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A market that breaks with the seasonality of leisure sailing and is one of the main drivers of the nautical sector

The charter market is growing three times as much as the general pleasure boat market

- Hiring a boat for sailing is establishing itself as a leisure trend in Spain. The charter market accounts for 26% of all the pleasure craft registered in 2016, and by September 2017 the figure had reached 31%.
 - Yachts, followed by speedboats and motorboats, are the most frequently hired craft and there has also been a notable increase in the hire of boats that can be operated without any kind of qualifications (up to 6 metres long and 15 hp).
 - The number of charter boats in Spain currently surpasses more than double the fleet in 2015.
 - The Balearic Islands are the Autonomous Community where there is the most charter activity. They account for 57% of the fleet of boats available for hire and are the most popular destination among users.
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Barcelona, 11th October 2017.- For the third year running, [Nautal](#) has analysed the current situation of the nautical charter sector (pleasure boat hire). Its report on the 2017 season focuses on the charter industry in Spain.

The robust performance of the nautical charter sector is borne out by the fact that, in 2016, 26% of the total number of pleasure craft registered in Spain were used for charter purposes, rising to 31% in September 2017 (according to data supplied by the National Association for Nautical Enterprises [ANEN]). To this we must add another important factor in the development of the nautical sector as a whole: charters are no longer seasonally adjusted and are gaining ground as a leisure activity. This reduction in seasonality is having a greater impact on larger craft (catamarans) and longer boats. In June and July 2017, there were more rental reservations for these types of craft than in previous seasons. The month of August saw the highest number of rentals.

The increasing popularity of charters is also reflected in the renewal of the fleet of boats used for hire. There are currently more hire boats built in 2016 than in 2007 and 2008 and 34% of the fleet was built less than five years ago, with the average lifespan of a boat estimated at eight years.

Another important piece of data concerns the growth in online searches for “Boat hire”, which certainly reflects the fact that on-line shopping for nautical products and services is growing in line with new consumer habits, particularly in the charter sector.

Business X-ray of the nautical charter sector

The business structure of the nautical charter sector consists of small businesses, most of them with a fleet of up to five boats, which is the limit the law allows to operate without having to recruit an external crew. Only 2.4% of companies have more than 20 boats, but these run 22% of the charter fleet in Spain.



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The highest percentage of charter companies offer a hire option with or without a skipper, followed by those that only hire out unskipped vessels. The lowest percentage of companies only provide skippered boats due to the size of the vessels, or because they are the skipper's main source of employment.

Which are the most frequently hired boats?

Sailing boats are the most popular and represent 36% of rental operations. The main reason for this is the rental price which is more affordable and is determined by the purchase price of the boat by the ship owner or charter company.

Sailing boats up to 12 metres long are the most in demand at www.nautal.es, and this is mainly due to economic reasons. The average rate to hire a sailing boat for a week in low season is 2,500€, whereas a catamaran costs 5,000€. The higher rate in the catamaran sector is due to their greater size, the comfort of the interior, seaworthiness, and the stability of the vessel, among other factors.

Speedboats and motorboats rank second, representing 27% of the demand. They are followed by yachts (310 of them hired in 2017) and catamarans (252).

Particularly significant is the increasing popularity of semi-rigid craft and boats that do not require any qualifications to operate them (up to 6 metres long and 15 hp). Although this sector is less profitable because it offers a lower operating margin, it does bring added value to the business as a whole as these boats provide an introduction to sailing for many users.

If we look at the brands, Beneteau tops the rankings in the sailing boat, motorboat and speedboat categories available for hire. Lagoons are most frequently hired catamarans. Sunseeker leads the yacht market and Zodiacs are the most popular semi-rigid craft.

The Balearic Islands, the mecca of nautical charters

The Balearic Islands remain the mecca for nautical charters as they are home to 57% of the pleasure craft available for hire. According to Nautal, most charter activity takes place in the port of Palma and the port of Ibiza. In Catalonia, Girona has seen a major increase in its charter fleet over the past two years.

Based on user preference, the Balearic Islands are the most sought after destination on-line, and, within the Balearic Islands, Ibiza tops the ranking, although this year Menorca has risen significantly and received the same number of on-line searches as Ibiza. Mallorca ranked third. On the peninsula, Barcelona is the most sought-after destination, followed by Denia, Alicante, Valencia and Costa Brava.

For further information:

Mar Lucena | Carmen Herrero

Comunicación NAUTAL

mar.lucena@thebestofpr.es | carmen.herrero@thebestofpr.es

620852004 | 655840443

www.nautal.es

