

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of light blue paintbrushes, each angled slightly to the right. The brushes are arranged in a grid-like fashion, creating a textured, industrial feel.

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REVISITING EUROPE AS CREW

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NO EASY OPTION

WORDS **MARK UPTON**

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A MAINTENANCE-FREE TENDER?

IT IS EVERY

crewmember's dream to have maintenance-free equipment onboard. Unfortunately there are few such items that are not considered disposable. For example, some watersports equipment has reached the point where it is bought with one, maybe two, seasons of life in mind. Tenders, however, are a completely different story. Throughout this series of articles we have focused on the pros and cons of different tender types and the importance of ensuring you, as crew, decide on the boat to suit your needs. But is there another option? Is it possible to buy a tender, place it onboard, perform no maintenance whatsoever except for cleaning, and then dispose of it after an accepted period of time? The answer, in short, is no. But there are options available to reduce the input required of the crew. I mentioned in a previous article the use of rugged, commercial tenders. These boats are extremely well built and in many versions build

quality takes precedence over specification. Military boats in particular are designed to be strong and will resist a serious amount of abuse. They are also constructed with easily replaceable parts: the tubes slide off easily; the consoles and seats can be unbolted and replaced if damaged; or the outboard engines can be removed, leaving the hull and integrated fuel tanks. The result is a boat that is very strong and, if you do manage to do any damage, it can be stripped down and fixed without too much trouble. Compare this with a traditional, high-spec tender and the difference is obvious. The majority of tenders are built to look good above everything else: components are integrated; the seats, console and equipment are fitted with style; and there are smooth edges and no visible joins. These boats, as mentioned in previous articles, are very well put together meaning they are not always the easiest to maintain or service, with less space to work and more of a focus



on the guest experience. Despite the fact that these two types of boats are very different in what they offer, there are two factors they have in common. Due to the quality of components, build quality and reliability, their price means that they are far from disposable. Military-spec boats such as the Zodiac Milpro or high-spec yacht tenders like McMullen & Wing, Goldfish and Compass are very expensive. Their other similarity is durability. Many superyachts have tried to use budget options in some misguided belief that they are used hard, so why waste money on a tender that will not last? While this may be a good approach for a crew runaround, remember that a badly maintained, budget tender will only last a very short period of time. A low quality or poorly maintained tender

stands out just as much as a high quality one. It also jeopardises the entire guest experience and, in some cases, the efficient running of the yacht. It should be remembered as a final point that any poorly maintained boat will deteriorate quickly. A high quality boat will deteriorate less quickly but will ultimately cost more to fix when things go wrong. There is no substitute for a boat that is looked after and maintained properly by an experienced crew. Whether it is a cheaper crew tender or a custom built limo, quality and cost cannot be used as a substitute for sensible operation and carefully planned maintenance.

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“A POORLY MAINTAINED TENDER STANDS OUT”