

SUPERYACHT SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION

WELCOME TO SUPERYACHT SINGAPORE

"To promote Singapore as a superyacht destination and
a hub to establish a new value in the superyacht industry"

[Member's News](#) Exclusive Interview with Asia Pacific
Superyachts Director Mr Scott Walker

Exclusive Interview with Asia Pacific Superyachts Director Mr Scott Walker

SSA met with Asia Pacific Superyachts Director Scott Walker on 23rd August and secured an exclusive interview with him.



SSA: You're one of the greatest personalities within the Singapore Association and you're also known as 'Mr Superyacht' in Singapore. Can you tell us how you got started in this industry?

SW: *I started as an engineer supporting the superyachts when they came to Singapore. As a land-based contractor assisting the engineer on projects such as servicing of engines and facilitating the repairs for the vessels' short stay in Singapore. Generally there was only a single engineer then, with one deckhand to help, they would stop here and be planning to head to Indonesia or Thailand, so there was not a lot of spare time. But this is clearly the place where you can get all these outside machine shop, fabrication and repair shop work done rather than in Thailand, Indonesia or other places.*



SSA: When did this get started?

SW: *About 17 years ago. We started off with the repair business which evolved. What happened was the engineers and captains would ask us "Do you know where to get... where do I buy...who has....?" all these kind of questions, rather than getting us to fix the issues. So we went from being the fixer guy to helping them find the fixes and into other things. Eventually we sold the van, got rid of the overalls and stopped that part of the business completely. There was no longer a need for it, ships have more than 1 engineer these days normally, they have 2 perhaps 3, they are given more time and they have a bigger budget to spend on their boats so there was no need for such a service anymore. What they do need when they come to Singapore is "where to get and how to buy and can you please get for us....," which more or less leads us right into doing this agency work.*

SSA: When did you become Asia Pacific Superyachts?

SW: *The company officially opened as APS in June 2008. We still have a company which is the predecessor to Asia Pacific Superyachts called Seal Superyachts Asia which was started in 2003. We had a name change for reasons of slimming down the business, getting rid of some dead wood, clearing the air a little bit with our outside customers. We chose another name to get away from a legacy that we were trying to leave behind. Before that we have always been trading under the North American Boat Service which is still what we have today, which is an equipment supplier servicing company.*

SSA: Which brands do you distribute?

SW: *We distribute the Northern Lights Generators, Lugger Marine Engines, Atlas Marine Systems and Hydro Electric Marine, otherwise known as HEM - water makers and water treatment. Those are the product lines that we directly represent and have exclusive rights to, in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia. That keeps that company very busy with repair work, parts and supplies etc. Asia Pacific Superyachts is purely focused on port services for visiting yachts which is a whole different business, a whole different revenue stream, so we have 2 different companies set up for that.*

SSA: How many employees do you have?

SW: *We have 3 in this company. Myself, Shine and my wife Joan. We have engineering contractors that work for us as mechanics and other companies that do jobs for us on a contract basis, which is more or less the way we do it in this environment in Singapore.*

SSA: Asia Pacific Superyachts is a member of the AYSS and a founding member of the Superyacht Singapore Association, what were your motivations for supporting the industry in Singapore?

SW: *Basically, it is to get my two cents worth into the mix with everyone else. As we are directly involved in the superyacht business in Singapore, I wanted to be able to offer our experience and opinions on various things as we do meet with a lot of Captains. Most of our client base is out of the Asia region, coming from Europe, sometimes from America. They do not know anything here so we are here as their first stop, as a gateway for them to this whole new realm. They have very specific needs and desires which are much different from what goes on here in Asia and I think it is only fair to share that with the rest of the group and to share with them the versions of what superyachts are. I wanted to be there as one of the few in Singapore who is actually actively doing this, to be able to speak about this so that ultimately we can get a place, a white boat yard to repair boats here.*

SSA: How would you compare the superyacht market in Singapore now and 10 years ago?

SW: *It is not even apples and oranges anymore. It is a whole different thing completely. Now there is an absolute genuine interest on lots of levels rather than self-centered interest that was previously there. There were a few people in the past who had always played in this arena only for themselves, it has never been for the better of the whole, it has always been for today, me, how much can I make from it. It was tough then. Now, there is genuine interest in this industry here. More importantly and excitingly especially at the government level, who has finally look at this as a serious venture and not somebody's dream, because the Association is in place. The SSA has been the catalyst for the government here, actually the government and the SSA evolved together on it, in my view. But it has been just the help of a few characters like you JJ and a few others who have been supportive of this whole exercise, who has pushed it through to now that we are seeing the fruits of the labour to some degree with the EDB and other people in the government looking into this more seriously on how to attract more of such business in. To sum it up, there wasn't an industry 10 years ago, there were some people, myself included trying to carve out some money from it and live. Now it actually has a name, it is an industry for real, it involves real people who has more than just ulterior motives. There is a big sign of hope in the horizon, we can finally do something here.*

SSA: Year to year, what is the average growth of your business?

SW: *I would estimate it at 15% – 20% which is quite good. Not just in the superyacht business but more awareness of the brands that we represent, more people are buying bigger boats, other boats bought are second-hand and ready for re-powering, refitting etc.*

SSA: You have been involved in the conversion of work boats to superyachts. Can you give us an example?

SW: *The obvious one here is Lady D. She was already converted some years ago in America and the new owners brought it here. We enhanced it substantially, not so much in design features that you can see from the outside but internally, especially in the engine room which was completely re-done. Originally, work was for 30 items then it went up to 450 items. Painting on the lower deck was a whole sub-project on its own, the boat was 57meters long and 13metres in beam. It was a good project, we did it all afloat, mostly at Raffles Marina, which was why we set up office here. We hope to get more of such projects.*

SSA: What would be your greatest satisfaction so far in 2010?

SW: *Getting our first superyacht conference and bringing some major players to this side of the world and introducing to us here the SSA group and seeing them come back now for the 2010 conference. I think that is the single most commendable and prominent achievement that any group of people in the pleasure yacht industry has done.*

SSA: What do you think of the next 2 – 3 years in terms of the superyacht traffic and superyacht opportunities in the region?

SW: *The whole region is going to benefit. For a few years, there's been a couple of bottlenecks due to owners' personal financial crisis, people were hesitant to move boats around because of the perceived suffering of the people in Europe and America, it's not the best climate to be touting your wealth. So a lot of boats have been held up at many places, kept out of view, out of mind. But things are easing off. Interestingly at the height of all these problems last year, we had 2 of America's biggest boats come through Singapore. Eos – a huge, vastly expensive 95 metre sailing yacht and Archimedes – a 60 odd metre yacht.*

SSA: What do you think of the Asian market per se?

SW: *I think that will definitely increase, money worldwide is looking to get spent. As property value shifts and business centres are made aware that there will be people capitalizing, you will see a lot of people looking to spend. So yes I think Asia is going to start coming into its own, as a sort of playground and people are going to start playing.*

SSA: What are your development plans for the next couple of years?

SW: *Our development plans will be to look more towards conversions of the oil and gas boats and fishing boats to become exploration type yachts. And to hopefully have an understanding with a repair yard facility based out of Singapore to carry out certain repair works. Repair works has always been a core and central part of our business.*

SSA: I understand that you went through some very difficult times in your business in the past. Did you ever regret staying in Singapore?

SW: *No, not directly no. I've had second thoughts about choosing this path, though it was never really chosen but an evolutionary process. I didn't set off being in the yacht business at all, but it sort of just happened.*

SSA: Last question of the day, what drives you?

SW: *I don't know to be honest; this whole thing is just what I do. This is something I look forward to, it's just that I didn't know. This set-up here is good now, I got my right hand man who helps me immensely every day. So I know that this is a pretty secure base all the time. We've got really good people around us who is working in this industry with us and the excitement of seeing it grow and us growing with it is what keeps us going to the end.*