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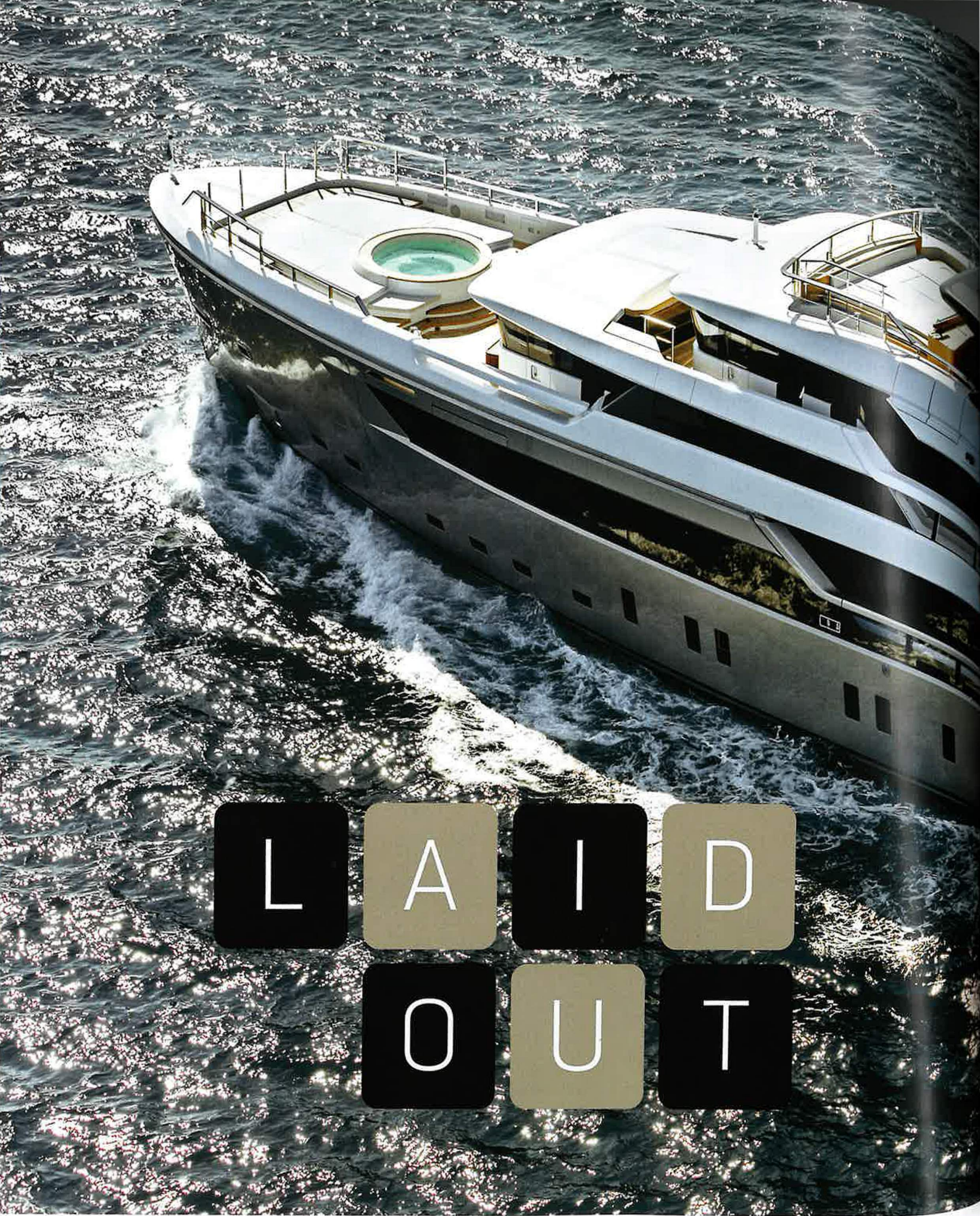
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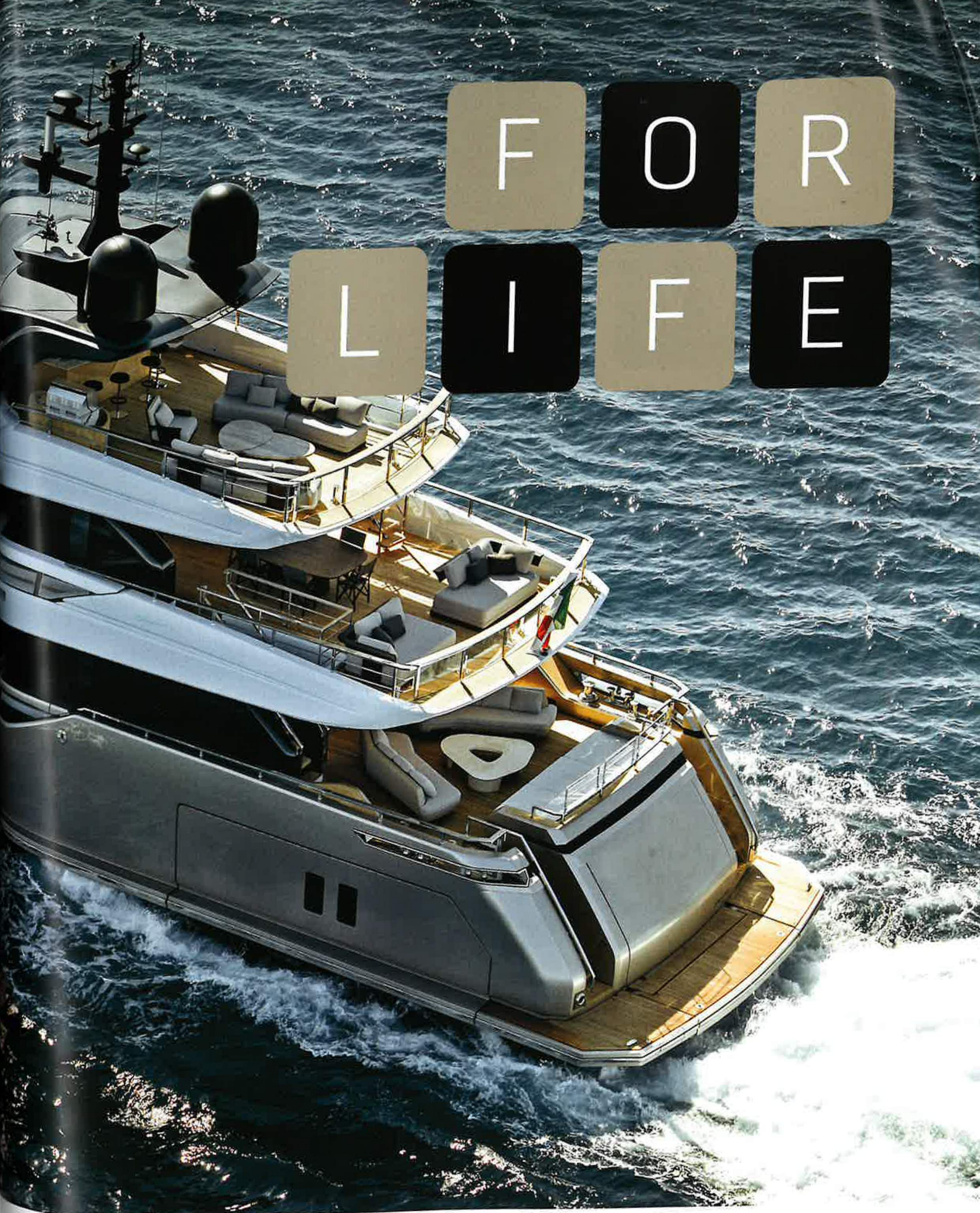
ADMIRAL'S NEW FLAGSHIP BREAKS THE MOULD

WHO KILLED THE KING? Inside one of yachting's most enduring mysteries





Photography: GUILLAUME PLISSON (exteriors); MARK SEELEN (interiors)



Hull No 3 in Sanlorenzo's latest Alloy series brings a whole new philosophy to superyacht design, says *Cecile Gauert*





When the owner took delivery of his new yacht, it was the very first time he'd seen it. He had never cupped his hand around the perfectly shaped banister, or run his fingertips across the silk-like finish of the coffee table in the saloon. He had never stepped into his cabin, sized up the wardrobe or turned on the taps in the bathroom. Hull No 3 of Sanlorenzo's 44Alloy series was built at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. With travel restrictions and quarantines creating barriers everywhere, the owner had to wait for the yacht to get to his part of the world before he could see it, says Guillaume Rolland, director of yacht design at Christian Liaigre, who was responsible for the yacht's interior design.

The client, a self-made man who enjoys good cigars, fine whisky and belting songs into a microphone in lively karaoke sessions, approached Liaigre to create the "Asian style with a French touch" he desired for the yacht's interior. "He wanted to find his roots in the boat, so he wanted a design that evokes Asia, but with a French touch," says Rolland.

Due to the pandemic, very few people had a chance to see the Sanlorenzo 44Alloy. The Italian shipyard introduced the concept from the drawing board of Zuccon International Project in 2017. The studio designed the yacht's exterior and layout, and delivered the first two hulls in 2020 and 2021. The first hull, *H1*, had a Zuccon-designed interior; hull two's interior was penned by German design practice Studio ASH; and the third has Liaigre's original interior – so original that it reportedly raised a few eyebrows at the shipyard before the finished product won everyone over. The owner of the third 44Alloy prefers to remain private, including disclosing the yacht's name, but, fortunately, he has allowed the designer and the shipyard to show off what they have created.

"The woodwork is out of this world," says chief architect Bernardo Zuccon, appreciatively. Zuccon does not like to use the word innovation. However, with the 44Alloy – the first he developed entirely for Sanlorenzo – he took a very different approach to the design and the life on board. "The 44Alloy was a very important step for my career because it was my first experience in exploring what I like to call the issue of how to create new living areas," he says.

He loves to study the history of architecture and draws inspiration from some of the most outstanding practitioners of the 20th century. In this case, the man who gave him the creative spark was Adolf Loos. His Raumplan concept broke away from tradition in architecture to focus on creating an experience through interconnected spaces. Raumplan refers to a three-dimensional way of thinking in order to enrich how spaces are lived in. Instead of approaching the design with a side sketch, as he may have done many times before, Zuccon started with a cross section of one key space – the owner's cabin. "I started my study of this yacht from this section," he says. He wanted to change the way people experience the space on board. "You can't get lost on a yacht," he says. "When I speak about 45-metre yachts, 100 per cent of times, you have the cockpit, main deck area, owner's cabin, then upper saloon, the wheelhouse. So it was my first idea to create a sort of jungle inside where you can get lost, and you can find different points of view."





Interior design studio Liaigre creates an architecture scenario for which it draws furniture as characters.

It's a new direction for yacht design that has produced unexpected visual delights on board





The upper saloon, a darker retreat ideal for the owner's karaoke evenings, is a fusion of cultural influences. The green onyx bar recalls the jade of Asia, whereas the arched doors could be from a castle or church in Europe

Unusually, the owner's suite spreads over three levels on a yacht that's just shy of 44 metres in length. A lobby is on the main deck. The bedroom suite, including a large wardrobe and a bathroom, is on one level a few steps below, and a well-lit space surrounded by glass is a few steps above the owner's main deck lobby. Zuccon likes to call this space between the main deck and wheelhouse deck "the mezzanine" – a bit of a secret space which can be used in several ways: as an office, a reading room, a small gym or a private lounge.

Many historical buildings throughout the world, and in Italy in particular, have such spaces, he remarks.

"The innovative concept of the owner's area, conceived as a private apartment of 147 square metres, is probably the key selling point of this owner-centric vessel, as it is a solution never seen before on a superyacht of this size," says Ferruccio Rossi, the president of Sanlorenzo's Superyacht Division. "Everyone falls in love with it."

Another key space in this model is the 65-square-metre beach club, which opens on three

sides. "I like to think that the first reason you are on board a yacht is because you love the sea, and it means you want to be very close to the sea," says Zuccon, who likes the well-ingrained solution of a beach club that can be enclosed during passages. "Yachts have two different behaviours: one is when you are cruising; and one is when you are in a bay. So when you are cruising, it's nice to have a place that is less open to the sea and feels safe, but when you are anchored in the bay, you open this platform and you really can touch the sea," he says.

Between these two spaces, he drew the rest of the yacht, but admits it was challenging, especially from the exterior design standpoint. He extrapolated from Loos the idea that there are two ways to experience a space: from the perspective of an outsider (someone on a quay), and from the perspective of the end user. "There is the public and the private dimension," he says, adding that he doesn't believe that yacht design should exist just to show off.

So, unlike the original in the Alloy series – the groundbreaking 40Alloy, introduced in 2007 with its gull-wing doors – the 44Alloy, despite its novel

approach to life on board and exciting spaces, looks more classic. The aim there, says Zuccon, is to create something enduring, something that won't go out of fashion any time soon. It's also quite challenging to decipher which decks correspond with specific spaces from the outside, and that's on purpose. It keeps onlookers guessing, and the interior private. Despite the abundance of outlandish concepts, yachts that emerge from shipyards, especially those under 50 metres, seldom focus on reinventing space on board.

It is not the case with Liaigre. The French studio has worked on the interior of several yachts, but they haven't often had the chance to showcase their work. Their preference is to do everything from the layout to the accessories and furniture, which are a large part of their brand recognition. While they have showrooms worldwide, on custom projects they design the furniture as characters in the story they are trying to tell. But this interior is genuinely fresh, from the flow to the materials used. Sanlorenzo has encouraged innovation through partnerships with big-name designers sometimes new to yacht design.



"WITH 45-METRE YACHTS, 100 PER CENT OF THEM HAVE THE COCKPIT, MAIN DECK, OWNER'S CABIN, UPPER SALOON AND WHEELHOUSE. SO IT WAS MY FIRST IDEA TO CREATE A SORT OF JUNGLE INSIDE WHERE YOU CAN GET LOST"



The main saloon's softly angled walls contain planters that evoke the art of bonsai and serve

to hide machinery and guide guests from the aft deck into the sanctuary of the interior

Rolland, an avid sailor, understands what it is like to spend time at sea, but he is also a cerebral designer who studied architecture and fine arts. He worked for three years with Philippe Starck, getting involved in projects such as the *Feadship Wedge Too*, and found a home with *Liaigre* 20 years ago.

His thought-provoking approach demystifies yacht design's frequent focus on materials. "The style and the palette have nothing to do with the feel of space. Not even the materials," he says. Instead, what matters is what he calls the architecture's scenario, the story it tells. A recent experience he made while working with virtual reality on the model of a new project supports his point, he tells me. To save time in the modelling phase, the design team kept everything white – yet it worked.

"If the architecture scenario is well done, you feel perfectly well; it doesn't matter what the colours are," he explains. "When you have symmetry, a perspective and light play, even in white, it works. The colours or materials don't matter as much. The beauty and luxury are in the intelligence you put in a project, and not in the price per square footage of the material you stick to a wall."

Expanding further on the idea of architecture as a scenario, Rolland cites the example of the Starck-designed *Delano South Beach Hotel* in Miami Beach where, from the entrance door, visitors move through a series of spaces between free-flowing curtains. Giant chairs, a pool table, bar counter and more offer scenes as people advance towards the inner courtyard. "It's these articulation points that speak to each other to create a story. It's exactly the same in music, writing and architecture," he says.

So when Rolland works on a yacht interior – or any interior – the lion's share of his work is developing that architecture scenario. On this yacht, it translates into a very novel approach. Curved passageways contour furniture devoid of corners. On the main deck, angled walls conceal the engine room's air trunks but, more importantly, guide people from the aft deck through a soft arch into the inner sanctum of the main saloon, the wooden ceiling and flooring acting as additional guides. In the walls, recessed pots containing plants that evoke the Japanese art of bonsai are revealed to guests when they are walking out.

In the fantastic owner's area, *Liaigre* embraced the multi-level concept created by *Zuccon*, but reversed the stairs. Adding transparency, the steps to the upper level office look like a free-floating ladder, lacquered white. They lead to the starboard side of the office, leaving room on the left for a work space with panoramic views. Companion stairs descend from the cosy lobby/lounge space, complete with a daybed that looks over the water





Elm is used liberally to reference 18th-century French oak panelling, and it contrasts with the rich chocolate tones of lacquered eucalyptus panels reminiscent of Asian interiors



"THE BEAUTY AND LUXURY ARE IN THE INTELLIGENCE YOU PUT IN A PROJECT, NOT IN THE PRICE PER SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE MATERIAL YOU STICK TO A WALL"



to the bedroom proper. The owner's bed is off-centre, leaving room to move around on the sides. Forward is a chic en suite with free-sliding white louvred panels, almost like folding screens, as the only partition. It is orientated with the sink looking out onto the water, quite literally, when the balcony is opened.

"We did not align the bulkheads on the mullions, so the sink encroaches on the balcony. When you open it, your sink is in the open air, which has never been done," explains Rolland. "With a free approach to the layout, we offer an exceptional space." There are no fixed doors, no rigid formulas nor sharp angles.

"It's really a boat for weekend and vacation," he adds.

For Sanlorenzo, it was extra work because they did not have a blueprint for this kind of layout. "It was a challenging project, especially at the beginning as we had to understand the details and the philosophy of the layout, but when we managed to find the keystone of the project everything became organic," says Rossi. "The owner's area with the bathroom inserted astride the terrace was a big surprise but also a great opportunity for Sanlorenzo. So we redesigned the position of the [door opening mechanism] to allow the designer to have the area completely open."

While the layout is the main story, we can't leave out materials altogether since they define the Asian-inspired interior "with a French touch". In terms of woods, for instance, elm is a nod to the French style. "In a lot of Parisian apartments, you

have light colour panels of oak," says Rolland, who adds that they selected elm but treated it similarly to the traditional oak used in French interiors that recall the tradition of 18th-century woodwork. "In opposition, you have these shiny lacquered panels of eucalyptus, a bit brown or chocolate in tone, which are much more a reference to Asia. When you go to hotels in Singapore, it's not rare to find these colours. This duality, black shiny with matt clear colours, is a dialogue and a marriage of elements." The caning on the side of the furniture

Lest we forget, all this happens on a yacht with a volume of less than 500 gross tonnes, reaching 21 knots with a full complement of up to 21 passengers, including nine crew. The experience of merging technical imperatives with an out-of-the-box design was challenging but rewarding, says Rossi. Pushing the boundaries of design this far on a boat of this size is still rare. The yacht, says Rolland, is about the art of living, but you may think of it as art in motion. ■



The Sanlorenzo 44Alloy is capable of high performance, reaching 21 knots. A view of hull No 3's tiered aft decks displays the variety bespoke furnishings Liaigre created for this yacht

further recalls the look of mid-century hotels in Asia.

In the upper saloon, which is a bit darker than the lower deck and the go-to spot for karaoke in the evenings, one of the featured colours is green. "There is bar in green onyx. It's not jade, but the green stone is emblematic of Asia," explains Rolland. Even the doors reflect this dual inspiration. The tops are arched, as they would be in a castle or a church in Europe, but the details near the floor where the woodwork curls upwards, evoke the shape of doorways in Asia. The main materials are wood – which exudes a feeling of well-being like trees do; timber tends to have a calming effect – green and white onyx, and leather.

While the associations tell the story, none of this is literal. It's more a suggestion that works on the subconscious level, a sort of "passerelle to the collective memory", says Rolland.

THE 65-SQUARE-METRE BEACH CLUB OPENS ON THREE SIDES –

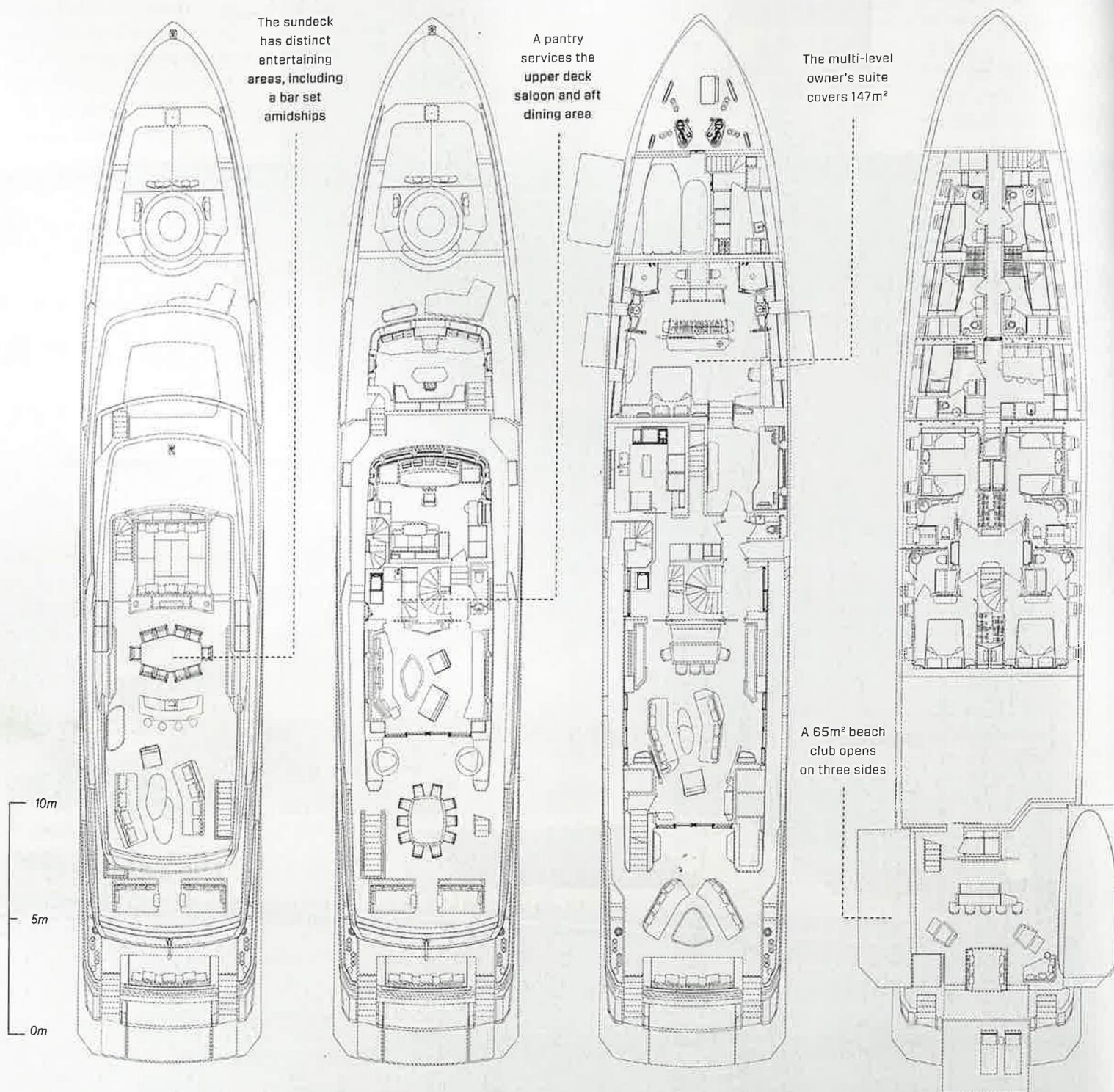
"I LIKE TO THINK THAT THE FIRST REASON YOU ARE ON BOARD A YACHT IS BECAUSE YOU LOVE THE SEA, AND YOU WANT TO BE CLOSE TO THE SEA"

Sundeck

Bridge deck

Main deck

Lower deck



LOA 44.5m

LWL 41.5m

Beam 9.3m

Draught (full load)
2.5mGross tonnage
482GTEngines 2x MTU 16V
2000 M96LSpeed (max/cruise)
21/11 knotsRange at 11 knots
2,000nmFuel capacity
41,000 litresFreshwater capacity
8,000 litresTender
1 X 7m

Owners/guests 10

Crew 9

Construction
Aluminium alloyClassification
ABSNaval architecture
SanlorenzoExterior design
Zuccon International
ProjectInterior design
Liaigre Studio

Builder/year

Sanlorenzo/2021
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superyacht@
sanlorenzoyacht.com
sanlorenzoyacht.com