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the crew

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REPORT



Azzura Marine Newcastle

As superyachts venture more frequently into the Pacific and Australasia local businesses have grown to support them, including various refit service providers. Newcastle is en route to popular cruising destinations of the Gold Coast, Whitsundays and the Great Barrier Reef from the culturally rich city of Sydney. Established yacht builder and relative newcomer to the refit game, Azzura Marine's facility in Newcastle is capitalising on the city's location and climate to provide a convenient service.

The yard

The 49,000-m² refit facilities can accommodate both motor and sail yachts of up to 120m, with a 900-T Syncrolift and a 120m x 40m main construction hall incorporating 16m of clear working height. There is a temperature- and air-controlled shed available for use, although according to Azzura Marine the Newcastle climate is perfect for refit painting; moderate year-round weather prevents extremes of temperature or humidity. In terms of practical refit work, a six-bay workshop can accommodate many requirements and there are dedicated areas for fibreglass storage, cutting rooms, a resin tank, a mixing room and a spray booth. There is also immediate deep-water access of seven metres' depth and wharf space to accommodate yachts alongside of up to 120m.

According to Azzura Marine, the yard understands the importance of working within budget and timescale on refit projects, and is aware that professional advice, guidance and service is paramount. Health and safety practices are high on the agenda – there are full site inductions for all visiting crew and monthly audits, including contractors, to ensure the yard is a safe place for crew to work in.

The staff support from Azzura Marine includes a number of highly qualified and experienced ex-yacht crew, who can direct the refitting crews to the most relevant suppliers in the area, not to mention the local shopping districts, nightlife, beaches and restaurants for any downtime activities. In terms of crew accommodation, the yard provides a sourcing service and most properties are located just minutes from the yard, city centre and beaches. Captain Richard Le Quesne of 52-m ketch *Squall* was in the yard for just over two months in late 2008. He commented that the crew "were able to rent nice crew houses close to the shipyard and the centre of Newcastle [was] a short taxi ride away". Every fortnight the yard provides a barbecue for all yard employees and yacht crew to unwind and get to know each other.

What is there to do nearby?

Newcastle is the second oldest city in Australia after Sydney. Once famed for its coal industry it is now better known for a vibrant art and music community, regularly welcoming large overseas acts and hosting festivals in the summer months. If you are sporty there are two gyms just five minutes from Azzura Marine and Newcastle is renowned as one of the best surfing and kitesurfing locations in Australia. For the nature enthusiasts, world heritage area Barrington Tops offers a range of outdoor adventure in varied terrains from subtropical rainforest to alpine mountain peaks; in addition, Newcastle is a major whale sightseeing region for several species of cetacean. The region is arguably most famed for the Hunter Valley vineyards, so there is plenty of diversion for the wine buffs onboard as well.

In terms of getting to and from Newcastle, a domestic airport that services Australia-wide is located 20 minutes from the yard. For Sydney, there is a direct three-hour rail service or the seaplane service (located adjacent to the yard) takes just 30 minutes. The Gold Coast in Queensland is 90 minutes' flight away.

For more information contact Martine Ballantyne at mballantyne@azzuramarine.com or visit www.azzuramarine.com.

Aerial view of Azzura Marine



Refit work underway



The Hunter Valley vineyards



The Newcastle coastline

