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Contact: Isla McKechnie  
[isla@albatrosspr.com](mailto:isla@albatrosspr.com)

## World's biggest catamaran visits Whitsunday marina

*The world's largest catamaran fits perfectly at a Queensland marina, which has been dredged and upgraded to provide superyacht facilities in the heart of the Whitsundays and Great Barrier Reef.*

The world's largest luxury catamaran, S/Y *HEMISPHERE* has found a fitting base this week in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef.

The 44-metre catamaran, with 16.6metre beam has been easily accommodated within Airlie Beach's Abell Point Marina, of the region which is attracting growing numbers of superyachts.

Abell Point Marina is currently undergoing a recent dredging programme under the direction of new owner, Paul Darrouzet, ensuring the marina is able to accommodate larger superyachts. The move comes as part of a focused drive by the marina to increase the facilities available to superyachts.

"Everyone at Abell Point has gone out of their way to make sure our stay went smoothly," says *Hemisphere* Captain, Gavin Bladen.

"Abell Point is a great facility for yachts to prepare for trips out into the Whitsundays, or take a little down time for the crew. The marina facilities have undergone a major revamp since their humble beginnings and now tick all the boxes a superyacht looks for when deciding where to berth."

The \$50million+ yacht, which charters for a minimum of US\$260,000 per week, is available for charter through leading brokerage house, Burgess; which is excited about the opportunity to present the region to guests.

"*HEMISPHERE* was specifically conceived and designed for extensive worldwide cruising. Her owners and crew are passionate about discovering the lesser frequented cruising grounds of the world and for the last couple of years the yacht has extensively explored the South Pacific and New Zealand," says Alev Karagulle, Burgess director of marketing and communication.

“Cruising the amazing waters of the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsundays will be a huge highlight for *HEMISPHERE* which is absolutely the ideal yacht for experiencing this unique and pristine natural environment. It’s undoubtedly a ‘Bucket List’ destination, which the owners and crew have been looking forward to discovering ever since they embarked upon their voyage around the world,” continues Karagulle.

The team behind Abell Point has also been heavily involved, working with national legislators to increase superyacht access to the Great Barrier Reef region. Led by Darrouzet, they’ve worked as part of an action group with Superyacht Australia, lobbying Australian government to ease access to the nation for foreign-flagged charter yachts. The team is also working with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to ease restrictions for larger yachts wishing to access the Whitsunday Islands region, which is renowned for its world-class cruising.

“Since the upgrade of the marina under new ownership, we have experienced a huge increase in Australian and international superyachts ranging from 35-50m visiting the marina. The marina is on the doorstep to the Whitsunday Islands, the facilities and services are of a high standard and it is located conveniently in the vibrant coastal town of Airlie Beach,” says Luke McCaul, Abell Point Marina marketing and business development manager.

“To a small town like Airlie Beach, the flow-on effect of a visiting superyacht has astronomical benefits. On average we may see \$50 - \$60,000 AUD being spent weekly in the local economy which flows on to shopping centres, butchers, flower huts, restaurants, clubs and more. We would love to see this benefit grow and, by continuously improving the experience for superyachts, our goal is to be the base of choice to experience the Whitsunday Islands and Great Barrier Reef.”

Abell Point Marina has undergone a comprehensive development to provide every service needed for superyachts in the Great Barrier Reef. Berths stretch to 70-metres, with onsite concierge services, including a dedicated helicopter for transfers, highly-trained team, provisioners, crew services and other amenities all on site.

The Whitsundays are home to the iconic Whitehaven Beach, Heart Reef, world-class resorts Hamilton and Hayman Islands, and has a private jet terminal and local airports which connects to international flights in Brisbane to the south and Cairns to the north. The region holds exceptional appeal to yacht; something Captain Bladen reinforces.

“The Whitsundays is Australia’s premier charter ground and offers everything a superyacht needs to keep her guests entertained. From tropical islands, pristine beaches, beautiful and protected anchorages, and shore-based activities like scenic flights, spas, access to fantastic diving out in the Coral Sea, and Great Barrier Reef and the world-renowned SS *Yongala* wreck which lies just off Townsville, along with great sport fishing opportunities,” says Bladen.

The Abell Point team works closely with Cairns Marlin Marina which sits at the head of the reef, to ensure superyachts have inclusive services throughout their time along the Great Barrier Reef.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

For image and interview requests or further media information please contact Isla McKechnie of Albatross PR, [isla@albatrosspr.com](mailto:isla@albatrosspr.com). +64 22 406 7058