



Hampshire I



CECIL WRIGHT & PARTNERS(3)

Broker

Q&A

Chris Cecil-Wright talks business

BY LAURA ROSE NICHOLLS

After 17 years at Edmiston, Chris Cecil-Wright took a leap of faith and left to run his own brokerage house to look after a small number of special boats and select clients. As the show season gets underway, Chris and his team are hoping to continue their trend of selling a boat at every Monaco Yacht Show. With three berths booked in preparation, along with his positive attitude and wealth of knowledge, he may well get lucky. In the meantime, over a cup of coffee on *New Hampshire*, Chris gives a fascinating insight into the business from the eyes and mind of one of the superyacht industry's most influential and successful yacht brokers.

Having branched out on your own and founding Cecil Wright in 2013, has your method of working changed? Do you have any particular tactics when it comes to dealing with clients? The way I do business is that I meet the client and I take the time to build a relationship with them as that is the driver for good business. When you have a good bond with someone

you can have frank discussions and, most importantly, you get to know their idea of value, size and quality. That's my tactic: to know my clients well! It is also why I don't have very many clients as I like to keep them to a minimum and look after them properly.

How do you think Cecil Wright stands out?

I don't think we do stand out, I just think we do what we do well! There's a whole big market out here with thousands of boats to choose from so you can't know everything. The way I add value to a relationship by knowing the history of the boats, which is why I focus on Feadships because I like the product and about their boats. When I deliver this information to a new owner it is good value to them.

What would your best advice be to a new owner wanting to get into the industry?

Personally if I was a new owner coming into the industry I would try to find the support of someone who spoke my language and understood who I was. Someone who bothered to make a relationship with me and didn't just send me a list of big white boats and ask me to choose. I would be having coffee at various brokerage companies and look the broker in the eye and ask myself: "Do I like this person? Because I am going to be spending the next year or two with them!"

Refit is often the best option for first-time buyers as it is likely that they have already chartered and explored the second-hand market. There's no point in building your own boat until you've spent some time on one because you won't know what you really want. That said, however, I have sold quite a few 80m+ new-builds to first-time buyers. I think the 60-metre market is very adaptable to suit any taste: For example, *Hampshire I* had dark blue carpets, dark wood and gold accents, but now she is looking very contemporary. A nostalgic boat doesn't necessarily mean a lack of modern amenities on board! There is definitely part of the market that like this style, but that's what I love about our industry so much: every owner is different with different ideas and wants something different out of yachting. It's a passion!

The refit work on New Hampshire came to around €8,000,000 over the course of 18 months, what is your opinion on the current refit market?

The refit market is a big question because boats are always being refitted and the scope is so huge. I think brokers are able to add value to a transaction by knowing the history of the boat leading up to its acquisition and can guide an owner through what needs to be done on the boat to make it how they want it with sensible expenditure. Some people are just after the biggest boat for the best price so they don't mind if it is a bit rough and ready; other people want absolute precision, perfection. But boats are never perfect - even when they come out of the shipyard: *New Hampshire* is a classic example.

You are very open about your passion for Feadship. What is it about Feadship you like so much?

I have worked on so many boats there now and have built strong relationships. If you went to Feadship to buy a boat it would be different than if you came to me and we both went to Feadship. Feadship needs to make a profit, whereas my job is to get the best possible deal, contract, terms, price and specification that I possibly can. For me, the Feadship DNA has always been in the ultimate finish and in the quality that is put into the details. Just as one example, you have the teak on a Feadship: if you run your toe over the deck there is a very small camber around the edge so water doesn't collect - no other boat has that! There are just a million things like that on a Feadship that just make them special.

Having been in the industry for nearly 25 years, have you seen a shift in the clientele?

In the last year, no. But in the last 10 or 20 years I have noticed an increase in female owners! Also, America took a bit of a back seat when the Russians were in town but that market is back in force now. Unsurprisingly, Asia is becoming more prominent. I couldn't comment on anybody's style or taste because when you think what sort of money these people have, they are so unique on this planet. It's an extraordinary business!

What if you don't agree with your clients' ideas?

These days I don't disagree. In the old days, I used to sell whatever anybody wanted, now I find my reputation is more important than just doing any deal. I can and have said I am happy to point people in the right direction but I won't be involved - I have the experience to know that it will come back to bite you and one disgruntled client is not worth it!

What are your expectations or predictions for the future, both in the industry and for Cecil Wright & Partners?

Having just sold *Hampshire I*, I predict we will find a buyer for *New Hampshire*. I really want to find a buyer in-house to keep them in my fleet and release them out to the charter market which is somewhere they both haven't been for a long time. They're both immaculate and we've had a lot of interest from realistic sellers. I sold a 66-metre Feadship to the owner of *Hampshire I*, and the owner of *New Hampshire I* bought an Abeking 81-metre, so they have both got their new boats already!

I'd like to see the Cecil-Wright charter department grow, especially as we will add the recently sold *Arience* to the charter market very soon. I see a lot of charter businesses just going through the motions and I think we can provide more of a personal service.

Do you have a particular career highlight, and a challenge?

I enjoyed doing *Madame Gu* as I introduced the designer, put the build contract together, went all the way through the build and delivered it. It was fun! We are still very good friends with the captain and the team. I delivered *Sherpa* which was a big highlight and an extraordinary process. We started off building a shadow boat and ended up with an explorer!

Leaving Edmiston was an emotional challenge. Despite the industry not having changed much in the last 25 years, every day is still a challenge! The reasons people have boats are the same, but there are a lot more shipyards and brokers even though what we are all trying to do is the same. The volume of the industry has gotten bigger which means there are more careers for people.



New Hampshire and Hampshire I cruising

What would be your money-no-object project?

That's like saying what's your favourite pair of shoes! Your favourite shoes may not be practical for playing tennis or going to the farm. So if I wanted to go to St Tropez, the last thing I'd want is a 110-metre motor yacht, but if I want to explore Antarctica, I wouldn't have a 35-metre 100-year-old classic sailing yacht. There are 100 boats I would love to own and I have around 10 boats as it is! They all have different jobs: I have a 12ft Scow that I race on a

Monday with my daughter, a J80 I race on Thursday with four other lads, a Nicholson 55 sailing yacht I take to holiday with my family, a 16ft Pram that I picnic on with my family along the coast and an 8.5-metre Scorpion Rib I take on the Solent as a means of transport. My perfect boat in the Med right now is probably a 45-metre classic restored Feadship - something like *Heavenly Daze* - lovely! I think one day I will buy it! She's the same age as me and people are calling it a classic! ♦

Advertisement

Nacre 62

A precious Pearl of the Sea



Nacre 62 m is a sleek, luminous yacht with every luxury imaginable. Its technological superiority is matched by the beauty of its hand-worked craftsmanship, including exquisite inlays of lustrous nacre throughout the interior.

Layers of elegant opulence to create your own pearl of the sea.

Exterior Design Hot Lab Hull Design Van Oossanen Naval Architects

sarpyachts.com |  [sarpyachts](#)



SARPYACHTS

The Quality Life Deserves