

# Partnerships

## Boat Building Brothers



In less than 10 years Yacht Solutions, run by Twist brothers Gareth and Simon, have transformed their business from a yacht delivery and refit company, to a superyacht builder with offices in Phuket and Bangkok. Not content with developing their own business, their aim is for Thailand to become a major player in the global superyacht industry.

When and where did you meet?

**Gareth:** He came into the world a few years after me and joined the family. So, our house in Formby, Liverpool, in 1974 would be about right.

**Simon:** I would like to say in a hospital in England in 1974, but from what I have just heard he couldn't be bother visit, cheers.

Why did you decide to start in business together?

**Gareth:** Our father said we would work well together. We had 'ying and yang' qualities and he believed we would complement each other.

**Simon:** I was working on a boat in the Caribbean when I was informed by my girlfriend at the time that I was no longer allowed to work on boats and had to settle down, get a house and a 'real' job. Gareth was so enthusiastic about the emerging marine business in Thailand, so of course I said yes when he asked if I would come and join him. Life on an island working with boats is a great compromise, so Phuket became my new home.

How did it start and why Thailand?

**Gareth:** I came to Thailand as a dive instructor in '94 and loved Phuket but after a year I went back to the UK to follow my diving career. While back home I got my captain's ticket and got increasingly interested in the yacht industry. I returned to Phuket to work as a sailing instructor and charter captain. After a break from work, traveling, I was asked to deliver a yacht from the Maldives to Langkawi. This led onto other deliveries and me basing myself back in Phuket. One such job brought me from Hong Kong back to Phuket, with the client requiring management services once there. From this, Yacht Solutions was formed. I saw a gap in the market for professional shore-side support services, so I set up Yacht Solutions in 2001. The company direction has evolved continuously from then on, with the focus and strength growing when Simon joined me a few years later.

What role do you have in the business?

**Gareth:** My key focus is bringing the business in and heading up the Phuket operation. I also want to focus more on representing Thailand's superyacht industry in the global superyacht forum - the more we can develop Thailand's reputation the better.

**Simon:** I am the pragmatist, with the often mundane role of working out how best to achieve the goals and ideas of my more free-thinking partner. I often consider having a degree specialising in small business management bad luck as my role has automatically become running the business day to day and implementing the necessary systems and standard operating procedures required to achieve the end results. I am certain that my brother plays on this, as he has made little progress in these fields since I joined him over five years ago. As the sizes of our projects have grown I have increasingly concentrated on the important aspect of scheduling and budgeting.

In what ways is your company different?

**Gareth:** We are quite unique. Superyacht refit, conversion and new construction is a very niche market and we are pioneering it here in Thailand. We have a 'no compromise' attitude and force quality to thrive.

**Simon:** The large yacht industry is relatively new in Asia and so, if anything, we are competing primarily with Europe and North America. Our biggest challenge is to encourage large yacht owners and crew to come to Asia first, and then we need to encourage them to come to Thailand, and then when they are here to use our company services. As we continue to successfully service an increasing number of large yachts our marketing efforts will focus on promoting our business of building superyachts, but at this early stage in the industry it is the region that primarily requires promotion.

What passions do you share?

**Simon:** I would like to say golf, wakeboarding and other sports but he had kids and that put paid to that. Nowadays our passions are in line with our desire to develop our business.

**Gareth:** Superyachts, building superyachts and fast cars.

How do you differ?

**Simon:** Apart from the obvious age and good looks, it will undoubtedly be our different way of thinking. As I mentioned earlier I am a lot more pragmatic. I am the realist. That's not to say I don't dream, obviously I do. But in mind that's exactly what they are, dreams. Gareth, on the other hand, has a completely different perspective

on this: 'we can do that' often follows some 'crazy idea' that in my mind is unachievable, it has to be said he continuously proves me wrong. His attitude is very much the sky's the limit.

**Gareth:** I enjoy meeting people, discussing what our company does and bringing their business in. Simon is good at making it all happen - not always a simple task!

How does being brothers help or hinder your working relationship?

**Gareth:** Help: Trust - complete and utter. Ability to speak completely frankly. Nothing is held back. Hindrance: To be honest, I can't think of anything.

What do you admire most about your business partner?

**Gareth:** I admire my brother's analytical mind and his systematic approach to work. Because of his attention to detail, he achieves the results and this enables me to sell our services with complete confidence and belief in the service and product we offer our clients.

**Simon:** His belief that anything can be achieved and his parenting skills - he is an amazing dad.

What irritates you the most about him?

**Gareth:** Moods.

**Simon:** His belief that anything can be achieved and his strange inability to even use the basic functions of Excel and Power Point.

What does the future hold for your business?

**Gareth and Simon:** Building Super Yachts.

**Gareth:** Our company goal is to work with reputable suppliers to create a portfolio of superyachts in the range of 50 - 60 metres. We will offer Lloyds classification and MCA coding. Working with professional, well known designers and architects, we are putting together a project for the Asian market. We will be able to offer the quality of some of the best yards with excellent value for money. This project will be launched early 2010.

**Simon:** Thailand has an excellent skills set in this field. The facilities are here, and with a small amount of investment, a quality yacht building facility could be constructed. We will work hard to develop Thailand's profile within the yacht industry as this of paramount importance and we hope other companies and agencies will work alongside us. Yacht Solutions will naturally reap some of the rewards as the industry develops in the kingdom, but I believe that to be fair for the effort we continue to put into developing the large yacht industry here in Thailand.



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