

# Clubbing on a yacht

**BY NICHOLAS FRANKL** | The key to all exclusive My Yacht Group events and the phenomenal success of this venture at the Austin F1 Grand Prix is simply wonderful and terribly loyal clients. It was actually their requests that influenced **Nicholas Frankl** to found this business in 2012. Over the years the company has built up quite a following of My Yacht 'groupies', a bit like a 1960s rock band, except many guests travel with their own private jets and request the calendar of events a year ahead so they can put them into their busy schedules. Nicholas speaks from the heart about his amazing work.

## The prestige

Our clients expect not just great execution of the events, but, most importantly of all, a genuine human connection with like-minded attendees, which is so often missing from supposedly 'cool' Formula 1 clubs and events.

We are only as good as our last event! We just hosted our second superyacht party, using Al Capone's famous 140ft Motor Yacht ACANIA on the Monterey Peninsula during the Laguna Seca historic races and The Pebble Beach Concours. It wasn't easy to follow up last year's premier hosted by Lincoln Motor Company and automotive royalty Edsel Ford. He had the vision and guts that marketing executives often lack these days, to create a new experience with us for VIP guests and cut through the clutter. He mentioned that if the yacht sank the whole weekend would be cancelled as "everyone who's anyone is aboard". Even Jackie Stewart, who's been attending this famous weekend for 35 years had never seen "Pebble Beach lodge from the water"!

Our guests have way more cluttered lives and way too many invitations, they tell me that they are constantly bombarded by brands to attend their latest release receptions and that it's of less and less interest. So it's tough for them to know which reception, club or yacht is truly a 'global elite' experience with the right crowd and which is just a cheap pretender with pretty pictures on their websites. The Monaco yacht hospitality scene has become a glorified nightclub promoter event. Of course, you get what you pay for and I'm proud to say we are the most premium yacht hospitality experience at the Monaco GP for a reason. We also host our annual My Yacht Monaco party on the Friday night, one of the most sought after events of the weekend, where I am honored to host my dear friends TSH Prince and Princess of Monaco aboard and approximately \$150bn net worth of guests who tell us it's the highlight of their year.

## Formula 1

Formula 1 isn't going anywhere. Clearly changes, many of which I think have made the racing more interesting, had to be made. The wheel-to-wheel action this year has been spectacular. You will always have one team that gets it sorted over the others, this has been the case since 1904!

I think that anyone interested in Formula 1 and the machinations of the team politics should read 'No Angel' by Tom Bowens. It will explain how Bernie Ecclestone created the magic and why he's so unique. I fear a little for what will happen after him.

A superyacht is really the only place to watch the Monaco or Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and the yacht industry does well out of those. It also allows more visionary Formula 1 sponsors to give clients and execs a very special weekend. I'm working on bringing the My Yacht experience to Singapore in 2015.

These businesses are very insular and clique worlds. I've travelled to hundreds of Formula 1 races, the paddock, yacht shows, business jet shows, motor shows and they're all very incestuous. I think Formula 1 personnel take themselves WAY too seriously, running their little areas of fiefdom without any real concept of what's going on in the world outside. Yachting is more open and, of course, they are selling yachts to well-healed

customers, whereas Formula 1 is selling commercial rights to sport sponsorships & TV entertainment.

## The future?

There will likely be more quantity and less quality in future Formula 1 parties. My Yacht Club was the first and remains the only real evening club for discerning guests at the Austin GP. We don't cater so much to the paddock crowd and corporate guests who would never personally pay \$15,000 and up for a VIP table; we prefer private international and local clients and the ambience is totally different, a great deal more sophisticated and fun.

My experience over the past 10 years with My Yacht and 30 years in Formula 1 has taught me that a professional but friendly, courteous and ego-free attitude can have a huge impact on staff energy and guest experience. Humans react better to smiles and waves! ■

