



PRESS RELEASE

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Africa's emergence as a serious player in the global yachting industry has been reinforced with the announcement of two high-profile speakers at the African Boating Conference.

The African Boating Conference (ABC), taking place on 20–21 October in Cape Town, has further strengthened its international standing with the confirmation of two influential industry figures: Erwin Bamps, CEO of Gulf Craft, and Paris Baloumis, Director of Strategic Alliances at Oceanco.

Their participation underscores the growing global relevance of Africa's marine sector and reinforces ABC's role as a key platform for industry collaboration, investment, and strategic dialogue.

Connecting Africa with the Middle East

The inclusion of Gulf Craft brings a powerful Middle Eastern dimension to the conference. As one of the key players in the global leisure marine industry, the company has built a strong reputation in emerging and high-growth markets.

Erwin Bamps' participation signals increasing alignment between Africa and the Gulf region, particularly as yacht owners and operators seek new cruising destinations. For Africa, this presents a clear opportunity to position itself as a natural extension of Middle Eastern itineraries—supported by investment in marina infrastructure, service capability, and destination development.

Sharing his perspective on the opportunity, Bamps said:



“As the global yachting landscape evolves, we are seeing increasing interest in exploring new cruising destinations. Africa presents a compelling opportunity, combining natural appeal with steadily advancing infrastructure. Platforms such as the African Boating Conference are key to aligning industry stakeholders, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting the development required to position the continent within the international yachting ecosystem.”

From South African Roots to Global Influence

The presence of Oceanco brings a powerful homegrown success story with true global reach. With roots in South Africa, the company has evolved into one of the world's most respected builders of large, custom yachts, setting benchmarks in innovation and human centric ambition.

Paris Baloumis, Director of Strategic Alliances, will offer a perspective on Oceanco's evolution, its collaborative approach to innovation and its role in shaping a meaningful community around its brand. His insights are particularly relevant as Africa looks to unlock the full potential of its blue economy.

Oceanco's journey stands as a clear demonstration of what is possible, showcasing how businesses without long standing heritage can grow with credibility, scale with purpose and establish themselves on the global stage.

Reflecting on this connection between heritage and future opportunity, Baloumis said:



“Oceanco’s story is, and always has been, about people. From its roots in South African craftsmanship to who we are today, that foundation continues to shape everything we do, driven by a clear pursuit of innovation through collaborations. The African Boating Conference is an opportunity to share perspectives across regions and contribute to a more connected and forward-looking global yachting industry. “

Together, these speakers represent complementary pillars of the superyacht ecosystem. Their combined presence offers delegates a rare, full-spectrum view of the industry's value chain and the opportunities emerging across it.

Maryanne Edwards, who has previously worked closely with both speakers commented: “Having engaged with both Erwin and Paris at industry events in the past, I can confidently say they are consummate professionals—highly engaging, insightful, and consistently valuable contributors. Their involvement adds real substance to the African Boating Conference and will undoubtedly elevate the quality of discussion.”

With momentum continuing to build, the African Boating Conference is rapidly establishing itself as a must-attend event for stakeholders invested in the future of boating and marina development across the continent.

By attracting globally respected leaders alongside African innovators, ABC is creating a platform where meaningful connections are made, ideas are exchanged, and tangible opportunities are unlocked.

About the African Boating Conference

The African Boating Conference, to be held in Cape Town 20-21 October 2026, brings together global industry leaders, investors, and regional stakeholders to explore opportunities in marina development and the broader blue economy across Africa.

As momentum continues to build, ABC is rapidly establishing itself as a must-attend event for those invested in the future of boating on the continent—creating a platform where meaningful connections are made, ideas are exchanged, and tangible opportunities are unlocked.

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