

# You Sail Me Crazy

July 2013

Frances and Michael Howorth asked some of the top names in the super yacht industry to answer the following question: "*What is the weirdest/craziest request you have had from a client during the building of his yacht?*" Here are just some of their more printable answers.

## **Jonathan Beckett, CEO of Burgess**

The weirdest and craziest request was from a lovely client who suddenly decided it was essential to install an English Garden on deck complete with a real grass lawn. The reason? To make the family dog feel at home! We even had to buy a lawn mower and employ a gardener!

## **Tim Hodgdon, President of Hodgdon Yachts**

Over the years we have had many requests to add unique features to their projects. One such was on a 38 metre modern built classic sailboat to include in its interior, a custom pipe organ, a wood burning fireplace and a wooden bathtub of complex curvature. These requests added to the unique aspect of this sailboat's extraordinary interior.

## **Maurizio Magri, CEO Kaiserwerft**

One owner had to explain to me why, despite adoring his wife they had to have separate ensuite cabins on opposite sides of a corridor. "*She walks in her sleep,*" he told me "*and although she cannot ever remember doing so in the morning, she can wake me up by hitting me during her walk. If we put her cabin on the other side of a wooden floored alleyway I will hear her coming and prepare myself.*"

## **Rodney Martin, Managing Director Fitzroy Yachts**

Owner's rep came on board late in the build, thought that the saloon cabin wouldn't be tall enough to accommodate the Owners cowboy hat, and asked us for a variation to raise the saloon roof by 100mm. The variation came back at several hundred thousand - and the next day it was approved by the owner!

### **Vincenzo Poerio, CEO Benetti Yachts**

One that comes to my mind was in 2005. The Owner of *Ambrosia III* had a passion for astronomy and wanted a planetarium inside the sky lounge. He wanted it to simulate a real night view of the stars, planets and constellations. It had to be able to change and rotate (and open) according to the real boat position in terms of latitude and longitude. We did it of course, gaining at the same time a deep knowledge in complex astronomy!

### **Francis Lapp, President, Sunreef Yachts**

I remember once a Client coming with his laptop and showing me a video simulation of one of our big catamarans literally walking out of the water on giant legs and walking up the beach. He said it was his dream to have such kind of boat and wanted Sunreef Yachts to build it. Obviously it was impossible but we had some good laugh together.

### **Iñigo Toledo, Barracuda Yacht Design Ltd**

Certainly the most radical request that we ever had was from the Owner of *Akalam* to have some windows like at home. He said: *"I want it like this"*, making gestures with his arms (something like 3x1m size). Happily we managed to get away with a sequence of four 0.9x0.65m windows. But the problem came again when he said: *"Yes, and in the dining room as well"* This was where the mast section was, so our yacht began to resemble an Emmental cheese. Not easy at all. The dining room sole is now level with the sea surface, so it feels like you could almost walk out onto the water.

### **Jonny Horsfield. Owner and Design Director, H2 Yacht Design**

The sweetest request we had came from a couple who wanted a window between the bathroom and the bedroom so that they could talk to each other whilst the other was in the bath! We had another client who did not want to waste space with clothes storage. Every night he simply threw all his clothes on to the floor and would find what he wanted the next morning from the pile around him!

### **Marcel Onkenhout, CEO, Oceanco**

At the early stages of the design our Naval Architects, the Designers and the Owner were discussing the position of the heli-deck and the swimming pool. No one could agree and finally the owner stood up from the table and declared *"Make the pool larger and we will land the helicopter on top of it!"* The rest is history.

### **Roland Kruger, CEO Newcruise**

Life is never dull designing super yachts but one of the most amusing requests we had was from someone very serious. He needed to have his yacht so well equipped from potential threats that we even went as far as designing a stylish vehicle to keep on board for use by him and his family to escape in, should they ever be attacked. The brief called for a high speed, had to have Kevlar armour plating craft capable of surviving chemical, biological, nuclear and rocket attacks. Even a mounting position for an anti aircraft gun system on the upper deck had to be investigated. The idea was eventually dropped when he realised how expensive it would be to say nothing of the legal burden it would bring with it!

### **Rupert Mann, Rainsford Mann Design Ltd.**

Over the years many a request has been far reaching and challenging but usually mixed with modicum of sanity but the bar was raised when a client requested we incorporate a mini version of the owners' suite for Bart, their pet monkey! The "Simeon Suite" as it became known, was even to have its own galley to enable Bart's favourite snacks to be prepared. Unfortunately due to international quarantine laws this idea never really got off the ground further than the paper it was designed on !

### **Tim Saunders, Tim Saunders Yacht Design**

I remember joining a client on board his private aircraft for a trip to Turkey to visit a yacht he was planning to convert. On the way, he asked me what I would design for him if he were to build a new yacht. I took out my sketchpad and began draw. I gave him my first thoughts, 3 hours later as we landed in Turkey. At the meeting in the shipyard he stunned everybody, including me, when he scrapped the conversion project and held my drawings in the air. Then he said, "*Gentlemen we are going to build a brand new 50 metre, and here is what she is going to look like.*"

### **Luca Bassani Antivari, President of Wally**

I recall one occasion that clashes somewhat with the laws of physics where an owner asked for at least two metres of cabin headroom using only one and half metres of height! Another wanted a lift capable of going up to the top of the mast with his guests so they could drink and watch the sun set. We managed to persuade him that a chopper would do it much more efficiently and safely. My favourite however, was the guest who wanted his 50 metre yacht to have a glass bottom so that he did not need to get wet while watching the fish. He wanted it to be a sort of sailing snorkeling, or snorkeling while couch potatoing experience.