

# From Tender to Chase Boat

By **Enrico Chhibber**



Superyachts have long relied on tenders to support the needs of owners and guests, performing tasks that the main vessel cannot easily accommodate. Over the past decade, these boats have undergone a marked evolution in both size and functionality, giving rise to a distinct new category: the chase boat.

## The difference between a tender and a chase boat

"Tenders are typically used for short transfers or support tasks and are stored onboard the mothership, whereas a chase boat is a standalone vessel that acts as an extension of the mothership," explains Marco Rossetti, Executive Director of Sales, Marketing and Business Development at Italian boat-builder Anvera.

Unlike tenders, which must be launched and recovered and often occupy valuable space, chase boats can travel independently or be towed, offering significantly greater flexibility. They serve as multifunctional platforms, enabling owners and captains to meet operational needs and enhance guest experience without compromising layout or functionality of the main yacht. As service expectations onboard superyachts continue to rise, so does the demand for additional crew. With many yachts constrained by limited accommodation, chase boats can provide a valuable extension of crew space, helping to maintain high service standards while relieving pressure on the mothership. Building on this, Alex Treleani, Managing Partner at Supertenders Monaco, explains: "Some chase boats are towed, while others navigate alongside. But in

the end, the term 'chase boat' comes from that it follows the main yacht. It is no longer really a tender, since it cannot be stored on deck."

## What is fuelling the shift to chase boats

The transition from traditional tenders to chase boats reflects shifting priorities in both the charter and ownership sectors, alongside regulatory changes that have influenced operational flexibility, guest comfort and space optimisation.

Treleani explains that guests onboard superyacht charters have become increasingly demanding, particularly when it comes to comfort. "Clients have paid for the experience and want to optimise their time, often choosing to reach the next port more quickly while the mothership takes additional time to arrive, dock and prepare."

The demand for chase boats in the charter market continues to grow, Treleani adds. "During a MYBA meeting three or so years ago, there was a request that Yachtfolio include a search engine specification on whether a yacht has a chase boat, saving clients and brokers a lot of time. The idea was that, just as you can filter on the number of cabins or cruising area, you can also filter on chase boats."

Treleani underlines the appeal for private owners, too, many of whom began their yachting journey on smaller craft they could pilot themselves. "Years ago, they might have owned a 15, 21, or 24-metre yacht that they could drive. Now, with a 60 or 70-metre yacht and a crew of 18, they can no longer take the helm and have lost some of their direct connection with the sea. Many rediscover that

pleasure through a chase boat which they can operate themselves."

With marinas becoming increasingly crowded, Treleani points to destinations such as Saint-Tropez, where "80 percent of superyachts are anchored offshore," and notes that clients are no longer satisfied being ferried ashore in small inflatables that leave them wet and uncomfortable.

Richard Faulkner, CEO of Compass Tenders, reinforces this point, highlighting how tenders have evolved. "Tenders have developed from small Boston Whalers into RIBs, but those boats are inherently exposed to weather conditions. If there is any chop, you are going to get wet, which is not high on the list of priorities. Comfort is paramount."

While limousine tenders once offered a more refined option, Treleani argues that the concept no longer meets the expectations of today's clients. "You are enclosed inside and cannot see out," adding that this has contributed to increasing demand for chase boats. Owners and guests now favour larger, more versatile tenders that deliver an enhanced on-water experience without compromising visibility or space.

Privacy has also emerged as a key driver of demand. Treleani notes that many guests prefer swimming closer to shore, where the water is shallower and clearer. In the past, a small tender might be used for a quick dip, but the tender offered no amenities. By contrast, a chase boat allows guests to anchor in three or four metres of water, where they can unwind for hours at a time. The

chase boat becomes an extension of the superyacht experience, offering comfort and discretion closer to shore.

Rossetti adds that regulatory restrictions on where superyachts can cruise, along with anchorage limitations, have further encouraged owners to acquire chase boats. "There's a growing trend, centred largely on the Côte d'Azur, but is rapidly spreading throughout the Mediterranean. This shift is creating more opportunities with chase boats: Owners can now travel more swiftly and comfortably to destinations that the superyacht can't reach."

## Will they continue to get bigger?

Both Rossetti and Treleani believe that the popularity of chase boats will continue to rise, although they stress that growth in size is likely to stagnate. Rossetti explains: "At the moment we build between 12-20-metres, as there is a 20-metre restriction. From what I see, chase boats will be an increasingly important trend."

Treleani takes a similar view. "A chase boat is unlikely to go much beyond that, although anything is possible. By definition, a chase boat can be almost anything, but a true chase boat that could be towed, has an upper limit of 20-metres. Our target is usually 16 to 17-metres. Beyond that, it becomes difficult."

The evolution of tenders to chase boats reflects a broader shift in how owners and guests use the water, placing greater value on comfort, privacy and versatility. Looking ahead, chase boats are set to remain central to the superyacht experience. ●

