

Salty Sea Dog

ONBOARD'S resident sage asks "Why do some spoil it for others?"



Ship building yards are generally generous in the extreme when it comes to granting hospitality to Captains of super yachts. The reason behind such action is, of course, clear and is used by them as an effective marketing tool that can, at best, result in a new build order and often a refit contract. Boat shows and charter yacht shows are sometimes equally generous with parties at the end of an event.

For their part, shipyards and repair complexes invite a group of Captains to join them in a fun filled jamboree that, in some cases, is linked to a serious session of seminars and team building exercises. Often it can be a one day golfing tournament or a snowboarding bash while others simply push the boat out and bill the occasion as a three or four day skiing event and fly groups of Captains up to the likes of Courchevel for ski and Après.

Been there, done that

But it is the après and the way Captains are beginning to greedily snatch at the generosity without thinking of the consequences that is beginning to worry this old salty dog. Remember I have been there and done that. Now as a hack, writing for the better yachting magazines around the world, I am still privileged to get invitations from shipyards and show organizers to join in the fun.

Sometimes I am happy to remember that I used to wear four stripes but on other occasions I am embarrassed to put myself into the same group that seems intent on grabbing what they can, knowing their hosts will be too polite to refuse or say anything.

The sad thing is that it is the future generations of Captains who will suffer. Shipyards whose generous actions have been raped and pillaged by marauding gangs of alcohol crazed Skippers will eventually get fed up of it all and stop offering such treats. In other words a small group of never do wells will spoil it for those of us who do know how to behave.

In recent times I have seen a humidor stacked with a choice of fine cigars allowing for one for every participating Captain, raided by just a handful of Captains who stuffed their pockets with as many as there freely issued Shipyard jacket could accommodate.

In other events, I have seen Captains liberate copious bottles of wine from hotel fridges where they lay chilling pre dinner. The wine was then liberally shared out among their friends who became well sloshed before dinner and then, as a consequence, destroyed what would otherwise have been a pleasant evening of networking for others within the group.

Don't let the side down

Silly alcohol fuelled behaviour is seen as funny by some at the time, but equally it is interpreted by other more sober members of a crowd as letting the side down. Actions that endanger the future of such generously sponsored events is a very selfish trait often brought to the fore by thoughtlessness.

The irony of it all is that, sitting close by a group of one tanked up Captains, I could not help but smile when one of the group proudly proclaiming that he had sacked his engineer and first mate for over indulgence at a crew dinner at a fancy shore side restaurants attended by the boss.

It seems when it comes to being rude to your hosts there is one rule for the rich and another for the poor.