



More than a delivery

Paying to have your yacht delivered also provides a mini-survey or a chance to learn from experts as well as saving time, learns David Glenn. He visits specialists Professional Yacht Services

Production yachts are growing larger, new events are tempting people across oceans and cruising plans are more ambitious than ever. It's no great surprise that more of us than ever before are sailing to far-flung destinations. But the one commodity owners need to realise such ambitions – time – remains in short supply. So, there is a growing need for alternative ways to get yachts from A to B.

One solution is to ship a yacht with a specialist company like Sevenstar, which bought rival Dockwise for US\$40 million in 2013 (this gives some sense of the scale of the business). However, a popular alternative is to employ someone to deliver



▲ Above: PYD's Mark Matthews (left) and Nigel Wilkinson

your yacht on her own bottom. And it is one that has hidden advantages for new boat owners who join the delivery passage, not least the chance to learn from experienced skippers and crew about how your boat and its complex systems actually work.

Founded in 1995, Professional Yacht Deliveries (PYD) has become the market leader in this specialist area. The team of 30 highly qualified skippers and over 500 hand-picked crew move more than 180 medium-sized yachts a year. Full-time yacht management is also a growing part of PYD's business. The company is run from offices in Heswall on the Wirral peninsula in the UK, where managing director Mark Matthews

grew up sailing dinghies and later larger yachts. Mark is not only an RYA/MCA Yachtmaster, but also a member of the International Institute of Marine Surveyors.

His business partner, Nigel Wilkinson, is a civil engineer and a Yachtmaster Ocean and Cruising Instructor. Both are highly experienced offshore yachtsmen and although they take shifts to monitor the delivery fleet 24 hours a day – there can be up to 30 yachts at sea at any one time – they still find time to deliver yachts themselves.

Worldwide operation

The Heswall office is the nerve centre of a 24/7 worldwide operation from which all yachts on delivery are tracked constantly using the SPOT system. Weather routing is forwarded to skippers and preparations are made to mobilise delivery crew and send out the relevant chart and pilot book packs for assignments anywhere in the world.

Much of PYD's work is with northern European boatyards – owners want to relocate their new yachts immediately





to the Mediterranean or be ready for a transatlantic crossing possibly, with the ARC, Hallberg-Rassy, X-Yachts, Hanse, Moody, Malo, Arcona, Dehler, Oyster, Discovery, Spirit Yachts and Beneteau are among the builders with whom PYD work.

Mark Matthews said that apart from owners not having the time to deliver their new yachts, some are daunted by the complexity of what they have just acquired.

"They may need help with how to work and maintain the ever-increasing amount of equipment on board, from watermakers and air conditioning to communications systems and even the sail wardrobe," he said.

Matthews and Nigel Wilkinson believe that the majority of yachts are now equipped with gear that most owners find difficult to maintain and repair. Many new owners even find that some equipment soon becomes surplus to requirements.

So, PYD increasingly find themselves instructing owners about how their boat works, which has led to the company offering full-time yacht management services and PYD skippers being asked to join owners, families and friends on holiday cruises and events like the ARC.

Gear checklist

All yachts delivered by PYD have to comply with a minimum equipment checklist and there are rigorous preparation and report procedures before and after a delivery. These can be particularly beneficial for the owner of an older, second-hand yacht, which will be subjected to a skipper's delivery condition report covering everything from deck and topsides, spars and rigging (most inspections are mandatory before and after delivery) to accommodation, bilges, tanks and skin fittings, safety equipment and the sail wardrobe. Anything untoward will be noted and given a rating (0-3), indicating whether something is either not on board, requires attention before the vessel puts to sea or is in good working order. It's a valuable assessment for any yacht.

Skippers photograph much of the yacht before delivery and in some cases this has

▲ **Above: PYD use the SPOT system to monitor up to 30 yachts 24 hours a day**

been invaluable when determining the cause of a gear failure later. For example, one yacht had a forestay failure during a delivery and PYD had a pre-delivery photograph to reveal that the cause was an almost imperceptible hairline stress fracture in a toggle at the top of the rig.

Another feature of each delivery is that accommodation surfaces are protected using pipe lagging and bubblewrap on timber surfaces, especially on doors and narrow passageways where harness buckles might come into contact with furniture.

Matthews was also keen to emphasise that it is entirely up to skippers to make judgements about whether to embark on a passage if, for instance, the weather is threatening. "We make a point of not forcing skippers to keep rigidly to a timetable if it means they are risking leaving in bad weather," he said, adding that the budgeted delivery time was the total period within which the delivery could reasonably be expected to be completed, allowing some margin for delay.

How does it work?

So, how does a delivery actually work? For a start, all clients need to provide basic information about the yacht as well as about keyholder details, the delivery and contacts, and all yachts must have a minimum safety and equipment checklist (see panel right).

A common issue is that owners overlook service periods, so that gear such as a liferaft which is in-service at the time of a yacht's departure will become out of service during the delivery period. Matthews added that engine spares and correct tools were also often found wanting and that some clients did not understand the need for correct insurance (see right).

On all deliveries PYD supply a minimum of three crew or four for transocean passages. Skippers and the first mate will always hold an RYA/MCA Yachtmaster certificate while deckhands must hold

What it costs

Mark Matthews said that the approximate cost of taking a 45ft yacht from, say, the Solent might be: £4,500 into the Mediterranean; £3,450 to Gibraltar; or £1,500 to Troon in Scotland. The price to deliver a 43-footer across the transatlantic from St Martin to Southampton would be around £10,500.

What's included in the price?

- Crew wages
- All surface and air travel
- Provisions (for the contract period)
- Passage planning and log records during the crew's time on board
- UKHO (Admiralty) and Imray charts, almanacs and pilot books for the entire passage for any location
- Cleaning of the yacht and a comprehensive condition report (see above)
- 24/7 weather routing for PYD skippers
- 24/7 parts and maintenance support through PYD's global marine contacts network
- Replacement crew if required
- Satphone if required



▲ **Above: cardboard, pipe lagging and bubblewrap are used to protect edges and surfaces from wear**

either a Yachtmaster Coastal certificate as a minimum or have equivalent experience.

Insurance

Clients must inform their insurance company that PYD is to deliver a boat on their behalf. An endorsement to this effect must be issued or confirmation received, so that the cover owners have for the hull and third-party insurance is extended to the delivery skipper and the crew for the duration of the passage. No delivery can start without an endorsement. All PYD skippers are covered worldwide for professional skippers' liability insurance.



Sailing on a delivery with a professional skipper represents a chance to learn tips from the experts

PROFILE OF A SKIPPER



Brendan Budd recently completed 100 deliveries for PYD since 2001, covering more than 85,000 miles in the process. He's crossed Biscay 20 times and delivered yachts worldwide. While a stockbroker in London in the late 1960s and 70s, when a sextant and, if you were lucky, RDF were the main means of position fixing, he sailed extensively on the late David McCauley's Admiral's Cup hopeful *Longbow II*.

After a second career in financial advice based in Cornwall, Brendan taught sailing aboard his UFO 34 before buying a Dufour 39 and sailing her to the Mediterranean and back. He holds an RYA Yachtmaster

(Commercial) certificate and is a Cruising Instructor. When *Yachting World* presented him with his commemorative certificate for completing his 100th delivery we asked him which boats he preferred.

Sweden Yachts, Hallberg-Rassy, Najad and Regina were all mentioned, but Brendan ranked a Vancouver 32 highly for having brought him comfortably and unscathed through a rough weathering of Ushant. He pointed out that long-keeled yachts might not be the fastest upwind in a blow, but they were more comfortable than many modern shapes, which inevitably slammed.

"Marketing overpowers almost everything else when it comes to choosing a yacht and equipping it," Brendan said. He added that owners should spend more time thinking about where they intended to take their yacht and how they were going to use it before buying. Something else that irked him was the evidence of neglect suffered by some yachts under their owners.

He said the ability to man-manage was crucial to the job – often he would meet his crew for the first time at the start of a delivery – and he praised PYD's philosophy of not putting skippers under pressure to finish a job if the weather was against them. "It's the skipper's decision and PYD will send replacement crew if you are delayed too long," he said.

CHECKLIST FOR DELIVERY

- Certified in-service liferaft (PYD can help if there are problems)
- In-date flare pack
- In-date fire extinguisher(s) and fire blanket
- Radar reflector
- Horseshoe lifebuoy with light
- Emergency tiller (in working order)
- Softwood bungs
- Engine spares (fuel and oil filter, water pump impeller, alternator drive belt)
- Engine and transmission oil and coolant
- Suitable anchor and chain/cable
- Bucket
- Motoring cone
- Courtesy flags for all countries en route
- Name or number of yacht on the transom
- Jackstays (PYD can supply)
- VHF radio (PYD can supply handheld if requested)
- Chartplotter (PYD can supply portable unit if requested)
- First aid kit (PYD can supply)
- Basic cleaning materials including dustpan and brush
- Materials to protect boat interior (normally sourced from yacht factory)
- Gas (for cooking)
- Galley equipment (PYD can supply)
- Spare navigation lightbulbs
- Tool kit (PYD can supply basic kit)
- Yacht's papers

For ocean crossings yacht must also have:

- EPIRB (PYD can supply)
- Satphone (PYD can supply)
- Danbuoy
- Extensive first aid kit
- Rigging cutter

UK-based delivery companies

Professional Yacht Deliveries
www.pydww.com
 Direct Yacht Deliveries
www.direct-yachts.com
 Halcyon Yachts
www.halcyonyachts.com
 Hamble Yacht Deliveries
www.hambleyacht.net
 Seaway Yacht Deliveries
www.seawaydeliveries.com