

# Reflections on the theme issue outcomes: what is the impact of luxury yachting on the well-being of consumers and relevant stakeholders?

Theme Editors Tatiana Gladkikh and Hugues Séraphin share their reflections on the significance and outcomes of the theme issue with Managing Editor Richard Teare.

## Overview

This issue aims to investigate the ways in which luxury products and services can be contributors to happiness and quality of life as opposed to the common belief that they are merely superficial, unethical and unsustainable. More importantly, the issue investigates luxury through the lens of sustainability and as consumers become more and more aware of the issues affecting the environment; a growing number of them are adopting pro-environment behaviour, which translates into the adoption of green products and services. A list of the articles in this issue can be found in the Appendix.

## Why in your view, is your theme issue strategic question important?

The body of literature relating to products and services across a wide range of sectors is growing, as is research on the topic of well-being. Luxury products and services play a key role in the happiness and well-being of individuals and society, and our theme issue investigates this connection through the prism of luxury yachting and sustainability. More specifically, we approached our question with reference to the lens of transformative luxury research (TLR), which focusses on creating positive outcomes in a specific field by promoting practices that increase consumer well-being. In this context, we consider the following questions: What do well-being and sustainability mean in the luxury yachting sector? How does the sector contribute to the level of happiness/quality of life of their owners and a wider community of stakeholders (crew, locals in destinations visited, architecture businesses and relevant other industries)?

The issue also explores how the luxury yachting sector can work effectively with destination marketing organisations and other major stakeholders to address societal issues faced by the industry generally and luxury yachting in particular. We suggest that luxury yachting can effectively address and respond to sustainability issues, such as overtourism, destination management and aspects of stakeholder well-being.

## Thinking about your theme issue plan and approach, what worked well?

We were encouraged by this theme-editing opportunity to bring together academic and industry professionals to explore our theme issue question. In order to better understand the challenges faced by society and various industries, it is important to integrate the efforts of practice and academia to maximise the impact of a joint effort. Working together, academics and professionals have produced some new insights on luxury yachting, a niche area of



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special interest tourism, which helped us to better understand professional practice in this sector and its impact on sustainability and stakeholder well-being.

Reflections on  
the theme issue  
outcomes

### **How did you engage with different stakeholder groups?**

There is currently limited academic literature relating to luxury yachting, and only a comparatively small group of academics have undertaken research in the field to date. This is perhaps the reason why it is a close-knit research community that is eager to expand its knowledge of the industry. Contributors were drawn from our previous collaborations and are based in different countries. Together, we sought to leverage our professional contacts and access to stakeholder groups and networks. Our access to practitioners was enabled by our personal contacts in the industry and we sought to expand our reach by employing a snowballing technique.

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### **What were the highlights from stakeholder group interactions?**

It is helpful to note that stakeholders in the industry are generally keen to share their knowledge and insight with academics. Collaboration is typically built on trust, willingness to work together and make a contribution to knowledge development. Practitioners tend to be very enthusiastic and motivated by the prospect of change-related improvements and projecting a realistic impression of the industry in society. "Snowballing" works well in this industry because the community of practitioners are well connected and those working in luxury yachting tend to be well informed about the latest developments and activities. This is an invaluable resource for researchers whose work is enhanced by academic-practitioner collaboration.

### **Thinking about your peer review process: what went well and why?**

We have worked together on a number of previous projects, including publications such as edited academic books and this theme issue was a logical step in our cooperation. We brought our own academic expertise to the review process, experience of editorial work in business and tourism journals and good teamworking. Each article and viewpoint was reviewed by both editors and we sought to provide informal and constructive feedback. By supporting each other and capitalising on our individual strengths, we were able to create a positive, collaborative environment. Overall, our goal was to support our writing team and communicate efficiently and clearly with all the stakeholders involved, and on reflection, we feel that this was achieved.

### **What are the most significant outcomes of your theme issue in terms of the contributions to knowledge and/or professional practice?**

We think that each article and viewpoint has made a meaningful contribution to this theme issue and that collectively, we have been able to augment knowledge about luxury yachting. By providing practical and theoretical insights, we have explored the issue of well-being at the luxury end of tourism and addressed sustainability considerations which help to inform the broader tourism industry. Further, we were able to integrate the outcomes in the form of a descriptive framework for luxury yachting research which could help to enhance exploration of societal issues facing the industry.

It is difficult to cite any anticipated solutions at the moment as our topic is under-researched but we think that the theme issue will make a substantive contribution to addressing this gap and encourage further development in luxury tourism research.

**What are the implications for management action and applied research arising from your theme issue outcomes?**

The theme issue investigates well-being in the context of luxury tourism and, specifically, luxury yachting. Luxury-yachting tourism is an under-researched area, and so there are several immediate implications for management action relating to the well-being of crew on board luxury yachts, management approaches to collaborating with stakeholders in luxury yacht destinations and the management of destinations and luxury yacht tourist experiences – from marketing luxury yacht holidays to the management and delivery of unique experiences. Applied research could be extended with reference to our descriptive framework for luxury yachting research in order to further explore and better understand the key features of this industry.

**Having served as a WHATT theme editor, what did you enjoy about the experience?**

We found this to be a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the creation of a theme issue which addresses the questions of well-being and sustainability in the niche context of luxury yachting. Richard Teare, the managing editor, was very supportive and he provided prompt and constructive responses to our queries, clear professional guidance and any other form of support we felt we needed. Our contributors have demonstrated how a team of researchers and practitioners can be united by the idea of enhancing our currently limited knowledge of the industry, despite being located in widely dispersed geographic locations. In summary, we feel that this theme issue has strengthened the community of like-minded academics and professionals who are exploring the questions raised in order to influence managerial action and enhance academic knowledge of well-being and sustainability in luxury yachting.

**About the Theme Editors:**

Tatiana Gladkikh is a 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 a Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Event Management Studies, School of Hospitality at Oxford Brookes University. His research focusses on events management, tourism development in post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destinations and the applications of ambidextrous management/organisational ambidexterity to tourism.

*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 the Managing Editor, Dr Richard Teare via the Emerald website.

**Appendix**

**Theme issue contents (WHATT v15 n4 2023)**

**Introduction: what is the impact of luxury yachting on the well-being of consumers and relevant stakeholders?**

*Hugues Séraphin and Tatiana Gladkikh*

Explains why luxury yachting can be considered as a form of tourism which contributes to the well-being of stakeholders in the sector. Observes that luxury yachting is also a transformative sector of activity which spills over to other sectors and stakeholders, contributing to the well-being of a large community.

**Sailing the tide of over consumption: applying a business history approach to explore the rising demand of luxury yachts and travel since 1979**

*Duncan Connors*

Identifies how the socio-economic trends caused by the economic deregulation of the last four decades have led to high-net-worth strata of individuals and families that conspicuously consumes luxury items and are the main customers in the luxury yacht market.

**Antecedents of yacht tourism participants' satisfaction and word of mouth intention**

*Anestis Fotiadis, John Rize and Rund Hiyasat*

Uses a theoretical discussion to explain how gratification, social motives, financial risk and status quo interact to predict satisfaction and word-of-mouth intentions amongst luxury-yachting travellers. Gender moderating effects on antecedent factors of satisfaction were also examined.

**Luxury yacht spaces and their impact on the well-being of guests and crew**

*Tatiana Gladkikh and Victoria Gladkikh*

This practice-led article argues that a sense of well-being and satisfaction with life can be facilitated by creating stylish and comfortable spaces which allow a closer connection and interaction with the outdoor environment, ability to combine work and pleasure and offer a retreat for personalised well-being activities such as beauty treatments.

**A scoping review of luxury yachting and wellness: study trends and research prospects**

*Thirumaran K, Emiel L. Eijdenberg and Caroline Wong*

Considers yachting in the context of wellness by exploring the research question: *In what ways is wellness created and experienced by luxury yachting?* The study considers signals received by manufacturers and the media from yachting clients relating to types of wellness and how crews and chefs create the best hospitality experiences for their clients.

**The luxury yacht charter market and sustainable brand image: the case of Sunreef**

*Hugues Séraphin and Shem Wambugu Maingi*

Adopts a case study approach to provide a systematic documentary analysis of online materials. It is also supported by a critical review of recent literature. In the luxury-yachting industry, the case of *Sunreef Yachting* has proven that environmental innovation in the yachting industry is the key to sustainability.

**Connecting transformative luxury with individual and collective well-being: a conceptual approach**

*Hugues Séraphin, Anca Yallop and James Kennell*

The tension between individual and collective well-being is at the core of the macro-marketing perspective and TLR has recently begun to consider this in the context of luxury consumption. This conceptual paper reviews TLR in the setting of the tourism and hospitality industry.

**Luxury yachting in the Fiji Islands: stakeholders' perspective**

*Vikas Gupta and Hiran Roy*

Explores the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders concerning luxury yachting in the Fiji Islands. It also reveals the facilities provided on luxury yachts, significant challenges faced by stakeholders in

the yachting business, major luxury yacht operators and the safety measures in place for the patrons/consumers of luxury yachting.

**Yachting tourism's contribution to the Caribbean's social economy and environmental stewardship**

*Theréz Walker, Sophia Rolle, Michelle McLeod*

Explores yachting tourism in the Caribbean to understand its contribution to the economic and social well-being of stakeholders. Several Caribbean countries have a yachting-tourism industry, whilst others focus on cruise tourism. Argues in support of developing yachting tourism as it has a potentially positive impact on tourism overall.

**Wellbeing, experiences and superyachts**

*Russell Williams*

Reviews and synthesises key concepts in luxury and well-being to provide a framework to better understand how luxury well-being propositions can be designed and delivered for the growing superyacht marketplace. It also presents a framework for the co-creation of luxury value in the context of luxury well-being on superyachts.

**What happens on the boat, stays on the boat: The dark side of luxury yachting**

*Brianna Wyatt*

Discusses the dark side of luxury yachting, with specific focus on the treatment and well-being of yacht crews. The paper is based on a literature review of key terms: luxury yachting, yacht crews, well-being, maritime tourism and yacht guests.

**Conclusion: What is the impact of luxury yachting on the well-being of consumers and relevant stakeholders?**

*Tatiana Gladkikh and Hugues Séraphin*

Provides a concluding overview of academic and practitioner approaches to the issue of well-being in the luxury yachting sector of tourism, highlighting the significance of the theme issue. It also proposes a framework for luxury yachting research illustrating the relationship between the areas directly affecting well-being.