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**INDUSTRY**

**Thai yacht builder expands**

*The growing popularity of solar-powered catamarans driving new business*

Thailand's Bakri Cono Shipyard, which builds the Silent 60 all-solar power catamaran for Silent Yachts in Austria, announced plans to dramatically expand and rebrand as PMG Shipyard as of August 1.

Philippe Guenat, owner of Bakri Cono Shipyard, signed a deal to develop an additional 6,000 square metres of production space for a total of 20,000 square metres, due to be ready for January 2021. The shipyard will also take delivery

of a new travel lift with a span of 14 metres and height of 10 metres, the largest such travel lift in Southeast Asia.

The expansion plans are to meet growing demand for Bakri Cono's yachts. The shipyard currently has 70 staff and the plan is to reach 80 by the end of August 2020.

Bakri Cono's current board of directors includes Raphael Domjan, who led the Planet Solar expedition of circumnavigating the world in a specially

**PHILIPPE GUENAT, OWNER OF BAKRI CONO SHIPYARD, SIGNED A DEAL TO DEVELOP AN ADDITIONAL 6,000 SQUARE METRES OF PRODUCTION SPACE FOR A TOTAL OF 20,000 SQUARE METRES, DUE TO BE READY FOR JANUARY 2021**

made solar-powered catamaran. Domjan has initiated numerous expeditions using solar power. The latest is a solar-powered aircraft that can fly into the stratosphere.

Guenat confirmed by email that the main focus of the yard will be the production of solar-powered catamarans. He says that the expansion is in response to growing demand. In an interview with Asia-Pacific Boating, Silent Yachts CEO Michael Kohler said that the Covid-19 outbreak had been good for his business, saying that Silent had sold three yachts during the peak of the crisis.

Kohler said that Silent has 11 yachts on the water now, but with four yards subcontracted to Silent Yachts and moulds in build, the company will be splashing many more soon.

Bakri Cono Shipyard was founded in 2004 by Guenat, a Swiss hotelier whose family has a history of shipbuilding. Initially building small leisure boats, the yard soon expanded into commercial vessels and mid-range catamarans. Today, the yard specialises in luxury catamarans, which have been popular among Thai charterers. The range runs from 41 to 105 feet, and the yard can customise yachts to a high degree.

