

Monaco Yachts Go A Shade Of Green For 2007 Show

Contributed by Roger Munns
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Monaco is used to welcoming the world's wealthy, and the world's richest men and women will soon be visiting again for the superyacht show, a unique annual event in the yachting calendar.

While millionaires and billionaires sip champagne and ponder buying a yacht that would be beyond the reach of mere lottery winners, the organisers have successfully made past events carbon neutral.

This year will be no exception as Monaco shows the rich they can be environmentally friendly.

The top end of the yacht industry has blossomed over the last ten years, with multi millionaires and billionaires buying yachts in the tens of millions of Euros price range - and when it comes to some billionaires they seem intent on buying a fleet that would put some small countries navies to shame.

Despite being the second smallest country in the world Monaco has established herself as the natural European home for many of the world's wealthiest men and women due to her tax haven status, with many more visiting on holiday while cruising the Mediterranean for the Monte Carlo casino - and Monaco has managed to stay as a top destination by cleverly spotting and exploiting trends ahead of her competitors.

The Monaco Yacht Show is part of the attraction for the super-rich, and has firmly established itself as the leading super yacht show in the world over the last fifteen years. For Monaco itself the Yacht Show is second only to the Monaco F1 for visitor numbers. Combined with the Hotel de Paris and other Monaco hotels the principality has successfully secured her position as a natural environment for the wealthy to live or visit.

Monaco is showing that cuts in carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases are possible in a land of plenty, and the Monaco Yacht Show has successfully achieved carbon neutral status for the 2005 and 2006 events, with plans to repeat this for 2007, establishing itself on the map of Monaco as an environmentally friendly event.

To attain carbon neutral status last year, the organisers sponsored various projects in Europe and further afield to offset carbon emissions generated by the show.

The show paid for wind turbines in New Zealand, generating enough electricity for 45,000 homes and in Brittany France paid for a heath to be planted with chesnut and oak trees to protect water catchments and provide a recreational area, while in the USA paid for a methane capture system, reducing the amounts being emitted by some 95 per cent.

Monaco France

The leadership for the move to a greener Monaco has come from Sovereign Prince Albert, who has been successfully campaigning among world leaders since his inauguration two years ago to move the environment up the political agenda, and it has brought the issue to the fore at home.

Prince Albert signed Monaco up for the Kyoto Protocol shortly after becoming Sovereign, and a few months later left behind the comfort and glamour of his palace and Casino Square for the wilds of Antarctica to see for himself the damage being caused to the glaciers because of global warming.

Upon his return he set up a foundation with his own money to study the impact of rising sea levels, and since then has been active in the attempts to publicise the need to cut CO2 emissions in the industrialised world.

In recent months he has met both Prince Charles and President Chirac of France to discuss global warming. Although he spent some time in the US in his early years and speaks English fluently, he hasn't had to learn French and can converse with leaders the world over without the need for a translator.

Close to the Fontvieille harbour where the yacht show takes place, a new island is to be built, and the bidders have been told that a successful application must be environmentally friendly, and some proposals indicate that the island will be a floating one to avoid any disruption or damage to marine life.

With Monaco real estate the highest priced in Europe, the new apartment buildings will be welcomed by the property sector as there is a very real shortage of property for new residents, forcing prices even higher. One bedroom apartments are currently exchanging owners at over a million Euros.

The environmentally friendly island will also include new Monte Carlo hotels, a university and possibly a museum, with the winning bidder due to be announced towards the end of the year.