

Justifying the Shadow

THE CONSTANT COMPANION



ONE DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF THE WORD SHADOW IS A "constant companion". It is fairly obvious therefore what a shadow yacht should be: a constant companion to your superyacht. But why would you need such a vessel?

Consider the cost of procuring a yacht. It's not a cheap or care-free exercise and the attention to achieving 'superyacht quality' finish in every corner of a large build drives the cost and delivery times way beyond those of a comparably sized commercial vessel. Consider that a significant amount of a superyacht is given over to

the tender and toy garages and other storage areas. This equates to around 12m to 15m of a typical 85m to accommodate all of these items. By removing these spaces an 85m could be happily reduced to 70m and still more than comfortably accommodate 12 passengers. Since volume is a function of length cubed it follows that the tonnage, and therefore cost, will be reduced by a cubic factor (in reality slightly less).

"Cost is not the issue" many people cry; but for some the sea-going experience is not just about size. Some owners

want to go to sea for the same reasons that those of us with more meagre budgets do: for the experience – they want to feel the boat move, they want to feel the spray on their faces and the wind in their hair and be at one with the environment as well as being able to stay in smaller anchorages and marinas. As yachts get larger, in an attempt to carry every more tenders, toys and helicopters, so does one becomes increasingly remote from the sea surface, the boat's motions become dulled and the ability to access those anchorages and marinas is diminished. All of this equates to "cruise liner syndrome".

Enter the shadow yacht, a constant companion that can carry all the tenders, the motor bikes, jet skis, stores and spares. Spaces to store garbage, carry additional bunkering and other fluids all in support of the main yacht. It can have sensible landing and garaging facilities for a large helicopter (affording the main yacht space to have a swimming pool perhaps), extended accommodation for the crew with proper accommodation and on deck spaces for rest and relaxation in an environment away from the 'on call 24-7' culture.

But the shadow yacht offers more than just a mobile storage facility. It brings operational flexibility, being able to travel ahead of the main yacht and be on station, having reserved the best anchorage, with all of the facilities at the ready for the owner's arrival. Not to mention the additional security of safety in numbers.

There are, however, drawbacks; increased operational costs must surely be one. These may far outweigh the benefits to the owner but only he (or she) can decide that. The speed and seakeeping ability of the shadow yacht in relation to the main yacht should be carefully considered. Often shadow yachts are significantly smaller than the yachts they support and therefore they are often slower and have lesser seakeeping. These issues are not insurmountable but require a different approach which brings with it new engineering challenges. This is where you must beware that the shadow yacht does not become a yacht. Does it need to be finished to superyacht

quality throughout, all adding cost, weight and a longer delivery period? It is a work horse and perhaps a high level commercial finish with yacht styling is a better route. These factors are often forgotten when the project team is developing the concept resulting in an overly complex, expensive and heavy shadow.

The more functions you build into a yacht the more you have to compromise or adopt elaborate and expensive solutions to avoid compromise. But why do so when you can have a shadow, and keep your yacht simpler, less cluttered and uncompromised?

For those seeking quantitative justification of these arguments we recently undertook some research into the subject culminating in a technical paper available in the public domain. 'The Shadow Yacht – Toy Box of The Sea' was presented at the RINA Design, Operation and Maintenance of Superyachts conference held in Genoa, Italy, in April of this year. The paper presents both qualitative discussion regarding the benefits of shadow yachts together with quantified financial justification.

For example, one case study illustrates that for an owner looking to commission a 105m new build with full tender garaging capabilities, an 89-metre yacht of standard proportions and form could be built instead without full garaging, saving sufficient money with which the owner could build a 60-metre shadow of high commercial finish.

The analysis presented covers yachts up to 120m LOA and suggests that the greatest savings can be realised at the larger end of the market.

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The full text of the technical paper presented at RINA can be found in this issue's Synfo Extras section

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