
OVERVIEW:

This is Oyster's third crew salary survey since 2017 conducted across all crewed Oysters in the fleet. As most crew salary surveys available online are targeted to the wider Superyacht industry and motor yachts, they tend to lump together all yachts under 40m in one salary range. We hope that our specially targeted survey for Oyster yachts by model is far more relevant for you and will help to place both crews and yacht owners on a level playing field when it comes to those all-important salary negotiations.

We were very interested this year to see how salaries have changed following the pandemic and what the general outlook of owners and crews is now. As always we have to bear in mind that every yacht program is unique, every owner's requirements and ideas of pay differ greatly and every crew member brings a variety of skills and experience to the saloon table. At the end of this report, there is a clear list of considerations for owners and crews, when making or accepting offers.

This year's survey was sent out to 125 Oyster crew members across all Oyster Yachts. We received an 83% response rate from yachts between 55ft and 125ft. That was up from the last survey so thank you to all who participated. All responses were anonymous (no boat names or personal data included).

There were 10 salary related questions:

1. What Oyster model are you currently working on or have worked on within the last 18 months?
2. Is your yacht signed up for the Oyster World Rally?
3. What is/was your position on board?
4. How many professional crew does the yacht run with?
5. What type of contract do/did you have? Seasonal/Permanent/Temporary
6. Is/was your contract MLC compliant?
7. Did you receive a salary reduction or change of contract during COVID 19?
8. What is your basic monthly salary (please include currency)?
9. What added benefits or incentives do you receive on top of your salary? Eg. Charter Tips; Health insurance; Time off (4 weeks per year or different structure?); End of year bonus or other incenti...
10. What is your gender? Not a compulsory question but we ask it to measure the equality of paychecks between the different sexes in the same roles.

ACTUAL SURVEYED SALARY RANGES IN EUROS AND US DOLLARS

YACHT SIZE	POSITION	MONTHLY SALARIES IN US\$	MONTHLY SALARIES IN €EUROS
OYSTER 100+ (33m+)	Captain (YM Ocean/Master 200)	11,000+	9,500+
<i>Oyster 100 runs with 4 crew +2 for deliveries</i> <i>Mate is a Mate/Stew on Oyster 100</i> <i>Oyster 1225 and 125 runs with 6 crew</i>	1st Mate or Mate/Stew (YM min)	5500	4500 – 6000
	Engineer (MEOL min)	5000 - 6000	4000 – 5400
	Chef	6000 - 6500	4000 – 6500
	Stew/Chief Stew	3500	3000 – 3500
	2nd Stew/Deck	3500	2000 – 3500
OYSTER 885 (27m)	Captain/Engineer	<i>No data</i>	4500* – 7500
<i>Usually runs with 3 or 4 crew (rarely 2)</i> <i>If 3 crew, the 3rd is a usually a Mate/Stew combination</i>	Mate	<i>No data</i>	3500 – 4000
	Stew	<i>No data</i>	3000 – 3750
	Chef	<i>No data</i>	4500* – 5250
OYSTER 82 / 825 (25m)	Captain or Captain/Engineer	6500 - 8000	4250* – 7000
<i>Usually runs with 3 crew in a variety of roles</i>	Mate/Engineer or Deck/Stew	3500 - 4000	3000 - 5400
	Cook/Stew or Chef	3500 - 4500	3500 – 4250*
OYSTER 72/725/745 (23m)	Captain/Engineer	5000 - 7500	4500 - 5000
<i>Ideal for a permanent Crew Couple.</i> <i>Additional crew for charter/daywork.</i>	Cook or Chef/Deck/Stew	4500 - 5000	3000 – 4000
OYSTER 66/655/675 (20m)	Captain/Engineer	5500	3250* – 5000
<i>Runs with sole Captain/Engineer or a Couple</i> <i>Additional crew for charter and daywork</i>	Cook or Chef/Deck/Stew	4000	3250 - 3800
OYSTER 61/62/625 (19m)	Captain/Engineer	4000 - 6500 (10000*)	4000 – 5500
<i>Runs with sole Captain/Engineer or a couple team</i> <i>Additional crew for charters / daywork</i>	Cook/Deck/Stew or Chef/Mate	4000 - 6500	2100 - 3000
OYSTER 545/55/56/565/575/595 (18m)	Captain/Engineer	3250* - 5000	3800 – 4200
<i>Runs with sole Captain/Engineer or a Couple team</i>	Cook or Chef/Deck/Stew	3250* - 5000	2100 – 3000

NB:

a) The above chart reflects current salary ranges on the Oyster crews that have willingly provided this information. ie. There may be crews earning outside of these ranges.

b) The salary ranges display the most commonly used currencies (Euros € and US\$) and shows that in the US, salaries are generally higher than elsewhere. If there are any blank spaces, it shows that there was no data provided in that currency for that yacht model.

c) Sterling currencies were converted using the following rates: £1 = 1.2€=1.3US\$

c) At no stage of this survey process were any names of boats disclosed as all participants were completely anonymous.

d) * **Red Asterisk** signifies unusually high salary for the yacht size. There are several reasons for this: - longevity in the role and loyalty to the owner for over 5 years; a particularly generous owner; or the Captain is the Sole Captain with no other crew on board and perhaps has more day to day responsibilities.

***Black asterisk** signifies a Captain and Chef Couple team who have chosen to split the salary 50/50 so the Captain's salary may seem unreasonably low.

***Green asterisk** signifies lower than average pay.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

We discovered the following statistics and noticeable trends surrounding our current crews' employment.

- Overall salaries on Oysters have increased by 6% despite the pandemic having reduced many crew salaries during 2020. Captain's salaries saw a 7% increase, Chefs 5% and Deck/Stews 9% increases.
- 26% of crew surveyed were paid in US \$ / 39% were paid in Euros / 24% were paid in UK£.
- Use of MLC compliant¹ SEAs (Seafarer Employment Agreements) has risen from 27% in 2018 to 48% in 2021. Oyster owners are more aware of crew welfare and adhering to industry standards. Bear in mind that the US doesn't recognize the MLC certification.
- Majority of crews Employment Agreements included a standard 4 weeks leave, food allowance, health insurance, travel expenses included.
- Only one respondent had no kind of written contract in place – an improvement on the 6% without contracts in 2019.
- 16% of crews were receiving charter tips or gratuity from certain guests on private boats.
- 91% of crews had medical insurance covered by the owner.
- 16.3% of respondents receive an end of contract or end of year bonus.
- Since 2020, 22% of Captain placements on Oyster yachts were female. This is a step up from 10% in 2019. The number of female applicants for Captain's positions is continually increasing.
- Crew incentives are still working to keep crew's motivated and producing great results. Crews with very busy charter itineraries and demanding owner trips keep up the momentum when rewarded well for their hard work. The offers of annual bonuses and financial contribution towards crew training courses work well to keep crews on side and seem to be on the increase.
- Cook/Chefs' salaries see a huge variation range depending on whether the owner wants more casual home-cooking on his/her 80+ft yacht or a 5-star quality chef.
- US crews used to earning dollars or visiting crews to the US are still talking about the 1000 US\$ per foot Captain's charge. This information hasn't actually changed for the last 15 or more years and still seems to work as a rule of thumb on some vessels however there are many more considerations than one fee fits all, especially on such a variety of itineraries and job specs that are on board Oyster yachts.
- US crews or crew employed by US owners are still, in the main, earning higher salaries than European/UK crews
- Do crew earn more on private or charter Oysters? Despite popular thinking, it does not seem to make any difference to the core salary. However you have more opportunity to earn good tips on the charter yachts.
- Charter gratuities have risen to an average of 15% as US clients are now tipping up to 20% of the charter price.
- Looking at salaries for the different genders in the same role on the same model yacht (mainly Mates, Captains and Chefs), it remains equal in the Oyster world when you take into account previous experience, additional charter tips, annual bonuses and paid time off.

¹ MLC 2006 Compliance*:

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006) is an International Labour Organization convention established in 2006 providing a set of international standards for seafarers. It outlines seafarer's rights to decent conditions of living and working onboard including employment agreements, hours of work or rest, payment of wages, paid annual leave and repatriation. Oyster works within these MLC guidelines to ensure that crew are fully aware of their rights as a professional seafarer.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE MAKING OR ACCEPTING AN OFFER:

1. **Previous experience** – The bottom end of the salary scale is geared towards crew with less experience on that particular size sailing yacht, less sea miles and minimum qualifications. The top end of the scale includes experienced/self sufficient crews with higher qualifications. Some unusually high salaries noted (with red asterisk) are not a starting salary but generally after several years of employment with the same owner. They can also simply show a generous owner who does not mind paying more than the market average!
2. **Time off and paid holidays** - The standard contractual offer is a 4 week holiday per year. Some yachts offer a reduced salary if the crew take more holiday time eg. if a boat is laid up for the winter.
3. **Annual bonus** – Sometimes a month's salary bonus and/or pay review at year end is part of the offer. There are yachts with an incredibly demanding schedule whose owners are very aware of the pressure that crew are under during the seasons and reward them accordingly for their hard work. In the case of the World Rally or circumnavigation, a clear, encouraging payment structure included in the initial agreement plus end of trip bonus is a great crew motivator and helps crews to commit.
4. **Medical Insurance** – With the MLC 2006 guidelines becoming a standard for more and more Seafarer Employment Agreements these days, it is usual for the employer to cover the crew's medical insurance whether the crew find their own or the employer provides it. NB. The US does not recognize MLC but nevertheless it is a good set of guidelines to follow when employing crew.
5. **Food Allowance** – It is usual for the employer to provide a food allowance for the crew. This is roughly around 15 - 20 Euros each per day but depends on the location of the yacht and local standard of living costs.
6. **Flight allowance** – Depending on where home is and location of yacht, many owners cover 1 or more return flights for crew per year.
7. **Car allowance** – If the yacht is based in a remote location some owners will pay for a rental car for boat related journeys.
8. **Further training courses** – As another crew incentive, and depending on itinerary, owners may allow time off for crew to update their sailing certificates, others will also pay for the cost of the training and flights to do the courses. Some owners may pay for further training (even if not applicable to their own yacht size) to keep their crews happy and progressing their careers.
9. **Itinerary** – Salaries can also be dependent on the itinerary of your yacht. An adventurous charter yacht that needs very experienced crew, the itinerary/required skillset may dictate higher salaries the average. Whereas a yacht that the owner uses twice a year and is taken out of the water for the winters will likely be a lesser salary for the crews and possibly only a seasonal role.
10. **Voluntary Crews** - Those yachts cruising to far flung places for round the world family adventures (eg. Oyster World Rally) or some yacht deliveries, tend to attract voluntary crews. These crews may be willing to work for expenses only and will muck in with the daily chores on board in return for the exciting sailing adventures. These range from lifelong leisure sailors who are retired from corporate lives to young, eager, green sailors looking for the experience and mileage with a view to a paid position after a few months. Depending on the yachts owner's own sailing abilities, will dictate the need for professional paid crew or volunteers. It is key to remember that accepting a voluntary crew on board, it can sometimes be harder to outline expectations of what work they must do. Much easier sometimes to employ the crew and have clear guidelines/rules!
11. **Charter Tips** - When negotiating the crew salary for a very busy private yacht, it is an idea to consider what crew would receive were it a busy charter yacht ie. Now the average is around 15% tip on each charter.
12. **Crew Management companies** – For an owner, using a crew management company really helps to take the pressure off potential crew/employer disputes, contract drafting, pay roll and up to date crew employment procedures. From the crew's perspective, they have peace of mind of a legal Employment Agreement, regular salary payments, a clear channel and procedure for any dispute that may arise - in short it is a secure employment structure that historically has been lacking in the yachting industry.