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Light

A sail with the owner and builder of the new Wally Cento *Magic Carpet*³ yields insights into what makes a yacht go fast.

Fantastic

BY Frances and Michael Howorth

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN THE EARLY 1990s, ITALY'S WALLY YACHTS has successfully established a niche in the superyacht category, delivering a series of eye-catching, game-changing sailing yachts and powerboats. The company's latest launch, the 100-foot (30.5-meter) Wally Cento *Magic Carpet*³ was on display the first three days of last September's Monaco Yacht Show, after which she was delivered up the coast to prepare to compete in the 2013 Voiles de Saint-Tropez. We were invited to make the sail with her owner, Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones, who until recently was the chairman of beauty products company L'Oréal. *Magic Carpet*³ is his third Wally. His focus with this yacht was speed and racing, and Wally delivered the goods.

Owen-Jones spent more than 30 years with the French-based beauty products giant. He began by selling the company's shampoo and moved up the ranks to become its chairman and chief executive officer at the age of 42. While at the helm of L'Oréal, he greatly expanded the company's reach, broadening it from a Eurocentric brand to a globally recognized cosmetics company.



LEFT: Competitive to the last, Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones helms the third in his series of ultra-lightweight Wally sailing yachts, each of which have borne the name *Magic Carpet*.

RIGHT: Luca Bassani, the designer, likes to rock the boat when it comes to creating uncluttered and eye-catching craft with a distinctive Wally look.



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Owen-Jones first began sailing when he was at Oxford University in the 1960s and years later became the first-ever customer of Luca Bassani, the man who designs and controls the Wally brand. Approaching his 50th birthday, Owen-Jones fell in love with the clean lines Bassani bestowed upon the first Wally, a boat he christened *Magic Carpet* in 1994.

“She was fast and I enjoyed racing her, but I knew we could do better, and we did,” says Owen-Jones. “With *Magic Carpet*² we ironed out the creases, learning from our experiences and building a much better boat. Her naval architecture was from German Frers, and she sailed like a witch.”

*Magic Carpet*³, the new love in his yachting life, is the latest evolution in Wally’s high-tech, racing-performance stable. As with all Wallys, she represents speed and agility married to spacious and comfortable interiors.

“I wanted three things out of my new yacht,” Owen-Jones says, “more speed, more comfort, and I wanted to be able to take her cruising. This new 100-foot ‘box rule’ class was designed in response to the demands of competitive yachtsmen like me. This is number two in the [Wally Cento] series and there is a third under construction. The first was *Hamilton*, built for Sir Charles Dunstone to the designs of the naval architects Judel/Vrolijk. Like this boat, she has a beautiful planing hull coupled with a powerful sailplan and movable ballast. Composite sailing yachts like these are expected to surf, plane and exceed 25 knots downwind, and we do. It is achieved using new-generation carbon composites and a passion for keeping the weight low, and that’s our secret weapon over *Hamilton*. We weigh less and go faster.

“I told Luca to weigh everything that comes on board the yacht,” says Owen-Jones. “We used titanium screws to hold it all together



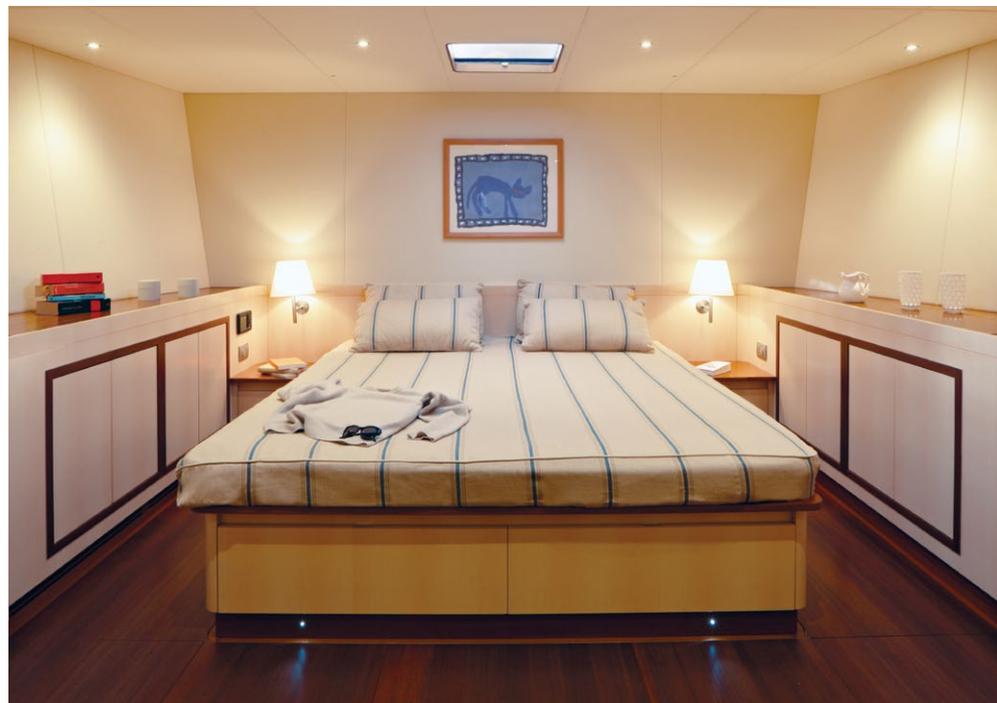
and I even offered a bonus to the shipyard workers for every pound of weight they could save during the construction process. The boat has a displacement of 50 tons. If you take out the keel and the mast, that figure drops to 18 tons, but if you want me to tell you the weight of the keel I will have to kill you as soon as I have done so, because that’s my big secret.

“We wanted a stiff boat because the more stiff she is, the faster she can sail. But I wanted her to be easy to handle, so we have employed many of the advanced Wally sail-handling features to deliver easy control for single-handed sailing, or when I want to, indulgent family cruising.”

Bassani is justifiably proud of his latest creation. He has been



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: *Magic Carpet*³ may be fast and lightweight, but that does not mean creature comforts are swept away. Belowdecks, the sofa on the starboard side has all the comforts of home; spacious and gracious, the level of luxury accommodation on this racing sailboat is to megayacht standards. Six guests are carried in three cabins, two of which feature twin beds. The master suite with its king-size bed is in the forepart of the yacht. The dining salon to port can comfortably accommodate the whole family when cruising.





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ABOVE: With the wind beginning to fill the high-tech sails, the yacht's crew gets comfortable on the weather rail.

sailing for 40 years, designing and building his first custom-built yacht for his own family in 1991. In the case of *Magic Carpet*³, he is both the exterior designer and the interior designer.

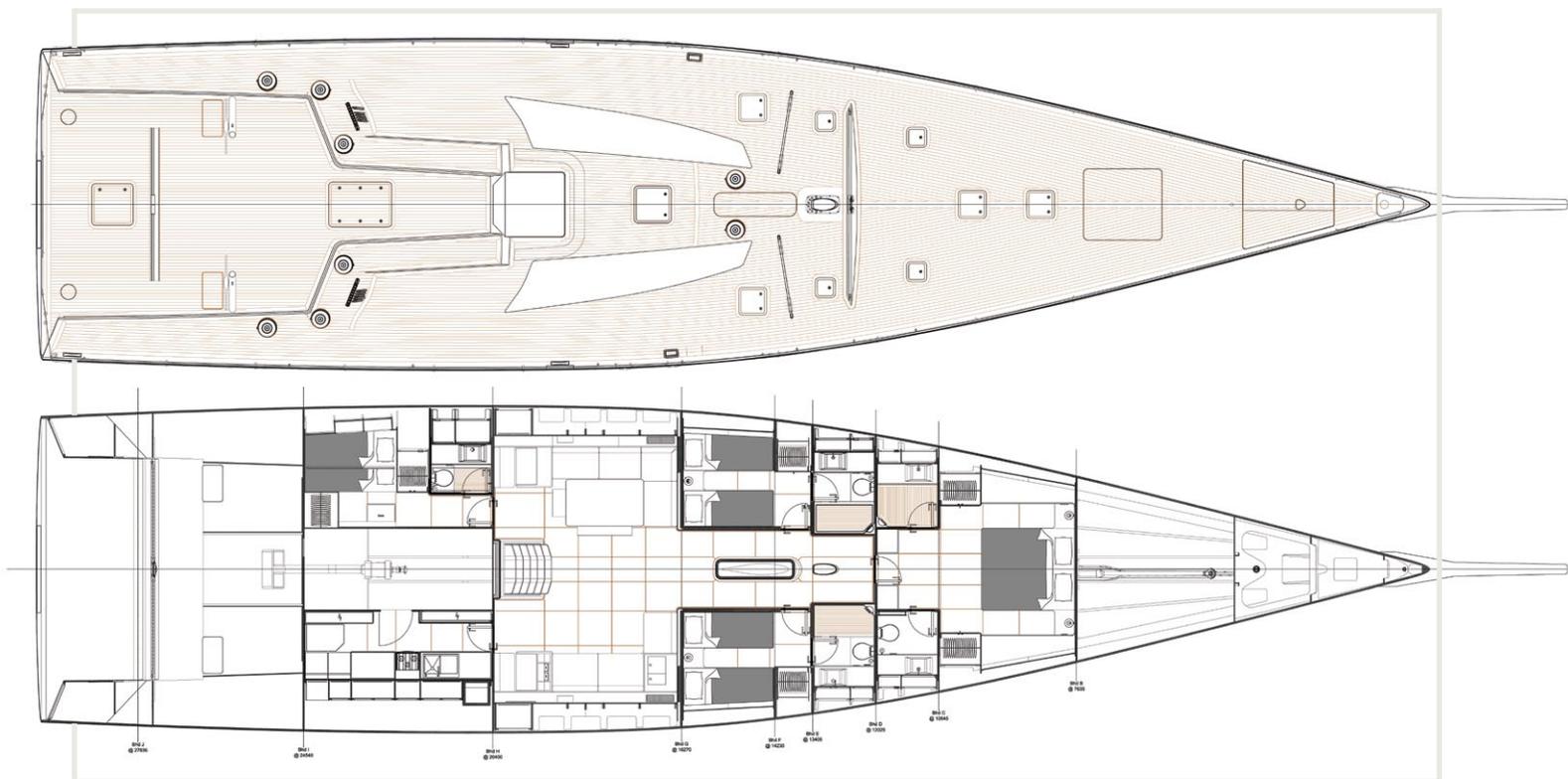
"The Wally race rules state clearly that before racing, you cannot remove anything that is normally kept on board," Bassani says. "That means everything has to weigh nothing at the start. We made the wash basins from carbon, we used an ash veneer on a honeycomb core to make the furniture, and we even put the light switches in the deckhead. There are two reasons for this: The first is that every bulkhead gives the boat structural strength and you would harm that by drilling holes through it; the second is that to run the cable down to the ordinary level of a light switch means more wiring, and every inch of wire weighs something."

Belowdecks, she is quite the cruising yacht. If anything is missing

from her comprehensive inventory, the casual onlooker is not going to spot it. This yacht has everything she needs to make a comfortable cruising holiday home. We cannot help but notice the clatter of the engine when underway and we comment accordingly.

"You are right," Bassani says when we point that out. "It is too noisy. I think we may have scrimped too much on the sound insulation and we might have to swallow the weight factor and add some more back in. Don't forget, this yacht is not for motoring. You take her out of the harbor, hoist the sails, then you fold the propeller and its shaft up inside the body of the hull to reduce drag and gain speed. There is not so much noise then."

When racing, the running of the yacht's main engine serves not to drive her forward, but to power the devices that provide the muscle to the hydraulic winches.



The naval architecture for *Magic Carpet*³ is by John Reichel and his partner Jim Pugh, who together founded and act as joint vice presidents of Reichel/Pugh Yacht Design. Born in Oyster Bay, New York, Reichel graduated from the University of Michigan's naval architecture program. He has been designing performance sailing yachts for nearly 30 years. He began as an apprentice with Doug Peterson in the early 1980s during that firm's domination of IOR racing and has gone on to create some of the fastest of all sailboats on the racing circuit.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating," Pugh adds, "and by that I mean you only have to look at recent regattas in Porto Cervo where we were pitched against *Hamilton*. She came 5th overall and we were placed 2nd."

On our run to Saint-Tropez, the magic of *Magic Carpet*³ became apparent when we realized just how fast we were sailing in so little wind. With just 6 knots of breeze, we had the yacht flying along at 10.7 knots over the ground.

Owen-Jones takes back the wheel and his eyes dart up to the tell-tales fluttering on the headsail. He flicks his wrist a fraction and the speed increases by half a knot. Asked whether there is anything he'd do to improve the yacht's performance, he ponders for a minute and says, "I cannot imagine a life without this sort of challenge in it. I love it so much. But I do admit, it would be nice if we could use hydrofoils. Think how much faster we could go." ■

For more information: +377 93 10 00 93; wally.com

WALLY *Magic Carpet*³

LOA: 100ft. (30.47m)
LWL: 97ft. 9in. (29.49m)
Beam: 23ft. 7in. (7.2m)
Draft (keel up): 14ft. 5in. (4.4m)
Draft (keel down): 20ft. 4in. (6.2m)
Sail area (main & jib): 6,889sq.ft. (640m²)
Sail area (main & asymmetric): 14,208sq.ft. (1,320m²)
Sail area/displ.: 41.3

Construction: advanced composite pre-preg intermediate modulus carbon
Displacement: 49.95 tons
Engines: 350-hp WM
Propeller: retractable
Fuel: 396 gal. (1,500L)
Generator: 1 x 15kW
Freshwater: 396 gal. (1,500L)

Classification: Germanischer Lloyd Structural Design
Naval architecture: Reichel/Pugh Yacht Design
Exterior styling: Wally/Luca Bassani
Interior design: Wally/Luca Bassani
Guest cabins: 3
Crew: 4
Builder: Wally Europe
Year: 2013