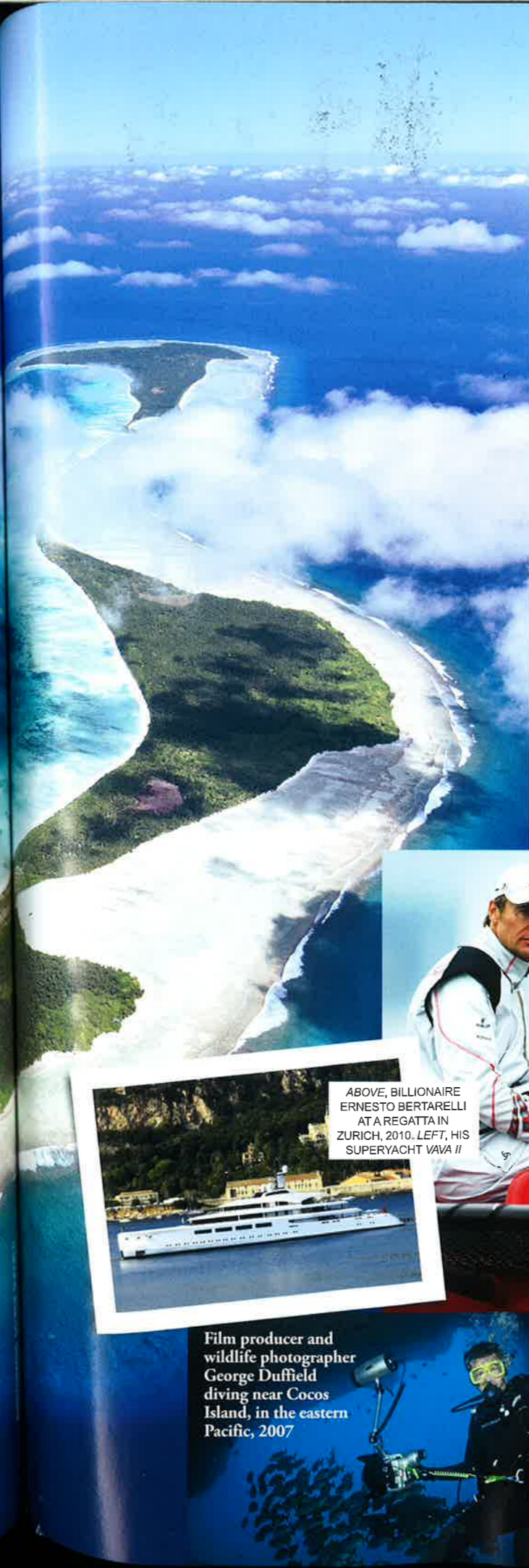


# 'FOR THE PRICE OF A THREE-BEDROOM LONDON FLAT, YOU GET A MARINE RESERVE YOU CAN SEE FROM SPACE'

From hedgefund kings to Hollywood heavy hitters, a new wave of marine philanthropists is sailing to our oceans' rescue. Keith Dovkants charts the big money safeguarding the big blue

An island in the Indian Ocean's Chagos Archipelago, an area now protected from commercial fishing by a partnership between the British government and Swiss philanthropist Ernesto Bertarelli



ABOVE, BILLIONAIRE ERNESTO BERTARELLI AT A REGATTA IN ZURICH, 2010. LEFT, HIS SUPERYACHT VAVA //



Film producer and wildlife photographer George Duffield diving near Cocos Island, in the eastern Pacific, 2007

**B**illionaires love the oceans. Calm, beautiful places across which they can plough a foamy furrow with their grandiose superyachts. And, of late, they have been expressing this love in a very extravagant way, pouring billions into creating marine eco-reserves. Forget saving the rainforests – a clean sea is the new frontier when it comes to mega-philanthropy. This global trend has been led by a small and plucky band of British charity workers and the British government, which has in its care a clutch of islands that have recently become highly attractive to wealthy benefactors.

Places like Ascension Island, a tiny British Overseas Territory in the Atlantic. The American hedgefund king, Louis Bacon, has put up £300,000 to allow work to begin there on what will be the Atlantic's biggest marine reserve, a safe haven for fish and endangered species that will cover an area only slightly smaller than the entire United Kingdom. Bacon, who has a long record of supporting large conservation projects through his Moore Foundation, has formed a partnership with the UK to make the Ascension reserve a reality.

'I grew up bluewater-fishing off the coast of North Carolina,' he says. 'During university summer breaks, I skippered a sportfishing boat looking for marlin off the Hamptons in New York. The boat's owner was a Wall Street trader who pushed me into the investment world. When I had the resources to start a foundation, it was important to me to devote significant funding to protect fisheries.' The Ascension Island scheme will produce 'both immediate and long-lasting results', he adds. Crucial to the deal was a London-based charity, the Blue Marine Foundation, which will administer the scheme with the Ascension Island authorities. Blue, as the charity is called, operates with five staff from an attic in Somerset House, yet its reach is truly global. It began with a book, *The End of the Line*, by Charles Clover, the veteran journalist and conservationist. He revealed apocalyptic facts

about overfishing and forecast that, at the current rate of decline, stocks would be exhausted by mid-century. Clover is chairman of Blue, which was founded by entrepreneur Chris Gorell Barnes and George Duffield, a film producer and wildlife photographer.

'I was making a documentary in Tonga when the director handed me a copy of the book,' Duffield says. 'As soon as I read it, I knew my life had changed. It was the first time anyone had made an unassailable case that we are simply going to run out of fish. One of the planet's greatest resources was being squandered.' Duffield, 43, produced a documentary based on the book, also called *The End of the Line*, with Clover, Gorell Barnes and others, including Ted Waitt, a billionaire American philanthropist. The film has been shown at the United Nations and at 10 Downing Street. And it was crucial at one of the most significant moments in recent moves to protect the oceans.

Duffield's mother is Dame Vivien Duffield, daughter of the late Sir Charles Clore, the retail and property tycoon who owned Selfridges.

Sir Charles was a man of dazzling generosity – some of his employees called him Santa Clore – and Dame Vivien continues the family tradition of philanthropy. She is estimated to have given away close to £200m, mainly to educational and cultural causes, including the Royal Opera House. ▷

◁ Dame Vivien has a home in Switzerland, where George grew up, and he took *The End of the Line* to Gstaad for a private screening. Among those who attended were Ernesto and Kirsty Bertarelli. Ernesto, a biotech tycoon with a fortune estimated at £5.6bn by *Forbes*, has a well-known love of the ocean. His father, Fabio, was a passionate sailor, and Ernesto and his sister Dona were given sailing dinghies almost as soon as they could walk. Today, their boats are rather bigger. Ernesto, 50, a skilled helmsman, put together the Team Alinghi challenge for the America's Cup and in 2003 brought the trophy back to Europe for the first time since it was lost to America in 1851. Alinghi successfully defended the trophy in 2007, then lost it to an American syndicate. Kirsty, a former Miss UK, is often described as 'Britain's richest woman' on account of her marriage. A singer-songwriter who wrote the No. 1 hit 'Black Coffee' for All Saints in 2000, she married Ernesto that same year, and they went on to have three children: Chiara, Falco and Alceo. The family has a 318ft superyacht, *Vava II*, which, at its launch, was hailed a masterpiece for its elegance and lavish appointments, including a fold-down beach club and a variable-depth swimming pool. For all its luxury, *Vava II* is a serious ship and has a new role in the current drive to save the seas.

George Duffield had only an inkling of this the night he showed his film to around 150 people in Gstaad. The Bertarellis were friends of a friend: "They came up to me at the end of the film and said, "What can we do? We want to help." That exchange was the point of departure for one of the biggest marine-conservation projects so far – the Chagos Islands Reserve. It covers some 210,000 square miles of the Indian Ocean in the Chagos Archipelago, a British Overseas Territory. In 2010 the Bertarellis, through their family foundation, entered into a partnership with the British government to protect the area from commercial fishing.

That same year, the Bertarellis' foundation worked with Blue to create a marine reserve around the Turneffe Atoll in Belize, safeguarding 600 square miles of ocean containing an ecologically important coral reef. The family is also currently involved in proposed projects in the Pacific, including ventures for Pitcairn – the remote island that is home to descendants of the mutineers of HMS *Bounty* – and Easter Island. "I was raised around boats and the ocean has always been a passion," says Ernesto Bertarelli. "We were doing some conservation work and I was already sensitive to the problems. But the meeting with George opened an opportunity to do something unique. Chagos provides humanity with a standard reference to what a pristine ocean can look like. What we are doing now is to try to understand the place more profoundly." Scientists, including researchers from Stanford and Oxford, were brought into the project. A patrol vessel took on the task of deterring illegal fishing and work began to monitor the sea and its inhabitants. *Vava II* became an expedition ship, crammed with scientific instruments, gear for tagging fish and special buoys to gather data. The yacht returns to Chagos this year for another round of research with the Bertarellis aboard. "The children really get it," says Ernesto. "It is not just about giving money – we get involved. We give our time and our passion. The children help tag fish and collect samples, but our 14-year-old daughter grumbles a little – she calls it "Daddy's vacation in isolation!"

The Bertarellis' various conservation projects have probably cost over £10m, but Ernesto declines to give a figure. "I just don't like to talk about numbers," he says. He is currently looking at some new technology – floating surveillance drones, powered by the waves and controlled by satellite. A fleet of these could allow a conservation zone to be monitored more closely than ever before. Drones are also cheaper to run than patrol ships.



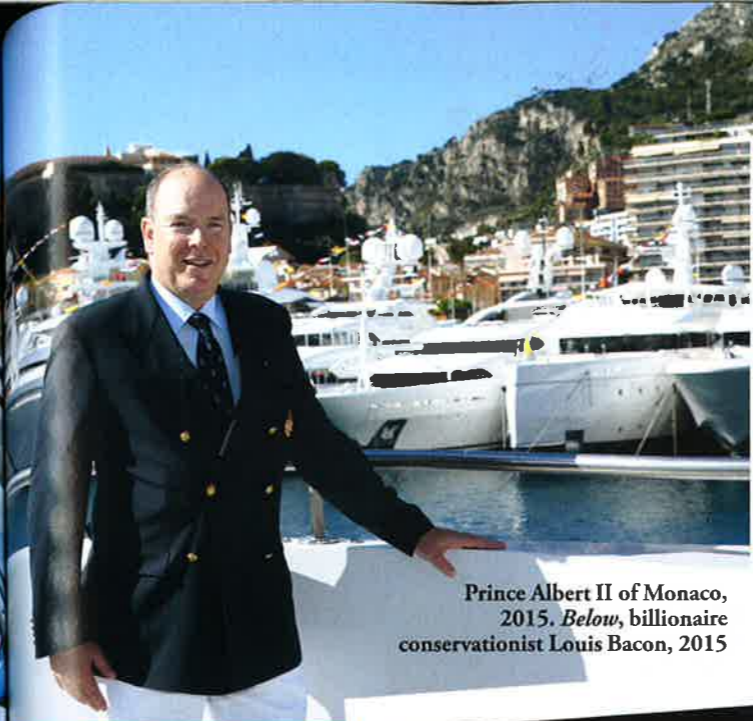
ABOVE, GEORGE DUFFIELD WITH HIS MOTHER, DAME VIVIEN DUFFIELD, AT A BLUE MARINE ANNIVERSARY PARTY, 2015. ABOVE RIGHT, CHARLES CLOVER'S *THE END OF THE LINE*. RIGHT, BLUE MARINE YACHT CLUB BURGEES FLYING FROM A MAST. BELOW, A SCENE FROM GEORGE DUFFIELD'S FILM *THE END OF THE LINE*



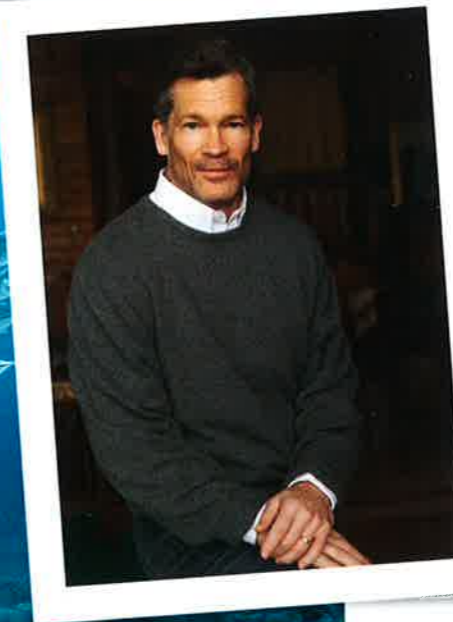
'THE CHILDREN HELP TAG FISH AND COLLECT SAMPLES, BUT OUR 14-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER GRUMBLES A LITTLE' – ERNESTO BERTARELLI



LEFT, SIMON LE BON AT AN ARTEMIS CHALLENGE YACHT RACE, 2014. RIGHT, SIR RICHARD BRANSON AT A YACHT CLUB IN NEWPORT, CALIFORNIA, 2011



Prince Albert II of Monaco, 2015. Below, billionaire conservationist Louis Bacon, 2015



ABOVE, SHEIKH MANSOUR'S TOPAZ, FREQUENTLY BORROWED BY LEONARDO DICAPRIO. BELOW, DICAPRIO WITH US SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY AT AN 'OUR OCEANS' CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, DC, 2015



Britain has a special place in marine conservation because it has 14 Overseas Territories dotted around the world. This legacy of empire – of which Chagos, Ascension, Pitcairn and others form part – covers vast expanses of sea and the government has said it wants to create a 'Blue Belt' of marine protection around them to stop illegal fishing. The problem is cost. Patrolling and monitoring huge swathes of ocean is expensive, and environmentalists say the only way progress will be made is with money from private sources – like billionaires. "Many people think ocean conservation is something governments do," says Charles Clover. "But the reality is that this is a new cost at a difficult time. There are people out there with more money than some countries' GDP and their help can make it easier for governments to do the right thing."

Chris Gorell Barnes, partner of Baroness Lane-Fox, is candid about targeting the rich. "We focus on wealthy individuals," he says. "People who have yachts and spend a lot of time on the ocean are receptive to our ideas and also have the money needed to pay for them."

The charity has launched its own association, the Blue Marine Yacht Club, with Prince Albert II of Monaco as founding patron. The club's burgee (identifying flag), designed by Ralph Lauren, is a 'badge of honour', says Gorell Barnes – it shows that a yacht owner 'really cares about the sea he sails on'. Among those currently flying the BMYC burgee are Sir Charles Dunstone, the Bertarellis, Matthew Freud, Simon Le Bon and Princess Zahra Aga Khan.

Many marine philanthropists have their own yachts – Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft has two; Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of the parent company of Google, has a research institute with its own vessel, which he lends to marine scientists. Ted Waitt, who put up a lot of the money for *The End of the Line*, has the 240ft superyacht *Plan B*. Leonardo DiCaprio, a poster boy for ocean conservation, usually borrows a friend's boat – like the 482ft *Topaz*, owned by Sheikh Mansour of the United Arab Emirates. DiCaprio, a keen scuba diver, is a serious player in the new drive to save the seas, not least because of his celebrity status and the fact he has pledged £5m to the cause. DiCaprio is part of Oceans 5, a US-based group set up specifically to help rich individuals find the most effective way to put their money to work for the seas. Its director, J Charles 'Chuck' Fox, tells *Tatler* that there has been 'an explosion in activity' in the past few years. "Our job is to identify conservation opportunities for our funders," he says. "There is much more awareness now that if we are to provide resiliency for the planet, we must protect the oceans."

Oceans 5 numbers among its funders former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, Ted Waitt, British investor Alan Parker's Oak Foundation, the Moore Foundation and Tiffany and Co.'s charitable trust. Other billionaires currently funding marine-preservation schemes include Sir Richard Branson, the American James Harris Simons and Ray Dalio, founder of the Bridgewater Associates hedgefund. The research group and website Inside Philanthropy has joked that it's as if the world's billionaires have all been sent a 'secret memo' telling them to get behind saving the seas. "Marine conservation is very fashionable right now," says David Callahan, IP's founder. "There is more understanding of just how much in peril the oceans are." There is also, he notes, a competitiveness among big givers. "A lot of these donors want to be at the cutting edge," he says. "They want to be doing things others are not doing."

"People increasingly want to spend the money in their lifetime and see the results," adds philanthropy expert Theresa Lloyd, author of *Why Rich People Give*. George Duffield says putting money into the oceans brings swift results; protected areas begin to recover in a few years and donors can see their money working to good effect.

"It's probably the best-value conservation you can get," he says. "For the price of a three-bedroom London flat, you get a marine reserve you can see from space. And your children can swim in it!" □