

Waiting for China to wake

September 2011

In the words of Napoleon: *"when China wakes, she will shake the world"*.

At recent estimate, China is home to 970,000 millionaires, 40,000 ten-millionaires and 1,400 billionaires. Affluence is an economy driver and the Chinese are on a spending spree. With a population of 1.3 billion people, it's no wonder the world is beating a path to the Chinese mainland.

Barry Jenkins, Ambassador for the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show among other marine roles, recently visited the inaugural Tianjin Binhai International Yacht Show. The show was held at the Binhai Exhibition and Convention Centre from Thursday 1 September to Sunday 4 September 2011. He said that despite low crowd turnout, organisers were happy with the VIPs and Beijing visitors who came down from the capital – just 55 minutes by fast train. "Recreational boating is still being established and therefore is an unknown quantity," said Barry of the fledgling show, which was established to showcase the brand new marina facilities in Binhai.

The 49 exhibitors at the show included most of the European brands through their agents/dealers – the only Australian participant was Evolution Yachts from Western Australia who are now building a range of sports boats in Zhuhai. There was a plethora of Chinese boat builders, among them Daytripper, Evolution (China), Zuhai Melian Boats Co., Ltd. Weihai Xigang Yacht Co., Ltd, Crystal Wave Yacht and Marine Depot.

In the Tianjin area a phenomenal 10,000 marina berths are planned over the next six years, reported Barry. "It sounds a lot and at this stage, they are mostly empty. But when things take off here they will be huge." Along with converting the affluent classes' interest in boating to actually buying a boat and getting out on the water, another barrier to boating in the region is related to climate, Barry continues. "Bohai Bay where all this activity is to take place, freezes over for three months, sometimes more, with 12 to 15 inches of crushing ice which prohibits all movement in the general area."

The high Australian dollar is creating a niche for Chinese boat builders to secure their local market. "Unless the Australian dollar comes down, the prospect of selling boats into China diminishes daily. Chinese manufacturers in conjunction with established European, American and Australian builders are gearing up to cope with expected demand and will no doubt export excess production."

With the ambition to build many thousands more marina berths around its coastline, the Chinese continually refer to the model provided by the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, held annually for the past 23 years on Queensland's Gold Coast. "Sanctuary Cove was mentioned at least five times during the opening ceremony and is still considered a 'yard-stick' by almost everyone I met in Binhai," said Barry. "Mayor of Binhai, Mr Zhong was most complimentary about his visit to Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show this year and is planning a repeat visit in 2012, this time with an accompanying government delegation."

Mulpha Executive General Manager, Alison Quinn said the boat show team has worked very hard for the past two decades to raise the international profile of the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show.

“The Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show traditionally invites VIP guests and Government officials from Asia to promote both Sanctuary Cove and the Australian marine industry. The boat show offers guests from Asia an opportunity to view this fabulous marine precinct and the lifestyle here, in addition to boats and products. During the boat show, guests can view The Marine Village and how it integrates with the marina, the golf courses and other facilities at Sanctuary Cove.” The boat show is also the ideal occasion for delegates from China, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and India to make contact with Australian companies, such as marina designers and contractors and other innovative companies who have the expertise to assist in developing the leisure marine industries in the various Asian countries.

According to Sanctuary Cove General Manager Events and Marketing, Sue Thomson, statistics from the International Federation of Boat Show Organisers (IFBSO) show that only the China International Boat Show in Shanghai attracts more exhibitors in this Asia-Pacific region. “Feedback from national and international exhibitors reinforces Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show’s position as a ‘must attend’ event on the global marine industry calendar,” she added.

“We rely on exhibitor feedback to continually improve the experience for them and the buyers we want to attract. We aim to continue growing the number of international buyers attending the show and to deliver something special for everyone next year with a strong build up to our 25th anniversary,” said Sue.

To secure space at the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show 2012, look for exhibitor applications opening in early November.

More at www.sanctuarycoveboatshow.com.au

The \$A2 billion Sanctuary Cove, located on the northern Gold Coast, is Australia’s leading and most successful master-planned community. Sanctuary Cove was acquired by current owners Mulpha Sanctuary Cove (Developments) Pty Limited in 2002. MSCD, an arm of Mulpha Australia Limited, which is a subsidiary of Malaysian listed Mulpha International BHD, has invested significantly in Sanctuary Cove over recent years, resulting in a major transformation designed to ensure the pre-eminent community remains at the forefront of master-planned living in Australia.