

# Global Sails

REPORT BY » Marty Free



**B**ernard Gallay is the founder and CEO of Bernard Gallay Yacht Brokerage and a former professional rugby player and sailor. He has competed in the America's Cup and twice in the Vendee Globe. In 1994 he founded BGYB in Montpellier, France and finished his sailing career during the Transat 6.50 in 2005. Well respected throughout the brokerage industry and sailing world, BGYB has expanded to include yacht charter and yacht management with a global network of nine offices.

*After dual careers as a professional sailor and rugby player, life as a yacht broker would appear to be comparatively relaxed. Do you miss the adrenaline rush of the game and the race?*

Actually there is a lot of adrenaline in the process of negotiating between a buyer and a seller, of going through the contract and finally of completing the transaction. It can involve not only the buyer and the seller, but also the yacht manager, one or two other brokers, a bank for financing the yacht, etc. The adrenaline which I find in most of the big deals has certainly replaced the excitement of starting a race and most probably stopped me from continuing to race professionally. Age is probably another cause...

*BGYB is one of the world's premier brokers of sailing yachts. When you founded the business, did you plan to be this successful?*

I first considered yacht brokerage in 1993, during the Vendee Globe race when fellow competitor Nigel Burgess, founder of Burgess Yachts, very sadly fell overboard a few days after the start. Because he had not managed to secure sponsorship, his boat had the name of his own brokerage company. His tragic death accentuated the many risks of single-handed racing.

Originally I started yacht brokerage as a side job to my involvement in racing and focused mainly on small yachts. Therefore I never planned to enter the industry brokering large yachts worth several million Euros.

Although we have achieved more sales of motor yachts over 40 metres than sailing yachts of the same size, we have



been developing very much into sailing yachts and we are still more on sail than motor. This is due to my personal sailing background and most of our in house brokers' backgrounds.

*The spectre of EU VAT on yacht charters and fuel is hanging over the industry - do you think the EC will try to make a determination before the 2013 yachting season begins and how do you think France will respond?*

It now looks most certain that France will have to apply VAT on yacht charters as most other EU countries do it now. This is still being discussed and MYBA, of which BGYB is a member, is deeply involved in this.

*Are the impending EU regulations on emissions and the removal of tax exemptions on charter fuel driving increased demand for sailing yachts?*

It might indeed lead people more towards sailing yachts, however fuel consumption on motor yachts does not represent

much more than 10% of the charter fees. Therefore I assume that there is still a long life for motor yacht charter. The charterers will probably take more time to plan their charters in order to diminish the fuel consumed on board.

*Many yacht designers are incorporating more sustainability into their designs using new materials and hybrid and nano-technologies. What is the best new product you have seen and why?*

In terms of new materials, sailing yachts have benefited most from the new developments and in particular from carbon fibre. The reason is that weight is a much more important issue for sailing yachts than for motor yachts. The carbon spars and textile standing rigging for example, have permitted much lighter and better performing boats with stronger rigging than boats equipped with alloy spars.

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