

Executive

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THAT X FACTOR

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EXTRAORDINARY ESCAPES

Andrea Trapani interviews Managing Director **PERRY NEWTON** and learns how Azure Ultra creates bespoke luxury yachting experiences that go “Beyond Ordinary” each and every single time

The yacht charter business is very competitive; how is your company reacting to the ever-demanding requirements of the VIP traveller?

Sailing on a luxury yacht is one of life's most pleasurable experiences, and Azure Ultra aims to create on-board memories to last a lifetime. Put simply, we provide a yachting experience that is “Beyond Ordinary”. From the moment guests step aboard, they receive sterling VIP treatment all the way. We are a close team of professionals completely dedicated to providing the definitive luxury yachting experience, and as a result we are able to tailor-make charters to cater for all our guests' individual requirements. Bespoke luxury charters can be arranged for holidaying families, small groups, businesses, wedding parties, honeymooners...indeed, any anniversary or occasion that can be elevated beyond the ordinary with the Azure Ultra touch. On-board privacy is guaranteed, with discretion being the byword of all our members of crew. Paying unsurpassed attention to detail, our team of captains and stewards will go all the way to ensure things run seamlessly, enabling guests to spend a memorable time aboard.

Ashore, we continue to match the level of quality of the on-board experience with five-star accommodation in our beachside luxury hotel. As part of Azure's range of lifestyle products, we

offer our guests access to impeccably designed and fully-serviced penthouse suites with spectacular views of the Mediterranean coastline.

You clearly set very high standards for both staff and boats. How do you ensure those standards are maintained?

Our commitment to providing superlative service to our on-board guests is ongoing. We set very high standards across all our operation, from the ongoing training of our highly professional crew down to the stylish interiors and deluxe finishings of our top-of-the-range motor yacht fleet. We believe that the smallest detail counts towards rendering guests' on-board experience as luxuriously complete as possible. As Managing Director, I am most rewarded by the enthusiasm and motivation that drives our dynamic Azure Ultra team. Each and every one of our staff shows outstanding dedication to providing the best service to our guests, and this is the great distinguishing feature of our company and the Azure Ultra experience itself.

Is there any limit to the charters Azure Ultra provide?

Malta's unique location at the heart of the Mediterranean enables us to provide bespoke charters which cover varying distances across both territorial waters and those that extend

beyond. Our highly professional team of captains and crew members holds years of boating experience, with specialist nautical knowledge of the Maltese Islands as well as the Mediterranean, Tyrrhenian, Ionian, Ligurian and Adriatic maritime zones. No yachting itinerary is too complicated for us to manage and organise on our guests' behalf.

Azure Ultra is entering its second holiday season. What have you learnt from last year and how do you plan to build on its success?

Azure Group is the European leader of luxury lifestyle vacations. Bringing Azure Ultra – its fractional boat ownership and charter programme – to Maltese shores has been an unprecedented success. As everybody in high-end business knows, our clients expect only the very best – and quite rightly so. We therefore constantly seek to respond to – and to hone our service around – their evolving needs. Meticulous attention to detail lies in everything we do; this, combined with the dedication and ongoing professional development shown by every individual team member, acts as the driving force behind all our efforts to continue developing the best possible lifestyle holiday for our guests. We received nothing but good feedback last year, and the 100% positive reviews on TripAdvisor were truly humbling. “We have had other yachting experiences in Portugal/Spain/UK, but none were even close to this.” “From the moment we stepped aboard the yacht, we were treated like VIPs... now I know how all the celebrities feel about having their own yachts.” One of our greatest strengths lies in the fact that our parent companies allow us all the flexibility and adaptability we require to meet guests' aspirations and turn their dream vacations into a reality.

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Sharing ownership leaves you free to concentrate on only the positives: indulging in the luxury boating lifestyle

THE CALL OF NEW HORIZONS

Europe's leading Fractional
Yacht Ownership provider, now
offering charters in Malta



You mentioned "fractional ownership" earlier. What exactly does this mean and what does it offer your customers?

Ask most high-end boat owners whether there are any negative aspects to owning a luxury yacht, and you will probably receive a predictable reply. While many will leap at the chance of having a motor yacht at their disposal, there are some well-known disadvantages. The cost of maintenance, crewing and berthing in suitable, convenient marinas – where most boats spend the majority of their time – can be astronomical and extremely problematic. Azure Ultra's fractional plan is revolutionary in that it allows clients to pay a "fraction" of the overall cost of the boat, entering a shared ownership system. We believe this has all the advantages of yacht ownership with none of the drawbacks. Yacht sharing leaves you free to concentrate on only the positives: indulging in the luxury boating lifestyle. We provide the full VIP service via a top-class yacht management team composed of a personal captain and steward/ess. All year round nothing is left to chance, and our procedures ensure that everything is in place for our members' professionally crewed boat to be ready to board when they require it. Azure Ultra's guaranteed five-star service extends to other flexible member-exclusive options, such as the ability to exchange yacht usage with a choice of prestigious five-star accommodation. Our vacation stays cover city and resort networks worldwide, and members also get to enjoy a peerless range of Azure products and services – including a soon-to-be launched supercar club. Additionally, Azure Ultra's fractional programme offers the possibility to charter one's on-board entitlement, thereby generating income from the ownership plan.



You have more than 20 years' invaluable experience in the vacation industry. Going forward, how do you see this industry developing in Malta?

As a high-end holiday destination the island will continue to grow. Already viewed as a "safe" destination, events such as Valletta being honoured with the title of 2018 European Capital of Culture can only enhance Malta's reputation and raise its international profile. Azure Ultra will continue to expand and promote the Maltese Islands while going forward, as we seek to expand into new markets with our products. Our targeted marketing campaigns and inspection visits to Malta have already attracted Europeans of different nationalities along with visitors from the Middle East. Following the launch of Azure Ultra, we immediately sold out the full 30 weeks of fractional usage offered by the first two luxury motor yachts to join our

fleet, Miss Moneypenny and Don't Ask. This fast-paced success prompted us to acquire a third boat, Mio Amore, within the same year. It is a source of great satisfaction that each new buyer is now a long-term visitor to Malta as well as a proud part-owner of a luxury yacht berthed at the prestigious Grand Harbour Marina.

Running high-profile, time-demanding businesses such as Azure Ultra can become all consuming. Can you relax?

In my free time I am a passionate adventure motorcyclist. I believe that we all need to set daily personal challenges to help us become better developed human beings. I enjoy challenging myself both physically and psychologically by participating in ambitious rallies and road trips, all in aid of charity. I suppose in this respect I adhere to the Azure Ultra mantra of going "Beyond Ordinary".

00356 2356 1839
charters@azureultra.com

www.azureultra.com

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