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Sarah Devlin highlights some points to consider
in the light of the election of US president,
Barack Obama



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Special Focus: Marina Planning & Design

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An overview of various aspects of marina
planning including design considerations,
budgeting, location and the challenges facing
inland marina developers

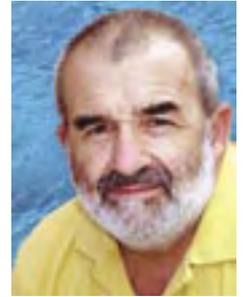


Products & Services

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Front cover: The Monte Carlo waterfront in Monaco teems with boats, much like the rest of the country's small coastline. With 215 yachts on average per kilometre, it probably houses the highest density of vessels per kilometre of coastline of any country in the world. Concentrating vessels in marinas – especially those that jut out into waterspace – is to be encouraged as it helps preserve coastlines says Camper & Nicholsons Marinas chairman, Nick Maris. Read more on p.39



Oscar Siches

In search of the 'extra' element

by Oscar Siches CMM

Some time ago, in a presentation I was invited to give at the International Marina & Boatyard Conference, I said that the technical part needed for projecting and building a new marina, as well as the economic part of it (financial study, accounting) was never a problem; there are plenty of firms that could be engaged to provide them.

So, why are some marinas considered better than others? Such judgement rarely depends on marina size, location or type of boats. Neither does it depend on turnover or financial results. When you hear people talking about those successful marinas, the 'it has something' concept seems always to be present.

Marinas are facilities that are designed and operated to moor yachts and provide the related services needed for the enjoyment of yacht users. This is an accurate statement, but not a complete statement. How do we arrive at the complete one? What is missing?

Feng Shui, usually known as a 'weird way of arranging furniture' was (and is) in fact a system of aesthetics to understand and better use astronomy and geography to improve quality of life - to get 'that extra thing' out of that knowledge.

There is a big shipyard in Northern Europe (Lürssen) that, around 1995, adopted that concept in their advertising. The slogan read: 'Water, Fire, Metal, Earth, Wood - Lürssen, the sixth element.'

The director of the yacht department of that shipyard is a dear friend of mine and I know

the yard very well as I have fitted marine electronics into several of its ships in the past. My friend was quite well aware of the world of superyachts when he joined the yard and - very importantly - he also knew how to treat the clients and how to speak their language (meaning understanding their needs and hope). For me, that sixth element was the perfect description of knowing the product and the client, and acknowledging the importance of the relationship created by those two elements, which is unique every time. The result is that his work as moderator for all of the players (shipyard, client, designer, captain) enabled - as much as possible - a general consensus to be achieved when creating a yacht.

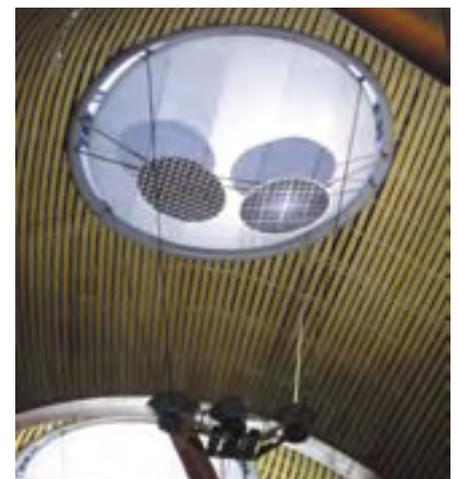
Before attempting to design or build a marina, you have to search, find or create that sixth element. It will be the centre pillar of your stability act. It is what the workers, the users, the suppliers and the local authorities should and will 'perceive'. It is the marina identity, the mood, the true factor that only a human being can create for others to share and enjoy.

I do not start a marina project dressing myself as a Hare Krishna, dancing, playing

cymbals and burning incense at the future site. But I tend to pay attention to non-technical matters that will affect the operation and the enjoyment of the facility. Here are a few examples:

1. Define the marina: big is not always right, both in amount and size of the moorings. A careful market study should be made. A marina for megayachts in a typical vacation apartment/family holiday area will not provide the moorings needed for the holidaymaker's boats, nor the services needed by the super and megayachts.
2. Think what you would like to find in the marina if you arrived there with your boat. If you do not have experience as a yachtsman, consult skippers of similar boats to the ones for which you are designing the marina. You will find out that there are segments of the fleet that desire and need similar services (one very evident difference is if the yachts have permanent crew). Choose a similar marina and visit it, have a couple of drinks in the bar, canteen or pub and engage in conversations about the harbour. A bar is usually the best place to find the skippers, maintenance guys and marina employees.
3. Check the traffic circulation in similar marinas. Clever traffic circulation design avoids carrying weight to the boats by foot, noisy suppliers early in the morning, better parking place distribution and safer boat transport to and from the boatyard.
4. Be part of the decision making about the commercial tenants. You know the people that are going to use the marina so the restaurants and shops should be within the limits of your users' budgets and expectations. If the restaurant or shop is too fancy or expensive it will not become part of the marina community.

Above and below: new illumination techniques combine the use of natural and artificial lighting.





5. Marinas with yachts over 12m length are becoming communities. Boat users come to the marina to spend time on the boat and ashore and not always to go sailing. Spaces to organise events (e.g. festivals, concerts, fishing contests) are necessary both inside and outside, as are basic services like a newspaper stand (or delivery on weekends), ATM and a supermarket.

Do you like good looking marinas? I guess you do, even if that is a perception that is not always rationalised. Beautiful, tidy, neat things make us feel comfortable. Most commercial marketing techniques are based on this, and we fall for it every time. The visual impact of a marina is the first impression we get, and therefore has to be taken care of. Shapes, colours and lighting play a very important role that is often neglected. This is one of the areas where people just follow 'the usual thing' and do not try new techniques and developments.

Is this too unimportant? Of course, I am assuming that the 'real' things are being taken care of: safety, piers, electricity, fresh water, bathrooms, showers, lockers etc. There is a lot of written material on these aspects and excellent consultants to approach for help.

Lighting can be used in a very creative way. First, we must find out about the minimum standards for the type of open spaces we have (usually the same levels as for car parks in industrial areas). From there on we must decide which type of light to use (filament, fluorescent, 'L' bulbs (low energy), LED). Fluorescent light or 'L' bulbs are used to save energy (good practice) but the light is often too 'cold', giving out what is usually called 'hospital' or 'pharmacy' illumination. The colour or tone of light is measured in kelvins. Light between 4000 and

5000 kelvins (K) is considered white light, while 3500 K will give a yellowish light like a bright candle and 6000 K a bluish light, as is found in arctic landscapes. Human beings identify low K light with warmth, coziness and a relaxing atmosphere. We can illuminate exteriors with warm light and still be fulfilling the standards. LEDs are produced in various colour temperatures and powers and can be used for almost all applications in a marina. Glare, light trespass (light filtering into the boat through a porthole or hatch), clutter and over illumination are common situations that should be avoided.

Noise reduction is also very easy to achieve if it is dealt with when planning the marina. When possible, 'louder' types of boats should be given moorings far from public terraces,

The use of colours can give very different visual perceptions.

restaurants or bars. Garbage containers can be towed close to the service entrance for the trucks so that the waste disposal process - generally undertaken at very early hours - does not disturb the yacht owners. Air conditioning compressors should be mounted out of sight, on flexible mounts, and when possible within a noise absorbing box. Gates should feature the trademarked Teflon or Delrin bearings to avoid screeching etc. I could go on and on, but just applying common sense when focusing on the matter will bring excellent results.

All of this can be done by an architect, a lighting technician and a sound and noise technician but it needs the input of someone with experience in marinas - ideally the future marina manager. He or she must get that 'gut feeling' I mentioned before and must also follow it. Only the manager can see the whole picture, jump forward in time and see the marina in full operation through the seasons. The marina will carry the manager's signature as some of his decisions will be very personal. There is nothing wrong with that and he will love 'his' marina before it materialises. When we gather together at marina conferences you cannot tell if we are talking about the family or the facilities. We speak proudly, we share our achievements, and we seek better solutions among ourselves. Our marinas are part of us - and it should be so.

So, next time you start a project for a new marina and you happen to have an incense stick at hand ... burn it.

You never know.

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New materials help increase security at night while reducing power consumption.