

POWER PEARL

FRENCH BUILDER COUACH CHARGES BACK INTO THE SUPERYACHT SCENE WITH THE LIGHTWEIGHT, HIGH-TECH LA PELLEGRINA, A YACHT THAT GIVES GUESTS A HUGE AMOUNT OF LIGHT IN AN IRIDESCENT ENVIRONMENT. *By Frances and Michael Howorth*





"THANKS TO THE KEVLAR-CARBON CONSTRUCTION, THE YACHT IS MORE RIGID, MORE SOLID, YET LIGHTER AND THEREFORE FASTER AND MORE AUTONOMOUS THAN ITS COUNTERPARTS."

Perhaps one of the most famous gems in the world, *La Pellegrina* is the name of a magnificent round pearl of 27.5 carats. It has been owned by European Kings and Queens, survived the French revolution and the Russian Bolshevik Revolution and is today conserved and displayed by the Moscow Museum.

It is an exceptional pearl in every sense of the word. Its purity of shape and its iridescence make it stand out above others. So it is perhaps not surprising that *La Pellegrina* is the name chosen to grace the largest yacht ever to be built in France using composite materials. Not only is she the largest French built yacht constructed in kevlar carbon, she is also the largest yacht ever built by Chantier Naval Couach (CNC). Couach has built a name for itself not just in high-tech yacht construction, but also in high speed pursuit craft for naval and coast guard service, a fact that has definitely helped over the course of the global economic downturn. According to officials at Couach, that experience has also played a role in the development of lightweight, high speed boats.

Designed by the in-house team at CNC, she has an interior by Jean-Pierre Fantini and accommodates 12 guests in a master, VIP, three double and one twin cabin, plus a crew of ten. Handed over in May to her excited owners, she made her first public show debut at the Monaco Yacht Show last September.

The yacht's hull is created using a one-piece infusion process. Couach specialise in building yachts with deep-V hulls, which they say offers excellent seaworthiness on open passages, and an unmatched cruising comfort. Using these materials they state they have built a hull that is more shock resistant than a more usual aluminium or polyester hull. Thanks to the Kevlar-carbon construction, the yacht is more rigid, more solid, yet lighter and therefore faster and more autonomous than its counterparts. Perhaps somewhat over-powered by two enormous V20, 5,300-horsepower MTU engines, she is capable of a maximum, fuel gulping speed of 28 knots, a more modest cruising speed of 25 knots and has a transatlantic range at a lower speed. At 12 knots, the yacht has recorded a consumption of 180 litres per hour.

Spread across four decks, this 12-metre high motor yacht boasts over 500 square metres of habitable space. On the main deck, the yacht presents a huge main saloon and dining room with an area of 75 square metres. Featuring full-height glazed windows, using glass from Tilse in Germany, the living spaces offer breathtaking seaviews. The charter friendly décor is both light

and shiny, featuring high-gloss light woods, white high gloss furniture, cream leather floor squares, and off-white fabrics. As with all yachts destined to offset costs through chartering, the design mood is one of simplicity that offends no one.

It is normal on a yacht of this size to find the owner's suite forward on the main deck, but not on *La Pellegrina*. Instead, a corridor opens up into a VIP suite past a bathroom with shower to starboard and on further, past a walk in wardrobe, to a raised bedroom with windows offering a 180-degree view across the fore deck. Here, cross-grained Wave Sycamore veneer is used on the bulkheads which, because of the unusual cut, took seven or eight times the amount of veneer normally needed to cover a similar area.

A wide, open tread staircase featuring floating steps of limestone lead down to the lower deck and the four guest cabins which open off a small central, space saving lobby. The effect of the smaller lobby is felt in each of the mostly square guest cabins, which are larger than is usual on boats of 50 metres.

The twin cabin is forward on the starboard and like the others on this deck, has impressive 2.2-metre headroom that makes each cabin feel huge. The three remaining cabins are double bedded. In each the bathroom with its separate WC has a small outer area as a dressing alcove. A TV set into a panel acts as a room

"FEATURING FULL-HEIGHT GLAZED WINDOWS, USING GLASS FROM TILSE IN GERMANY, THE LIVING SPACES OFFER BREATHTAKING SEAVIEWS!"



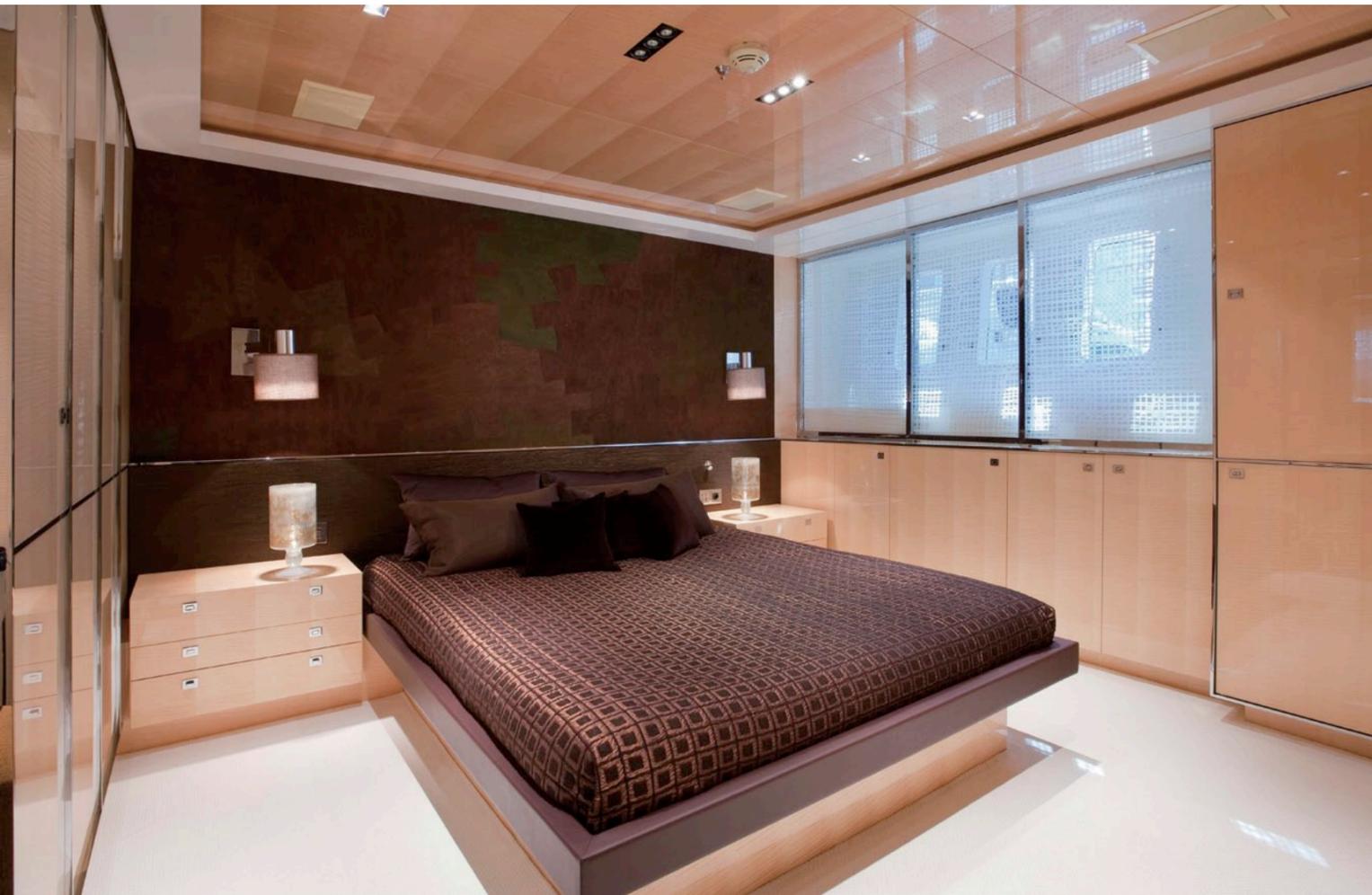


"THE FULL-BEAM OWNER'S SUITE SITUATED RIGHT AFT ON THE BRIDGE DECK OFFERS A PANORAMIC VIEW AND, THROUGH GLASS DOORS, ACCESSES ONTO A DECK WHICH FUNCTIONS AS A PRIVATE TERRACE."

divider between sleeping area and dressing room. Each cabin is finished in different fabrics and wall coverings but all feature the same sycamore woodworks and cream carpet. Obsidian frames are used around mirrors in both aft cabins – the naturally occurring volcanic glass works well when used beside the mirror.

The full-beam owner's suite situated right aft on the bridge deck offers a panoramic view and, through glass doors, accesses onto a deck which functions as a private terrace. The white marble master bathroom, fitted with a Hammam steam room, is to port. It has a double-ended bathtub, separate shower and WC. The room is linked by a somewhat space wasting but nonetheless glorious and gracious passageway to a pleasingly vast dressing room on the starboard side.

Externally, the yacht offers plenty of recreational space for guests to enjoy. High bulwarks give a feel of total security while walking around the yacht. Wooden cap rails are left untreated for a more natural look that will certainly cut down deck maintenance – an important factor for any hard working charter yacht. The yacht's rescue boat is stored inside a large locker on the foredeck just forward of a pleasant Portuguese bridge that offers a fine viewing platform from the U-shaped sitting bench around a small dining table. The main tender is stowed aft inside a garage that additionally accommodates two jet skis. The garage door drops down to reveal a spacious swim platform that gives easy access into the sea or onto the tenders.



The uppermost deck is where the majority of guests will enjoy the outside life. It offers plenty of room for sun worshippers and plenty of other distractions to the hedonist, with a large Jacuzzi, al-fresco dining area and thoroughly-stocked wet bar.

While much has been done to maximise the space for the yacht's owner and guests, the same degree of effort has gone into making crew working and recreational areas as compact as possible. The bridge is small but hugely functional, and unlike many yachts, has done away with the guest area that can often prove a distraction to watch-keeping officers. Behind the bridge to starboard is the Captain's cabin shown on plans as a double-bedded room. Here for reasons of his own the Captain has opted to have the shipyard remove that and replace it with two bunk beds one above the other. The galley to port on the main deck has a long area that will be valued by those serving the dining room, but the galley is small when one considers it has to cater for 12 guests and ten crew.

On the lower deck, four double bunk crew cabins accommodate eight crew and the reasonably sized adjacent crew mess can see them all sitting together for a meal when guests are not on board. The well laid-out and equipped laundry room features both an emergency exit and stairs down to dry storage and freezers that are built into the tunnel that leads to the engine room. This gives excellent access to all services but would be more comfortable to use were it to offer full head height. The engine room is spotless and well laid-out.

Both hull numbers one and two have opted for the huge V20 engines and they take up a great deal of the real estate and make lighting difficult in places. Both are needed for easy maintenance. Those who have ordered hull number three have wisely opted for the more compact and lighter V16 versions of the same MTU engine and it is likely that they will welcome the weight saving, the increase in engine room space, and of course, the improved fuel economy. It is doubtful that they will even

Technical Specifications – Couach 5000 Fly La Pellegrina

LOA	49.5m
LWL	43.4m
Beam	9.3m
Draught	2.55m
Displacement	280 tonnes
Hull Material	Kevlar and Carbon Fibre
Superstructure Material	Composite
External Styling	Exequiel Cane Lanza
Naval Architect	Couach
Interior Designer	Jean Paul Fantini
Engines	2 x MTU V20 (5300hp)
Speed (Max)	28 knots
Speed (Cruise)	25 knots
Fuel Capacity	65,000 litres
Range@12 knots	4,000 nm
Fresh water Capacity	8,000 litres
Owner & Guests (Berths)	12
Crew	10
Classification	Bureau Veritas
Tenders	Nouverania

notice a drop in performance because this sub-500GT yacht displaces just 280 tonnes and simply does not need as much power as is packed so wonderfully into *La Pellegrina*.
www.couach.com