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Hugo Van Schaik and Michael Nurbatlon



Right: electric surfboards featured in the toys and tenders showcase



ROYAL HUISMAN TEAMS UP WITH DESIGNER RACOUPEAU

The Dutch shipyard announced a partnership with Olivier Racoupeau of Berret-Racoupeau Yacht Design, as it focuses on custom-built, multihull catamarans in Asia. Together they have drawn up concepts for a 33m sailing and a 36m power "supercat", which they're targeting at the rapidly growing short-term charter market. The perfect party craft, both vessels include large beach-club areas, magnificent open spaces for socialising in, as well as a private spa connecting directly to the owner's cabin.

Rendezvous guests enjoy a wine and oyster pairing in the Kata Rocks cellar



Adam Frost, Trevaan Gay, Andrew Richardson, Rebecca Gay and Ms Richardson



Above: Richard Pope and Gulu Lalvani. Left: Jody Chapman unveiling the new iAqua toy



IAQUA MAKES A SPLASH

Guests were treated to a private trial of the new iAqua toy, in the company of iAqua founder Simon Phillips on board his Sunseeker yacht. Phillips, who has worked with Volkswagen, BMW and Audi, initially asked his technology team in Shenzhen to create something for his own personal use. Once hooked on the prototype, he then set out to develop a water-jet product that was high quality but low priced. His engineers worked out how to make it robust, while ensuring that "anyone can repair it if necessary, be it a captain, crew member or owner". The iAqua has launched for about \$3,000 (£2,300), and there's a version with GPS and a camera, plus a high-powered electric surfboard to follow. "It's just a lot of fun, isn't it?" says Phillips. Having tried it out, Boat International can attest that it certainly is.

Right: Benetti's Peter Mahony addresses the exclusive Captains' Dinner



Below: Nicky André and Paris Baloumis



Tata Young, Chatadul Seenapongpipit and Ray



Phuket really rocks

Infinite Luxury puts the Thai island on the map with the Kata Rocks Superyacht Rendezvous

The Kata Rocks Superyacht Rendezvous kicked off the Asian yachting season in style with its third staging in Phuket last December. Guests were treated to a full programme of glamorous events – from small, invite-only dinners, which were held in resort founder Richard Pope's own elegant villa, to a champagne and oyster tasting, Thai cookery classes, private massages in the spa and a fresh seafood barbecue feast at the nearby Surin Phuket, which looks out over the beautifully secluded Pansea Beach.

Naturally, there were plenty of boats to discover too – such as the 34-metre *Xanadu*, the recently refitted sailing yacht *Aphrodite A* and the 33-metre charter yacht *Nymphaea*, which has relocated to Asia following successful charters in Alaska and the Caribbean.

Of course, it wouldn't be a rendezvous without some great parties too, which Kata Rocks also had in abundance. From the Camper & Nicholsons and Royal Huisman cocktails on the first night, to the Hemisphere Monaco gin party and the final closing celebrations, a warm and welcoming crowd celebrated in style.

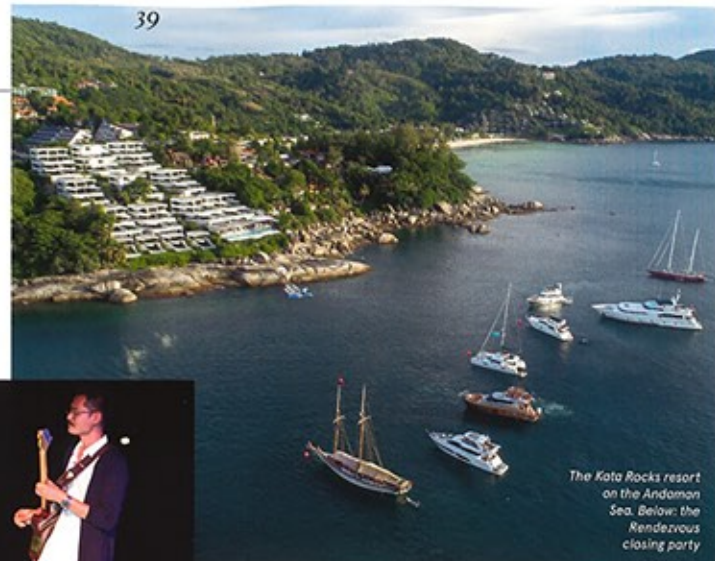
"Year one was good, year two was better, and I think we've really stepped things up again this year too," explains Pope, who also runs the event and is CEO of the company behind the Kata Rocks resort, Infinite Luxury. "A lot of superyacht owners have

done the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, and they're now starting to discover Asia, along with new Chinese clientele who are also coming this way."

Support networks in this part of the world have also improved significantly, Pope explains, making travel in the region more feasible for owners as well as captains. "I think people worry about arranging visas and sorting supplies, but Seal Superyachts, which provides dedicated support for boats, now has 17 different outlets from the Seychelles down to Australia, so there's plenty of help for everyone."

Nicky André, managing director of Hemisphere Monaco and a founding partner of the business along with Pope, agrees. As a crew employer in the region offering services from payroll and contracts to account management, she has seen a significant increase in popularity in the area over the past five years, with Thailand taking centre stage.

Now the infrastructure is largely in place, it's clear to see what Phuket offers as a destination. "Around here it's incredibly beautiful and diverse," says Pope. "My favourite place is Ao Phang Nga National Park, where there are sea caves you can explore with a little canoe or a RIB, and then you can go off and find a beach with literally no one on it. People are increasingly using the Kata Rocks Superyacht Rendezvous as a fun starting point, before setting off on their next great adventure." katarockssuperyachtrendezvous.com



The Kata Rocks resort on the Andaman Sea. Below: the Rendezvous closing party

