

LUXURY

LUXURY MAGAZINE

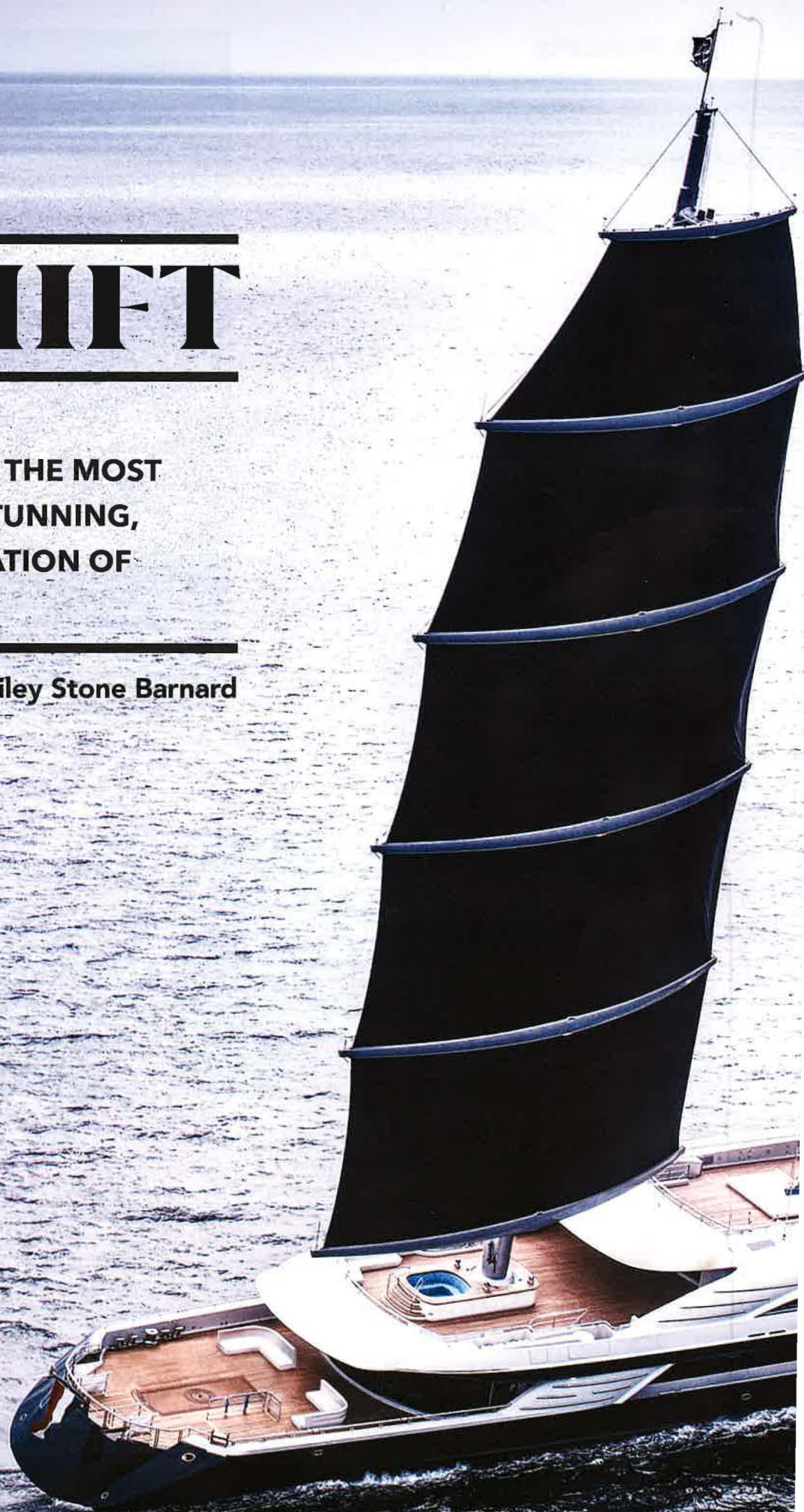
SUMMER 2019



TIDAL SHIFT

TODAY'S MOST ECO-CONSCIOUS SUPERYACHTS ARE ALSO AMONG THE MOST DESIGN-DRIVEN AND VISUALLY STUNNING, HELPING COMPEL A NEW GENERATION OF YACHT BUYERS TO GO GREEN.

by Bailey Stone Barnard



The 350-foot *Black Pearl*, built by Oceanco, is currently the world's second-largest sailing yacht and touted as the most advanced.



Courtesy Oceanco/Francisco Martinez

YACHTING'S LEANER LOOKS

DESIGN TRENDS AREN'T JUST FOR LANDLUBBERS. A NEW GENERATION'S TASTES ARE RESHAPING YACHT INTERIORS.



The lifestyle choices, ecological awareness, and contemporary aesthetics of a younger generation of yacht buyers are changing the décor on luxury boats. We sat down with three world-famous yacht designers—Guillaume Rolland, principal and yacht design director of Liaigre; architect Achille Salvagni; and Jim Dixon, director of yachts and aviation at Winch—to talk about how they are rethinking the way they outfit modern pleasure craft.

Q: Obviously, every design brief depends on the client and differs accordingly. But generally speaking, what is most obvious about the new interior aesthetic?

SALVAGNI: What has changed is the approach to what you associate with the luxury experience.

The new aesthetic is more connected to nature. It's very clean, calm, sophisticated—still exclusive, but not overdone.

The new wealthy generation understands that what their father thought of as luxury is different from what they desire. Luxury is not any longer gold, expensive rare woods, and precious materials.

ROLLAND: We do a beautiful interior in a classic way, but clean it up. A cornice used to be a crown molding that unified the room with a single line. But you can do the same thing with a shadow gap. Using less and less materials is definitely the path. The last yacht we delivered was

all teak and white with a few touches of dark woods.

DIXON: The swing in the barometer of the market you're talking about is less relevant to Winch. We are launching five yachts this year and they couldn't be more different. One is modern, but classically proportioned. The interiors are "young classical," ornate but not heavy. Our owners are getting a bit younger, and their appreciation of what luxury means is definitely changing.

Q: There also seems to be a shift away from approaching yacht interiors like a residential job—revealing the hull more, for example, rather than using straight angles and walls to make it something more rectilinear.

DIXON: Again, it depends on the brief. One art collector's yacht is extremely residential in feel, primarily because it is their main residence, so it's designed

in a way that addresses that brief. And we're still working with clients who are later in years and have a different, slightly more conventional perception of what luxury stands for.

ROLLAND: It's a very conservative industry and for good reason. On yachts, you can't change very much. You have a logical spine that you cannot alter. We are expanding on the model of a very small yacht; we're not trying to put an apartment into a yacht. It's a real mathematical game.

SALVAGNI: I have never transformed any yacht into a floating penthouse filled with antiques and furniture. A yacht is closer to a spaceship or an airplane than a house. You cannot create an interior without connecting it to the setting. The yacht has no roots at all. It moves. You can't connect it to anything in particular. You have to connect to the DNA of the object itself. That's why I never use square angles. That's not related to the sense of movement.

Q: How is that reflected in the choice of furnishings and the feel of the spaces?

ROLLAND: You have a grammar and lexicon of a particular subject. If you have no context, it's just a table with four legs. Furniture can be too big or too small. Ours is a millimetric precision.

SALVAGNI: I use soft shapes that look organic, as if they are shaped by the wind. The volumes create themselves naturally. When you have the opportunity to create a bespoke project, it does not make sense to fill it with furniture and objects that are designed by someone else or readily available on the market. I'm an architect and I need to



shape space rather than decorate with a painting or furnishings. Also, I rarely select pieces from the land and put them on a boat because the proportions don't work. The height of regular furniture doesn't work when compared to the low ceiling of a boat. Some pieces can act as a reference to residential comfort, which is still a necessity. But the best way is always to mix elements; for example, bespoke pieces with a few interesting 20th-century pieces.

DIXON: What we absolutely hold dear is our attention to detail and to injecting a spirit that identifies the project—whether that's a use of a particular material or an artwork we help develop.

Q: What are some of the influences that are changing the younger generation's sense of luxury?

DIXON: They're more ecologically aware. There's not so much plastic on board. Most clients are very particular about not using synthetic materials that are harmful to the environment. And they want to make sure they're not mining things out of the ground that have taken centuries to grow.

SALVAGNI: They'd rather save rare species of woods and stones and instead use ones that are beautiful and luxurious, but not endangered. Exoticism in luxury is not attractive to millennials.

ROLLAND: The newer generation is more aware of the message they are sending into the world. Yachts have gotten smaller; 50 to 90 meters will be the norm. Instead of a 15-person crew, you need 10.

DIXON: There are plenty of very large yachts being built if you look at the data. But there are also plenty of 70-meter boats. The majority of deliveries is between 65 and 70 meters.

Q: Has the usage of the yacht also changed?

ROLLAND: It used to be more about a show of status and money. But it has melted more into a pleasure boat for family use. It has to do with a feeling of well-being more than taste. People want to bring home what they experience in a hotel—saunas, spas, even hairdressers. You're creating your own rules, so you have no limit.

DIXON: Clients want water toys, health and wellness facilities, more spaces devoted to a Zen mindfulness.

SALVAGNI: It is no longer about volume and dimension and making an impression; instead, it's about the experience. The trend is to be a little more practical. There are pantries in the kitchen where you can prepare your own cappuccino and enjoy that experience instead of ringing a bell and having it brought to you. Also, 20 years ago there was

Clockwise from opposite: The classic yet modernized interior of *Cloudbreak* by Liaigre; the top-deck lounge on *Endeavour* features the signature soft shapes and round edges of Achille Salvagni's designs; *New Secret* shows off Winch's sophisticated artistry.

such a complexity of technology onboard. To switch on a light or TV, you had to call someone from the crew to help you. Now switches are discreet, however, you can easily find them.

Q: What about the trend in so-called "explorer yachts"? Is that on the rise, and how does it affect the design?

DIXON: People want to get to places beyond the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, to the far corners of the world.

The design has to be about looking—observation rooms, open sundecks that become viewing platforms, a greater connection between interior and exterior spaces.

ROLLAND: In terms of the interior-exterior relation, it is disappearing. There is a clear request to have fewer raised thresholds, and the least number of steps possible between the

cockpit and the main saloon. Clients also say, 'We want you to design furniture for both the interior and exterior as one holistic approach.' And it influences the palette when you know you're spending three weeks in Greenland or Alaska. You want a cozy interior. It's like when you return from skiing; you want to be in a ski chalet, not an all-white interior.

Q: Any last thoughts?

SALVAGNI: Design has become interdisciplinary. With the web there has been a wider range of options, which has dramatically changed the scenario. What could be attractive in the fashion world can be used in other areas of design. We no longer consider it outside of one kind of design or another. Our field has to be updated with the same clever, sharp approach you would use in any other luxury experience. The rules are the same.

ROLLAND: I see no particular connection to fashion, except in the love for craftsmanship. With globalization, doing things quicker and cheaper, it's one of the last disciplines in which we can keep craftsmanship alive. It's one reason luxury is still very strong. >

—Jorge S. Arango

