

YACHTING MALTA



Yachting Malta is a public private partnership between the Government of Malta and the Royal Malta Yacht Club. Launched in April 2015 Yachting Malta's primary role is to identify & attract high profile yachting events to the Maltese Islands including sailing regattas, power racing, boat shows, awards, conferences and other activities related to yachting. The organisation has also been created to market and promote Malta as a yacht racing, cruising & super yacht destination.



SPINNAKER caught up with WILFRID BUTTIGIEG, CEO of Yachting Malta, who explains Yachting Malta's role within the industry, what contribution it has done so far and where it is going

Prior to kicking off its initiatives programme, Yachting Malta undertook a year and a half long in depth process of consultations with over 80 yachting stakeholders including – agents, yards, chartering companies, marina managers, sportspeople and skippers. This was complemented by an official consultation week which included topics focusing on various areas including education, super yachts, yacht services, marketing and policy.

In its efforts to implement the best possible initiatives, Yachting Malta undertook a process to strengthen organisational synergies with entities such as the Chamber of Commerce (Yachting Section), the Malta Tourism Authority, Transport Malta, Valletta 2018 Foundation, Institute for Tourism Studies, Malta College

“During the first year of our operations we have consulted widely and listened carefully to the key players of the industry and the sports sector. As a result of this consultation we developed a clear strategy with 120 identified initiatives related to the sports sector, leisure yachting and super yachts. Once implemented these initiatives should place Malta in a prominent position on the international yachting map.”

Wilfrid Buttigieg, CEO Yachting Malta

for Art, Science and Technology, Sport Malta, Malta Sailing Federation, as well as the Malta Power Boat Federation and the Malta Model Boats Association.

In its first year of operations Yachting Malta has also managed to undertake a number of relevant and rapid initiatives such as the support towards locally held international races such as the Thundercats World Championships (October 2015) and the Euromed Dinghy Regatta, organised annually by the Malta Young Sailor's Club in December. Yachting Malta will again be supporting this year's edition which will host a record 248 sailors representing 21 countries.

Yachting Malta was also involved in the organization of the Pageant of the Seas Capital of Culture 2018 rehearsal event in Grand Harbour last June 2016.

“The overall goal is maximising Malta's yachting potential and achieving a mark-up in overall quality of the Maltese yachting product. Ensuring excellence and competitiveness throughout will be Yachting Malta's target.”

Wilfrid Buttigieg, CEO Yachting Malta

Yachting Malta was instrumental in assisting Viking's Sailing Club with the refurbishment of their premises, which allowed the Club to continue its operations. Through Yachting Malta's intervention and the collaboration of the Royal Malta Yacht Club, the Club was also able to bring their boats out from storage enabling them to continue offering Skolasport's On the Move sailing lessons on Laser 16 and Topper (single handed) sailing boats from the RMYC premises.

Yachting Malta has also assisted the Royal Malta Yacht Club Sailing School by contributing towards the purchase of two RS Feva sailing boats for use by the RMYC Youth Racing Team as well as the purchase of educational resources for the Birzebbuga Sailing Club. Another initiative was the International Council of Yacht Clubs Conference held at the Royal Malta Club.

For two consecutive years Yachting Malta hosted the Rolex Middle Sea Race Owners and Skippers reception at the historic Fort St. Elmo (2015) and Fort St. Angelo (2016). This year Yachting Malta also supported the Coastal Race Awards, which were presented to the winners during the evening.

Last but not least, Yachting Malta co-hosted the annual Yacht Racing Forum with Yachting Events Ltd. The Forum welcomed an array of top international names

in yachting and racing to Malta with the aim of placing Malta higher up on the international yachting map. – Some of the top names included Ken Read, Ed Baird, Cameron Appleton, Ian Walker and famed designer Juan Kouyoumdjian who all took an active part in the discussions that ensued between the 300 delegates who travelled to Malta for this event. A number of local Sailing and Powerboat club members also took up the opportunity to attend this Forum with the aim of improving our local club structures, management and administration practices.

This was undoubtedly Yachting Malta's first key project from an international perspective.

GOING FORWARD

There are many more initiatives that Yachting Malta plans to undertake and already has pledged its support towards a number of events for 2017.

The inaugural Yachting Malta Awards will be held at the Westin Dragonara Ballroom on the evening of the 17th February 2017. The Awards will acknowledge those individuals, clubs and organisations who have made a significant contribution and impact to yachting as a sport and industry over the years. Nominations will be accepted online on the Yachting Malta website and will be vetted by a specially appointed independent adjudication board.

Yachting Malta will continue to lend its support to local clubs and regattas. It is also plans to carry out an Economic Impact Assessment of the Rolex Middle Sea Race in order to scientifically quantify the return on investment of a country as a result of the organisation of international yachting events. Malta's attractiveness as a yachting events destination will be further strengthened with the organisation of boot/training camps aimed at participation in the Sailing Champions League. The Trophée Baillée de Suffren Classic Race and the Grand Soleil Cup in 2017 are other initiatives that are being planned.

To sum up, Yachting Malta, in the coming 24 months, will continue to ramp up its efforts in transforming Malta into a leading yachting destination by focusing on a selected number of initiatives from the 39 initiatives related to sports yachting, 55 targeting mainstream yachting and 26 related to super yachts.

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