

"It is important to work with a client's feelings in mind. From there, the scope of work is derived"

Diana Scott, designer and stylist, Sterling Scott

University training

A sense of style

odern software and fast hardware have made significant changes to the work of the exterior stylist. Software available today has made it possible for designers to create the lines of a superyacht on a powerful laptop. This is in stark contrast to a decade or so ago when a large drafting table was required. Before the arrival of modern software, work could only be as accurate as the scale of the drawing would allow.

Today, everything has to be exact and this has shifted some of the responsibilities from the yard to the designer. Luckily there are excellent software tools which aid stylists with this task and allow them to get an exact insight into the fairness of a particular surface. Specialist software can show designers the exact deformation that is needed to get a required curved surface out of a flat sheet of metal.

Design software is particularly good for displacement, stability and hull characteristics. Given the right software, designers can build up a complete set of line plans for hull and superstructure and see how they work together.

For example, when an owner suggests they need more headroom in the salon, the designer can tweak the drawing to accommodate the requirement. The software automatically recalculates and adjusts the yacht's profile. Any conflicts raised by the change are highlighted on screen and can be discussed with the client.

Clever software and powerful computers apart, many of the better stylists still start every design with a pencil and paper, believing that no computer can replace the power of sketching an idea while brainstorming with a client.

INTERPRETING A CLIENT'S VISION MAY HAVE EVOLVED FROM DRAWING BOARD TO COMPUTOR SCREEN, BUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLIENT AND STYLIST REMAINS KEY BY FRANCES & MICHAEL HOWORTH



The time taken to design a superyacht from start to finish depends on the size and style of the project

Superyachts are, of course, seen by different people as very different things. For crew they are a place of work, for owners they are a work of art and an asset to be acquired, for yacht builders they are a three year money making project — and for stylists they are graceful drawings in either 2D or 3D. This means from an early stage the stylist has to satisfy a great many factions.

Crew, for example, firmly believe that every stylist needs to have been a deckhand before they are allowed to draw a single line on paper. Their reasoning is that if a designer knew how difficult oddly shaped design twists were to clean, or if they knew how badly they corrode in the salty atmosphere, the designer

would never have allowed their thoughts to become reality. Whether or not the crew are right, it is a fact that very few practising stylists have ever been to sea other than as guests of the owner.

Winning a commission to design a superyacht is the first hurdle. Theo Werner, a designer based in Holland, is lucky in that he has a

Pricing a commission

steady supply of customers. "Clients are usually open about what they are doing and usually let us know who else they are talking to when choosing a stylist,"

In the end the client generally chooses

one designer over another based on the level of understanding they and the designer share as to the outcome of the finished vacht. Clients know what they want and if the designer does not catch on to that quickly they won't get the commission to complete the design"

Generally speaking the sketch work for the exterior styling and deck layouts is always charged by the hour based on time spent completing the work. This generally works out cheaper for the client, and leaves designers free from risk if they encounter a client who likes to make a lot of changes. The remainder of the design work



completed for an owner is then invoiced on an agreed fee basis. There are additional fees for preparing the bid package, the pre design, line drawings and calculations, along with the

construction and interior joinery plans. The time taken for a design from the start of the project to the beginning of yard work on the yacht depends entirely on the size and style of the project. The bigger the yacht the longer the lead time. Typically this first phase spent creating the concept can be as short as three months, but in very large yachts this can stretch to 12 months. The pre-production phase can take just as long but much of the work can be done in parallel as long as a strong concept design has been developed.

While many stylists learn their profession at

the hands of masters, others acquire design skills at college. Coventry University in the UK has been populating the international boat design industry for over 25 years.

Many of Coventry's graduates hold key positions in the world's foremost automotive, boat and product design companies and between them have created numerous groundbreaking design concepts.

The university's undergraduate programme combines industrial and commercial experience with new models and techniques for computer aided spatial design.

Graduates of the courses have left and found employment with companies such as — Bernard Olesinki, Bill Dixon, Broom, Evan Marshall Consultancy, Fairline, Guido de Groot, John Mumford, Ken Freivokh, KKG, Laurent Giles, Oyster Marine, Princess Yachts, Raymond Langton Design, Riveria Yachts, Sealine, Sunseeker, Tony Castro. A number of graduates have established their own design consultancies and several others hold senior positions within the industry.



Tim Thompson graduated from Coventry University in 2010 with a masters degree in boat design. He now works as a research assistant on the European Boat Design Innovation Group (EBDIG) project, where he is developing 3D animation technology for supercomputing applications (HPC) to

visualise superyacht interiors and exteriors. "The opportunity to transfer innovation and development skills from automotive design practice is one of the great opportunities of the course," he says. "Working on the EBDIG project has given me exposure to cutting edge visualisation and

supercomputing technology which has not yet been seen in the marine design industry. "We can create 3D photorealistic animations of superyachts in days using the HPC which would take months to process on

a standard high end PC." Tim Saunders, now the MD of Tim Saunders Yacht Design, believes the learning experience gained while studying at

Coventry University, gave him a strong foundation on which to build his career. "The course was invaluable as it allowed me to develop my aesthetic based skills, as well as learn more about mechanical

engineering, materials and manufacturing." According to Dr Sean McCartan, course director of boat design at Coventry, exterior stylists have to examine the contemporary

understanding of the term luxury in the context of superyacht design. "In doing so they must research the trends in design aesthetics, to identify commonality and specifics of design language, across the full spectrum of boat design, from small craft with limited interior space to superyachts," he says. "They must

concept of luxury." Saunders, meanwhile, believes there should be an established qualification in

appreciate the relevance of emotional design in respect to leisure boat design and the

superyacht design. "I would like to see a rebirth of an apprenticeship rather than try to cram more learning into two, three and four year degree

courses," he says. He has recently been approached by more than one university to teach yacht design

and is currently in negotiations. "We will have to wait and see what happens, but I would like to become involved in offering a specialist Superyacht Yacht Design course as an MA to design and naval architecture students." SB

Exterior stylists ON FOLLOWING PAGES

Six leading exterior stylists and designers talk to SB about the importance of meeting client's tastes and needs

JUNE 2011 | WWW.SUPERYACHTBUSINESS.NET 61

60 www.superyachtbusiness.net | June 2011

* Toledo, Iñigo

Meeting the highest design standards

epin Gonzalez, who started Barracuda Yacht Design, tragically died 20 years ago leaving Iñigo Toledo, his protégé, to sail his company forward single-handedly. "Navigating Barracuda through those tough economic times of the early 1990s, following the death of my mentor, was one of my greatest personal challenges," says Toledo, Barracuda's owner and manager.

"Now we are first and foremost naval architects and handle exterior styling for all of our projects. Occasionally we are also asked to handle interior design.

"Our work breaks down into 50 per cent naval architecture, 20 per cent overall design (including exterior), five per cent interior design, and 25 per cent project management.

"I spend my time managing the company on a day to day basis and ensuring that all areas of the work are up to the high standards that we set ourselves, whether it's design, structures, interior design, overall planning or detailed engineering.

"I manage main customer relations and

am the first point of contact for new business enquiries. "Sometimes we find ourselves in a

competitive tender situation and need to work to get the job, but our proposals



"All of the enquiries we receive are genuine and the speculative enquiries have all but

are always paid-for work.

work with the owner directly. Given the choice we would always prefer to have direct contact with the owner for a better understanding of

"Five years ago approximately 30 per cent of our designs were never built, then, as the recent recession kicked in that figure rose to 60 per cent with cancellations and construction stopped included. Happily, now we are finding that all of the enquiries we receive are genuine and the speculative

disappeared"

"In the case of one-off bespoke designs, we the overall project.

enquiries have all but disappeared. "There's no doubt that computers have

improved efficiency, they offer more options and they remove a lot of the boring part of the work but, ultimately, most designs still start with a pencil and a blank piece of paper. From this a simple basic concept can evolve by hand after which the computer can help to refine the initial dream.

"As hyper-modern styles become more popular, style remains important of course, but balance, nice lines, respect and other concepts should not be forgotten, otherwise we are just creating an environment of visual-pollution that some stylists want

"Ultimately, I believe there are a few good stylists doing a good job - and many opportunistic people out there looking for an easy ride." SB

* HORSFIELD, Jonny

Thinking ahead to the yachts of tomorrow

onny Horsfield started his career as an exterior designer working for Martin Francis on the Eco project. A year later he moved to Donald Starkey Designs where he started to become more interested in interior design as well as maintaining control of the exterior design in his studio. He set up H2 design in January 1994.

"At H2 we currently employ two full time exterior designers as well as myself. Work is split between these two designers based on their respective skills. One is more senior and he manages the projects and produces the bulk of his information in autocad. The other designer is responsible for producing 3D modelling using Rhino or Alias. "Recently, we have formed a partnership

with Laurent Giles a firm of naval architects and this will, we feel, give us better access to their services which have an increasing impact on the yachts of tomorrow.

"These multi talents give us the ability to be more than simply 'stylists'. In order to achieve maximum results I believe it is preferable that the exterior and interior of the yacht are developed side by side within the same design team. That way there will be a natural synergy between interior and exterior that may not be possible with two different companies working separately.

whose classic looking yachts are eye

a specialist at all, it is as a yacht designer

rather than an exterior stylist.

catching but I like to think that if I am

"I believe that designing is just a matter

of talent that you either have or do not have.

"I much prefer to create the design, add

in the interior layouts, consider the naval

architecture, and bring the engineering all

together into one bundle that then becomes

my favourite aspects, I enjoy the challenge

myself, I can tackle any possible conflicts at

doing so I will have designed a better yacht.

of bringing it together at one point. By

addressing all these aspects of a design

a very early stage in the process and by

"Although styling of the exterior is one of

It is hard, if not impossible, to learn to

become a designer without talent.

the supervacht.

"Generally we are asked to pitch at the beginning of the project with some ideas for exterior styling. In my experience clients want to get a better feel for what you can offer them before committing to you, unless they have seen something from your previous work that appeals straight away to

"I see a gradual move from purely beautiful design to a more aggressive and architectural brutality"

them. We are generally also pitching for the interior design and offering a package. "We have produced literally hundreds of

concept ideas that will never see the light of day. We would normally generate at least 10 different ideas or variations for each client. "We generally deliver an exterior 3D

computer generated model of the final exterior to the shipyard within three to five

"When designing, I always try to look

ahead towards the

way the yacht will

be constructed'

strength issues are in conflict with one

them both and find a solution while the

ahead towards the way the yacht will be

in mind construction techniques that will

"I believe the industry's attitude to

concept is still on the drawing board.

another, as they sometimes are, I can address

"When designing, I always try to look

constructed — optimising hull lines, bearing

months of them signing the build contract.

Unfortunately you then have to spend the next 30 months watching the design being built with very little opportunity to make any meaningful changes! "In a similar way to the car industry I see

a gradual move from purely beautiful design to a more aggressive and architectural brutality, with much more emphasis on the green issues of solar and wind power. "Some clients see their superyachts as floating accommodation platforms rather than graceful, sleek status symbols to be

admired in the marina. "I think that working on a superyacht for even a brief period of time would most of whom have never spent any time on

exterior design has changed a lot over recent

years. It started in the 1980s, when the naval

styling is a relatively easy part of the whole

process, but perhaps the best paid sector of

that high payment, some stylists just take

things too far, and come up with ideas just to

impress. The designs would look good, when

"There are however quite a few extreme

moored up at the yacht club, but would be

designs that I really like and among these

Enigma (ex Eco), by Martin Francis, or even

further back in time, Maridome (ex Stefaren),

by the master of the exterior yacht style -

the late great Jon Bannenberg"

would be Senses from Kursch and Martin Francis, Predator which is a Feadship design,

"Sometimes I get the feeling that, to justify

architect was not necessarily the yachts

exterior stylist. In my humble opinion,

undoubtedly be useful to most designers, a yacht and forget that it moves in an incredibly hostile environment!"

the design process.

useless one mile out at sea.

* WERNER, Theo

Enjoying the challenge of finding solutions

f Andre Hoek is the man people first think of when it comes to the exterior styling of classic sailing yachts then his equal when it comes to motoryachts has to be fellow Dutchman -

He trained as an engineer before getting his first yacht design opportunity with Pieter Beeldsnijder. He then worked for Andre Hoek as a designer, before starting Werner Yacht Design in 1997.

"I wanted to concentrate solely on my own designs, and I have worked long and hard to make the name Werner Yacht Design well know in the Netherlands. "I realised I had a talent to draw pretty

looking yachts at an early age but to make sure they floated well and performed well out at sea, I also had to understand the disciplines of naval architecture. "Pieter Beeldsnijder gave me a wonderful

opportunity to learn and encouraged me to broaden the scope of my talent as much as possible. Hoek Design gave me a lot of freedom at the design table but, the fact is, I have no formal qualifications to do the job I do. Instead I have a feel, some might call it a flair for doing the right thing. "I have become known as a designer



Theo Werner realised early on in life that he had caught the boating virus and that no matter what, he was 1997, to Werne

"When for instance, design and structural

66 WWW.SUPERYACHTBUSINESS.NET | JUNE 2011

* LOBANOV, Igor

bring the yacht to final fruition.

64 WWW.SUPERYACHTBUSINESS.NET | JUNE 2011

*SCOTT, Diana

Theo Werner.

Meeting the client's dreams and inspirations

iana Scott has been working as a yacht designer and stylist for the past ten years. Sterling Scott, her Monaco based design studio, was formed three years ago.

"I am the head yacht designer at Sterling Scott. I work alone on yacht design projects from my office in Monaco or wherever I am in the world," she says. "I work together with other experts, but I have primary control over each design, which gives me the freedom to work without the pressure of outside influences — with the exception of the client of course.

"I pay close attention to the wish list and ideas provided by the client. It is as much a passion for me to create a beautiful yacht as it is to create one that fits the client's requirements, dreams and inspirations this is a part of the challenge I really enjoy.

"It is vital to ensure the client is always excited and thrilled with the overall look of the superyacht"

"Our design process includes interior layouts matched to the style of the yacht and the client's needs and tastes. When required, we work closely with the naval architect, Robert McFarlane, and various interior designers. However, exterior styling is what we specialise in. We always find that clients have many different tastes and ideas with respect to the finished interiors so it is important we provide them with the best match of exterior design and styling, interior design and styling and naval architecture to suit their needs and tastes.

"Initially I meet with the client to work out the feasibility of the project and produce the client's detailed wish list. It is important to

work with a client's feelings in mind. From there, the scope of work is derived, which includes exterior styling, beginning with the concept design. It is a process whereby the client learns and lives through the project phase a step at a time until they see exactly what they want."

Design process "The general arrangement plan layout covers very detailed architectural drawings,

which can later be used for the interior design, pricing and eventually the construction process. These plans are also used by the naval architect to complete this essential process. Once these initial phases are completed, the detailed/outline design phase begins. We use 3D renderings throughout the design phases, along with sketches, and if required a full scale model is produced. Communication with the client is regular as the project evolves. "It is vital to ensure the client is always

excited and thrilled with the overall look of the yacht, as well as the details. I always remain involved in my projects and ensure all designs and shapes are correct throughout the build process. Working with the project managers, engineers and the naval architect team, I normally see through the supervision of the build process. "I label myself as an exterior stylist as well as a designer. I cover both aspects. I enjoy the overall styling and

harmonising of a

project as well as

designing all the

roles overlap."

details of the overall

look — to me, these

YACHT DESIGNER I TIM

SAUNDERS YACHT DESIGN Tim Saunders has spent more than and owners on a large number of projects. His skills and knowledge

Holistic concept for interior and exterior design

* SAUNDERS, Tim

im Saunders started designing exteriors during an 11 month internship at Fairline Boats in 1990 after graduating in Industrial Design Automotive Design from Coventry Polytechnic, in the UK.

Over the next decade Tim worked on many fascinating projects at Andrew Winch Designs, Princess Yachts, Espen Oeino and Frank Mulder. In 1999 he founded Tim Saunders Design, and worked closely with Pieter Beeldsnijder, Redman Whitely Dixon, Felix Buiterdijk and Guido de Groot on larger projects. He joined forces with an interior designer forming Rainsford Saunders Design (RSD) to work on a 170m project which was developed for production over a four year period until the world economy put the build on hold indefinitely.

Seeking a fresh challenge he decided to leave the RSD partnership and continue his career independently. In 2009 he launched Tim Saunders Yacht Design based in Bodrum, South West Turkey.

"I strongly believe each concept should be conceived by one mind in order to coordinate, optimise and balance the exterior, interior and naval architecture. Currently I set up each concept and then work with our dedicated team to brainstorm and maximise the design. I prefer to become involved in projects when appointed for both the exterior and interior design, a holistic approach, the two elements being optimised and balanced in to one."

SAUNDERS

20 years working as a specialist luxury yacht designer. He has worked alongside many respected yacht designers, naval architects, shipyards evolved from working on an array of custom, production and refit projects. He has a wealth of experience working on a diverse range of yachts varying in style and length from 30m-235m.



"Every client and every project is unique, so it is difficult to generalise but as I have previously worked in the studios of various exterior stylists, interior designers and naval architects during the course of my career, I am able to draw on a wealth of knowledge and know-how which helps guide myself and my team to winning solutions. "Owners often ask for a brand-new

concept starting from a blank sheet of paper, the challenge here is to create something

"Naturally, I am keen to continue building a stronger and more efficient design studio and team"

client's face, using the latest available technology and working to a budget.

entirely new that brings a smile to the

Future plans

"Naturally, I am keen to continue building a stronger and more efficient design studio and team, and to continue realising many more new build and refit projects. I would also like to help bring some order to the industry — to provide high quality and value for money design, naval architecture, management and purchasing services — all at understandable and reasonable rates. "Over the years I have devised countless

ideas, many which have not yet been realised. I would like to become involved in setting-up and actually building a circa 75m (243ft) state-of-the-art superyacht — to my own brief — using all of my accumulated knowledge and experience, coupled with the latest technology to provide a high performance and energy efficient superyacht for the year 2021." SB

Home grown designs for Russian owners

ith so many yacht owners in Russia choosing to have superyachts built at yards around the world it was almost inevitable that sooner or later a talented Russian designer would step forward and give them their own home grown designs. The word stylist sits happily on the shoulders of Igor Lobanov who has studios in London.

to write the word stylist next to my "I am very name, or come to excited about what I am doing, and think of it, the description 'designer'. I think I seeing my design take shape is very have taste. I enjoy creating and thinking fulfilling' about new ideas. I can organise design

"It's hard for me

processes and deliver

requirements to clients. But I hate the concept of design and especially designers who always talk about styles and new designs as if everything that has gone before does not exist for them.

Design concept "There is something about the word 'design'

and consequently 'designer' that I simply do not like. It is overused in today's world and it gains too much attention. Was Da Vinci a designer? Would he like to be called one? "I am sure that any artist who is able to

draw a beautiful picture can design a chair.



Talented, skilled people are engaged in this type of work in various areas and are producing different things. One will come up with new product ideas, another will be drawing pictures and creating artwork, while others will be drawing the exterior

lines of a yacht. "I worked in the studio that produced the designs for A. That is where I cut my teeth on superyacht projects. I was very lucky to be asked to join the project and enjoyed my time there. I am very excited about what I am doing now, and seeing the reality of my design take shape at Oceanco is very fulfilling. One of the best parts of my job is having an opportunity to dream, and here in Y708 I am seeing one dream become reality.

> "I am not always so lucky. Once I was asked to design a sailing yacht but my concept was turned down because it was not considered radical enough. The financial crisis has affected my business as it must have done to many others in my line of

work. It is a risk we have to take. I have many new designs that have yet to see the light of day. Now is not necessarily a time when you go shouting about new superyacht concepts. But the market changes, and when it does, my designs will be as fresh then as they are now because no one has seen them.

"One good thing about the superyacht business is that everything takes time to reach maturity. Designs drawn a few years ago could well still find their ways to the slip way and I aim to be around for some time to see that mine do too." SB

OBANOV OWNER AND MD | LOBANOV

62 WWW.SUPERYACHTBUSINESS.NET | JUNE 2011