

## Dubai wakes to the importance of the superyachts

**The Dubai International Superyacht Summit, organised by FABMAR and hosted by P&O Marinas, was held in Dubai recently with the specific purpose of discussing the opportunities and challenges for the emergence of an “Emirati Riviera” as a yachting destination, indeed a superyacht hub, and winter destination.**

The most important aspect of this summit as it unfolded was its implicit acknowledgement of how much work there is to accomplish its stated goal- the development of an “Emirati Riviera”.

Expert speakers from the world and the UAE were almost unanimous in acknowledging the vast potential of the region and in stressing the improvements needed to realise this potential.

Local industry leaders, while appreciating the acknowledgement of the country’s potential, and pointing out the massive on-going investment in required infrastructure, were pleasingly paying attention to the challenges spelled out without reservation by the visitors.

Notable amongst these challenges is the opportunity for local authorities to align the regulation of the superyacht niche. At present, procedures and free movement of visiting yachts are complicated and regulations should be revised to meet the needs of the multinational superyacht crew intending to cruise in UAE waters.

Organiser Fabiana Maccarini commented after the Summit “This is the first, but not the last superyacht summit in the region. The good-will and positivity of all players is very pleasing and bodes well for the future”.

Co-organiser Capt. Tony Crabbe of Fabyachts had this to say: “There were certain doubts expressed by local industry prior to the summit. These seem, to a certain extent, to have been dispelled by positive statements made by local officials and offers of advice from international experts. We can make Dubai and the UAE a winter superyacht destination but to do so we all need to work together to achieve it.”

On completion of the summit Mohammed Al Mannaei, CEO of P&O Marinas, said that P&O Marinas will continue the process of bringing to the attention of the authorities the points discussed. P&O Marinas further invites all players to come together and assist the authorities in a constructive manner to streamline the cruising experience for all yachts, be they local or foreign, private or commercial.

There is no doubt that the infrastructure is being provided, and that the opportunities are there to grasp. The question remains as to whether all players will have the collective will and determination to bring them to fruition.