

Life After Yachting: From Yacht Chef To Crew Pages

Spending 11 years as a Yacht Chef, with 10 of those years spent onboard one vessel, Gracija Matijević has certainly experienced a successful career in the Yachting industry. He attributes this success partly to discipline and organisation, but also due to a clear exit strategy that allowed him to focus vehemently on the end goal of growing two successful businesses. Here, Matijević discusses the secret behind his longevity in the industry, the inspiration behind setting up [Crew Pages](#), the advice he would give to yacht crew who are considering their life after yachting, and the importance of helping the community around you.



How long did you work as crew? What was your role onboard and what yachts did you work on?

I worked as a chef for 11 years. I started onboard the 37m M/Y *Private Life*. One year later, I was offered a job on the 47m M/Y *Reve D'or*, where I worked for exactly 10 years. The yacht was based in my hometown, which gave me a great quality of life, but at the same time, it was a charter yacht, so it provided professional challenges and growth opportunities.

When did you leave the Superyacht industry, and what were your reasons for leaving?

It has been one year since I left the industry. The main reason I joined yachting was to support my family while my wife was growing our company, [A+ Yachting](#). The company has reached a stage that requires our full presence to further grow, and it was a time for me to leave.

Furthermore, a year before leaving the yacht, I started development of *Crew Pages* and it grew to the point where it required more of my time and focus.

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Prior to leaving, did you plan an exit strategy?

I always knew that yachting was just a phase in my life, so from day one, I invested in real estate properties and our company, A+ Yachting. Having a yacht based in my hometown gave me the opportunity to spend quiet winters working on other projects and creating passive income.

At the same time, my spouse and I always supported the yachting community in our area and helped many local people get into the yachting industry. We were not in the recruitment business, we were doing this to give back to the industry and community.

During my last year onboard, I struggled to find suitable yachts for two good chefs, and I couldn't understand why recruitment in this small industry was so complicated. It could be so much easier if we had one platform where crew could access all onboard jobs in one place and apply with one click. And that is how *Crew Pages* was born.

Two years later, we have some great results behind us and great plans ahead.

So, to answer your question: yes, I had an exit strategy, *A+ Yachting* , but *Crew Pages* was something a bit more exciting. Something that will help crew, but also recruiters, in the long run. I always believed that we need to use our knowledge,

experience, and skills to give back to the community that gave us this wonderful life opportunities.

Most important lesson you learned as a crew member that you now apply in day-to-day life on land?

The most important lesson is to expect the unexpected and to respond efficiently. Also, I learned to plan my time wisely. Discipline and organization are 80% of success. Adaptability also plays a major role, it all comes down to your mindset.

If you approach challenging situations by complaining, your chances of success in this industry are almost non-existent.

What is your current job role, and where are you based?

I am based between Tivat, Montenegro and Dubai, UAE.

I am currently working as a business development manager at A+ Yachting, which operates in Montenegro and Croatia, helping to develop two additional departments within the company to better support our clients in the area.

At *Crew Pages*, I can best describe my role as an entrepreneur. Although I spend the majority of my time with software developers, I am also actively working with our marketing and customer service team and actively learning that start-ups are truly special ecosystems, completely different from regular companies.

Can you tell us more about *Crew Pages* and what you do on a day-to-day basis?

When we speak internally of it, people within a team usually refer to it as a project. But it was never a project for me; I like to think of it as a legacy.

My dream was to create a platform where knowledge, competencies, and skills are the only criteria that make you visible to the right employer, and this includes about 2 million crew members in the maritime industry across the world, not only yachties but all seafarers.

Crew Pages have a goal to bring all maritime recruiters and crew members to one place. However, it is not solely a recruitment tool. It is a maritime-only social media platform where you can build your professional portfolio and network. It is a community, a place to meet colleagues, follow industry news, showcase your skills, exchange knowledge, raise important questions, and discuss hot maritime topics.

On a day-to-day basis, I work with software developers to think of ways to simplify user experiences. But my engagement doesn't stop there. I also need to think about how to finance the next phase of it and educate myself daily to learn new skills.

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The good, the bad, and the ugly parts of transitioning from yachts to shore? This can include the highs and lows of setting up your own business, etc.

I am probably not the most competent person to answer this question because I was simultaneously working in A+ Yachting every winter for the past 5 years, and I started the development of *Crew Pages* almost a year before my final termination of my yachting career.

In my mind, I was already long time ready for this, and immediately when I stepped out of the yacht, I had lots of things to juggle daily and didn't have time to think about it.

But I would say that for most people the ugly part of the transition would be a major difference in monthly income or having no income for a time being when starting your own business.

What is your hardest struggle since leaving the industry, and how did you overcome it?

I didn't have any struggles at all. It may sound a bit cocky, but I enjoyed every minute of it. Whether it was spending more time with my family or working with the team, I feel that this is exactly where I need to be.

Did you have any other career options in the back of your mind when you were considering your life after yachting?

I always liked the real estate sector, particularly building high-quality villas. When I was building our house, I realized that I enjoy seeing things grow as a direct product of my ideas and work.

I was dreaming of flipping houses and building villas for sale – but there is a time for everything in life.

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If you could return to the start of your yachting career, would you change anything? For example, financial choices, ways you would have enhanced your CV, extra courses, and so on.

I am not sure that I would change anything. I was lucky when I started. I must admit that I didn't know much about the industry before I started as everything happened so quickly.

I would advise anyone who is starting a yachting career to try to understand yachting before they join, by asking experienced crew, as that can help to adapt to the new environment. *Crew Pages* will help with connecting you with others.

I do also encourage any type of education that you can get. It is the work you do on yourself that defines how far will you get. So, it comes down to networking and education, but before you choose what course to do, you need to be brutally honest with yourself and identify your weak spots.

What kind of positive changes would you like to see in the industry?

Like most crew, I'd like to see more rotation. The privilege to spend winters at home was the only reason I stayed this long in the industry and on the same yacht.

I'd like people from industry to have the possibility to have families along with doing this job.

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What does success mean to you and what is your career vision for the next 5 years?

Success is loving the life you have and enjoying the journey.

For me, success is waking up with appreciation every day and enjoying anything that comes with it. Love all the challenges that life throws at you, they are moving you forward, they are opening up new possibilities.

Life is a journey of discovering who you are and what you can achieve, and therefore life shouldn't be planned. It is great to have some goals that you are moving toward, but you also need to have adaptability to take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way.

My family and I are currently living a life that we didn't anticipate a year ago. We live between Dubai and Montenegro / Croatia, as our business requires our presence at both locations, and we all love it.

Lastly, can you share 3 pieces of advice for crew members thinking about their life after yachting?

- Don't spend your money on parties, drinking, expensive cars or branded clothes. I know that younger people want to create memories, which is a valid point if you came to work onboard to create memories. But in the long run, you need to create a stable passive income before you quit your job, and you can do that only by investing your money wisely.
- Create healthy habits before getting on shore. They will keep you moving even if you struggle with finding yourself at the beginning.

- Work on your network. Networking is an essential part of building any career. Surround yourself with people who want to see you succeed. Give back to your community, guide younger people to get where you are now. Find similar minded people who are looking to excel in life, learn from each other, support each other. Create an account with [Crew Pages](#) and start connecting with people you have something in common with.
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To learn more about *Crew Pages*, [click here](#).
If you would like to connect with Graciya or his team, you can find him over on [Linked In](#).

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