

Missing yacht found after three week search

Pantaenius UK received a call from a client on 11 March 2009 advising that his sailing yacht had been stolen from Mahon, Menorca over the preceding weekend.

Efforts were initially focussed on Menorca where a local surveying contact was mobilised to coordinate the investigations on the ground. Through a combined effort incorporating four Pantaenius offices across Europe and our sister company Marine Claims Service, as well as Pantaenius' extensive network of surveying and maritime contacts, full details of the yacht, including photographs and a long list of distinguishing features, were immediately circulated to all port authorities, marinas, yacht clubs, riggers, repair yards, coastguards, police forces, yachting traffic and commercial shipping traffic in the area.

The search area expanded progressively through the Balearic Islands in proportion to the distance which the yacht would have been able to travel in the time available, to eventually encompass the entire Western Mediterranean from Gibraltar, through Spain and France to Italy, including the North African coast and the Mediterranean islands of Corsica, Sardinia and Malta.

Through Pantaenius' strong links with the media, notifications were also placed on internet yachting forums for viewing by the maritime public at large, with our industry friends and colleagues all keen to assist us in locating the vessel for the owner. The yacht's owner and his family also worked hard to circulate details of the missing boat as widely as possible.

After nearly three weeks of hard searching, with a few interesting leads and possible sightings, we got a result. The vessel was found in a marina in Malta where she had been deposited by the thieves prior to them taking another vessel. Save for some relatively minor aesthetic damage and some missing equipment, the boat was found safe and sound. The finding of the vessel was first reported to Marine Claims Service by the Maltese police and locals, who had been duly alerted to the disappearance of the yacht by the combined search effort and had consequently spotted her in their marina.

It was a very happy moment when we were able to inform the owner that we had found his boat. Following location of the yacht Pantaenius is delighted to have been able to assist the owner with prompt release of the vessel from judicial custody. Pantaenius is presently working with the owner on the resultant claim for loss and damage, prior to the yacht returning to her rightful berth.

This was a satisfying end to a fascinating search and an example of how the large Pantaenius infrastructure, along with our powerful network of contacts and coordinated teamwork can bring about a result - often against the odds. Our thanks go to all those who were able to assist us in achieving this positive outcome.

As a footnote, due to the success in locating our client's boat, Marine Claims Service was then asked by the insurers of the yacht that was subsequently stolen from Malta to take up the search for their client's vessel.