

SUPER MARINAS

As new marinas develop worldwide, so the cruising opportunities for superyachts to visit exotic superports expand. Frances and Michael Howorth highlight new docking facilities available all over the world, review marina complexes opened in the last year or due to open soon and ask can all of them survive?



In a world where many wonder about the future of superyacht building programmes, no one, it seems, thinks there will be a let up in the ongoing worldwide craving for superyacht docks. Marinas, their design, funding, siting, building, maintenance and day to day operating, seem to grow daily, adding strength to the industry sector's already-strong foothold.

While building yards are fretting over where the next order might be coming from those who commission the building of new marinas hold no such fears. It seems that those who build and operate docks for supersailing yachts believe that no matter what, there will always be a demand for down time dockage spaces used by sailing yachts between races and charters.

Anna Tarbone, sales director of Camper & Nicholson's Marinas, says: "We are confident that the business of marina construction and operation will weather the world's current economic situation. Indeed, given the contracts signed recently by us with marina owners, all the indications are that the construction of new marinas for superyachts shows no sign of let up in the immediate future."

This could just be putting a brave face on it. Others tell a different story. A conference organised by Quaynote Communications entitled the Future of Marinas and Refit Facilities and aimed at senior executives with a vested interest in the development or operation of yacht marinas was scheduled to be held in Malta during October 2009. Because of poor support, it has been rescheduled for April next year.

Computer-generated imagery of Yas Island Marina overlooking the Formula One Grand Prix circuit in Abu Dhabi



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Above: futuristic-looking design by Philippe Starck (below) for the new enlargement to Port Adriano on Mallorca.
Right: Grand Harbour Marina in Malta's capital Valletta



The Mediterranean

There is certainly no sign of a slowdown in the Mediterranean. Xiqui Mas, chairman of **Vilanova Grand Marina**, Barcelona, was at the Monaco Yacht Show in September for an award ceremony and told us his marina opened its doors in April this year offering 49 berths for yachts from 80-260ft/25-80m with all the necessary services to meet the requirements of captains, owners and crews. The marina, located in the inner basin of Vilanova Port, integrates with Barcelona's infrastructure and technical areas which specialise in repair and refit projects, and provides added value to the marina. www.vilanovagrandmarina.com

Port Adriano on Mallorca has been around since the early 1990s, but it too is chasing the supersail dollar by commissioning the French industrial designer Philippe Starck to produce an ambitious enlargement project which entails the building of a new breakwater parallel to the existing one, creating 82 berths of up to 200ft/60m. The first of these new berths will be delivered in May 2010 and the port will be fully operational by January 2011. www.portadriano.com

Guaranteed for completion before May 2011, sales of some 900 berths at **Marina Bizerte**, a purpose-built luxury marina on the Tunisian Mediterranean coastline, are now underway.

The financial benefits of buying one of these berths are competitive, with the annual cost for the duration of the 50-year lease 12 times cheaper than the cost of a similar mooring in Antibes. Furthermore, fuel costs in Tunisia are roughly 50 per cent

lower than those in Europe. VAT breaks from moving a yacht outside the European Union provide further significant savings. One captain of a 187ft/57m yacht declared: "With the cost savings the owner will make, he can put the senior crew on rotation and still be way ahead."

Marina Bizerte is well positioned in the heart of the Mediterranean, allowing quick passage to many key yachting destinations. Local cruising opportunities along the beautiful and still mostly untouched Tunisian coastline are abundant. The country has year-round sunshine and, being further south, mostly better weather than France or Italy at the beginning and end of the summer. The Mediterranean sailing season in Tunisia is therefore longer than in other sailing hubs. www.marinabizerte.com

Using Monaco as a conceptual design blueprint, designers have ambitious plans for the Arsenal at Tivat, currently a somewhat derelict port and former naval dockyard in Montenegro, part of what was once Yugoslavia. They plan to convert the old naval base there into a marina that will become, they hope, a rival to the Principality for superyachts cruising the Mediterranean.

Work on **Porto Montenegro**, as the new marina will be called, has already begun and when completed will offer berths for 800-plus yachts, repair facilities, hotels, restaurants and shops. The £200 million project is the idea of Hungarian-born businessman and philanthropist Peter Munk from Canada, whose friendship with Milo Djukanovic, the prime minister of Montenegro, has been a catalyst. He is bringing together other investors,





including Bernard Arnault, the French luxury goods magnate, and Oleg Deripaska, the Russian mining billionaire, along with British-based Lord Rothschild and his son Nat. www.portmontenegro.com

Also in Croatia is the NCP Group (Nautical Center Prgin) marina, home to the **Mandalina Marina and Yacht Club**. Situated in the central part of the Croatian Adriatic coast, in the historical town of Šibenik, the marina is operated by IGY (Island Global Yachting) and has 350 berths for sailing yachts up to 250ft/76m, offering a comprehensive range of on-site conveniences for superyacht owners, their guests and crew members. www.ncp.hr and www.igymarinas.com

The ground breaking ceremony took place in October for another Turkish development, Camper & Nicholson's Marinas' **Cesme Marina**, located on the Izmir peninsula in the Aegean. Currently undergoing redevelopment, the marina is set in a natural harbour and, when finished in May 2010, will provide 375 berths up to 100ft/30m. www.cnmarinas.com

As a result of all this activity, C&N Marinas are expanding their berth sales operations. Using knowledge accrued, they are now offering a service to berth owners in the South of France and on the Italian Riviera.

Olivier Morvan, berth brokerage manager, explains: "We now have berths for sale on the French Riviera and Liguria, with over 60 berths from 30ft-300ft/10-90m for sale, including berths in Antibes, Golfe Juan, Saint Jean Cap Ferrat and Cap d'Ail with licences expiring in 2021 or 2024." www.cnmarinas.com

The Caribbean

The big question for most captains cruising the Caribbean is: what can marinas do for them in the down times, when the owner or charter guests are not aboard? Supersailing yachts still need a place to berth and today's most successful marinas are those with the most flexible attitude.

At IGY, marina managers are empowered to work with each captain individually to meet their requirements and overall financial goals. They aim to look at the whole season with the captain, using their network of Caribbean marinas, offering long-term berthing rates that cover multiple destinations across the region. More nights booked across the network translates into serious savings.

Kenny Jones, executive vice president of marina operations for IGY, says: "There is still tremendous demand for quality berthing, especially in the mega and superyacht categories. For the upcoming Caribbean season, we are expecting another great winter. However, we are finding some interesting trends taking place. Captains are looking for value in every aspect of their berthing. They choose our marinas because they know their guests are going to have the highest level of in-slip experience, amenities, service, excursions in a fabulous destination."

From the Virgin Islands to St Lucia, IGY have a string of new berthing facilities created specifically for superyachts – **Yacht Haven Grande** in St Thomas, **the Yacht Club at Isle de Sol** in Sint Maarten and **Rodney Bay** in St Lucia, for instance. www.igymarinas.com

Port Louis marina in Grenada, operated by Camper &

Adding a superyacht shine to Port Louis Marina, Grenada, with 20 new berths for yachts up to 300ft/90m





The marina at Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, showing the model (above) and the reality (right). The marina was flooded in preparation for the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix in November

Nicholsons Marinas will soon be adding further superyacht berths with the completion of its next phase that will see another 20 berths created. These will cater for yachts from 100ft-300ft/30-90m and the berths are available for annual, seasonal or short-term rental as well as for sale.

When the next phase of the marina is completed at the beginning of December it will provide 170 berths and it is expected that the most interest will come from the superyacht sector. www.cnmarinas.com

The company recently signed an operating agreement with **Cockleshell Bay Marina** in St Kitts through its owners the Toronto-based St Michael Development Ltd, creating a ten-year operating agreement which commenced on 1 September. The partnership between the two companies covers the development and operation of the 153-berth marina on the southern coast of the island. Work will begin in January 2010 and the marina is scheduled to open in November 2012. www.cnmarinas.com

Again in St Kitts, White House Bay is currently a small and secluded spot in the south-west of the island unspoilt by man. But just behind the beach lies an attractive expanse of water that fills what was once the crater of a volcano. Plans are well-advanced to develop this area and create a marina village to be called **Christophe Harbour** by blasting and dredging a channel from the sea into the caldera. Once complete, there will be room for 12 superyachts over 200ft/60m. www.christopheharbour.com

The rest of the world

In the Middle East, the Abu Dhabi Government has issued tenders for what could become one of the region's largest marina projects at Mina Zayed on the tip of Abu Dhabi Island. Tentatively called **Marina Zayed**, it would contain 500 berths for superyachts up to 590ft/180m and, while still in the early screening and feasibility stages, it could become the home for

Too many marinas?

Is demand great enough to sustain all these marinas? Speaking at the Monaco Yacht Show Sir Christopher Lewinton, chairman of Camper & Nicholson's Marina Investments, admitted: "During the six months to 30 June 2009 the Group made a loss before tax of €2.2 million on sales of €1.3 million. While the first 6 months of 2009 show a continuing, but slightly reduced operating loss, I am pleased to report that we are making good progress towards the completion of the development phase of this business, which we expect to be completed within the next two years."

He added: "Our plan shows we are cash sufficient through to the end of this period. Although we do not expect to be profitable until 2011, we're there to be a pick up in berth sales in the near term it would significantly improve the profitability of the business."

Later he said: "Although caution on the economic climate, demonstrated by the lack of berth sales, has proved justified, we go forward with confidence." www.cnmarinas.com



future superyacht shows similar to the one hosted in the area earlier this year. The proposal came just as another new marina at **Yas Island** was flooded ahead of the Formula One Grand Prix which took place on 1 November – the marina overlooks the circuit. www.yasisland.ae

Further south superyachting in Oman is set for expansion with the development of a network of marinas that will open up cruising on the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea coast, which extends south for some 1,000 miles from the mountainous Musandam area in the north.

Currently Oman has just one marina facility, **Marina Al Bandar Rawdah** in Muscat. The lack of other berthing and mooring facilities has restricted the development of boating, especially cruising, as the coastline and waters, although beautiful, are somewhat rugged and exposed. www.omanworldtourism.com

According to Mohammed Al-Sinani, director general of planning at the Ministry of Tourism in Oman: "There are 13 new marina projects either under construction or in the advance stage of planning, ranging from **Khasab** in the Musandam to **Salalah** in the south. All of these projects are due for completion within the next five years." www.igyamarinas.com