



ABOVE: Aerial view of Sanctuary Cove.

Fort Lauderdale-Style Multi-Venue Gold Coast Premier Yachts Shows

Plans are afoot to turn the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show and its satellite Sovereign Islands and Marina Oceanus events, on Australia's Gold Coast, into a Fort Lauderdale-style multi-venue Gold Coast Premier Yachts Shows in 2011. Sanctuary Cove, with 424 exhibitors and 576 boats this year, is already the southern hemisphere's leading import-export showcase, and it is felt that the combined concept will attract more Asian, Middle East, European and American visitors.

The Gold Coast and Fort Lauderdale have long been sister cities. They look alike, from the beachfront high-rises, intra-coastal marinas and canal moorings to the pelicans that skim waters offshore, and in the hinterland, Florida alligators give way to Queensland crocodiles. Sister city parties are often held, and many Gold Coasters cross the Pacific and continental America for the annual Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show.

So it seems natural for the boat shows to develop along similar

lines. Sanctuary Cove, which has an ambient setting as Australia's largest master-planned resort, and at 28 S has a mild sunny winter, launched its boat show in 1988. Sydney Boat Show, beside the CBD in Darling Harbor, attracts a higher numbers of visitors, but Sanctuary Cove is known as the place where the boating industry does business. It is the heartland of Australian boat building, and local owners and salesmen often arrive by helicopter or stretched limousine.

A decade ago superyacht dealer Grant Torrens, who represents Christensen and Lazzara among other builders, started his own show at a nearby also ultra-wealthy enclave, Sovereign Islands. When Sanctuary Cove closed after 5 pm, the Sovereign Islands would light up for an ongoing evening session, and it also ran for a week or so longer.

Australia's doyen superyacht dealer Geoff Lovett, who handles new builds by Benetti and Hatteras as well as big brokerage yachts,

realized that this formula worked well, so he became the anchor of another boat show at what is now Marina Oceanus, part of the Marina Mirage complex, beside the exclusive Sheraton Mirage and Palazzo Versace resorts. The wonderfully rustic Regency Hyatt Sanctuary Cove is always fully booked at boat show time, so many important people also stay at these resorts or the adjacent Marriott Surfers Paradise.

Christopher Murray, formerly with Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron and a regular boat show visitor at home and abroad, has now taken over as General Manager of Events and Marina at Sanctuary Cove, and he understands the value that combined marketing could bring internationally.

Larger superyachts are unable to reach Sanctuary Cove anyway because it is up the sometimes silt-affected Coomera River, so the other two venues would offer wider scope. Adding fourth and perhaps fifth venues to the Gold Coast Premier Yachts Shows appears likely in the years ahead. The events are always held in the third week of May, which is late autumn Down Under. Wealthy Middle East visitors fill upmarket hotels at this time, escaping the searing heat of the Gulf summer, and Australia has its own steadily increasing superyacht fleet.

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SANCTUARYCOVEBOATSHOW.COM
GRANTTORRENSINTERNATIONAL.COM
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ABOVE: All-girl band on aft platform of a Sunseeker 98', which was sold. BELOW: Grant Torrens giving the thumbs up from part of his display at Sovereign Islands

