

# Dubai show anchors 450 boats

## Five-day event starting today to see 16 global launches

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DUBAI — The 24th edition of Dubai International Boat Show opening today will be the venue for unveiling 39 boats, including 16 global and 23 regional launches.

As a buoyant buying sentiment spurs small to medium boat market growth, the largest regional showcase of world's latest pleasure craft of all shapes, sizes, and uses assumes greater significance. This is reflected in the increased participation of yacht makers vying for share of the booming market which has seen the demand for big yachts grow six per cent annually since 2009.

The five-day event at Dubai International Marine Club, Mina Seyahi, is showcasing 450 boats, according to organisers, Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC). With more than 800 companies and brands from 55 countries exhibiting, over 25,000 visitors from over 120 countries are expected to attend.

This year, the show will extend to the beach for the first time, offering taster sessions of popular water sports. Other new features include hands-on experiences where visitors can learn the basics of owning and driving a boat, as well as fishing.

Organisers said the event is benefitting from regional currencies being linked to the strong US dollar, with United States' brands eyeing a market where selling prices remain on par with their own costs, while Europeans are able to offer greater value for money to Middle East buyers.

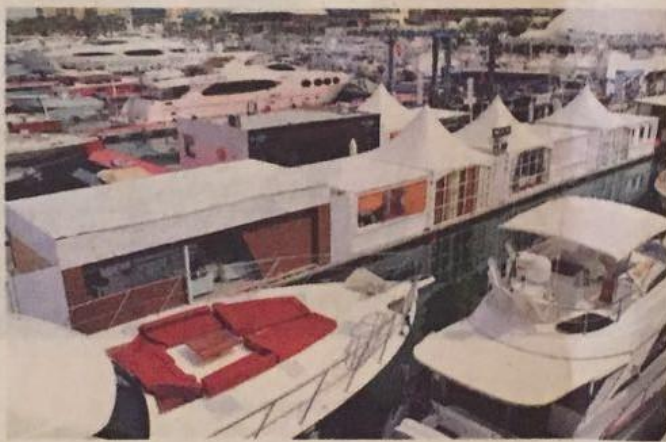
According to the Superyacht Builders' Association, among the Middle East's ultra high net worth individuals whose net worth is more than \$ 30 million), 55 per cent are likely to buy a yacht longer than 40 metres, representing the highest 'propensity to buy' for any region globally.

The UAE now consistently ranks among the major manufacturing nations for superyachts, according to the ShowBoats International Global Order Book, while official figures from Dubai Maritime City Authority reveal new licenses issued for water craft of all types more than doubled in 2015 when compared with the previous year: 1,623 licences issued, compared with 698 in 2014.

"For buyers of new boats, there is always a preference for new models, and especially those which



Gregor Stinner, Erwin Bamps, Mohammed Harib, Ahmed Al Khaja, Senior vice-president Venues Management, Dubai World Trade Centre. Roberto Zambrini and Trixie LohMirmand at the Press conference in Dubai on Monday. — Photos by JuidIn Bernarrd



Boats displayed during the 24th Dubai International Boat Show.

allow for some element of customisation," said Mohammed Harib, CEO of Dubai International Marine Club and Member of the Board. "Dubai has cemented its global reputation for new boat sales primarily on the excellence of the Dubai International Boat Show, with its wide and varying range of newly-launched boats on display each year."

The show is also establishing its name for supporting a full spectrum of water sports.

"We want Dubai International Boat Show to be an immersive experience for all visitors," said Saeed Harib, Secretary General of Dubai Sports Council, vice-president and chairman of Dubai International Marine Club —

Mina Seyahi, and senior advisor to the Dubai International Boat Show.

"With our coastline and warm weather, being on the water is an obvious recreational choice in the UAE. An important measure of our success going forward will be how effectively we encourage our residents and visitors to become more involved in boating and water sports."

"The UAE is one of the best yachting hubs in the world," said Erwin Bamps, CEO of Gulf Craft, the biggest single exhibitor at the Dubai International Boat Show.

An Emirates-based company with three shipyards in the UAE and one in the Maldives, Gulf Craft manufactures boats for a range of markets under four separate

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brands, and has been ranked among the world's top 10 superyacht builders.

Two members of the Superyacht Builders' Association will be launching new products — a first for the event. These are a global launch by Netherlands-based Heesen Yachts, and Italy's Mondomarine.

"The Middle East unveiling of the M/Y Serenity, the first of the new SF line, is particularly significant for us," said Mondomarine co-owner, Roberto Zambrini.

ART Marine, the Middle East's largest 360-degree leisure yachting enterprise, and one of the show's largest annual exhibitors, sees Dubai International Boat Show as an essential event.

"As a business, we don't just operate in Dubai or the UAE, and we work to reach customers in every market where we have a presence," said Gregor Stinner, CEO of ART Marine.

"Dubai International Boat Show has been serving the boating community for almost 25 years, and we are growing with that community," said Trixie LohMirmand, Senior Vice President of DWTC.

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