

# THE LUXURY CHANNEL MEETS NICHOLAS FRANKL OF MY YACHT GROUP

By Fiona Sanderson

Whilst in Monaco for the Yacht Show, The Luxury Channel sat down with Nicholas Frankl, the founder of My Yacht Group. Frankl runs the company with his twin sister, Annabelle, curating luxury and ultra-high net worth experiences for discerning guests and brand partners at the world's premier sporting and social events. Here, he gives us a unique insight into his amazing world....



Nicholas Frankl (image courtesy of Rosalind Milani Gallieni)

## HI NICK! HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

Things are going great! We've had some fantastic clients here [*in Monaco*], and we've hosted a number of wonderful evenings with some of our partners – including our astronauts, which has been just incredible [*My Yacht Group has a partnership with Axiom Space*]. They have a very specific objective – they want to meet billionaires who can afford to go to space and who have the time and the inclination to do so. They're a really interesting client to work with, so we're really relishing it. The clients we're inviting here are all incredibly excited about it. It's been amazing.



# HOW DID MY YACHT GROUP BEGIN?

My Yacht Group originally came out of Monaco Grand Prix, and it's still our signature event – it's what we do and what we're known for. We host about 50/60 clients a year who come from all over the world. Although some are actually Monaco residents who live here, but they're not next to the race track. We actually did our very first event here 15 years ago. We started doing our Friday evening party, which became *the* event on the Friday evening, and we've since had some amazing guests attend over the years. People said to us, "wow, this is a really nice party and so different from other things that we go to – you should do more of them!" So about 11 years ago, we *did* start doing more of them. Now we have a series of events all over the world. We've built this community of wonderful people where the most important thing is that we have their trust, so when we invite them to something, they want to come. Which is really nice because most of the time, you invite someone to something and they don't show up! I guess for us, it's different because it's a social event – it's social business networking.

## HOW DID YOU FIRST INVOLVE THE BRANDS YOU WORK WITH?

All of the brands we work with have the same challenges – which is, how do we deepen the relationship with our existing clients, and how do we find new ones? Many brands are struggling with that and they're not very good at it. For the last 15 years, especially in the luxury business, it was incredibly easy for brands to just open another store and people would show up and then they made their money. So they didn't really have to do anything! Now the world has changed and you don't have quite so many Chinese, Russian and Middle Eastern guys flying through the door unannounced, so you've got to work a little harder for your revenue. That, I think, is a challenge for a lot of these people. A good friend of mine – who is the head of a major brand – said to me, "we don't have relationship executives – we have order takers." Well, that's not the same thing! I'm in the relationship business and the people that I entertain and invite to our events are sophisticated people that by and large are not new money. Well, some of them are because they've made a lot of money from block chain and bit coin and we're in that market, so there are always new opportunities. But many of them are educated people who already have a yacht and a plane and a collection of



cars, but they're interested in new things. Last night, I was on the biggest boat in the harbour and organised a private dinner with some really amazing people and one of them texted me this morning to say, "I've got to buy this boat!"



Image courtesy of Tom Wheatley

## HOW DO PEOPLE FIND YOU?

They look me up. Funnily enough, I had someone randomly calling me from New York the other day who's the head of a big brand, and he had been told he had to meet me because he'd been to one of our events, so he had his secretary call me. People just know us, as we have such a big network of people now around the world. Someone will say, "I'm going to Monaco," and someone will say to them, "oh, you have to call Nicholas; he'll either know what's going on or he's hosting the best thing that's going on." The Grand Prix, of course, is a real challenge because it's obviously very popular and everyone seems to have a friend of a friend who *must* come to the party on the Friday night!

## NETWORKING CLUBS SEEM TO BE OPENING UP ALL THE TIME, SO WHY DOES YOURS STAND OUT FROM THE REST?



We're not a club; there's no membership fee. It's invitation only. You're either invited or you're not. It's not a snobby thing but we are very good at putting people together who we know are going to have synergy. I guess that's our little magic sauce. It makes a big difference when we host our events, whether they happen to be 20-person dinners or 120-person yacht receptions and charity events. Certainly for the dinners, I know all the guests because I invite all of them and for the yacht parties, I know 80% of the attendees. It's quite rare to go to a large-scale event aboard a yacht and someone knows 80% of the guests. That means they can actually connect people, and there's also a point of connection for the guests. How do you know Nicholas and Annabelle? We met in St Barts, we met in Pebble Beach, we met in Hong Kong, we met in Miami, we met on the yacht in Monaco. Oh, you were in Monaco? I was in Monaco! Oh, you were in St Barts? I have a house in St Barts! It's a very different thing and for those individuals, it's a substantial difference from what they're used to with brand parties, which are usually a discombobulated group of random people who have been randomly invited by 25 different assistants, and everyone's standing around wondering who's who. But there might be someone an arm shake away that you would want to meet but you never will because no-one's going to introduce you.

## WHAT ARE THE PARTNERSHIPS THAT STAND OUT TO YOU? YOU MENTIONED ASTRONAUTS AND SPACE?

Well, space is literally out of this world! *[Laughs]* We've had hundreds of partners over the years. We've got long-standing relationships with private banks that we've had going on nearly a decade. We've worked with private aviation, with Bombardier – we worked with them for nearly a decade. We launched Whispering Angel 13 years ago and it's now the world's number one rose. We launched them here in Monaco. We did the first events and the first publicity and got them into the Beverley Hills Hotel and Soho House and various other places. When I told the Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles that they needed Whispering Angel, they said they'd never heard of it. So I said, "your rose's crap and you need Whispering Angel; it's going to be the biggest seller on your list." *[Laughs]* It's now the biggest seller on their list! But they've been with us for more than a decade. So we like establishing real genuine friendships and great business relationships that work for everybody.



# YOU MUST SEE A REAL MIX, WITH NEW ENTREPRENEURS ALONGSIDE BUSINESSES THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR YEARS?

It's a complete mixture. We did the first block chain Monaco Grand Prix event two years ago. We had 65 of the world's leading block chain entrepreneurs, we had three superyachts and we had Bob Sinclar playing on the helipad of the *Legend* yacht and it was just amazing. Billion dollar individuals who'd made a vast fortune in block chain in just a few years – bitcoin, ethereum, eos, all these amazing currencies – they all said, “wow, this is the coolest block chain event we've ever been to,” and they're a pretty interesting group of people to say that!



Image courtesy of Geoff Brooks

## SO THIS IS YOUR PASSION?

Yes, my passion is connecting great people together and then you see the magic that comes out of that. Everything from marriage, babies, obviously business relationships, yacht deals, car deals, plane deals, land deals, house deals, distribution deals, you name it. When you put people together like these people, things happen. Magic happens. We've had marriages and babies as a direct result of my yacht parties. It's like an extended family.



## WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

We've just had a meeting with our friends at the Singapore Yacht Show. We've always wanted to do something at the Singapore Yacht Show, and I think it's a great opportunity for the right brand to capture that market. South East Asia is still a booming market. We've done Hong Kong a couple of times now, with Art Basel Hong Kong. We're going to do the Super Bowl next year. The city of Miami came to us and asked us to create something special for the Super Bowl for February next year. That's something new and innovative and cool – bringing our brand to the Super Bowl, which is a different type of experience to the superyacht experience. So we're constantly innovating. We're connected with astronauts and Axiom Space. It's a very unique offer, to be one of the world's first civilians in space. For the first time in human history, in 3 billion years, we have the chance in 3 months – that's 3 months, not 30 years of a career – to go to space as a private individual, to be launched to go to the International Space Station. That is a 100 billion dollar project and you are going to spend 50 million dollars doing it. So it's not actually that difficult to think about. It's pretty extraordinary. We'll change your life – and there's not many things that'll change your life like going to space. And we've already got clients signed up.

## TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CHARITY WORK?

For many years, we've worked with a number of great charity partners. We've just had a meeting with YachtAid Global, which is a fantastic charity working with superyacht owners for emergency relief in areas hit by hurricanes. They've been doing it for many years, but they're really becoming a much higher profile charity now. They sent superyachts in as the first responders in the Bahamas in the Abacos. That came to our attention because we love the Bahamas. We then started promoting them to our yacht owners in Monaco to try and generate some support. We also work with the Blue Angels Foundation, which is a foundation for veterans who are retired or suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Here in Monaco, we work with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, and we work with a lot of other great charities too.

*For further information about My Yacht Group, visit [www.myyachtgroup.com](http://www.myyachtgroup.com).*