



Yacht Club de Monaco at the heart of Monaco Ocean Week

As part of Monaco Ocean Week, taking place 30th March to 4th April, the YCM hosted around 60 delegates for its La Belle Classe Superyachts Environmental Symposium, organised in the form of a dinner-debate. The topic: “The Ocean: grandeurs and servitudes”.

Many key players from the great ocean family attended, led by YCM General Secretary Bernard d’Alessandri and HE Mr Bernard Fautrier, Vice-President of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

For nearly three hours, specialists in the marine environment – including Luxury Yachting sector professionals – answered questions from an audience unanimous in its concern for the future of our oceans and Man. One after the other, subjects as diverse as the seemingly unstoppable climate warming machine, ocean acidification, new and less polluting methods of propulsion, and responsible fishing were tackled in a lively and extremely informative discussion.

Also on the agenda was progress made on more eco-friendly moorings and anchorages, too often responsible for destroying Posidonia seagrass beds. Developed by a Monaco company, a new genre of buoys targeting big yachts could prove an economic godsend in the future. “It is therefore essential to support these projects,” urged Laurent Certaldi, Director of Catalano Shipping which is behind this concept and is a member of the Cluster Yachting Monaco.

Owners, naval architects, researchers and scientists behind eco-responsible associations reflected the moral attitude required to avoid an acceleration of climate imbalance, which could ultimately lead to an ecological disaster on a global scale. Delegates also learned what is being achieved by owners, as illustrated by the intervention of François Fiat, La Belle Classe Superyachts Ambassador who takes developments to another level.

Naval architects, in particular Espen Oeino, Cluster Yachting Monaco Vice-President who gave a very detailed talk, presented technical innovations underway. A priority is propulsion methods and here more and more people are turning to clean energy sources to complement systems that have up to now been driven by fossil fuels. All recognised that wind and sun are and will be the future, as indispensable elements for a more responsible approach to the seas and oceans. For example, the M/Y *Black Pearl* project (106m) has set a target to cross the Atlantic on just 20 litres of fuel in the very near future. For his part, Mr Fiat highlighted that the M/Y *Yersin* was close to achieving zero emissions of fine particulates. Other innovative projects such as double hulls for refrigerants for air-conditioning, or ballast using recycled water caught the imagination and earned the approval of a very attentive audience.

CNRS researchers, scientists from the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and managers of marine protected areas produced technical data that strengthens their convictions. In short, there is much more work to be done to reduce ocean acidification and reign back global warming, and it is up to each and every one of us to take responsibility.

As Dr Jean-Pierre Gattuso from the scientific laboratory in Villefranche describes it: “The Ocean is our planet’s thermostat, and if the imbalance is too great, it will in the end have dramatic consequences for the human race.” There was strong recognition of the battle that has been fought here in Monaco and by HSH Prince Albert II over many years. This has led to concrete actions such as the ban on selling blue tuna and ban on shops giving out plastic bags, a major source of pollution and poisoning of marine wildlife. Plastic is a phenomenon of such magnitude that today scientists talk of a “sixth continent” when describing the concentrations of microparticles in certain oceanic regions.

Finally, during the prestigious dinner centred round seafood, prepared by YCM Chef Christian Plumail, participants discovered the identity of Mr Goodfish in Monaco. This very active international association creates a link between all those involved in bringing fish and seafood to our tables. A chain of solidarity joining fishermen, wholesalers, distributors, restaurants and consumers, it has a slogan everyone understands: "Fish responsibly today to have fish tomorrow". The evening ended on an optimistic note from YCM General Secretary Bernard d'Alessandri: "Nothing is irreversible but everything must be done now to ensure that it does not reach that point".