

Special Feature

QATAR INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW

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F O C U S P U B L I C A T I O N



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Setting new benchmark for yachting success

"The plan is to put Qatar on the world map in terms of the international boat show circuit by becoming one of the main destinations for regional yacht and boat companies."

It was a long time in the making, but the very first edition of the Qatar International Boat Show (QIBS) has surpassed all expectations, even before the first of the boats on display secured their moorings in Lusail Marina - the venue for the show.

Not only has it attracted the top names in the maritime industry from around the world, but the overall numbers of international exhibitors is the equal of many well-established European boat shows, with the list reading like a Who's Who in the industry.

Twenty-four international companies are present, with a very strong contingent of Italian boat yards, while there is also a strong Gulf exhibitor presence, with Qatar itself represented by four boat building companies, and others from the UAE and Bahrain.

Around 50 boats are on show, including the fastest composite Maxi Open Yacht ever to be built - Overmarine Group's Mangusta 165 Maxi Open Yacht, which is 50 metres in length and has a top speed of 40 knots.

An ideal platform

Faysal Mikati, Vice President of Snow Conceptual Communications - the event's organiser - and the driving force behind the establishment of the Show, believes QIBS 2013 provides an ideal industry networking platform which will generate opportunities for the promotion of new boats and services with events both on land and in the water.

"Qatar is one of the most promising leisure boating markets in the GCC and has benefited in the past 15 years





from vast oil and natural gas reserves, such that now it is the richest country in the world in terms of GDP per head of population," Mikati explained.

"That wealth has driven the growth of the leisure marine industry, with some 1,700 leisure boats over five metres in length in Qatar, together with five full service marinas amounting to around 1,300 marina berths, with plans for further expansion," he added.

"The plan is to put Qatar on the map in terms of the international boat show circuit by becoming one of the main destinations for regional yacht and boat companies, as well as international companies involved in leisure and water sports, seeking investment opportunities in the GCC markets."

First in the queue for this year's show, however, was a local Qatari ship building business that specialises in boat manufacture and marine maintenance. Al Udeid's General Manager, Nabil Mohammed Al Jamai, said his goals reflected Qatar National Vision 2030 - to develop a competitive and diversified national economy.

"Thanks to His Highness' support and guidance, the industrial sector in general and the marine sector in particular are headed towards taking the lead in becoming industry pioneers on local, regional and global levels," he explained.

Qatar's very first International Boat Show is to feature

another 'first' - the world premiere of a new string quartet, being performed at a special gala evening, and believed to be the first piece of music for a string quartet to be commissioned by an international maritime event.

Premiere of 'Power'

The world premiere of Power, by world renowned composer, conductor and pianist Dr. Professor Sophia Serghi - who will also be conducting the work - is being performed live by the Doha String Quartet during a VIP reception.

"The composition is a musical metaphor of the powerful propulsion of a super yacht, combined with the human discovery of inner power and strength," Dr. Serghi explained.

Of course, many Western and Arab countries have hosted boat shows. So just what is it that makes Qatar's show so different? Faysal Mikati is in no doubt. "When we speak of Qatar, we speak of the strongest economy in the region, after being ranked first among Arab countries and 13th worldwide. We also have to take into consideration the growth of the local market and diversification of economic sectors which attract the world's largest companies for investment.

"It's a known fact that Qataris make up a major sector of the buying market for international luxury yachts, so it also makes perfect sense to hold our very own

boat show here in Qatar, which has historically been a maritime nation. The time is ripe for such a show, and with the tremendous amount of interest shown from around the world in taking part, it is clear that our early decision to host the event has been clearly vindicated; and it is fitting that the country should finally take its place on the international boat show circuit," Mikati added.

Qatar Marine Association

In addition to showcasing the latest boats and yachts and their accessories, the Qatar International Boat

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Show has a longer-term objective. Through this event, plans have already been made to lay the foundations for marine businesses and create opportunities for Qatari investors to attract the world’s leading brands in this industry, by setting up Qatar’s very own Marine Association.

H.E. Hassan Bin Jabor Al-Thani, President of the Qatar Marine Sports Federation, announced there would be a round table meeting of maritime stakeholders held during the show, at which the Qatar Marine Association would be created.

“The timing is auspicious,” he explained, “because one of the primary objectives of the QIBS is to establish a platform for the well-being of the maritime industry. Such an association would promote awareness of the local market, create opportunities by identifying needs and attracting the right calibre of specialists, and achieve international recognition for all that Qatar had to offer in this field.”

To anyone who might have doubted the feasibility of setting up yet another international boating event, Mikati emphasises that the Qatar International Boat Show is not a one off event. “It literally takes years to become a solid and profitable show, and already discussions are taking

place with potential exhibitors for the 2014 edition. We believe that the fact that there are so many international pioneering companies beating a path to our door amply demonstrates that they have a deep confidence in the Qatari market and the wider Gulf region.

“Exhibitors know that the market in Qatar already has large numbers of potential buyers and by exhibiting at QIBS, the international boat yards have the chance to meet their existing customers on their home turf - whereas before they had to travel half way round the world to meet one another. As well as finding yachts, some visitors will be here looking for fishing boats, while expatriates are predominantly in the market for fun boats.

“Qatar International Boat Show 2013 is all about unique experiences, worldwide firsts, international and regional launches and an event that combines luxury, industry know-how and culture. The show will be truly representative of both the international and regional maritime communities for the mutual benefit of all who come to visit and the exhibitors themselves. We are very confident that QIBS 2013 will set the scene for successful boat shows to be held in Qatar for many years to come,” Mikati concluded.

