

Feature

Photos courtesy of Asia Pacific Superyachts



ASIA SUPERYACHT RENDEZVOUS – FUN ON AND OFF THE WATER.

THE BIG BOATS COME TO PLAY!

Although economic turmoil has ravaged the world's economies, Phuket, in many ways, appears to be untouched by this. In a picture-perfect setting which most people can only dream about, luxurious sail and power yachts anchor in the waters off Phuket Island, for a five-star, exclusive fun event, the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous.

Held on the 17th and 18th of December every year, the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous welcomes superyachts of a minimum of 100 feet for two days of social and sailing activities. Although participation is by invitation only, the ninth running of the event saw the largest fleet ever, with 11 superyachts present. Old friendships were renewed and new ones forged.

This prestigious event is hosted by hotel sponsor The Chedi Phuket, a luxury hotel on Surin Beach. Feadship of Holland, the world's premier superyacht builder is a principal sponsor along with co-sponsors Asia Pacific Superyachts and Jumierah Private Island. Co-organiser Charlie Dwyer, captain of the superyacht, Yanneke Too, says, "This annual celebration is the only major event of its kind in Asia. It also represents Phuket's coming of age as a major yachting destination for the international community."

For most of the participants and spectators, the highlight of the event is the 'Feadship Challenge', which is held during the opening party, beside the Chedi pool. It's presided over by Feadship which is represented by Francois



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Van Well, President of Feadship America. The Challenge brings competing crews together as boat builders, to construct small boats from kits. Creativity and originality are frequently evident in the designs; the biggest test then becomes seeing if they actually float. Model yachts compete in pairs, in two three-metre-long gutters. Using only his breath, the appointed 'blower' carefully sails the team's boat down the gutter to the end, where he must consume some sumptuously fried bugs, turn the boat around and blow it back to the finish line. Spectators cheer on their favourites from the sidelines. The winner of the heat moves on to the next round.

Two prizes are awarded. Last year M/Y Vie Sans Soueis won the hotly contested Challenge. The second award, for the best designed boat, went to Silolona which was built in the likeness of their Indonesian 'phinisi', a traditional wooden sailboat.

On the Friday, the sailing yachts gathered for a race in Pansea Bay in front of the Chedi. The 2009 event saw five sailing yachts participating in the

triangular course, and the power yacht S/V Maverick providing committee services. It was a sight that proved to be truly spectacular; often only boat-lengths separating the superyachts. The 48-metre Thalia stood out amongst the fleet, coming from behind to cross the finish line first.

The late afternoon cocktail party was then held aboard Silolona, where entertainment included the Indonesian crew dressed in traditional regalia, playing traditional instruments and singing. The celebration then moved shoreside to The Chedi for a formal gala for superyacht owners, and a beachside BBQ for the crews and other participants.

Fantastic social and sailing events at an unparalleled location made the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous 2009 the most successful one yet. Simply, it's the best attended superyacht event in Asia, and it's expected that the tenth year will be even more spectacular.

