

Insider Trade

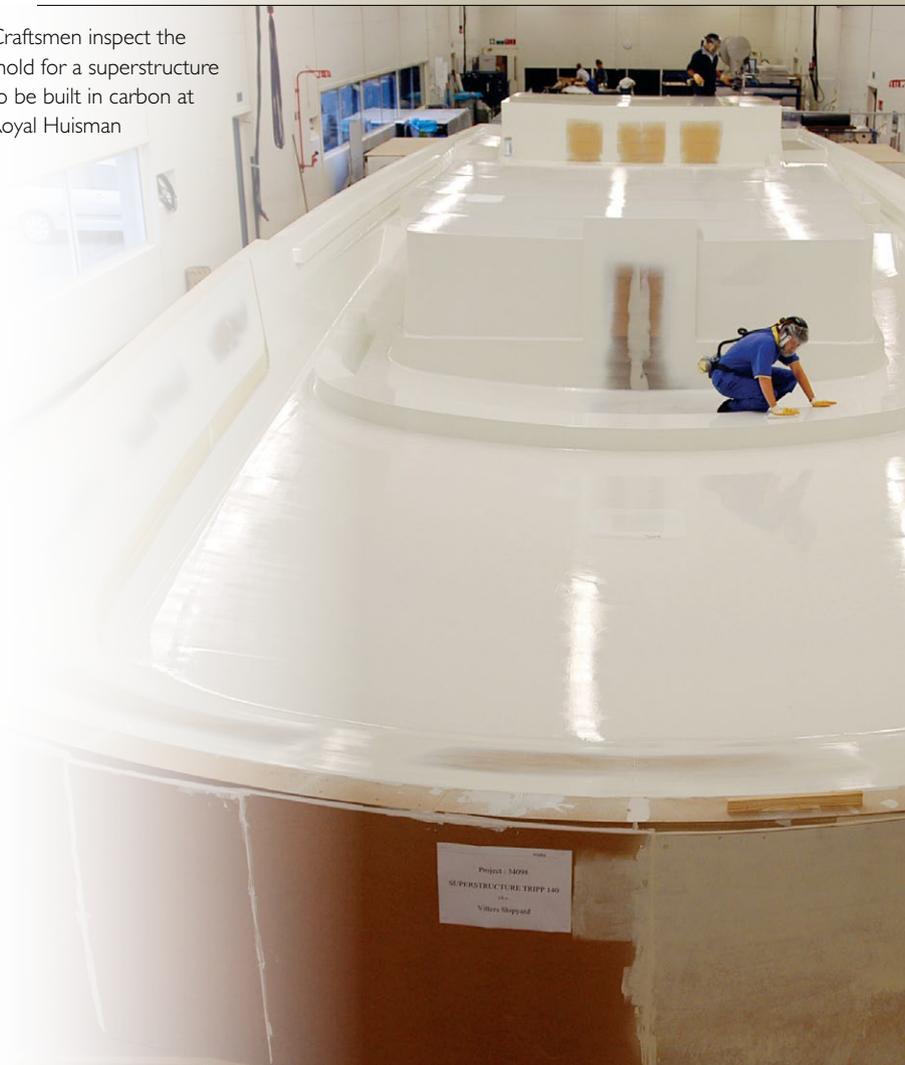
We did a little snooping around a few shipyards to find out what they're hiding. What we found were extraordinary designers and amazing craftsmen laboring in the shadows of the big yachts. We have the inside scoop.

STORY Frances and Michael Howorth

SHIPYARDS USUALLY GET THE CREDIT for building the magnificent megayachts that sail the world's oceans. We often refer to a yacht simply as a Feadship or a Burger. Occasionally, the owners and designers also receive credit for these amazing works of art that we so admire. Often overlooked are the technicians and the artisans laboring in the assembly halls or back offices, many of whom honed their skills over years of practice and learned their trade from previous generations. Today, thanks to a few of these renowned shipyards, we are able to put a spotlight on a the people who work in the shadows of the big yachts. The common thread is passion.

MASTER CRAFTSMEN AT WORK

Craftsmen inspect the mold for a superstructure to be built in carbon at Royal Huisman





A close-knit team takes pride in the exceptional finish of the Feadship yachts

Detailed work at...



Christensen Yachts...



Moonen...



Fairline...



and Benetti



Burger USA

MILLWORK MANAGER

Gene Gauthier joined the Burger Boat Company as a carpenter in 1980.

Initially, he installed bulkheads and cabinetry in the crew areas. Eventually, he acquired enough experience to work in guest accommodations and exterior fit-out. And then, he advanced to boat leader, boat manager and production control manager. Today Gene manages the millwork department at Burger's 50,000-square-foot joinery facility.

"Burger incorporates a philosophy of continuous improvement, utilizing lean principles," Gauthier said. "That philosophy and those principles, combined with my in-depth knowledge of yacht construction, help me guide and mentor the joinery craftsmen. I am responsible for overseeing the construction and joinery installation of the yachts' interiors.

Our team builds cabinets, furniture, doors, stairways, wood flooring, bulkheads and overheads, as well as any fabricated wood exterior components.

"I enjoy all aspects of yacht design and construction processes, as well as the unique challenges each new yacht presents. Creating a finished yacht involves extensive planning and the alignment of all trades. It is a very rewarding experience, one in which

Feadship The Netherlands

CHIEF PAINTER

He stepped out of the spraying tent. His boiler suit was taped up at the wrists with sticky tape, his face wrinkled from the solvent mask that he removed to speak to us. His hair was white. It could have been either from his age and experience or the fallout from the white paint he had just applied to the gleaming Feadship under the tent. "Hi, I am Rees Tomlas," he said.

Tomlas has been working at Feadship for nine years and heads the paint department. Giving a hull a perfect finish is painstaking and arduous work, but Tomlas and his team take care of each other to achieve the best results.

"Team building is fairly important so we work hard at it. I believe when my team is well motivated then they listen, learn quickly and get the result we are striving for.

"You need to hold the concentration when you are spraying. My team talks and jokes a lot as they get ready to work. But when they go into the tent to start spraying, they are very quiet because they are all concentrating totally.

"It can get very uncomfortable while wearing the correct personal protection equipment (PPE), which we all do. We wear safety spectacles—goggles or visors—nitrile rubber gloves, overalls and have to ensure none of our skin is exposed. We all wear coveralls and we tape up the wrists and legs of each other's suits to make sure we are each very well protected.

"It is possible to make some very nice work here because we have the time to make it nice. Of course, we are under pressure to do the job well but we are never told to do the job quickly. We are allowed the time to get it right," Tomlas said.

"The training our team receives makes sure the finishes we achieve is to, and frequently beyond, our own high standards. You need to practice professionalism, expertise and experience to achieve the ultimate in yacht finishes and that is what we do here all the time.

"Good is not good enough for me. What matters is always getting better because the level is very, very high. It's always a challenge, but that's what I like. It's very important to me because my life is here."



Insider Trade

everyone involved feels a great sense of pride and accomplishment.

"I work closely with our carpenters and interior finishers to ensure that the interior-joiner package properly integrates with the vessel's systems throughout the build process. This often means I have to liaise and work closely with our in-house joiner design team.

"My work can be seen in Burger's more recent launches: *Ingot*, *Tō-Kalòn*, *Sycara IV*, *Sea Owl* and *Lady Gayle Marie*, as well as many other Burgers seen throughout the world.

"If I had to single out my most memorable piece of work, it would probably be the interior of *Sycara IV*. The joinery package is very intricate and provided challenges in both design and execution. The interior features madrone burl veneer with accents of ebony, padauk and sycamore inlay. This proved to be a very interesting challenge, as each piece of veneer needed to be hand selected and properly mapped to indicate its final location in the yacht.

"Additionally, the interior featured several stainless-steel components that needed to be properly integrated into the joinery. The exterior includes a considerable amount of detailed teak features, including teak cladding around the front third of the yacht, plus several custom teak cabinets and other specialty features, including a hand-carved name board and bow trail boards."



Christensen USA

SHIPYARD LEAD CARPENTER

Patrick Kannianen has worked in the carpentry department at Christensen Shipyards for more than 13 years. In that time, he has helped to craft and install the interiors of at least 15 Christensen yachts. Currently he is the carpentry lead man and oversees the installation of all of the interior-décor items, from the wall panels and cabinetry to the artwork and furniture.

"With a background in residential interior carpentry, I was hired on the spot. My first seven years were spent installing all things shiny in the yacht interior," Kannianen said. "More recently, I stepped in to build the mold for the first Ocean Alexander 120 and set the superstructure components for other yachts currently under construction. I am currently working on project *Perfect Pursuit*, a Custom 50M Series yacht set to launch in June. Working through it, room by room, I can sense that she is getting closer to completion.

"Eighty percent of my day is spent working with my crew of about 20 carpenters and the other 20 percent of the day I spend with the electrical, plumbing and HVAC departments, coordinating when and where different elements are installed.

"I also get the pleasure of working hand in hand with project managers and clients to make sure the interior is completed to the high standards for which we are known.

"As a carpenter, my most memorable piece of work was when I installed all of the major elements of the main foyer on the 157-foot *Liquidity II*. Watching her transform with each radial wall panel and watching her change from start to finish was awesome.

"The most gratifying part of my job comes when it is finished. I enjoy looking back to the first moment I stepped on board carrying the first stud, to installing the last wall panel, and to the moment when I enjoyed a cigar and glass of wine with the owner at delivery; the whole process is incredible."



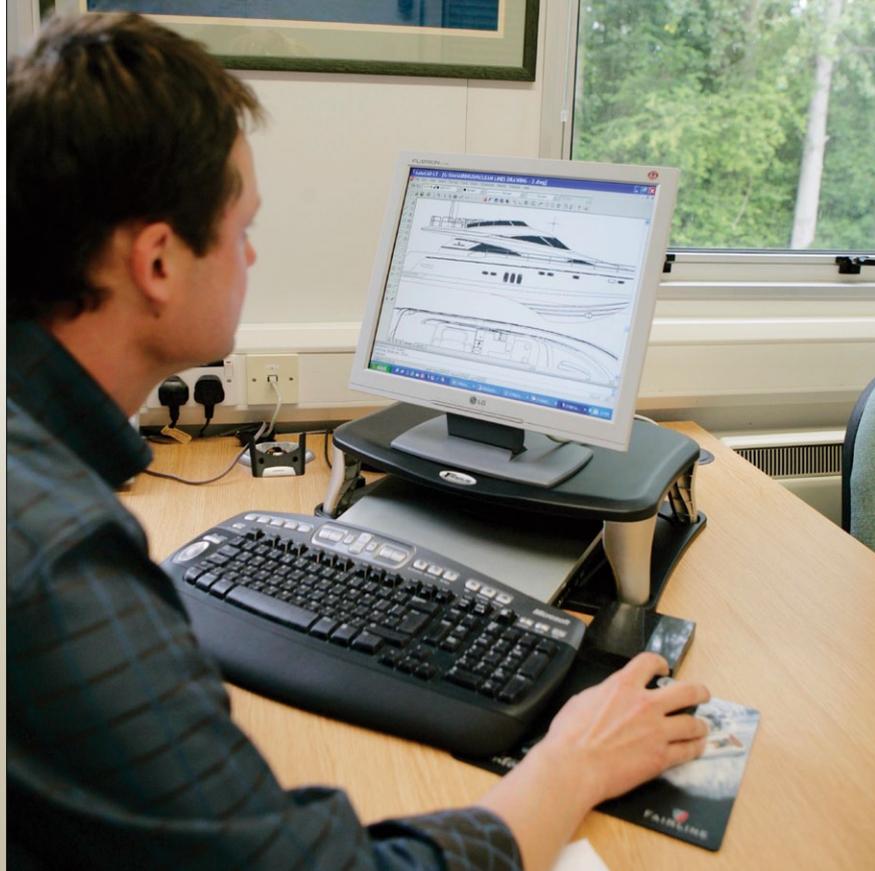
Benetti Italy

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Mauro Izzo, an interior designer of custom megayachts at Benetti, has worked at the company's sprawling Livorno shipyard since 2001. It's a job he loves as we immediately grasped when we visited his office. The sprawling shipyard, located on a historic facility on the Livorno waterfront, was abuzz with activity. Yachts in late stages of commissioning, lined the marina. A few were propped up on the yard, and more hide in the huge metal buildings that are the assembly halls. A visitors' gallery near the arched entrance with a cobblestone-paved street was filled with models of Benetti yachts past and present. "Look," Izzo said, waving his hand at his surroundings, "here it is possible to express my passion for design. You have to have passion to do my job and here in Livorno, we are surrounded by people who share that passion. It would be difficult to work here if we did not all love it so very much.

"Recently, I worked on *Bistango*, a yacht of over 200 feet, and the slightly smaller *Ocean Paradise*, at 180 feet. Currently I am working on a yacht we know only as FB267, because her South American owner has yet to give her a name. For him, it will be his first Benetti, and I do not know who is more excited about how she will turn out—him or me!

"Perhaps my most memorable piece of work was *Latinou*, now named *Latitude*. This 170-footer has won many international awards for her interior and that made me feel very proud," Izzo said. "I have no preferences for a classic or a modern interior. What I like to do is create an atmosphere and a project that can make the owner really proud. François Zuretti has been a great influence, and one day, let's say in 10 years or so, I would love to head up my own design studio just like he has done."



Fairline UK

DESIGN MANAGER

Andrew Pope started working at UK-based Fairline Boats' design department in 1993. He joined the company from Coventry University on a work-placement scheme, and this year marks his 20th anniversary at the company. As part of Fairline's in-house design department, he works on new-model design, inside and out.

"I work with the concept team and with a team of five designers, interior designers and engineers. As you would expect, I also work with a broader range of people across the business to assist with costings, sales, new product testing and dealer relations," Pope said.

"I have worked on all of our new models, which include our Squadron 60, Targa 62 Gran Turismo, the new range of 48-foot models and a revised Targa 38, which we launched at the London Boat Show. She features a high-low bathing platform—a great design achievement on the smallest model in our range.

"My most memorable project would have to be the launch of the Squadron 74—at the time, the flagship of our range. We launched this model in 2002 at the Tower of London, and it was a project I worked on from beginning to end. I was responsible for the concept line drawings right through to the final sea trials and the prestigious customer launch.

"In my role I face many interesting challenges, and we spend a lot of time perfecting every element of our motoryachts to ensure everything we offer is the best in its class and created to the best of our ability, with careful attention to detail and practical elements.

"Our design department is ever evolving to respond to customer and market demands, and this has led to the creation of numerous class-leading yachts and bespoke systems, such as the Fairline Tender Launch and the high-low bathing platform."



Royal Huisman The Netherlands

CARBON COMPOSITE WORKSHOP FOREMAN

Recruited into the Royal Huisman team by Wolter Huisman in 1988, Jan Boes has just celebrated his 25th year with the company. He was hired for his expertise in hull preparation and spray-painting but rather quickly changed direction. "I remember Wolter telling me that we had won a very special order: We were to build the 156-foot sloop *Hyperion*. It wasn't just her size and styling that was special, it was the fact that she would have a carbon mast 197 feet tall and a carbon boom—and that I would have to help build them," Boes said. "If building carbon spars for the first time was a challenge, so too was the fact that our team had first to design and build a composite construction hall to house the project.

"The project's success launched both the yard and myself into a new area of construction and gave me a new career path to follow," Boes said. Indeed, the carbon department developed into a separate company under the same ownership known as Rondal, which builds masts and specialty carbon parts, such as steering wheels, rudders, swim stairs and hatches, not only for Royal Huisman but other sailboat builders around the world. It is detailed and technical work that requires a very special facility and skilled craftsmen.

"I am currently working on a 194-foot composite mast for a classic sloop in build here and am busy preparing to build a 246-foot main mast and a 197-foot mizzen mast for a new project at Perini Navi in Italy," Boes said.

"I never forget my past as a yacht painter because it gives you such a good technical appreciation. It focuses you on the need for perfection at every stage of the build process—a perfect mold for a perfect mast, a perfect mast for a perfect paint job and so on.

"I always try and think further than the next step. As a team, we should always be thinking of the impact of our work on each other's jobs, and on the final result. And that could hardly be more important than when we build out our first carbon hull—something that may not be too far off, as I know it's high on the yard's agenda."

Vicem Turkey

MASTER CRAFTSMAN

It was 1979 when Hasan Usta first started working on wooden boats in Küçükçekmece, Istanbul. He was just 12 years old. "It was my first job and I began working for a small factory as an apprentice. I was very excited," Usta said.

"Woodworking has always been in my blood; my grandfather was known as the best carpenter in town. He was renowned for building handcrafted wooden houses. Inevitably, his interest in woodwork and construction materials got my attention in those early days of childhood.

"At the age of 22, with 10 years of experience under my belt, I decided to start my own business with a partner. It was 1990 when I started to build my very first wooden boat all by myself. She was 85 feet long and she caused me many sleepless nights, as I worried about her and my ability to complete the work. But if I learned anything on that project, it was that you should always trust your own instinct and do what you feel is right.

"I worked long and hard and eventually finished the boat, delivering it to a very happy owner. At the same time as I was building her I also built an 18-foot open boat, again handcrafted in wood,



and I took her to Düsseldorf where I had her on display at the boat show," Usta said. "In 1994 I met with Sebahattin Hafizoglu, the founder and now chairman of Vicem Yachts, and began working for him." Although Vicem recently launched a few composite yachts, the yard is well known for its wooden boats, built using the cold-molding construction technique. Hasan fit right in.

"I love working with wood; it is a very strong material. However, its strength is unidirectional, meaning you can easily bend the wood in one direction but it can break if you try to bend it in the other direction. Binding together several layers of wood at 90-degree angles makes the hull much stronger in resisting the complex set of forces that affect vessels in a seaway," Usta said. "Preventing the hull from absorbing too much moisture is crucial. Many woods are two or even three times stronger when dry than they are when saturated with moisture. The cold-molding system aims to keep the wood dry.

"Through this method, the hull skin is built upon a wood frame in four directional layers of African or South American mahogany (sapele) composite planking. Every piece of wood in the hull structure is coated with epoxy formulated for cold-molded construction. The epoxy soaks deep into the wood, sealing it off from moisture and oxygen. Keeping the water out means no swelling and no rotting. The glued joints are firmly bonded for long periods of time.

"I don't accept compromise and mistakes. It is vital to deal with each detail during the whole production process."



Moonen The Netherlands

CARPENTRY MANAGER

Jos van Dongen, now 33, started with Moonen Shipyards as an apprentice carpenter when he was just 16 years old. He had studied engineering, computers and AutoCad design at school, but these occupations were not for him. "It is not my thing to sit at a desk or computer. I prefer being out on the shop floor with the other guys and to see boats, rather than computer screens," van Dongen said.

"But I know that this is the era of high technology and I have no regrets that I studied engineering and computers, because now I can change drawings and explain the changes to the men. I used to be the youngest and had to do all the common chores. Now I can tell the younger guys to do those chores, because it is good training for them, as it was for me.

"For the last six years I have been running the carpentry and paintwork departments. I work with designers, engineers, painters and interior suppliers, such as soft fabric creators, stainless-steel fabricators, stonemasons, interior architects and project managers. And sometimes I am in direct contact with the client.

"I am currently working on the 137-foot *Sofia*. Sometimes we have to outsource some aspects of the interior; but for *Sofia* we have done everything here in-house. Because she is such a big boat, our biggest here at Moonen until now, this has been a real adventure for me!

"Now I am working on our 100 Explorer yacht. This is a typical classic interior with solid moldings, which gives the yacht a strong and robust feeling.

"I am also involved in the refit of the six-year-old Moonen 84 *Etoile d'Azur*. She is a much-traveled yacht and has even crossed the Atlantic on her own bottom and will do so again after the refit. Even though she has been used a lot, she is still in pristine condition. It is nice to work on a refit for such a passionate client!"

