



AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE
OF MARINE SURVEYORS

Shipshape

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**WORLD'S LARGEST BATTERY-ELECTRIC SHIP
POWERS UP IN TASMANIA**

A mission in the Med: surveying a 31-metre CDM explorer yacht in Sardinia



IN the superyacht sector, trust is as vital as hull integrity. When an Australian client engaged RTM to conduct a full pre-purchase survey on a 31-metre Cantiere Delle Marche (CDM) explorer yacht in Sardinia, our task was clear: deliver independent, professional due diligence to support a multimillion-dollar acquisition.

Setting the scope

After 32 hours of travel from Brisbane, Renee and I arrived in Olbia, Sardinia, ready to begin. This was not a travel assignment; it was a technical mission involving a 240-tonne steel and aluminium vessel powered by twin Caterpillars.

Before stepping aboard, we reviewed construction specifications, maintenance records, and operational history to establish a structured survey plan tailored to the client's priorities and the vessel's intended operational profile.

By engaging RTM, our clients relied on trusted local expertise rather than unfamiliar fly-in surveyors. This ensures consistency, independence and a clear chain of accountability, which is essential when representing owners in international transactions.

Day One: initial assessment

The American crew provided excellent cooperation as we commenced the onboard inspection. Renee focused on interior presentation,

finish quality, and guest-area functionality and services, while I examined structural integrity, propulsion systems, and ancillary equipment.

CDM's reputation for robust engineering was evident but, as every surveyor knows, value lies in the detail. We assessed machinery, propulsion, ancillary systems, electrical distribution and hydraulic systems, verifying that the vessel's systems matched both the documentation and the owner's intended use.

Day Two: out-of-water inspection

The haul-out at Olbia shipyard provided full access to the underwater body. Watching a 240-tonne explorer yacht lifted clear of the water is always impressive – but the real work begins once the hull is safely cradled.

Our inspection covered:

- plating condition and coating performance;
- appendages, shafts, bearings and seals;
- rudder assemblies and steering gear;
- thruster tunnels;
- skin fittings and penetrations; and
- evidence of grounding or impact.

For steel vessels, early detection of corrosion or coating failure is critical. The shipyard's facilities and cooperation allowed us to complete a thorough assessment.

Day Three: sea trials

A six-hour sea trial along Sardinia's coastline allowed us to evaluate the vessel across a full operational profile. We monitored engine performance, vibration levels, steering response, stabiliser behaviour, generator load handling and creature comforts under realistic demand.

At anchor later that evening, we continued testing into the night, validating redundancy, automation and system integration. By midnight, our findings were compiled into a formal report, and reviewed onboard with our client and the owner's representative.

This immediate, transparent communication enabled timely, informed decision-making regarding negotiation and future operational planning.

Day Four: finalisation and departure

After a final review and handover, we began the long journey home. Assignments like this reinforce the importance of independent surveying in global yacht acquisitions.

Beyond the technical work, our role is to provide clarity, ensuring every vessel purchased is safe, compliant, and represents genuine value for the owner.

Rod Twitchin
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AIMS member