FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gowrie Group Official Insurance Sponsor of the 2020
USVI Charter Yacht Show Set for November 12-15

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Gowrie Group, a nationally-focused, leading marine insurance agency that manages the comprehensive health insurance and yacht insurance programs offered to active members of the Virgin Island Professional Charter Association (VIPCA), has been named by VIPCA as the official insurance supplier of the USVI Charter Yacht Show for the fourth year in a row. The 2020 Show, set for November 12-15, at IGY’s Yacht Haven Grande, will offer in-person and virtual elements all with COVID-19 Safety Protocols designed to assure the well-being of attendees and island residents alike.

“Gowrie Group, a Division of Risk Strategies, is extremely proud to sponsor the 2020 USVI Charter Yacht Show,” says Rick Bagnall, senior vice president of Gowrie Group. “We are excited to announce a major change to the health insurance for active VIPCA members starting January 1, 2021. CIGNA, one of the largest U.S. carriers, will be the new group carrier for VIPCA’s group health insurance. The new plan is not only more robust and comprehensive, but we expect to also see a decrease in the current rates. Health insurance is extremely important for those working in and around the marine industry. If you need medical assistance when in the Caribbean, you often will find yourself transported to the mainland U.S. medical system. Having a plan that provides access to providers worldwide is extremely important, along with having coverage for medical transport and/or medical evacuation.”

Gowrie Group offers two key products to active VIPCA members. One is the Health Insurance Program and the second is the Yacht/Fleet Insurance Program, both managed by the insurance experts at Gowrie. One new trend Gowrie is seeing in the Health Insurance market is a significantly increased demand for Travel Insurance and Travel Medical Plans, says Bagnall. Bagnall advises that yacht
charter brokers inform their charter clients about the various insurance options that are available to them. Gowrie has multiple options for this coverage and can assist charter clients in the selection process.

The Yacht Insurance market has also been evolving rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many insurance carriers have exited the marine insurance market, including some of the primary Caribbean focused options. Mark Gargula, Gowrie Group’s VIPCA Yacht Insurance Specialist, has been proactively working with his yacht clients to review their policies and optimize their coverage for premium savings and to align with their current usage, given the COVID-19 environment and cruising restrictions. Gargula expects the Yacht Insurance market to continue to evolve and go in new directions through the end of 2020 and deep into 2021. These changes open opportunities for yacht owners to work with Gowrie Group to secure the best coverage possible.

Gowrie Group will feature a Virtual Presentation on November 13 at Noon (Atlantic Standard Time: UTC–04:00) The title is: ‘Understand Your Options: Crew Health Insurance, Yacht Insurance, and Cancel for Any Reason Travel Insurance’.

“Gowrie Group has been a steadfast partner with VIPCA through thick and thin, insuring our member yachts through hurricanes, and insuring our member crews through viral pandemics,” says Oriel Blake, VIPCA’s executive director.

For more information and to contact the Gowrie Group, visit: https://vipca.org/crew-insurance/ and https://vipca.org/yacht-insurance/

2020 USVI Charter Yacht Show Offers the Best of Both Worlds – In-Person & Online

The U.S. Virgin Islands is a key Caribbean cruising ground that, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, has re-opened to visitors both on land and sea, including for crewed yacht and day charters. Hence, VIPCA is indeed hosting a live 2020 USVI Charter Yacht Show and doing so with rigorous COVID-19 safety protocols. For the full text of the protocols, please visit https://vipca.org/covid-19-safety-protocols/. However, to accommodate brokers unable to attend in person, organizers are adding a virtual element. It’s the best of both worlds approach to showcase the U.S. Virgin Islands-based boutique charter yacht fleet to the widest possible audience and assure a successful upcoming season.

In-Person – Top Yachts at the Docks

Over 50 yachts are registered to exhibit at IGY’s Yacht Haven Grande marina for the USVI Charter Yacht Show, with an anticipation of 60 yachts to be registered to exhibit by November. The show fleet, which collectively averages 55-foot LOA, includes a diverse mix of vessels: sailing monohulls and catamarans up to 80-feet and longer and motor yachts in the 80- to 120-foot range. To register, visit: https://vipca.org/vessel-registration/
Superyacht Marina of the Year for the third time, is Valere, Elite and Outta Touch.

Stylish and modern, the Azimut 84, Valere, offers four staterooms; al fresco dining on the aft deck, flybridge and bow; luxurious sunbeds on the bow; and a retractable sunroof on the flybridge. The 92-foot Sunseeker, Elite, is a 4-stateroom yacht notable for its huge main salon windows with aft deck doors that open completely to bring the outdoor dining area and bar inside; a spacious flybridge equipped with a wet bar, BBQ grill and brand new hot tub, and water toys including two Seabobs, wakeboard, and large floating mats. Outta Touch is a 105' Intermarine Savannah, with beautiful gloss wood finishes and bright interior that provide classic elegance, an intimate ‘in-kitchen’ dining table to watch the chef work their magic, and a Jacuzzi on the flybridge with sunbeds for lounging. These three yachts are represented by Bluewater Yachting and new to the charter market.

Over 150 individual charter brokers from the Caribbean, U.S. and Europe attended the 2019 USVI Charter Yacht Show, and with this year’s new online element, more still are expected to virtually attend. The Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands effective November 9 will allow mass gatherings of up to 100 people indoors and outdoors. Therefore, physical charter broker attendance will be capped at 100 this year, so anyone considering attending in-person should register soon. Brokers can register to attend the show physically or virtually at https://vipca.org/charter-broker-registration/

“For us as charter managers, it's especially important to provide as much marketing assistance as possible to our owner clients and retail brokers with first-hand visits and crew interviews,” says Ami G. Ira, yacht sales and charter specialist for Bluewater Yachting, headquartered in Antibes, France, with eight offices in six countries. “Charter show participation shows that the owner is business-minded and serious about booking charters, instead of private yacht owners hoping to offset their tax liability by placing the yacht on the charter market with a freelance crew. Those owners rarely understand the charter agreements and the terms they're meant to respect in times of dispute, which results in unhappy clients and brokers, but it's impossible to tell who those owners are based solely on their online profiles. Likewise, rarely do freelance captains and crew
know the vessel like the back of their hand, so can't possibly deliver the same stellar experience that a permanent crew can. That's why we at Bluewater recommend our fleet yachts to participate and expect our retail brokers to attend to do their due diligence on behalf of our retail charter clients.”

Online – a Virtual Element to the Yacht Show

The virtual element of the 2020 USVI Charter Yacht Show will offer VIPCA broker members remote digital access to yacht tours, crew interviews and yacht show seminars with industry updates for the upcoming season upon payment of $50 for individual password access. The fee for non-VIPCA members is $100. Attending in-person is free to VIPCA-member brokers and is $100 for non-members. Register for in-person or virtual attendance at https://vipca.org/charter-broker-registration

Local companies have stepped up to assure a non-interrupted virtual charter yacht show experience.

“Viya is 100% committed with the U.S. Virgin Island and the boating community,” says Rolando Texidor, director of produce and enterprise sales for Viya, the largest telecommunications provider located in the USVI, providing a full suite of telecommunications and entertainment services. “For the show, we will be providing a state-of-the-art Wi-Fi connection backed up with our wireless LTE Network. The two combined will allow a transmission during the show regardless of the area. Inside buildings, outdoors and inside yachts, ‘no waters will be left uncharted’.

aLGLink, Ltd, a British Virgin Islands-based provider of marine Wi-Fi for charter fleets and private yachts, will also provide support to the Show.

“We are providing a dockside HotSpot service for guests to use,” says Jason Eitel, aLGLink owner.

At no extra cost to the yachts, VIPCA has arranged for The Pamlico Group, LLC, with offices in Florida and Connecticut, to film all registered yachts at IGY’s Yacht Haven Grande Marina during the show dates. Additionally, yachts can schedule Pamlico’s professionals to film virtual 360-degree photographic tours pre-or-post-show at extremely discounted rates. These tours show the yacht’s exterior and interior and can be viewed on a mobile device, computer, or using VR goggles. Exhibiting yachts can arrange their 360-degree virtual tour directly with the Pamlico Group by contacting Ted Norris: tnorris@pamlicogroup.com

Latest Show Update

The 2020 USVI Charter Yacht Show has moved away from group gatherings and events, and towards time focused on networking opportunities between the yacht crew and brokers with a restriction to four brokers per yacht at a time. In place of ashore events, both lunches and dinners will be hosted on board, whether catered by the yacht
chefs or by the show’s exclusive catering sponsor, Moe’s Fresh Market. All onboard dining will be organized through the clearinghouses with invitations extended directly to the in-person attending charter brokers.

Sponsors of the USVI Charter Yacht show include the USVI Department of Tourism; Yacht Haven Grande; IGY Marinas; Gowrie Group, a Division of Risk Strategies; Denison Yacht Sales; Offshore Marine; Northern Lights, distributed by Parts and Power; Moe’s Fresh Market; Grey Goose, distributed by West Indies Company; Veuve Clicquot and Captain Morgan, distributed by Bellows International; the Charter Yacht Broker Association; Cardow Jewelers; Harbor Shoppers; and, La Royale Cosmetics.

ABOUT VIPCA

VIPCA is the territory’s 501(c)(6) nonprofit marine association, whose purpose is to promote, protect and further the capabilities of charter yachts and the marine businesses that sustain them. Projects and initiatives VIPCA membership supports includes producing a marine directory of local information, technical advice and resources; improving Customs and Border Protection facilities; facilitating access for charter vessels between the USVI and Spanish Virgin Islands; compliance guidance; installation of territory-wide new transient moorings; and marine vocational training for V.I. youth under the organization’s charity fiscally sponsored by Community Foundation Virgin Islands (CFVI.net), the Marine Rebuild Fund.

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