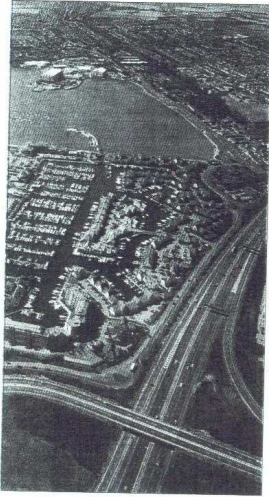


# 'Marinas make leisure boating a lot easier'

Is the Indian coastline ready for a slew of marinas constructed on par with international standards? Shakeel Kudrolli, founder and director, Aquasail, tells Venetia D'Souza that it's only a matter of time



Port Solent Marina, UK, has been constructed by Walcon Marine Ltd

### What developments in the leisure boating segment have boosted the need for marinas?

Today people have greater disposable income than four years ago. Cars and aircraft have been bought on a fractional basis and now they are buying yachts, which is a natural transition in the luxury market. Luxury boating is only a small part of the leisure boating segment, which includes activities like kite surfing, wind surfing, cruising etc. Also, the reasons for buying boats vary. There are some who are willing to spend Rs 6 to 10 crore on a yacht on which they can cruise with family. Then there are others who use it to travel to their farmhouse across the harbour on a regular basis. Those boats are more cost-effective and are available for Rs 1 lakh.

### What are some of the key functions of a marina?

Marinas provide a set of services that make leisure boating a lot easier. Irrespective of the boat size, it's a place where they can park safely. These berths also provide basic services like fuelling, battery-charging and filling water. It saves the owner the trouble of crossing the harbour, hiring a crane and transporting the boat to a workstation for servicing. During the monsoon, it's difficult to keep a boat in a single spot for an entire day without a breakwater. Here's where the shelter of a marina is useful. An area can also be set aside for distributors to display boats and pay service tax once they are sold. Across the world, marina development is a profitable business.

### What are some of the factors that hinder the development of marinas on the Indian coastline?

People are determined to build a marina at the Gateway of India. But we need to test the feasibility of the area. A marina must have two and half meters of water at low tide to accommodate a yacht's keel. After receiving all necessary permission from the Port Trust of India, carrying out soil testing, environmental impact study and wave study, you need to



A marina created for the Southampton International Boat Show, UK

### How long has Aquasail been in partnership with Walcon Marine? Which are some of Walcon's noteworthy projects?

Walcon's chairman Bobby Walters has been interacting with us for over three years. It's only this year that we started working on projects with the British award winner. Walcon is the big daddy of design, construction and installation of marinas, yacht harbours and boating facilities. The company has bagged the London Olympics 2012 marina project. They are building marinas for the Southampton and the London boat show. The challenge at these shows lies in creating a 500-boat ma-



The Western coastline has untouched areas like Jaigarh and Ramagiri that are perfect for marina construction

SHAKEEL KUDROLLI  
 FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, AQUASAIL

### What prospects does the really segment hold for marina developers?

There are some who use marinas as a real estate project and build hotels around them. This format may serve luxury cruising, but does not suit leisure boating as the investment is too high. Then there are yacht harbours, where a person traps the value of the Rs 10 to 50 lakh that he pays for a single berth. You can have sailing schools, charter boating companies, fractional boating companies making use of the harbour.

### You have done research across the Indian coastline. Which are some of the areas that are ideal for marina construction?

We are bidding for a marina on the Baga Island, Kochi, which will house 90 boats. We have also tied up with the Chowgule group, known for their sailing background, to promote the development of marinas. In fact, the Chowgules now have a company known as Goa Yacht Haven, created to develop marinas. They have invested in a 400-boat yacht harbour in Goa, and we are involved in its design. Umaji Chowgule, one of the directors and I have travelled to the Southampton boat show and observed the marina construction. The Western coastline has untouched areas like Jaigarh and Ramagiri, which are perfect for marina construction.

### Any dream projects in the pipeline over the next four years?

Over the next few years, we hope to have four or five marinas along the Western coast. This will help people experience leisure boating. They can travel around the coast in comfort and develop an interactive community.