

Beat: Lifestyle

Mark Elkington, Managing Director of Multihull Solutions

Multihull Solutions

Phuket, 20.01.2014, 08:48 Time

USPA NEWS - At the 11th Phuket International Boatshow (PIMEX) from 9 to 12 January, I had the pleasure to interview newcomer to the Phuket Boatshow, Multihull Solutions, Managing Director Mark Elkington from Queensland, Australia. Mark took the time to answer some of my questions about himself and the company.

Originally from Western Australia, Mark had a passion for sailing since he was a boy and started sailing his first dinghy at the age of seven in Perth, much to his father's delight because he always had power- and sail boats and Mark practically grew up on boats. His father taught him how to sail by sailing alongside his dinghy on a 30 foot yacht and told him when to pull ropes and what to do. Later Mark acquired a degree at the Freemantle Maritime College where he studied everything about the marine industry and did specialized courses in the fish industry. At the age of 20 he bought his first cruising boat.

After leaving school he worked in various industries from commercial fishing to boating and in 1987 he was appointed Safety Officer for the America's Cup, representing the Royal Perth Yacht Club. Sometime later he looked after a Swan 53 for a client on Hamilton Island. The owner had gone on holiday for one month. Mark loved the place and quickly found work scrubbing decks and cleaning charter boats and eventually he started managing the boats and finally bought the company together with some friends from the yachting industry. He bought the company "Hamilton Island Yacht Charters" in 1993 together with a German friend who had approached him and who wanted to buy a charter company but didn't know anything about the management of boats.

They set up a Joint Venture of the company and Mark became one of the founding directors of Sunsail Yacht Charters in Australia in 1994. To attract more customers to the area they had to modernize their fleet and imported the first Fontaine Pajot Catamarans into Australia.

In 2009 Mark Elkington established Multihull Solutions in Mooloolaba, Queensland.

New and pre-owned cruising sail and motor catamarans are the core of the business. "Service starts before making a choice" is his company motto and it has proven to be an excellent dictum.

After being recognized as the "Fontaine Pajot Worldwide Distributor of the Year" for the past four consecutive years, Multihull Solutions has recorded constant growth since its founding.

"The multihull market is the only growing market segment right now," Mark Elkington tells me. "It's one of the few areas in the marina and boat building industry that shows expansion. Multihull's have several advantages over monohull's, that's why Multihull Solutions focuses on catamarans only. Right now (10 January 2014) we have 16 boats under construction for customers around the world but since we just sold one on the first day of the PIMEX we need to build 17.

Usually clients who come to a boat show, know what they want. They have made enquiries through the internet and other sources and want to see the boat in the water now. Boatshow's are very important for us," Mark tells me "because they are the ideal venue for new and recurring customers to get the newest updates on models. Customers get the full package, after they order their boat. They get training until their boat arrives, to get them ready to handle their own yacht. If there is a problem, we'll try to solve it as fast as possible."

"This kind of service orientation creates long term relationships with our customers who usually come back to us, ask us to sell their pre-used boats and buy a newer model. Multihull Solutions doesn't just inform, we also include training and excellent service. People who are coming through our marketing division, are coming to learn about catamarans. They can go to another company and get some instructions but they only get the information on that one particular brand. What we are doing is opening the door for education about Multihull's in general and hopefully we have the right brand for the customer's needs."

“The key to our success is our team. In Australia we have a team of 17 people who have all worked in the marina industry for many years. Andrew De Bruin, the newly appointed General Manager for the Asian operation has worked with us in Australia in the charter industry. We’ve all worked in different businesses but we are all familiar with each other, we all have the same values and our ethics are the same. Good service, teaching and educating our customers about the boats. A good team is the catalyst to success and growth of a company.”

“With the opening of the Phuket office, run by Andrew De Bruin, General Manager of “Multihull Solutions Asia” we want to bring our after-sales services to an even higher level since Thailand is one of our major target markets. In the future we plan to open up offices in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia”.

Thank you very much Mark Elkington for taking the time. All the best for the future.

For more information go to: <http://www.multihullsolutions.com.au/>

Gallery: <http://www.ilsegibson.com/pimex-phuket-international-marine-expo.html>

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1805/mark-elkington-managing-director-of-multihull-solutions.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Ilse M. Gibson

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