

INVICTVS™

Issue 4 - Summer 2013



*"I am the master of my fate
I am the captain of my soul"*

William Ernest Henley

By Invitation Only

90 M PROJECT LIGHT

BLENDING INTO THE ENVIRONMENT



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Determined to succeed

Sea trials of Azzam underway

Since first breaking cover in May 2012 at the Lürssen shipyard in Germany, yacht enthusiast and media have been eagerly anticipating the first photographs of the new 'World's Largest Yacht' underway. In mid-June that moment came when the elegant 590' (180m) Azzam left the yard for the first time to undertake three days of sea trials. Photographers from theyachtphoto.com, who followed her progress by helicopter, report she achieved top speeds of 31.5-knots thanks to the 94,000hp delivered by her twin diesel and twin gas turbine engines. Due for delivery in November, with her shallow draft of just 14' (4.3m) Azzam - whose name translates as 'Determined' in Arabic - could actually be home ported in Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina... if that were to be where she is headed.



©TheYachtPhoto.com-Claus Schaefer



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*A pessimist is one who
makes difficulties of
his opportunities and
an optimist is one who
makes opportunities
of his difficulties.*

Harry Truman



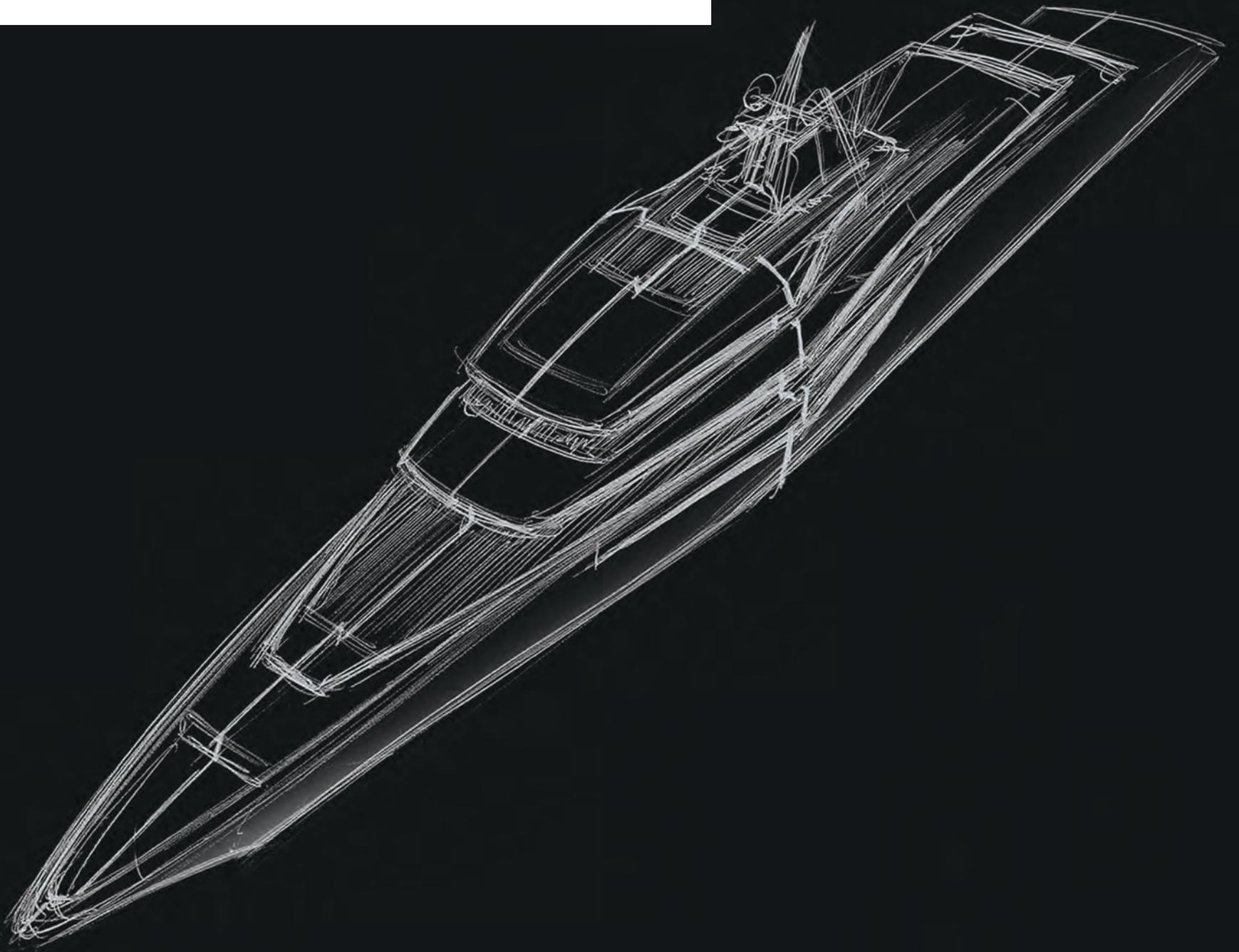
Nauta Yachts

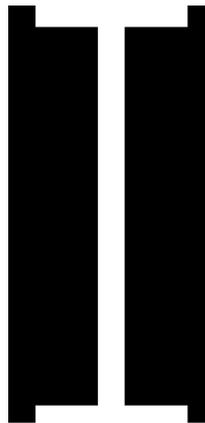
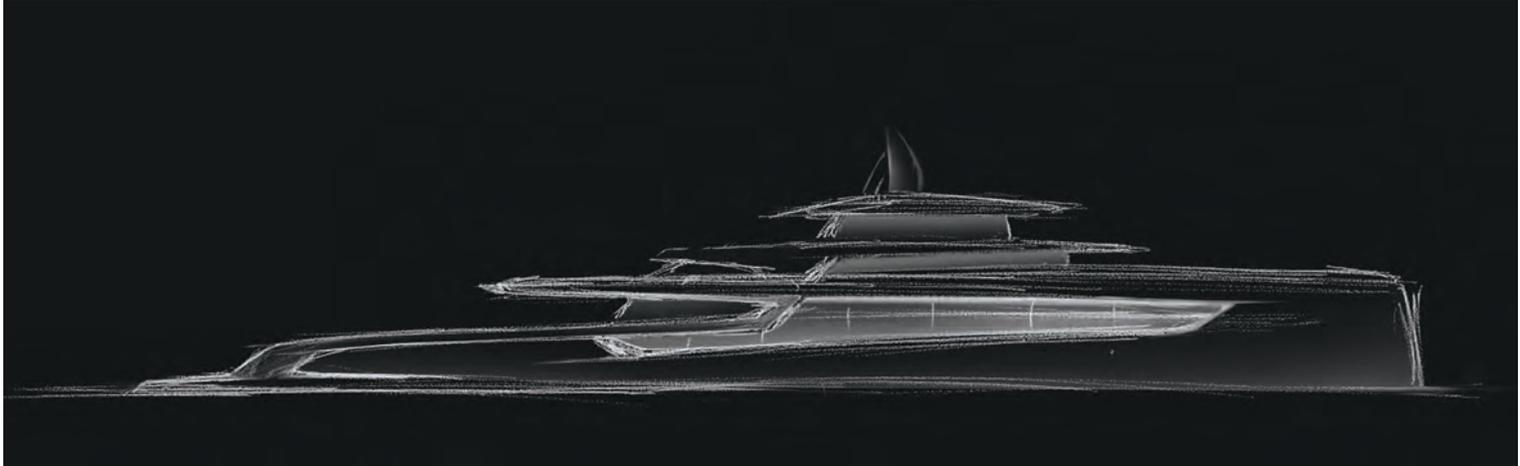
BETWEEN THE LINES

When Nauta Yachts were announced as the designers of the 590' (180m) Azzam – the new ‘world’s largest yacht’ scheduled for a November delivery by Lürssen – most scrambled for Google to find out who they were. The truth is they are one of the industry’s best-kept secrets, as we discovered during a day at their Milan studio.

BY: CRAIG BARNETT
IMAGES: NAUTA YACHTS/KARL GROLL

Being a studio reticent to occupy the limelight, the story of Nauta Yachts is best read between the lines... they speak for themselves.

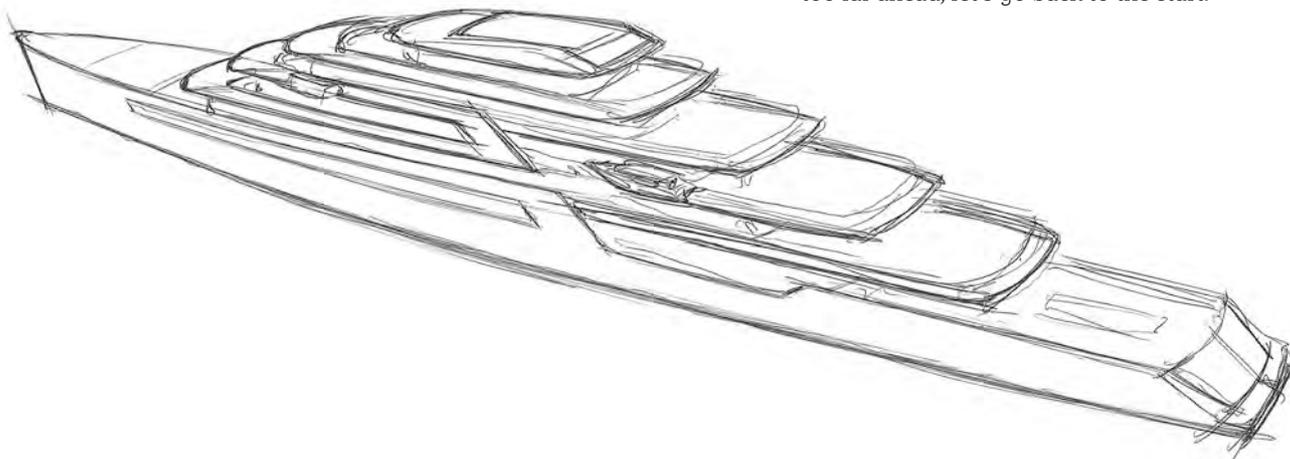




Nauta's entry into the large yacht market was made with a bang, but over decades they've built a solid foundations of true design and engineering expertise.

If you have a secret you're bursting to share, but want it kept undisclosed, entrust it to Mario Pedol. Along with business partner at Nauta Yachts, Massimo Gino, Mario has guarded the biggest secret in the history of yachting... for three years. "You'll not believe how hard it is to keep the biggest achievement of your career a secret for that length of time," Pedol says with a sparkle in his eyes. "When I first heard we had been awarded the contract I was driving to the meet some friends," he continues. "I pulled over the car to take the call and reached the beach later with a huge smile on my face. The worst thing was I couldn't explain that I'd just won a contract to design what became the world's largest yacht."

Quiet, unassuming and modest, Mario Pedol is the reluctant 'face of the company'. Meanwhile, equally as determined to inhabit the shadows around the limelight is founding partner Massimo Gino. Massimo is described by Luca Pedol - Mario's nephew and the team's Media Manager - as the other engine of the company, the silent sage who unobtrusively enjoys his role as Head of Design Production. With neither partner interested in basking in glory, or comfortable in the glare of publicity, it comes as no surprise the company has managed to maintain such a low profile. Self-aggrandizement is simply not something Nauta Yachts is interested in. Instead, while hiding their light under a bushel, the team has quietly gone about producing designs for thousands of yachts built by the industry's leading brands. Nauta Yachts may prefer to let their work speak for them, but on that bright May morning in 2012, when an incomplete 170m hulk slipped quietly out of the Lürssen sheds in Germany, a new chapter was feverishly written into the annals of yachting. It also signified a time for Nauta to turn over a new leaf in terms of visibility. But before we jump too far ahead, let's go back to the start.







THE EARLY DAYS

A keen sailor Mario Pedol remembers family summer holidays spent on the water. "My grandfather was to blame," he laughs, "he was the Chief Engineer on Saturnia and Vulcania, two beautiful old transatlantic ocean liners, so he put the virus of the sea in my veins." Brought up on stories of passages between Italy and New York, while plying the coast of Trieste on the family runabout during vacations, the sea entered Mario's soul at an early age. By the age of 20 he was participating in regattas aboard a friend's 30' half-tonner, and during one summer break from his studies for a dry Economics degree in university, Mario and his sailing partner conspired to design and build a boat for the forthcoming half-tonner World Championship to be held in France the next year.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm of a prospect client who occupied the berth next to them on a charter boat, the young men employed the talents of Andrea Vallicelli for the design and set out to find a builder. With the design drawings completed, and an order from the charterer (who incidentally remains a repeat client of Nauta Yachts today!) they persuaded a small boat builder to construct a mold and build their first boat. Having little money to invest in the venture, the boys struck a deal that involved a royalty payment on each boat built. One of their yachts came third in the World Championship and beat all international entries. Within two years over 40 of the 23' sailing yachts were sold, much to the delight of the 23-year old Mario and Massimo... and

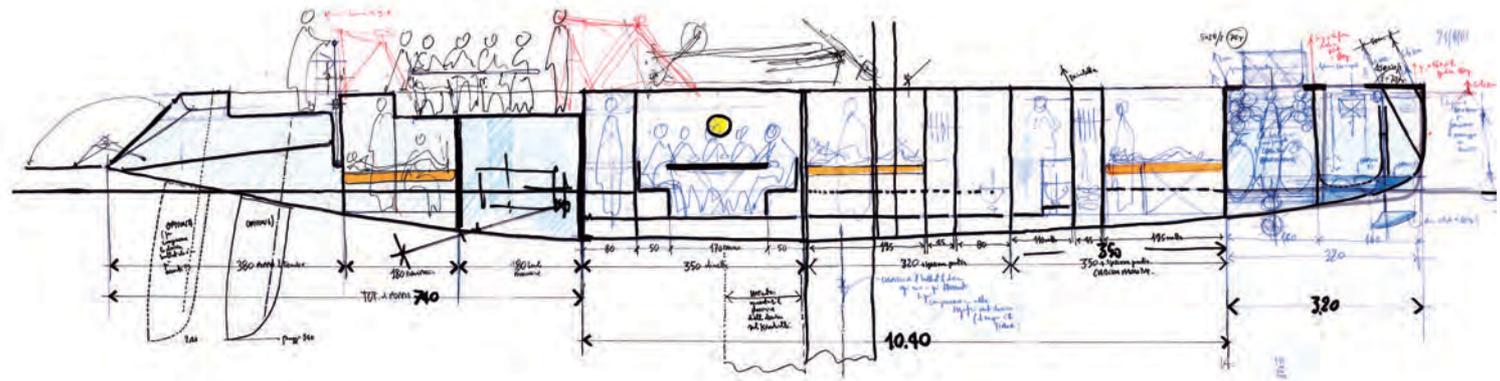
the boat builder no doubt! Needless to say, Mario's university studies were put on a back-burner. Realizing they needed a name for their products, Mario and Massimo called them 'Nauta'.

The day of our visit to the studio, Mario had just returned from the Loro Piana regatta in Porto Cervo. "For business or pleasure," we enquired? "I'm fortunate, my passion is also my business," Mario shrugs. "Yes my clients were there so it's important for networking and we had four boats we designed racing, but it's also for the pleasure of sailing and the

clients are friends. I sailed on three of our designs, one each day." The youthful sparkle Mario exudes when discussing time onboard tells us sailing has lost none of its allure since childhood, so we ask which role he now plays when crewing. The wave of his hand from side to side indicates a position we're familiar playing ourselves: VAMB - Voice Activated Moveable Ballast.

"Like artists every designer has their own style and influences, I found mine as an understudy to the brilliant Scott Kaufman." **Mario Pedol**

The three evolutionary stages of My Song, Nauta built yachts for Pier-Luigi Loro Piana MySong (54', 70' and 84').



FORMATIVE YEARS

Persuading his family to trade in their 37' yacht for a new Oyster 37' in the 1980's, Mario became the Italian representative for the British yard and used the family boat as a demo model. While selling five yachts within a few years, importing boats was no longer financially viable when the British discovered oil in the North Sea and sterling strengthened considerably as a result. Using the downturn as an excuse to 'charter the family boat for a season' in the Caribbean, Mario set off across the Atlantic on a personal voyage of discovery.

Rough passages and a year of living aboard not only gave him time to consider a career path, but also provided invaluable experience in the practical aspects of spending extended periods onboard a yacht. This experience was put to good use on his return, when Mario discovered the local university in Milan had begun offering a course specializing in yacht design. Rather than being taught by academics, the course tutors were also highly regarded professionals from the yachting industry, so Mario immediately signed up. Learning the fundamentals of his trade from experienced designers like Fulvio De Simoni, Andrea Vallicelli and Massimo Gregori, Mario appreciated the practical approach of the course and straight after it finished headed back to the States to continue his education. Landing an apprenticeship at the renowned studio of Scott Kaufman, who himself studied with Sparkman&Stevens, it was there Mario was influenced by the elegance and simplicity of Kaufman's work. "Like an artist, every designer develops their own style," Mario tells us, "but Scott did influence me in the aesthetic sensitivity of his designs. If I had a mentor, it was Scott Kaufman."

Returning to Italy recharged and inspired, Mario found his home country enjoying the boom years and the 'golden age' of modern Italy industrialization. Recognizing it as the perfect time to start a company, along with two friends, Massimo Gino and the late Enzo Moiso, he founded Nauta Yachts in 1985. Conceived as a design studio, yacht builder and brokerage house, the company strove to offer a 360-degree service. The first yachts built were the Nauta 54, a large sailing yacht for its day. Not entirely convinced of the project's success, but operating in an economic climate where 'flyers' could be taken, the team was overjoyed when debuting their 'on spec' build at the Genoa Boat Show resulted in three confirmed sales.

Suitably encouraged production pressed forward and with four additional sales a total of seven Nauta 54's were built. One of those seven, SY My Song, was built for experienced sailor Pier-Luigi Loro Piana, a fantastic testament to their quality and performance. Still a faithful client today, when speaking of Loro Piana, Luca says: "We're proud to say that our clients remain the best testimonial, the best advertising and best marketing tool that we have. Most come back as repeat clients throughout the years." Another contribution to their education, perfection and marketing tool was their collaboration with established designer Scott Kaufman, who was happy to put his name to the project. Building semi-custom yachts for discerning and demanding clients pushed Nauta to achieve ever high standards and this stood them in good stead as they expanded the range.

In the centre is a hastily sketched brief to Nauta by famed architect Renzo Piano for his new yacht. Above and below is the 112' Nilaya also designed by Nauta Yachts with Reichel Pugh.

Next came the Nauta 70' and as with the previous project, the in-house design and engineering was refined, fine tuned and signed off by a legend of the sailing world; Bruce Farr. Four 70's and subsequently four 65's were built at their own yard in Fano before the economic crash of the early 1990's closed the Nauta facility. Reconsidering their strategy, the three partners decided to eliminate the huge overheads of running their own yard, and instead concentrated on what they truly loved, design projects to be built by others.

DESIGN BY DESIGN

When Nauta Yachts commenced their next stage in the early 1990's, the team brought with them a combination of qualities that ensured the plan of designing for shipyards was efficient and successful. Being enthusiastic sailors themselves they understand the demands of the client. Having produced yachts and owned their own yard, they understood the challenges faced by builders. Being designers at heart, they were thus able to deliver complete, comprehensive and precise blueprint packages to the commissioned shipyard, from which the yacht could be built.

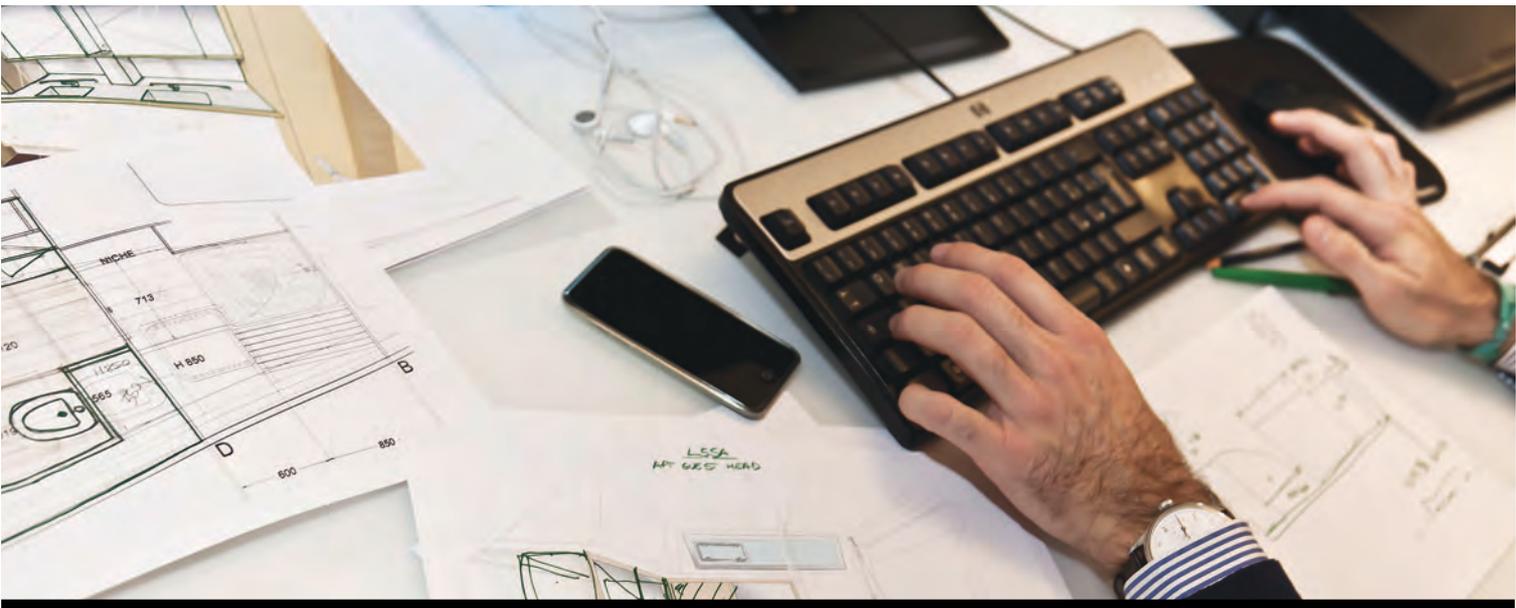
Unusually for a design studio, but making sense in so many ways, Nauta Yachts also ran (and still operate) a brokerage division. Though currently accounting for "less than 10 percent" of their turnover, this service is part of their holistic approach. If a client requires to sell their existing boat, or acquire a 'fill in' yacht while their new one is being designed and built, Nauta are able to facilitate it. "The brokerage division was the responsibility of our partner Enzo Moiso, who sadly passed away in 2009," Mario explains. "So it's not been a primary focus of our business since then. What it has always done however is allow us to keep our finger on the pulse of the market in general, which is very useful."

The precision of Nauta's work made them a pleasure to work with. Yard owners like Willy Persico of Southern Wind shipyard would invariably employ Nauta whenever possible for his interior, deck design, hardware layout and engineering packages - appreciating the precision and complete nature of the final drawings. Empathy with loyal owners and the building yards led to many more successful collaborations on series-build and custom sailing vessels, with many renowned yachts including around the 100'-mark like Farrandwide (100'), Nilaya (112'), Maya Ray (95'), Algamores II (102') and two further 100' Southern Wind constructions in Mrs Seven and Fado.

With experienced yacht owners and demanding new clients, we asked Mario if he preferred working to a tight brief, or being given a freedom in design? "The easiest is in the middle," Mario laughs. "It is exciting to bounce ideas with an experienced owner, especially when they are open to new ideas. But each client is different and it is about establishing trust, sometimes you have to narrow down the choices for them to make a decision. With a long-standing client like Pier-Luigi Loro Piana we have that trust. He may come into the office, or even at a dinner table, spend five minutes sketching out his own ideas (see pictured) and then leave the rest to us. Being able to work in 3D and show a client a life-like rendering certainly helps with communication."

Drawing from the client's desires is a key part of Nauta's job; "Sometimes a client may arrive with samples of material, pages from magazines, photos of things they've seen and liked," Mario tells us. "If we visit them at home it gives us an insight into how they live and their

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Between 1992 and 1995 Nauta's focus switched to designing interiors for Bertram's production range. It proved to be an invaluable experience.

MOTORING AHEAD

Shortly after the shift from designing and building to concentrating primarily on design, in 1992 Nauta was approached by Bertram Yachts to design the interior of their range. When asked if they have a preferred sector to work in, motor or sail, Mario confesses, “We have no real favorite, we like to work on both. Sailing is a passion and admittedly with sailing yachts there are more limitations with regards to the superstructure and deck, but that is a challenge that exercises the mind. With motor yachts there’s more space and freedom, but we still employ our ethos of graceful, elegant and almost minimalist lines. The limited space available on a sailing yacht also pushes you to use every available inch, and this experience is beneficial into our motor yachts designs. Bertram was particularly amazed by this factor.”

Relishing the challenge of a new discipline, Nauta worked with Bertram until 1995, three good years during which Bertram was producing around 300 boats a year, so Nauta’s experience in production design increased exponentially. The relationship paid dividends for both parties: Bertram’s traditional styling was rejuvenated into something fresher and more stylish, and Nauta learnt a lot more besides the skills and processes of designing on an industrial scale. “There are some similarities between sailing and sport-fishing yachts, in terms of practicality and offshore sea-keeping, but spending time at the factory in Miami provided a deeper insight. There was a very good designer at the yard, David Napier, who had great aesthetic experience with the exterior, so we added a lot of skills to our exterior design capability through learning from him.”

The departure between custom and production yacht design is considerable, and at Bertram Nauta’s team implemented new systems, materials and ideas. “We’d have to consider economies of scale,” Mario explains, “designing components that might fit a number of different models in the range. Calculating the joinery details and geometry, ensuring maximum efficiency in manufacture and construction is quite an involved task. It’s a very different discipline to design custom yachts, in many ways it is harder.”

Having designed the interiors for several hundred Bertrams, Nauta were then approached by Toy Marine to design a line of traditionally style boats. “At that time the new version of the Mini Cooper car had been released,” Mario recalls, “and a resurgence in appreciation of retro design was taking place. We were asked to do a similar modern reinterpretation of the lobster boat.” Supplying the complete design package – exterior, interior and naval architecture – was an indication of how Nauta had matured. Producing over 1,000 yachts with Bertram, Nauta once again returned to the sailing sector and employed what they had learnt to remarkable effect...

decorative tastes, which is helpful, but not essential. The key is in the relationship, through which you come to know the client as a person.” When discussing inspirational clients, Mario mentions Renzo Piano, the renowned Italian architect who, amongst other landmark projects, designed the iconic wind tunnel at Ferrari’s headquarters in Maranello.

“Architecture is certainly very inspirational,” Mario muses, “it’s fascinating sharing philosophies with someone as demanding of himself as Renzo, and also reassuring when we realized we already employed the same processes. Missing the opportunity to study architecture is something I regret, but my daughter is studying it, so at least she is benefitting from it. Renzo is very open-minded and inspired me to be curious and consider all forms of design, from buildings to art, nature to history.” While the larger semi-custom and custom yachts were flying off the drawing board, Nauta was tuning another string for their bow that would see them design for owners that they were rarely likely to meet. This new venture would also see the number of their designs launched number in the thousands. Nauta began production yacht design.

Beneteau, the world's largest production builder, appreciated Nauta's custom and production design experience. Together they've launch in excess of 10,000 yachts.

PRODUCING THE NUMBERS

The reputation Nauta had garnered in the big boat market attracted the attention of Beneteau, the world's largest producer of sailing yachts, who invited Nauta Yachts to visit their facilities in 2005. "I was surprised at lunch to discover Madame Roux was joining us," Mario tells us. "She was very direct and explained that they were the largest group in terms of turnover, units produced, international sales representation and so on. But she went on to add that they felt they were no longer the leaders in terms of product and they wanted to change that. It was a very open exchange." Showing their portfolio of work, Mario believes it was "the marriage between large custom yachts and production experience with Bertram" that led Beneteau to commission Nauta to design the interiors for their range.

"Fortunately we've always had the opportunity to work with quality shipyards," says Mario, "and while financially rewarding, working with Beneteau pushed us to learn new skills in a very different sector of yacht building. The process of building limited numbers in series builds to production boat building on an industrial scale is like chalk and cheese. Mario explains to us one example. "At Beneteau they had a 'library' of parts and components that we could build the interiors out of. From trim to partitions, fiddles to patterns for solid wood parts, the archive of parts was extensive, but it still limited us - especially when compared to the freehand of custom designs. You had to make a very good case to add something to the library and introduce change." Mario continues, "Due to the huge number of yachts they build at Beneteau, the method of construction is as important as the actual style of the design. It meant us looking at our work from a very different perspective." When Nauta arrived they also experienced for the first time what it was like to be a part of a huge team. "In an open space of perhaps 4,300sqft (400sqm) were 50 people in design section on one side, and 50 people in the production process department on the other. Everything went back and forth between the two departments, evolving until a final design was distilled. The process took around two years for a new model, so it was a very different process for us."

Nauta adjusted their methods quickly and successfully. Testament to this is not only the length of the collaboration, which continues today, but also the fact that Nauta also design the interiors for other brands in the Beneteau Group portfolio: CNB and Lagoon catamarans. When asked if he can estimate the number of yachts Beneteau launched with an interior designed by Nauta, Mario rolls his eyes and reaches for a piece of paper. "The current range stretches from around 31' to 62', then you have the different models, Oceanis, Sense, First, each with a model about every 3', plus Lagoon catamarans. Each model changes approximately every three years and we're on our second cycle... If Oceanis is the best seller and sells around 300..." Giving up on the mental arithmetic, Mario's best estimate is 'somewhere in the range of 10,000 yachts'!



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With sailing, building and selling experience, coupled with design skills in custom, semi-custom, high volume production, designing interiors, exteriors and naval architecture, Nauta had grown into a well rounded studio capable of taking on anything. Just how big the next challenge was, nobody could ever have imagined...

PROJECT LIGHT

Mario actually credits the commissioning of their work on the world's largest yacht to a previous project that had failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion: Project Light. "While working with Renzo Piano on his boat, he mentioned a friend who couldn't be persuaded to build a sailing yacht, but was determined he wanted a custom motor yacht. We began speaking and from our discussions began working on a preliminary design for a 230' (70m) in January 2006. The size grew up to 255' (78m) and the final proposal package was for a 262' (80m)." For a yard whose only previous experience in motor yacht design was interiors for production yachts and lobster boats to 68', this was a huge step up. They won the contract. Already possessing a good knowledge of 60m+ yachts through their involvement in brokerage, over the next two years Nauta Yachts built on this foundation and learnt large yacht

design from the keel up. From the naval architecture and extensive tank testing, through vibration and sound calculations and simulations, engineering and large yacht systems, through to the interior design and classification requirements. In order to achieve this, significant investment was made in the company. A news studio on a leafy boulevard in central Milan was secured to accommodate a team that grew to 14 members. The new computer software and hardware required was purchased and new skill sets were acquired. It was a busy time for Nauta Yachts. As Mario shows us renderings and sketches of the Project Light's design, he explains the ethos they developed for the project. "We set out to avoid excess but embrace tradition. In the history of sailing and motor yachts you can find elegance through simplicity. We have our own sensitivity and balance in design, which is modern but not extreme. These two elements produce timeless projects. This is our philosophy and has become our trademark and we attract clients with the same values. As per your earlier question, this was one of those projects where we were afforded complete freedom." From the blank sheet Nauta produced a very clean design with a surfeit of exterior entertainment spaces, each flowing easily into those contained within the superstructure. Coming from a sailing back-

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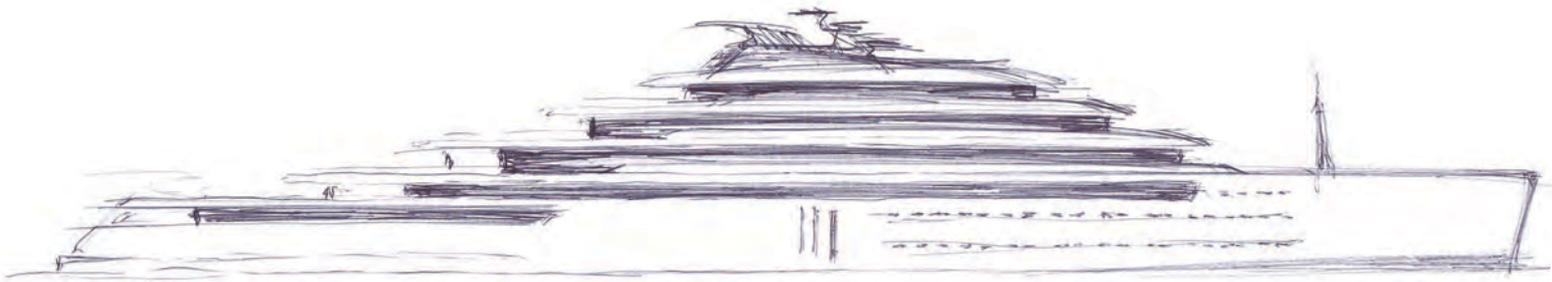
The Nauta team expanded for Project Light. The initial project was a victim of 2008, but bigger things came from it and a further refined version is currently available.



ground and used to experiencing the elements and the sea, this was a key feature Nauta aimed to introduce in their motor yacht design. "Not building a wedding cake, a yacht that's 'over-volumed' was part of the goal too," Mario adds. "Rather than taking the approach of trying to introduce the outside environment into the yacht, we designed the yacht around being in the environment, which is evident from the large exterior decks and low volume superstructure. There's also low bulwarks and lots of glazing, I hate being in a salon that feels like you're riding a bus!" With the design signed off, all the naval architecture and studies completed, the engineering drawings complete and the package delivered to the shipyard, the studio drew breath awaiting the first piece of steel to be cut... in February 2008. Unfortunately, rather than hearing the clang of steel against steel, the bang heard around the world was that of the economic bubble bursting. The owner, being a property developer, suffered almost immediately and the project evaporated almost overnight. As crushingly disappoint-

"We avoid excess but embrace tradition. In history elegance is found in simplicity. Our own sensitivity and balance is modern but not extreme."





ing as that was for Nauta, the studio pushed on, refining their design up to the majestic 90m Project Light that is available today. That summer must have been a long one for the Nauta team, like the rest of the world they left for their summer vacations with some concern for what they'd discover on their return. Just days after being back in the office the world flipped again however and from the pit of despair they were exalted to the top of the world...

DETERMINING THE FUTURE

"It didn't start out as the largest yacht in the world," Mario smiles with a modesty that borders on apologetic. "The initial project was for a 145m, but as with all yachts it grew and grew as time went on." After some gentle persuasion Mario takes us back to the beginning of the story; "I was actually skippering a catamaran on holiday with friends when the first call came through. Of course, at first I thought it was a friend making a practical joke, but it quickly became evident this was not the case. A mutual friend who knew about our work on Project Light had suggested us to the client, Engineer Mubarak Saad al Ahabbi. After a lengthy conversation he called back and said they'd

like to meet as soon as possible, but I had another week on the yacht. I couldn't just drop the anchor and leave my friends and family without a skipper. It was a long week!"

Mario continues, "the meeting which followed was very pleasant and positive, thanks also to their appreciation of the neatness and stylistic elegance of Project Light, our large yacht reference at the time".

Next Nauta submitted an economic proposal to conduct the design and fortunately,

the wait for the answer was not long at all.

"I was in Sardinia for the Rolex Cup when the call came through. Racing had finished the day before and I had a day layover before heading back to Milan. I was driving to the beach to join some friends, so obviously I had to pull over and take a moment to let it sink in. I think when I arrived they could tell I was overjoyed, but all I could say was 'I've won a big contract'. I couldn't tell them I was going to design one of the largest yachts in the world - she was still 145m at that time... though for a designer who usually designs 100' yachts, they may not have believed me anyway!"

Back at the studio in Milan, having already increased the team due to the workload for Beneteau and Project Light, Nauta was able to carry straight onto the Azzam project on 8th September 2008 without further expanding the team. "Going back to the office and delivering the good news after the crushing disappointment of the Project Light deal collapsing just months earlier in February, it was a great feeling," says Mario. "It was just before the Monaco Show in 2008 too, the time when the industry was pushed off the cliff by the crisis, that we com-

"It didn't start off as 'the largest yacht in the world', the initial plan was for a 145m, but as with all yachts... they grow"

Project Light was the catalyst for Azzam, without it the studio would never have been introduced or been ready.

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“It’s a relatively simple and uncomplicated yacht. Of course in terms of size, complexity – and hopefully design – it’s still spectacular.”



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menced work. The design progressed apace, with glazed apertures increasing in size to improve the internal ambiance even further. When asked if there were any features of the yacht that were notable in terms of application or innovation, Mario shrugs and, as with all his answers when discussing Azzam, chooses his words carefully so as not to contravene the watertight Non-Disclosure Agreement. “To be honest, it’s a relatively simple and regular yacht. Of course in terms of size, complexity – and hopefully design – it’s spectacular.” Apart from the Aquariva in the portside tender garage, it’s doesn’t sound as if Azzam has any ‘James Bond-style’ features.

Mario confesses that the scale of the project was completely new to the studio. Looking at general arrangements that include a dining room for 50 people, plus a salon within which he could fit two of his 74’ sailing boat designs side-by-side and accommodation for between 50 to 60 crewmembers, was a steep learning curve. In addition to the external design, Nauta also aided in the internal spatial flow for crew and traffic to move around the yacht. By the time Nauta was appointed, Christophe Leoni was already working on the interior designs. Having already produced interior designs for the client, Leoni was well positioned to translate their taste in terms of decoration, and requirements in terms of facilities, into Azzam’s interiors.

Involved in the process of selecting companies to complete the interior fit-out, Mario and other key figures in the Azzam project visited nine different companies; seven were eventually selected to ensure the project was completed in time to meet the delivery deadline. Due for launch in November, it has taken just five-years for the project to

be completed, and as Mario says, “between 25 and 30 percent of a project’s total build time is spent on design and engineering. Everything is completed well in advance, it is the only way to industrialize such a huge manual process. Apart from all

the studies on vibration, propulsion, noise, balance, etc. all the conflicts, access, components, wiring, plumbing, everything have to be planned and scheduled in advance. A project like this is incredibly well choreographed.”

Having started work in September 2008, by Spring 2009 the exterior styling had been defined for a 145m design, to a good level of detailing and a 3D model produced. The project then slowed for six-months and discussions took place about lengthening the yacht. “The initial brief didn’t change at all,” Mario tells us, “Just the length, which was added primarily in the bow area, with some amidships through the superstructure and a bit on the beach club. It stretched the design for an even more graceful look and allowed us to make the bow sleeker.” When questioned on why the additional length, to accommodate more tenders, to increase accommodation, or simply to become the largest yacht in the world, Mario professes he cannot answer for he doesn’t know the reason. Always designed as a high-performance gigayacht, thanks to two diesel engines and two gas turbines, Azzam can achieve remarkable speeds for a 7-deck yacht of 590’. During her first three days sea-trial, a shadowing helicopter from yachtphoto.com reported she hit speeds of 31.5-knots powered by a total of 94,000hp. From the images produced during the shoot, the most striking aspect of Azzam is how well proportioned she is, her balance contributing to the fact she doesn’t appear her 180m length.

Editor’s Note: Directing the construction of Azzam, Engineer Mubarak was the point of contact and considered the client by Nauta, the shipyard, suppliers and contractors. The beneficial owner has remained a close secret and the subject of much speculation, including widespread reports of it being Saudi entrepreneur Al-Waleed bin Talal. Despite bin Talal not publicly dismissing these rumors, having spent six years living in the UAE trusted sources suggest ownership is in fact much closer to home.



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Current projects include the Nauta Air series for CdM, a sailing collaboration with Reichel Pugh and a study for the Benetti Design Innovation initiative.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Thrust into the spotlight when Azzam broke cover, and anticipating another wave of attention when Azzam is delivered later this year, Nauta have kept themselves busy with a number of different projects. Along with producing an entry for Benetti's Design Innovation initiative, Nauta have also been collaborating with one of Italy's most exciting new shipyards: Cantiere delle Marche. Introduced to INVICTUS readers in issue #1, in the last three and a half years CdM has built and delivered four exquisitely engineered expedition yachts. On the yard's order book (which would make some more established yards weep), are two 90' models from a new range designed by Nauta Yachts.

Named the CDM Nauta Air, this series of hardy cruising yachts will feature CdM's renowned engineering, but wrapped in the more refined lines of a Nauta Design. The range includes 90', 105' and 130' models, each featuring the high-volume-bow and low-volume-superstructure and clean lines we've come to associate with Nauta. Add to that the large glazing, huge exterior entertainment decks and a transom on the 130' model that sports steps directly down to the sea, and you're on familiar territory. With four of the yachts sold from the new series, "and some negotiations on several others very close to satisfactory conclusion," it appears future CDM Nauta Air owners can't resist being able to tell their friends: "My yacht? Oh, it was designed by the team that did the world's largest yacht."

For a last word for this feature, after bidding goodbye to Mario and Luca Pedol, we drove from Milan to Ancona to visit Vasco Buonpensiere, CdM's Sales and Marketing Director. We wanted to understand what it was like to work with Nauta Yachts from a client's perspective. Concurring with our own opinion, Vasco commences with: "If I can only tell you one thing about Mario Pedol, it would be that he is a complete gentleman." During the conversation Vasco confirms what other yard owners have told us regarding Nauta delivering "the most precise and complete engineering package, one that reads like an instruction manual for the Project Manager." Vasco also tells us a short anecdote that serves as a fitting conclusion to Nauta's design philosophy. One day when discussing the exterior design of the CDM Nauta Air range, Mario Pedol told Vasco that he wanted to design boats that in ten years, as their owners make their way back to the shore on the tender, they can look back at their yacht and say 'She's a beautiful lady'. "Which is fair enough," says Vasco. "But Mario then followed it with, 'But how do you know yours is a beautiful lady? Sometimes you are blinded by love, then you go to a party and you see all the ladies and start to take a second look at yours. It's only when you can put your lady amongst a group of others and still know she's beautiful, then you really love her. That's what I want to create.'"



"It's only when you can put your lady amongst a group of others and still know she's beautiful... then you know it's love."

*The simplest acts of
kindness are by far more
powerful than a thousand
heads bowing in prayer.*

Mahatma Gandhi

The Centurions

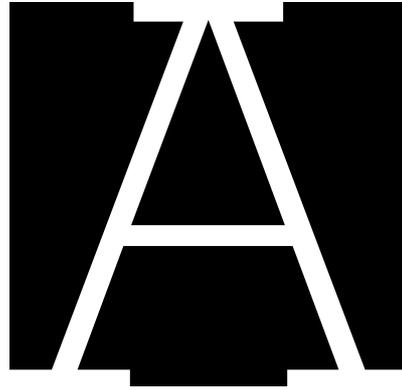
THE 100M DASH

The appetite for ever-larger vessels remains unabated amongst the world's most powerful yacht owners. Currently numbering 25, the 100m+ fleet is set to exceed 40 in coming years if projects currently underway and under contract come to fruition. We take a look at the current members of the 'Centurion Club' and reveal those who will be gaining entry to the world's most exclusive coterie shortly.

BY CRAIG BARNETT

INVICTVS CENTVRIONS

Azzam
Eclipse
Dubai
Al Said
Prince Abdulaziz
Topaz
El Horriya
Al Salamah
Rising Sun
Savarona
Serene
Al Mirqab
Octopus
Katara
A
Atlantis II
Luna
Issham Al Baher
Pelorus
Le Grand Bleu
Dilbar
Radiant
Lady Moura
Loaloat Al Behar
Atessa IV



As the year's most significant new launches have either been handed over to their new owners, or are in the final stages of pre-delivery finishing, a review of the world's largest yachts indicated that once again, as expected, the average length of the world's 'Top 100' has increased. The colossal 590' (180m) Azzam has inherited the crowning glory from Eclipse, and in doing so the 'Centurion Club' has welcomed another member. Being the only 100m+ launch to date in 2013 however, we mused on what future launches were in the pipeline, both in build and in the engineering phase.

What we discovered was startling. The current 100m+ fleet, reviewed in subsequent pages, currently numbers 25, but that is about to change dramatically. Information on the largest yachts is notoriously difficult to acquire, and even more so for jealously guarded projects that have yet to see the light of day. From our resources however, we can count at least 15 further solid cases of 'centurions' in build, proving the enthusiasm for megayachts is far from fading, but indeed gathering pace. Against all odds the average length of the Top 100 has increased by an impressive 13.87m (45') in the five years since the crisis struck in 2008, but with the 100m+ Centurion Club due to account for over 40 percent of the Top 100 in the next five years, that average length will shoot up exponentially.

Indeed, as the rarified air occupied by the upper echelon of megayacht owners becomes more crowded in the coming years, so will the few marinas capable of accommodating them, which could lead to an undignified scramble for berths. This is a welcome problem however, too much business is always more favorable than none at all. Thanks to the owner's passion for these large yachts, their wealth is redistributed and ensures gainful employment for thousands of shipyard workers, sub-contractors, systems and material suppliers, logistic companies, designers, researchers, crew, dock staff, insurance, sales executives... and magazine editors! These yachts put food on the tables of families around the world.

Every yacht is a reflection of an owner's personality, and as one would expect there are some powerful characters in the Centurion Club. Some like the 119m 'A' demonstrate the courage of the owner to put unfettered faith in a designer to create a pioneering design, explorers like Grand Bleu and Luna exhibit an adventurous spirit, while others push forward the boundaries of naval architecture, technology and design. My favorite anomaly amongst the centurions must be Al Horriya. Still maintaining a position in the Top 10, she was delivered in 1865. At that time the Civil War was drawing to a close in the USA, President Lincoln was assassinated, Wild Bill Hickock was running around the Wild West and Titanic was still almost 50-years from being launched. Today Al Horriya's longevity inspires the same awe that her scale and majesty must have created upon launching.

Given the longevity of yachts and the rapid pace of technological progress, one wonders what observers will make of today's yachts in 50 or 100 years time. In the second section of our feature, the centurions in build, it becomes evident that environmental responsibility is a serious consideration. No less than five sailing yachts currently in build will become Centurion Club members, while no existing private sailing yachts approach the 100m threshold. Even amongst the motor yachts diesel electric propulsion, more efficient naval architecture and lower onboard power consumption is a primary consideration. The Centurion Club must appreciate that in order for these magnificent machines to be treasured in 50 or 100 years time, the oceans upon which they float must be preserved.

INVICTVS



LOA: 180m
Beam: 20.80m
Volume: n/a
Engines: 94,000hp
Top speed: 31.5-knots
Cruising Speed: 25-knots
Range: n/a
Exterior Designer: Nauta Yachts Design
Interior Designer: Christophe Leoni
Shipyard: Lürssen Yachts (Germany)
Owner's Nationality: Emirati

AZZAM

180 M - 591'
Year : 2013

Measuring a colossal 180m, the new king of the hill is currently undergoing sea trials and finishing ahead of a scheduled delivery in November 2013. Cleverly encapsulated within her graceful design by Nauta Yachts (see a comprehensive feature on the studio in this issue) are social areas of dimensions never before witnessed aboard a private vessel. Covering an area of almost 6,000sqft (550m), her main salon is decorated in an Empire style by a designer little known in yachting circles, Frenchman Christophe Leoni. Covering six decks, the build of this leviathan at the Lürssen yard in Germany was carefully supervised by the owner's representative, Engineer Mubarak Saad al Ahbabi, who was assisted by Burgess. The relatively short build time for a project of this magnitude, around four years, was achievable through immense effort on behalf of the 1,500 workers involved in her construction. Seven different interior fit out companies are currently working on different zones of the yacht to ensure she meets deadline.

