



Make your mind up

It's time to find out whether you are a Martha or an Arthur enquires ONBOARD's resident sage

I am beginning to find that the Superyacht industry does not know if it is Arthur or Martha. It's not a sexual identity problem, more of an awareness thing. In one corner we have a group of folk who think the industry is too exclusive and that for the greater good we should make it less so. They argue that more owners would bring more yachts more jobs and more cash. In the other corner sits the group who perhaps for their own good want to keep it something akin to a rich old boys club where you cannot be a member of the club unless you already own your own yacht.

At this point I want to point out it is not the owners that think this. Instead it is the vast army of hangers on who claim to know what the owner wants. Best not to get me started on that subject, I get hot under the collar when it is aired and might well write about it in an upcoming column!

Back to my point! The group that wants more owners more boats etc., can be identified as being composed of shipyards, designers, refitters and the myriad of suppliers who keep the industry rolling. Spearheading the shipyard argument is SYBAss or Superyacht Builders Association whose aim is to unite and represent builders of large yachts. Their main goal is to facilitate communication between members and their clients, and the wider industry.

They have done a huge amount towards demystifying the conception of superyacht ownership and by their formulated presence at yacht shows have brought several new owners into the fold. If SYBAss looks after the affairs of the builder then the Association of Yacht Support Services better known as AYSS wave the flag for the other guys. Again their message is simple. It proclaims that superyachting is fun, it is to be enjoyed and that it is not at all exclusive.

On the other side of the fence there is the grouping that would rather things become a little more club like. The MYBAs and LYBRAs of this world promote an elitist agenda that says our members are better than those who do not belong. It is not done maliciously of that I am quite sure and in fact if you sit down and talk with individual members you will find they abhor the very idea of limiting the industry. The associations are not alone. The media has its part to play.

Two well respected publishing groups specialist in the superyacht field have created their owners clubs which enhance the solidarity aspect and attempt to marginalise the outsider. Code words are needed to enter websites that purport to promote owning a yacht. Fleet Street plays its part sending down to the Monaco Show your graduate trainees straight out of college to write about a world they know nothing about.

The Daily Snail and the Torygraph are just two examples where hacks have arrived in Monaco and written nothing more than this yacht costs a squillion quid a metre to build and run and it doesn't even have solid gold taps and, oh yes little Miss Celebrity No One flashed her tits on the aft deck of this one. Why on earth don't these guys just ask the guys who know the difference between a Lurssen and a Grottycraft?

To their very great credit both sides promote the ideals of safety and professionalism in an industry that is slowly taking head of the message and for that we who do not belong in either camp should be grateful.

Now I am not saying which side is in the right or who is wrong but to the industry as a whole Salty Seadog says, "For the good of the industry make you mind up – Inclusive or Exclusive!"