



Monaco Ocean Week

Thursday 21st March 2024

Yacht Club de Monaco and The Explorers Club celebrate the spirit of adventure

Thursday 21st March 2024. In a collaboration with The Explorers Club of New York, nearly 150 explorers made the trip for the first time to the Yacht Club de Monaco for its 13th Environmental Symposium entitled Day of Exploration, packed with talks and meetings that concluded with the 4th YCM Explorer Awards. Orchestrated by YCM, these meetings are key events during Monaco Ocean Week organised by the **Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation** in partnership with the **Monaco Government**, the **Monaco Oceanographic Institute** and **Monaco Scientific Centre**. *"We are keen to work together to promote research, innovation and education. This is the ambition of the 'Monaco, Capital of Advanced Yachting' approach, initiated by the Yacht Club de Monaco which aims to encourage and develop sustainable, innovative yachting,"* said HSH Prince Albert II.

Explorations and explorers

A bespoke programme awaited the American delegation who came to the YCM. It included a regatta on the one design J/70 boats and sailing on YCM's flagship, the 15M IR gaff gutter *Tuiga* (1909); inauguration of the first Explorer Dock attended by YCM General Secretary Bernard d'Alessandri and Sir William Roseman, Executive Director of The Explorers Club; and visits to seven explorer yachts moored in the YCM Marina, namely M/Y *Prometej* (45m), M/Y *Santandrea* (29m), S/Y *NDS Evolution* (26m), M/Y *U Boat Navigator* (24m), M/Y *Beyond Capricorn* (24m), M/Y *Audace* (46m) and M/Y *King Benji* (46m), the latter being christened with great pomp and ceremony. Famous faces from the offshore racing world were to be seen on the quays including Jean-Pierre Dick, two-time Barcelona World Race winner, and Boris Herrmann, skipper of the IMOCA *Malizia-Seaexplorer* which will be on the start of the next Vendée Globe (10th November 2024). He was accompanied by YCM Vice-President and founder of Team Malizia, Pierre Casiraghi, who had come to meet the children in the YCM's Sports Section and share with them their passion for sailing.

Exploration the link

Organised in partnership with The Explorers Club of New York as a Day of Exploration, the 13th Environmental Symposium La Belle Classe Superyachts saw a dozen renowned explorers take the stage to speak. *"It is important to have them here as we need to know more about the planet and its oceans and appreciate just how beautiful it is. If we want to protect something, having an indepth knowledge of it is fundamental,"* believes YCM General Secretary Bernard d'Alessandri.

"To be a good explorer, you have to be humble," said American **Victor Vescovo** from the outset. Known for having dived to the deepest depths of the oceans, he is one of a handful to have tasted the exhilaration of the seas alongside explorers **Josh Gates**, **Barry Clifford**, **Carl Allen**, **Captain Maiwenn Beadle**, **Nico Vincent** and the artist **James Prosek** who also made the trip. *"The Club shares a rich history with Monaco,"* began **Richard Garriott**, President of The Explorers Club of New York of which HSH Prince Albert II is a member of the Board of Directors. *"In the wake of Prince Albert I, several generations of the Grimaldi family have been members of the Club and flown its flag in the field during expeditions and won its highest distinctions. Our members may have walked on the moon and the summit of Mount Everest, but our roots are firmly anchored in the ocean".*

A commitment with no limits

"When it comes to love, you don't count the cost" so the saying goes. And many of these explorers are the perfect interpretation of it as demonstrated by **Emmanuelle and Ghislain Bardout**, the couple behind the Under The Pole expeditions. *"We sold everything we owned to buy our expedition boat"* with the goal being to introduce the public to the underwater world, gain better knowledge of the ocean and above all to raise awareness of the urgent need to protect it. *"Fishing is one of the biggest threats,"* says **Rachel Graham** who works with traditional fishermen and sector-specific partners in several tropical countries to identify and roll out win-win solutions that reconcile the wellbeing of coastal communities with sustainable use of resources, and conservation of threatened marine wildlife and habitats critical to their survival. Meeting local people is key like **Tommy Allen** who now focuses his attention on building new types of boat, *"no matter what you work on, or what we find, too often we forget the human factor. The indigenous populations that I meet embody ecology, they are the environment".*



Knowledge key to protection

According to **Nina Jensen**, CEO of REV Ocean, the largest research expedition vessel (REV) currently under construction, which will be available to scientists, NGOS, policy makers, innovators, engineers and stakeholders in the maritime sector, *"Less than 10% of the oceans have been explored. The idea with this boat is to save life in the oceans and it's not just about the boat but also the people on board"*.

Many have also witnessed rare discoveries, at sea and in space. *"We have collected numerous samples that allow us to find out the chemical composition of certain rocks on Mars,"* said scientist, **Nina Lanza**, Space and Planetary Team Leader in Space and Space Remote Sensing and Data Science (ISR-6) at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, *"I really think exploration is a leap of the imagination"*. Explorers share with scientists the ability to observe, analyse and listen to the nature that surrounds them. *"We have lost the ability to listen to nature because we have developed another way of communicating with language. At the moment we are disconnected from nature,"* said **Michel André**, professor, Bioacoustician and Director of Applied Bioacoustics at the Technical University of Catalonia Barcelonatech (UPC).

Explorers of extremes, they are used to dealing with the unknown. *"Panic paralyses but fear is a thermometer that keeps you alert,"* continued the legendary American astronaut, **Kathy Sullivan**. Their passion pushes them to go beyond the limits of what is possible. *"Exploration is not just about going into the unknown, it is also about exploring a better quality of life,"* concluded **Bertrand Piccard** who this year celebrates the 25th anniversary of his nonstop round the world trip in a balloon. *"The impossible must be achieved. Every time we have a choice to make we are going into the unknown"*.

4th YCM Explorer Awards by La Belle Classe Superyachts: owners in the spotlight

The **YCM Explorer Awards by La Belle Classe Superyachts** ended the day. Since 2019 the ceremony has been recognising owners who stand out for their commitment to protecting the marine environment, be it in the design of their yacht or how they use it. Awarded by a jury of professionals there are four awards, Technology & Innovation, Science & Discovery, Adventure & Environmental Ethics and a special Coup de Coeur award. They were presented by YCM President HSH Prince Albert II, alongside Richard Wiese, President Emeritus of The Explorers Club, Mike Horn and Bertrand Piccard.

"They are acutely aware of the environment and are playing, and will play, a crucial role in marine exploration by providing their invaluable support to scientists and local communities," said HSH Prince Albert II.

- **S/Y Cachalote** (25m) won the **Technology & Innovation** category and earned the 4-star 'Superior Standard' rating of the SEA Index®. Launched 2020 by YCM and Credit Suisse, this reference has become essential for assessing superyachts' CO2 emissions, providing invaluable support for owners committed to more responsible yachting.
- **M/Y Archimedes** (68m) won the **Science & Discovery** prize.
- **M/Y Gigi** (49m) was recognised in the **Adventure & Environmental Ethics** category.
- The special **Coup de cœur** prize went to **M/V Latitude** (47m) whose captain Sean Meagher is a member of the YCM's Captains' Club and The Explorers Club.

As the Sovereign concluded in his speech, *"Together, let us commit to protecting our oceans and working towards a sustainable future for our planet. It is a collective responsibility, a duty we have to our children and future generations"*.

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Photos : <https://yachtclubdemonaco.smugmug.com/Monaco-Ocean-Week-Yachting-Day/2024>