



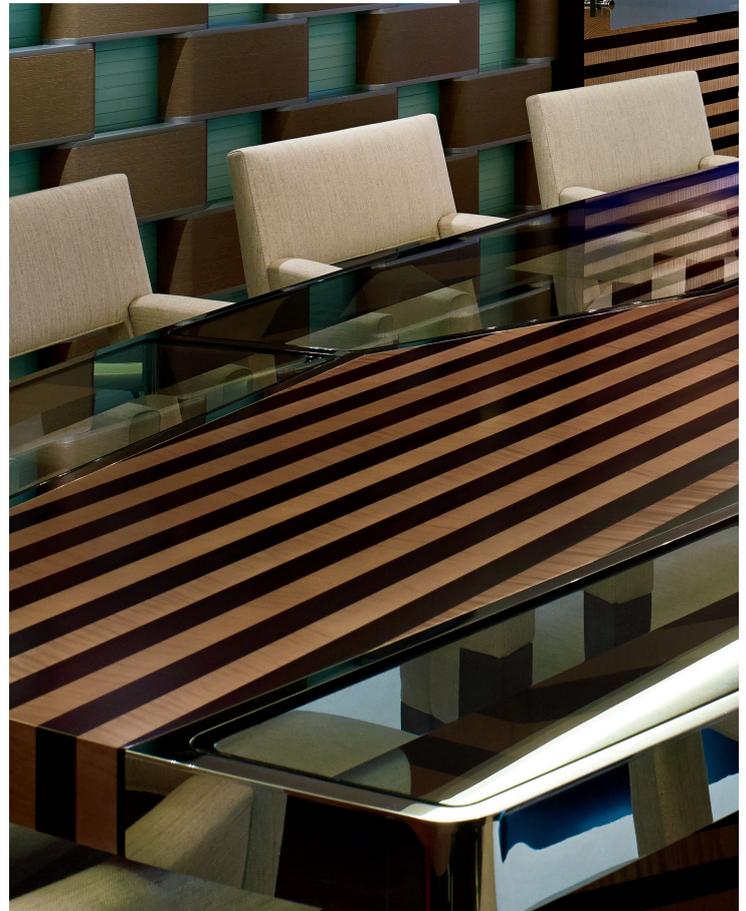
Boat designers and interior designers have traditionally passed like ships in the night, inhabiting almost entirely separate domains. But recently there has been a new fluidity between the two camps, fostering a cross-fertilisation of ideas and aesthetics. So while clients may well ask the designers of their private residences to take on a floating interior too, yacht designers are also expanding their creative horizons into land-bound projects, including super-prime developments.

Dickie Bannenberg and Simon Rowell of Bannenberg & Rowell Design, for example, have extended their reach into private development projects over the past five years – notably a high-end collection of properties in Oman. “For this particular client, the association with the world of superyachts is an additional marketing tool,” explains Rowell. “The yachts we design are generally highly individual and bespoke, and that gives these residences extra cachet and a point of difference.”

In Oman they drew heavily on the materiality of ocean living for inspiration. Rowell explains: “We spend our professional lives trying to avoid clichéd yacht finishes, such as teak floors, but when asked to develop the Oman residences, we set out a raft of teak that began at the entry gate, wove through the ground floor and continued to the rear terrace. Locally sourced stone walls were chosen to contrast with white lacquer cabinets – also commonly spec’ed for boats – achieving a dynamic juxtaposition that challenged the traditional perception of yacht finishes.” He continues, “It is not just aesthetics but ergonomics that can be translated from yacht to land. The nature of a moving vessel demands rounded forms and softened edges, but these also improve comfort in a house. In the dining room of a European lakeside project [pictured top], for example, we set out the chairs around the arc of the dining table, which mirrored the shape of the *Galactica Star* [a 65m Heesen yacht] dining salon [pictured right].”

It’s a similar story at Winch Design, where the team is also enjoying overtures from top developers. Head of architecture Simon Tomlinson says yacht designers are being recognised for creating something different from the mainstream. “Increasingly, developers want to align their brand with ours and tap into our marine legacy for land-based projects. In part, I think that is because we don’t just look at things aesthetically, but how people really engage with their environments. And we don’t have a house style – we ask our clients about their goals and aspirations, and we build our design approach from that, with no preconceived ideas.” Indeed, land-based projects are developing at such a rate that Winch now has an entire architectural division, which has grown by 100 per cent over the past two years. “Land-based projects often provide greater opportunities for creating spatial

From top: the Bannenberg & Rowell-designed dining table of a European lakeside property reflects the shape of a table for *Galactica Star* (right), built by Heesen Yachts



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Specialist superyacht and prime residential designers are now expanding their creative horizons into each other's territories - to the benefit of both boat and home interiors. **Helen Chislett** reports

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Clients often want the same look within a yacht as their home, preferring a designer's cohesive design language throughout

drama than is possible on yachts where we are always trying to make spaces feel larger than they are," Tomlinson explains, "but for a recent project in Knightsbridge, our clients challenged us to achieve the same level of drama that you might find on one of our yachts. To do this, we designed an extra-deep lobby area [pictured near right] with a clear, axial circulation space off this entrance, anchored by powerful art pieces at either end."

He believes that this cross-fertilisation is also benefiting the yacht division with which the studio made its name. "The great thing about residences is we have far more creative freedom to try things out than we do within the constraints of a yacht – so when we see something that works really well on a property, we consider whether it might also work well on a boat." Certainly looking at the Winch portfolio, there is great synergy between a project such as Knightsbridge and a yacht such as the 87m *Ace* (pictured top right), built by Lürssen, which features classical interior architecture, inlaid floors, bespoke ornamentation and statement art.

However, the traffic is not just one-way, and superyachts today are as likely to be interior-designed by a land-based studio such as Candy & Candy, Sims Hilditch, Argent Design or Achille Salvagni as a specialist yacht designer. Salvagni says clients often want the same look and feel within their yacht as they enjoy in their home, preferring to employ a designer who can use a cohesive design language throughout. He designed the interior for *Numptia*, a Rossinavi 75m yacht, that resulted in further commissions for the client's New York apartment and Palm Beach retreat. "Our brief for the superyacht was to create an interior for hosting friends and family in the same sort of impressive, yet relaxed, environment that they enjoy at home. We chose a palette of soft colours and natural materials. There is great beauty in simplicity and balance – of stripped-back spaces enhanced by luxury bespoke detailing." Special touches included a quilted pattern on the brushed-and-limed teak lining the walls and ceiling of the lounge area,



marked out at regular intervals with bronze sea urchins.

Tina D'Abundo, senior designer at Candy & Candy, oversaw the studio's recent refurbishment of the 63m *Benetti 11:11*, including the choice of art: "What matters to owners now is chilling on the top deck with friends and family – the 'floating villa' vibe. This desire for casual elegance is why we chose curvy armchairs, polished stainless-steel bar stools, a custom-made cocktail bar (pictured top left) and Tracey Emin artwork for the Sky Lounge."

Interior designer Emma Sims-Hilditch and her husband John are in the fortunate position of having their own yacht, *Venator*, to refurbish – a restored Swan 65, "the superyacht of her day in 1974", which demanded an interior as beautifully crafted as the exterior, yet also contemporised for their growing family: "I have kept it as light and airy as possible, with cool linens in sand, off-whites and soft blues, and camel-coloured wool and cashmere throws. Every item chosen is 'best in class', but the signature feeling is one of understated luxury." And for the 65m *Silver Angel* (pictured overleaf), by Benetti, Nicola Fontanella of Argent Design chose art deco as inspiration, creating a punchy, monochromatic scheme of black lacquer, Lalique wall lights and mirrored walls – described by her as "a 21st-century take on Hollywood Regency."

Understandably, shipyards and naval architects have been wary of the sharp influx of land-based studios



Clockwise from top left: the Candy & Candy refurbished cocktail bar on the 63m Benetti 11:11 yacht. Winch Design's classical interiors in a 87m Ace yacht, built by Lürssen, and in a Knightsbridge property

moving into their territory, but the more visionary among them have come to admit the benefits. Laura Pomponi of Luxury Projects, for example, who began her own career in telecommunications systems before transferring to the yacht industry 15 years ago, believes that the new-look superyachts are also thanks to guest interior designers being brought in by clients. "You have to give them credit for coming into our world and breaking the design mould. Traditionally, yacht designers

have been a niche community, proud of their profession, but stuck with certain ways of doing things, particularly with regard to layout and lighting," she says. "Our interior design colleagues, knowing next to nothing about a boat's construction, come in with a creative concept that might appear rather crazy, but then the shipyards are obliged to develop it because the new owner wants it."

Pomponi, like many other specialist yacht designers, increasingly finds herself being asked to take on residential commissions as well. "To be honest, to move from yacht to house is easy, because in a yacht there are so many rules to respect, whereas in a house you can tear down walls or extend the space. I think one of the reasons we get commissioned is that interior designers tend to roll out one signature look, whereas yacht designers are used to crossing over into different styles."

Dubai-based Donald Starkey, who moved into yacht design 30 years ago, agrees: "Clients are often attracted to the way yacht spaces are planned and want the same approach in their house. Having designed the interior of the gargantuan 115m *Luna* [built by Lloyd Werft] for Roman Abramovich, he refreshed it for the new owner,



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From top: **FM Architettura d'Interni's** oak and leather study for the 63m *Waku*. The art deco-inspired dining room by **Argent Design** for Benetti's 65m *Silver Angel* yacht

Farkhad Akhmedov, who has since asked him to oversee a huge residential project in his native Azerbaijan.

As a result of all this cross-fertilisation, traditional yacht layouts have given way to more varied spaces that allow owners to match the yacht more closely to their lifestyle. Francesca Muzio, of FM Architettura d'Interni, trained as an architect and collaborated with the Renzo Piano studio before moving into the boat industry, then expanded her own studio into residences and hotels, including London's Shangri-La Hotel at The Shard. She explains: "The new generation of owners uses space in a different way, so we create multipurpose areas, allowing a salon to double as an office, for example, with full conference facilities." For the 63m *Waku* she incorporated an elegant study (pictured top), custom-made from oak and leather, with curved slats that echo the contours of the boat. "The key point of difference is that a superyacht is more like a floating boutique hotel; you can change the panoramic every day if you wish – it is all about capturing the essence of the journey. We took the same philosophy for The Shard where we wanted to optimise the 180-degree views, so we chose clean, smooth lines and contoured furniture shapes, as on *Waku*, that allowed us to achieve a stroboscopic effect, giving the impression of floating over the city, just like you float in water."

Adriana Monk, whose Monk Design studio on the Côte d'Azur is focused primarily on cars, planes and yachts, says: "When it comes to designing yachts, it is all about optimising a confined space. I worked as an interior designer on luxury cars for 10 years, so I enjoy that challenge. Today, clients want solutions that are cooler, more individual." In a recent land project on Lake Maggiore, she designed a custom staircase featuring a steel ribbon that wraps up through the whole stairwell, providing both a support structure and handrail.

French designer Rémi Tessier has successfully bridged the worlds of super-prime residences and superyachts

and technology to factor in. There is no room for improvisation at the last moment." For one client, Tessier recently completed both a residence in Palm Beach and the interior of the 73m *Grace E*, built by Perini Navi, for which he combined Macassar ebony, brushed sycamore, parchment, stainless steel and backlit onyx to spectacular effect.

Tessier also believes that working within both worlds means that each gains from the other. "On a yacht, fine quality is absolutely essential, down to the smallest detail. That is not always true of a house, so now I bring this level of excellency from the yacht world to the residential one – it might be something very simple, but when it is truly perfect, it is like a dream." He is aware that yacht designers sometimes resent interior designers for coming in and shaking things up, but as he says, "It is not always good to be a specialist if it means you no longer have an open mind. You will repeat yourself and lack creativity and innovation. Whether an interior is something that floats or is land-bound – what matters is finding the right answer for each and every context." ♦

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