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MONACO YACHT SHOW

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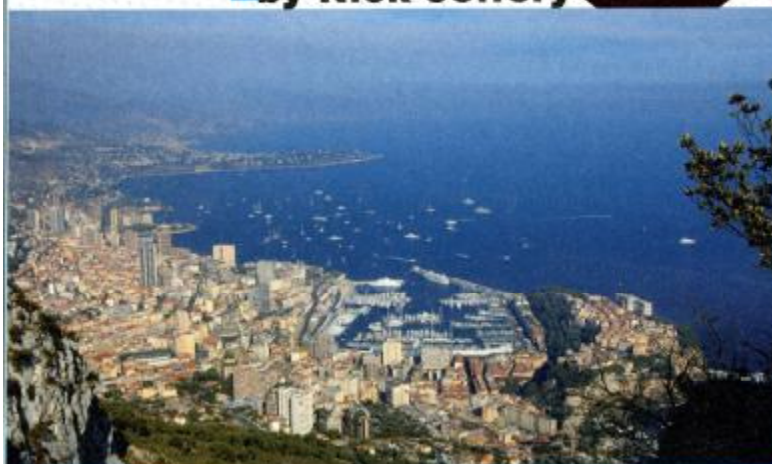


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Monaco world capital of yachting

by Nick Jeffery



Serial yacht builder and serious gambler Kenneth Clark arrived in Monaco for the 1903 winter season aboard his new G.L. Watson & Co. designed steam yacht *Katoomba II*. The casino was the main focus of his attentions but when Mme Heriot (mother of famous sailor Virginie Heriot) enquired if she might visit his palatial yacht he gladly invited her. Evidently impressed, she lightly remarked that she « would give anything for such a yacht ». « Anything? » enquired the gambler to which his guest answered favorably but added that she would want immediate possession. That night Mr Clark moved into the Hotel de Paris whilst Mme Heriot enjoyed her new 250-foot steam yacht.

Dr William Collier, Managing Director of G.L. Watson & Co. (the world's first yacht design studio), provided this anecdote and, as a preeminent classic yacht restoration specialist, is the type of guest one might expect to find aboard the Yacht Club de Monaco's gaff cutter *Tuga*, celebrating her centenary this year in the Monaco Classic Week (16-20 September).

About the same time, in 1905, Albert 1er, Prince of Monaco, said at a conference: « I sincerely hope that, by enlarging the horizon of oceanographic studies for you, I have been able to show you that marine spaces – so much more vast than terrestrial spaces – possess countless subjects for study among which biologists and afterwards philosophers, will find material and intellectual riches for humanity ».

Monaco's marine spaces and territorial waters (extending 12 nautical miles offshore) are larger than its two square kilometers of terrestrial space. Nicholas Edmiston – one of the Principality's subjects worthy of study – believes the recent extension of the port was one of the significant factors in attracting visiting yachts to stay: « It is now a safe haven, well protected providing a comfortable anchorage, even with an Easterly swell outside », adding « it is also a nice place to live, crime-free with excellent security – and no paparazzi ».

Monaco is like a society hostess that can appear almost austere to newcomers but after a few months of subtly courting her and confiding your interests – while she discreetly has your background checked out – she may invite you to stay and even open a few doors for you. A number of top yachting brands' directors have won her over and enjoy the benefits of her 'little black book'. But you'll need to use plenty of charm and assets to get on her A-List for the glamorous balls or the private Grand Prix parties. It's a unique environment where an early-morning run along Larvotto beach or a stroll around the port at lunchtime could have you bump into superyacht owners, major industry players or even stars (Michelin ones on the Port Palace terrace). A birthday party aboard the 73m *Silver* last spring saw one rock star at the edge of her outdoor dance floor – more exclusive than Jimmy's that night – overlooked by thousands of windows. *Silver* is one of this year's most significant sales to date – naturally involving a Monaco broker and a Monaco Yacht Show soirée last September.



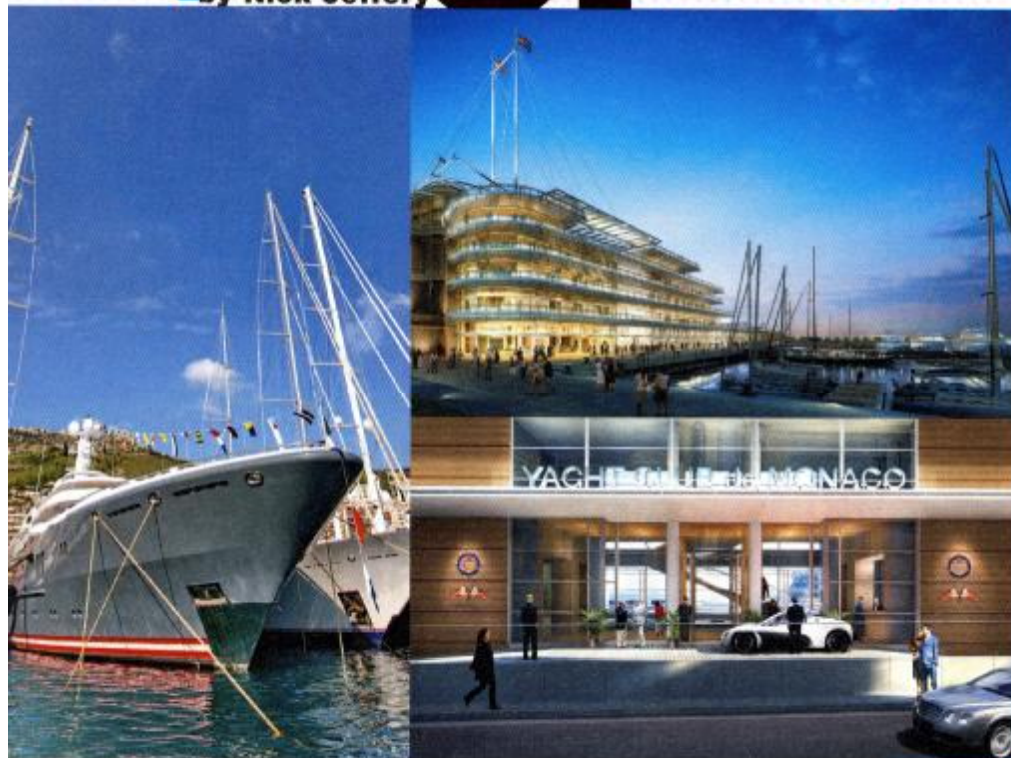
Luc Pettavino, President of the Chambre Monégasque du Yachting, links the Principality and yachting « Monaco is important for yachting and yachting important for Monaco. It is a longterm source of prestige and income for Monaco, with great potential to grow as Monaco is now the premier yachting port of the world ». As for the Monaco Yacht Show that he has presided over for nearly two decades, he adds: « Professional and private clients have identified for some time now, that this is the premier rendezvous for top-end yachting. The F1 Grand Prix and MYS are the two most prestigious and highest-grossing annual events for the Principality ».

Leading brands such as Wally – founded in Monaco in 1993 – choose Monaco as « the only place to be! », Liveras Yachts – owners of some of the world's largest and most successful charter yachts, with spas to match Les Thermes Marins de Monte Carlo – has been here for a decade while countless brokerage houses (Burgess, C&N, Charter & Charter, Edmiston, Fraser, Imperial, Moravia, Ocean, IYC, Yacht-zoo, YCO, YPI...) between them closing the majority of large yacht sales deals worldwide, expand and contract their office space according to market share. Independent consultants are ubiquitous too – Paul Archer of Arrow Yachts who set up 14 years ago, operating at 'the other port' in Monaco's business district, Fontvieille, says « It is a service centre with a critical mass... on the Riviera, where the yachts are – a tremendous advantage over offices in London or the Isle of Man ». Only Yacht was established in Monaco just a couple of years ago and has quickly gained market share in yacht insurance, its local advertising and sponsorships, together with its property connections no doubt giving it a boost – and Riviera Radio, next door, broadcasting to every yacht from Sanremo to St Tropez.



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Even those not based in Monaco still choose it as a display platform and frequently visit to meet clients and trade. Dutch builder ICON Yachts launched itself three years ago at MYS and this year has chosen to unveil the first new, much-anticipated, ICON 62 in the port. Her designers, Redman Whiteley Dixon, who have attended the show since its beginning, run RWD Tour Auto – a classic car rally from their studios in Beauteux, UK – to Monaco. The convoy of branded Porsches, Ferraris and well-preserved English bodywork passing the Automobile Club de Monaco up past the Casino Square, attracts almost as much attention as advertising pages in the leading media. Boat International hosts an annual party at l'Hermitage, this year launching The Superyachts book in Monaco rather than London. ShowBoats International has held its awards and Bal de la Mer in Monaco for nearly 20 years, Boat Exclusive launched at Monaco last year, while the Financial Times hosts its FT Business of Luxury Summit – now in its fifth year – in Monaco, with the likes of LVMH's Chairman & CEO Bernard Arnaut in the line-up. MCM celebrates its 21st anniversary in Monaco this year, one of many yacht show parties that vie for a slot in journalists' agendas.

Researching material for the book 'Luxury Toys – Mega Yachts' and enjoying a lunch on the terrace of naval architect Espen Osino, he confirmed that he and his team « find inspiration looking at the boats coming in and out of the port » and « due to the high concentration of professionals – and of clients – it is effectively the yachting centre ». The 10-minute helicopter hop to Nice airport or the 10-minute walk to the Yacht Club de Monaco (YCM) for a sail or a networking cocktail party provide a quick escape from the drawing board for more stimulation. The new YCM building, designed with Foster & Partners and ready in 2012, will provide even better facilities attracting younger members. This is not only a club for large yachts such as the elegant SS Delphine – who had the honour of Stephanie of Monaco's presence at her baptism – but also an active sailing club, hosting international regattas such as the Primo Cup, with race rule evening classes and regular racing from school children up. HSH Prince Albert, YCM President for 25 years, sails aboard Tuiga, often helmed successfully by YCM General Secretary Bernard d'Alessandri. La Belle Classe Tradition last year opened its arms to embrace today's superyachts too; while the club hosts the second annual World Yacht Racing Forum in December – a global platform for the most important sailing events, racing teams, pro sailors, race managers and top venues – unimaginable maybe for yachtsmen participating in the Principality's first sailing regattas in 1862, or its first international events for motorboats in 1904.

The Prince Albert II Foundation ([fpa2.com](http://pa2.com)) carries on his family trait of doing something positive for the environment, with climate change, biodiversity and water supply its three areas of activity. Along with the likes of the Monaco Scientific Center (known for its Red Coral research) and the beautiful Oceanographic Museum (100 next year), they share a wish to keep Monaco a centre of innovation in its approach to the environment.

A century after the Katoomba II incident, one of Monaco's most loved yacht owners confided to a colleague with a smile before a date, « If she plays her cards right tonight, she could be the owner of a superyacht in the morning! » – as the fun side of yachting's bon viveurs and environmental leaders rub shoulders, Monaco has rock solid foundations to grow upon.

In 2109 perhaps there will be stories shared on the terraces of the « coolest, early 21st century design Yacht Club de Monaco » with low-energy, seawater-cooled air-conditioning, of « the old days when they even allowed diesel-powered yachts into the port, and petrol-engined Ferraris around the F1 GP track – of course that was before Monaco's ideas, as the World Capital of Yachting, trickled into mainstream design in the 2020s... »



Monaco F1 Grand Prix 2009 - copyright: yachtpublicity.com



Below them in the port, meanwhile, the proud owner of a patented Dyson-powered Clean superyacht – who took possession last night – has her crew (less than half of them robots, as per current Monaco Flag Rules) launch the tender to join a colourful fleet of lovingly-maintained, Wallynanos. She has come to defend her centenary world championship title (- her great grandfather won the *Dragon masters* back in 2029/ -) and, as they sail out of the harbour past the new superyacht quay on La Cigue, smiles up at the gentleman waving from his Hotel de Paris window...

Pictures of the future Monaco Yacht Club - copyright: © Foster+Partners