

# New age yachting – who's coming to Australia?

Last month saw the second edition of the [Australian Superyacht Rendezvous](#) (ASR) held at [Gold Coast City Marina and Shipyard](#) (GCCM). Not a yacht show open to the public but a series of events targeted to different audiences involved in yachting, ASR expanded its activities this year to include an Industry Roundtable for the Captains and senior industry players. 120 participants joined in the hearty discussion and for me, there was an epiphany – we are on the cusp of the Australian decade of new age yachting.

## Yachting in Australia

So firstly, I have a vested interest and a bias to yachting in Australia, yet my epiphany is not without evidence to support it. The room was not just Australian captains and industry preaching to the converted, so to speak, but also experts from Europe and Asia as well as those in the luxury travel, private aviation, accommodation industry and destination promotion. As a group, we covered four topics – Global Trends, Australian Charter Trends, Operations and Industry, and the Future. There was no formal presentation but instead, facilitators asked audience members questions to ignite conversation and it did just that; sparked a conversation which is likely to extend beyond the four-hour forum itself.

## Owners and charterers are looking for more

Coralyn Tracey from [MYBA](#) and Peter Mahony from [Benetti](#) Asia told of charterers and yacht owners looking for more

experiences which require seabobs, dive equipment and other adventure toys to explore new and remote destinations. The same people are looking for yachts which multiple generations can enjoy as yacht designer, [Misha Merzliakov](#), explained.



Nick Robinson and Dean Gould | Image credit: Australian Superyacht Rendezvous

Dean Gould from [Destination Gold Coast](#) and Joachim Howard from [Ocean Alliance](#) explained that Australia was not immune from the experience travel revolution and in fact, is extremely well placed to capture that market. We are growing our domestic fleet of chartering superyachts, the latest of which is [Oneworld](#) whose crew and owner were in the room to outline their plans to bring a touch of the Mediterranean charter service to Australia. The consensus was that unique, sustainable and authentic experiences are key to attracting the future affluent traveller, yacht charterer and yacht owner. And Australia has that in spades.

## We do face obstacles

Yet it was not the yachting equivalent to an evangelical convention. Yes, we have all seen the light but there are still obstacles in our way. Obstacles in the form of Australian survey standards which, in some cases, are more stringent than others more widely used on charter yachts. The regulator of these standards, the [Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#) (ASMA), were in the room and very keen to impress on captains and crew that they are open to consultation which is encouraging.

And of course, Australia still has our punitive GST (VAT) regulations for foreign flagged yachts chartering in our waters. Yet, [Superyacht Australia](#) advised progress is being made as proposed legislative changes are before the Australian

parliament and the group was cautiously optimistic.



Image credit: Australian Superyacht Rendezvous

## **We want the adventurers**

Onto the Future and the question remains that if the demand from affluent travellers, charterers and yacht owners for new experiences and the supply of Australian-based chartering superyachts (most of which were on display at ASR) is increasing, why aren't we the destination de jour?

As though I had been touched by the yachting gods, I realised; we talk about it all the wrong way. Yes, we are far away; this is a good thing. No, we don't have the 'scene' you find on the French Riviera; again, this is a good thing. For Australia is not a destination for those interested in being seen or who are keen on dining in a different restaurant for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It is a vast, untamed, spectacular and challenging destination for those with strength in their conviction and not faint of heart. For those intrepid, true exploring yachting enthusiasts, we are well and truly open for business. And for those who can't or don't want to rise to the breathtaking, awe-inspiring and transformative experience of cruising Australia, we highly recommend St Tropez!