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# Themed editorial: What is the impact of luxury yachting on the well-being of consumers and relevant stakeholders?

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editorial

333

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Luxury yachting can be characterised as a form of special interest tourism, based on niche products and services that appeal to people travelling for a very specific reason. This theme issue examines the world of luxury yachting and investigates its role as a contributor to the well-being of its stakeholders. I would like to thank theme editors Tatiana Gladkikh and Hugues Séraphin and their team of contributors for providing a fascinating review of luxury yachting operations and some of the sustainable developments that are occurring.

*Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT)* aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development, and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, do please contact me.

**Richard Teare,**  
*Managing Editor, WHATT*

This theme issue aims to demonstrate that luxury yachting has what it takes to meet the needs of all its stakeholders and beyond. Luxury yacht tourism has the potential to facilitate “meta-tourism”, where “Meta” refers to anything which goes “beyond the boundaries” or which exceeds expectations in terms of stakeholder experience.

Despite frequent criticism, there is evidence that the luxury yachting industry is trying to become more sustainable, and this will benefit the well-being of all stakeholders involved in the ecosystem, including the well-being and happiness of staff working on luxury yachts. It is evident from our analysis that luxury yachting contributes to the well-being of a broad range of stakeholders, which reflects the transformative nature of this sector. Further, the industry’s effort to become more sustainable is encouraging other stakeholders to follow. In so doing, luxury yachting is playing a positive role in the changing imagery of luxury products and services.

What then is the impact of luxury yachting on the well-being of consumers and relevant stakeholders? This issue highlights its unique position in the economy as a niche sector, primarily accessible to high net worth individuals. However, other stakeholder groups such as crew, suppliers and destination communities are part of the complex landscape of the industry and this specific sector. Their lives are directly affected by the industry and thus form a broader context for academic and practitioner interest.

The collection of articles presented in this issue reveal the interconnectedness of the luxury yachting industry and relevant stakeholders who represent the wider ecosystem surrounding luxury yachting. Further, the research reported here focuses on several areas that help to characterise the industry more broadly and well-being more specifically. We identify four main categories which are instrumental to our understanding of the industry and its contribution to society and the well-being of its stakeholders. These are stakeholder experiences on board luxury yachts, the role of leadership and management in creating and facilitating the luxury yacht experience for guests, crew and stakeholders; the importance of infrastructure (e.g. marinas, relevant policies surrounding the industry) and addressing the



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challenges faced by the industry (e.g. treatment of staff, education/skills training of stakeholders, environment and sustainability). By linking these areas into a descriptive framework for luxury yachting research, we illustrate the interconnectedness of these four aspects which comprise the environment and context in which the industry operates.

Going beyond the customer perspective, we have been able to identify implications for other stakeholders (e.g. crew and destinations) demonstrating a broader area of concern and providing a road map for further research. In this, we think that the framework presented in the concluding article can assist our understanding of luxury yachting, its transformative societal force and potential to positively impact its stakeholders. It is also contributing to the global sustainability agenda, and this enhances the well-being of a large range of communities locally and globally.

**Tatiana Gladkikh and Hugues Séraphin**  
*Theme Editors*

**About the Theme Editors:**

Tatiana Gladkikh is lecturer in management in the School of Business at the University of Aberdeen. Her current research interests are in the area of special interest tourism (SIT), specifically luxury yacht tourism. Her previous work covers leadership, cross-cultural issues in the global business environment and pedagogy of transnational higher education.

Hugues Séraphin is senior lecturer in tourism and event management studies, School of Hospitality at Oxford Brookes University. His research focuses on events management, tourism development in post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destinations; children in the tourism industry and the applications of ambidextrous management/organisational ambidexterity to tourism (and related subjects).

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