

# SuperYachtWorld

The global magazine for superyacht owners

## MAGIC MONACO

The new yachts lighting up this year's Monaco Yacht Show



A home on the sea: On board *Irvictus Solandge*: Lürssen's stunning 85-metre Feadship Heritage Fleet in Monaco  
Monaco GP: From aft deck to pit lane  
Chris Cecil-Wright's life in yachting  
Bows and vows: A superyacht wedding





As with most figures who have been involved in the superyacht industry for more years than they care to remember, you don't have to look too far into the family history of Chris Cecil-Wright – a yacht broker since 1993 and the founder of Cecil Wright & Partners last year – to find someone who started messing about in boats almost as soon as they could walk. "I had a typical water baby's start," he says. "Dinghy and keelboat sailing was all I knew. We had a National 21 called Ajax that my dad would put me in, along with my brother and little sister. We sailed around the Solent getting cold and wet – actually, I can remember being quite miserable in that boat!"

The family holiday home is in Keyhaven, Hampshire, on the South Coast of England, with 200 metres of its own beach, and it proved to be a good grounding in all things nautical for Chris. Even with a mother and father whose working lives were in Birmingham – a location as far from the sea as you can get in Britain – Chris still managed to sail dinghies on local lakes. After school at 18, he went on a gap-year round-the-world jaunt, with a variety of temporary jobs that inevitably ended on the water. "On the way to Cairns some friends and I chartered a boat from Airlie Beach. We had a great week and when we got back the charter owner said: 'You seem to know what you're doing, would you like to skipper the next charter?' I said yes, and proceeded to do the next five booked charters," says Chris. Next came the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, followed by a commission in 1st The Queen's Dragoon

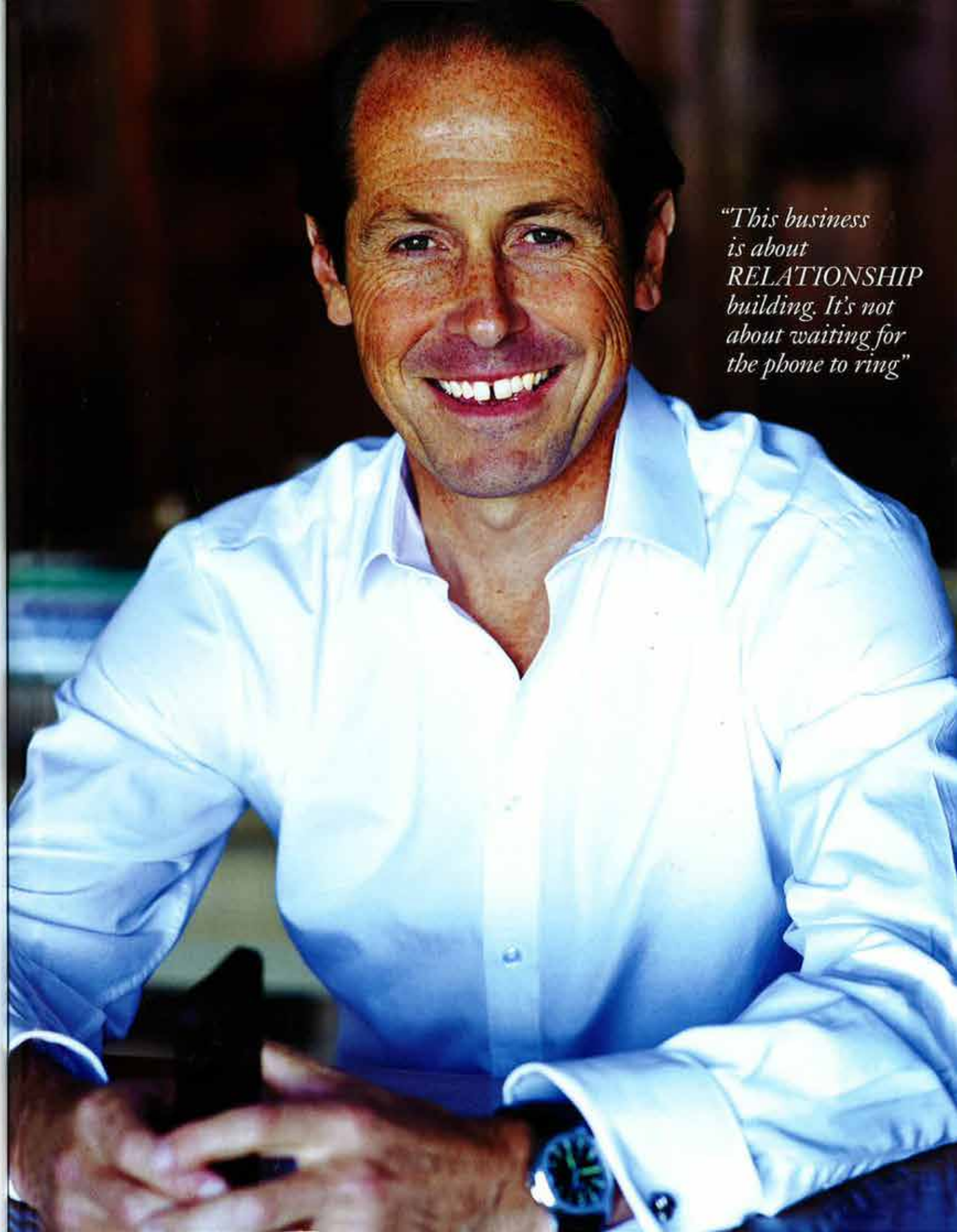
Guards as a tank commander. It was in his regiment that he was able to pick up his Yachtmaster Offshore. "I could now take out groups of 14 soldiers in one of the Nicholson 55s the army had. We would sail from Gibraltar to the Canaries on trips designed for team building. Fourteen men on a 55-footer is tight, you need to be disciplined, and it was great conditioning for living on board a Main Battle Tank. All that pressure in confined spaces!"

With the army career going well, life then had its own trick to play. "I did my pilot's grading with the Army Air Corps and was due to start a helicopter pilot's course – the Apache was coming in and I really fancied that! But I crashed my paraglider." And it wasn't a typical crash – Chris was in hospital with a broken back and life-threatening injuries, with doctors surprised he didn't die on impact.

With his army career over after four years, he spent a long time in hospital recuperating and trying to plan a future – the year was 1993. "The only attractive option was to make a new career path in something related to sailing. I knew there wasn't much money in yacht deliveries, but perhaps there was in selling yachts. The biggest boat I had ever encountered was that 55ft Nicholson, and therefore thought Camper & Nicholson's may be the best place to make enquiries about becoming a yacht broker," he says. "I put pen to paper four or five times without receiving a reply! Then one lunchtime I met a friend of mine from Sandhurst in a London pub. I was telling him how I hadn't received a reply from C&N. He said: 'How odd, and most unlike them! Did you know that my uncle Nicholas Edmiston is the MD?'"

**Right:** Chris Cecil-Wright – ensuring the client gets a personal service.  
**Top left:** Chris teaching daughter Gracie to sail.  
**Top centre:** With David, his brother. David was tragically killed in a car crash aged 18.  
**Above right:** A fresh-faced Sandhurst cadet.  
**Above:** The amazing Tango, a 77-metre Foadship.

*"This business is about RELATIONSHIP building. It's not about waiting for the phone to ring"*







*"We can ensure our client base receives a SERVICE they would not get ANYWHERE else"*

His friend rang Nicholas from the pay phone in the pub and fixed up a meeting at C&N's office in Berkeley Street that afternoon. "After the meeting, Nicholas said: 'If you absolutely insist, you can come and work for me, but I won't pay you!' To be fair, I was still convalescing and in my back brace, and I still had an income from the Army."

He didn't have to wait too long for his first sale. "This client, a Mr Gari – a lovely Spanish guy – walked into the office and didn't really know what he was looking for. I was excited about a boat called *Bolero*, a 32-metre German Frers, which we discussed. After Mr Gari left the office, I was tidying up the many brochures when I discovered a very smart gold pen wedged amongst the papers, which he'd left behind. I had it securely couriered off at once to Mr Gari's address in Spain. A short while later Mr Gari's wife came rushing in to the office enquiring about the lost pen – I explained that it was in the safe hands of DHL. That was the start of a long and trusting relationship," says Chris.

The client bought *Bolero*, and it was an illuminating experience for Chris. "I truly believe our business works on solid relationships. It is about credibility and delivering what you promise. It is also all about product knowledge, but I think it is vital to set up the chemistry first, before you start looking for boats. Both parties must like each other in order to move forward. This is not about people sitting in an office waiting for the phone to ring. It's about relationship building. I have walked to the North and South Poles with another client, sharing a tent with him. We have ridden motorbikes around Africa together. I sold him a 56 metre and built him a 78 metre. I now consider him one of my closest friends."

**Top:** The 78-metre *Feadship Hampshire II*.  
**Right:** Chris with wife Kitty celebrating his fortieth.  
**Above left:** Chris is never far from something active.  
**Above:** Windsurfing has been a lifelong passion.

In 1996 Nicholas Edmiston had left C&N and phoned Chris to set up a meeting in St Tropez – a week later Chris was back with Nicholas at the first Edmiston office in Monaco. "I slept there, with a mattress on the floor!" Russian buyers were starting to come into the market and business was booming. From 2004 to 2011 Chris did a raft

of deals, including the first *Dilbar*, a 66-metre Oceanco, the first *Phoenix* (a 60-metre), *Hampshire I* and *Trident*. He also started new builds, including the 77-metre *Feadship Tango*, the 78-metre *Feadship Hampshire II*, and the 99-metre *Feadship Madame Gu*.

He founded his new venture, Cecil Wright & Partners, to rediscover the personal approach to clients. "We are a team of seven. They are experienced people that have all the technical attributes for a great brokerage company. We run a tight ship and I am keen that we don't overload ourselves. I would prefer to turn business away than compromise our service. With fewer clients we can ensure they receive our full attention, and offer a level of service they will not receive anywhere else," he says.

With his three children and wife Kitty, Chris is now back enjoying life on England's South Coast. "I love seeing my children engage with this wonderful place as I did. In the school holidays we get on the water most days. Monday night is dinghies with the kids and on Thursdays I race a keel boat with local friends," he says.

His inspiration is a simple one – "I like people who like yachts" – and there are many satisfied superyacht owners who can testify to the passion of Chris Cecil-Wright, SYW [www.cecilwright.com](http://www.cecilwright.com)