

FOR SUPER

DECEMBER IN PHUKET, AND THE FLEET
GATHERS FOR SOME SEASONAL FUN AT
THE ASIA SUPERYACHT RENDEZVOUS

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUY NOWELL





The weekend before Christmas, the weather is glorious, the crew have buffed the caprail to perfection and the galley and cellar are fully stocked. So, time to embark the guests, slip the lines and head round to The Surin for the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous, sponsored by Feadship.

Ten years down the track, and the biggest gathering of superyachts in Asia continues to be a draw. This time it was 10 yachts – motor and sail – that turned out for three days of camaraderie, parties, sailing, cruising and dining, all based at the recently-renovated The Surin.

Opening Night featured a skippers' briefing from Race Officers Andy Dowden and Simon James, who explained the intricacies of the infinitely flexible racecourse to the Captains of the two sailing vessels participating. A few words from organisers Gordon Fernandes and Capt Charlie Dwyer, and then it was time for cocktails on board M/Y Celebrity, with side trips to visit M/Y Andara and M/Y Onyx. It was a hugely convivial evening as guests, crew and members of the media soaked up the on-board atmosphere. There's no doubt that the top deck of a 30m motor yacht is a great place to be on a balmy tropical night in December.

Another glass of white wine? Thank you.

It was all action on Saturday morning as the effortlessly elegant Swan 76, Silandra V, took on the 92' cat, Cilliam, on a course of continuously variable geometry designed to 'give both boats a chance.' Anyone who thought 76' vs 92' was a mismatch was correct - but it was the smaller Silandra V that romped away to an easy win in a fresh breeze that had the experienced sailors on board delighted as boat speed topped 11kts and the lee rail went under. Sterling stuff. On board the biggest Committee Boat in Asia (Maverick II's stately 42m) Race Officers Dowden and James reported themselves 'very comfortable.'

The evening's entertainment at The Surin (dressed in her best party frock and looking absolutely the picture) was a perennial favourite, the Feadship Challenge. Each superyacht crew was provided with a 'bag of bits' – balsa wood, pins, card, sellotape etc – with which to build a boat inside the allotted hour. An hour later, and the results of a good deal of head-scratching were varied, to say the least. Now the boat builders had to race their vessels down two troughs, one-on-one, in a knockout competition to determine the 'best design' which of course had nothing to do

PREVIOUS PAGE:
Onyx captures the fleet's reflections when 'On Parade'

OPPOSITE:
serious racing moves

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Fleet review; Onyx on station; booty hunters; Silandra V



ROLL CALL

- S/Y SILANDRA V Swan 76 Custom
- S/Y CILIAM Lago 92 catamaran
- M/Y ANDARA Baglietto 28m
- M/Y CELEBRITY Ses Yachts 30m
- M/Y ONYX Sanlorenzo 40
- M/Y MAVERICK Stirling 42m
- M/Y AVELINE Maiora 32m
- M/Y CAVALLINO Pershing 80 (24m)
- M/Y HYE SEAS 2 Azimut 35m
- M/Y SAMAX Feadship 55m



with who could blow the hardest! But it did have a good deal to do with which boats stayed upright, which fell over, and which ones could be persuaded to move in a straight line. There were even some floating creations which Feadship might have preferred not to have their name on! Anyway, after a great deal of huffing and puffing, it was the captain of M/Y Andara who blew home a winner in grand style. Just watching was hard work.

Sunday morning provided bright sunshine and fresh breeze for another day out on the water. In another face-off between Silandra V and Ciliam it was the Swan that came home the winner again, by a handsome margin and two 360° turns. Spectators on board M/Y Onyx enjoyed a grandstand view (and the very best strudel ever).

And then it was the turn of the motor yachts to show off a little, as the whole fleet – all 337m of polished teak, varnished cap rails and metallic paintwork – paraded in echelon formation for the benefit of the cameras. It really did look fabulous. Arthur Tay, owner of Hye Seas II as well as One° 15 Marina in Singapore, said, 'This collection of beautiful boats is just a sign of things to come in Asia.' Capt Ed Shields of M/Y Aveline added, 'It's a real pleasure to be here. Asians are developing a liking for boating and yachting, and I am sure that the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous is going to grow into something bigger. The number of superyachts heading east has been steadily growing in recent years, and it's only going to get bigger...'

After the review of the fleet, it was 'all ashore' for more fun and games, the search for the Rendezvous Booty. It was a treasure hunt – for grown-ups and kids alike, and it involved clues underwater, messages in bottles, charts inside coconuts, exotic beverages, navigational skills, and a great deal of enthusiasm. Nobody is quite sure when so many pirates were last seen on Pansea Beach, 'loitering with intent to have fun.' And is a RIB equipped with a cannon automatically a Bombardier? After a great deal of rushing about, digging holes in the sand and translating 'Phi Phi (island)' into 'toilet' and then into 'hong nam' (which is Thai for toilet) it was the crew and juniors of M/Y Samax who won the race to the treasure. We're guessing that it was the juniors who ate the chocolate, and the crew who stashed away the spa coupons!

Closing Night at the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous was the Gala Dinner at The Surin hosted by Boat International Media. 'Fabulous' is an understatement, and 'glittering', 'sumptuous' and 'magnificent' have to be in there somewhere. Under a marquee beside the beach, and to the accompaniment of traditional Thai dancing and live music, guests enjoyed a truly sparklin. There were a few words from Dick van Lent, Director of Feadship, and a few more from Victoria Lister, Commercial Director for BI Media. Then as the evening wound down it was time to light the Chiang Mai lanterns on the beach, make a wish and watch them float away into the starry night. (We heard one Captain wish 'that it doesn't come down on my boat.') And another Asia Superyacht Rendezvous was over.

Bas Nederpelt, Marketing & Sales Director, Feadship, said 'we came on board this event when it started 11 years ago... instead of opening offices here we decided it would be more fun to be involved in an event. We certainly intend to continue supporting the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous in the future.' Now that's a real vote of confidence: roll on, ASR 2012.

CLOCKWISE, FROM OPPOSITE TOP LEFT:

Pansea Bay, from The Surin; M/Y Onyx crew become boatbuilders; The Surin, all ready to party; "blow, blow, blow your boat..."; M/Y Andara, Feadship Challenge winners; S/Y Silandra, 'Spirit of the Rendezvous'