

Marine mecca

With the luxury leisure marine market surging ahead in tandem with regional consumer confidence in the Middle East, organisers are promising the largest ever Dubai International Boat Show in March 2017. **Captain Michael Howorth** looks ahead

More than 50 countries will attend the Dubai International Boat Show as exhibitors this year, as well as four dedicated pavilions from Australia, Italy, America and Turkey, with the US highlighting global interest and investment in the lucrative Middle East market.

The show is also expected to draw more than 26,000 visitors from over 70 different countries, including 5,000 VIPs and key buyers. Superyacht owner and enthusiast His Highness Sheikh

Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum will join regional royalty and top buyers from Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, together with thousands of visitors from Africa, Asia and China. Heading up a strong visitor footfall from Europe and America is the British Ambassador to the UAE Mr Philip Parham.

Boat owners walking the docks in Dubai are no longer looking for the best deals, but instead they are looking for

up-to-date models and more premium brands within the 15-20-metre flybridge category. For those with cash to splash, Tankoa Yachts from Italy will have on display the largest and perhaps most expensive yacht in the show; the 69-metre *Suerte*.

Commonly requested specifications are superior air conditioning units and stabilisers for larger yachts, with more and more clients seeking support in securing adequate berth. The pre-owned market also remains strong

in the UAE, with a plethora of excellent deals and luxury brands at the show.

In recent years, the marine landscape has been redefined, with growing numbers of marinas and destinations to explore, and an increasing launch of waterfront residential developments. Superyacht owners are looking to experience the same lavish lifestyle they enjoy at home, on the water.

This growing desire for the home-away-from-home experience is creating a demand for larger, more luxurious yachts. Ambitious waterfront projects, such as the Dubai Canal, are dotting the Gulf coast with stunning lifestyle destinations, ➤

Main: Dubai's Mina Sehayi prepares for the 25th Dubai International Boat show and more than 400 luxury yachts



Portfolio

DUBAI BOAT SHOW

creating opportunities for owners to venture as far, or as close, as they like to enjoy their craft. With the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increasing its forecast economic growth for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an increase in new local boat project builds will become a solid contributor to the region's steadily growing leisure marine market.

Industry data has shown that the Middle East ultra-high net worth individual market has the highest propensity to buy a superyacht. This, combined with the region's natural affinity with the sea, on going waterfront developments in the Gulf, and a strong passion for travel and

exploration, makes both the UAE and the wider region an ideal market for superyachts. Locally based in Ajman UAE, the Gulf Craft shipyard has recently announced its intentions to enter the 50-metre plus market and much will be made of the news at this year's show. Company COO Erwin Bamps has confirmed that

full details of the all new *Majesty 200* and *Majesty 175* will be on display at the show.

It is not only a show for local producers. Great Britain will be represented by well established brands that include Princess, Sunseeker and Fairline, a company celebrating 50 years of boatbuilding this year.

Pictured: Tankoa Yachts (below) will be among more than 800 luxury brands on display at the 2017 Dubai International Boat Show

Represented by Royal Yachts, Fairline will have on display their new *Squadron 48*, a boat valued at around AED2.5m, that is perfectly suited to the waters of the Gulf. Saeed Al Hajri, the Qatari rally driver is a special VIP guest of Fairline and will be on their stand. American boats from Sea Ray will be on display including the *Sundance 450*, the *L590* and the *L650 Fly*, which is equally sure to be a hit in these waters.
boatshowdubai.com

The 25th Dubai International Boat Show, the MENA's leading luxury yacht platform, runs from 28 February to 4 March 2017 at Dubai International Marine Club, Mina Seyahi, and will feature 840 exhibiting companies and brands; a 12% increase on 2016. Organisers have confirmed there are expected to be more than 430 boats on display, both on land and in water. With Dubai International Airport located 5km southeast from the city, the show is an easy 20-25-minute drive away. Unlike many shows in the west, the intense heat governs show timings in Dubai, consequently the doors do not open until 15:00 each day, closing 21:30 at night.

