

COMMENT

■ EDITOR'S CHOICE:
RECOMMENDED READS:

COORDINATING MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING
We take a look at the recent launch of the South African International Maritime Institute on page 06.

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While I am usually the first one to jump on the bandwagon of any type of initiative aimed at exposing the general public to what goes on at sea from a commercial perspective - I have never really considered the impact that the Volvo Ocean Race has in this regard. So the race's stopover in Cape Town this year was a little bit of an eye-opener into the potential for such an event to provide a glimpse of the maritime realm.

Much of the satellite events associated with the race focus around the tourist and sporting potential of the ocean, it is true - but the nature of a life at sea was highlighted as was the sheer magnitude of the logistics associated with moving this mammoth spectacle around the globe.

It's a logistical undertaking that can only be accommodated by sea and statistics showcased to the thousands of visitors must surely have alerted them to the importance of shipping if not only to the race, but perhaps ever so slightly to global trade as well.

Visiting with the team at the Maersk hospitality centre in the race village, it was clear that their involvement with the race has alleviated the logistical headache of moving the village from stopover to stopover. According to Simone Holm, General Manager of Global Sponsorships for Maersk, two identical race villages crisscross their way to each of the stopover points to ensure that the village is set up before the yachts arrive.

Tom Touber, Chief Operating Officer of the Volvo Ocean Race joined us at the Maersk press briefing and he spoke of some laudable ambitions for the future of the event that include aiming to make the yachts "energy neutral".

Highlighting the popularity of the event and its ability to attract visitors, he reported that over 200,000 people would have visited the race village during the course of the stopover in Cape Town. That is significant exposure.

Touber also spoke about the risks that the yachtsmen would face on the leg leaving from Cape Town. Although the threat of piracy has diminished significantly since the last race, they are still cognizant of this inherent danger. He adds, however, that they were likely to meet suspicious boats that were not necessarily pirates. In some cases, he says, the yachts have been delayed by vessels asking for "gifts" and for this reason they are advised to carry goodie bags to give passing vessels.

Other dangers include unlit fishing vessels and gear which pose a navigational risk - and which require additional skills from the sailors.

On another note - thank you to our clients for their support over the last year. We look forward to working with you again in the New Year to deliver a quality magazine to our readers.

Colleen Jacka, editor

