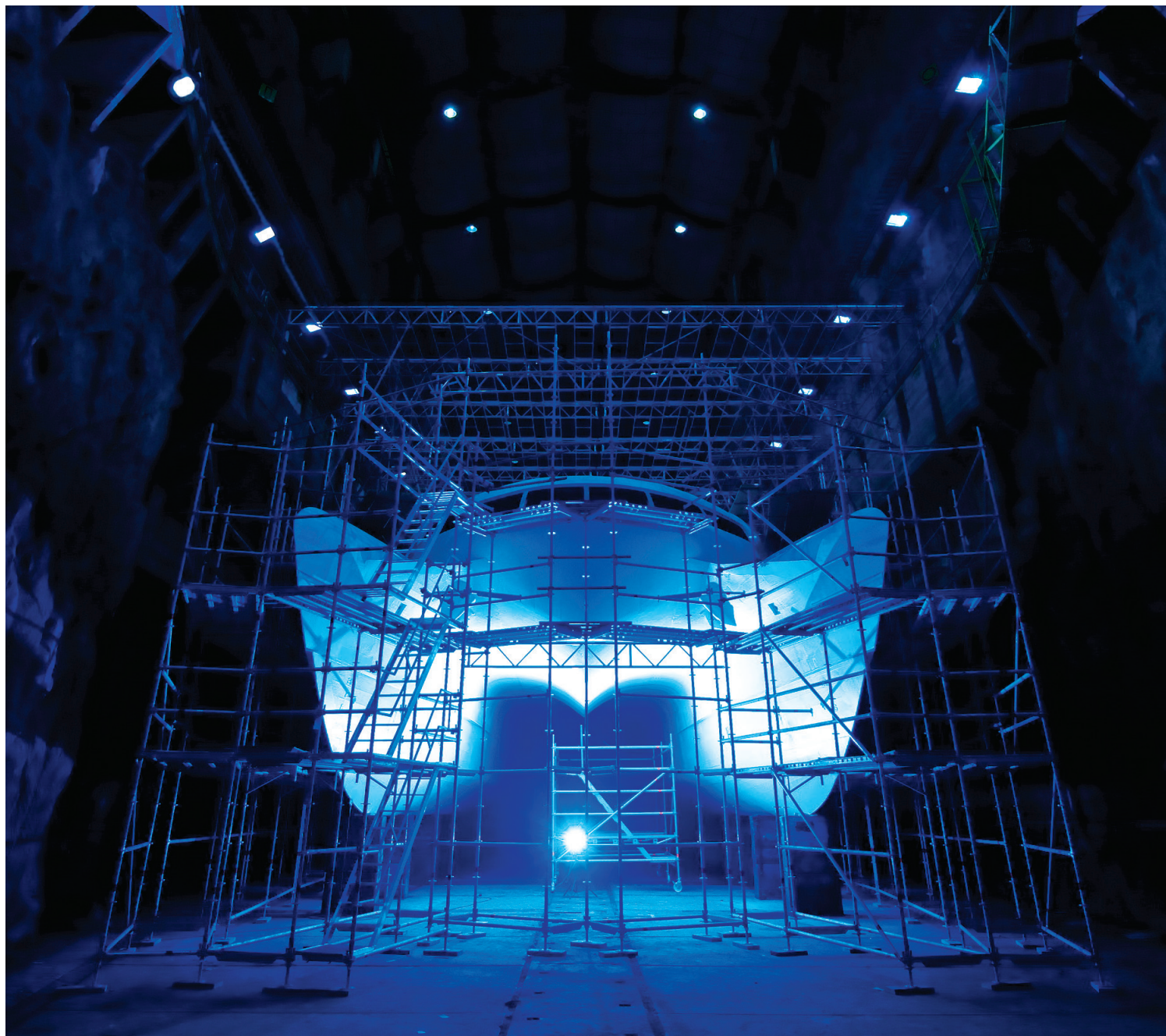


The Superyacht

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PLAYING FOR MONEY



Lulu Trask reports from Palma, which played host to the 25th anniversary of one of the superyacht industry's most anticipated annual events – The Pinmar Golf charity tournament – on 10–12 October, 2013. Meanwhile, **Will Mathieson** attended The Italian Job, hosted by Amico & Co and held on the Ligurian riviera on 11-13 October, 2013.

With expectations high, last year's Pinmar Gold tournament saw some impressive numbers as the tournament raised more than €80,000 for a number of charities. Some 106 teams (of four) registered to play the 18-hole course over the two days, with 285 industry professionals being present at Bond Support and Services' invitation-only VIP party at Tristan's Puerto Portals, and an impressive 957 attending the much-awaited Pinmar Anniversary Ball – a spectacular end to the event.

While the tournament comprises industry members, without a doubt that, of all in the yachting calendar, this event has primarily recreational intentions that can be moulded into effortless networking. Indeed, some attendees turned up with a view not to participate in play but to spend the full two days at the social hub, the club house. However, compared with other events that take the spotlight in our industry's calendar, the demand for this type of gathering event is clear.

"It is the industry's most fun and relaxed event of the year; an event where everyone involved can let their hair down and catch up with old friends, which makes it, in my opinion, one of the best networking events to attend," Nigel Sherlock, sales manager at Van Berge Henegouwen (VBH), told *The Superyacht Report*.

Stefan Van Cleef, CEO and co-owner of Yacht Eye, part of Oculus Technologies, attended the event for the first time in 2013, and described it as: "A great event. It has a relaxed setting with less formal networking because it has a focus on friendship and fun. You really have the time to speak to people."



As long as the industry remains professional in its collective socialising, The Pinmar Golf tournament provides a unique groundwork upon which to build relationships in the most informal and relaxed industry event of the year.

The event does, however, have somewhat of a reputation as an industry booze-up, branded under the term 'networking'; a reputation that was worsened in 2013 as an alcohol-fuelled incident saw significant areas of the golf course severely damaged by a golf buggy, costing not only an estimated €30,000, but also the golfers their buggies on the second day of play. While the consumption of alcohol is, for many, part of the informal get-together scene and provision of alcohol at this type of event is in no way an excuse for these actions, it does, unfortunately, raise the chance of such an occurrence when it is provided to an unprofessional member of the industry.

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Further along the Mediterranean coast, there was more competition on the golf course, as Amico & Co hosted The Italian Job: "Three days of wellness, gastronomy and Italian lifestyle" at Marina di Loano, positioned on the Ligurian Riviera. The event, which attracted around 150 superyacht captains and industry professionals, was punctuated by a tournament at the Garlenda Golf Club on the Saturday, which was played out in the inimitable relaxed Italian style.

Despite the organisers' *laissez-faire* approach, captains will always be captains, and there was still a underlying competitive edge to the day's play, with the team of Captains John Fleckenstein, Michael Lovely, David Farmery and Luca Triggiani eventually coming out on top. The event certainly delivered on its objective – to offer guests a weekend of informal networking, enjoyment and relaxation, which also included a day of spa treatments at Marina di Loano and Grand Hotel Alassio to aid guests' recovery after a banquet dinner the previous evening.

Unlike the Pinmar event, which is in its 25th year and is one of the staple fixtures on the superyacht calendar, The Italian Job was being staged for the first time. Also unlike Pinmar, the event was not in aid of charity but rather an astute means of attracting key superyacht decision-makers to a region to experience what its infrastructure has to offer.

Captains are prized guests at any industry event, as they invariably have the greatest access to the ultimate decision maker and pursuer – the owner. Social events have long been deemed the most effective means of prising them away from their boat and capturing their attention. The Azimut Benetti group has been doing this for many years with its YachtMaster events, which bring existing Benetti captains together for a week of fine dining and activities. As well as acting as a 'thank you' to its clients, it serves as a reminder that by remaining loyal both captain and owner will be well looked after. >>



Amico & Co and its various organising partners have grasped this concept with both hands, and the event was an opportunity to showcase Ligurian expertise and the perks that wintering in the area could afford the crew. Luigi Spiaggi, whose organisation Mansueto Group was among the technical sponsors, said that this was just the beginning and the 2014 edition of the event would be even bigger and better.

Whether staged in the name of charity, good will or commerce, these events continue to prove powerful tools for client retention and positive PR. They offer a welcome respite from the formality of the yacht show circuit, and

that is probably one of the main reasons captains opt to attend these events.

Time and again people say the superyacht industry is one built on relationships and if that is the case, then these social events will remain a powerful tool in a company's arsenal. ■



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WITH SUBJECT: PLAYING FOR MONEY

1988 Viking set sail with 2 employees, Dieter & Jill Jaenicke.
2013 Viking employs over 50 staff globally and has placed and managed over 100,000 crew members across the world.



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