

# Want the yachting life, even for a day? Miami startup will hook you up

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Nicholas Cardoza, co-founder and designer of YachtLife, is vice president of the luxury yacht company VanDutch and has been involved in yachting his entire life. In 2008, Cardoza got his start working in the yachting industry as a personal chef and deckhand on mega- and super-yachts, and later obtained his captain's license and began delivering yachts during the off-season. In 2012, Cardoza joined VanDutch and has since helped build the company's presence as a major luxury brand.

Patrick Curley, co-founder of YachtLife, quit his job in finance in New York to start a mobile tech startup in the hospitality space and moved to Miami three years ago. When visiting, his friends would occasionally inquire about chartering a yacht, and since he had no idea how to go about chartering yachts, he would refer them to Cardoza and VanDutch would help his friends. After a number of times doing this, both Curley and Cardoza realized how the yacht charter industry was still light-years behind other industries - few websites actually list pricing, so customers need to search multiple websites and call brokers for quotes. After receiving quotes from multiple websites, customers then needed to go back to the site with the best quote and finalize all booking details over the phone.

"YachtLife has assembled a top-notch portfolio of some of the nicest yachts for charter in Miami and beyond. Since we removed the middleman and negotiated the best terms, users can now book fully crewed luxury yachts for the day, in most cases without even speaking to a broker - simply choose your yacht, pickup time, and tell us what day

you'd like to go out. YachtLife usually confirms your charter within an hour," Curley said. "The YachtLife concierge also helps with any questions before, during or after your charter."

Today, YachtLife operates in South Florida, the Bahamas, the Hamptons, Chicago, New England, Spain, the South of France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Prices for half-day to multi-day private yacht charters vary widely, but start at about \$1,600 in Miami.

YachtLife currently lists about 250 yachts on its platform, from a 40-foot VanDutch to a 154-foot Feadship with a crew of 12 - "It's a 6-bedroom floating mansion on the water with all the water toys you can imagine," Curley said.

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Startup spotlight: With the YachtLife app, users can browse available inventory and even book a luxury charter on the fly, without needing to speak to a broker or owner. YachtLife Technologies gives yacht owners a direct way to list their own yachts for day or multi-day fully crewed charters to offset their costs.

Company: YachtLife Technologies

Headquarters: Miami, one of the world's only year-round yachting destinations.

Concept: YachtLife aggregates local inventories of fully crewed luxury yachts and displays them on one platform. The YachtLife app has photos, specs and pricing for all yachts, so users can browse available inventory, and even book on the fly, without needing to speak to a broker or owner. A concierge assists when needed to plan itineraries and attend to the needs of the user to ensure a luxury, fluid and memorable

experience, and at prices less than what a broker would typically charge. YachtLife gives yacht owners a direct way to list their own yachts for day or multi-day charters to offset their costs.

Launched: May 2015

Website and social: [www.yachtlife.club](http://www.yachtlife.club); @yachtlifeapp;  
[www.facebook.com/yachtlife.club](https://www.facebook.com/yachtlife.club)

Management team: Patrick Curley, Nick Cardoza, Anko Mast

No. of employees: 12

Financing: VanDutch Yachts, a leading luxury yacht manufacturer, purchased a stake in YachtLife in 2016. YachtLife is raising a \$1 million seed round. An accelerator fund and a handful of angel investors have already committed half of the round.

Recent milestones reached: In February, YachtLife announced it has launched a membership club, and has already attracted a Miami Heat player and other YachtLife users. Members receive discounts on yacht charters and benefits from partners, such as hotels, yacht clubs and restaurants. YachtLife recently signed a deal to act as exclusive yacht provider for the two-weekend long Fyre Festival, a music and cultural festival in spring 2017 in a private cay in the Exumas, Bahamas.

Biggest startup challenge and why: Scaling inventory and opening up new regions. Each region has cultural and legal differences, and you need to really have good on-the-round relationships with luxury yacht owners, brokers, and management companies in order to negotiate favorable deals, the co-founders said.

Next steps: Campaigns to grow inventory in existing areas YachtLife

services as well as partnerships with strategic hospitality and luxury brands. After fund-raising, YachtLife will hire a sales rep with group-sales experience in order to target corporations to host events on yachts.

Mentor/investor's view: "We are big fans of marketplace companies, in particular those with high margins and that leverage the broader trend in the sharing economy. Yachts are a perfect example of an underutilized asset, and YachtLife allows yacht owners and renters to better utilize those assets for mutual benefit. In addition, YachtLife's exclusive partnership with VanDutch is truly unique in the industry and allows their marketplace to be seeded with the most popular yachts available," said Troy Vosseller, co-founder of gener8tor accelerator.

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