

Throughout its history, Monaco has had an enduring connection to the sea.

# NEW FRONTIERS

South East Asia was the talk of the town at this year's Monaco Yacht Show, but does this fast-growing region actually have a superyachting market to show for it?

Photo ELISA BLOUET





By DOMINIQUE AFACAN

**O**n the surface, this year's Monaco Yacht Show was no different to any other. The champagne was flowing, the sky was dotted with helicopters and private jets, and Port Hercules was jam-packed with US\$2.7 billion (S\$3.8 billion) worth of superyachts.

Beyond all the glamour though, there were multi-million dollar deals to be done and this year's event saw an almost imperceptible shift; instead of focusing on established markets, such as the US and Europe, forward-thinking folks had one eye on Asia, home to 26.1 per cent of the world's billionaires, and with any luck, the next big deal in superyachting.

The demand has been a long time coming and despite positive signs, it's by no means speeding out of control yet. Cultural differences, lack of marina infrastructure and China's crackdown on corruption have all seen to that, but Jeremy Comport, a broker at Camper &

The length and draught of Kamino, 33.5m and 1.8m respectively, give her owners access to shallower depths and restricted mooring facilities that keep larger superyachts at bay.

Nicholsons ([www.camperandnicholsons.com](http://www.camperandnicholsons.com)), thinks it's a market worth listening to. "Yes, the trend for yacht ownership in Asia is still in its infancy, but with Asia having the fastest growing population and fastest increase in wealth worldwide, the trend for yachting and other luxury pastimes is inevitably catching up."

Several boats have already been commissioned for Asian owners by some of the leading European shipyards. Italian yard Benetti has 12 superyachts cruising in Asia with five more under construction. And Feadship's Kamino, part of a fleet of three 33.5m-long boats built for a Hong Kong client and his chums, caused something of a stir at the show.

More companies were lining up in Monaco

to offer further inspiration. Claydon Reeves ([www.claydonreeves.com](http://www.claydonreeves.com)), a superyacht design agency, unveiled Chuan, a superyacht concept aimed at the Asian buyer.

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Photo ARTHUR SMEETS

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Secluded sunbathing retreats, a spa bath, beautifully proportioned dining areas, and a walk-in beach club are just some of the luxurious features on Solaris.



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Mike Reeves, partner in the firm, says:

“On the exterior there’s a small nod to Asian architecture in the way we’ve handed the radar supports, which mirror a temple design. Beyond that, the focus is on a huge internal entertaining space. My understanding of the usual usage of Asian buyers is that they can’t spend long periods of time on board – they want to go out, have a jolly old time and come back, usually with large family groups.”

Despite this, Reeves is wary of stereotyping, preferring to work with clients on an individual basis. “There’s a real naivety that can creep in about ‘the Asian buyer’ and it doesn’t have to be that way. There are positive elements to take from Asian culture, architecture and design, but you don’t liberally apply them all to one boat.”

Assuming that buyers can commission the perfect superyacht, the next dilemma lies in where to keep it. Infrastructure is lagging, especially in China where as Reeves comments: “It’s hard to know where to put glossy yachts that aren’t rubbing up next to industrial boats.”

Most agree that the yachting hotspots are to be found elsewhere in Asia, many of which were represented at the Monaco show by Asia Pacific Superyachting.

Thailand, where the government has loosened tiresome regulations, looks to be



The 32m MCY 105 is the largest in Monte Carlo Yachts’ collection.

leading the pack, with Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar following close behind.

Mark Robba, who owns Dunia Baru ([duniabaru.com](http://duniabaru.com)), a superyacht based in Asia, thinks part of the region’s appeal lies in the fact that it’s still untapped.

“Dunia Baru spends most of the year cruising the Indonesian archipelago and there are many days when we don’t see any other boats.

We spent some time cruising the Mergui archipelago in Myanmar earlier this year and the same was true there, but to an even greater degree. It was like a lost world – deserted islands, vast horizons with no other vessels, isolated beaches and remote coves. Completely stunning. We are returning there at the end of this year because we loved it so much and we have had several charter requests.”

Chartering is often seen as a stepping stone to ownership, so it was unsurprising to see yet more charter brokers at the show, offering trips to the region for the months ahead. Whether those charters convert to sales would require a crystal ball, however.

In the meantime, Robba adds: “As the classic hotspots in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean get busier, and travellers start looking for more unique experiences, it is inevitable that South East Asia and its incredibly diverse cruising grounds are going to become even more popular.”

Set up for serious fun, Tiara comes with a four-by-four-metre Bedouin tent (inset), an outdoor cinema, an on-deck DJ set-up and an onboard kitesurfing instructor.



#### TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

The majestic 54m sailing yacht Tiara is available for charter in South East Asia for 2017. It can accommodate 10 guests in five cabins, and costs €180,000 (S\$275,000) per week. An open-air cinema, jacuzzi and a full range of watersports toys ensure you’ll have as much fun on the boat as off it. [ycolyacht/tiara](http://ycolyacht/tiara)

Photos ALEXIS ANDREWS