

Life under Sail

CELEBRATING THE SAILING LIFESTYLE

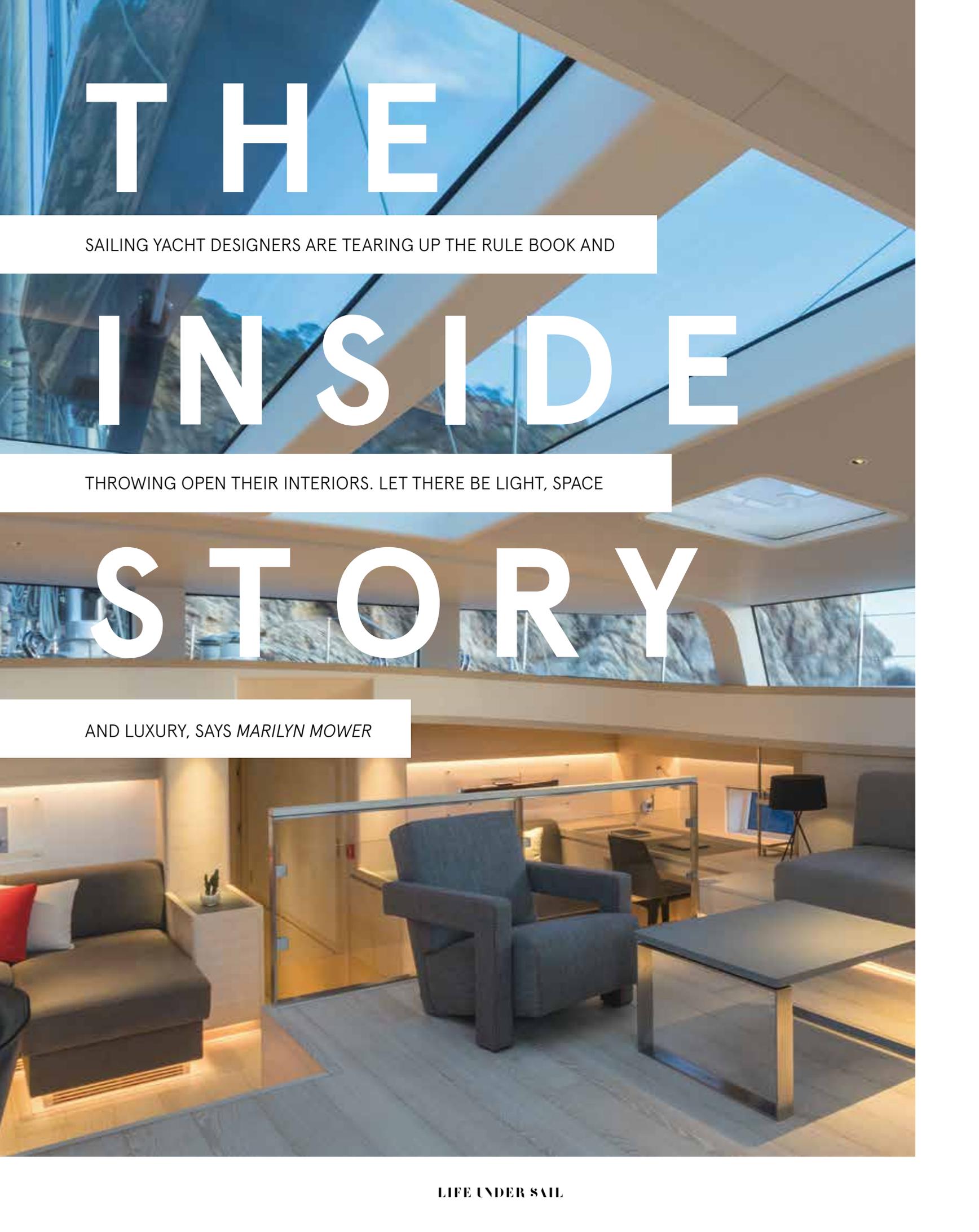
09/2019

**FOILED! ON THE WAY TO
THE 36TH AMERICA'S CUP**

**SURVIVING THE WORLD'S
WILDEST WATER**

**INSIDE THE YACHT
INTERIORS REVOLUTION**

BOAT

The image shows the interior of a modern yacht. The space is bright and open, featuring a large skylight at the top and curved windows that offer a view of the sea. The interior is furnished with contemporary decor, including a grey sofa, a blue armchair, and a coffee table. The lighting is warm and ambient, highlighting the clean lines and materials of the yacht's design.

THE

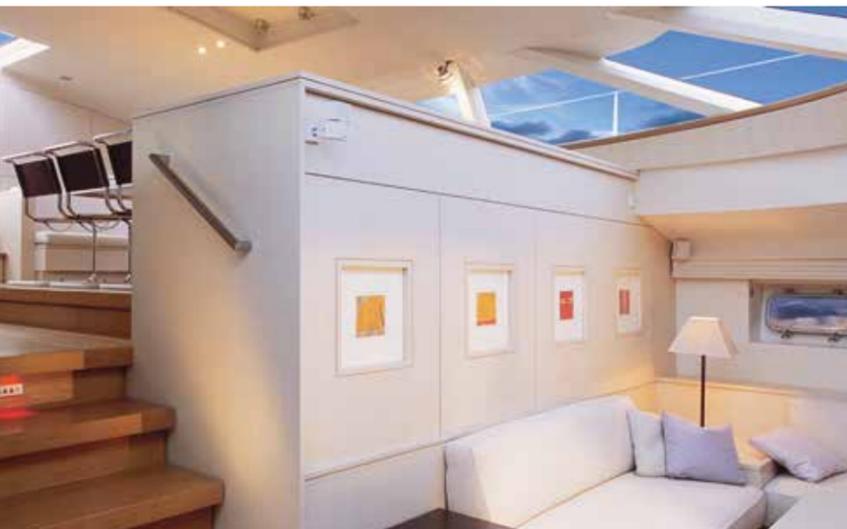
SAILING YACHT DESIGNERS ARE TEARING UP THE RULE BOOK AND

INSIDE

THROWING OPEN THEIR INTERIORS. LET THERE BE LIGHT, SPACE

STORY

AND LUXURY, SAYS *MARILYN MOWER*



Previous pages: G2's upper and lower saloons. Above: Alithia, a 39.8m with interiors by Winch Design, has a nicely integrated entertainment area below the saloon



Right and above: Design Unlimited penned the living areas on this 50m performance sloop

“We are getting close to being able to get rid of a lot of levels. We are working on a 42 metre boat that manages to have the saloon, dining and cockpit all on one level”

Mark Tucker, founder, Design Unlimited



Sailing yacht interiors have gone through a metamorphosis in the past two decades, primarily due to requests for lighter weight to increase performance, and modern naval architecture with wider beams and lifting keels. As with motor yachts, there has been a desire to get more natural light aboard. Yet today's sailing yacht interiors are anything but cookie-cutter.

We contacted some of the busiest design firms to hear what they have to say about sailing yacht interior trends – and discovered there isn't really a look, but more an increasing amount of owner involvement and a growing request for individual expression, often with the emphasis on relaxation.

“Sailing is a lifestyle rather than a mode of transportation,” says Ignacio Oliva-Velez, senior partner, production and sailing yachts at Winch Design. And therein lies a key requirement with the majority of sailing yachts – an innate informality and interaction with the crew, at least the deck crew and helmsman.

“My sailing boat clients are passionate about sailing; most have been sailing their whole lives, from dinghies on up,” says Mark Tucker, founder of UK studio Design Unlimited. “They tend to have strong ideas about what layouts work for them and get very involved in the details.”

One of the challenges, according to Tucker, is to create the kind of single main deck living that is possible on a motor yacht on a sailing yacht. “We are getting close to being able to get rid of a lot of levels. We are working on a 42 metre that manages to have the saloon, dining and cockpit all on one level,” he says.

It used to be that some people objected to the feeling of “going below” on a sailing yacht, especially through a



The side-by-side lounge and dining space on the Winch Design-penned Jeanneau utilises the growing trend for wider beams on modern yachts

“If you compare new yachts to those of 20 years ago, you'll find they are 20 per cent wider”

Ignacio Oliva-Velez, design manager, Winch Design

narrow companionway. Today, good designers know how to create a better flow between the cockpit and the inside of the boat, with wide glass hatches into deck saloons and sometimes, depending on the size of the yacht, even full height glass doors. On flush deck yachts, or those with recessed cockpits and very low coachroofs, this is trickier, but the use of toughened glass makes it feasible.

Opening boats to the sea has always been difficult but some yards are challenging the boundaries, says Tucker. “Pink Gin [by Baltic Yachts] and the Perini guys have addressed the last big lifestyle issues of openness with the inclusion of balconies in the hulls for staterooms and beach club fold-outs. I suppose the next thing is to put windows under the water on sailing yachts.”

“If you compare new yachts to those of 20 years ago, you'll find they are 20 per cent wider now,” says Oliva-Velez. “There might be three steps now from the dining table to the sofa on a 60-footer [18 metre]. We see interiors influenced by performance hulls which are wider and more stable.”

Oliva-Velez is a sailor himself and is keen to see what influences canting keels and foils developed for round-the-world racing boats, IMOCA and the America's Cup will have on cruisers. “The Formula One of sailing has been multihulls for the last 10 years, but except for the Caribbean charter market, multihull sailing yachts haven't really caught on for larger boats, probably because they are harder to park.”

Oliva-Velez says the most dynamic part of the sailing yacht marketplace at the moment is the owner-driven 25- to 40-metre sloop. “Because the owners are driving, it requires changes to the layouts of the sailing and social cockpits. They often are not so separated as before. Imagine that you are sailing and you stop and anchor for a swim. The cockpit has to change from operation to social and at night your dining area may become the cinema lounge. As designers, we have to think more about transitioning the spaces from one function to another and also how the crew are going to access the deck for service.”

Tucker agrees, saying that designing spaces within spaces is one way to make up for not having multiple decks. “This means there are places to tuck into for sailing within the larger spaces for use in harbour mode.”

Mark Whiteley, of the eponymous UK design firm, notes that the popularity of the performance cruiser market puts pressure on designers to look at the different functions for crossover yachts that do occasional regattas. “Aquarius is a good example. That yacht can go from a regatta back to owner mode in an hour.”

Technology is also reducing the amount of space necessary for running the yacht. “Instead of the large navigation stations we used to have, you can practically run the boats from a tablet,” says Oliva-Velez. On a 90-footer we are designing, this allows us to use the space that once would have been a nav station tucked under the cockpit for a guest service area, coffee or breakfast bar.”



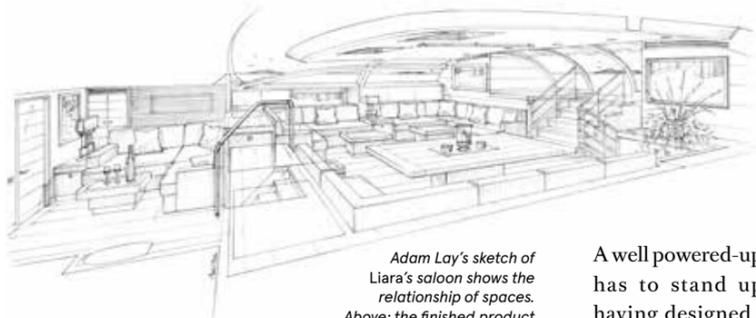
Ignacio Oliva-Velez (top) and Mark Tucker are both keen sailors as well as leading interior designers

PHOTOGRAPHY: MIKE AUSTIN PHOTOGRAPHY



“A well powered up boat can be skittish, and your interior has to stand up”

Adam Lay, principal, Adam Lay Studio



Adam Lay's sketch of Liara's saloon shows the relationship of spaces. Above: the finished product

A well powered-up boat can be skittish, and your interior has to stand up,” says Lay, who in addition to having designed the 2009 *Salperton* penned the 2013 carbon-fibre *Inukshuk*.

Although sailing yacht interiors have progressed far from the cave-like spaces of a generation ago, when small portholes and hatches were seen as a necessity for keeping interiors dry, owners are asking for even more natural light and ventilation. “We get more requests from owners who want to be able to open hatches for sleeping – that’s a thing now,” says Lay. “They are also into more healthy lifestyles and want healthy finishes, not lacquers with high VOCs [volatile organic compounds]. We use natural fibres as much as we can.”

Not all natural materials are environmentally friendly, cautions Lay. “Some of the processes in and of themselves are not good for the environment. I cringe when I think of the leather tanning factories that dump their chemicals into rivers. I had a client tell me he didn’t want to see shagreen on board because it made no sense to kill rays for decoration and then go out sailing to be with nature.”

Lay’s latest project, the recently launched 34.1-metre Baltic, *Liara*, which will be on display at the upcoming Monaco Yacht Show, has what he describes as a very natural interior of open grain bleached oak paired with cotton and linen fabrics.

Whiteley concurs. “My clients are asking to use sustainable materials as much as possible. It’s our responsibility, isn’t it?” His favourite recent find is Green Blade veneer, made from banana tree trunks. “It looks like Tabu, grows fast, is sustainable and can be dyed any colour.” He’s also working with a Moore & Giles leather product in which the hides are “tanned” with a 100 per cent organic product made from olive leaves.

When it comes to layouts and decor, “increasingly, the owners want to leave clutter behind”, Oliva-Velez says. “They want minimal interiors not boxes of stuff.” While Lutron controllers were once hailed as the greatest thing, Whiteley says his clients are now searching for something simpler. “I have clients asking me for physical switches on lamps and overhead lights so they don’t have to go hunting for things or figure out how they work.”

Several of the designers we spoke to characterise their clients as appreciating the self-sufficiency of sailing boats and wanting to exploit that theme throughout. “They like the idea that they could go world cruising without consuming large quantities of diesel fuel,” says Tucker.

“Most of our customers are interested in performance; that’s our speciality,” says Mario Pedol of Nauta Design. By that, he means light air performance, which is about reducing the weight of the interiors as much as possible. “But then they also want to cruise and anchor in beautiful locations and with a boat of 30 metres or more, that demands a lifting keel.

“We are doing a 100-foot-high performance boat for a client at Southern Wind. The owner wants speed – a real gran turismo of the sea. The draught will be six metres with the keel down to race and that is not acceptable for cruising. He needs the keel to lift two metres for cruising. That’s up to the naval architect, but for us, it is what to do with that keel.”

Pedol says he starts the layout by accommodating the keel, be it lifting, telescoping or swinging. “You design >



The walls of the master suite for this 81m schooner by Mark Whiteley are covered in a sustainable material from Tabu

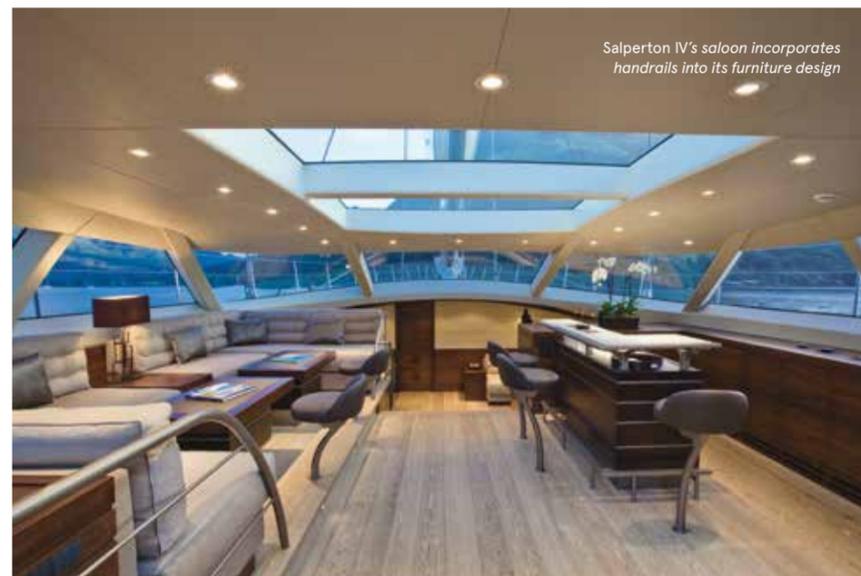


“You have to think what this space will be like at 30 degrees of heel. Sometimes by taking out you get more luxury”

Mario Pedol (left), founder, Nauta Design



Adam Lay (top) and Mark Whiteley



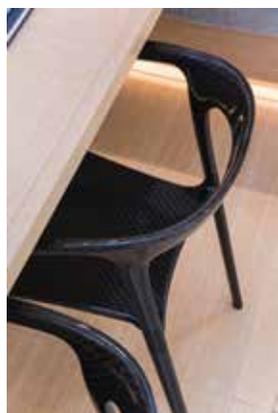
Salperton IV's saloon incorporates handrails into its furniture design



Carbon fibre structure is exposed for contrast on these steps from Nauta Design



Left: this 55m cruising ship concept by Design Unlimited has a roomy multi-function space



around that primary feature and do it in a way that you hardly know it is there. It's harder to do on a smaller boat, especially if you want the crew aft, but usually we can work it into the furniture. With symmetrical layouts the keel trunk can become a feature, but it does divide the saloon, and in my view the saloon should be as open as possible.

"We have lots of differing opinions in our studio. I'm usually the one trying to take the furniture out. A sailing boat has so many pieces to fit in that are necessary for function, machinery and storage. You have to think what this space will be like at 30 degrees of heel. Sometimes by taking out you get more luxury," says Pedol.

While lifting keels may create an interior design problem, diesel electric propulsions may take one away. "We no longer have to have that big old engine room space in the middle of the boat," says Tucker. "We are exploiting that on a 52-footer at the moment. It has a lifting electric drive unit powered by a generator [we have] hidden in the galley. Convincing owners that this sort of technology is the future gives us greater flexibility with interiors."

Pedol likes to marry natural and high-tech materials for a contemporary look that shaves weight. Carbon fibre is one of his favourite materials as it can be laminated into organic shapes on a mould. Of course, carbon fibre does not have to mean black and Pedol often covers it with veneer or lacquer. "My favourite colours have shifted over the years to lighter tones. I like oak with light stains because I like the fine, subtle tones and the texture of open grain. Sometimes we use white lacquer with touches of dark wood veneer.

"As the hull shapes have evolved, so too have sailing yacht interiors," says Pedol. "What is consistent is that you have to put the human at the centre of the design. You have to imagine yourself at the centre of life on board." ■



Green Blade veneer (above) and reclaimed wood are two of Mark Whiteley's favourite materials

