



MAKING YOUR MARQUE

LAUNCHING INTO A NEW YEAR MEANS SCOPING OUT THE LATEST IN NEW BUILDS ON THE LUXURY MARKET. **KEVIN GREEN** ENLIGHTENS US TO THE LATEST LAUNCHES FROM THE FLAGSHIPS OF THESE MARQUES, EACH OF WHICH MAKE A BOLD STATEMENT FOR THEIR OWNER'S IN DIFFERENT AND STYLISH WAYS.

For many luxury yacht buyers the answer can be quite simple because strong brand loyalty for the likes of Oyster and Grand Soleil, for instance, dictates that they will return for the latest model. Typically a degree of intimacy will have developed with the yard, and that's something discerning owners value highly. Other more impartial buyers will simply consider their needs and for those seeking a performance cruiser, the 2016 Grand Soleil 58P looks to have the legs for the regatta circuit and the stability for an ARC rally, while Oyster's largest production yacht in the upcoming 118 – is indeed a superyacht with all the accoutrements one would expect.

Most of the production marques, such as Hanse, Beneteau

and Jeanneau build what can be described as multi-purpose yachts which translates into relatively light displacement, high volume hulls. This style of yacht has proven itself in every kind of sailing, including ocean crossings, but being a jack-of-all-trades comes at the cost of really being master of none in particular, so when it comes to bluewater cruising, the specialist builders such as the Amel, CNB and Nautor Swan find their niche. Characterised by high stability and deep hulls (and bilges) these boats will sedately take you across oceans without dramas. Henri Amel used this premise to create his unique yachts with their sheltered centre-cockpit designs and manageable ketch rigs, the latter an excellent way of balancing a large sail plan. Typically

their rigs are much more versatile as well, reflecting the variety of conditions they may encounter in double headsails for tradewind running, staysails for short-reefed beating and a hull that can be driven without the autopilot wearing itself out – all common features. Their ballast ratios will be high because most of the weight is deep down in the keel. Apart from the premium prices (and of course premium resale values) these often semi-custom yachts reward the discerning owner.

As the cliché goes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so seeking your dream yacht may be an involved process or as Spirit Yachts founder Sean McMillan puts it: "It's not that complicated to make a quick boat, but it can be quite complicated to make a quick, elegant boat – that's what we major in." The wooden hulled Spirit 52 was featured in the Bond movie, *Casino Royale*, which speaks volumes for the style and aesthetics of this semi-custom British yard. Another way to go fast and look good is with the carbon-hulled Southern Wind. These award winning South African performance cruisers come from the pens of Farr, Rachel Pugh and America's Cup designers, so will put you on the podium and do it with some panache.

What all these yachts have in common is smart engineering; although the materials and build vary, which of course is reflected in their prices. For instance, it takes 45,000 hours to build an Oyster 825, which is a hand-built, custom-made yacht with a price tag to reflect it. In contrast, Beneteau and Hanse (who own Moody), use their powerful material buying power and economies-of-scale to create efficient production yachts at very affordable prices. In between is the CNB and the new CNB 92 that has evolved from Construction Navale Bordeaux's reputation for sturdy cruisers, such as the popular Bordeaux 60.

In terms of technology, there's plenty to consider with these large yachts. Key features to look for include hydraulically-powered winches and furlers. System management can be a challenge so digital bus systems are a consideration as are fast charging and lightweight lithium batteries.

Maintenance is easier if you have a walk-in engine room and during those ocean voyages, a workshop. Also while on the big blue briny, a dinghy garage to securely store the tender is preferable. Comfort at sea is greatly aided by an owner's aft cabin and deck saloons are a good antidote to seasickness. Decent crew quarters are also a good way to maintain a happy ship. On deck, a protected yet not stuffy cockpit for the family and a GRP arch puts the mainsheet out of harms way, while also creating a large bimini. And for those awkward Pacific atoll anchorages, lifting keels with twin rudders to minimise the draft are another consideration for your dream machine.

FAR & WIDE
Oyster yachts contest in the Oyster World Rally. The new Oyster 118 will have a powerful Rob Humphreys hull and tall carbon rig, so ideal for exploring far flung destinations.

OYSTER

Oyster Marine has been producing quality cruising boats since 1973 and the announcement of the new Oyster 118 brings hull numbers to an impressive 358 sold. The Southampton headquartered yard has weathered some changeable financial conditions but brand loyalty has helped it, with nearly half of its builds from repeat customers. Many of them enjoy the now famous Oyster Rallies around the world and this has further fostered a strong brand loyalty and kinship among owners. Typical of this is the 18 Oysters that set off in November's ARC Rally, where the 2,700-nautical mile Atlantic leg will be followed by Caribbean cruising for the season, before returning back to Europe for the Mediterranean summer events in 2016.

Oyster's popularity is not hard to see when the seaworthy hulls and sheltered cockpits are considered. Among the British yard's signature features are its deck saloon, which is a dedicated area for the owner.

Long-term designer Rob Humphreys continues to pen these graceful hulls that can equally enjoy the high latitudes or the tropics. The company's largest Humphreys collaboration to date is the new Oyster 118, which will require three years in development and construction before its launch in December 2017. Construction is at the Oyster Southampton base where new facilities are being created to enable simultaneous building of two Oyster 118s, bringing the potential to complete four yachts before summer 2020.

The 118 is an evolution of the Oyster/Humphreys plumb bowed, soft chined and twin rudder designs. The 35-metre Oyster 118 has grown from the initially planned Oyster 115, and the resulting profile looks sleek with a modest freeboard gently sheered and illuminated with Oyster's signature seascape hull windows and teardrop glazing to the deck saloon. Here there's an integral bimini with a moveable sedan hard top, intended to blend the guest cockpit with aft steering controls. The 118 has a strong emphasis on cockpit dining with two dinnette tables, a large social area and front-facing seating.

Below, is accommodation for 12 guests supported by six crew. Hull number one will feature in the aft lower deck a five-cabin/four-head plan while on the forward lower deck there are options for a sixth suite and/or a snug TV room that will convert to a kids' bunk room. The galley is part of the enclosed crew area forward of the mast and is built to commercial charter standards, as is the entire yacht (DNV classification and MCA LY3). However Oyster can build to specific owners' requests so there is plenty of scope for customisation in subsequent hulls.

The sailplan for hull number one is single headstay, with additional removable inner forestay for jib and asymmetrics attached to the anchor strut prodder. For ease of handling, there's four captive winches for the sheets and halyards. The rig is four-spreader carbon with roller boom for quick reefing and is supported by outboard shrouds, which allow clean decks throughout. The large foredeck has enough space to house a powerful Williams Dieseljett 565 RIB, hoisted by a mast located davit, from a pit that doubles as a lounge area.

www.oysteryachts.com

HANSE

Hanse has come a long way for a company that rose from the ashes of the former East Germany and only began production in 1993. Fuelled by the famous German work ethic and inspirational boatbuilding entrepreneur Michael Schmidt, the company has grown to become second to market leader Beneteau.

“East Germany was a good place because the people were very motivated to build something up,” Schmidt told English magazine PBO. A key feature of Schmidt’s ownership of the company was acquisition, even in the early days when he bought the moulds for well designed hulls, rather than try to reinvent similar designs. Later acquisitions of iconic brands Moody and Dehler would reinforce this ethos. Then, the methodical engineering and modern production processes were developed to bring the final production to fruition in their first yacht, the Hanse 291 with distinctive flowing lines, in 1993. This was the kind of innovative thinking that attracted Sydney dealer’s Peter Hrones and Mary Bickley to sell the brand and to form a partnership with Hanse that has flourished, bringing their company Windcraft numerous dealer awards. Windcraft realised that the Hanse ethos of creating modern, liveable and easy-to-sail yachts matched the profile of the Australian market and continues to do so.

“Strategic investment and utilisation of new production technologies means that new Hanses meet the demands of our high end consumers,” Bickley says. As I saw first hand recently when attending the September Windcraft Port Stephen’s meet-up, Hanses are popular with a relatively younger clientele who are busy people and want to maximise their time on the water without too much fuss. That means key features such as self-tacking jibs, furling mainsails and joystick-operated bow thrusters are popular selling points for the eight-boat range, that runs from the 315 to the new flagship 675. The 2013 Hanse 575 is the German builder’s second largest yacht and a popular seller for cruising couples, with several in Australia. Personalisation is another key feature, with hundreds of combinations available for interior fit-out in the cavernous hull. Hanse’s signature streamlined deck with low coachroof lends this yacht a stylish air but practicalities aren’t ignored, thanks to sizable bulwarks.

Long-term collaborators Judel/Vrolijk continue this sleek design ethos for the new Hanse 675 soon to be launched. A replacement for the 625, the 675 will compete in the semi-custom and custom yacht market – a tough playing field. Harnessing economies-of-scale using robotic engineering and CNC reproduction combined with the traditional skills of the German workforce should ensure the 675 becomes a worthy flagship. A large fixed hardtop is the most characteristic design feature of the 675 while the interior has flowing composite surfaces that minimise weight while blending into the light wood interior to create a very modern feel, reflecting the forward looking nature of this prolific German builder.

www.hanseyachts.com
www.windcraft.com.au



THE LIVIN' IS EASY
 Below: The new flagship 675 from Hanse comes with many customisable options in the sleek Judel/Vrolijk hull and will have a fixed hardtop for all weather enjoyment in the cockpit. Above: The Amel 55 (pictured) along with the 64 are pedigree bluewater yachts with manageable ketch rigs, centre cockpits and watertight bulkheads. Right: The CNB 76 blends modern design with nautical comfort.

AMEL

Amels' have many thousand bluewater miles below their sturdy keels so have been a favoured yacht among long-term voyagers since 1968 when the colourful Henri Amel created an easy-to-sail yacht that would induce his wife to enjoy voyaging. His spirit very much lives on in the ethos and the practical design of the company's two current models, the 55 and the newer Amel 64. As commercial manager Boris Compagnon tells me, “I would say Henri Amel himself is still the main ingredient of the company and because of his blindness, he has been very charismatic, and designed the boats far from the trend.”

The 2013-launched Amel 55 is an evolution of the 54 to give a more modern appeal to their traditionally conservative in-house designs. With more hatches for increased light and ventilation, the 55 is intended to be better for the tropics.

I visited the company's Med base in the town of Hyères and took the 55 for a mini cruise, which was done entirely from my seated position in the enclosed cockpit, using joystick controls for the halyards and outhauls. The heavy displacement hull has a skeg protected rudder, a retractable bow thruster and the drive shaft is integrated into the elongated cast iron keel. The wide stern section includes a large swim platform with optional davits (while the 64 has a dinghy garage).

Another seaworthy feature is four watertight bulkheads in the hull and a deep engine room well. Despite its fairly long keel, the 55 proved manageable even in the tight marina berth that I squeezed the 24-tonne hull into using the bow thruster and Volvo engine.

The 55 comes in a standard three-cabin version but a two-cabin layout is also available. On the 64, a walnut-lined saloon is divided into discrete areas to avoid the acreage of dangerous empty space often found on mass production yachts. Similar to the Swan, the Amel is fully factory fitted-out with cruising essentials such as generators, navigation systems and ancillaries.

www.amel.fr
www.vicsail.com

KEVIN GREEN / NICOLAS CLARIS

CNB

Construction Navale Bordeaux has been building a wide range of luxury yachts at the old dock yards in Bordeaux since 1987. For maritime tragics like myself it's a fascinating place to visit as its steeped in wartime history that even goes right back to the commercial days of sail when it famously built the five-masted *France* in 1911. More recently, CNB established its production yacht credentials with the Bordeaux 60, which became a popular seller for the Beneteau-owned company. However the company is probably most well known for superyachts with expertise in the 100-foot range of alloy and composites that began with the launch of the extremely beautiful Frers-designed *Mari Cha II* in 1989. CNB shares its dockyard and some of its 500 staff with Lagoon, and both operations benefit from the work that goes in to creating their larger models. In the same size range is the CNB 76 that launched last year, a yacht with similarities to the Jeanneau 64, which is unsurprising as both are designed by the prolific Philippe Briand. The CNB 76 has put a lot of Briand's know-how from the popular Bordeaux 60 into this elegant pocket superyacht.

Speaking to the yard, the big news says Cecil Whittman is drafting of the CNB 92, a fully-customised luxury cruising yacht that will splash in 2018. “Building on the success of the semi-custom CNB 76 that has 12 orders already, the CNB 92 is a semi-custom to represent the dreams of the owner, and it's something we do well, having gotten seven international awards for these kinds of projects,” says Whittman.

www.cnb.fr

THE COLOURFUL
 HENRI AMEL
 CREATED AN EASY-
 TO-SAIL YACHT
 THAT WOULD
 INDUCE HIS
 WIFE TO ENJOY
 VOYAGING





JEANNEAU

Jeanneau is one of the older yards with a colourful history going back to 1956 when Henri Jeanneau started building motorboats in his father's workshop in western France. With the advent of fibreglass, the company became known as pioneers of engineering and even spawned what is now the world's largest catamaran marque, Lagoon. So when Kevin Costner wanted an outlandish trimaran for his movie *Waterworld*, Jeanneau's Advanced Technologies division was happy to oblige.

This may all seem a long way from the company's dominant current position as leader in the over 50-foot market but it does reflect the innovative history that has always put seaworthiness top of the list. This means key areas such as stability and ballast ratios are important considerations throughout the marque that now has three lines that range in size from 32 to 64 feet.

Company representative in the Asia Pacific region, Paul Blanc, oversees a vast territory that puts many different demands on the brand yet doesn't see the need for compromising on seaworthiness. "A Jeanneau yacht is designed and built to sail well, so rather than having square and beamy open hulls that look great at boat shows, we build boats that perform well in all wind conditions and offer good protection for offshore voyages and a smooth passage in heavy seas," he says.

Since the 1995 acquisition by Beneteau, the Vendee-based company has enhanced its engineering capabilities, which was apparent when I looked around the very first of its flagship Jeanneau 64, which has since sold 30 units. Having five axis CNC machines that can process the entire deck of a large cruiser illustrates its capabilities, but the final product must also reflect the company's mantra that any yacht must look good and sail well.

For this, the key ingredient is Philippe Briand's design prowess, which has been used for the last 30 years to produce those signature tear drop topsides and sleek but sheltered aft decks. For the Jeanneau 64, 800 owners of the 53, 54 and 57 were surveyed for input while superyacht interior

designer Andrew Winch was brought in to create the sophisticated accommodation intended to rival semi-custom yachts. This is also the kind of thinking that is going into the new Jeanneau 54 for 2016. It will have a versatile sail plan, including self-tacking jib, park lane boom and Jeanneau's proprietary 360 Docking joystick. Deck innovations will include retractable davits and bimini; while below is a new VIP cabin layout and up to six cabins with views through enlarged hull windows.

www.jeanneauaustralia.com



SOUTHERN WIND

The Southern Wind yard in South Africa built its reputation on early Farr designs, most notably, the Farr 72. Established in 1991 by former boss of Cantieri Navali Rodriguez, Italian Guglielmo Persico, who was initially seeking a yard to build his own yacht, the Cape Town builder has grown to create prestigious superyachts. It specialises in high performance composite luxury sailing yachts ranging from 24 to 35 metres, including carbon fibre. Semi-custom construction techniques mainly with some one-off projects allows the yard to work with a wide range of designers including Farr, Reichel Pugh and teams from the America's Cup. For most of its semi-custom interiors, experienced Italian company Nauta Design is used. "Our approach allows for an advanced level of customisation, making almost every yacht unique, while optimising construction processes," yard representative Umbera Pegaso told Ocean. "A semi-custom production means customising all that is visible and using standardised solutions elsewhere, which allows us to transform clients' wishes into something feasible in terms of efficiency and in the total control of quality standards," added Pegaso.

The success of this approach won them the World Superyacht Award in May 2015 for "quality and value" of the SW102 project. More than 30 percent of their customer base is made of repeat clients.

Attention to detail is essential at this level so these bluewater yachts all undertake a 7,000-nautical mile sea trial for their maiden voyage. Over 85 percent of builds are destined for Europe and predominantly the Mediterranean where cruising is mainly done. However, increasingly, the company is being asked for yachts that will compete in superyacht regattas such as the Superyacht Cup, Voiles de St Tropez and the legendary Middle Sea Race and this has prompted the company to create a new range of high performance racer-cruisers, built of carbon and of medium to light displacement. This design remit allows these yachts, in the 100-foot range, to be competitive in the widely varying

Mediterranean racing conditions. These new projects will represent a substantial portion of the shipyard production for the period 2016-2021. The new boat will build on the success of yachts like the SW110 Thelma using High-Modulus carbon masts and a carbon standing rigging. As per Southern Winds standard, Thelma's interior furniture was built in lightweight honeycomb and sandwich foam while still obtaining high quality finish and richness.

www.southernwindshipyard.com



"OUR MARKET IS USUALLY THOSE WHO HAVE SOME LONGER PASSAGES IN THEIR SIGHTS AND WANT TO DO IT IN HIGH-END LUXURY"

CRUISE IN COMFORT

Opposite page top: The new performance cruiser, the Southern Wind 115, is aimed at superyacht regattas because of its composite interiors of carbon and honeycomb, which are light yet comfortable and stylish. Left: The flagship Jeanneau 64 has proven popular, with 30 units sold in just two years. Above: The new Moody 54DS combines the comforts of a deck saloon with the sailing performance of a traditional cruising yacht. The 54DS can also be controlled from the inside helm while relaxing with sea views all around.

MOODY

This traditional British marque re-emerged under the Hanse group banner in 2008 and has gone on to produce some really innovative yachts including the newest one, the Moody 54DS that I enjoyed sailing most recently. That was hull number one and her sistership (hull number three) went on to successfully complete a rather bumpy Sydney to Hobart in 2014. I did that race on another larger yacht but met with Australian distributor Peter Hrones on the dock at Hobart when he reported that all was well, and more importantly, that the new owner was happy with his 54DS. Hrones, as one of Hanse's most successful dealers was invited to contribute to the design of the 54DS, alongside long-term Moody architect, Bill Dixon. "People just wanted a larger version of the 45DS which is what the 54 essentially is," said Hrones.

A strong mix of cruising comforts blended with modern design from hull specialists Judel/Vrolijk runs through the Moody range, which also has the more traditional aft cockpit 41 and 43 along with the very popular deck saloon 45, 54 and 62. Speaking to owners at the recent Moody meet-up showed them to be a discerning group of sailors who wanted more than simply another production yacht. Attractive features of the aft cockpit range include traditional portholes and polished dorade vents, mixed with modern conveniences such as electric winches, bow thrusters and a self-tacking jib. "Our market is usually those who have some longer passages in their sights and want to do it in high-end luxury," explains Mary Bickley from Windcraft.

Undoubtedly, the deck saloon concept is what's moved this brand forward, so my sail on the first of these, the 45DS, was a startling experience back in 2010. The Moodys all have deep and wide hulls, which allow good protection in the cockpits, and allows this area to be on the same level as the tall saloon. But the reasonably powerful rigs with their good stability means these yachts are much more than mere motor-sailors. It's this kind of versatility that is their main appeal. The new 45DS has refined this concept even more because with its longer water line of 17.15 metres, it offers faster passagemaking than the 45DS while still costing substantially less money than the flagship 62DS. However throughout the range the key features are the same: sheltered cockpit on the same level as the tall deck saloon, with views while you relax in the vast lounge or cook at the galley; while steering is done from the eltwo dinnette tables, a large social area and front-facing seating. Below, throttle and autopilot is part of the chart table arrangement. Flexibility again is apparent, as seen on hull number three, which did the Sydney Hobart and came with a galley-down arrangement. Looking to the future this model range may grow in length and benefit from the synergies of Hanse's growing motorboat division.

www.moodyboats.com and www.windcraft.com.au



SPIRIT YACHTS

James Bond's yacht in Casino Royale and the choice of 53 other discerning owners, gives Spirit Yachts undoubted cachet before you even begin to look closely at these hand-made classics. Oozing elegance with lots of overhangs and raked lines, these performance cruisers hark back to the time of the J-Class yet belie an ultra-modern build using traditional materials.

Based in the river town of Ipswich on England's east coast where they are currently expanding the premises, the company has 20 years experience of strip plank and cold moulded wood, combined with computer modelling to optimise hull shapes and keels. Structure is typically created by lightweight stainless steel frames cut by laser, then integrated into the wooden hull like some of the older America's Cup boats. Builds so far have ranged from 37 to 100 feet and the company is not adverse to producing some motor cruisers as well though, sail does predominate, says managing director, Nigel Stuart. "As the wood epoxy construction method does not require moulds, we have the ability to build yachts of all sizes, designed to suit the owners, allowing us to produce cost effective one-off yacht designs," he says. The company offer three basic concepts in the Classic line, Cruising and the Deck house.

Interiors are designed to the individual owner and climate the yacht will sail in, so vary, but the standard of craftsmanship does not. Handcrafted solid timber is used over a marine plywood base for the furniture. The Classic range has very high performance yachts, often with carbon rigs that are designed for speed rather than space within, whereas the Deck house builds on the Classic range's hulls but creates more volume. The Cruising range is beamier whilst keeping the Classic style, so ideal for live aboards.

A Spirit 65 was delivered to Asia this year and it will cruise with occasional regatta appearances. The 65's Bermudan carbon rig is clad in performance carbon sails (1,900 square metres in total windward) with large running sails to power the 15-tonne hull through the generally light Asian breezes. Performance requires plenty of stability so a figure of 37 percent for the new 65 shows that it will allow you to hold on to ample sail area when the wind picks up. The foils are a deep carbon spade rudder and L-shaped bulbed keel with shaft driven 106 horsepower Styre motor. Going backwards could be challenge but that's part of the experience of owning a classic yacht.

www.spirityachts.com

THE CRUISING RANGE IS BEAMIER WHILST KEEPING THE CLASSIC STYLE, SO IDEAL FOR LIVE ABOARD

MAKING WAVES

Above: The sheer traditional elegance of the Spirit 74 hides an ultra-modern approach to its design. Opposite page, from top: New director of sail boat marketing at Beneteau, Gianguido Girotti, intends to move the marque forward and the Oceanis 62 will be the first of this revamped range and its new flagship; The Grand Soleil 58 Performance aims for speed with comfort; The Swan 115S is a semi raised deck saloon model with a powerful rig and carbon hull – the deck saloon is surrounded by a high performance hull, which allows for fast and comfortable passage-making.

KEVIN GREEN



BENETEAU

Beneteau continues to expand its extensive sailing range, which as the world's largest recreational yacht builder, takes it to a vast global market. Dominated by the Oceanis range, the French builder continues to innovate these cruisers and for 2016 it is launching its largest model so far, the Oceanis 62. Development also continues in the company's programs that aim to simplify the actual sail handling process, a key tenet of the modern Beneteau.

Also new is former Dufour executive and naval architect Gianguido Girotti, director of sail boat marketing, who has been brought in to move the range forward in a model line-up that comprises the performance cruiser First models, the Oceanis and the luxury cruising Sense range.

"Our new Oceanis 62 will have improved access to the sea with its angled transom but will still be very seaworthy," explained Girotti over a coffee. Improvements are also planned for the Senses, he said, where the large cockpits will be offered with more shelter. "But just like your restaurant menu, you will be able to choose exactly which options you want to pay for and Beneteau's vast production facilities will ensure this done at a reasonable price," he adds.

www.beneteau.com.au



GRAND SOLEIL

Italian maker Grand Soleil has been creating distinctive performance cruisers for 41 years and has worked with several designers including the legendary German Frers and winning race boat designers Botin & Carkeek.

The Grand Soleil 58P should create quite a stir when it splashes in January as it has good stability that allows plenty of sail area in higher winds while maintaining volume for accommodation and a dinghy garage. Two layouts are available: either an L-shaped kitchen near the companionway or a wider kitchen midships. The owner's cabin can be at either end of the hull. The alloy rig can be upgraded to carbon and all sail controls are around the twin steering wheels, including the mainsheet track.

"We have clients who live on board and do round the world sailing, while we also have many who push their boats hard racing, but all our yachts are strong, fast, liveable, easy to handle and elegant," says yard spokesperson, Maya Bach. Looking to the future, clients are asking for larger yachts, she says. "For this project we surveyed 200 Grand Soleil owners of the 50, 54 and 56 models. So in this way we designed an excellent new project in the GS 58P."

www.grandsoleil.net
www.antillmarine.com.au

NAUTOR'S SWAN

The legendary Nautor's Swan celebrates its 50th birthday in 2016, which is a milestone that few other yards can match. An early coup for the fledgling founder, Finn Pekka Koskenkyla, was persuading Olin Stephens from Sparkman & Stephens to design the first Nautor's Swan yacht, the Swan 36. The success of the 36, the first production fibreglass yacht over 10 metres, led to a partnership that produced around 800 S&S designed boats between 1966 and 1978. A new era began in 1980 with Argentinean designer German Frers' involvement, which carries on until this day. The latest news is that he will be joined by fellow countryman and innovative designer, Juan Kouyoumdjian.

Visiting this illustrious yard near the town of Jakobstad is an ordeal I still fondly remember, as it required me to fly 400 kilometres north of Helsinki, which brought me near the Arctic Circle; followed by a midnight drive over thick snowdrifts to find the yard frozen in, awaiting the Spring icebreaker to free a channel through the ice solid Gulf of Bothnia. Its location, combined with the surrounding Viking history, perhaps explains why Swans have always put seaworthiness ahead of anything else. Swans are famously fitted out to sail across oceans or wherever the owner can take them, so generators, air conditioning and ancillary whitegoods are factory-fitted. This philosophy hasn't changed with the takeover by Italian entrepreneur, Leonardo Ferragamo.

The other major difference you find when visiting the yard is the amount of in-house engineering that goes on, something that's not changed since my visit there a few years ago, a spokesman recently confirmed for me. "The work carried out at Jakobstad covers all elements of design and construction from the composite/structural engineering, to the deck layout and sail handling design, interior styling, systems and hydraulics, HVAC engineering, electrical and electronics," said Alessandra Ghezzi.

At the Monaco Yacht Show in September, Nautor's Swan showcased the new Swan 115 S, the flagship of the SwanLine and its two standard deck layouts on offer: the 'FD' denoting the race-orientated flush deck and the 'S' representing a semi raised saloon. The Swan 115 S is the pinnacle of the new generation of the maxi yachts built by Nautor and its modern lines, wide stern, twin rudders and square top mainsail are indicative of her racing intentions; while the stylish, modern classic interior sets a new standard for the iconic Finnish brand.

www.nautorswan.com

