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Unchartered waters: Phuket's superyacht playground

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With movie-worthy cruising grounds, sunny winter days and a thriving party scene, Phuket is the perfect playground for superyachts. Sophia Wilson discovers why the island is prepped for a charter boom

Another champion of Phuket's superyacht credentials is Richard Pope CEO of Infinite Luxury and host of the annual [Kata Rocks Superyacht Rendezvous](#). Pope's mantra is to encourage superyachts to "turn left" instead of heading to the Caribbean for the winter season. The plan seems to be working with an increased fleet attending this year's rendezvous, including 68 metre Feadship [Lady Christine](#), 50.9 metre [Northern Sun](#) and 52 metre phinisi schooner [Zen](#).



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At Pope's ultra modern Kata Rocks Resort we are treated to a three-day showcase of what Phuket has to offer. Combining a mixture of relaxed cruising, yacht hops and two fabulous parties – with firework displays lighting up the bay, gold painted waiters brandishing bottles of champagne and DJs playing on a stage in the infinity pool – it demonstrates both sides of life on offer in Phuket.

"What we really need to do is build this event and build Asia," Pope says. "It is very much about securing charters. What this event does is give yachts exposure to hopefully get some charters. If they believe they are going to get charters they are more likely to come this way."

One of the biggest draws for potential charter guests is the beautiful cruising areas surrounding Phuket, including the Similan Islands, Phi Phi islands and Phang Nga Bay. While the armada of tourist boats can seem off-putting, for those in the know there are still plenty of spots of solitude to be discovered. "When you are on a boat you can avoid the so-called tourist destinations but you need a captain with local knowledge," says Sol. "The further you get away from Phuket, the more peace and quiet you get. I have just heard from the captain of [Lady Azul](#), who is with guests in Ko Lipe. There is no one there and they are loving it."