

Marina

World www.marinaworld.com

March/April 2015

Issue 88



Essential reading for marina and waterfront developers, planners and operators



15



19



43

World News

7

marine15/Queensland Update

15

Setting the scene for marine15 on the Gold Coast, Australia

Superyacht Facilities

19

New cruising pastures; Marina Santelena; Pier 66; Denarau Marina; charter boost in Spain; Makronisos Marina update

Product Focus

43

Superior introduces Edge II at Birkenhead Point Marina

Company News

47

Products

53

People

58



Marina World



Front cover: Birkenhead Point Marina in Drummoyne is the largest privately owned floating marina in Sydney Harbour. It has been constructed using innovative new hardware. See Product Focus p.43



Uncluttered space, cleanliness and ease of access make life much easier for captain and crew, and security is highly appreciated by guests and crew everywhere.



Oscar Siches

designed, all-new explorer yachts saw the light and, today, the superyacht world offers these types of yachts in series production from many shipyards all over the world.

Are they all going on expedition trips? I have my doubts. It actually reminds me of those 4x4 luxury cars ready to face the desert, jungle and other inhospitable terrain that are condemned to take their masters to the office and back within first world cities. They express their owner's wish for adventure although unfortunately such wishes are rarely fulfilled.

But alongside the explorer yacht is the traditional superyacht, including the less well defined 'megayacht' if longer than 50m. By 'traditional', I refer to a design that follows certain proportions of length, beam, height, volume, visual impact etc. But this is not to say that traditional cannot be innovative. These vessels have experienced crew and, above all, yacht-minded owners.

The expression 'old money' springs to mind. It represents history, tradition, culture, protocol and the things you cannot acquire just by a monetary transaction. The British, for example,

New pastures – thrills with fewer frills

by Oscar Siches

For superyachts, think 'super'. Super money is spent producing super designs and feats of engineering. All involved in the superyacht set (and at the end of the day, it all depends on the people involved) meet in September at the Monaco Yacht Show to look, listen, talk, admire and plan. Monaco is the undisputed world superyacht capital and it deserves to be, having been a pioneer and excellent host and, most importantly, because it understands superyachts.

Some 5,700 superyachts (yachts over 30m) are cruising the world's oceans. A new size? The internationally agreed frontier of 24m seems to have now settled unofficially at the 30m mark, partly due to the well received Superyacht Intelligence Database, which starts at that size.

Most of these 30m+ vessels, of all sizes and types – traditional and avant-garde – are concentrated in the cruising grounds of the East Caribbean and the Northern Mediterranean. But the spirit of adventure is not as restricted as one might think.

Aspiring explorers

Fifteen years ago, the first ocean tug-based explorer yachts were commissioned and their trips around the world were featured in every superyacht magazine. It was an

extreme approach to recreational navigation, with yachts (ex-ships) of extraordinary range, sea-keeping capabilities and commercial status. It was as easy for them to explore virgin enclaves as it was to request a berth in a commercial harbour for maintenance, victuals and fuelling.

Around eight years ago, the purpose-



Simple things count. Logistical needs can be very specific and bicycles are often of great value to crew members. It's a rare superyacht marina that sets appropriate space aside for them.



Palladium, moored up at Pantalán del Mediterráneo, Palma de Mallorca, at an unfinished dock when the captain failed to find mooring elsewhere. A security firm was hired to complete the deal and everyone was happy.

This is understandable. Forget about the superyachts in terms of size alone and think differently about those aboard them. Many people (mostly land lubbers) see superyachts as beautiful ferries for rich people; King Midas boats that convert everything they approach into gold. But most superyacht owners tend to be discrete people who do not need to show off their wealth. Yes, there are exceptions and the publicity given to these people has created the wrong image.

Many proud marina developers are excited to announce that they will build a very luxurious hotel in the marina and top restaurants in order to attract superyachts. But superyacht owners are used to staying in extreme luxury hotels all over the world. They invite and are invited to the best restaurants on earth. Their onboard chefs are often top level and many very good restaurants would envy the galleys in which they cook. Luxury is not what owners are seeking and, in order to truly provide what they want, you have to learn to speak what I call 'superyacht language'.

Here are a few tips:

- 1 Decide if you are going to be a winter destination, a summer cruise destination or, if you are lucky and the marina is in a very beautiful and interesting place, a mix of both. Don't waste your resources on infrastructure that will not be appreciated.

brought this style to yachting in 1720 in what is today the Royal Cork Yacht Club, founded by a member of the British Parliament. Superyachts of the time were owned by royalty, nobility and captains of industry and this continued well into the nineteenth century with outstanding notables like Sir Thomas Lipton.

Thus, the superyachts I call 'traditional' are a lot more than age and shape. They are not the type to be seen for long at the same 'fashionable' harbour during high season. By nature, they seek alternative destinations and secluded bays where guests can enjoy the solitude that being at sea has to offer. They drop anchor close to small communities where a superyacht guest is as alien as any other outsider arriving by any means. Most superyachts are prepared to be autonomous and the basic local products to be found in these remote places (vegetables, fruit, bread, flowers) are as much a part of the discovery as a logistical requirement.

New cruising grounds

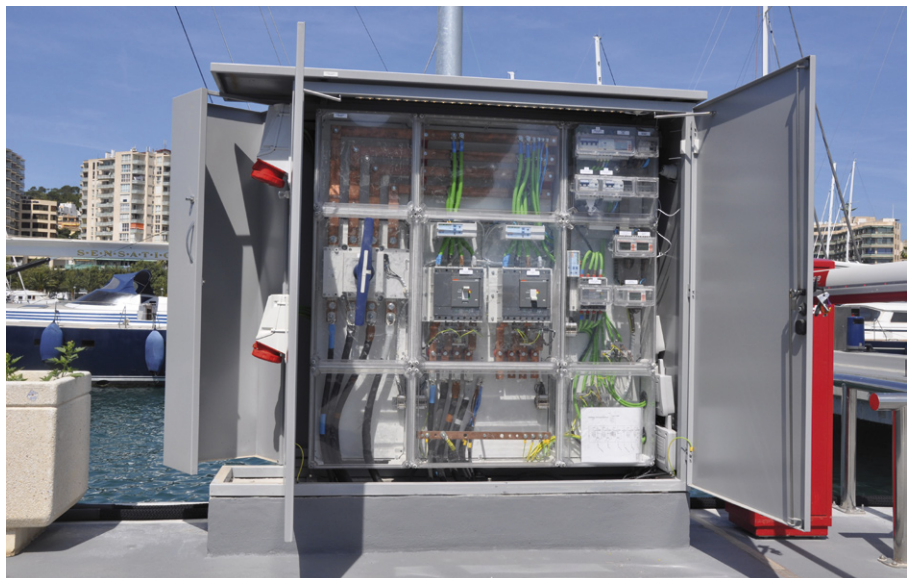
According to the records of the Singapore Superyacht Association, superyacht visits to the Asia Pacific region grew by 100% over the four year period of 2008-2011. Turkey became the wintering spot for many superyachts that had previously favoured the western Mediterranean. The traditional Caribbean cruising ground from Florida to St Thomas has expanded and now reaches Grenada.

Brazil has a bad name since the murder of Sir Peter Blake in 2001 (such scars take a long time to heal) but

Never underestimate the dockside needs of a superyacht.

more and more yachts are venturing to the east coast of South America. Let's remember that the distance from the Canaries to Antigua is 2,500nm but from the Cape Verde Islands to Fortaleza in North Brazil it is only 1,400nm. Weather in the South Atlantic is very steady, mild and predictable and it's easy to head off for these more unusual cruising grounds. Down to Paranaguá there are countless bays, cities and villages to enjoy. Anyone prepared to cruise down to Patagonia, the Magellan Straits, Tierra del Fuego and the Falklands (Malvinas) will have an unforgettable experience.

But can these alternative destinations increase their appeal to superyachts? This is a question that many of us have addressed in different ways via conferences, articles and forums. And we have failed to create a general understanding of the real needs of the crew and the guests aboard a superyacht.





Idyllic, quiet mooring spaces suit superyacht owners looking to really escape. Norwegian fjords (left and below) are being marketed for their sheltered, safe and beautiful natural surroundings.

with professionals taking care of the marketing based on the survey findings. Modifications were made at the harbours (as simple as installing tarpaulin elements to protect superyacht fenders from getting dirty). A guide specially tailored for superyachts was produced, along with a brochure and a website with information on natural features, history, berthing and anchoring places, customs procedures, emergency services and the unique offerings and features of each of the seven destinations (like wild salmon fishing or a glacier visit by foot or helicopter).

The team made regular visits to typical superyacht spots like Antibes, Monaco and Palma and met with captains to explain the cruising options in Norway. They brought the brochure personally to brokers and superyacht agents.

People making such effort to promote a marina or a region with solid arguments convince the captains and owners that when they arrive they will not only be welcomed to a beautiful place but will be received by professionals who know how to properly take care of a superyacht. An excellent example to follow.

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- 2 Do not underestimate the crew. Owners and guests are onboard for a few weeks a year. The crew is onboard for at least eleven months a year. The main focus at a winter destination must be crew comfort. This is more complex than it sounds and includes safety (above all) and general integration with the local people. This matter is rarely discussed but there are places, including in the Mediterranean, where superyacht crew are seen as and made to feel like unwelcome intruders. Other essentials are communications (airport and transport to nearby towns and cities); leisure infrastructure (bars, gym, winter sports, movies in original version); reasonable victual and technical supplies; and technical services for yacht maintenance and repair. For the crew, an idyllic place far away from mundane noise is hell.
- 3 Extend your offer, beyond the marina and into the hinterland. Local food, wine, golf courses, mountain treks and, yes, special restaurants in the area. Guests like to discover and enjoy something different to what they have every day.
- 4 Create a very good visual impression. Dress your marina. If you cannot repair, paint. Train your dockhands to adopt appropriate postures when waiting for a superyacht and ensure the place is clean. Make life easy and avoid making captains move to do paperwork – offer to come onboard to do it. Captains love this because, upon arrival, they have to organise the life of the guests, crew and

supplies. It makes their life easier and you win them forever.

These suggestions apply to all marinas and can be decisive when superyachts plan their annual programme.

One example to follow comes from a group of seven destinations visited by superyachts in the Norwegian fjords. Together, they hired a marina consultant to survey the places and report on what could be improved to attract yachts to the area.

Upsides were identified as: beautiful natural surroundings; sheltered waters; low salinity; tax-free fuel on departure; non-EU status; the welcoming warmth of Norwegians; safety; and incredibly clean waters.

The group created a non-profit association (Superyacht Norway)

