

## Russian superyacht: New pictures

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**Ultra-rich enjoy relaxed atmosphere and safety in New Zealand and spend millions while exploring country.**



Serene with Rangitoto in the background. Photo: Sam Mahayni/Tourism New Zealand.

The firm providing support for the giant Russian-owned vessel Serene says superyacht tourism is booming.

Asia Pacific Superyachts NZ has been in business for 12 years and its founding director, Jeanette Tobin, says "word is out" about what New Zealand had to offer.

The super-rich enjoy the relaxed atmosphere here and that the country is safe, she says. These visitors spend millions of dollars throughout the country over summer.

"We've got five times more income than last year. They're all cruising and doing big itineraries and coming for two weeks to two months."

She said her firm was handling a range of vessels this summer ranging from 30m to 56m in addition to the 134m Serene, which slipped into Auckland early yesterday. Tobin and business partner Duthie Lidgard's firm also provided services for the distinctive superyacht "A", which spent months here last summer undergoing maintenance and cruising around the coast.

Tobin said there was a range of owners from Europe and the United States.

There was strong interest in Maori culture - with guests having hangi on private beaches on Great Barrier Island and in Northland. One family learned how to kitesurf and others dived at the Poor Knights. Vineyards on Waiheke and in Marlborough were popular, as was hunting and fishing.

"We try and make it as Kiwi as possible - you can't go anywhere else in the world and find the Kiwi way. We're relaxed but try to keep levels of service as high-end as possible," Tobin said. "They're comfortable, there's not the paparazzi, nobody knows them, they feel safe and comfortable, they don't need security, this is a really safe country."



Serene in Auckland Harbour. Photo: Sam Mahayni/Tourism New Zealand

Nobody wanted to play golf this summer which she said was unusual.

There was a group of about 30 superyacht skippers who shared notes on where their owners would like to go.

"It's all starting to happen - we're getting inquiries from big boat [owners] who know they can have a good time in New Zealand," Tobin said.

She could not talk about what those on board Serene, owned by vodka magnate Yuri Scheffler, would do during their time here.

She said the very large vessels coming here were too big for the dedicated Silo Marina and this was exacerbated by a shortage of space during a busy cruise ship season.

Figures released by Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development last year showed a record superyacht season between April 2013 and March 2014 was worth \$29 million in net economic benefits for the regional economy.



Serene coming into Auckland. Photo: Sam Mahayni/Tourism New Zealand

The report by the Superyacht Intelligence Agency shows 37 superyachts visited New Zealand throughout the season, with each yacht contributing more than \$1 million in net economic value to the national economy - generating a combined total of \$39.5 million.

An estimated \$4.3 million was spent specifically on tourism-related activities in the greater Auckland region and \$8.25 million throughout the country.

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