

# Survey of the Opinions of Crews Regarding Cruising Yachts wintering 2004 – 2005 in Porto di Roma, Italy

## Executive Summary

**Background:** There were approximately 35 cruising yachts that spent the winter of 2004 – 2005 at Porto Touristica di Roma. The marina is in the town of Ostia Lido near the mouth of the River Tiber, and approximately 30 kilometers from Roma. Between September and March, the number of live-aboard crews varied widely with many visiting home countries over the extended holiday period. The cruising yachts include but are not limited to Australian, British, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, South African, Spanish, Swedish, United States and Venezuelan flags.

**Purpose:** It was noted by visiting yachtsmen and women that conditions in Porto di Roma and the surrounding area had deteriorated over the past year or two. With that in mind, several cruisers decided to create a questionnaire to survey interested cruisers about their experience over the winter in Porto di Roma. The results shall be shared with the worldwide cruising community and the management of the marina. Hopefully this process will continue annually.

**Summary:** Crews from nineteen of the yachts returned their survey questionnaires. The summary is based on the data and information provided on the survey forms. For purposes of evaluating the survey results, an arbitrary scoring system was established: 4.5 – 5.0 Highest Quality, 3.5 – 4.5 Good Quality, 2.5 – 3.5 Acceptable Quality, 1.5 – 2.5 Poor Quality, less than 1.5 Unacceptable Quality.

- **Marine Facilities:** There was near unanimous consensus that the physical docks, pontoons, mooring rings, bollards, mooring chains, lines and related systems are safe and met their requirements. As one cruiser noted, the facilities were subjected to sustained winds of up to 50 knots during a winter storm. That provides a numerical score of 4.8, Highest Quality. Likewise, the survey indicated that Electricity and Water utilities on the docks rated a very high 4.9 and 4.8 rating also Highest Quality. Comfort of living onboard the docks was rated a 3.9 or Good Quality owing to the effect of some surge entering the marina during on-shore winds. Boats on exposed positions on some pontoons experienced surge effects differently. Safety equipment such as ladders on the pontoon, firefighting equipment, life rings and the like was rated a 3.4, Acceptable Quality with the important note that there are inadequate ladders for recovery of people who may fall into the water. One cruiser noted that the rescue of an elderly passerby on the pontoon had to be effected using a yacht's boarding ladder. Dock Services performed by the staff mariners in the control tower, the pilot boats and on the docks was rated a 3.7 or Good Quality, although it was noted that at night time there is no visible patrol of the docks during storm conditions. Only one yacht had used the diver service at survey time. It rated service as mostly good but very expensive.

- **Security System:** There was an overall consensus that the security system at Porto di Roma is poor to unacceptable for yachtsmen and women and significant improvement is required. One respondent likened the security at Porto di Roma to that at any public city wharf. The physical security equipment was rated overall a 1.6, Poor Quality and the security services was rated a 1.4, Unacceptable Quality. The entire facility is open to the public day and night for shopping at the many boutiques or dining at a number of restaurants. The marina is very popular with Romans who enjoy the premises for their traditional “passeggiata”, or weekend and evening strolls. There are no effective barriers to limit access to the marina proper or the pontoons. The sanitary facilities are shared with the public. There have been incursions by vagrants into the interior shower facilities, and indecent conduct by local youth in the ladies shower rooms. The sanitary block continues to be vandalized including stealing of toilet seats, shower heads and frequent incidents of graffiti. There have been repetitive thefts of bicycles from residents including some boarding of boats day and night by local youth. Marina management has not implemented measures, twice promised to rectify the security issues.
- **Sanitary and Laundry Facilities:** Even though there was a general consensus that the structure of the sanitary blocks are Good Quality, 4.0; the conditions of the shower facility and toilets were rated 2.59 and 2.47 marginally acceptable to Poor Quality. A lack of heat during winter, inadequate dressing areas, poor maintenance and servicing of toilets contributed to the lower scoring. The laundry facilities are located in the shower rooms, with only a single working dryer to serve the entire marina. The dryer is in a women’s shower room which makes it unavailable to male yachtsmen. The laundry facility received a grade of 3.3, acceptable quality.
- **Quality of Life:** The lack of a meeting and recreation room for the cruising community in the marina received a 2.1 or Poor Quality rating. This issue was to some degree offset by the owners and operators of the Food’s Planet restaurant on site who graciously shared some of their business space for cruisers to meet informally from time to time. The new, as yet not fully operational Roma Yacht Club received a 3.1 or acceptable quality rating. Although it is a fine facility, it remains open generally only five days a week until six in the afternoon. The cost is beyond the means of some of the cruising community so to some degree it divided, rather than unified the cruising community.
- **Office and Business Services:** Overall the office staff got an overall rating of 3.8 or Good Quality. It was noted that the handling of mail in the office could be done more carefully and the cruisers would appreciate it if the office staff would be more outgoing in offering their knowledge and advice for new arrivals. Nevertheless, there was a general consensus that the office staff always performed in a professional and courteous manner.
- **Overall Evaluation:** In response to the final question whether the cruisers would want to return to Porto di Roma for another year or would recommend the marina to fellow cruisers, the overall result was a rating of 2.5, poor to acceptable quality. There was consensus that the primary attraction of this marina is the location near Roma and the access to local bus, train and international air transportation.

Opinions about the marina varied across the board. While Porto di Roma may again be a world class marina, many issues need to be addressed. It was clear that the negative comments were primarily focused on the lack of security, the continuous vandalism, the poor maintenance and servicing of the sanitary blocks, and finally management's lack of attention to solve these issues

The details of the survey including quantitative data on the answers to each question, the importance cruisers placed on the questions and the individual comments written by the respondents are attached. There is much more information here than is included in the executive summary. A review of the data detailing the use of on-site or off-site marine services may shed some light on additional business opportunities. There was little use of the on-site haul out facility and yard this winter. At the time of the survey, only one boat used the haul out service on site. Even though only a few responded to the question, the on site chandlery got very good marks and comments. Cruisers were able to take care of their needs for refilling cooking gas tanks, and get canvass work done. We trust this information will be of use to the management of the marina and our fellow cruisers who will visit Rome and this facility in the future.

These results have been reviewed and are believed to be a fair and reasonable representation of the survey by the following full time cruising members of the Seven Seas Cruising Association

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