



Full steam ahead at the Thailand Yacht Show

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With its beautiful beaches, year-round tropical weather and legions of tourist attractions, Thailand has long topped the list of popular holiday hotspots. Yet as a yachting destination, the country remains relatively uncharted. The Thailand Yacht Show (TYS), held December 15–18 at Ao Po Grand Marina on Phuket, aimed to map out a new course and give the Mediterranean and Caribbean a run for their money. Bringing billionaires, brokers and boat enthusiasts together, the show gave visitors a glimpse of the glamorous yachting lifestyle.

Organizer Andy Treadwell, the mastermind behind numerous other boating events around the world such as the Monaco Yacht Show and the Singapore Yacht Show, established the Thailand edition as a platform to show the huge economic impact the industry could have on the country, as well as show off the kingdom as an exciting new destination to the international yachting community.

“Our aim is to position Thailand as the natural destination capital for yachting in Asia, as well as the preferred winter destination for the global superyacht fleet,” he said.



With 60 exhibitors and some 55 vessels on display including 18 superyachts, there was plenty to ogle and experience for visitors. In addition to the sparkling sight of luxury yachts moored along the pontoons of Ao Po Grand Marina, a demo platform offered live demonstrations of dinghy sailing, standup paddleboarding and kayaking. Some guests took the opportunity of a scenic helicopter ride over the marina by Phuket-based helicopter charter company **Skydance** which uses a single-engine Airbus H130 tailored for passenger transportation, sightseeing and VIP duties. An exhibition pavilion featured luxury lifestyle companies, local property companies and nautical ancillaries, while evenings saw the marina turned into a spectacular party scene resplendent with free-flowing champagne rivaling anything the Med could conjure up.

Exhibitors included local and international dealers and brokers like **Boat Lagoon Yachting**, **Burgess Yachts**, **Lee Marine** and **Simpson Marine**, some of whom organized sea trials and short charters to give potential customers a taste of the boating lifestyle. One of the show’s founding partners and international marine broker, Lee Marine, showcased a range of large yachts from some of the world’s most prestigious brands such as Ferretti, Pershing, Riva, Riviera, CRN and CDM, from island-hopping day cruisers, to superyachts still under construction by the world’s leading brands.

Those whose pockets are not quite deep enough to purchase their own private yacht could consider chartering one instead. Be forewarned though that a weeklong cruise on a luxury yacht like the **Ocean Emerald**, on offer by leading Asian yacht broker and charter company **Simpson Marine**, will easily set you back several hundreds of thousands of dollars, provisions and fuel not included. But that’s peanuts of course compared to the tens of millions it can cost to run a yacht year-round. Designed by Norman Foster and featured in the latest *Point Break* movie, this 41-meter megayacht is based in Thailand and was the first foreign-flagged vessel over 30 meters to receive a Thai charter license in 2015.



Also available for viewing were the 90-meter superyacht **Lauren L** which comfortably fits 40 of your closest friends, and the stately **Northern Sun**, a 50-meter vessel which can accommodate 12 charter guests in six luxurious cabins, and boasts a stocked games room and an arsenal of water toys to boot.

This second edition of TYS was dedicated to His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej for his passion and support of the sailing sport, and several of His Majesty’s own self-built sailing boats were also on display.

One of the highlights of TYS was the unveiling of a **portrait** of His Majesty, created by 24-year-old German artist and social media sensation Tim Bengel, who flew in especially for the occasion. Tim creates his intricate artworks using black and white sand, gold leaf and a sticky canvas, in a painstaking process which can take weeks to complete. His most ambitious creation to date, a depiction of the Palace of Versailles, received worldwide attention, while a short video of his various creations garnered nearly 25 million views on **Facebook**, earning him a personal invitation to Facebook’s corporate headquarters in Palo Alto.

The next edition of the **Thailand Yacht Show** is scheduled to take place December 14–17, 2017.

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