

Calendar

Small Cities Made by Hand

YachtFest San Diego 2001

A big, huge boat is not necessarily a super yacht," says David Roscow, who is having some trouble explaining what exactly a super yacht is.

Roscow would be doing better if he had been asked first the definition of a plain old ordinary yacht. The San Diego yacht broker has a glib answer ready for that one, he says. "Whatever else it may be, it is certainly something that you do not need. If you needed it, it wouldn't be a yacht at all. A commercial fishing boat is not a yacht."

What a super yacht is, says Roscow, is a floating city. "One of these boats does for itself everything a small city does. And in some cases, in today's world, it does more. Obviously they generate their own electrical power. They process their own sewage. They make their own fresh water from sea water. It's a very sophisticated piece of equipment."

It also has "the look," he says. "The look has a lot to do with it." That look is provided by "certain designers who are considered super-yacht designers," says Roscow.

This weekend, at YachtFest, San Diegans are invited to meet some of those designers and to see their boats. One is Charlie Johnson of Seattle, who is also a captain. Johnson's *Arie*, a 124-foot super yacht, will be among the 20 yachts that YachtFest participants can tour. "You are not restricted to standing on the dock," Roscow wants to emphasize. "You are invited to come in and mix with this bunch. You certainly are going to see some owners, a lot of the crew, and many people who work in the business."

Speaking of the crew, he says, the super yacht definition "frankly extends even to them. These people are highly

trained. They're the best of the best when it comes to the human-resource element."

The "integrity" of the construction is another part of what qualifies these boats as "super." Roscow was in Holland recently, watching some super yachts being built. "These old Dutch guys are like watchmakers when they put these things together," he says. "I mean, the tolerances, the precision. It's extraordinary. Unparalleled. It's very 'old-world.' They use the latest aerospace materials, but the boats are hand-built by human beings who use their hands."

And what is the cost of a super yacht? Roscow has trouble with this question, too. Apparently, you can spend a great deal of money and still not have bought one. "We in this industry joke about what a million dollars *won't* buy you. These days you could spend a couple of million on a new 50-foot sportfishing boat, which is nothing like a super yacht. For the same amount you might be able to acquire an older boat and refurbish it. And you would have a super yacht or something in the periphery of the super-yacht category."

There is no upper-edge dollar figure, says Roscow. "There are boats in construction now in various parts of the world that are — these numbers are staggering — \$50 million, \$100 million."

Many of the boats at YachtFest are available for sale, says Roscow, the event's chairman, who acknowledges that the crowd will inevitably include "a lot of folks who have no real ability or interest in owning one of these things." But, he says, some of them may be interested in "the charter angle. Luxury vacations onboard these yachts in exotic parts of the world are a fast-growing and already huge aspect of our industry," he says. He hopes that YachtFest will attract "people who



might be interested in that kind of episode in their life."

And what might be the cost of chartering? "Fairly expensive," he says. "But it's a way to get in your jollies, I suppose, without going to the poor house." Some of the boats at YachtFest are available for "as little as \$10,000 a week" — although "the norm" for a 100-footer averages \$25,000 to \$35,000. That's for "full use of the boat" — along with the so-called human-resource element.

Even if chartering is unlikely, Roscow wants to see you there — to introduce you to "this industry and what it means for our economy." Granted, he says, these boats are "big, expensive things typically owned by corporations or very wealthy people. But they tend to leave enormous amounts of money in their wake, if you will. They come into one of our yards here and leave behind a few

hundred thousand dollars. We had the occasion to build a boat here a couple of years ago — for an Arab, if I may be specific. That project left \$50-odd million in San Diego. One boat. One owner. One project. I think there are folks in this community who consider this very opulent and excessive and conspicuous consumption. I see it as a method of redistributing the wealth of the world."

— Jeanne Schinto

YachtFest San Diego 2001
Friday, September 14,
Noon-8:00 p.m.;
Saturday & Sunday,
September 15 & 16,
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Shelter Island Marina
2071 Shelter Island Drive
\$50 one day; \$75 multiple days
www.yachtfest.com or
858-373-8700

Local Events
page 61

Classical Music
page 75

Art Museums & Galleries
page 77

Theater
page 78

Pop Music
page 83

Restaurants
page 115

Movies
page 126

