



134m M.Y. Serene Arrives in Auckland

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One of the world's biggest superyachts, the 134-metre *Serene*, arrived in Auckland in the early morning of January 20 to the surprise and delight of early bird wharf strollers.



(Photo: APS NZ/ NZH)

The vessel was built by Italian shipyard Fincantieri and delivered to owner Russian vodka tycoon Yuri Scheffler in August 2011. *Serene* is longer than a rugby field and the largest such vessel ever to visit New Zealand.

Serene's visit was arranged by Asia Pacific Superyachts (APS) New Zealand and is viewed as a huge coup for support industry and luxury tourism. The firm's managing director, Duthie Lidgard, reported APS NZ is providing services for the vessel during her stay. "She is now berthed at Auckland's Wynyard Wharf – the 134m M.Y. *Serene* is too big for the dedicated big boat marina. The A\$423 million (US\$330 million) *Serene* is the biggest superyacht to visit this country."

M.Y. *Serene* cost more and is 15m longer than the superyacht *A*, also owned by a Russian tycoon and attracting intense interest during her stay in New Zealand last summer.

Providing support for *A* during her visit, APS NZ Founding Director Jeanette Tobin commented: "Getting such a high-profile vessel as M.Y. *A* to New Zealand was a coup for the superyacht support industry and for luxury tourism."

Tobin says the busy Auckland Anniversary Weekend, Seafood Festival and cruise ship season created challenges finding space for the 8,200-gross-tonne vessel, which makes a splash wherever she arrives around the world.

The Grand Cayman Islands-flagged *Serene*. As reported first by *The New Zealand Herald*, '*Serene* is about 18m longer than the latest and biggest superyacht New Zealand billionaire Graeme Hart has ordered from a shipyard in Norway. The yacht (*Serene*) is owned by Yuri Scheffler, a vodka tycoon who is understood to be holidaying in New Zealand for several weeks.'

The article included details from yacht charter websites showing the vessel has a helicopter hangar, two helipads and a submarine hangar. There is an underwater viewing space and 12 luxurious staterooms for 24 guests who are tended by up to 52 crew.

The owner's suite boasts an exterior hot tub on its terrace. This stateroom has a centred oversize California king bed, full walk-in dressing area and spacious ensuite bathroom. It has its own lift that links to a "sea cabin" on deck two, with a private swim platform. Behind the owner's suite are a saloon, lounge bar and library with a fireplace.

There's an internal seawater swimming pool, a hot and a cold Jacuzzi plus jet stream swimming pool on the sundeck. The vessel – more than three times as long as Fuller's biggest ferry in Auckland - also has a cinema, a library and an indoor climbing wall for kids.

"According to supermoney.com, the vessel last year was the fifth-most expensive superyacht afloat, costing US\$330 million to build," the *Herald* reported, adding that *Serene* can be chartered at times. "Last August, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and family were spotted off Sardinia after hiring the boat for a week."

Gates reportedly spent US\$5 million per week to charter *Serene*. Regarding the superyacht's visit, Tobin believes it will generate financial benefits for New Zealand. "Spending by the party and crew during the visit will be huge – into the millions of dollars," she says. "It is likely to cruise around the coast, but will be spending some time in Auckland. Other superyacht owners who visit enjoy the relaxed lifestyle and quintessentially Kiwi pastimes such as hunting and fishing."



Offering concierge services to superyachts for the past 12 years, Tobin has observed that “the tourism side of the business has boomed in the past year”. www.asia-pacific-superyachts.com



(Photo: Tourism New Zealand)