

5 reasons to go to FLIBS (especially if you live on the other side of the world)

Boat Shows are hard work, and costly too, yet they are a key feature of the yachting industry. For those in Europe and the US, it is a short hop, skip and jump to attend the upcoming [Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show](#) (FLIBS) but what about our more distant colleagues? What attracts them to travel great distances to the Bahia Mar Yachting Centre to 'do the Show'?

We asked Kevin Altera, General Manager of Operations and Business Development at [Gold Coast City Marina and Shipyard](#) in Queensland, Australia why the team consistently attended FLIBS over the last 18 years and these are his Top 5 Reasons!

1. Nothing beats face-to-face



Kevin Altera (left) with GCOM CEO Trent Gay

We may live in an increasingly digital world, however, nothing beats face-to-face with clients. Boat Shows are perfect opportunities for this as everyone is gathered in one place with a clear focus on business. We get to give the market detailed information about our continued development and investment in new infrastructure at the same time as hearing about the upcoming plans for our clients and their yachts. It is targeted and detailed which is the only way to succeed in a Show of this magnitude.

2. Keeping us on our toes



There is nothing like being in the company of global peers to keep you on your toes. Each day of the Show there are press announcements or a launch of yachts and products. The docks buzz with industry talk and news. It is the perfect time to take stock internally. Due to its breadth in representing the industry, the GCCM team comes back from FLIBS full of ideas on how to improve our services and facilities. We use the show to benchmark ourselves against others in the refit space as well as those who are doing incredible things in their own sectors. We have over 65 onsite trades many of whom cannot make these shows so act as the conduit to the global yachting community

imparting our learnings to them. This is, in part, why we have been the most awarded marina and shipyard in Australia.

3. Selling the destination



The Gold Coast, Australia | Image credit:
Tourism and Events Queensland

If you expect them to come to you then you need first to go to them. The interest in cruising Australia has always been there and is growing steadily. As locals and yachting professionals, we bridge the gap between the well-known tourism highlights and the practical information on cruising, service, refit and maintenance. The decision to cruise to a new destination is not taken lightly so we are armed at the Show with local knowledge and guidance for those Captains and Owners serious about the journey. It shows commitment to the industry and respect for the requirements of the captains and owners.

4. The latest and greatest



Image credit: dilellainternational.com

Often FLIBS is chastised for having everything from fishing rods to Superyachts but for us that is part of the appeal. Each boat and yacht owner with whom we work has plenty of interest in the latest, greatest accessories and toys which FLIBS delivers in spades. We head home to outline new launches of semi-submersibles, integrated teppanyaki bars, sports fishing gear, gyro stabilisers, dive equipment and everything in between to an eager audience of owners. Not only does it provide value to our clients and fills our 50,000sqm of hardstand with retrofit work, it also reminds us that this industry is about fun and recreation which can, at times, be lost in the commerce.

5. Sister Cities



Got to fit in a spot of fishing!

It is a little-known fact that Fort Lauderdale and the Gold Coast are sister cities yet it is unsurprising. Both have a beach going lifestyle with a keen focus on boating and yachting. Both are known for their casual, fun atmosphere attracting affluent tourists. And both are the epicentre of yacht refitting for their respective nations. We love it so much we sneak in a whole day of game fishing the day before the Show. It is a great way to get game ready and thank some of our loyal partners. Of all the boat shows, FLIBS feels most like home.