

05/03/2003

Sean Paquito II entered for regatta

K.P. Waran

SIMPSON Marine Ltd, one of the sponsors of the Langkawi International Regatta, has entered a 128-foot schooner with a 20-member crew for the March 11-16 race.

Simpson Marine senior broker Paul Scholten said the Grand Bank schooner named Sean Paquito II will compete in the Classic category.

Built in 1996 in South Africa and purchased by Sony Movies for a Ron Howard movie filmed in Mexico (the picture was not completed), the schooner was bought by a retired Dutch aviator Marius Bog Aard who sailed it to Langkawi over the last 18 months.

Purchased for US\$745,000 (RM2.83 million), Aard currently uses it for his charter business in this region. The yacht, currently anchored off Langkawi, is already a major attraction among yachting enthusiasts who have begun to arrive from all over the world for the regatta.

Simpson Marine is sponsoring the second day of races during the Langkawi International Regatta where 65 yachts will battle for the 'Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy' over four days.

In conjunction with the regatta, Simpson Marine, which is involved in the sales of yachts, construction, management and the charter business, will be opening its third Malaysian office at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club which boasts of a 200-berth marina. The company already has offices in Port Dickson and Kota Kinabalu.

"Malaysia's excellent coastline, beautiful islands and proximity to other highly desirable cruising areas makes it a convenient hub location for cruising north or south. The Government too has acknowledged the potential of the yachting industry by offering firm support for marina development and by not levying taxes on new yachts.

"The country's round-the-year sailing weather and active programme for racing events and regattas such as the Langkawi International Regatta is another reason to foresee Malaysia's continued growth in the boating industry," said Scholten.

Scholten said he is currently involved in the restoration of a 50-foot timber sloop, built in California, but which has been in Malaysia for the past 11 years, and hopes to get it ready in time to race in the Classic category of the next Raja Muda regatta and take on the likes of Richard Curtis' Eveline and the Royal Malaysian Navy's Dondang Sayang.

He said interest in sailing in Malaysia was catching on among the local populace and foreign boat owners which augurs well for the yachting industry.

He said Simpson Marine will put on show between 10 and 12 yachts from Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, which would be available for inspection during the Brokerage Boat Show on March 9-16 at Langkawi.

Simpson Marine founder and managing director Mike Simpson said: "We believe that we should be where yachtsmen are, and in Malaysia more people will develop an interest in yachting and enjoy the use of its waters and marinas.

"We want to be there to support the yachting community, our clients and the international yachtsmen as well as be part of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's drive to make Malaysia a haven for yachting."