

# UAE's maritime industry set for further growth

Dubai International Boat Show to once again showcase best

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DUBAI — The UAE strengthens its position as one of the world's leading international yacht manufacturing hubs as the country's more than \$60 billion maritime industry expands on increasing interest by international developers as well as more investment by local manufacturers.

This was disclosed during a news conference, which was held to announce the 23rd edition of Dubai International Boat Show, which will showcase yachts worth Dh1 billion during the five-day event.

Organised by the Dubai World Trade Centre, or DWTC, the boat show at Dubai International Marine Club - Mina Seyahi is open to trade visitors and the general public from 3pm to 9:30pm daily from March 3 to 7.

The UAE currently ranks ninth in the world for superyacht manufacturing, with 15 projects under development, according to the 2015 ShowBoats International Global Order Book. Local and international manufacturers are set to announce a slew of new projects for the UAE at the 23rd Dubai International Boat Show.

Dr Khalid Al Zahed, vice-chairman of the Dubai International Marine Club Board, said: "This year's Dubai International Boat Show will reaffirm Dubai's status as a leisure marine hub. As the water-based lifestyle becomes increasingly popular in Dubai, we will see this sector continue to expand and grow in the future."

According to the Dubai Council for Marine and Maritime Industries, or DCMMI, the total UAE maritime industry is worth more than \$61 billion, with 386 boats above 24 million built in 2014, up eight per cent on 2013. The fleet of yachts in Dubai has doubled since 2009 and the DCMMI predicts the creation of a national classification society — Tasneef — and the introduction of the world's first code governing private yachts, the UAE



Sultan Al Shaali, CEO of the Al Shaali Group; Dr Khalid Al Zahed; and Ahmed Al Khaja, senior vice-president for venues at the DWTC, during the news conference in Dubai on Tuesday. — Supplied photo

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VALUE OF UAE'S MARITIME INDUSTRY

Yacht Code, will boost the industry's future development.

Boosting Dubai's position as a global maritime hub, Comar Yachts, which has produced more than 6,200 yachts to date, will relocate some of its production facilities from Italy to the UAE.

Local manufacturers are also expanding activities in line with the growth in Dubai's maritime industry, which also aligns with Dubai's National Innovation Strategy aiming to make the UAE one of the world's most innovative nations within the next seven years.

The UAE's Gulf Craft is investing \$100 million over the next five years to develop a facility to build a shipyard for the manufacture of mega and super yachts within the marine district of Dubai Maritime City.

ART Marine, the Middle East's largest 360-degree leisure yachting enterprise, is also consolidating its presence in the region with its Oman launch and reopening in Egypt. Another UAE-based luxury

yacht manufacturer, Al Shaali Marine, will unveil its new \$5.45 million AS100 model superyacht at the show, which it describes as the first of its kind designed and manufactured in the Middle East.

With potential first-time boat owners set to make up a large number of the expected visitor turnout, the Dubai International Boat Show has ensured a wide range small- to medium-sized builders will be participating to showcase a range of crafts that also include speed boats, jet skis, quad skis and other marine leisure products. On display are pleasure craft from return exhibitors Delma Marine, Macky Marine and Ocean Boats, as well as boats in the same range from new show entrants Brodie Boats, Dar Al Taswaf Services, Mercan Yachts, Revolver Yachts and Rio Yachts.

With over 800 companies and brands from 54 countries exhibiting at this year's Dubai International Boat Show, tens of thousands of visitors, from more than 120

countries are expected to attend. New country participants in 2015 include Djibouti, Indonesia and Luxembourg, while Italy and the US return as top participating countries, and the event will see 45 global and regional launches over the five days of the show.

Show sectors for this year include Marina Display, Superyacht Life Area, Outdoor Display, Marine Luxury and Lifestyle, Equipment Services and Supplies, with popular show features including the Supercar Promenade and the Retail Village returning to the show.

The Middle East Yachting Conference — the region's largest maritime networking session — will bring together some of the leading industry experts, region's top boat manufacturers, marina operators, in a collaborative knowledge platform. In addition, Marine Talks will offer leisure marine enthusiasts the chance to glean the latest tips, trends and tricks from experts in fishing, diving, sailing and watersports.

"As the region's maritime industry expands, and as the UAE consolidates itself as a hub for boating and manufacturing, it is important that the Boat Show evolves and develops alongside it," said Trixie LohMirmand, senior vice-president of the DWTC.

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