

ARISE: THE NEW MARINA HUBS

The evolution of the destination marina — from helipads and private jet terminals to a ski chalet for crew, modern marinas offer far more than just a berth.

By Sophia Wilson



The primary purpose of a marina is practical — a place to refuel, restock, repair. However, over the past two decades the landscape of the industry has been revolutionized, with many marinas becoming destinations in their own right, designed to lure owners and entertain crew.

These new destination marinas act as large commercial operations, complete with luxury spas, designer fashion labels, Michelin-starred restaurants, and premium real estate opportunities. “Marinas have become much more than just a place to berth a yacht,” says Dan Hughes, chief operating officer of Camper & Nicholsons Marinas. “Owners, captains, and their crew are looking for more. They need to feel special and looked after, with privacy and safety as standard. This then creates a reason for them to spend on the services and the experience that the marina offers.”

The growth of destination marinas has seen them become central to the coastal communities in which they are situated. Porto Montenegro, which opened in 2014, is a prime example of this. Peter Munk’s multimillion-pound investment has transformed a disused naval base into a thriving marina village — the site even boasts Montenegro’s first boarding school, Knightsbridge Schools International, and naval museum. “A full service, well managed, and well marketed marina should become a hub for tourism generally, which draws spending and improves the economy of the locality,” says Hughes. The number of new developments under construction — from the €650 million development at Portonovi, also in Montenegro, complete with the first One&Only hotel in Europe, to the 1.8 million-square-meter Dubai Harbour — shows there’s no sign of this trend slowing yet.

Despite the dramatic changes already experienced, the industry is braced for further developments. The biggest factor expected to affect future marinas is the increasing size of superyachts. “Marinas must grow the number of large yacht berths available to meet the pipeline of yacht builds over eighty meters emerging over the next few years,” says Paul Cook, general manager at OneOcean Port Vell in Barcelona. “There is a critical shortage of large yacht berths, which is only going to get worse.”

Hughes believes a solution to the shortage of larger berths can be found through inventive modern architecture. “Removing redundancy in design and creating flexible space capable of berthing a wide range of yachts on the same berth gives the marina operator the ability to be flexible,” he says. Charles “Buddy” Darby, superyacht owner and founder of Christophe Harbour in St. Kitts, agrees that technology will be an important factor in marina development. “With advances in science, engineering, and technology, the possibilities for marina architecture are exciting,” he says. “We’re starting to see the incorporation of shoreside innovations found on

land, such as yacht stackers, and looking further ahead, there’s no doubt robotics will play a greater part in engineering and maintenance and the services we can provide.”

Green credentials are also becoming an increasingly important factor for owners, captains, and their crew. “Those marinas who provide not only facilities for collection and disposal of waste,” says Hughes, “but who also consider the promotion and protection of marine ecosystems in their daily operations are likely to score higher when decisions are being made on where to stop over with a yacht.”

In St. Kitts, Darby has seen a similar trend: “We are already seeing a greater response to protecting and restoring marine ecology,” he says. “As the marina industry grows, treading lightly is demanding more commitment and more attention.” 

FUTURE DESTINATIONS...

1: Dubai

Dubai Harbour

Designed to expand Dubai’s yacht capacity by 50 percent, the 1.8 million-square-meter Dubai Harbour will incorporate a 135-meter tall lighthouse tower. Located alongside world-renowned Palm Island, the 1,400-berth marina for vessels up to 85 meters, will also offer a cruise ship terminal, retail space, events arena, shopping mall, and yacht club.

Scheduled opening: to be confirmed

www.meraas.com

2: Italy

Cala del Forte, Ventimiglia

Just eight nautical miles from Monaco, Cala del Forte marina will add 171 berths – ranging from 6.5 meters to 60 meters – to this packed stretch of coastline. Developed by Société Monégasque Internationale Portuaire, an organization owned by the Monaco government, upon completion it will have a variety of shops, cafés, and either a lift or funicular to take visitors to the historical Ventimiglia Old Town.

Scheduled opening: summer 2018

www.caladelforte-ventimiglia.it

3. Montenegro

Portonovi, Herceg Novi

Capitalizing on Montenegro’s superyacht revolution, a new state-of-the-art marina is at the heart of a €650 million development at Boka Bay. Portonovi marina will be able to accommodate yachts up to 70 meters within its walls, with yachts up to 120 meters able to make use of seasonal berths located on the external wall. The development will also be home to a yacht club, created by Winch Design, and the first One&Only resort in Europe.

Scheduled opening: summer 2018

www.portonovi.com

