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REPORT

THE MAKING OF MANGUSTA

Celebrating its 30th year, the Italian company is now diversifying into displacement vessels.

TAKING ON GOLIATH

TSR speaks to the team at West Nautical about its client-focused boutique culture.

WATCH THIS SPACE

How the MLC's regulatory requirements have changed the production and semi-custom market.

PRODUCTION MATTERS

We investigate the culture and ambitions of the world's production yards.

Contributor
Comment

Shadow man



Terry Allen of Terry Allen Marine highlights the pros and cons of employing a shadow or support vessel in order to enhance the yachting experience for owners.

The use of a shadow or support vessel is by no means a new idea, but its use is becoming more popular and quite rightly so. Owners are paying a lot of money for their private vessel, but a lot of space is being taken up by the toys, and this means there is precious little space left for the crew to prepare or work on them either. So the shadow boat or support vessel has risen in popularity and certainly offers a practical solution.

There are many advantages to using a shadow vessel. Let's first consider the type of features that are now available on these vessels, features that add to the 'yachting experience' and do so for far less money than the cost of building a much larger mother vessel.

example, guests have been set up on a beach, cleaning up the area of all the equipment, loading all the jetskis and boats and journeying to the evening location. The crew should then be able to overtake the mother vessel and have the tenders in the water and ready to go at the new location.

By employing a shadow vessel, we can have:

- Bigger, more functional tenders that cost less than a custom tender with its folding console, low profile and shallow V hull that produces an uncomfortable compromise, is prone to the inevitable wave that comes over the bow and gets everyone wet
- As many jetskis as required

Historically, shadow boats have been offshore supply vessels that have been pensioned off after serving their term for the oil and gas industry. These vessels are very robust, go-anywhere vessels with good 'dead weight' capacity.

SHADOW AND SUPPORT VESSELS

To start with, let's put the word 'shadow' in the right context. Last time I checked, my shadow was right beside me, not somewhere over the horizon where I have to stand around and wait for it to catch up. A shadow vessel should be right next to the mother ship in order to fulfil its needs.

This means that the shadow should be as fast or even faster than the mother vessel – it should be the last to leave and first to arrive. The shadow vessel's crew should be able to fly into action if, for

- A sea plane or a helicopter with an enclosed hangar and a safer environment from which to land and take off
- A submarine
- Large entertainment areas
- A galley that can cater for a 200-hundred-person or more banquet
- A hospital with all the necessary equipment to deal with the occasional emergency
- Diving equipment with refill capacities, mixing equipment for the more experienced divers and possibly even a small hyperbaric chamber

- Workshop areas to service and maintain all the equipment correctly

Then there is the 'support' vessel: this is the vessel with all the characteristics previously described, except it doesn't have the speed to keep up with the mother ship, so we are back to the scenario with tenders taking up potential accommodation and entertainment areas.

To keep it simple, historically, shadow boats have been offshore supply vessels that have been pensioned off after serving their term for the oil and gas industry. These vessels are very robust, go-anywhere vessels with good 'dead weight' capacity. Deadweight (also abbreviated to DWT) is a measure of how much weight a ship can safely carry. It is the sum of the weights of cargo, fuel, fresh water, ballast water, provisions, passengers and crew.

Faster vessels do not have the same deadweight capacity, so there is a compromise for speed versus capacity. Saying that, most deadweight requirements for a shadow vessel would be well within the 200- to 300-ton range. The downside of overloading a fast vessel is of course an increase in fuel consumption and loss of speed.

FUEL FOR THOUGHT

A frequent request is for the support/shadow vessel to bunker fuel to the mother ship. All of a sudden the support or shadow boat has become a fuel tanker, and that can open a can of worms. MARPOL Annex 1/Chapter 8 is not required for yachts but provides good guidance on ship-to-ship (STS) operations. It is normally recommended by flag states to follow these rules as guidance that is reasonable and practicable.

In allowing the STS there must be a full and in-depth risk assessment and plan of action before being authorised. Many factors play a role:

- Sea/weather conditions
- Daylight hours
- Competence of the crew to perform such transfers
- Hose materials used (approved and certified hose only)
- Spill equipment
- Communications

The owner/managers must check whether the yacht underwriters are in agreement and if any pollution damage is covered, and both yachts involved in the bunkering should be fully covered. Local port authorities should be in agreement as well. Some areas are restricted to perform these operations due to environmental

reasons, and they sometimes require a spill boat in the area, which will be at the expense of the owner.

Last but not least, from a taxation point, if fuel is being transferred from a commercial yacht to a private yacht, is this legal if the fuel has been purchased VAT free? This is a serious consideration to be taken into account and you must seek professional advice on this.

Ultimately, we know that yachts are getting bigger, along with the price tags, with the average big-boat build costing around \$100 million. We also know that a support vessel makes a lot of sense, albeit with an extra dash of regulation and consideration required. For another \$15-20 million you could have a lot more entertainment space and facilities on the yacht and have a very reliable 50-70m support vessel to go with it to fully complement the experience of yachting. ■



TO COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE,
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WITH SUBJECT: SHADOW MAN