

THE ULTIMATE *offshore investment*

By Mark Armstrong, HND



What more is there to say about Superyacht? They are status symbols, objects of luxury that would make many a king or queen blush. They are perfect for hiding from prying paparazzi and hopping from various exotic ports throughout the Mediterranean or Caribbean for months at a time while entertaining friends and family.



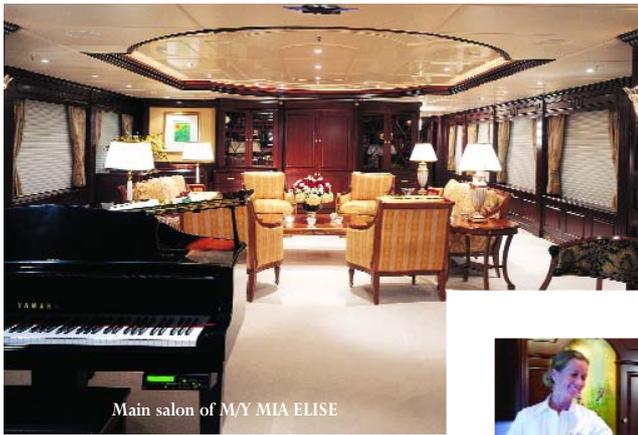
LEFT
M/Y ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM, 161 ft. (49m) aluminum tri-deck relaxing in the Bahamas
TOP
M/Y MIA ELISE, 180 ft. (55m) steel displacement yacht in Nice, France.
CENTER,
The recent delivery of M/Y LADY LINDA, 157 ft. (47.9m) aluminum tri-deck.
ABOVE
Aft sun deck of M/Y MIA ELISE.

Not so long ago, a 30 metre (100 ft.) yacht with 3-4 nice staterooms would have been quite a prize. Today, some owners believe that if you don't have a grand piano, a helipad, a gymnasium, or a 500-bottle wine cellar; you might as well be in a row boat.

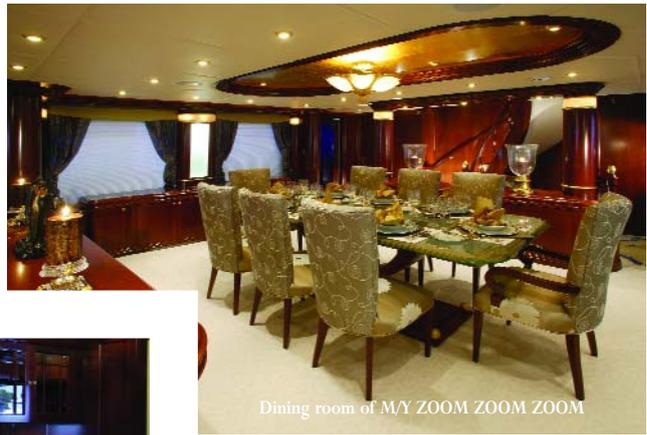
Yet while superyachts might seem like frivolous opulence, they are also feats of naval engineering and construction. Their owners are right to be proud, as these ships are often entirely hand-built by hundreds of artisans crafting the hull, moulding the cabinetry and designing high-tech gizmos; but can they be called investments?

The industry of building new superyachts is currently growing at 14% per annum worldwide between 2006 - 2007. Over the last decade the global fleet has almost doubled. Due to a low scrap rate, the market for repair/refit is expected to grow at the same rate. The decision to build a SuperYacht is not normally thought of as an investment, but the demand for new yachts exceeds the production capacity of recognised Superyacht builders which has resulted in long delivery dates from most builders. Also, the development of an increasingly active charter market where average superyachts charter between \$175,000 and \$375,000 per week, as well as new concepts such as fractional or shared ownership, are adding new options for owners. As a result, a new Superyacht from a yacht yard with a known pedigree will appreciate, (yes I did say appreciate) from the minute you sign the build contract to approximately the fourth or fifth year after delivery. All of a sudden the pure joyful decadence of superyacht ownership begins to take on a beautiful financial glow.

Trinity Yachts, LLC., a company well aware of this formula, has been on the forefront of this financial investment boom since 1988, building steel and aluminum superyachts for clients all over the world.. According to William (Billy) Smith, Vice President, they are ➤



Main salon of M/Y MIA ELISE



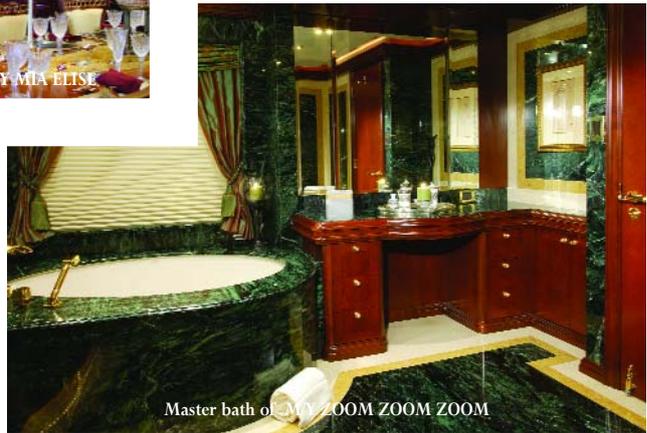
Dining room of M/Y ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM



Dining room of M/Y MIA ELISE



Split level master suite of M/Y ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM



Master bath of M/Y ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM

proud to say, "not one of their yachts commissioned by a client has ever re-sold for less money than the contract price," and this makes the financially savvy owners of a Trinity yacht very happy.

This is probably why out of the eighteen superyachts that Trinity has on order today, (the most a shipyard has ever had in the history of US superyacht building), eleven of them are from repeat clients and three clients have a multiple yacht programme; one yacht currently in use, a yacht in the build phase and a third in the design stage!

To put it simply, Trinity Yachts have overcome obstacles that would have put many yacht-builders permanently under water. Even after suffering a direct hit on August 29th 2005 from America's worst natural and man-made disaster due to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Trinity has re-emerged as the world leader in custom superyacht-building according to Showboats Int. magazine*.

Upon learning that hundreds of their employees lost their homes in the flood, Trinity simply turned around and built a small village of large mobile homes on their premises to provide accommodation for these employees to help them get back on their feet. From scratch there was the installation of sanitation, power and security to help create a comfortable living experience. Walk around in the evening at the Trinity "employee village" and children ride their bicycles while dads boil Louisiana crawfish or barbeque hamburgers. Visit early on a workday morning and you will see the school bus

stop to pick up children. It is in part that Trinity's loyalty and dedication to their workforce has in turn created a dedication and loyalty to the company that is often unheard of by today's standards, and all this contributes to Trinity's successful formula.

Although Trinity is quick to point out that they use extremely modern build techniques and systems, they never forget their roots being firmly planted at the old Higgins shipyard, where most of the D-Day landing craft were built for WWII. With strong military influences used in their building techniques, hence extremely high levels of quality control, it is hardly surprising why Trinity Yachts has gained such a high reputation as the superyacht builder to go to when looking for a safe investment. Now with two shipyards in production, one of the largest departments of naval architects in the business, the largest "Sycro Lift" in the USA due for installation, a new 550 ton travel lift delivered next month and 18 exquisite ships under-construction, Trinity is buzzing with energy.

Today as this American superyacht builder moves forward in 2007, the future has never looked brighter for Trinity Yachts, its employees and very importantly, the investment savvy owners of a Trinity yacht. ■

*At time of writing, ShowBoats International/Curtco, has reported in its most recent issue, that in terms of custom superyacht builders, Trinity Yachts, LLC., in the USA was ranked number one, with 18 projects having a total length of 2,965 feet, and an average length of 165 feet.

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