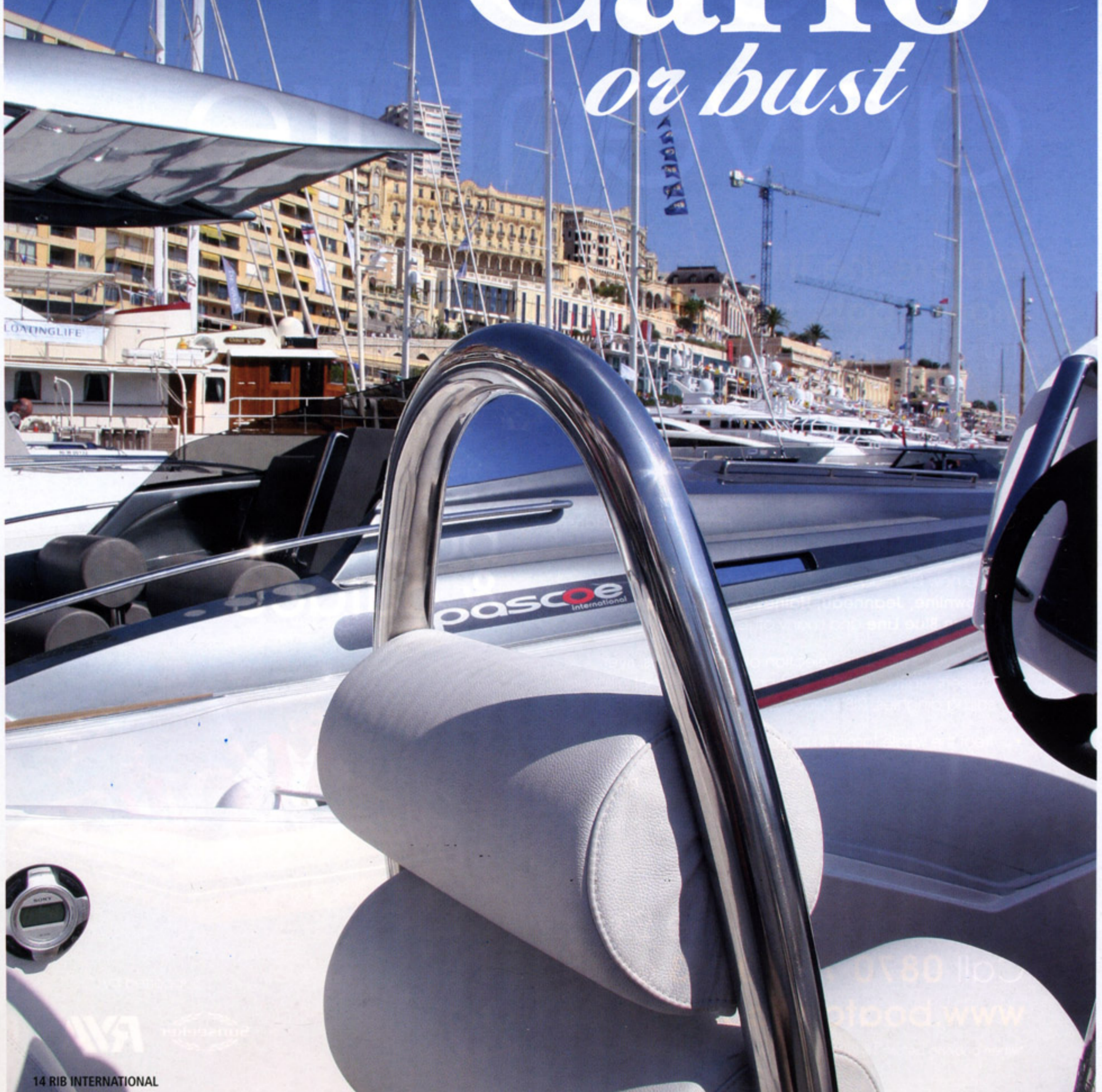


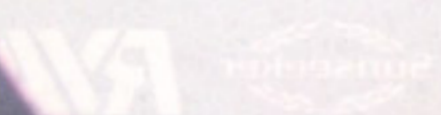
Monte Carlo

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With Prince Rainier of Monaco recently announcing that he wanted more Brits to relocate to the Principality, a visit to the Monaco Yacht Show would give him the opportunity to welcome me with open arms and bid for my imminent relocation...

Sadly his 'people' clearly failed to hook up with my plane at Nice and, five minutes after actually arriving in Monaco and seeing first hand the outstanding wealth on show, I soon realised that it probably wasn't me he was aiming to snare!

The Monaco Yacht Show is just that bit different from the Southampton and London boat shows; the clue is in the title, and any show that uses the term 'yacht' is clearly aiming for a different market from your standard boat-show punter. The marketing blurb stated there would be more superyachts there than ever before, with at least 30 expected to attend. If you've never stood next to a superyacht then it's difficult to describe how you will find yourself reacting. Everyone I've been with, as they survey the sheer magnitude of these beasts, tends to initially drop their lower jaw and emit a long, drawn-out 'wow!' followed by repeated chuckles and shakes of the head as they stare, slightly dumbstruck, at these playthings of the very few.

You'll be glad to know, though, that despite the opulent wealth surrounding these floating 7-star hotels, the real little worker bees are the RIBs and other tenders that ensure their owners get where they want to go and have a great time whilst doing so. It was the worker bees on show here in the tenders' section that I was here to have a look at.

The tenders on board these yachts can generally be divided into two categories. Firstly there are the extremely sexy, 'image-is-everything' tenders which double as ferries to

take the boss and his entourage ashore. They can also explore into the bays that the mother ship simply can't get to and give the boss the chance to blast around wherever he/she wants to go in total style. In this section of the market, tenders from the company Wally (yes, that is their name!) are increasingly popular, and you even find some of the larger yachts with Sunseekers craned on board. The majority of superyachts, though, tend to use RIBs for the same reasons that we do - versatility, toughness and rugged good looks. The second category is the tenders that have to do everything well and are for use by the crew either as ferries, as ski boats or as safety or security craft deployed from the yachts; invariably these are RIBs too.

Represented at the Monaco show were a handful of RIB manufacturers serving each end of this market, with Avon, Pascoe, Cirrus, Castoldi and Novurania being amongst the better known makes, but with some great-looking boats from Sea Water and Dariel too. When you consider that there are something over 400 superyachts in build around the world at present, and rarely will they have less than two tenders, with the 65m+ yachts having three or four, then you can see how large the market is for those targeting this area.

Probably the most popular range of RIBs among the superyachts seemed to be the Novurania and it's easy to see why. They were represented by a range of well laid out and well finished RIBs, from small, good all-rounder types through to the larger ferry-type models.





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Many of the larger yachts had two or three RIBs, so having the ability to choose from this variety of styles from one manufacturer proves pretty handy. All of the craft are available in any format you wish, with jet drives being very popular and found on over 50% of the craft sold.

Cirrus had a 6.5m boat at the show and it was stylish, attractive and well finished. With teak decking, seating for about 10-12 and a Yanmar diesel in, it managed to be that classy all-rounder type already mentioned.

At the larger end of the spectrum, the RIBs from Dariel were very attractive with one of them sporting a pair of the new and truly awesome-looking 350hp V8 Yamaha outboards. The two Dariel RIBs are very much the swanky 'look-great' type of tenders, and if they run as well as they are laid out and finished they would be a great buy. To give you an idea of price, though, you can spend between two and five hundred thousand euros on one of these beasts so you'd better have deep pockets!

The 'muscle-boat' style RIB was provided by a newer Italian company called Sea Water, with their 41ft RIB powered along by triple Yamaha 225hps. In jet black it looked a real mean beast with good seating and sunbathing areas - although I have to say that if I was exhibiting a black RIB at a boat show I'd make more of an effort to make the tubes look clean!

My stars of the show, however, were the Pascoe RIBs. Pascoe have really targeted the superyacht market over the last few years since superyacht designer Ken Freivokh got involved, and it appears to be paying off. Eddie Jordan's new Sunseeker 37m, The Snapper, has a 5.8m Pascoe in its tender garage. Meanwhile Maltese Falcon, an amazing 88m yacht, sports two 10m

Pascoes on its foredeck - a nice coup for the company. The two Pascoes on show were both inboards with the 9m version sporting two of the new BY series Yanmar 260hp diesels. But the 10m was my favourite and managed to combine sophisticated opulence with a sort of understated aggressive look. It has a small cabin for those 'intimate moments' and, of course, a nice big sunpad to lounge around on. Raid your piggy bank for a few hundred thousand euros and one could be yours - or mine if you are feeling generous!

Overall the show was hugely interesting and a real eye-opener as it is a window to a world very few inhabit. If you're in the market for a RIB, is it worth a trip next year? If you're in the megabucks territory then you may want to visit for the big boats, otherwise a good number of these RIBs can be seen in the UK at RIBEX. And Prince Rainier? His people told my people, "maybe next year".

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www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk

