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## Art Sarasota generates extraordinary response for launch of 2011 SeaFair season

Sarasota, FL - "This is the most exciting thing to happen to Sarasota since Ringling brought the circus," commented Brad Goddard of PNC Wealth Management and a co-sponsor of the opening evening Preview Party to benefit the Sarasota Museum of Art (SMOA). "This ship is incredible." That was the consensus among the 2,700 guests attending *Art Sarasota's* Thursday opening.

"It was a wonderful experience," stated Sarasota Museum of Art Board Member, Peppi Elona. "We are happy and delighted with the exhibition and this special environment. It was exciting to have *SeaFair* come to Sarasota, and we can't wait until its return."

Those in attendance opening night included former Metropolitan Museum Curator, Joanne Olian. "It was festive and elegant. When you're aboard it's very conducive to buying because you feel like you're really away and on holiday."

Friday morning the crowds gathered early in anticipation to board the 228-foot, 3,200 ton exhibition mega-yacht that set the city abuzz when it sailed into Sarasota the previous day. "I watched the ship pull in on the news and couldn't wait to check it out. This is so exciting," said local collector Shelly Bradley.

The welcoming and enthusiastic response from local residents and community officials was overwhelming. Estelle Crawford observed, "This is so appropriate for Sarasota. We are a community that appreciates the arts as well as a whole other host of cultural aspects." Her husband Carl Crawford chimed in with a grin, "and yachts." They agreed, "It was simply spectacular."

In the days that followed, lines often four blocks long waited patiently to board the ship.

David Lester of IFAE and Expoships noted "The public response from this very culturally oriented community was overwhelming - our attendance here set new records for any SeaFair event! More than 18,000- visitors attended *Art Sarasota* this week. "

Dealers found a large collector community in Sarasota and a market for American and international art. Among the onboard exhibitions were fine art glass from the United States and Italy, paintings, sculpture, and installations.

*SeaFair's* next stop will be in Newport, RI for late June and Fourth of July visitors. The mega-yacht will then sail on to a two-part visit

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to Martha's Vineyard in July and August, before ending its *SeaFair* summer season with a return to its inaugural port in Greenwich, CT, September 15th – 19th.

Based on the success of *Art Sarasota*, *SeaFair* will adopt a similar exhibitor profile for Newport and Martha's Vineyard, featuring modern and contemporary art, jewelry, and sculpture. The ship will host American and international galleries with a majority of artwork in the \$3,000 to \$35,000 range with the occasional more expensive work.

For more information and updates on upcoming shows, we welcome you to visit *SeaFair's* website at [www.expoships.com](http://www.expoships.com) or call 239-949-5411.

To view press coverage and clippings for Art Sarasota, [click here](#).

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