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THE RISE OF SUPERYACHTS

Today's super yachts appear to have outgrown pleasure yacht marinas. These monster yachts have to berth in commercial docks and the size of their operations has more to do with commercial vessels than with yachts. True, but de facto only a small percentage of these yachts are in this monster size range. There are still a large number of these mega

yachts, which with their majestic presence grace the marinas around the world.

Definition of a Superyacht

What then, you would ask, is the definition of a super yacht? Had you asked that question 10 years ago, the answer would have been yachts over 80 feet LOA (length over all). This subsequently moved up to 100 feet LOA and do not be surprised if it moves up to say 135 feet LOA in the not too distant future.



He will look for a yacht that distinguishes itself from the production style yachts and look for a design that reflects his imagination of what his dream yacht should be. Luckily for him, there are a number of shipyards to turn to for the realisation of this dream. These shipyards specialise in custom built yachts.

Ever since the Dutch invented the word 'yacht' in the 17th century, they have set the standards for yacht building and over time the Dutch have kept on top of the competition. Today's best known super yacht brands are FeadShip, for motor yachts and Royal Huisman, for sailing yachts. Time and again they build award winning masterpieces in great demand by their clientele.

Size And Cost

This leads to the question of cost. A rule of thumb in today's market place is difficult to develop as the cost of building super yachts increases exponentially. For example a 100 feet LOA super yacht may be built for 10 million Euros. That same yard will build 135 feet LOA super yacht for 20 million Euros and 150 feet LOA for 30 million Euros. The reason for this is that with the increase of LOA, the volume of the hull increases exponentially and with it the size of not only the yacht's engines but all the systems to deliver the owner's objectives including climate control and sound insulation. There appears no economic justification but these yachts do represent absolute works of art uniquely perceived by their owners, designers and builders. These yachts offer status and pleasure to both their owners and guests and project the ultimate in affluent society. They also bring freedom of movement allowing their owners to explore uncharted waters and to create a palatial home away from home.

Super Yacht Owners

Who buys them? Super Yachts have always appealed to wealthy entrepreneurs, movie stars and aristocracy alike. Super yachts can be moved around to be their platform in any chosen playground in the world. In the late 1800s the new wealth competed with the kings in sailing competition in yachts well over 100ft. The Motor yachts were called tenders to the sailing

Why is there a moving goalpost? This in part is due to the great success of the major production brands whose shipyards build yachts in series production. Leading brands such as Sunseeker, Princess, Fairline and Ferretti have pushed the size envelope and produced flagships in the 90-110 feet LOA range in order to satisfy their customers who wish to upgrade to the next size. It is obvious that a yachtsman who has owned two or three production yachts will next look around for something truly unique and exclusive.



yachts and to play, one had to be substantially rich. The number of yachts over 100ft built in the early 1900's would not be repeated until the building boom of the 1980's started to push the pocket of the envelope and super yachts started to grow in size. Originally fuelled by Europeans and Americans, the oil money bought their fair shares of mega yachts and more recently the emerging economies in Russia, China and India will account for new super yacht owners bringing unique cultural heritage to the make up of these yachts.

Author

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is a yachtsman by passion. He grew up in a yachting environment and developed his sailing skills from a very young age. He sees the emerging yachting scene in Asia as a great challenge and is keen to assist the new boaters to get on the water!



International Rules & Regulations

Before you rush off to place an order for a new built super yacht, remember that size does matter. Whilst you could build or convert a yacht to any size, the

restrictions are created by international maritime law and national authorities of countries you may wish to visit. As soon as your yacht travels offshore, it must have a flag or nationality. Depending on the flag, your yacht will be subject to classification standards which in turn will cover safety related to the construction of the yacht and the safety of its operations at sea. Construction standards are set by organisations a.o. like Lloyds, Norske Veritas and American Bureau of Shipping. The integrity of these standards will be obvious in a new yacht, but in older yachts they must be surveyed from time to time to remain valid.

And finally, using the yacht at sea is governed by organisations like the Maritime & Coastal Agency who set the standards for safety at sea. This deals with a wide variety of issues but one of the more important ones is the required crew qualification.

Chartering, buying or building a super yacht is a complicated matter which requires expert advice from specialists. But once you have acquired your dream yacht, it will be your exclusive and unique home away from home. **IB**