

It's not St Tropez, it's Stratford

A playground for VIPs is being created in east London as superyachts cruise in for the Games, writes **Kate Mansey**



Nicholas Frankl, pictured with the model Sanja Papic, is bringing the Harle to London

A PRIVATE beach, a speedboat to taxi you to the next exclusive party and possibly a Hollywood celebrity next door — any self-respecting tycoon would surely demand nothing less.

Those attractions are what oligarchs and billionaires arriving for the Olympics in their superyachts have been told they can expect. With prices starting at £150,000 for a two-week stay, it does not come cheap, though that is highly unlikely to bother the clientele.

Yachts expected to take up berths in Wood Wharf, Canary Wharf and the Royal Docks in east London include Octopus, the 414ft megayacht owned by Paul Allen, the Microsoft billionaire, and Eclipse, one of the world's biggest superyachts, owned by Roman Abramovich, the Russian oligarch.

Altitude, a superyacht previously chartered by the music

stars Beyoncé and Jay-Z for a Mediterranean cruise, is also expected to be in London. It boasts its own pool, six luxury cabins and two jet skis.

The Leander, owned by Sir Donald Gosling, the multi-millionaire former owner of NCP car parks, will also be in the capital.

The Queen, a friend of Gosling, has been entertained on board, as have the Earl and Countess of Wessex, who used Leander on a royal tour of the Caribbean.

Another yacht on view will be Harle, a 148ft vessel that sleeps 12 guests. It is owned by the billionaire Nicholas Frankl, a Hungarian former bobsleigh Olympian. He is usually seen hosting parties at the Monaco Grand Prix, where his guests have included Prince Albert of Monaco and the Formula One champions Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button.

Speculation is rife that the actor George Clooney may make an appearance.

Either way, it is likely to be the biggest gathering of superyachts seen in Britain.

With 12 berths already taken, the superyachts will bring some of the world's richest tycoons to the Games, which open on July 27.

Those organising the VVIP services aim to recreate St Tropez in east London. A 24-hour concierge service will provide musicians, catering, a helicopter and front row Olympics tickets with a private speedboat to get you to the front of the queue. Pontoons are being built alongside the docks with private Jacuzzis for a late-night dip.

Benjamin Sutton, a spokesman for the yacht concierge service MGMT, said: "We're offering a complete package that we hope will launch London as a vibrant destination for the



Octopus

Owner: Paul Allen, Microsoft billionaire
414ft



Leander

Owner: Sir Donald Gosling
246ft



Altitude

Owner: unknown
181ft



Harle

Owner: Nicholas Frankl, Hungarian former bobsleigh Olympian
148ft

future. Whatever a superyacht owner can expect in St Tropez or Monaco, they will get it here. It will be like Monaco during the grand prix."

Waterside House, a club and restaurant, is offering packages to yacht owners looking to party. There will be a 200ft beach, outside lounges and a nightclub

where the DJ Fatboy Slim, real name Norman Cook, is expected to make a guest appearance. Its "black card" membership club costs £1,000 for the duration of the Games.

Along with the hefty price tag, each berth comes with the promise of discretion. Paul Ashton, editor of SuperYacht

World magazine, said: "The brokers that you deal with are extremely discreet.

"They never name their clients in advance and everything is lined up for them."

You would be forgiven, however, for thinking the superyacht owners might wish to take a trip down to Weymouth and

Portland to watch the Olympic sailing events.

One VIP concierge organiser said: "You'll find people don't tend to buy a gin palace because they're interested in sailing. They have no interest in going down to Weymouth.

"They want to stay in London and party." ■