



Chris Minnee

Privilège dealer for Benelux

Sailing runs in the veins of Chris Minnee, who still lives by the sea where he grew up. He makes no pretence about it. "When I was about 8 years old, I saw for the first time a catamaran on the North Sea beach of the village where I still live. It was 'love at first sight', and it never stopped!"

Even when his career took him off at a tangent into the oil industry. "When I started my career, I bought my first beach cat - followed by many other models," he adds. His passion for sailing has been passed on to the next generation, and he attends regattas to watch his son compete in the nippy Nacra beach cat.

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CHRIS MINNEE

Chris's industrial career took a number of turns, with stop-overs in lubrication oil, industrial cleaning and a metalworking plant. But in 2000, he turned back to what he loved best when the opportunity came up to take over the well-reputed Jan de Boer Catamarans. "In the beginning I acted as the dealer for several well-known French shipyards," he says. "Then, in 2007, I was asked by Catherine Relandeau, the sales director of Alliaura Marine at that moment, to be her dealer."



Chris on the new Privilège Signature 580



Listening hard

never regretted, enabling him to make the most of the skills he had established in his previous fields. “After making the first contact with a potential client, I build trust based on my long experience in engineering, marketing and sales. It’s important to listen very carefully and investigate the client’s project. This process costs time but is always a pleasure to speak with clients about their dream.”

“I also try, especially after first contact with a client at a boat show like Cannes, to visit the client at home. This is mostly highly appreciated by the client and results in a very constructive meeting in a nice atmosphere, where they feel very comfortable.”

Another technique is to ask the client to hang a piece of blank paper at home, divided by a line down the middle. “On the left side, I ask the client to write down their wishes concerning their new catamaran and on the right side their requirements,” says Chris. “In practice, it means that the client is thinking about their catamaran project every day and strongly contribute to a decision-making process.”

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CHRIS MINNEE

Privilege offer many options and a large degree of customisation, so there is a process of really trying to match the client’s words with the right layout. “The best compliment I ever received came from a client who was really surprised when I made him a configuration proposal which included almost 90 per cent of what he wanted,” says Chris. “Just a matter of carefully listening and asking the right questions to the client and their partner.”



Cannes Yachting Festival 2021



Take your time and listen carefully

For Chris, this is the moment it all comes together and his efforts pay off.

“Sometimes you reach a deal in 6-8 months, but I have also had experiences with clients where it took almost seven years after the first contact,” he says. “It is essential to be motivated and to listen carefully!” Then, nothing beats that feeling of watching the first wake of a new boat slip astern, knowing there is a happy client aboard.

Except, perhaps, the feeling of doing it in his own Privilege catamaran. Chris has already given an itinerary some serious thought. “After a couple of years sailing in the Med, I would like to cross the Atlantic to the Caribbean and later on to Polynesia,” he muses. But not for a few years yet. “My objectives for the coming three to five years are to sell some nice new Privilège catamarans to existing contacts and to develop new potential business.”

Find out more about Chris on his [website](#)