



Galley – home to the chef team where there is sometimes just a sole chef for the entire yacht or a team of chefs with different responsibilities.



Engine Room – handling the engines, electrics and IT infrastructure and every other part onboard whilst keeping guests and crew safe at all times.



## INTINERARY

Weekly, monthly and seasonal schedules are never the same from one superyacht to the next. It will depend on how that owner likes to use the yacht and if it is single season, dual season or world cruising.

Some charter yachts are incredibly busy and some private yachts are incredibly quiet, but you also get extremes in both cases.

## SEASONAL, TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT

The majority of superyacht jobs are now on a permanent basis as more yachts accept that to attract the best crew, they have to offer job security and longevity. However, there are also seasonal and contract roles that are suitable for both junior and senior crew.

Seasonal positions are normally for smaller yachts that are single season and do nothing during its season off. It could also be that a yacht needs an extra deckhand or stewardess for a charter season or to cover other crew absences.

Alternatively, a yacht may need a temp to cover holiday or a specialist to join for a certain boss trip.







## SALARY AND BENEFITS

Superyacht crew can earn anything from €2,500 per month for a junior position to upwards of €15,000 per month as a Captain.

This is on top of all your living expenses being covered, including food.

Benefits can include health/medical insurance, funded training and development, subsidised flights, onboard gym or fitness and wellbeing programmes and bonuses.

## HOLIDAY AND LEAVE

The bare minimum you are likely to get as yacht crew is 38 days annual leave, but this is fast becoming very rare.

It then increases to 60 days, 90 days and rotation, which could be four months on and two months off, three months on and one month off, two months on and two months off.

The quality of leave packages often increases with experience too, so the more senior you are, the more likely you are to get some form of rotation.

## WORKING HOURS

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) states that superyacht crew should have at least 10 hours rest in a 24-hour period and work no more than 70 hours per week.

The reality, however, is that you'll likely be 'on duty' for 10+ hours a day, sometimes seven days a week.

You could be working on a four-week charter, with just 48 hours to turn the boat around for the next trip. Or you could have a two-week boss trip, followed by two weeks in a marina simply maintaining the boat and having every evening and weekends off.

In some cases, you might not even get a full day off before your leave kicks in.

## EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

A common misconception among 'green' crew is that you are only paid for the time you are onboard a yacht and that most jobs are seasonal.

In fact, 99% of the time you are employed as you would be in any other job, with paid holiday or rotation and on a permanent contract unless specified otherwise.



# PROS AND CONS OF BECOMING SUPERYACHT CREW

## PROS

- Excellent earning potential, often tax-free and with potential to earn tips on top
- Visit places most people will never even have heard of
- Gain additional skills and qualifications that can lead to a long-lasting career, both at sea and on land
- Make some amazing friends for life who you practically live with 24/7
- Be part of a very sociable and tight-knit community
- Get your daily dose of vitamin D
- Meet interesting people and potentially influential contacts that can open doors in the future



## CONS

- It's not easy
- You will not be on a 'working' holiday getting a great tan
- You are away from home for long periods of time – you'll miss birthdays, weddings and other key events as well as family members and friends
- It's a high-pressure environment requiring you to be at the top of your game and presentable 100% of the time
- It could involve long working hours and extended periods of solid work with no days off
- It can be boring and very monotonous at times
- It's not as glamorous as it appears
- You won't always get to experience the places you visit
- It can be difficult to leave – most yachties claim the money and lifestyle is hard to leave behind

A man wearing a black cap and sunglasses is looking out at a boat on the water. The background is a bright blue sky and water. The man is wearing a black polo shirt with a white logo on the sleeve.

## SKILLS AND MINDSET OF SUPERYACHT CREW

Yachting is not for everyone.

Although the majority of skills can be learnt, you will need to have a particular set of personality traits to withstand the pressure and environment and be willing to make sacrifices.

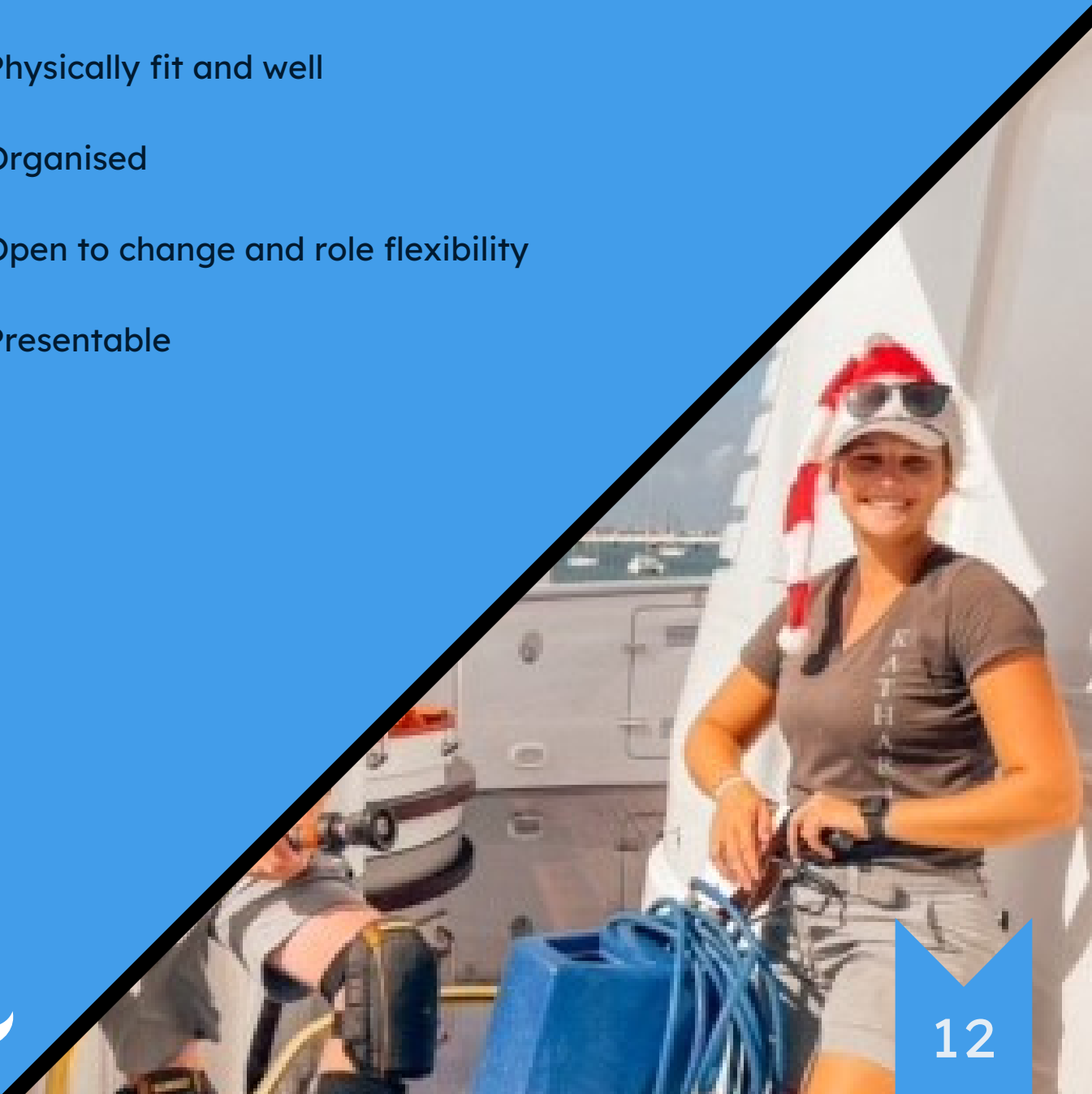
Yachting may not be a viable career for you if:

- You have commitments at home like a long-term partner or children.
- You get homesick and don't like being away from people for long periods of time.
- You are shy and struggle to make new friends.
- You prefer peace and quiet and your own company.
- You get sea-sick, can't swim and don't like heights.
- You have a number of visible tattoos and piercings when wearing shorts and t-shirt, although this is becoming more acceptable.

## MUST-HAVE SKILLS AND MINDSET

You may be suited to yachting if you are:

- Hard-working
- Team player
- Personable and outgoing
- Positive
- Able to take instruction and criticism
- Physically fit and well
- Organised
- Open to change and role flexibility
- Presentable





## USEFUL ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Useful experience to gain ahead of pursuing a yachting career:

- High-end hospitality – service and housekeeping
- Additional beauty or fitness related specialism like massage or Yoga instructor
- Marina or boatyard roles
- Carpentry and engineering
- Additional water sports or yacht related specialisms like Dive instructor or tender driving qualification

## QUALIFICATIONS

The minimum qualifications needed to even be considered as superyacht crew are:

- ENG1 – medical certificate for seafarers
- STCW – a set of mandatory training courses to ensure basic safety training onboard



# HOW TO FIND A SUPERYACHT JOB

Whether you are completely new to yachting or a seasoned yachtie, there are three main ways to find a superyacht job.



## WORD OF MOUTH

A lot of job success in yachting comes down to who you know, not necessarily what you know. If you're considering a career as yacht crew, then it's likely you know someone already working onboard or has in the past.

If you don't, try and find someone who can give you a real-life insight into what it's like working on a yacht. Join forums and Facebook groups and do lots of research.

Existing crew will of course have plenty of contacts in the yachting world and it's not unusual for someone you used to work with to recommend you for a new role with their new Captain, so maintain good relationships with all your crewmates.



## DOCKWALKING

Basing yourself around a popular superyacht marina, such as those in the South of France, will give 'green' crew the opportunity to dockwalk. This involves walking the marina daily, making contacts and asking yachts if they have any work, even if it's just day work. It enables you to gain some experience and can sometimes lead to a more permanent role.

It requires months of self-funding, however, as you could spend very long periods without getting any work at all. It's also becoming less common, especially due to the marina access restrictions imposed during the pandemic.



## CREW AGENCY



Only when you are ready to accept a superyacht role should you be shortlisted should you register with a crew agency. This means having the minimum qualifications, a well-structured CV, professional image and desirable skills and experience highlighted clearly.

**REGISTER**



Not all agencies provide the same level of service, but register with as many of them as you can to maximise your chances of getting your first role. Also register with companies such as YotSpot.

[REGISTER WITH QUAY CREW HERE!](#)

