

Matriarchs of the Seas: Our Favourite Original Superyachts

When we think of Superyachts, we envisage shining palaces, gliding between exotic destinations in ultimate luxury. In an age where technological advancement seems like a dated term, the seas are becoming more and more populated by yachts that can sometimes resemble spacecraft rather than boats, and it's easy to forget that this industry was born many years ago. In the last century in fact. And while many might appreciate these 'new-fangled machines', there is a loyal following for the 'Matriarchs of the Seas', the original Superyachts that are still afloat today.

EL MAHROUSSA



Image credit: superyachttimes.com

This lady, launched in 1865, is thought to be the oldest serving Superyacht in the world. Designed by Sir Oliver Lang and built on the Thames by Samuda Brothers, this steel-hulled

motor yacht now serves as Egypt's Presidential yacht. At 145.7m long, she is certainly deserving of the Superyacht title and is actually the 8th largest in the world today.

VICTORY CHIMES



Image credit: www.boatinternational.com

If you were looking to invest in a piece of maritime history, you could purchase the three-masted schooner VICTORY CHIMES, the oldest of her kind built in the U.S and still sailing. She was launched in Delaware in 1900 by George K Phillips Co. with the purpose of carrying cargo in the Chesapeake Bay. She was then adapted in 1946 to carry passengers (up to 50 if you so fancied) and is deemed an American National Historic Landmark. Yours for a paltry USD775,000.

SHENANDOAH



Image credit: www.charterworld.com

For anyone familiar with the industry, you are likely to have come across SHENANDOAH. This 54.45m, three-masted Topsail Gaff Schooner possesses a rich history, and is truly an intrinsic part of the Superyacht annals. She was built and launched in New York in 1902, and began her story in Newport, as a private yacht for Charles Fahnestock – a vastly wealthy American banker. Innocent beginnings indeed, but the following years read like a blockbuster film plot; confiscation by the British Navy during WWI, suspected smuggling of highly dubious items, playing host to royalty, being hidden from the Nazis in WWII, confiscation by the French Government in connection with an unpaid tax scandal, and being saved from certain rot and ruin after being deserted for 10 years! This timeless beauty is currently sporting a price tag of €11,000,000, and is looking for her next adventure.

MOONBEAM of FIFE III



Image credit: www.seesainttropez.com

Sadly, these 'old girls' are usually privately owned, so experiencing life at sea aboard one is only for the very privileged. However, there are some that are available for charter and MOONBEAM of FIFE III is a great example. At 30m, she is on the small side for a superyacht, but what she lacks in length, she makes up for in class. Designed by the famous William Fife & Sons and launched in 1903, this wooden-hulled gaff cutter was designed to race under the new RORC tonnage of the time and she is still racing today!

These yachts have stood the test of time, and provide a snapshot into the past, to the origins of the awe-inspiring industry that superyachting is today.