

THE LOBSTER BAY  
Kayaks

# FRAGRANT HARBOUR

Spring 2022

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Optimists reOpen sailing

## The position of water sports in Hong Kong

Water sports are some of the oldest, continuous sports practised in Hong Kong. Of course, dragon boating is both a sport and a culture and has been a part of Hong Kong's maritime life for many a year. But others — canoeing, rowing, sailing and swimming — have all had their place and Hong Kong is regularly represented internationally in each of these.



Others include surfing, water skiing, outrigger canoeing and more recently SUP. And with coverage across all water sports, the Hong Kong Life Saving Society also holds a special position, owing to the importance of safety.

As has been the case with many land-based sports over the past two decades, participation in water sports has risen significantly and public interest continues to rise as new opportunities develop along our coastlines.

Notwithstanding their popularity and relatively small land requirement per capita, water sports have often failed to receive the planning recognition from government which is necessary to support their development. This is unfortunate because our surrounding waters are a natural sports arena for recreational and grass roots activities all the way up to elite training and international competition. Our waters could, in fact, play a big part making us a regional sports hub.

Water sports actually do receive good government support through programmes and other funding, but there are gaps when it comes to planning.

A paper submitted to the previous LegCo Panel on Home Affairs in September last year seemed to demonstrate the difficulties which water sports face in the

eyes of government. The paper set out the outcomes of a two-phase study which had been commissioned by the Home Affairs Bureau on the demand and supply of sports facilities in Hong Kong.

In the paper, it stated :

*'The 2-phased Study provided a scientific basis on assessing the demand and supply as well as the provision standards of sports facilities in Hong Kong. The Study also provided recommendations on the planning of sports facilities with a view to better addressing the evolving needs for sports facilities arising from an ever-changing sports behaviour and pattern based on an adaptable approach.'*



Swimming pools were included in the study. However, no other water sports were addressed.

It is not clear why water sports were omitted from this study but the omission in such an important policy paper means that in future planning, consideration for water sports might be limited, even overlooked. This, in turn, could lead to lost opportunities for sports offered to youth.

In years to come, many young people might not have the chance to try or practice water sports.

As the majority of readers of this article will know, water sports have a special value of their own in taking participants away from the confines of urban life, and putting them into a natural. Hong Kong has many beautiful coastal areas where water sports can — and are — being practiced. There are even areas that would be suitable for sports tourism and widely-publicised international events.

Let's hope that government gives more support to the development of water sports and their advantages in crowded Hong Kong.



**First 44** Beneteau's First range was born 45 years ago with the launch of the legendary First 30. This is now being celebrated with the launch of a First 36 in January, and recently a First 44.

The First 44 is presented in two main

setups, the second being a performance version being a different deck plan and options for keels and masts. The interior is modern and luminous, with a blend of white lacquered surfaces, moulded woods and tasteful upholstery.

Twin 300-litre ballast tanks emphasise the 'racer' in racer / cruiser and are very useful when short handed.

Equipment and systems are geared towards racing, like the foam non-skid surfaces that replace the teak on the

cockpit sole, six well-placed winches and a conventional mainsail traveller. The rigging and sail setup include a 1.5m bowsprit, a hydraulic backstay, a powerful in-hauler system and a performance keel/mast combo.

Below, there are three cabins and two heads. In the saloon, the six-seater transversal table is positioned opposite the couch and nav station.

For more information contact Simpson Marine Ltd. Tel: 2555 8377.

