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Luca Triggiani: “Captains are becoming HR managers”

Nicola Capuzzo · Wednesday, July 13th, 2022

As the role of maxi yacht captain is undergoing significant change, SUPER YACHT 24 often dealt with this change by interviewing several captains to talk about issues such as MCA Titles or the difficulties of working in a complex, or even contradictory, regulatory environment. With training manager and member of the Italian Yacht Masters association Luca Triggiani we talked about the professional career and training of captains, who are currently required to have many different skills.

Born in Genoa, Triggiani boasts significant achievements in the Italian Naval Academy and Navy, and he studied in Great Britain, France and the US. He works as a yacht master since 1999 and his shipowner recently entrusted him with the 74 meters long unit “Roe” of the Turkish shipyard Turquoise Yachts. He monitored all the construction phases of the brand new ship of which he became the captain (he also personally designed its integrated bridge) and is now about to start the summer season in the Mediterranean, at the head of a crew of 21 members, who are mainly foreigners.

It is worth mentioning that the unit Roe can count on a 28 meters long shadow boat built by the Dutch company Lynx Yachts, confirming the shipowners’ great passion for yachting and his desire to take care of every detail.

Capt. Triggiani, how will the upcoming season be for “Roe”?

“We are completing preparations in Sanremo, and soon we will move to Monaco in order to start our cruises between the French Riviera, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Campania Coast, Malta and the Balearic Islands. The shipowner loves spending time with his family, therefore the yacht is for private use”.

Speaking about your category, what is the effect of the Russian shipowners’ mega yacht arrests?

“Some captains obviously suffered the consequences of this situation and lost their job, but others found new jobs, and our association tried to help them out as much as possible. Russian shipowners were known as good payers, but our salaries are growing”.

As concerns figures, what level has the captains labour market reached?

“For 45-50 meters long ships, prices range from 4,500 Euro per month flying the Italian flag, to 12,000. Recently a colleague of mine was engaged for 9,000 Euro on a 35 meters long unit”.

What about chief engineers?

“There is a great demand for Italian and skilled chief engineers. Sometimes they earn more than captains, i.e. around 9-10,000 Euro per month for six months a year”.

What are the latest developments for your job?

“Modern captains are no longer ‘sea dogs’ or a sort of emperor onboard who only gives orders like it used to be in the past. In fact, at present captains are like human resources managers in a company. They have to manage crew rotations and training, as well as plan and implement special ‘crew retention’ programs in order to provide training and retain crew members”.

How are Italian captains regarded at an international level?

“They have a very good reputation, which improved over the past years, also thanks to all the work of our Italian Yacht Masters Association. In general, Italian captains focus on their job 24 hours a day due to their great passion for it, while our British colleagues take a proper break when they are not on duty. However, we have to improve, especially from a cultural perspective, for instance in choosing our crews: sometimes we tend to prefer our fellow countrymen instead of focusing only on their skills”.

What is the Italian Yacht Masters association doing with respect to training?

“We are focusing on extending captains’ skills and on providing them with further qualifications and training. In the past years, we have been promoting leadership and the human factor, sustainability and environmental aspects, as well as more technical aspects such as dynamic positioning and polar code, with special courses”.

Are Italian captains able to “network” effectively?

“Definitely yes. In fact, the Italian Yacht Masters association was created with this objective, in order to support and guide our category, as well as for lobbying in international environments. Also shipyards understood that it is in their interest that shipowners hire Italian captains because in this way yachts are more likely to remain in Italy during winter, thus generating significant downstream activities”.

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