

VICEM 78 CRUISER

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Mr. Rashid Al Abbar,
city builder and
proud Vicem owner.

Having built one of the world's most recognisable skylines, a fortune and an irreproachable reputation, Rashid Al Abbar is now looking forward to spending more time relaxing. Graciously inviting us aboard his new Vicem 78 Cruiser, the Chairman of the Al Abbar Group - who has glazed almost every landmark in Dubai - discussed his latest acquisition.

By **Craig Barnett** Photos **Rebecca Hobday/Alberto Cocchi**

As an agent of change, Rashid Al Abbar is one of the men responsible

for not only dramatically changing the skyline of Dubai, but also changing the parameters and expectations of city builders around the globe. Having glazed landmark projects like the Burj al Arab, Dubai International Airport, Emirates Towers and the mesmerising needle of glass that is the Burj Khalifa, on the day we visited the Al Abbar Group Chairman's new yacht, the company was celebrating the delivery of a significant airport project... three months early! "The family business has been established 28-years now," he tells us, "and we have a reputation in the aluminium and glazing sector for always delivering on, or before, the specified deadline. We've expanded into Oman, India, Saudi Arabia and the Philippines; so after 28-years of dedication to the family business, I'm now fortunately in a position to relax a little more, enjoy some leisure time. Hence I looked for a really comfortable yacht." That Mr Al Abbar elects to spend his leisure time on the water, is typical of the close affinity Emiratis have with the sea. "For us the sea is like part of the family," he smiles as he gazes at the ocean from the flybridge. "My father



The profusion of joinery makes for a very tactile craft.

Owner's perspective

was a captain for many years, and we spend far more time in and around the sea than the desert or mountains. Every weekend we try to spend our time on the water." Being a game-changer and figurehead of an international business group, when Mr Al Abbar decided to upgrade his previous 65-ft Turkish built yacht, it comes as no surprise that he didn't follow the herd and opt for the ubiquitous white fibreglass sports yacht that proliferates in the UAE's marinas. Instead, demonstrating discerning taste and an appreciation for fine craftsmanship, he purchased the Vicem 78 Cruiser; a stately gentleman's cruiser that takes styling cues from the famous lobster boats of Maine, USA. "I fell in love with this yacht the moment I saw it," Mr Al Abbar confides. "It is different from what we are used to in the UAE, but sometimes you simply have to introduce something new to this part of the world." Having discovered the Vicem shipyard through reading about them in various yachting magazines, Mr Al Abbar contacted the yard and arranged to view some of their yachts. "From the moment I met the guys from Vicem and saw their craft, I knew they were a quality shipyard that produce class yachts. I was actually in the USA to view another Vicem, but when I saw this 78 Cruiser I instantly knew it was the one for me. It is well laid out, extremely comfortable, she is light inside and offers great views from everywhere, and the quality of craftsmanship truly is first class. Every inch of the yacht is well used and the fact she

is hand-built really appeals. This first impression of her being a superb yacht was born out during our maiden cruise, she was very comfortable at sea. Even in strong winds and seas up to seven feet high she felt rock solid." Having shipped the 78 Cruiser from Florida to Antalya, Turkey where Vicem have their yard, the new owner and his skipper were provided with a unique opportunity to 'shakedown' the yacht - a three week cruise around the Turkish coast which Mr. Al Abbar describes as 'a most wonderful time'. Flying in different family members to share the experience, the new owner and his guests enjoyed exploring Turkey's coast, while the skipper familiarised himself with the yacht and noted tweaks and adjustments that needed to be made. When the cruise concluded, the yacht returned to the shipyard to rectify minor issues and the conversion of the electrical system to 220V (as used in the UAE). "The salon, with fantastic panoramic views through the windows, and the well organised space in the main cabin are the two highlights of the yacht for me," Mr Al Abbar tells us as he shows us around. "The quality of finish and fittings in the en-suites tell their own story too. But overall I think it is the 'tactile' feel of the joinery on this wooden yacht that really makes it stand out. You can tell it was built by caring craftsmen in a 'boutique' shipyard, rather than something mass produced in a factory." We can only concur.



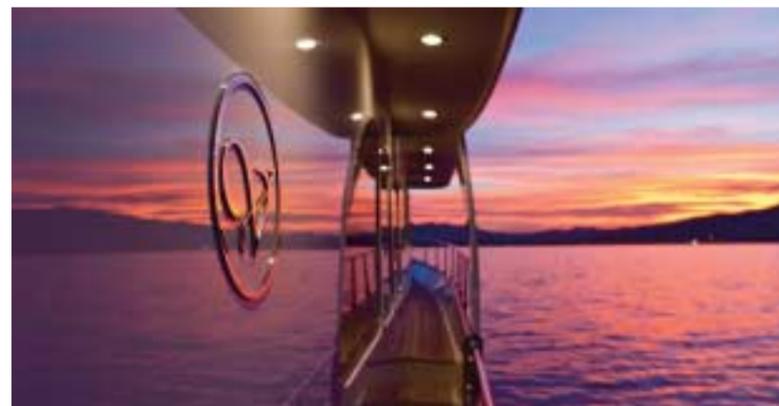
VICEM 78 CRUISER



Owner's perspective



LOA: 82' 0" (25m)
Hull length: 78' 0" (23.77m)
Beam: 21' 0" (6.40m)
Draft: 5' 9" (1.75m)
Max. Pax: 12
Construction: Cold moulded mahogany West System Epoxy
Hull Type: Hard Chine V Planing Hull
Fuel Capacity: 2,168 gals (8,206 L)
Water Capacity: 430 gals (1,628 L)
Interior/Exterior Design: VICEM YACHT DESIGN TEAM
Certifications: CE / RINA
Engines: 2x 900hp MAN V8 900
Max Speed: 17-knots
Cruising Speed: 14-knots
Cruising Range: 525nM
Displacement (Dry): 125,000 lbs - 62.5 tonnes
Contact: www.vicemyacht.com



The Vicem 78 Cruiser is an incredibly well considered yacht in terms of layout. From the hydraulic bathing platform, the large sociable cockpit, to the vast flybridge - complete with wet-bar, Jacuzzi and shaded dining area, tender stowage and davit - the outdoor entertainment spaces are of great proportions. Add to the aforementioned the foredeck sunpad, and a banquette that makes for a wonderful vantage point when underway, and it is a yacht that really suits the profile of Gulf use. Inside the neutral décor with light oak joinery amplifies the natural light provision, creating a bright and relaxing ambience. The main salon offers a formal dining area on a split-level. A separate access to the large full-beam master cabin (located athwartships) is provided to starboard off the salon, and here dressing rooms and the sizeable en-suite buffer the owner's stateroom from the engine room. Meanwhile a central companionway on the main deck leads past the portside galley, through the sociable wheelhouse and down into the guest accommodation. A VIP cabin occupies the forepeak, while a double and twin guest, also with en-suites, flank the corridor.

Crew accommodation for three, complete with galley, square and laundry, is positioned aft. Having already spent considerable time aboard Antalya during the three-week inaugural cruise (the yacht has been named in recognition of the Turkish town where Vicem built the 78 Cruiser), Mr Al Abbar is delighted with the live-aboard capability and is already planning an extended trip around the Turkish and Aegean coast in the near future. Shorter passages, like several hundred meters out of DIMC and into Barasti lagoon, are equally satisfying however. "Simply anchoring here in the lagoon at sunset is more than enough," he enthuses. "It is so beautiful and peaceful, just being a hundred meters offshore relaxing with friends and family is enough to enjoy your yacht. We will look to cruise further, maybe to the Musandam in Oman for example, as we have a comfortable cruising speed of 14-knots and a range of 525nM. With twin 900hp engines it is a very economical yacht."

"You can tell this yacht was built by craftsmen, not mass produced..."

At the helm, Mr Al Abbar reflects on his purchase.



VICEM 78 CRUISER

When asked if it is in any way difficult to justify the financial implications of yacht ownership, Mr Al Abbar was unequivocal in his answer. "Having a yachting season that stretches comfortably between September and May or June, there is plenty of time to entertain family and friends aboard, so we'll have plenty of use out of the yacht. I also envisage using it to host business clients and colleagues on occasions, so justifying the expenditure is no issue. One has to realise however a yacht is a luxury purchase, and not a necessity, so having the disposable finances to service, maintain and ultimately enjoy the asset is essential. For this yacht, I consider the initial price to be on a par with European yards, but the value is in the higher quality than a fibreglass yacht."

Maintenance of the 78 Cruiser was a key question we had wanted to ask Mr Al Abbar, and this seemed like the perfect opportunity. Being a cold-moulded wooden hull yacht, wasn't he concerned about the effect the Gulf climate may have? "Not at all," he replied. "My last yacht was constructed using the same method of wooden frame, mahogany skin and laminated wooden composite

hull, all protected by a fibreglass coating. It has fared extremely well in our climate for the last six years. No special maintenance is required, just simply keep it clean, well anti-fouled and look after it as you would any other yacht. Never delay for one day anything that needs fixing and never cut corners. Vicem are also very strong with their aftersales, so I have no issues."

A fine example of Vicem's production, the 78 Cruiser is a very sociable yacht. It features a high quality interior, with superior levels of comfort throughout the accommodation... plus that elusive 'tactile' feel of a wooden vessel. In Mr Al Abbar the yard has certainly found a very satisfied customer, one who is happy to play an ambassadorial role for the brand. Obviously enjoying his time aboard his latest acquisition, Mr Al Abbar's conclusion is typically visionary; "Hopefully Vicem's presence in the Middle East will grow and we'll see more of their yachts here in the future. I believe they will be exhibiting at the 2012 Dubai International Boat Show, and I'd really recommend people look them up." A fitting closing statement from the man whose architectural creations we look up at so often and admire. ■

In Mr. Al Abbar Vicem have found not just a new client, but also a brand ambassador.