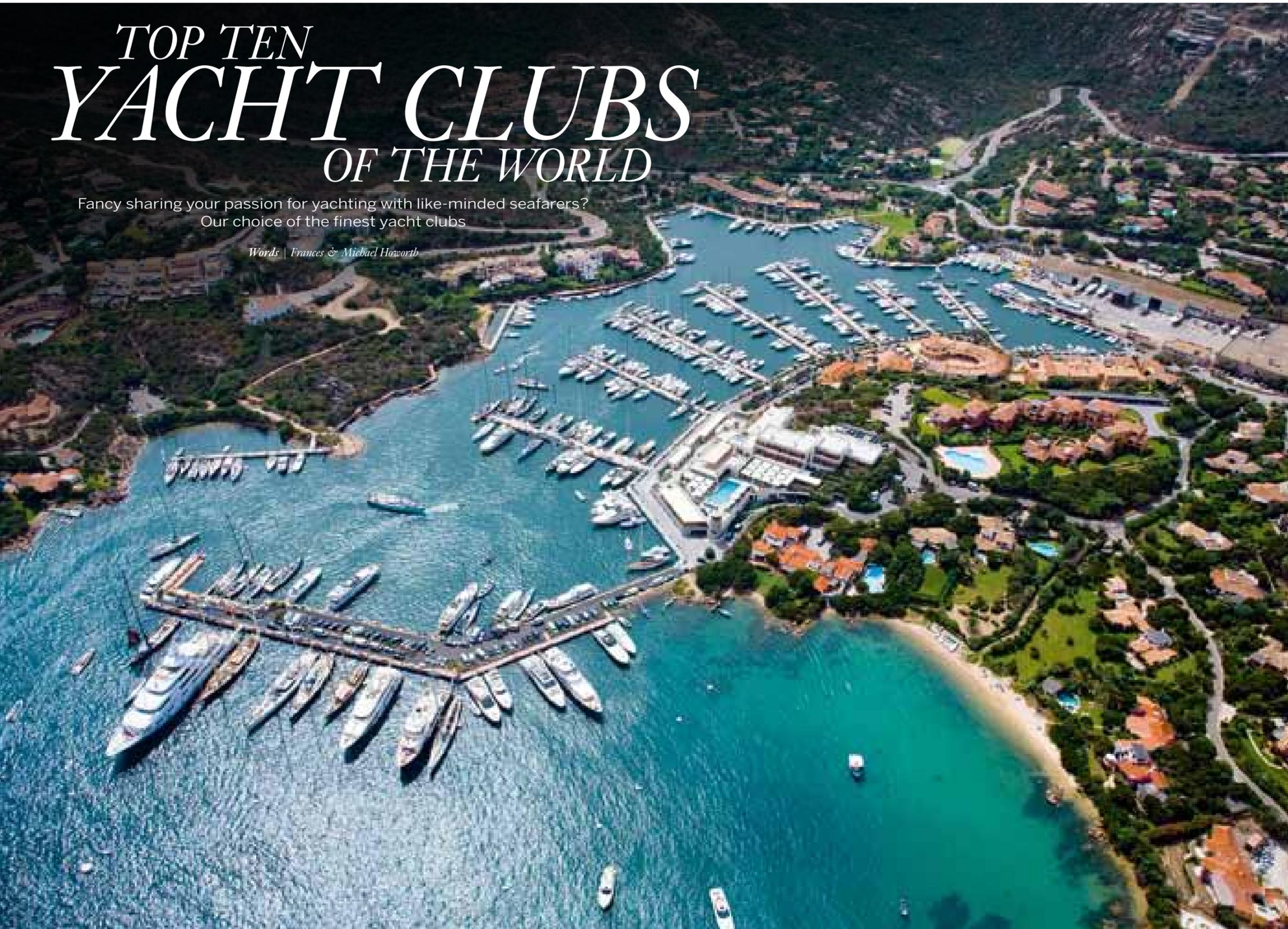


TOP TEN YACHT CLUBS OF THE WORLD

Fancy sharing your passion for yachting with like-minded seafarers?
Our choice of the finest yacht clubs

Words | Frances & Michael Horwath



This is a highly ACTIVE club, seen as a hub for REAL yachting

Yacht Club Costa Smeralda

Founded 1967

When YCCS opened in Porto Cervo, Northern Sardinia, it quickly became an important hub in the Med social scene. His Highness the Aga Khan and four friends set up the club as a non-profit sporting association for fellow passionate sailing fans. Today's clubhouse, totally renovated in 2003 by New York architect Peter Marino, has floor-to-ceiling windows and Italian beach-house-style décor. Facilities include a panoramic pool terrace, restaurant, members' lounge and wellness centre. The clubhouse also has 24 suites for members and their guests, each with a private terrace.

What's on International regattas are an important part of the club's activities, and these include superyacht events such as the Dubois Cup, Loro Piana Regatta and the Perini Navi Cup.

Join because Over half of the roughly 500 full members own one or more yachts and this is a highly active club, seen as a hub for real yachting.

Membership Two current members 'of good standing' must sponsor and support a new applicant. www.yccs.it



Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club

Founded 1890

Formed when yacht racing in Hong Kong became popular and needed a central point of management and soon granted a royal warrant. Initially, it was open only to British members (with a board of military personnel), though those murky colonial origins are now long forgotten and the cosmopolitan club welcomes all. Even though Hong Kong reverted to China in 1997, the club remains one of the region's few institutions to keep the 'Royal' prefix. As well as the main Kellett Island site (above) there are two smaller clubhouses at Shelter Cove near Sai Kung, and Middle Island.

What's on Over 100 sailing and rowing events are organised every year, including the Rolex China Sea Race.

Join because This is one of the oldest and most prestigious sports clubs in Hong Kong and its regattas are hugely popular. There is a thriving social scene, with rowing and small-boat sailing proving very popular. It also boasts a strong membership with 4,000-plus expats and locals, as well as 6,700 members based abroad.

Membership Applicants must be proposed and seconded by members and there is a waiting list. www.rhkyc.org.hk



Royal Thames Yacht Club

Founded 1775
 This is the oldest sailing club in Britain and one of the five oldest in the world, established by the Duke of Cumberland, brother of King George III. Members originally met in coffee houses, but from 1857 the club has been based in London, moving in 1923 to its present location at 60 Knightsbridge, overlooking Hyde Park. Events initially took place on the Thames but as the Solent became an increasingly important yachting hub, many activities moved there.
What's on Cruises and races are arranged not just in the UK but also throughout the world – in May there is a

sailing rally in Greece, starting on Poros. The club also organises the Cumberland Cup, a major team racing contest that involves the leading yacht clubs of the world.
Join because The club is rich with tradition and boasts a worldwide membership. A particular attraction is the Knightsbridge clubhouse, with 'cabins' for overnight stays, convenient for some of the best shops in London.
Membership New members are welcome but they must have a strong background in sailing and be personally recommended by four members.
www.royalthames.com

Yacht Club de Monaco

Founded 1953
 The first regattas were held in the bay of Monaco in the second half of the 19th Century, and a Société de Régates was established by Prince Albert I in 1888. The current club was founded by Rainier III in 1953, and it has continued to provide a focus for yachting in the Principality. A new clubhouse is under construction at the end of the Quai des Etats-Unis (shown right), due for completion next year.
What's on Racing is a significant part of the club's activities, including the HSH Prince Albert Cup held every two years. Social events are also an important part of the calendar.
Join because There's nowhere better to mingle with fellow yacht enthusiasts in the region. Today, the club opens its pristine doors to more than 800 members of 44 nationalities.
Membership Applicants must be proposed and seconded by members. A committee chaired by Prince Albert II approves memberships twice a year.
www.yacht-club-monaco.mc



Royal Swedish Yacht Club

Founded 1830
 The Kungliga Svenska Segel Sällskapet was founded in Skeppsholmen in Stockholm by wealthy city folk who wanted to race yachts, gaining royal status in 1978. It is Sweden's largest and oldest yacht club with over 6,000 members, 1,500 of whom own boats and participate regularly in events. The club owns and operates three separate premises: the main Saltsjöbaden clubhouse and two at Långholmen and Lökholmen, islands in the Stockholm archipelago.
What's on The most important event of the year is the Stockholm-Gotland Race

and the club sponsors 12 other smaller regattas. Non-yachting events popular with members are organised during winter months, such as its fashion show.
Join because Although boasting a strong heritage, the club is vibrantly alive and free from the fussiness that tradition can sometimes bring. It embraces youth and new members, and focuses on training future world-class sailors as well as those who just enjoy the sea.
Membership Applicants pay a joining fee and an annual subscription. There is currently no waiting list for membership.
www.ksss.se



New York Yacht Club

Founded 1844
 This legendary club, one of the most exclusive in the world, was founded when yacht builder John Cox Stevens proposed the idea to eight fellow enthusiasts on board his yacht *Gimcrack* in 1844. The club opened three days later. In 1851 Stevens' took his *America* to race 14 yachts from the Royal Yacht Squadron. He won, and the race was renamed the America's Cup in his honour. Famously, when a watching Queen Victoria asked which boat had taken second place she was told: "Ah, your Majesty, there is no second", immortalising the spirit of the committed but friendly competition of the event ever since.
What's on The annual summer cruise is one of the highlights of this club's extensive calendar of activities. Its regatta has taken place every year since 1845 and the NYYC Race Week at Newport is presented by Rolex. Other events include team racing, transatlantic racing and international social events.
Join because They don't come much more exclusive than this. Over half of NYYC's 3,200 members are yacht owners and all are passionate about yachting. The beautiful Beaux-Arts New York clubhouse on West 44th Street (above) is spectacular, as is Harbour Court in Newport (left), which has dining and accommodation.
Membership By invitation only.
www.nyyc.org

They don't come much more EXCLUSIVE than this



Royal Bermuda Yacht Club

Founded 1844
 Formed by officers in the British Army stationed on the island, this is the third oldest club holding a royal warrant outside the British Isles and it has one of Hamilton's best waterfront locations. It runs several high-profile yachting events, but its most famous is June's Newport-Bermuda Race, which started here in 1906. The oldest repeatedly scheduled ocean race for amateur sailors in regular boats, it is the first event of the Onion Patch series, which also includes two inshore races in Bermuda. The Newport-Bermuda runs on alternate years – 200 yachts are expected to take part this year.
What's on Other annual sailing events organised in the islands include the Bermuda Gold Cup, the world's oldest match-racing competition for one-design yachts. This event attracts America's Cup competitors as well as

top-ranked match-racing sailors. The club believes in investing in the next generation of sailors and over 100 young people participate in summer sailing programmes (adults can learn to sail here, too).
Join because The yacht club is more than just a destination for an ocean race. With around 750 full members, two-thirds resident in the territory, it is a perfect way to connect with others in the key industries on the island. It is also a social centre with lots of family activities. The club's three-bedroom suites are popular with overseas and reciprocal members.
Membership Applicants must be proposed and seconded with letters of recommendation from members. You must then meet six of the committee and be approved for membership by the board of governors.
www.rbyc.bm

It is a PERFECT place to CONNECT with like-minded people on the island



Royal Yacht Squadron

Founded 1815
 Originally proudly calling itself simply 'the Yacht Club', the RYS, whose base is Cowes Castle, was founded in a tavern in St James's, London. Membership was originally open to "gentlemen who owned a vessel not under 10 tons". Today, the club has dropped the tonnage requirement but members must be actively interested in yachting. The Prince Regent became a member in 1817; 'royal' was added to the name on his coronation and a lasting link with the monarchy was formed. Prince Philip is a former commodore and the Queen is patron. In 1833 the club became the Royal Yacht Squadron by command of William IV. The club also has a long

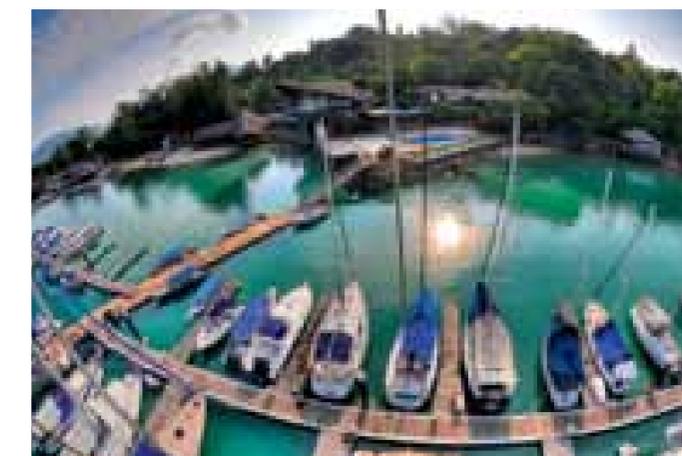
association with the Royal Navy and Nelson's flag captain at Trafalgar, Sir Thomas Hardy, was among its early members. Sir Robin Knox-Johnston is a member, as are members of royal families from all over the world. What's on Most famous for the America's Cup and the celebrated annual Cowes Week regatta, racing is an important part of the Royal Yacht Squadron's activities, most of which take place in the Solent. Join because You'll be a member of one of the most exclusive clubs in the world where nautical traditions are strong. Membership Members are proposed and seconded from within.
www.rys.org.uk



St Francis Yacht Club, San Francisco

Founded 1927
 Located close inside the Golden Gate, this club fronts some of the most dramatic sailing waters on earth. The clubhouse is on the site of the schooner *Yankee*, which served repeated terms as the club's flagship. The St Francis also has a station at Tinsley Island on the San Joaquin River, the club's summer getaway and home to its autumn cruise.
What's on The club has one of the most active programmes in the world, from the springtime Zellerbach Regatta to the club's signature event, the Rolex Big Boat Series. There are summertime

evening competitions and the docks are bustling every weekend. In addition there are social nights, extravagant amateur theatricals and yoga classes.
Join because "St Francis Yacht Club is about the spirit of the members and their commitment to excellence," says former commodore John McNeill. "We have a beautiful clubhouse, but without that 'spirit of us' the clubhouse is only a shell filled with trophy cases and models and paintings."
Membership New members require up to three sponsors. Find out more on the website, or call +1 415 563 6363.
www.stfyc.com



Royal Langkawi Yacht Club

Founded 1996
 This relatively young club has positioned itself at the forefront of boating in Malaysia. It has grown in tandem with the development of the island of Langkawi, and both have emerged as the heart of sailing and yachting on Malaysia's north-west coast. The marina facilities have expanded from 44 to 200 berths with room for yachts up to 60 metres. The distinctive open-style clubhouse was designed and built to blend into the landscape of the island. Its imposing, elegant structure is shaped to resemble a ship's hull pointing towards the open sea.

What's on The annual Royal Langkawi International Regatta, which takes place in January 2013.
Join because The club serves as a marina and members have priority for dockage. It has an impressive list of reciprocal arrangements with other top yacht clubs in Asia and Australia, including the Royal Hong Kong. The onsite dining is a major attraction of the club, as is its stunning location.
Membership There are different types of membership, some involving nominations and fees. Local residents can join at a reduced rate.
www.langkawi yachtclub.com