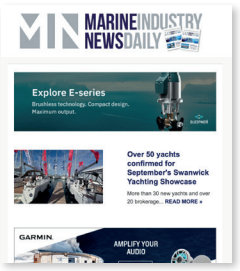
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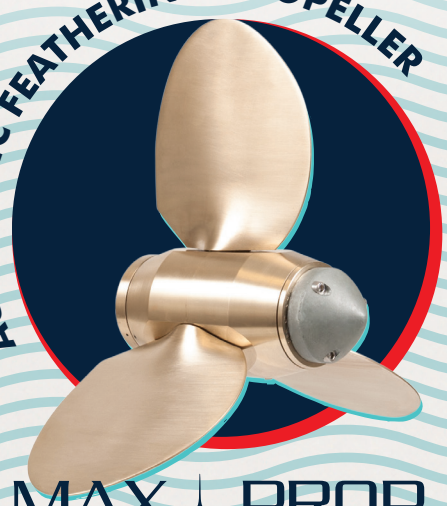
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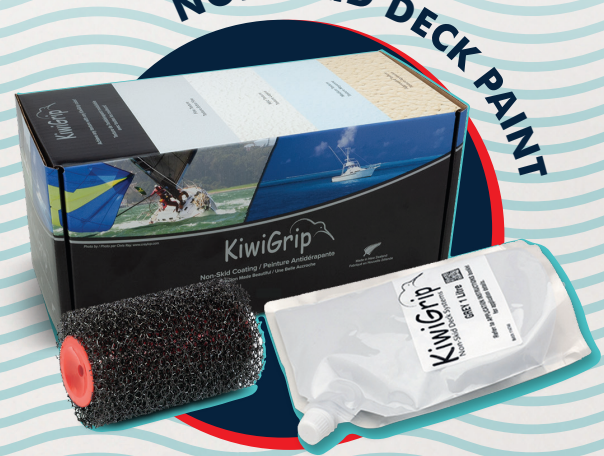
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Editor's welcome

In today's complex trading landscape, strategic flexibility, customer service, and digital integration bring competitive advantage.

In this issue, three leading engineers discuss how to attract top tech talent on page 22. Plus, key supply chain players debate growing pains in an expanding superyacht industry on page 4.

Erwin Bamps, CEO of Gulf Craft Group, shares his perspective on the shifting dynamics of global yacht ownership. Returning to the helm of the UAE-based shipbuilder, Bamps reflects on regional headwinds on page 14.

It is precisely within current tighter operational parameters that artificial intelligence (AI) is demonstrating potential for marine businesses. McKenna Townsend explores how firms can better leverage AI on page 58.

MarineShift 360 reveals how third-party verified data could – and should – be used to end widespread greenwashing within the industry (page 43).

And, as our industry grapples with an ever-changing business landscape, the autumn boat shows and plethora of marine events should be a welcome reminder of the level of innovation, technical prowess and design expertise the leisure marine sector has to offer.

This issue aims to reflect the scale of potential – from startups discussing the art of scaling up to Sunseeker and Sunreef Yachts revealing their latest ventures and strategies.

As ever, the *MIN* team looks forward to connecting with readers at the upcoming boat shows and marine events.



Chantal

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The superyacht industry's growing pains



Seven leaders on the challenges shaping 2026

The superyacht industry continues to grow, but many of the people responsible for building, servicing, selling and supporting the world's largest yachts say the industry is wrestling with labour shortages, rising costs, increasing technical complexity and owners whose expectations are evolving faster than the infrastructure designed to support them.

Bigger yachts, strained infrastructure, challenges for marinas

According to IGY Marinas' European operations director Simon Bryan, the biggest challenge currently facing the sector is the widening gap between growing superyacht demand and the infrastructure, people, and operating standards required to provide support.

"The fleet continues to become larger, more sophisticated, and more service-intensive, while prime berthing capacity, technical support, skilled labour, utilities, security, and environmental infrastructure are not expanding at the same pace," he says.

IGY operates a global network of luxury yacht destinations across the Americas, Caribbean, and Europe – many of which are home ports for superyachts.

"For IGY, this challenge is more significant than any single issue such as regulation, labour shortages, or sustainability because it encompasses all of them. A marina is no longer simply a place to berth a yacht; it has become a service platform, logistics hub, compliance interface, hospitality venue, security environment, and technical support ecosystem."

Supplier and talent shortage for shipyards

The ecosystem sitting behind the wider industry is causing furrowed brows.

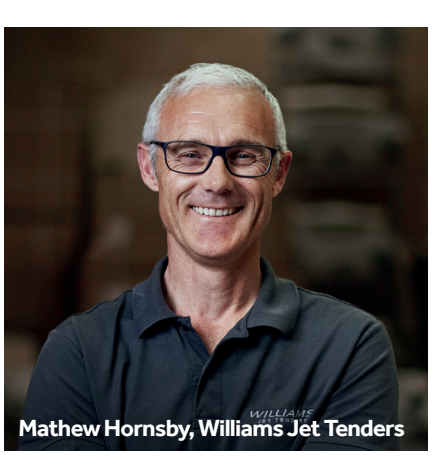
"It is becoming increasingly difficult to find a supply chain, and subcontractors, capable of adequately supporting the ever-growing quality requirements demanded by shipyards," says


IGY's Vieux-Port de Cannes


Simon Bryan, IGY Marinas


Fabio Ermetto, Baglietto


Edmund Beckett, Burgess


Mathew Hornsby, Williams Jet Tenders

"Many suppliers in this sector are still highly artisanal in their approach and have not evolved sufficiently to meet the needs of an industrial environment."

Fabio Ermetto
Baglietto

Fabio Ermetto, Baglietto's chief commercial officer. Baglietto, a historic Italian shipyard, specialises in custom aluminium and steel superyachts.

"Many suppliers in this sector are still highly artisanal in their approach and have not evolved sufficiently to meet the needs of an industrial environment.

"Of course, this does not apply to everyone, but it is undoubtedly an issue that is closely linked to another equally important challenge: the difficulty of finding skilled labour, particularly in certain areas such as metal fabrication and steelwork."

Williams Jet Tenders' sales director Mathew Hornsby, agrees. "Attracting and retaining talented individuals who embody a company's values and can drive meaningful, actionable improvements remains one of the greatest challenges for any business, regardless of being in the superyacht sector or another industry."

Interestingly, Edmund Beckett, naval architect and senior partner for global superyacht brokerage firm Burgess, says a key issue is that yachting has been billed as an aspirational activity (for good reason). "But this means that the expectations of being involved in all the 'good stuff' are out of proportion with the willingness to put in the hard yards," he adds.

Yachts' technical complexities heighten talent shortage

The clear shift towards larger vessels has heightened the shortage of skilled professionals, highlighting challenges brought to the fore with the continuing strong growth post-covid – says Pietro Cappiello, vice president of CMC Marine (which manufactures stabilising systems for superyachts). "This evolution has significantly increased the technical complexity involved in the design, construction, and management of yachts.

"As technology continues to advance rapidly, there is a growing need for highly qualified talent across the entire value chain – from designers and shipyards to suppliers and crew – capable of managing increasingly sophisticated systems and solutions.

"At the same time, there is an ongoing challenge related to generational turnover."

Superyacht owners want more – and faster

IGY's Bryan agrees that labour is a challenge. "Recruiting experienced operational, technical, hospitality, and security personnel has become increasingly competitive." »



D-Marin's Porto Mirabello

But he sets the challenge neatly alongside compliance, sourcing, energy costs, and... owners.

"Compliance requirements continue to grow, supply chains remain less predictable than they were before covid, and utility and infrastructure costs have risen significantly."

At the same time, he says, "owners and captains expect faster responses, greater flexibility, higher levels of personalisation, and consistently exceptional service."

That comes within the lens of considerably intensified competition within the marina sector. "New developments, acquisitions, and investment-backed operators are entering the market, increasing pressure on marina operators to continually invest in facilities, technology, and service standards. Differentiation is becoming more difficult, particularly in mature yachting destinations."

Getting the data balance right for owners

Burgess' Beckett is also experiencing owner challenges – but of a different nature.

"Everyone in the industry, including owners, is far more informed than five years ago and have AI at their fingertips," he says.

"There is so much information now publicly available and owner's views are often quite set before anything is discussed with them, but these views are often formed without the full picture and context."

This means that keeping relevance and "expert advisor status" is more challenging than ever.

But Josh Richardson, CEO Superyacht Tenders and Toys (SYTT) which sources, customises, and manages tenders for superyachts, welcomes the availability of data.

"Historically, sourcing a quality tender or chase boat often relied on a relatively small network of contacts and a lot of time spent gathering information. Today, buyers have access to far more data, better market intelligence and a wider range of options globally. That's raised standards across the industry," notes Richardson.

"Owners and captains are making more informed decisions, builders are more accountable, and the market as a whole is operating more efficiently.

"We've seen firsthand how increased transparency benefits both buyers and sellers by creating greater confidence in transactions and valuations. Something that is less common these days is back-handed commissions to brokers, ensuring the client gets the best price."

Margin pressures from customer expectations

Richardson says that margin pressure is showing up in yacht toys, watersports equipment, and tenders, where innovation cycles are accelerating... and customer expectations continue to rise.

"Manufacturers are facing higher development, compliance and support costs, while competition continues to increase. At the same time, owners can see watersports products on the shelves of Walmart, Decathlon or online retailers and understandably question why a superyacht solution costs significantly more. »



Josh Richardson, SYTT

> *"Manufacturers are facing higher development, compliance and support costs, while competition continues to increase."*
>
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D-Marin's Porto Mirabello

"The reality is that they're often comparing a mass-market product with a premium, commercial-grade or bespoke solution that has been selected, customised and supported for a very different environment. The businesses that will protect margins are those that can clearly communicate that value and deliver an exceptional ownership experience long after the initial purchase."

Economic landscape remains a critical factor

Taking a macro view, the key risk facing the superyacht sector in late 2026/7, is the emergence of financial or credit crises, believes CMC's Cappiello.

"Beyond that, the broader international political and economic landscape remains a critical factor. In the post-covid period, we have already seen how inflation and an unfavourable economic environment have affected the market – particularly in the smaller boat segment – leading to significant challenges for many companies.

"If a similar situation were to occur on a larger scale, it would inevitably have repercussions across the entire industry."

But some things have been getting easier.

Digitalisation and tech increases professionalism

Dean Smith, CCO of D-Marin (which operates a network of superyacht harbours across the Mediterranean and Gulf), says digitalisation has removed many of the traditional frictions owners once faced; the paperwork, the mooring delays, the constant back-and-forth with marina teams.

"Service standards across the sector have risen sharply, so stepping into boating, even at the superyacht level, feels much more intuitive than it once did," he says.

"For D-Marin, this shift has been transformative. We've focused on creating a connected, premium network across nine countries, bringing new marinas in Italy, France, Greece, Malta and Spain into one consistent standard of experience. Digital innovation has played a huge role in that."

IGY Marinas' Bryan agrees. "Technology has significantly improved communication, reservation management, customer profiling, maintenance planning, security monitoring, and operational efficiency," he says.

"The industry has also become more professional. Captains, yacht managers, owners' representatives, shipyards, and marina operators are more aligned than ever on service standards, safety, and sustainability objectives.

"There is also far greater collaboration and knowledge sharing, particularly among global marina networks, helping to drive consistency and best practice."

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that the superyacht industry's greatest challenge is keeping pace with its own evolution. From marina infrastructure and skilled labour shortages to increasingly complex technology, margin pressure and rising owner expectations, businesses across the sector are being asked to do more with greater speed and precision. Yet there is also a clear sense of confidence. Greater transparency, stronger collaboration, improved service standards and continued investment in digitalisation are helping companies adapt to changing conditions. While economic uncertainty remains a risk, the industry is increasingly professional, connected and better equipped to meet the demands of the next generation of owners, yachts and destinations.



Dean Smith, D-Marin



Pietro Cappiello, CMC Marine

Words: Zella Compton

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Fact & friction



AkzoNobel antifouling application

AkzoNobel outlines how shifting regional regulations are shaping the hull coatings market

Representing more than a simple tick box exercise, fouling control has been an essential pre-launch consideration for owners and yards for decades, unlocking significant performance benefits including reduced drag, increased fuel efficiency and extended maintenance intervals.

However, environmental concerns and a shifting regulatory landscape continue to reshape the market, driving a new generation of technology and impacting the antifouling solutions available across global jurisdictions.

Navigating a fragmented market

The continued fragmentation of regional regulations represents a distinct challenge. Ongoing reclassification of raw materials – aimed at reducing biocide, VOC and isocyanate-based coatings – is creating disparities in product availability and compliance between countries.

The leisure marine industry's push to reduce environmental impact, alongside an increasingly climate-conscious consumer market, is now directly steering product innovation.

Eve Lenez, global yacht segment manager, AkzoNobel, says: "While fouling control is proven to have a positive effect on the environment, by reducing fuel consumption and subsequent emissions and by discouraging the transfer of invasive species, the coatings products themselves now need to adapt to maintain compliance with new regulatory frameworks and a more environmentally engaged consumer market.

"As a result, environmental considerations have emerged as a key driver for antifouling research and development."

R&D pivots as biocide restrictions tighten

Antifouling paint has traditionally relied upon the use of one or more biocides, which are released gradually over time to prevent the microscopic fouling organisms from attaching to the boat.

However, current regulations have prompted a pivot towards foul-release, biocide-free coatings. This technology emphasises surficial film management.

Lenez adds: "The marine coatings compliance landscape is fragmented and can be complex, with countries and regions having their own authority and national approval boards.

"Generally, to ensure compliance, companies must provide detailed data on hazards, exposure and safe use, and certain substances »



AkzoNobel staff


Regional regulations are impacting the choice of antifouling

can be restricted or even banned. In the EU, for instance, some regional customers are required to meet tighter regulations around biocides, so biocide-free solutions have been developed to meet increasing demand.

"In North America, the difficulty of product selection is amplified due to a two-tiered federal and state regulatory system, placing complex, often inconsistent, restrictions on biocide use. For example, in areas such as California, biocide-free coatings must meet lower VOC limits. This causes a particular challenge for boat owners who are sailing within multiple jurisdictions.

"Regulatory changes will eventually lead to the need for a broader adoption of biocide-free technologies."

Of course, the very nature of boating results in vessels traversing different regions and thus triggering varied regulatory measures.

Hans Slegtenhorst, yacht senior product manager, AkzoNobel says: "We recognise the challenges posed for boatbuilders and owners. To keep our coatings portfolio future-ready, we continuously monitor and anticipate changes in legislation worldwide.

"It is essential that customers have confidence that the solutions they select meet different regulations across different regions, so we develop products tailored for specific regional and local requirements, and [that are] designed to meet or exceed the strictest international regulatory standards.

"Answering the increasing requests from owners and boatbuilders for additional support, AkzoNobel continues to invest in an extensive technical network which provides expert guidance, supported by intuitive online tools that simplify product selection."

Antifouling options

A key consideration for boatbuilders and owners remains whether to apply a polishing or hard antifouling.

Gareth Thomas, global technical manager yacht, AkzoNobel, explains: "Self-polishing copolymer (SPC) antifoulings, such as Micron 350 from International, are designed for the most demanding fouling conditions. They gradually wear away in seawater, ensuring a consistent release of active ingredients and a smooth surface over time. These coatings are ideal for boats that stay in the water year-round, cruising yachts, and owners who want longer intervals between maintenance, as well as reliable, all-round performance.

"Hard antifouling coatings are typically used for a single season and perform best in moderate fouling conditions. They are often chosen for faster boats or racing yachts, as they can be burnished or wet sanded to create a smooth, durable finish. Hard antifouling systems protect by gradually releasing biocides from the paint surface to prevent fouling, although this effect reduces over time.

"The importance of sophisticated biocide-free foul-release technology is only growing within the industry.

"One of our most recent innovations in biocide-free technology, which is designed to support compliance with regional regulations, includes B-Free Explore, a biocide-free coating system from International. AkzoNobel's Sea Hawk and Interlux brands, meanwhile, offer copper-free alternatives and water-based technologies to meet the specific demands of the North American market.

"A further factor impacting demand for antifouling coatings is an increasing desire for glossier surfaces and brighter colours, even for underwater surfaces. A common misconception within the market is that the development of biocide-free solutions will lead to a compromise between sustainability and performance. However, this isn't the case. Customers can experience the premium level of performance when implementing the correct application and maintenance processes."

Ultimately, as environmental regulations tighten globally, long-term commercial security belongs to the boatbuilders and owners who partner with adaptable, future-proof coating manufacturers.



"Environmental considerations have emerged as a key driver for antifouling research and development."

Eve Lenez
AkzoNobel

Words: Chantal Haines

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Bridging the Gulf



Gulf Craft CEO Erwin Bamps talks regional headwinds, vertical integration and AI

When Erwin Bamps returned to Gulf Craft Group as CEO in April 2025, the UAE-based builder was on a clear trajectory of global expansion. Within a year, the marine industry had been tested by a series of sharp macroeconomic challenges.

Bamps, who previously spent 16 years at Gulf Craft before moving to be vice president of Prestige Yachts, has retaken the helm at a key juncture. There's planned expansion to the Middle Eastern shipyard's fleet and services, balanced with the residual market friction following the US-Iran conflict.

Conflict consequences

While 2026 has been anything but predictable, Bamps says strategic agility has been critical during this period. "We didn't stop production, not even for an hour," he explains. "We continued to build and deliver boats while maintaining constant communication with our clients, dealers, suppliers and keep the business moving with discipline."

Reflecting on a challenging early 2026, Bamps says: "Any regional conflict creates pressure, particularly for a manufacturing business. The most immediate effects are not necessarily on demand, but on sentiment, logistics, insurance, travel planning and the timing of buying decisions.

"In the short term, geopolitical tension naturally affects confidence. It can influence cruising plans, insurance, event activity and the timing of some purchasing decisions. That is unavoidable. Restricted logistics have also required more flexibility in delivery planning."

But having operated from the region for more than four decades, Bamps notes that "resilience is part of the way the business is built. We are used to managing complexity, and our vertical integration gives us a level of control that helps us respond when external conditions change."

Bamps remains optimistic: "The fundamentals of the Middle East as a yachting destination remain strong. The region continues to invest in marinas, waterfront real estate, hospitality, tourism and regulatory frameworks


Nomad 95


Gulf Craft's craftsmanship


Erwin Bamps, Gulf Craft

> *"The fundamentals of the Middle East as a yachting destination remain strong. The region continues to invest in marinas, waterfront real estate and tourism."*

Erwin Bamps
Gulf Craft

that support marine leisure," he says.

"The Middle East has become more sophisticated as a yachting market. Buyers understand the product better, expectations are higher and the ecosystem is continuing to mature. That does not disappear because of a period of tension.

"In the medium term, the opportunity is to convert resilience into confidence. The region must continue investing not only in destinations, but also in service, crew support, maintenance and long-term ownership infrastructure. That is what will define its credibility as a yachting hub."

Middle East: a resilient market

Gulf Craft's portfolio includes the Majesty line of luxury craft ranging from 60 to 175ft, the Nomad class of yachts and superyachts, the Oryx cabin cruiser models and the SilverCat power catamarans.

Underscoring its uninterrupted production, Gulf Craft launched the first hull of its new Majesty 145 superyacht in April 2026. The build serves as the latest addition to Gulf Craft's 40m+ fleet, complementing the Majesty 175 and Majesty 160, with the latter due to be launched later this year.

Gulf Craft has also embarked on a new 10,000m² manufacturing facility in Ajman, which will primarily build its SilverCat and Oryx lines.

"Investing in the Ajman facility is a clear sign of expansion, growing demand and build process optimisation."

The Ajman facility allows the company to optimise production for its leisure craft range while creating more focused capacity at the main shipyard for larger yachts and superyachts.

"Oryx and SilverCat vessels have different production requirements from larger Majesty and Nomad yachts, so it makes sense to give them a dedicated environment designed around their build process, sea trials and delivery flow."

Gulf Craft's Superyacht Service Centre (SYSC) is also helping to create the infrastructure that supports the 'full ownership experience'.

The SYSC has deep-water berths, an 80-metre service quay, 600-ton and 75-ton travel lifts, on-site technical teams, and in-house capabilities across mechanical, painting, joinery and upholstery work.

"Importantly, this capability is not limited to Gulf Craft-built vessels – SYSC is equipped to service boats and yachts from any shipyard," Bamps explains. The offering forms part of Bamps' goal to expand Gulf Craft's scope "outside the remit of boatbuilding" into ownership, service and long-term care. »



Gulf Craft factory

"We also see rising potential in parts of Africa, particularly coastal and island markets where tourism, marine transport and waterfront developments are evolving."

Erwin Bamps
Gulf Craft

Vertical integration increases
Gulf Craft is known for a high level of in-house manufacturing, which Bamps says attracts owners.

"On a boat, every centimetre matters. When design, engineering, production and interiors work closely together in-house, we can optimise layouts, integrate systems more intelligently and create spaces that feel generous without compromising practicality. In yacht building vertical integration gives better control over quality, timelines and cost.

"In 2026, the strongest value is in areas that affect consistency, timelines and lifecycle support. That includes engineering, interior fitout, after-sales support and spare parts readiness.

"The more we can manage internally, the more we can protect quality and respond quickly when conditions change. This is especially important in a market where supply chains, logistics and client expectations are all under pressure."

Emerging markets
In line with many yards, Southeast Asia is a key emerging market for the group.

Bamps adds: "Our participation in the Singapore Yachting Festival has reinforced that potential. It showed us that there is clear relevance for all our brands in southeast Asia.

"We also see rising potential in parts of Africa, particularly coastal and island markets where tourism, marine transport and waterfront developments are evolving. These markets are interesting not only for leisure boating, but also for commercial and utility vessels."

The GCC region also remains "highly important" to the company's core strategy.

"Across the region, major waterfront, marina and tourism developments are strengthening the marine lifestyle environment, from Dubai Harbour, Mina Rashid and Yas Marina in the UAE to Saudi Arabia's Red Sea destinations, Qatar's Doha Port and Oman's emerging marina-led tourism projects.

"These developments are not only increasing berthing capacity, but also creating interconnecting yachting destinations.

"What connects these markets is not only demand. It is the development of the ecosystem around boating. That is where we see long-term opportunity: in markets where ownership, infrastructure, service and lifestyle are beginning to mature together." »

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SilverCat 34CC

"We are currently working with several partners across different areas of intelligence, and we are gradually rolling AI tools out within the organisation."

Erwin Bamps
Gulf Craft


Gulf Craft is expanding its production capabilities in the UAE

Commercial vessel operations

On the utility side, Gulf Craft supports around 80 per cent of the Maldives' transport fleet – a commercial model that offers interesting growth potential.

Bamps says: "Through Gulf Craft Maldives, we have a dedicated production facility in the market, which gives us a strong local presence and a direct understanding of operational requirements.

"Can this model be applied to other archipelagic markets? Yes, but it has to be adapted carefully. Every island market has its own regulations, sea conditions, tourism and transport needs, so it is not something that can simply be copied and pasted. That said, we do see clear potential in markets where marine transport is essential to daily life."

AI in production

In 2025, Gulf Craft signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with cognitive AI-driven technology provider Partsol.

Bamps says the partnership initially targeted supply chain intelligence – building resilience into procurement and logistics.

"More broadly, we are currently working with several partners across different areas of intelligence, and we are gradually rolling AI tools out within the organisation," he says. "This includes supply chain management, production planning, design modelling, visualisation, safety monitoring, maintenance planning and crew-support systems."

A game of two halves

For Gulf Craft, long-term commercial growth across both the GCC and emerging territories depends on how effectively regional infrastructure, service networks, and ownership regulations mature alongside buyer demand.

And, while 2026 has presented unexpected challenges, Gulf Craft has continued to plan for the future and build efficiency.

The group's extensive vertical integration is providing a practical buffer and aids resilience, while its expanding portfolio and manufacturing footprint are ready for buyer sentiment to grow.

Words: Chantal Haines

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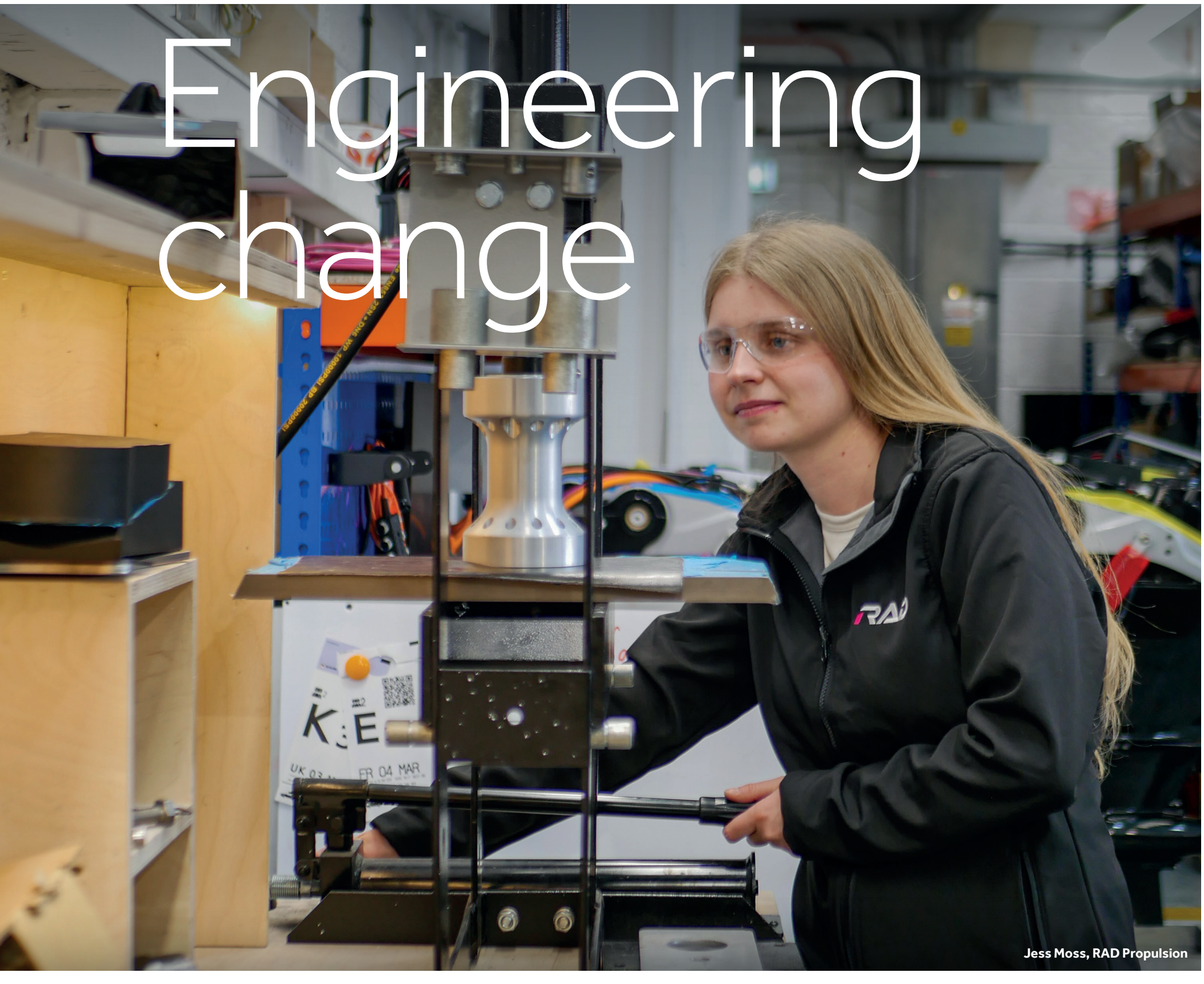
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Engineering change



Jess Moss, RAD Propulsion

Women driving marine tech innovation: careers, mentors and the power of visibility

From data engineering and electric propulsion to AI-powered operations, women are increasingly shaping the future of marine technology. Yet despite clear progress across the sector, long-term success still hinges on mentorship, opportunity and representation.

Channelling skills

In this article, professionals working at the forefront of marine innovation share their career journeys, the challenges they face, and why greater industry visibility is essential to normalise diversity in maritime tech.

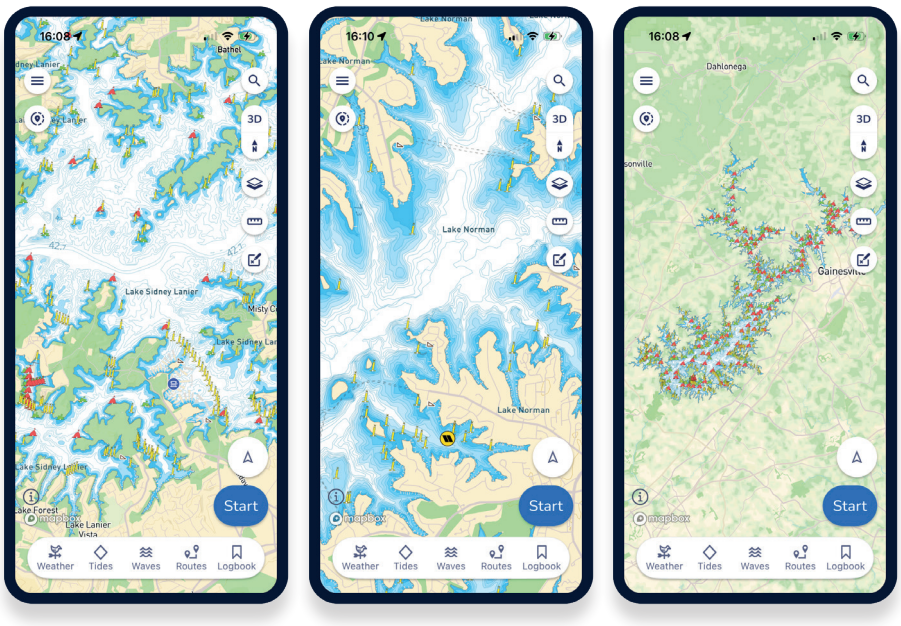
Elena Petru, geospatial data engineer for marine navigation company Savvy Navvy, transitioned from land-based geomatics to marine geodata in 2023.

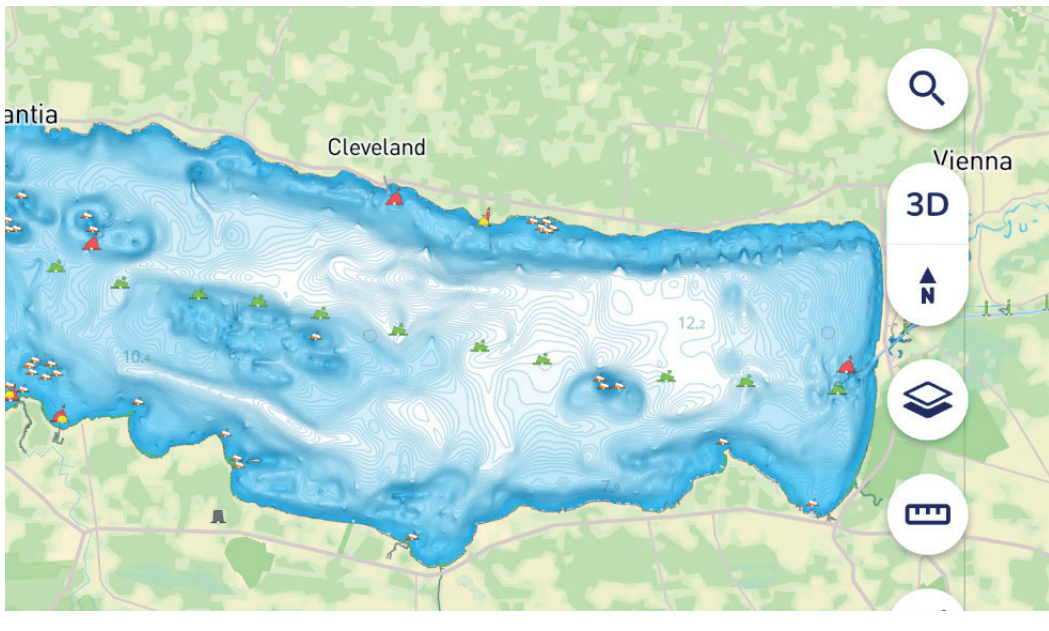
She now builds data pipelines resolving fragmented mapping coverage – vital work behind Savvy Navvy's geo coverage. Petru says that making the technical work behind the sector more visible is key to attracting top-tier developers and tech specialists to the marine industry.

"From the outside, it is easy to see the boat, the chart or the app. What is not always visible is the amount of data, engineering and decision making sitting behind it," Petru explains.

"We should talk more about the limitations and messy parts. That may sound counter-intuitive, but those are often the things that attract curious engineers. For inquisitive technical people, the limitations and edge cases are often what make a field interesting, because they show where real problem-solving and judgement are needed. Marine has this in spades.

"A young engineer might not immediately realise that skills





Digital chart mapping requires top-tier talent


Elena Petru, Savvy Navvy

in data engineering, software, geomatics, environmental data, meteorology or product development can all be applied to marine problems... but once you see what sits behind a marine product, the overlap becomes obvious."

Petru emphasises that domain language can be learned, but core technical skills are entirely transferable. She adds: "If young female engineers can see the complexity and the impact of the work, they are much more likely to recognise that their skills belong there too.

"You do not need to arrive as a maritime expert. Arrive curious, technically careful and willing to ask why the data does not agree.

"What excites me most about maritime is the potential for progress. Compared to industries like automotive, there's still so much room for innovation, and being part of that change is incredibly rewarding."

The power of mentorship

Mechanical design engineer Jess Moss joined electric propulsion specialist RAD Propulsion in early 2026, focusing on sustainable engineering and product development. For Moss, early mentorship changed the course of her career.

"I went to an all-girls secondary school where subjects like DT were cancelled early on, so I didn't have much exposure to engineering until GCSEs," Moss explains. "Everything changed when one of my teachers introduced a computer science course. She was passionate about getting girls into STEM, and that enthusiasm rubbed off on me."

Moss went on to study engineering at university.

"I was one of only around 20 women in a cohort of 200, and that number dropped as the years went on," she reflects. "But I was determined. I had lecturers who genuinely supported me, alongside industrial mentors who took the time to talk to me about placements and engineering roles, encouraged me to apply, hired me, and continued supporting me long after I graduated.

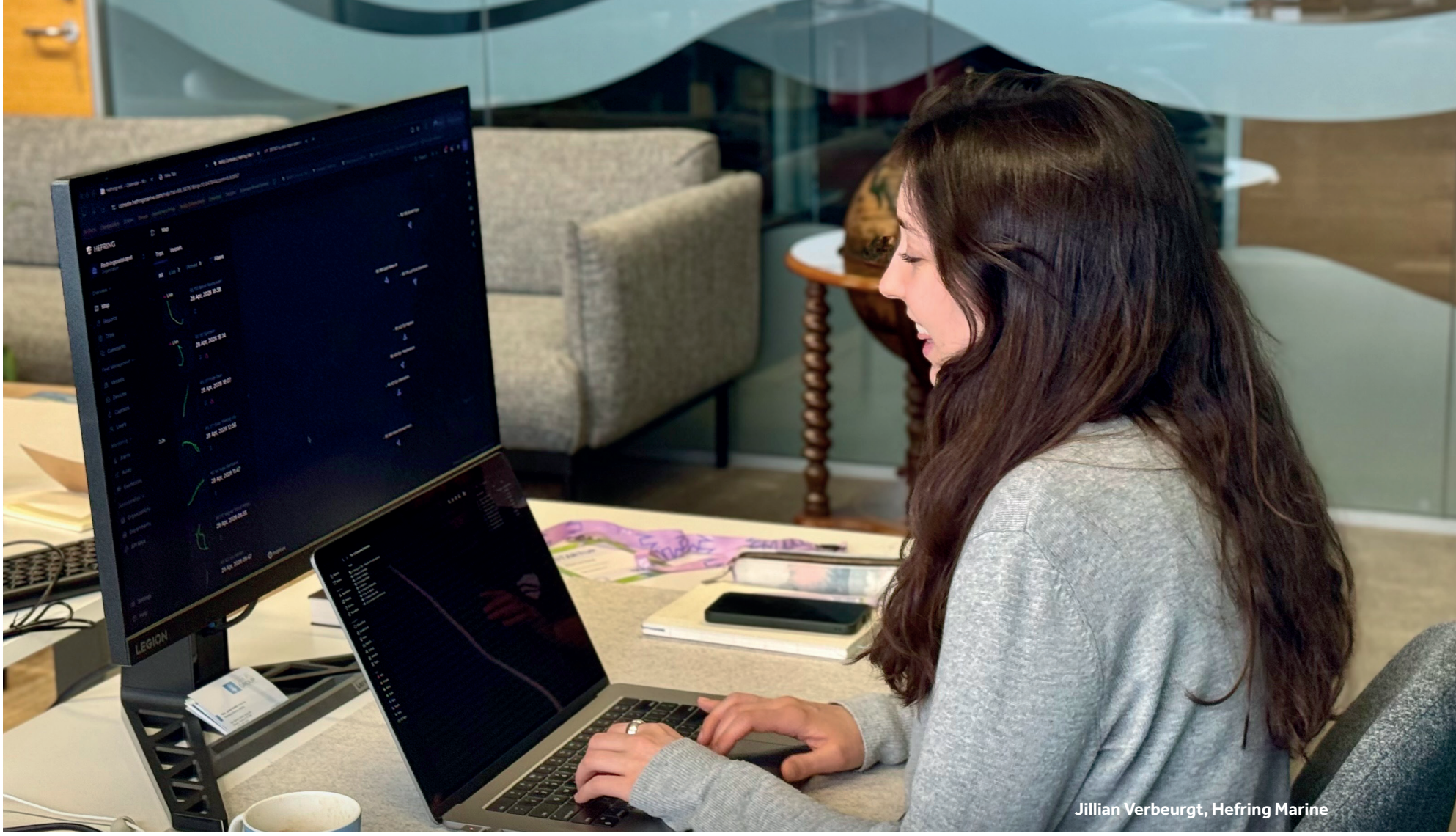
"Being a woman in engineering and maritime has mostly been a positive experience for me, but that doesn't mean there haven't been moments. At university, I was once asked if I was 'only on the course as a diversity hire', despite graduating top of my class. Comments like that stick with you, but they also fuel you," Moss adds.

"I've learned to be strategic about environments. I choose places where I feel supported, respected and valued for my work. RAD has been exactly that. I've never been made to feel like I can't do something because I'm a woman; I'm treated the same as everyone else, which is exactly how it should be."

Company culture

At Icelandic marine tech firm Hefring Marine, Jillian »

> *"If young female engineers can see the complexity and the impact of the work, they are much more likely to recognise that their skills belong there too."*
>
> **Elena Petru**
> Savvy Navvy



Jillian Verbeurgt, Hefring Marine

Verbeurgt supports strategic operations and cross-team projects as the company scales its real-time decision-support systems for commercial and defence vessels.

"When people ask how I ended up in the maritime industry, I usually smile because I never planned to be here," she says.

After moving to Iceland in 2017 to study sustainable energy sciences, Verbeurgt developed an interest in machine learning and data science before founding and running a food tech startup for five years.

"When I began looking for my next challenge, I met the team at Hefring Marine, and it immediately felt like the right fit. I've always been motivated by work that creates a positive impact, and Hefring's focus on safety and sustainability resonated deeply with me."

Currently, Verbeurgt leads Hefring's involvement in the NATO DIANA (Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic) accelerator programme, which she highlights as "one of the most rewarding parts of [the] role".

The programme aims to support cutting-edge dual-use technologies across critical defence and security challenges.

Verbeurgt reflects: "I'm one of Hefring's main contacts for the project and the experience has been transformative. The team at Cove (the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship), with whom we collaborate, have been incredibly supportive. I've felt a real sense of mentorship and encouragement from them."

Visibility is on the rise

In terms of sector-wide diversity, Petru notes that the trend is heading in the right direction. "There are more women in engineering networks, more open conversations around representation, and more visible role models," she explains. "That matters because it makes these career paths feel more achievable, especially for people who may not have seen themselves represented in technical roles before."

Petru continues: "There are still challenges, and experiences vary a lot by company, sector and country. But I do think the direction of travel is positive.

"For me, the bigger question is not only how women are received once they are in these roles, but whether enough young women can see these roles as realistic options in the first place. Sometimes the first barrier is not ability. It is whether you can imagine yourself there at all."

Verbeurgt's advice to young women considering a maritime career is simply to "try it".

"And if diving straight in feels daunting, start somewhere maritime adjacent, that's exactly what I did.

"Building confidence often comes from having a supportive 'tribe' around you, people who can back you up and help you navigate new environments," Verbeurgt adds.

Petru notes that she didn't arrive through a traditional maritime route either.

"I came from a geomatics background and then discovered how much of that experience applied to marine problems. It can feel intimidating at first, because every sector has its own language, assumptions and history. But it also means you bring a different skillset and way of looking at the problems," says Petru.

At its core, the future of marine innovation depends on making these diverse career paths visible to the next generation of technical talent. By highlighting the complex, real-world problem-solving behind today's maritime tech – and fostering inclusive company cultures – the sector can continue to attract top-tier professionals from non-traditional backgrounds.

As Moss concludes, the goal is to reach a point "where women in maritime isn't a headline, it's just normal. The more visible we are, the more natural it becomes for the next generation."

> *"If diving straight in feels daunting, start somewhere maritime adjacent."*
>
> **Jillian Verbeurgt**
> Hefring Marine

Words: Chantal Haines

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Multihull options



How is Sunreef Yachts leveraging its dual footprint in Poland and the UAE amid geopolitical challenges?

Francis Lapp, Sunreef Yachts' founder and president, turned heads with the launch of the world's first 74ft luxury oceangoing catamaran with a flybridge in 2003.

He founded the shipyard in Gdansk, Poland, re-envisioning multihull designs. Over two decades on, Sunreef's portfolio now encompasses sailing, power and superyachts supported by dual production facilities in Poland and the UAE.

Operating through Middle East tensions

The catamaran builder celebrated the official inauguration of its new shipyard in Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), UAE, in 2024.

The facility serves as a key hub for the Ultima range of catamarans, while also producing models such as the Sunreef 60 NEXT.

Lapp says: "From a business perspective, expanding production into the UAE gives us a very strong geographical position and better access to key international markets, allowing us to operate more efficiently on a global scale."

With the RAK facility serving as a pillar of the company's planned growth trajectory, the geopolitical tensions in the region are being closely watched.

Speaking to *MIN* in summer 2026, Lapp says the business remains well insulated.

"The conflict has not had a significant impact on our 2030 objectives or overall business performance in the region.

"Demand remains strong, and clients continue to place orders for yachts produced at our Middle East facilities. Of course, we are closely monitoring the situation as we are planning to make further large-scale investment decisions."

If 2026 has provided a backdrop of supply chain squeezes and geopolitical tensions, Lapp says the business has focused on agility. "We have diversified our supply chain, strengthened partnerships with suppliers across different regions, and expanded local production capabilities to reduce dependence on any single market or logistics corridor."

Recently, Sunreef has adapted its production and logistics strategy at the Ras Al Khaimah facility.

"So far, our supply chain and production operations in Ras Al Khaimah remain uninterrupted, and the business continues to operate smoothly," he continues. "The main operational adjustment


Ultima 88



Carlos Alcaraz

“Working with world-famous athletes naturally brings significant attention to the brand.”

Francis Lapp
Sunreef Yachts

we have made has been changing the delivery port. Beyond that, our focus has been on remaining agile… and ensuring continuity across all key areas of the business.”

Growth amid global headwinds

Earlier this year, Sunreef unveiled its Beyond 2030 strategy targeting €1 billion in annual revenue by the end of the decade.

The strategy includes a €30 million expansion programme across its two major production facilities. Despite the US-Iran conflict, the boatbuilder’s expansion plans remain unwavering.

“The expansion of our infrastructure in both Poland and the UAE is a very important part of the strategy. Our long-term vision requires not only investment in new technologies and product development, but also continuous growth of our production capabilities.

“In the UAE, our shipyard operations currently cover around 65,000 m² in Ras Al Khaimah Maritime City, plus an additional 15,000m² where we are now expanding stainless steel and woodwork shops. We currently employ around 1,300 people there, with plans to increase this number to approximately 2,000 by the end of the year.”

According to Lapp, Sunreef recruited more than 450 employees since the beginning of the US-Iran conflict.

In Poland, the company operates two shipyards with a combined area of around 125,000m² and is investing in a new 7200m² production hall dedicated to superyacht projects, slated for completion around October 2026.

“The Beyond 2030 roadmap is mainly focused on two directions,” explains Lapp. “The development of the Ultima range and the expansion of energy-efficient superyachts. We are also working on a new sailing superyacht concept that is already at an advanced stage of development, although it is still too early to share more details.”

Further updates are expected during the autumn 2026 show season.

Shifting multihull perceptions

“When I built the first Sunreef catamaran, the luxury multihull market practically did not exist,” Lapp says.

“At that time, catamarans were mostly associated either with small sports boats or mass-produced recreational units of fairly basic quality. I still remember our first showcase at the Monaco Yacht Show – »

many people were reluctant even to step on board because they simply did not believe a catamaran could be a true luxury product.

"Today, the perception of multihulls has changed completely. Catamarans have become one of the strongest trends in the global yachting industry, appreciated for their space, comfort, stability and energy-efficiency."

Harnessing star power

Sunreef has long taken a distinct marketing approach, by aligning with high-profile global ambassadors. The shipyard's premium owner network includes an array of elite athletes and high-net-worth individuals, counting tennis stars Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz, as well as F1 champions Nico Rosberg and Fernando Alonso among its fleet owners.

Lapp says these high-profile associations represent authentic client relationships rather than conventional commercial sponsorships. "People often ask how we connect with personalities such as Rafael Nadal or Carlos Alcaraz, but in reality, they first came to Sunreef simply as clients looking for the right yacht for themselves," he adds.

"What is particularly interesting is that many of them choose different generations of technologies within the Sunreef portfolio.

"Rafael Nadal selected a 80 Sunreef Power, Fernando Alonso later chose an electric 60 Sunreef Power Eco, Robert Lewandowski opted for a yacht from the NEXT range, and most recently Carlos Alcaraz selected the Ultima 88.

"Of course, visibility is an important aspect – working with world-famous athletes naturally brings significant attention to the brand. But the impact goes much further than that. They also strongly support our sustainability narrative.

"When someone like Fernando Alonso chooses an electric Sunreef Eco yacht, it generates real interest around clean technologies and helps demonstrate that sustainability and luxury can successfully go hand in hand."

Attracting monohull and superyacht owners

Sunreef's latest push centres on the new Ultima range, a fleet of faster and more performance-oriented catamarans.

Aiming to offer the benefits of a monohull but with multihull space, Lapp explains the Ultima catamarans are a response to shifting market expectations.

"We identified a growing group of owners moving from monohulls to catamarans who still expected high performance, comfort and prestige.

"Another important direction for us is redefining the superyacht category. With projects such as the Sunreef 100 Eco or the Sunreef 43M Eco, we want to demonstrate that superyachts can combine luxury with energy efficiency and clean technologies."

Market demand for electric and hybrid multihulls is inherently client driven, he says.

Lapp adds: "We see it directly in the growing number of orders for yachts equipped with electric propulsion systems, integrated solar panels and other energy-efficient solutions. What is particularly interesting is that this demand is becoming increasingly strong in the superyacht segment.

"We are now building larger electric catamarans with advanced photovoltaic integration, including projects such as the Sunreef 43M Eco – a 140ft sailing superyacht combining electric propulsion with next-generation solar technology.

"This type of project goes far beyond sustainability as a communication trend. It reflects a genuine shift in client expectations."

As the brand moves towards 2030, Lapp believes the company is creating a balanced global footprint where each production site develops its own specialisation while remaining flexible enough to support the company's long-term growth and innovation strategy.

Words: Chantal Haines



Sunreef's Ras Al Khaimah factory

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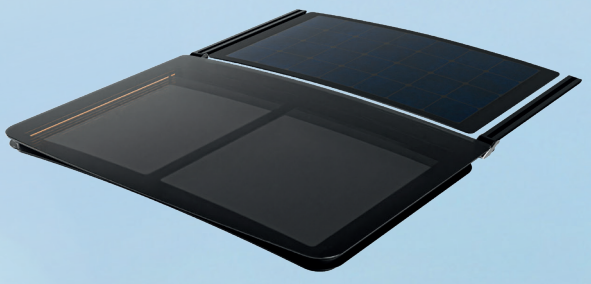
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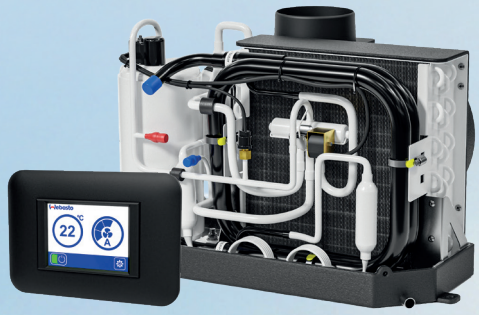
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Egypt: ownership trends evolve



Hurghada, Egypt. Credit Unsplash

Will new infrastructure pave the way for further shifts in both private ownership and international superyacht transit?

While Egypt is blessed with beaches, diving and heritage offerings, it has suffered from geopolitical turbulence over the past decade, and, like many Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, is now investing heavily in modern infrastructure, residential and tourism offerings.

The country boasts a strategic north African location, an eastern European time zone and three boating regions: the Mediterranean, Red Sea and River Nile. In addition, waterfront real estate developments are rapidly expanding to capture international investment opportunities and tourism remains steady despite the recent conflict in Iran.

Property surge sparks shift to private boaters

Domestic tourism for the affluent has traditionally been split between autumn and spring on the Red Sea east coast (Sokhna and Hurghada) and summer on the Mediterranean north coast (Sahel).

Despite a significant commercial connection with the sea, from the ports of Said, Suez, Alexandria, Sokhna and Safaga, recreational yachting has not been a widely accepted pastime, with cultural preference for tourist boat charters – particularly for group diving – over self-drive ownership.

General manager for Marassi Marina Yacht Club, Mohamed Elnewishy, says: "As a nascent market, private boat ownership on the north coast is mostly smaller cruisers ranging from 20 to 40ft, with commercial operators offering day boats in the 20 to 40ft range for a family day out, and larger groups and corporate events catered for by catamarans and yachts up to 100ft."

The property boom on the north coast is also attracting a new client base. Elnewishy adds: "This year, dealers have reported strong sales and enquiry activity during the summer season on the north coast, especially among first-time private boat buyers in the 20 to 35ft category."

Superyachts present the ultimate growth frontier

The Red Sea profile, as a more established market, has larger day and diving boats, and a significant volume of liveaboard dive boats. Yet here the vessel split also leans heavily towards smaller recreational boats and commercial tourism vessels, while private yacht ownership remains a smaller but growing segment.

Egyptian maritime specialist, Yasin Arafa, is vocal about the opportunity Egypt offers: "Egypt's leisure marine market is often discussed through the lens of domestic ownership, but the more significant near-term opportunity lies in the international superyacht segment. Egypt has coastline, history, and marine biodiversity that rivals any charter destination in the Mediterranean or Indian Ocean. »



Richard Haws, GMBA



Port Ghalib in Marsa Alam

"The gap between Egypt's $15 million annual charter revenue and the UAE's $235 million is not a gap in demand; it is a gap in quality infrastructure and operational frameworks such as permit accessibility, regulation transparency and safety regulation. If we close that gap, that converts natural assets into bookable charter products and Egypt becomes a serious player in global superyacht tourism."

Marina developments in Egypt

Leisure yacht marinas in Egypt are relatively new, originating in Cairo with Maadi Yacht Club and Cairo Yacht Club marinas catering for small cruisers on the Nile. Purpose-built marinas at Hurghada, El Gouna and Sokhna followed, with Port Ghalib in Marsa Alam, Marassi North Coast and Ismailia establishing an increase in private ownership and options for larger yacht berthing.

Basins in El Galala (Sokhna) and Taba Heights (Sinai) are also earmarked for marina redevelopment, further normalising boat ownership and expanding the range of boats beyond tourism and commercial dive/fishing style vessels. Scheduled projects for Ras al Hekma (Mediterranean coast) and Marassi Red Sea will expand the opportunity for cruising and berthing, especially sitting under established developers renowned for creating facility standards expected by international visitors.

A strategic crossroads for development

In line with other administrative changes opening up Egypt for tourism and commerce, the government's Maritime Transport and Logistics Sector has initiated a unified electronic platform to simplify paperwork under the unified 'Sail to Egypt' slogan (reducing the time required to issue approvals and licences for visiting yachts).

Combined with a policy change to allow foreign flagged, commercially registered yachts to be legally permitted to cruise freely for leisure, there are signs the authorities are responding to the calls from the local yachting industry.

The Suez Canal sees 60+ superyachts per year in transit, a number that was growing at 64 per cent in H1 2023 before Houthi disruption for yachts leaving the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean.

Leveraging its position, the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has invested on inbound superyacht movement by building a dedicated yacht marina at Ismailia. It anticipates superyacht traffic returning and growing.

At the same time, SCA led a joint initiative to yachts transiting the Suez Canal to remain within Egyptian waters for tourism. Yachts under 300GT can claim discounts up to 50 per cent on SCA fees and berthing at designated marinas.

Customers driving international tastes

With traditional shipyards lining the waterfront of Suez, Safaga and Alexandria, Egypt builds hundreds of commercial and fishing vessels annually. However, aside from a few outliers such as De Birs yachts, quality leisure yacht builders are the exception with many vessels following traditional building methodologies that eschews the safety parameters and classification standards for the modern yacht market.

Refit and repair continues to be large business from neighbouring countries including Saudi Arabia, indicating the demand is there. That quality gap represents a significant industrial opportunity that aligns with Vision 2030-style ambitions for the country.

There is a rising interest in international brands for boats, engines and fittings. Thus, dealers and service agents are increasingly under pressure due to supply chain challenges for imported parts and extraneous costs created by currency volatility and import tariffs.

Consumer quality perception is also changing. Maintenance, service and customer care are expected at international standards. Dealers are therefore responding with more local partnerships, consolidated service centres and selective stocking.

Egypt's leisure marine sector sits at an inflection point. Infrastructure investment and a young, aspirational population are laying the foundations for gradual growth in private ownership, while charter and dive operations continue to underpin volume. For international brands and service providers, the opportunity lies not in immediate scale but in early positioning.

Yachts under 300GT can claim discounts up to 50 per cent on Suez Canal Authority fees and berthing at designated marinas.

Richard Haws is chair of the Global Marine Business Advisors (GMBA).
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Words: Richard Haws

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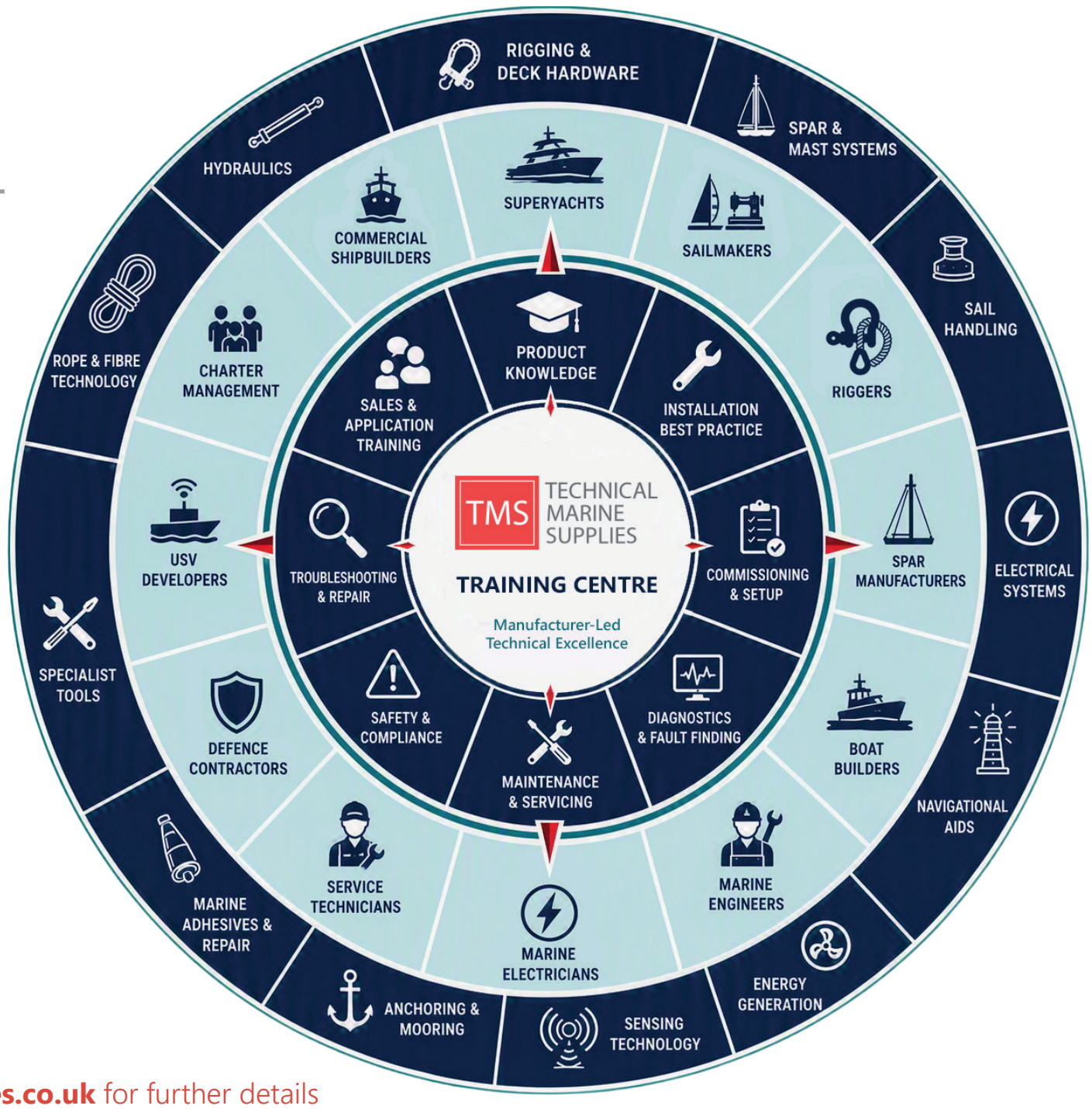
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Electric switch



Hanasaka, an SE Life 33 crafted by Saffier Yachts, which is powered by the Yanmar electric saildrive

Yanmar brings electric propulsion into mainstream sailing

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The Yanmar SDe series of electric saildrives has been designed for boatbuilders, engineers and refitters to offer customers a 100 per cent emissions-free propulsion option which is easy to install, use and maintain.

The SDe series is designed to fit the same engine base as Yanmar's YM and GM diesel range, meaning no hull modification – bolts can be reused, and nothing needs to be cut, even on older boats.

The SDe electric saildrive range, available in 7kW, 10kW and 15kW power outputs, runs on a 48V platform and is built for sailboats up to 40ft.

Fuss-free integration

The SDe series is a completely integrated system where the gear, motor, motor controller and cooling system are all contained in a single compact unit. For boatbuilders and installers, that means fewer connectors, fewer cables through engine bays, and a much quicker installation.

Rather than drawing seawater for the cooling system, the SDe uses a closed-loop system: the same oil that lubricates the leg's gears is also used to cool the motor and controller, circulating internally before returning to the leg. Because there's no saltwater contact, internal corrosion is minimised.

Servicing follows the same logic as a standard saildrive: an oil evacuation pump means fluid changes are as simple as connecting a hose to a bucket, without the external pumps a diesel installation typically demands.

Connectors and cabling are protected by metal and plastic housings designed to withstand the marine engine bay environment, reducing the risk of damage during installation or in service. A hardwired backup panel gives a direct, network-independent way to control the boat as an extra reassurance.

Range data

For the end user, one key barrier to electric propulsion has been range anxiety. The range remains dependent on load, displacement, and how the boat is used, but when tested on Yanmar's Saffier 33, after running at 2.5kW power for two hours, 80 per cent state of charge remained. The SDe series is also easy for end users to maintain with fewer moving parts compared to combustion engines, while making the onboard experience better with no noise, smoke or odour.



Yanmar SDe 15

To find out more about the SDe Series, visit **yanmar.com**

The rise of Africa's marine economy





Cape Town's marine sector is entering a new phase – one defined by ambition and growing capability

Maryanne Edwards, director of marketing and business development for the upcoming African Boating Conference, sits down with MIN to explore how the region is developing its superyacht service segment and emerging as a region that can solve problems, manage complexity, and deliver work to international standards.

What is fuelling South Africa's marine services growth?

"South Africa has long been known as a leading producer of sailing catamarans and specialist vessels. But over the past two decades, an extensive ecosystem of supporting businesses from naval architects and composite specialists to marine engineers and commissioning experts has emerged.

"What ultimately drove the transition was scale. As South African boatbuilders expanded globally, the supply chain followed, deepening local skills and attracting investment. International partnerships expanded. The result was the gradual evolution of an industry capable of supporting far more than vessel construction alone.

"That evolution matters because the greatest long-term value in the marine sector rarely comes from the initial sale of a vessel. It comes from everything that follows: commissioning, maintenance, upgrades, technical support, logistics, refit work and operational services delivered over decades.

"Today South Africa is increasingly recognised as a destination where vessels can be designed, constructed, and supported throughout their operational lives."

Is a maturing refit sector critical to future growth?

"If boatbuilding established Cape Town's reputation, refit has the potential to secure its future.


Asteria undergoing work in Cape Town


Superyacht berthed in Cape Town


Commercial infrastructure is building

"If boatbuilding established Cape Town's reputation, refit has the potential to secure its future."

Maryanne Edwards
GMBA

"Refit is arguably the most important component in transforming Cape Town from a destination that yachts visit into a destination where yachts choose to base themselves.

"Owners, captains and management companies require access to maintenance facilities, engineering expertise, technical support, spare parts, surveys, warranty work and emergency assistance. Without that support ecosystem, even the most desirable destination struggles to attract long-term vessel activity.

"Cape Town already possesses many of these attributes, the opportunity now lies in consolidating those strengths into a comprehensive refit offering capable of servicing increasingly complex projects.

"There currently is a shortage of dedicated superyacht refit and service infrastructure in the Indian Ocean region. While destinations such as Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar offer extraordinary cruising opportunities, relatively few facilities are capable of supporting major technical projects or emergency repairs."

What is the five-year development outlook?

"The next five years represent an important consolidation phase, driven by a mix of infrastructure influx and regional collaboration.

"Boatbuilding remains the foundation of the sector, but future growth is likely to be driven by a broader combination of infrastructure investment, refit capability, superyacht activity, skills development and regional collaboration.

"One of the most significant developments is the V&A Waterfront's Quay 7 Superyacht Marina, scheduled for completion in 2026. The project signals Cape Town's intention to strengthen its position not only as a boatbuilding centre, but also as a destination capable of supporting larger visiting yachts and associated marine services.

"On the east coast, the partnership between KwaZulu-Natal and Navigo, one of Europe's most established yachting networks, is creating new opportunities for yacht services, refit activity and skills development.

"The initiative aims to strengthen Durban and Richards Bay as centres for yacht services, refit capability, skills development and marine tourism, helping create a more balanced national marine economy.

"This is important because South Africa's future growth will not come from Cape Town alone. Durban, Richards Bay, Saldanha Bay and other coastal centres all have roles to play in creating a connected marine economy capable of supporting both domestic and international activity."

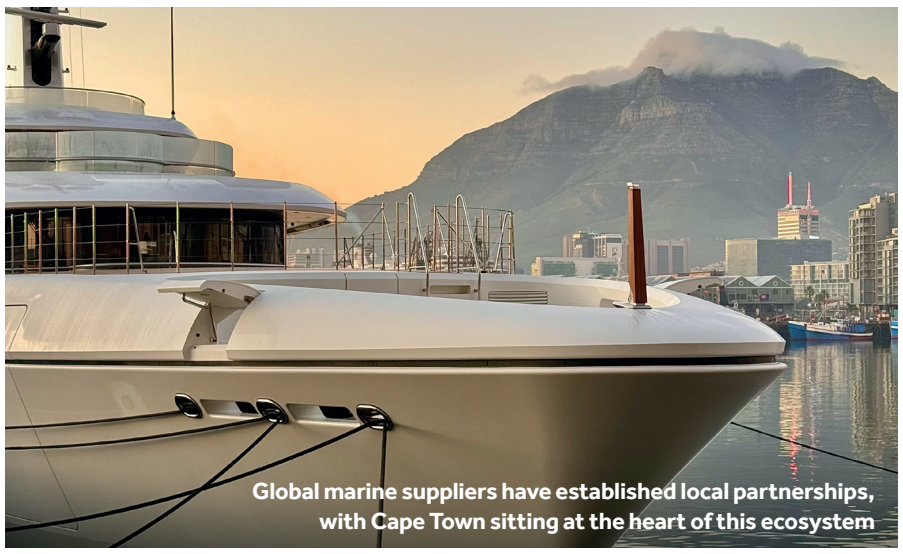
How will South Africa bolster its standing within the superyacht sector?

"Around the world, owners are increasingly seeking destinations that offer distinctive experiences beyond traditional cruising grounds.

"South Africa is at the gateway to incredible cruising regions including the Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius and »



Refit and repair is a growing sector of the African market


Global marine suppliers have established local partnerships, with Cape Town sitting at the heart of this ecosystem



Asteria in Cape Town

Madagascar. The discussions that emerged from the inaugural African Boating Conference [in October 2025] highlighted the potential for a more connected cruising network throughout southern Africa and the western Indian Ocean.

"This is not a single-destination story – it is the emergence of a cruising corridor.

"There is also increasing momentum behind simplifying regulatory frameworks and improving the ease of movement between destinations. While progress is incremental, the direction is clear: a more accessible, better coordinated region that encourages yachts to stay longer and explore further."

Which developments are helping to build interest in the African 'cruising corridor'?
"Beyond South Africa, encouraging developments are emerging throughout the western Indian Ocean. Seychelles remains one of the most established yachting destinations in the western Indian Ocean. It continues to strengthen its position through Eden Island Marina, which has become one of the region's most established superyacht destinations.

"Mauritius is investing in luxury tourism and yachting infrastructure, while destinations such as Madagascar and Mozambique are attracting increasing interest from explorer yachts seeking new cruising experiences. Collectively, these developments are helping create a more connected regional network.

"The success of an African cruising corridor will ultimately depend on the strength of the network rather than any single marina development."

What infrastructure will aid this cruising corridor?
"Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, Réunion and Tanzania are all strengthening their roles within the emerging cruising corridor.

"Importantly, not every destination requires a large-scale superyacht marina. In many cases, what matters most is the availability of reliable support services.

"Customs clearance, fuel access, provisioning, technical assistance, communications, emergency response capability and safe berthing facilities are often more important than marina size alone.

"Operational improvements are also making a difference. The designation of Saldanha Bay as a port of entry and departure for international yachts provides greater flexibility for cruising vessels.

"What is emerging for the first time is a visible pipeline of infrastructure investment, operational improvements and regional cooperation that points in the same direction."

"South Africa's future growth will not come from Cape Town alone. Durban, Richards Bay, Saldanha Bay and other coastal centres all have roles to play in creating a connected marine economy."

Maryanne Edwards
GMBA

Images courtesy of Hugo Scott Attfield

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MobyFly's zero-emission hydrofoil passenger vessel

Evidence over rhetoric

Business resilience, not greenwashing: how data is tackling sustainability fatigue

Marine Futures founder Ollie Taylor acknowledges why the industry is experiencing sustainability fatigue.

"I think businesses are so preoccupied with just trying to simply survive crisis after crisis," Taylor elaborates.

"First covid, then Ukraine, now Iran – it's an incredibly challenging time to be a boatbuilder, and they don't want to add extra complexity. So for us, it's about showing how sustainability can also build resilience into a business.

"MarineShift360 [a purpose-built life cycle assessment tool for the marine industry, founded by 11th Hour Racing and delivered by Marine Futures] is about giving real world examples that show sustainability doesn't necessarily cost businesses loads of money or add challenges."

Evidence-based data to battle sustainability apathy

After winning a DAME Design category award in 2022, the MarineShift360 tool has gained traction with industry leaders such as North Sails, SailGP, IMOCA, Williams Jet Tenders and Starboard.

In April 2026, three companies were selected for the 2026 MarineShift360 Impact Accelerator programme: Gurit, a composite materials and engineering company; MobyFly, a Swiss-Portuguese technology firm building zero-emission hydrofoil passenger vessels; and nlcomp, a composite materials supplier developing fully recyclable thermoplastic systems.

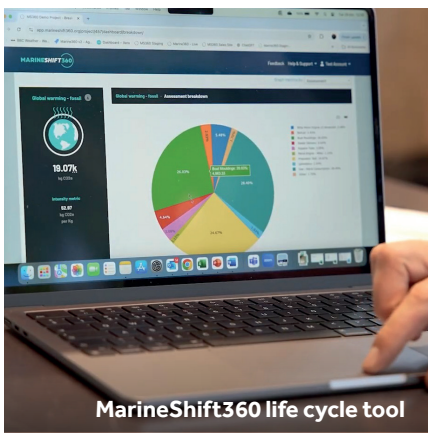
The year-long initiative equips the marine businesses with life cycle assessment expertise, technical consultancy and access to an industry-wide sustainability network.

"People are bored of hearing about the next sustainable solution. They want to see it in action and the proof. So we're trying to create those examples in the industry via the programme," explains Taylor.

What can be done about greenwashing?

The 2026 cohort agree that third-party validation and hard data are essential to prove to clients that sustainability translates into bottom-line savings.

Sue Putallaz, co-founder and CEO of MobyFly, says that validation from the Accelerator »


MarineShift360 life cycle tool



Gurit specialises in composite material engineering



nlcomp prototyping

programme will counter widespread – and frustrating – industry greenwashing.

"Being selected by MarineShift360 gives us the framework to strengthen our approach through the life cycle assessment of our vessels," she says. "Crucially, though, it also allows us to prove our sustainability credentials via an independent party.

"It's easy for [everyone] to claim something, it's about proving it. In this field there is a lot of greenwashing, so that's what makes the real difference for us."

Putallaz hopes this kind of neutral data verification will also help convince the industry to push forward and see sustainability as "bankability".

Highlighting the need for verified metrics, Taylor notes: "There's so much greenwashing in the industry with press releases claiming this and that – but often no data that sits behind them to prove whether it's good, bad or the same.

"The MarineShift360 tool gives you the actual quantified data to tell you, 'yeah, you're doing the right thing' or 'no, actually, your hypothesis was completely wrong and you've made something much worse environmentally'."

Taylor argues that by adjusting their approach to internal eco assessments, marine businesses can make better strategic decisions.

"During a recent panel with material manufacturers, the host asked what initial step boatbuilders should take. The suppliers naturally advised adopting their own resins or recycled carbon fibre and so on," Taylor recalls.

"But my answer is, you don't know what you should do until you know the impact of what you're producing already. Where does that impact occur? Is it in your production processes and materials? Is it in the life use? Unless you know that, you're kind of shooting in the dark with what you introduce to the system."

According to Gurit, demand for actionable life cycle analysis is increasingly driven by commercial pressures. Nicolas Siohan, principal engineer for Gurit, reports strong interest from high-performance motor yacht, sailing superyacht design and refit sectors.

In this arena, Siohan says "advanced composites are critical to achieving weight reduction, structural efficiency and premium finish, as well as in the fast-growing segment of unmanned marine vehicles, where lightweight and durable core materials directly support range and operational reliability."

Build supply chain immunity

With recent global conflicts disrupting energy and raw material pipelines, Taylor believes manufacturers need to re-evaluate their key vulnerabilities.

"Sustainability is an overused word with lots of fatigue at the minute. But ultimately, it's the right move because it gives [manufacturers] resilience against supply chains that they can't control."

Adopting commercial strategies that factor in sustainability is a business-critical decision which makes the most sense, according to Taylor.

"If you want to build a business that's successful in the next five, ten, 15 years, you can't keep running it the way you ran it the previous ten years,"

Taylor continues: "Material availability and resource economics are fundamentally changing.

"I can't tell you over what time horizon resource scarcity is going to really bite. But what I can tell you is that in the last six years, all we've seen is massive increases in materials costs, input costs into business and supply chain volatility, etc.

"So why wouldn't you try and create a business model that decouples you from a supply chain that controls your margin? It's a commercial decision, and a business-critical one, long before it's an environmental one. Controlling your own inputs is supply security.

"Build a boat you can take apart and reuse, and the next spike in material prices stops being your problem."



Ollie Taylor, Marine Futures

"Build a boat you can take apart and reuse, and the next spike in material prices stops being your problem."

Ollie Taylor
Marine Futures

Words: Chantal Haines



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Enclosures are fitted out pre-dispatch

Seeking efficiency

Growth without growing: inside Sunseeker's factory transformation

"No one builds Sunseekers like Sunseeker employees," says Alex Tilsed, business manager of the company's Technology Centre.

"You control the quality, you control the delivery performance."

He's spent the last 18 months resetting the 105,400 square foot Technology Centre to reflect the factory's focus on volume, efficiency and data... all without expanding its footprint.

"This factory has been futureproofed for when the volume increases and we're building 300 boats a year again," he says of the Poole-based site which has about 1,000 parts (of 30,000) in production at any one time.

The initial challenge was the layout which had developed over about 20 years in an "increasingly inefficient" manner. Tilsed's challenge was to "grow without growing. We knew that there was untapped potential there."

While the factory retains its original six-bay footprint, areas have been moved into a logical production flow.

Previously, CNC machines, saws and furniture production were spread across the bays without clear separation. The reorganisation's created defined production areas, including two wood mills, a central spray bay, a machine shop and dedicated upholstery areas.

The impact is measurable says Tilsed. Over two years, production volume has increased by 40 per cent.

More production is also now in house. Interior upholstery has increased from none to around 75 per cent; production of interior furniture has increased from circa 50 per cent to 100 per cent of boats. Previously outsourced door production is now carried out entirely on site.

The idea is to do as much as possible at the factory – rather than on the boat. As Tilsed says: "It's always going to be far more efficient doing this work in this environment."

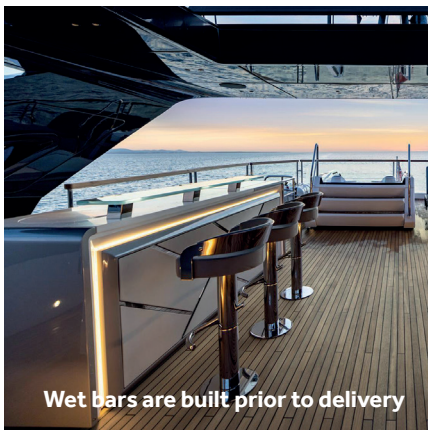
Assembly areas have been created so more components can be built and tested in the factory. For example reconfiguring electrical production around pre-built boards and cabinets means enclosures are fitted out, cables cut and labelled to length and systems are tested pre-dispatch.

Wet bar assembly moves into factory

Previously, wet bars arrived at boats as a moulding. Components were delivered separately and trade teams assembled them. These days one person builds each unit at the factory.

That required almost 100 engineering changes to make the unit more self-contained, like incorporating drip trays into the moulding rather than a separate fitting. Now each configuration is treated as a single part number. The spec covers details such as finish, door colour, glass top, layout and appliances.

Multiple electrical, air-pressure and plumbing pressure tests happen before delivery. Then the wet bar is craned into position, bolted down and plugged in with installation time around an hour, with an estimated saving of around £4,000 per unit.



Wet bars are built prior to delivery



Inside Sunseeker's Technology Centre

Words: Zella Compton





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The art of scaling up



Timing, adaptability and real-world testing is key to pitching in this space

Successful marina startups are de-risking their products and building peer-to-peer trust

The marina sector knows it needs to modernise. Digitalisation, sustainability requirements and shifting customer expectations are reshaping what operators need to deliver, and the pressure is only increasing. And yet adoption of new technology across the sector continues to move slowly, and it is a source of frustration for startups.

But the reasons for that slowness are specific. Understanding them makes all the difference between a startup that gains traction and one that doesn't.

Why marinas are cautious buyers

Marinas sit at a genuinely complex operational intersection. On any given day, a marina team is managing hospitality, infrastructure, compliance, customer service and safety – often with lean staffing, during a season where downtime carries immediate commercial consequences.

That context matters when thinking about technology adoption. A software system that fails during peak season doesn't just create an IT problem, it disrupts bookings and damages customer relationships in real time. A cybersecurity breach can shut operations down for days.

Antonis Drosos, general manager of Kos Marina in Greece, reflects a view shared widely across the sector: "When you've been operating for 25 years, you need to see evidence that a solution has worked somewhere else before you're willing to take it on."

Trust takes time

Marinas don't buy technology on its merits alone. They buy it on the basis of trust built through peer networks, on-site relationships and demonstrated commitment over time.

Victor Meyer, who has organised the Monaco Smart & Sustainable Marina Rendezvous event for several years, has observed this across hundreds of startup and scale-up conversations. The companies that gain traction are those who can point to existing deployments and speak to what actually changed for the operators using them.

Henrietta Roslund, founder of Moxsea, a white-label boat-sharing platform, found this directly in her own experience. Sales cycles were considerably longer than she anticipated, and building enough credibility to close early deals required sustained effort well beyond what the product quality alone could deliver. Roslund adds: "Marinas don't need more technology options, they need the right ones and they need to see clear evidence of real-world results."

Federico Brunelli, co-founder of HapySity, which provides solar-powered IoT infrastructure for smart marinas, approached this »

"When you've been operating for 25 years, you need to see evidence that a solution has worked somewhere else before you're willing to take it on."

Antonis Drosos
Kos Marina

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Monaco Smart & Sustainable Marina Rendezvous 2025

challenge by investing heavily in the relationship around his first pilot.

After meeting Antonis Drosos through the Monaco Smart & Sustainable Marina Rendezvous, Brunelli travelled to Kos to work through the installation alongside Kos Marina's engineering and IT teams.

He also attended the Greek Marina Association Congress in Athens independently, demonstrating a broader commitment to understanding the market. That level of engagement, Drosos notes, made a meaningful difference to his confidence in the partnership.

Seasonal timing shapes everything

A practical point that catches many startup founders offguard is how strongly the marina industry's seasonal rhythm affects the sales process. For most European marinas, the summer months are operationally intense – high occupancy, stretched teams, and very little appetite for evaluating or integrating new systems.

Approaching marina managers during peak season with a sales pitch is, at best, ineffective, and at worst signals a lack of understanding of how the industry works.

The period from November through to February is when strategic decisions actually get made in Europe. Budgets are reviewed, operational problems get revisited, and teams have the space to think carefully about what they want to change. For hardware companies, the timeline considerations go further still.

Víctor Vives, CTO of Mediterranean Algae, which works with more than 30 marinas across Spain, says his company spent a full year validating its water quality and bioremediation technology at the Port of Alicante before expanding. Hardware operating near saltwater faces corrosion, biofouling and temperature extremes across seasons that can't be replicated in controlled testing.

That investment in validation became the foundation of the company's subsequent growth, and Mediterranean Algae can now deploy its modular system at a new site in a matter of hours.

What operators actually need from technology

A pattern that comes up repeatedly when marina operators describe their experience with technology providers is the gap between what founders want to talk about – and what operators actually need to hear.

Startup founders often want to discuss the technology itself – how it works, what makes it innovative, what the roadmap looks like. Operators want to know whether it will save them time, reduce operational complexity or help them avoid problems. »

"Our company spent a full year validating its water quality and bioremediation technology at the Port of Alicante before expanding."

Víctor Vives
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As marinas become digitised, operational requirements are becoming more complex



From left: The three co-founders of Moxsea – Zeth Roslund, Henrietta Roslund, and Stefan Roslund



From left: Victor Meyer, event & sales manager at M3 Monaco, Gabbi Richardson, founder at Yachting Ventures, Mathis Gibert, events intern at M3 Monaco

These are not the same conversations, and the startups that do best are those that have learned to lead with the problem they're solving, rather than the solution they've built.

Mediterranean Algae is a useful example, where Vives structures sales conversations around algae blooms, water quality and the regulatory pressures operators are already navigating. Mediterranean Algae's system is the answer to those problems, not the opening pitch. The technology deserves attention because the problem has already been established.

Adaptability is also a consistent theme. No two marinas have the same layout, operational model or set of priorities.

A solution built for one context won't necessarily translate directly to another.

The founders who build modular, configurable products (and can demonstrate that flexibility in practice) tend to move more smoothly from first pilot to subsequent deployments.

For many early-stage companies, navigating the marina sector can be difficult without the right introductions, context and visibility.

The role of ecosystem support

Companies such as Yachting Ventures are helping bridge the gap between startups, marina operators, investors and industry stakeholders through events, founder education and introductions.

Through collaborations with initiatives such as the Monaco Smart & Sustainable Marina Rendezvous, marina-focused fireside discussions and startup showcases, Yachting Ventures is helping founders gain earlier exposure to operator pain points and more realistic expectations around procurement, pilots and adoption.

For new businesses that approach the marina sector with realistic expectations and a genuine understanding of how it works, the opportunity is considerable.

Regulatory pressure is increasing on multiple fronts and customer expectations are rising, particularly among younger users who expect seamless digital experiences. And as marinas become more digitalised, the operational and security requirements that come with that are becoming more complex, not less.

What the marina sector's trajectory makes clear is that the companies best positioned to grow within it are not necessarily those with the most sophisticated technology. They are the ones who have taken the time to understand how marina operators make decisions and those companies that appreciate the preference for demonstrated results over promising propositions.

Words: Gabriella Richardson



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Hidden potential

How crucial is it for marine businesses to boost their visibility on emerging AI platforms?


Image courtesy of Adobe Stock


Matt McKenna

AI-driven large language model (LLM) search is rapidly changing how brands are discovered, evaluated and trusted. Just like Google and Bing, it is essential that marine brands are visible across generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT and Claude to target audiences using AI to make decisions, and to help them become category leaders.

Generative AI platforms have become an extension of the purchasing process, providing multi-source, deep comparison research tools.

With McKenna Townsend's 20 years of expertise building brands' reputations as a PR and communications agency, the company has launched a new AI strategic generative engine optimisation (GEO) system. The new programme, named McKenna Townsend: Insight Marine, is designed to help companies in the sector unlock brand visibility across AI platforms.

Matt McKenna, co-founder of McKenna Townsend, explains: "The way in which a brand is perceived across these many sources directly correlates to the visibility achieved when buyers are in the initial research stage using AI. It is essential that your brand is visible to AI search and our new service has been developed specifically for the marine and superyacht sectors, utilising our deep knowledge and strong relationships with earned media, marine communities and content sources most cited by LLMs."

According to McKenna Townsend, marine brands have untapped AI opportunities and room for growth, and with clearer positioning, proper structured data and stronger brand mentions, companies can rapidly close the gap and put themselves ahead of competitors.

Unlocking AI opportunities

In the larger superyacht sector, for example, McKenna says the citation landscape is still highly open, "creating a strong opportunity for a brand to rapidly scale and position itself as the leader in this space with a focused citation-building strategy".

By positioning itself, not only as a bespoke larger superyacht manufacturer, but also as the industry leader in yacht lifecycle excellence, a brand could dominate AI search results. This includes strengthening visibility around yacht refit services, yacht maintenance services and tech, and crew training.

McKenna adds: "There are already some clear brand winners in the AI search race in the leisure marine sector, with reputations that have been carefully developed and nurtured over many years. However, there are significant opportunities for all brands and companies to improve their AI search visibility and to impact how people understand their brand and products online. This is where our new service comes into play."

How to build brand presence

McKenna Townsend: Insight Marine is a strategic GEO programme that actively builds marine brands' presence across the sources that LLMs (including ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Gemini and Google AI) rely on to generate answers, recommendations and insights.

McKenna explains: "We help these platforms understand who you are, what your offering and products are, and why you matter to the right audience. If you want your marine brand and products to be accurately represented, trusted and discoverable in an increasingly AI-driven world,

> *"There are significant opportunities for all brands to improve their AI search visibility."*
>
> **Matt McKenna**
> McKenna Townsend

McKenna Townsend: Insight Marine provides companies with the intelligence, strategy and execution to do so."

Over the coming months, McKenna Townsend is planning to undertake a review of AI search and visibility across the leisure marine sector, focusing on brands, products, geographical segments, sectors and the most trusted citation sources that AI search draws from.

The company will use multiple data streams to identify the significant opportunities, the reputational risks, who is winning and who is not, and what companies need to be doing to manage their brands and products in an increasingly AI-driven online environment.

Companies and brands interested in being considered for this review can email McKenna Townsend: ***matt@mckennatownsend.com***



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