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WE APPLIED THE BRAKES IN GOOD TIME AHEAD OF THE TURN, AND NOW WE ARE ACCELERATING OUT OF THE CURVE.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Burgess CEO Jonathan Beckett explains how the company has opened up clear water between itself and the competition, despite the prevailing conditions.



The past three years have been challenging for the superyacht industry. I am glad to report that despite this, Burgess is in a strong position. We have continued to succeed against the odds, particularly in comparison with some of our competitors. We've kept our team intact, and we are taking on additional, experienced people to strengthen our performance.

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CLIENTS ARE SEEKING BROKERS WITH THE PROVEN EXPERIENCE, SKILL AND INSIGHT TO GUIDE THEM THROUGH TO A FAVOURABLE OUTCOME.

Burgess has been able to weather the storm primarily because we have never overstretched financially. We went into the credit crunch with money in the bank and after three years of hard markets and exceptionally hard work, we are in better shape than ever. Our aim is to further improve the level of service we deliver, by increasing the ratio of staff to clients and by extending the portfolio of yachts we have for sale, charter and under management.

In recent times, there has been a sea change in yacht brokerage, a 180° shift that required firms to adapt rapidly, and which has shaken out some of the smaller players. The reality is that this is still a consolidating industry, where only the fittest will survive.

Because there is a surplus of inventory, it remains a buyers' market and buyers are determined, quite rightly, to get good value. They are seeking brokers they can trust to provide accurate information and reliable advice. In the current climate, brokers have a responsibility to keep a close eye on everything that is happening in a market that is still volatile.

The new reality of the superyacht market was clearly illustrated by the Monaco Yacht Show last September, which reflected the 'pecking order' of the industry as it really is. There were more than 150 yachts for sale in and around the harbour, but this was only a fraction of the global inventory. In fact, we could have filled most of the berths in the harbour ourselves; it is a sign of our success that so many experienced owners entrust us with the sale of their yacht.

With so much choice, and such a wide variation of pedigree, provenance and price, the broker's role has never been more important. A trusted broker can help a potential buyer explore what's available and identify the best yachts to meet the required criteria as part of a long and careful evaluation process.

To succeed, brokers must keep on top of all market intelligence on a daily basis. At Burgess we can do that

better because we work as one cohesive company. Our yacht management team looks after an ever-expanding portfolio, giving us firsthand insight into the ever-changing operational realities of running a large yacht. Our charter brokers work closely with captains, building up an unrivalled body of knowledge about yachts and destinations, while our technical consultancy services division keeps us closely informed of developments in technology, regulation and what is happening in the shipyards. Each of these divisions is thriving in their own right and has enjoyed a remarkably successful period over the last twelve months.

As the only full service superyacht company with a team-driven global capability which reaches worldwide locations in all the key markets, Burgess is well placed to extend our lead still further. We are expanding in the USA in 2012, and looking further afield, particularly at Asia which has extremely exciting potential. As ever, we will remain prudent, spending our own money on our plans, and supporting every initiative with sound business acumen.

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BY KEEPING OUR MARKET KNOWLEDGE UP-TO-THE-MINUTE, WE CAN IDENTIFY OWNERS WHO ARE GENUINELY KEEN TO SELL AND BRING THEM TOGETHER WITH GENUINE BUYERS.

Thanks to this combination of confidence and caution, we now have a very stable and secure platform with deep roots in every area of the superyacht market. We are now ready to build on this with the next phase of our expansion.

Of course, I am delighted that Burgess is in this strong leadership position in the market. Yet it seems to me that there is still so much more we can do to grow the market and improve our services, while raising the bar for the industry as a whole. In many ways, it feels as if we are just beginning. These are exciting times!