

## Bring on the superyachts!



**Is there anything Monaco can do better than Mallorca? Port Adriano has everything to become the new hotspot of the Mediterranean jet set. But is the rest of the island prepared for a million-dollar public? asks Andreas John**

Owners of superyachts know the problem: at night you're sitting comfortably on the flybridge, when an even bigger boat arrives to moor on your left – and something of the good taste of the champagne is lost. On the southwest coast of Mallorca, this scenario might soon occur more often. Within a few weeks, Mallorca's new superyacht harbour Port Adriano will be officially opened – the island's only one with space for more than 80 sailing and motoryachts over 25 metres in length behind its 15-metre quay wall. They are lying so conveniently here – like Playboy Bunnies at the pool of Hugh Hefner.

The prefix 'super' of Port Adriano is not only a synonym for the pearl-white shimmering million-euro-fleet. The conversion of the hitherto rather inconspicuous small marina is also the work of a true high-flyer on the international design scene. French star architect Philippe Starck has designed the futuristic port project. Its core is a 4,000-square-foot commercial area, running parallel to the docks. It will house an underground car park and more than 40 fashion boutiques, chill-out bars, shops and restaurants. Ocibar, a company specialising in construction and management of marinas in the Balearics, has invested almost 90 million euros in the transformation of "maritime Cinderella" Port Adriano into a glamorous hotspot for the Mediterranean superyacht scene. The company received financial backing from the four largest banks in Spain: Grupo Santander, BBVA, Banca March and Banca Popular.

So far, so good. I, as a staunch non-millionaire and proud owner of a 26-year-old surfboard, ask myself two questions – under the circumstances of a persistent economic slump. Do the investors in this superyacht harbour project actually overlook the business section of daily newspapers, or are they simply mad? No, they are not. The numbers prove them to be right. Last year in June, already half of the superyacht berths for the bargain price of an average 2.2 million euros were sold, according to Isabel Teruel – the smart, charming, and very striking 38-year-old business leader of Port Adriano.

Second question: Isn't Puerto Portals enough as the superyacht harbour of the island? Of course it's not. Puerto Portals, Club de Mar and the Real Club Nautico in Palma burst at the seams. Anyway, the demand for moorings for yachts of more than 25 metres in length has increased worldwide, despite the crisis in the past two years. Monaco, Cannes, Nice, wow! If Mallorca wants to keep up with these long established superyacht destinations, then you have to create space for the "Lady Moura" yacht types of this world. Sounds quite logical, doesn't it?

Well, but must Mallorca try to emulate a small, glamorous principality, whose average cost of living is about as high as at Disneyland Paris? Yes, this is necessary, asserts Mar Suau, head of Tourism Promotion Foundation FTM of the Island Council of Mallorca ('Consell'): "The way tourism has been marketed here so far does not work. Mallorca is an exclusive destination and has its price. For its privileged position the island must not be cheaper than comparable destinations in Europe such as Croatia or Turkey," says Suau. Her credo: less mass tourism, more millionaires. Of course, now it all makes sense: And I've always believed that the sometimes outrageous bills at some restaurants on the island were just a sign of greed or highway robbery. What a mistake! I just have to pay my extra contribution for Mallorca's exclusivity.

So let's get back to Port Adriano. Let us assume that this billion-dollar fleet of superyachts really moors here one day: hordes of industry CEOs, sheikhs armed with petro-dollars, caviar-spoilt movie actors and extremely wealthy casino-goers come to spend a fortune on the island. What will they find here? Poorly trained staff at restaurants, hotels and shops, sometimes arbitrarily set prices and lots of officials murmuring the Mallorcan idiom.

I mean, if Mallorca really makes the leap into the Champions League of international lifestyle destinations, then it should be prepared for this. Quality has its price, okay. But for selling quality, first certain conditions have to be met. These include a much higher level of education in the service sector than currently given on the island. Also a more cosmopolitan administration. And that includes a transparent legal security for foreign investors. In fact, an island cannot continue with mass tourism, all-inclusive and full board, due to its limited size and resources. Less is more. But the construction of superyacht harbours is not a general solution. The surroundings have to be 'super', too. Otherwise, superyacht owners are likely to stay in the harbour, cosily sipping champagne on the flybridge. And getting angry, when an even bigger boat arrives alongside.