



SILENT RESORTS TAKES FIRST STEPS

Building on the solar technology developed for Silent-Yachts catamarans, Silent Resorts is launching its first yacht-and-villa retreat in the Caribbean, while Asia is in the plans as the new company looks to grow a global network of exclusive, eco-friendly holiday destinations.

WORDS **NICK HUNG** PHOTOS **SILENT RESORTS**



Silent Resorts developments feature beachfront villas, common facilities like a clubhouse, pool and spa, a docking system and Silent-Yachts solar-electric catamarans

As the world leader in solar-electric luxury catamarans, Silent-Yachts has displayed a particularly global vision. The brand's Silent 55 is built in China. Its new Silent 60 is being built in Thailand. And several units of its future flagship 80 are under construction in Italy, where more 60s are being built to cope with demand for what's already the brand's best-selling model.

Yet before hull one of either the 60 or 80 have touched water, Austrian Michael Kohler, the company's founder and CEO, has joined forces with American architect Victor Barrett to create Silent Resorts. Their mission? To develop solar-powered beachfront resorts featuring Silent catamarans as floating villas.

Designed to be sustainable, eco-friendly and built with a 'light touch', these resorts are more than just a cute concept. They're happening, starting in the Bahamas with the 30-acre Silent Island located in the district of North Eleuthera, which has its own airport and is a 55-minute flight east of Miami.

Barrett, CEO of Silent Resorts, says Silent Island will accommodate eight catamarans at sea and 16 villas on land, with the first few units scheduled to be ready by late 2021. The forward-thinking property will include a clubhouse, spa, pool and water toys, all eco-friendly as per the company's tagline: 'Live Fully, Tread Lightly, Stay Silently'.

Silent-Yachts' luxurious 60 and 80 catamarans, measuring 18m and 24m respectively, each have four guest cabins with ensuite bathrooms, a large saloon, dining area and galley, as well as outdoor

social areas in the aft cockpit and on the foredeck and flybridge. At any time, guests staying on the catamarans are free to set off on a cruise and start exploring the surrounding region, whether for a few hours, few days or few weeks.

Along with its catamarans, Silent-Yachts is supplying the solar-electric technology that will power the villas, communal facilities and infrastructure for a fully integrated, carbon-free property.

"You can start your vacation on the yacht and finish in a villa, if you want, or the other way around," Barrett says. "The power systems on the villas and yachts are matched, so they can balance themselves. When a yacht pulls up to the resort, they can plug in for power or transfer excess power to the island. It's a very symbiotic and balanced system."

In fact, the designs of the catamarans have even influenced the new villa concepts, according to Barrett.

"We're designing the one-storey villas to mirror the catamaran layout, with suites on either side of a big, open living room and kitchen in the middle. You can also have a staircase to the sunset deck or 'flybridge' on top, very similar to the way the catamarans are laid out," he says.

MEETING OF MINDS

Like Kohler, Barrett has a very global outlook and his recent bases have included landlocked Austria and the African island nation of Mauritius, where he founded his company TrueDesign.

The globetrotting American has worked on projects in North



Michael Kohler (left), founder and CEO of Silent-Yachts and co-founder of Silent Resorts; Victor Barrett (middle), co-founder and CEO of Silent Resorts; 'Silent Island' (right) in the Bahamas

and Central America, the Caribbean, Middle East, Africa and Asia, including in Indonesia and China, where he spent two years as a Senior Architectural Designer for Atkins a decade ago.

Having helped develop high-end resorts for the likes of Six Senses, Como and Aman, he was recently working for the TradeWinds yacht charter company, building a beach club in the southern Caribbean until Covid-19 halted its development early this year.

It was then he returned to Austria and pitched his idea for Silent Resorts to Kohler, having become aware of Silent-Yachts while the pioneering yacht builder was exhibiting at a boat show in Miami.

"I was thinking of better ways to build resorts on islands," Barrett said. "That's when I called Michael and proposed we use his yachts as villas for these beautiful, remote locations, so we don't really damage the islands."

Kohler was receptive to the concept, having previously approached multiple luxury resorts with the idea of buying Silent catamarans to use as an added attraction for guests and extra rooms when required.

"When Victor told me more about his idea, I was very happy because it was a better version of what we were previously trying to do with resorts," Kohler said. "This time, it's not working with an existing facility that has already had a negative environmental impact on the island, as you see so often."

Silent Resorts offers a flexible build solution that includes pre-engineered villas and other structures, while even the villa pools are modular, made in Canada. Land-based infrastructure, such as

water purification, wastewater processing and solar-power systems, is containerised.

The villas at the first resort in the Caribbean will be built from sustainable hardwood and prepared in Belize – another country Barrett has worked in – while there will also be components from Indonesia for interiors and furniture.

The floating docking system is also modular, while the Silent catamarans can be shipped in or make their own way, depending on where they're coming from, before serving as sustainable floating villas.

"With Silent Resorts, we have a green approach from the start," Kohler says. "All the components of one villa are in one container. We put it together and there's no waste material, nothing to contaminate the island or bay. We can take it away at any time, which is what we mean when we describe the resorts as 'reversible'."

"It's a much more flexible system, with almost no negative impact on the environment. Whatever we bring, we can remove. Victor's idea was very, very smart and is a perfect match for our Silent catamarans."

GLOBAL MEMBERSHIP

Silent Resorts is based on a membership model, so each member has access to the resort and future sister facilities for six weeks a year, and is effectively a part-owner of the property, including the catamarans.

Joining fees will range from about US\$300,000 to US\$500,000,

Silent Resorts uses the same solar-electric technology used by Silent-Yachts, with catamarans and villas drawing from the power grid and also contributing to it





Starting in the Caribbean, Silent Resorts is looking to grow its network of beachfront yacht-and-villa resorts across the globe, including in Asia

with annual fees on top, although Barrett says they will be minimal compared to other properties due to the low-maintenance nature of both the resort and the catamarans.

“A member can say, I’m coming for 10 days and I want to spend five days in the villa and five on a yacht. That yacht can move around, stay in a cove overnight, go where you want in the region,” he says.

“From Silent Island, there are thousands of islands nearby like the Exumas and you can choose your itinerary each day. The guest experience at Silent Resorts will be unique.”

Conceived during the Covid-19 era, the Silent Resorts model also fits with what Barrett believes will be a growing emphasis on quality, experience and duration for luxury travel.

“We believe people will take fewer vacations, but that holidays will be longer and of a higher quality. It won’t be unusual for people to travel for two or three weeks,” he says.

“Due to Covid, I think the growth areas in luxury tourism are going to be yachts, private islands, private villas and private aircraft, rather than the traditional hotels and resorts.”

Along with getting the first resort up and running by next year, Silent Resorts is also looking to build its network across the globe and is scouting for suitable sites at idyllic beachfront and island locations. The company states that a turnkey resort can be operational in 18 months or less in any location worldwide.

“The plan is to have five more resorts around the globe within five years and when you become a member of one location, you can use any of the locations,” Barrett says.

“For the Bahamas resort, the US is an obvious target market for members, but we’re getting interest from all over the world. Europe is the next big market for such members, so we’re also looking for a site in the Mediterranean and maybe the Middle East.

“We then want to circumnavigate the globe, so we’re considering Asia – especially Indonesia – as well as Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and the South Pacific.”

Only a few years ago, Silent-Yachts’ proposition of 100 per cent solar-powered catamarans seemed admirable but ambitious, too niche to sustain mass production. However, the company’s huge increase in sales over the past year or so have shown that such technology is becoming increasingly sought after by conscientious owners.

Barrett is similarly confident that Silent Resorts will lead the way in sustainable beachfront destinations and says the initial feedback has been encouraging.

“The appeal of 100 per cent solar-powered, green resorts in beautiful destinations, responsibly developed and managed, connecting the worlds of luxury yachting and luxury villas, is very powerful,” he says.

“And in terms of what we’re doing, there’s zero competition. We’re the first.” ☼



As well as a place for catamarans to berth, the docking system has the potential to provide on-water facilities

www.silent-resorts.com
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