



# BRAND BUY OUT

*Winfair Marine tries to rebuild a famous brand name from the shipyard up.*

**WINFAIR MARINE, ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED TO BUILD YACHTS ON AN OEM BASIS, DECIDED IN 2006 TO GET INTO THE BRAND GAME.** They did it the old fashioned way – they bought Prout, a famous but bankrupt UK brand that specialised in catamarans. In fact, Prout was more than a famous brand – in multihull circles, it is a legend, with the Prout brothers building the first cruising cats in the 1950s.

Since 2006, Winfair has pushed ahead, taking Prout's name and distribution, and moving all production to its bases in Zhuhai and Thailand. Winfair plans to turn its Thai production facility into a marketing and distribution hub, while concentrating its shipbuilding in Zhuhai. This will be a key branding point for the company as Thailand continues to develop yachting hotspots like Phuket and the Gulf of Thailand. The new factory in Zhuhai has also been used as a base to start building furniture and trimmings for the Prout brand and in this, they have been quite successful. The Thailand site already has 160,000 square feet of production space, while the Zhuhai yard sits on a one-million-square foot plot of land that clearly has room for expansion.

What is interesting about this undertaking is the extent to which Prout is being developed as a brand by Winfair, known to the Chinese as Yun Hui (the real name from which "Winfair" is a derivative). Prout was originally far better known for its sailing catamarans, mostly of the mid-range. That's about to change.

Prout International is moving ahead as a builder of sailing, power and superyacht catamarans. Further, the company is even developing megayacht power trimaran projects. Some of the designs that are being developed are truly forward-looking, and while they may not all wind up built, the ambition on display is breathtaking.

The newest Prout International megayacht project is a case-in-point. Called the Tristrike 420, this 128-metre yacht is groundbreaking; Prout International will be showcasing the concept for the first time at the Dubai International Boat Show in March, along with a new 128-foot tri-deck semi-displacement motor yacht to be built at Winfair's Zhuhai facility. Already, Winfair is building a 138-foot trimaran in Zhuhai that has been sold. Sea trials are due in November 2009. Clearly, Winfair and the Prout brand are moving ahead quickly.

## TRISTRIKE

Prout International is clearly looking for a big reboot on their image, and of the projects that have been released by Prout-Winfair, the Tristrike 480 is easily the most impressive. Intended as a long-range expedition yacht, with its foundations rooted in military design. Across her three hulls, the Tristrike's 128-metre length will be set against an enormous 27.5-metre beam. Her hulls are to be built in steel, which would mark both a departure and new horizon for Winfair. With three MTU 2,000-horsepower diesels, her top speed is estimated at 20 knots, though higher-powered engine configurations could yield speeds of 40 knots.

Her five-deck layout features an open atrium accented by a large waterfall and a grand foyer. Winfair-Prout hopes to entice either a single owner with a version suited to 18 guests, or a global charter version that accommodate up to 56 guests. Should the Tristrike come online, Winfair-Prout will be a brand name on every yacht spotter's lips.

[www.proutinternational.com](http://www.proutinternational.com)



WINFAIR MARINE