RENDEZVOUS GOES EAST

The super-yacht world is looking to Asia as the next great cruising ground. As more super-yachts are attracted to the area, the popularity of the Asia Super Yacht Rendezvous can only grow.

Text by Suzy Rayment, Photography by Courtesy of Asia Super Yacht Rendezvous.
In December 2010, the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous celebrated its tenth anniversary in grand style. Held just before Christmas each year, the event was extended from its usual two days to a three-day programme, in honour of this special anniversary.

Organisers Gordon Fernandes, GM of Asia Pacific Superyachts and Charlie Dryer, Captain of the Yanneke To, commented, “It’s not often that you get motor boat owners mixing with sail boat owners, and this three-day event has been full of fun and camaraderie.” Feadship Royal Dutch Shipyards continued as principal sponsor and were joined by two new 2010 co-sponsors, Merle Wood & Associates of Fort Lauderdale USA represented by Francois van Well, and Rolling Stock S.A. Managing Director, Rupert Savage. Thirteen superyachts had planned to participate; however, due to unforeseen circumstances, four sailing boats were not able to be present - Nao, Shenandoah, Silolona and Monte. Captain Charlie Dryer’s command, Yanneke To, who has attended every other Rendezvous, also missed this important occasion as the yacht is undergoing an extensive refit in Brisbane, Australia, but hopefully they will be back next year.

At the end of the day the Rendezvous had a fleet of nine superyachts including the 50m S/Y Persen built by Perini Navi in 2001, 42m M/Y Maverick II, built by Sterling in 1988, 40m M/Y Lady Ariya built by Oceanfast in 1990, the Thailand based 36m M/Y Vie Sara Souris built by King’s Yachts in Taiwan, the 74m M/Y Silver Zwei built by the western Australia company Hauraki Marine in 2009, 57m M/Y Noble House built in 2005 by Sensation Yachts, 27m M/Y Major Affair built in 2007 by Sunseeker, S/Y Ananta, and a 24m Pershing M/Y Cavallino from Italy. The host venue sponsor was the The Surin Phuket (formally the Chedi Resort) and co-sponsors for the event were Asia Pacific Superyachts. Taking on the title Media Partner for the first time this year was Boat International Media, the world’s leading media group serving the superyacht industry. Victoria Lister, Alice Wilddoors and Holly Lunn from the London office were there to oversee operations, and Yachtstyle was there as the Asian Media representative.

The superyacht fleet gathered in Nai Harn Bay at the southern end of Phuket island, commemorating the very first Asia Superyacht Rendezvous which was held there. Following a briefing from Race Director Andy Dowden and Simon James at the Royal Phuket Yacht Club in Nai Harn, owners, VIP guests,
and Captains were invited on board the beautiful Lady Arraya - the renamed, iconic Bannenberg-designed Opal C, a jet driven Oceanfast build - for the opening cocktail party. Lady Arraya’s owner Philippe Chettou, remarked that “this is a unique event, and a wonderful way to meet the other owners of superyachts who are cruising in the region. Thailand is such a special place which is so much to offer - you can forget the Mediterranean and the Caribbean as far as I am concerned.”

“As a relatively new owner of a superyacht, I am keen to learn more about cruising in the region, and the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous provides a unique opportunity at which to do so. I just wish that more boats were taking part - but I am sure the event will continue to grow.”

Johnny Warrillow, owner of Maverick II said, “We are here because it is a very friendly gathering of yacht owners in Phuket, a region that has an exciting future as a base in Asia, and it is fun to be part of it from the start.” The relaxed and informal opening party set the tone for the rest of the event, where friendships were forged over shared experiences.

The following day the fleet cruised up the coastline in relaxed rally style with S/Y Perseus doing the honours and crossing the start line first. For those on board these magnificent superyachts it was a grand tour of the scenic beaches that line the west coast of Phuket, and for the guests lucky enough to be on Maverick II this was combined with a long lunch on the aft deck featuring local Thai delicacies, accompanied by fine wines that perfectly suited the relaxed mood of the day. The final destination was Surin Bay, where the yachts anchored up in front of The Surin Resort.

That evening, the ever-popular ‘Feadship Challenge’ was held poolside at The Surin. The combination of an opulent cocktail party combined with a fun-filled games programme never ceases to engage the yacht owners, guests and crewmembers. There is always a real sense of rivalry amongst the competing teams, as they build model yachts from a collection of identical flotsam and jetsam, and then race them up and down specially-built troughs. Superyacht owners and crew become boat-builders for the evening, with no quarter given on the racing front. Prizes are awarded for the fastest and the best-designed yachts, and the variety of designs are intriguing, particularly as there is no opportunity for tank-testing before the racing begins.

The aim of the challenge is to get the model yachts up and down the prescribed course as quickly as possible, using wind power supplied by the designated skipper’s lungs. Some of the teams had been to the event before, so had some prior knowledge of what sort of designs works – or don’t. Some of the newer teams vessel had stability issues, which meant there were plenty of opportunities for capsize, much to the amusement of the spectators.

Then there are the bugs! A bowl of local delicacies in the form of creepy crawlies (such as fried scorpions, and frog’s legs) need to be consumed at the half way mark, (or you can opt for a bottle of beer) before the race continues. The ability to gulp down those critters quickly, and still be able to huff and puff, adds a dash of excitement for the spectators. At the end of the day it is a combination of good design, lung power and a strong
stomach that produces the winner, and this year it was Team Vie Sans Soucis for the second year running. Add to all this excitement a spectacular sunset, adventurous cocktails and a delicious gourmet buffet – and it’s the sort evening that makes for lifetime memories.

Day two of the Rendezvous was slightly different from previous years. Usually there is a fun race for the sailing yachts but this year as there was only one sailing boat in the fleet the programme was replaced with a dramatic ‘formation cruise’ up the coastline of Phuket. Captured on camera and video by photographers in a helicopter, the parade was a sight to behold. Directed by Race Director Andy Dowden, and with the assistance of PRO Simon James, the fleet was marshalled into position to produce an Asian first.

Following such an exciting day on the water, the superyacht owners and VIP guests then changed for dinner and decamped ashore for the Boat International Media Gala Dinner. This was the social highlight of the three-day programme, and guests enjoyed a delicious feast of culinary delights with an ‘East meets West’ theme.

A number of famous faces from the superyacht world attended the event and included the internationally famous superyacht designer Philip Briand, Gulu Lalvani, and Dr. Herbert Wertheim who owns the Westport 105 Brain Power, and is a World Superyacht Award 2011 Judge. Dr Wertheim enthused, “The event exceeded all my expectations. Thank you, Boat International Media, for inviting me to this extraordinary occasion. It was very worthwhile attending, and I met many owners who share my love of yachts.”

During the Gala Dinner, a prizegiving ceremony saw S/Y Persus receive the ‘Spirit of the Rendezvous’ Award, which recognises a yacht that has contributed “notable enthusiasm and spirit to the event”. S/Y Persus is currently on a world cruise, and changed her schedule in order to attend the Rendezvous in Phuket, and even competed in the Premier Cruising division of the Phuket King Cup Regatta the week before. On receiving the award and a bottle of Möet & Chandon, Persus’s owner said “We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and are sure to be back in the future”. After the dinner and dancing to the excellent live band, the evening finished with the traditional lighting of ‘Lanna’ sky lanterns from The Surin’s beautiful private beach. For those owners
and guests who were still ready for some action, it was off to the rollicking ‘Rolling Stock Crew BBQ & Beach Party’, which was held nearby at beach front restaurant (name). Organizers Gordon Fernandes and Captain Charlie Dwyer led guests in toasting a successful Rendezvous, with celebrations continuing into the wee small hours.

Keo Zitman, Director of Feadship, reflected that “Feadship has been involved with this event for 10 years, and we are sure the association will continue. We believe in supporting the region and growing the superyacht industry in Asia.” Bau Nederpelt, responsible for Marketing at Feadship Royal Dutch Shipyards said that, “The 10th Asia Superyacht Rendezvous, which we’ve seen grow to a three-day event this year, was a great success! The founders of the event had it right ten years ago and Feadship is very pleased that we joined the event from day one.”

Francois van Well of Merle Wood & Associates, another proud sponsor of the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous, said, “Boat International Media have done a great job in attracting more owners and large superyachts from all over the world to come to the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous, making it the premier superyacht event in Asia.”

Rolling Stock Managing Director, Rupert Savage, commented: “On behalf of the Rolling Stock Group, it was a great pleasure to be one of the co-sponsors of the event and the Rolling Stock Crew Party. The entire event was extremely well organised and greatly enjoyed by everyone. This type of event is a wonderfully informal way of meeting new people and making new contacts. Clearly, Asia is a wonderful cruising ground, and I am confident that more and more superyachts will visit over the coming years, which will of course increase demand for superyacht services. The Rolling Stock Group is here to look after our clients in Asia as well as Palma de Mallorca and around the world!”

Supporting superyachts worldwide, the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous is the longest-running event of its kind in Asia, boasts the largest gathering of superyachts in the region, and is a major annual international event for visiting superyachts.
RENDEZVOUS SUPERYACHTS ON PARADE

M/Y Noble House
M/Y Noble House (53m) provides the most discerning charterer with a superb opportunity to sample the ‘ne plus ultra’ of luxury and comfort - some of the very best that yachting has to offer. Built by Sensation Yachts, she is one of the largest motor yachts to be constructed in New Zealand, with interiors designed by the renowned Francois Zuretti. On deck she offers a herringbone-styled laid deck, which conveys an attractive background to the spacious sun lounging and alfresco dining options. Noble House also boasts a Jacuzzi hot pool and a gym. This glorious yacht provides modern and stylish luxury accommodation for 12 guests in six beautifully appointed cabins.

M/Y Silver Zwei
The 73m M/Y Silver Zwei was custom built by Australian yard Hanseatic Marine, based south of Perth at Cockburn Sound. Megayacht Silver Zwei is the world’s largest conventionally powered motor yacht, as well as the world’s longest all-aluminium yacht. She is well known for her high speed, long range and low fuel consumption. From the drawing board of Espen Oeino Design, Silver Zwei features beautiful and elegant design, and unparalleled workmanship. The extremely lightweight and agile Silver Zwei can reach a top speed of 27 knots, and offers elegant and comfortable accommodation for up to 18 guests.

M/Y S/Y Perseus
S/Y Perseus is a magnificent 49.80m Perini Navi sailing yacht which features four beautiful cabins. Two of them have Pullman berths, and the full beam master suite includes a sitting room that can be made into a private stateroom with its own facilities. Her outstanding outdoor spaces include a luxurious aft cockpit with protected lounging and dining, plus a large and comfortable fly-bridge with Jacuzzi. The yacht offers a generous formal dining salon comparable to that of a motor vessel. With a variety of tenders and toys on board there is plenty to keep everyone amused while sailing around the world.

M/Y Cavallino
M/Y Cavallino is a Pershing 80, capable of 50kts top speed while providing all the creature comforts that the most discerning yachtsman could wish for. Open up the sunroof and the saloon doors, and the boat immediately becomes the marine version of a sport car. Its innovative design and distinctive styling combined with the ultimate in luxury means this yacht is guaranteed to be a favourite amongst boat owners who like a little excitement in their lives. With four cabins and a large saloon this is a yacht that takes you places fast - and in style.

S/Y Vie Sans Soucis
M/Y Vie Sans Soucis (built by King’s Yachts in Taiwan)

M/Y Maverick II
M/Y Maverick II (42m) is a proven world cruiser expedition yacht with a range of well over 3,500 miles. She offers exceptional volume for her size, and is well set up for cruising in the tropics, with several indoor and outdoor lounge and dining areas, sun pads and deck chairs. She can comfortably accommodate eight guests, and the Owner’s Suite includes a spacious stateroom, office study and seating area. This suite can be completely isolated from the remainder of the yacht for total privacy. Onboard there is an outstanding range of marine toys available to make chartering this super yacht a great deal of fun.

M/Y Lady Araya
M/Y Lady Araya (40m), built by Oceanfast in 1990, is now Thailand-based and available for charter. A fast cruising yacht, she can accommodate 10 guests in five ensuite cabins. At sea, comfort is further enhanced by her highly effective stabilisation system. The large saloon is surrounded by picture windows, and has the unique feature of being a rotating dining area. Guests can enjoy the comfort of air conditioning for lunch when the outside temperature is uncomfortable, and then enjoy an alfresco dinner under the stars in the evening when the heat of the day has dispersed. Her shallow draft means she can explore many of the beautiful bays of the Andaman Sea.