

# YACHTS

EMIRATES

LÜRSEN 147M

## TOPAZ IN DUBAI

TOPAZ LEADS A FLEET OF SUPERYACHTS DESCENDING ON DUBAI

**THE CONSTANT INNOVATOR**  
HOW THE YOUNG POLISH SHIPYARD SUNREEF YACHTS IS TAKING ON THE SUPERYACHT MARKET

## PRINCESS YACHTS

PRINCESS' NEW 82' AND 52' YACHTS ARE SURE TO HAVE COMPETITORS LOOKING OVER THEIR SHOULDER

**FEATURED YACHTS:**  
SANLORENZO 40M ALLOY | DELTA 50M | CHEOY LEE 47M



SUNREEF YACHTS

# THE CONSTANT INNOVATOR

In 2002 when Francis Lapp made the bold decision to establish a shipyard, he not only decided to enter an extremely competitive and fickle industry, but also to do so with a product that, at that time, hadn't seen much demand globally. Today, Sunreef Yachts is an undisputed leader in building luxury sailing and power catamarans from 60 to 200 feet. This is their story.

By **Shaun Ebelthite** Images Courtesy of Sunreef Yachts



**It would be easy to tell the story of Sunreef Yachts as one of triumph**

over adversity, but that isn't, in fact, the case. It's more a story of faith and intuition, backed up by a solid, passionate team with leadership that Ewa Stachurska, Marketing Director for Sunreef Yachts, describes as 'visionary'. Before you cast such statements off as mere fluff, consider that Francis Lapp established Sunreef Yachts, building catamarans, at a time when they were still considered an unconventional design for eccentric sailors in the yachting industry or specialist commercial application, much like the trimaran or axe-bow today. This in

itself was an act of faith, a belief that the market would see and understand the merits of a catamaran over a monohull. But, Sunreef Yachts was also established in Gdansk, Poland just 12-years after the collapse of communism in the country, at a time when other entrepreneurs were still holding back, waiting to see if the country's new market-based economy was there for good. Francis does not see himself as the brave entrepreneur, however. "I started Sunreef because I saw that such a product, a large, customisable, luxury catamaran, did

**Sunreef have expanded their shipyard in Poland considerably since 2002 to keep pace with demand**

**Sunreef is CEO Francis Lapp's dream, every yacht launch is a powerful moment for him**



**"We no longer compete as a catamaran builder, we compete as a superyacht yard"**

not exist and I wanted to do it in Poland," he told Yachts magazine. "Poland has always been special to me, it is my adopted country. I saw its development potential in the 1990s and have been impressed by it since then." Poland is actually the only European country that has avoided the 2008-begun financial recession, a factor, no doubt, in Sunreef's emergence from the crisis, apparently unscathed. Asked what it is in particular that he finds impressive about Poland, Francis highlights the work ethic of his staff. "In Gdansk, there is an abundant highly qualified workforce because of the area's historical links to ship building." In fact, the current Sunreef shipyard is leased in facilities that were once used for building large commercial vessels, which has made it easy for Francis Lapp to expand his construction halls over the years, with expansion taking place even during the crisis. While Ewa may describe Francis' leadership as 'visionary', Francis is more modest in explaining how Sunreef came through the crisis unscathed.

"For a start, we build yachts for a niche in which there is very little competition, and had a well-established reputation, so orders during the crisis never fell. Secondly, we only build on spec for a specific client, so we never have to sell yachts at price that is lower than our production costs." Sunreef actually launched more yachts in 2009 and 2010 than they did before the financial crisis. This careful style of leadership has been a watchword with Francis from the very beginning, cautiously blending innovation and risk. "I always remain focused on quality over quantity, this is why we have only launched around 60 yachts since 2002, and why we will only bring out two new models each year."

The point then, is that each new yacht they do bring out will be impressive and different to anything else on the market. This was a trend started in 2003 when the very first Sunreef, a 74' aluminium sailing catamaran, was launched, and naysayers were brought by the lee with her futuristic styling and state-of-the-art systems. She was also the first catamaran in the world to boast a flybridge, which allows the skipper centralised control over the yacht, and provides a great vantage point for guests underway. "The 74' was our ticket to all the major yacht shows in Cannes, Monaco, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Palm Beach and Genoa,"

explains Ewa Stachurska. "Her flybridge added an extra deck, considerably expanding living space."

Sunreef soon incorporated the flybridge as a trademark of the brand, and since then all the yard's yachts have been launched with one. It is a design element that competitors were quick to copy, but Francis Lapp

## I Shipyard



is not threatened. "We have no competition," he jokes. "No one is able to match our quality. The 74' was finished in high-gloss American Cherry wood with lots of fancy electronics. Really, we work hard to achieve a very high standard of fit and finish on our yachts and I think the recent Cannes boat show spoke for itself, we received the highest number of visitors among catamaran builders."

In 2005, Sunreef Yachts began their ongoing program of expansion through innovation. The aluminium Sunreef 74 was followed by the Sunreef 62, offered in aluminium or composite, which became Sunreef's best-selling yacht for several years. An impressive 30 were launched between 2005 and 2012 out of a total of 60 yachts delivered. "What made the 62 so popular was the ability for owners to entirely customise the interior décor in terms of finish, as well as the equipment onboard," says Andrzej Chmielewski, Design Office Director for Sunreef. The 62' also offered owners a choice of three different interior layouts, from owner to semi-owner and charter, which provided for three cabins, four cabins, or four cabins all with an en-suite. In 2008, Francis Lapp made a decision that would open a new chapter in the history of Sunreef Yachts - the introduction of the Power range, which now includes four models between 60' and 85' with the versatile ability to cruise at close to 30-knots on short sprints, or for up to 3,500 nautical miles at a more sedate 8-knots, even with their smallest power yacht, the 2012-launched 60 Sunreef Power. The Power range also includes their Custom builds, with yachts up to 150' such as their 40m Sunreef Power.

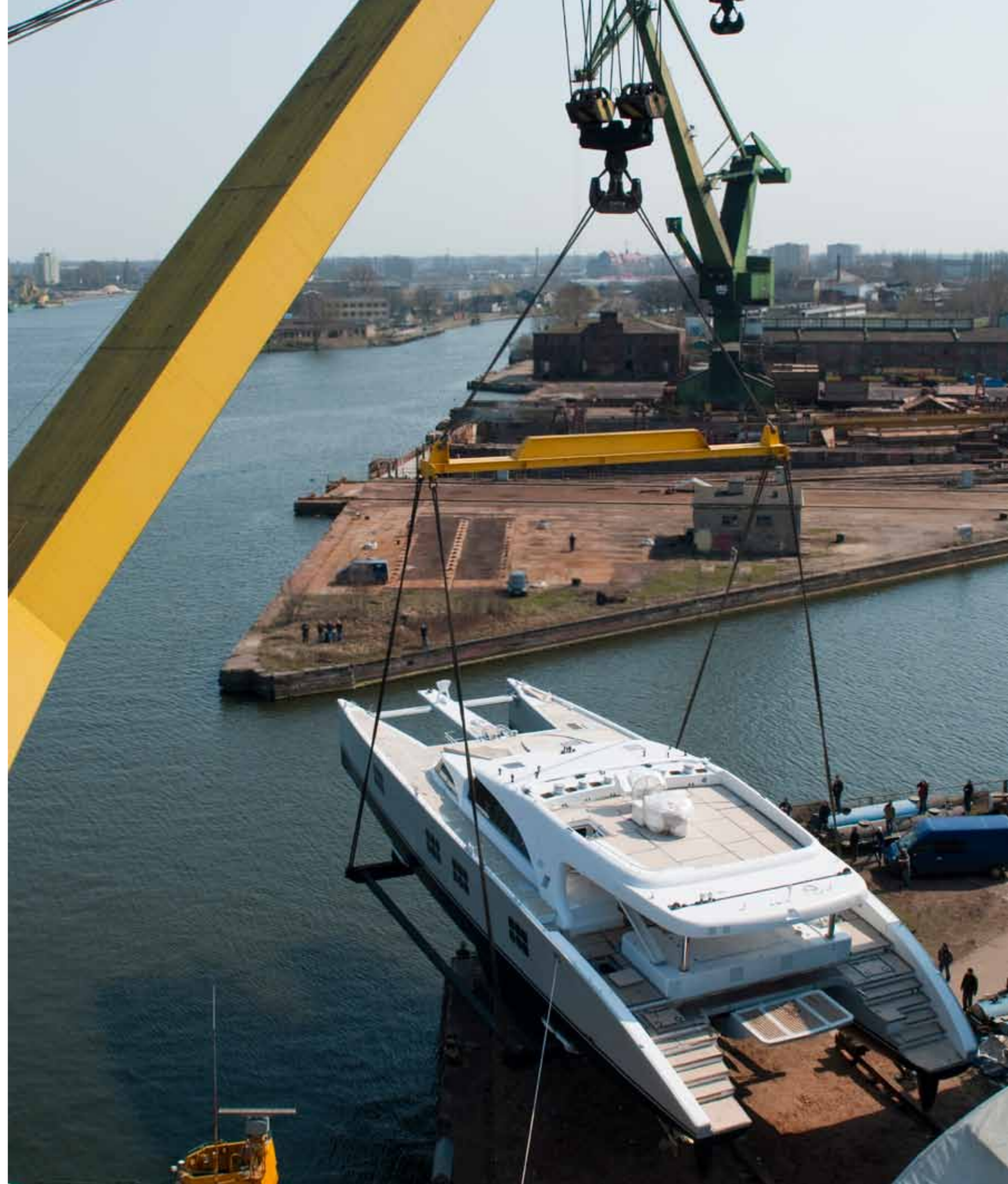
The introduction of the power range required substantial expansion of the yard. "We rented more halls," says Fran-

**Sunreef launches around two new models per year and ensures that each one is an innovation in her class**

cis, significantly understating the development of new molds for a totally new hull design, the hiring of additional staff for new production lines and design offices, and a multitude of other elements that go into the development of not just one, but four, totally new yacht models. The design was a sound one, within months a contract was signed for the 70 Sunreef Power, which remains the best-selling model in the power range.

By 2010, Sunreef Yachts were dominating the luxury catamaran market, in both the power and sailing niches, but Francis and his team wanted to make their mark in that most prestigious of yacht building markets... superyachts. In the same year Sunreef launched the Sunreef 102 Double Deck, a yacht with exterior styling that loudly proclaimed this yard's intentions in the superyacht market. "At the time of her launch, Iphara was the largest sloop-rigged catamaran in the world and the world's first double deck sailing catamaran," says Jeanne Bertai, Sunreef's Exterior Stylist. According to Robert BlaDejak, Sunreef's Concept Designer, it is the immense use of outdoor space that makes the 102' so popular. "Passengers have a choice of staying in the shade in the 50sqm cockpit or they can sunbath on the 50sqm flybridge and bow nets."

Iphara was followed by the launch of Che, a 114' sailing catamaran that is currently the largest sloop-rigged catamaran in the world. Both these yachts were launched as part of Sunreef's 'Custom Range', while their semi-custom sail and power ranges offer yachts up to 85'. "We believe that in the future more superyachts will be catamarans," says Francis, which explains why Sunreef took the decision in 2012 to dramatically expand the Custom



## I Shipyard



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Range with the addition of a 40m and 45m Power. “Our ambition is to launch the world’s largest catamaran.” The first 45m Power will be just that, eclipsing the current titleholder, the 44.2m Hemisphere. Sunreef have their bases covered in the custom sailing range as well, with the 170’ Sunreef Ultimate on the drawing boards.

It is for these reasons that Sunreef Yachts no longer sees itself as competing in the catamaran market alone. “In Cannes, we were visited by many current owners in the monohull market,” Francis told Yachts magazine, referring to the 2012 Cannes boat show, at which Sunreef presented the 60’ and 70’ Sunreef Power yachts and their 70’ and 82’ sailing catamarans. “Our 45m flagship gives us the ability to compete across the board,” says Francis. “We’ve received serious inquiries from clients and are hoping to sign the first contract this year. It would be our breakthrough model and would open a new dimension in the design of a superyacht catamaran.” According to Francis, Sunreef is now eyeing the Middle East, Russia, China and the rest of Asia for future expansion in sales. “At the moment we are launching ten to twelve yachts per year, but in the next five to ten years we’d like to see this increase to up to 20.” No more than 20, we ask?



### Catamaran vs monohull

- More stability
- Greater living space
- Less noise underway
- Lower draft (ability to cruise shallow waters)
- 50% less fuel consumption for Power range

Francis smiles. “Again, quality over quantity, for the same reason we only release up to two new models each year.” In passing, as our interview comes to an end, Francis mentions that Sunreef is hoping to take three to four superyacht orders per year within the next five to seven years. It appears that Sunreef has lost none of its ambition since 2002 and remains founded on a solid brand image thanks to stringent quality controls and the development of innovative, easily recognisable catamarans. Also, by locating the design office and construction halls under one roof, the yard is able to enhance efficiency and quick decision making when a new model is being drawn up. Lastly, by ensuring their yachts meet the most demanding certification from MCA, Bureau Veritas or Lloyds Registry, Sunreef Yachts is able to compete alongside other major monohull superyacht builders - they’re no longer just a niche catamaran yard. Fans of the yard’s semi-custom series need not worry about being left behind though, according to Ewa, Francis Lapp has no intention of neglecting the production of smaller yachts. “The Sunreef shipyard is his dream and every single yacht launch is a powerful moment for him.”

[www.sunreef-yachts.com](http://www.sunreef-yachts.com)