

CHINA

Captain plots course for yachting success

Frenchman is helping turn Sanya into a leading destination for global sailing community



By MA ZHIPING in Sanya, Hainan
mazhiping@chinadaily.com.cn

“Sunshine, waves, beaches and the old captain ...”

An idyllic life near the sea, as typified by the 1980s folk song *Grandmother's Penghu Bay*, is now within reach for many people, as cruise ship and yachting trips become more affordable, and maritime recreation grows in popularity in China.

More than a decade ago, French captain Godfrey Zwygart saw the opportunity for growth in the sector in China and the need for experienced terminal builders, managers and ship captains.

In 2010, he moved to Sanya, Hainan, to pioneer the development of high-end yachting services in the island province. But his initial impressions were not good.

“I hesitated for about half a year before deciding to settle in Sanya which was then unattractive to me,” said Zwygart, who has taught himself Mandarin and uses the Chinese name Gao Dehua.

“The Banshan Peninsula, where the marina stands today, used to be barren beaches and the surroundings were like a backward fishing village 10 years ago.

“But I could not resist the temptation that Sanya, with its nice location, climate, fine natural environment and sea resources, would someday become a great yacht resort city,” said Zwygart with a wide grin.

The Sanya Serenity Marina, with its 325 wet berths for vessels up to 61 meters, is now a major landmark in the idyllic seaside town. “It would take at least five years to build such a marina in the West,” Zwygart said.

In 2018, the marina was awarded the Platinum Gold Anchor Accreditation by the Marine Industry Association, the first in Asia and the



Godfrey Zwygart guides a vessel in Sanya, Hainan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

second in the world to earn the top yachting honor. Only eight marinas have earned the prestigious title.

Zwygart's 90 employees take great pride in the achievement and give most of the credit to the leadership of the experienced captain who is the marina's director.

“He has great marine expertise, which we need very much in Hainan,” said Yao Yuanfa, who has worked at the marina for eight years, adding that Zwygart is a “bundle of fun and full of new ideas and insights.”

Grown up in a coastal city in southern France, Zwygart said he has been infatuated with Chinese martial arts since childhood and came to China in the 1980s after he left the French navy. He stayed in Taiwan for about 20 years, building boats and running yacht clubs, shipyards and a ship maintenance business.

Yao said Zwygart has 30 years of experience captaining various craft including navy vessels, freighters, sailboats and superyachts.

Last year, Zwygart became one of

100 winners of the Chinese Government Friendship Award given by the State Council to foreigners who have made a special contribution to the country's development.

Zwygart said the award was the greatest honor of his life.

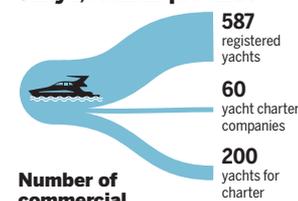
Its convenient location and professional facilities have made Sanya Serenity Marina a stopover for many international sailing races including the Volvo Ocean Race, the Clipper Round the World Race, the Round Hainan Regatta and the 2017

Youth Sailing World Championship.

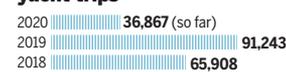
It is also a popular resort destination for people such as tourist Xiao Wang, an enthusiastic newcomer to the boat scene who recently arranged a weekend party for his friends on a yacht he hired.

“It was a day of great fun,” Xiao said. “The captain told us many stories and shared his knowledge about marine culture while we sailed the sea. We were charmed by the sea views and became immersed

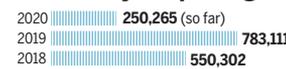
Yacht industry figures for Sanya, Hainan province



Number of commercial yacht trips



Number of yacht passengers



Source: Sanya Yacht Industry Association CHINA DAILY

in the excitement of jet skiing and sea fishing, a brand new experience for all of us.”

Zwygart foresees huge potential for yachting tourism in China, especially Hainan, over the next 10 years. The younger generation cares more about quality holidays and a diverse lifestyle and will spend generously on sea leisure products, he said.

Zwygart said zero tariffs for certain products under the establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Port were good news for the development of the yachting industry in the province. “With costs greatly reduced, more yachts will be imported, land and dock here,” he said.

Although a foreigner, Zwygart said he has never lived as an “outsider” in Sanya and considers himself an “old Hainan” hand. He has published many articles on social media promoting knowledge about yachts and environmental awareness about the ocean.



Online
Scan the
code to watch
the video.

Hainan takes lead recycling role

HAIKOU — At an eco-awareness center in Hainan province, 83-year-old Zhao Yueying uses a sewing machine to turn secondhand garments into cloth bags, which are given to residents and tourists to replace plastic bags.

“The more cloth bags I make, the fewer plastic bags will be used. It's a contribution to society,” said Zhao, who makes four or five bags a day.

Workers at the center in Baishamen, Haikou city, are trying to find an alternative use for discarded fruit peel, vegetable scraps, old clothes, plastic bottles and bags.

The country's campaign to establish an urban garbage-sorting system has given the center an educational function, where visitors learn how everyday trash can have a second life.

In the center's yard, there are dozens of sealed blue tanks containing rotting fruits and vegetables collected from local markets.

Jiang Fujun, Zhao's son and the director of the center, said after the food waste is mixed with water and brown sugar it turns into “eco-friendly enzymes” in about three months. The liquid can then be used to clean stains, grow flowers and deodorize toilets.

The second floor of the center is an exhibition hall showing items

24,000

number of cloth bags the eco-awareness center in Baishamen, Haikou city, has given to residents and tourists to replace plastic bags

made from waste material. Decorative bags, aprons and sachets made from waste cloth are on display, along with a large stool constructed from hundreds of plastic bottles, each stuffed with colorful plastic bags.

The center is playing a central role in a local drive to raise public awareness about garbage sorting. Last year, it received more than 23,000 visitors, including residents, students and employees of public bodies seeking inspiration on garbage sorting.

The center also gave away over 24,000 cloth bags and 30,000 bottles of its eco-friendly enzyme liquid.

To encourage more people to participate in garbage sorting, Jiang has built three more eco-awareness centers with the support of the Meilan district government.

One center became a popular summer vacation spot, where children played “garbage-sorting games” and trained to be volunteers to promote knowledge of gar-

bage sorting in their neighborhoods.

Mao Zhisen, 12, is familiar with garbage-sorting rules and takes pride in his volunteer work. “Trash has polluted the earth, so every one of us should take an active role in protecting the environment,” he said.

Wang Caili recently took her 3-year-old son with her when she dropped used boxes at the center.

“My son enjoys playing here and he has learned a lot, including dropping trash in the right bins,” said Wang, adding it is important to get children into the habit of garbage sorting.

Residents who take garbage to the center for recycling receive small gifts such as soap, the bottled enzymes and cloth bags. Jiang said the rewards are popular with elderly residents.

“Some have even mobilized their family members to join them,” he said.

The provincial government started enforcing household garbage sorting in four cities in Hainan from Tuesday.

“Promoting garbage sorting and eco-awareness will benefit future generations,” Jiang said. “It's my dream to build 1,000 eco-awareness centers around the island.”

XINHUA



From left: Zhao Yueying uses a sewing machine to turn secondhand garments into cloth bags at the eco-awareness center in Baishamen, Haikou, Hainan province, on Aug 25. GUO CHENG / XINHUA A volunteer teaches a child to paint on an egg case at the Haikou Youth Center on Aug 25. YANG GUANYU / XINHUA



Visitors enjoy blooming flowers at the Jiucaiping scenic area in Bijie, Guizhou province. LUO DAFU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Guizhou cashes in on cool climate

GUIYANG — When scorching heat waves hit most parts of China last month, Guizhou province on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, with a cool average summer temperature of 23 C, became a popular tourist destination.

Situated at an altitude of 2,777 meters, wild Chinese leek flowers bloomed in the Jiucaiping scenic area of Bijie city, attracting a large number of tourists from warmer places such as Chongqing and Guangdong province.

“Since August, my rooms have always been occupied,” said Xu Guiqin, a local villager who runs a homestay 10 minutes' drive from the scenic area.

Xu said her business has rebounded after being affected by the COVID-19 epidemic earlier this year.

To attract more tourists, the provincial government has rolled out a series of policies, including slashing the entrance fees to major scenic spots by half, and offering discount vouchers worth 10 million yuan (\$1.46 million) to visitors

to promote the cultural and tourism sectors. The vouchers can only be used at specified venues.

Guizhou's tourism sector once lagged behind other provinces, but in recent years it has been a popular destination for summer travel due to its mild temperatures and beautiful scenery. In July, the number of tourists increased 43 percent from the previous month to 77.55 million, while tourism revenue for the province increased 38 percent to 58.39 billion yuan over the same period.

According to a report by online travel platform Trip, by mid-August Guizhou ranked as the fifth most popular provincial tourist destination. Travel between provinces resumed in mid-July following a long suspension due to the novel coronavirus epidemic.

Anshun city, with an annual average temperature of 14.2 C boasts many tourist attractions, such as the Huangguoshu Waterfall, the largest in China.

“It only takes 30 minutes to drive here from the Huangguoshu

resort. Our village has seen more tourists in recent years,” said Wei Jun, Party chief of Leikua, adding that the village was trying to develop tourist attractions specializing in ancient rattan armor and the culture of the Bouyei ethnic group.

The village has three countryside restaurants, 10 grocery stores and homestays with over 200 beds. The per capita disposable income of villagers was 8,800 yuan last year, almost double the level in 2014.

Wei Xingxiu, a 57-year-old formerly impoverished Bouyei villager, now runs a restaurant from her home. Since her business opened in May, Wei has earned over 10,000 yuan. In the past, she was fortunate to earn 80 yuan a day doing odd jobs.

With tourists bringing in revenue, the environment of the village has also changed. “The road was muddy in the past, but now it's covered with cement,” Wei said.

XINHUA