

BOAT



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80-METRE
BEHEMOTH
TAKES
FLIGHT



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INDONESIA'S
SECRET
ARCHIPELAGO

THE WORLD'S BEST BOATS

WINNERS
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SUPERYACHT
AWARDS
REVEALED

Inside a
superyacht
power couple's
Adriatic
escape



Cover boat

Taming the Dragon

WITH AN 80 METRE CONTRACT AT STAKE, PALUMBO SUPERYACHTS PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS TO SATISFY A CLIENT IN A HURRY. ANDREW JOHANSSON DISCOVERS HOW THE ITALIAN YARD BUILT ITS FLAGSHIP, *DRAGON*, IN LESS THAN 30 MONTHS





Above and top: the beach club, with sauna, hammam and bar, is 200 square metres of relaxation space open to the sea on three sides

They say time is the one thing you can't buy, but there are exceptions to every rule. When a client from the Middle East came looking for a new superyacht in the 77- to 80-metre range, it was an opportunity that Palumbo Superyachts was keen to secure despite the challenges - the most significant of which was the time frame.

“The build time was an issue for the client and was one of the key factors to securing the contract. They didn't want to wait four years for a new boat,” explains Francesco Carbone, general manager and sales director at Palumbo Superyachts. Fortunately, the shipyard had a trick up its sleeve in the form of a started-on-spec 65 metre, penned by Sergio Cutolo and his team at Hydro Tec for its Columbus brand. The original platform had been designed in 2013 with larger models envisaged, so there was scope to scale up from 65 metres to something in the client's size bracket.

“We wanted to design a platform that was easy to extend,” recalls Sergio Cutolo, principal designer and owner of Hydro Tec. “We gave the original design a generous beam of 13 metres, which meant that at the longer length of 80 metres, it is the right beam.” When construction began in 2015, only 24 metres of the yacht were built before attention turned to finding a potential owner for the project. This initial work gave the yard a head start when negotiations began with the new client.

“Serious discussions started at the 2016 Monaco Yacht Show and the contract was signed in December that year, so it was all rather quick,” says Gianpaolo Lapenna, COO of Palumbo Superyachts. “They had an idea of what they wanted but it was not clear, which made the process complicated.”

Armed with just a few notes, Cutolo's team set out to reimagine the Columbus yacht that would capture the client's attention, as well as the naval architecture that would underpin it. “We knew the owner was looking around at other projects, so it was not easy, especially as I had never met the owner; everything was mediated by the yard but we made it work,” says Cutolo. The studio created a few different designs that would function on the extended platform they had drawn, one of which was a 70 metre that the owner liked. Taking this as the starting point, Hydro Tec began to create a new design. “It was a more simple, flowing line compared to the client's reference boat,” says Cutolo. “We went in a different direction and took a gamble but it was the right move.”

The studio had only weeks to produce a refined exterior design along with detailed engineering drawings. With such limited time, the shipyard couldn't afford to wait for technical drawings from suppliers during design development. To overcome this problem, Hydro Tec drew on its explorer design experience while working closely with the shipyard, which has a strong commercial background. To prevent delays, the team worked generous margins into drawings to allow for larger engines, pumps, generators, air conditioning units and ducting. The result is technical spaces that are practical and allow crew to carry out maintenance on all systems, especially in the engine room. “We had to make some tricky decisions in order to get the ball moving fast. It was a matter of months between when conversations with the client began and the signing of the contract, so it was a very busy time,” says Lapenna.

This commercial experience is also evident in the side tender garage that includes a removable soft patch, providing access to the pump room below. Should equipment

need to be replaced, it can be removed using the telescopic tender crane to minimise downtime. There's also a concealed door finished in teak between the guest embarkation platform and tender garage, which sit alongside each other on the starboard side, allowing crew to recover the tender without encroaching on guest areas. This solution required careful analysis as only one reinforced construction frame separates the 10-metre-wide tender garage hatch from the guest platform door.

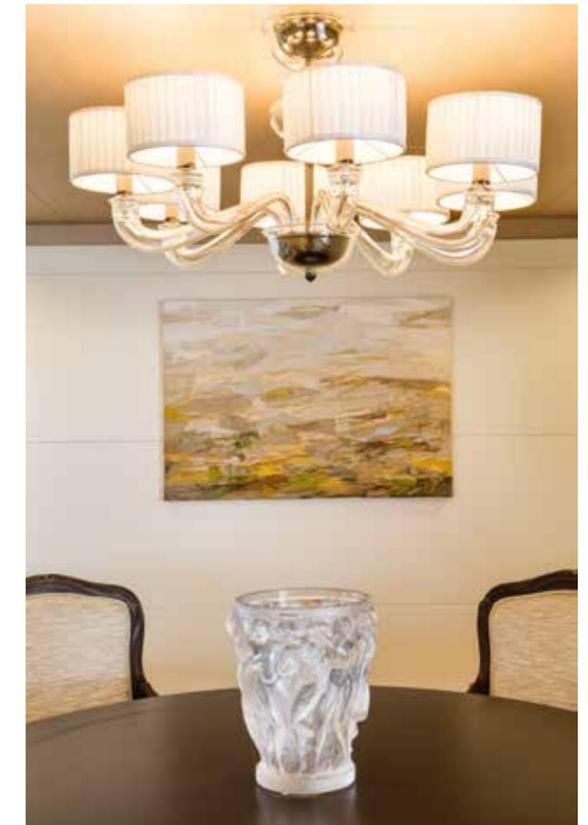
“FEM [Finite Element Method] studies were carried out to ensure we could achieve this,” says Lapenna. The same structural analysis, used to predict material stresses and weaknesses, was applied to the saloon on the main deck, which features windows made from six panes of glass, four of which are five metres long and sit without supports in between. “When you step on board, you don't realise just how big they are,” says Cutolo. “Of course this caused a

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PHOTOGRAPHY: PALUMBO SUPERYACHTS, GIORGIO BARONI



Right: a blue agate panel visually connects the beach club with the sea. Below: the owner's suite shows the bright, inviting design ethos found throughout the yacht



“THE OWNER REQUESTED WE REINTERPRET THE STYLE INTO A MODERN LOOK WITH SIMPLE AND BRIGHT ENVIRONMENTS”

Right: the neutral palette blends the white oak and travertino romano flooring with the buttery marble top of the custom Giorgetti dining table



few structural challenges because it is a huge 140-square-metre space. We understood that this would be a Mediterranean boat, so big windows were important. It also helps to create the classic yet masculine look we were striving to achieve on the exterior while also offering something that was modern and light.”

Creating a light interior was one of the tasks that fell to Francesco Guida – a designer the shipyard turned to following his work on the 36-metre ISA 120 *Clorinda*, delivered in 2017. Once the contract had been signed, work began on a concept and within a relatively short period, Lapenna and Guida presented their vision for the interior to the owner.

“We turned up at the meeting, everything looked incredible and with each slide that was shown, the owner showed his enthusiasm and was impressed,” says Lapenna. “Then at the end of the presentation the client said, ‘you’ve done a great job. It’s just a pity it can’t be my boat. Unfortunately, it just isn’t my style.’ So, we were faced with a problem and [an even] tighter deadline.”

THE CHALLENGES THE TEAM FACED ARE CLEAR, AND YET THE SHIPYARD WAS ABLE TO DELIVER A FULLY CUSTOM 80-METRE SUPERYACHT IN JUST 27 MONTHS

To get back on track quickly, the shipyard asked for more information as to the client’s tastes and received a bit more direction. “The owner requested that we reinterpret the Provençal style into a modern look with simple and bright environments,” explains Guida. “We created a rigorous design based on rigid proportions and precise alignments of every architectural component. We added character with decorative pieces such as rugs, tables and lamps.”

These glamorous touches include custom furniture with metal accent inlays with a bronze finish. They are interspersed with showpieces such as the bespoke dining table by Giorgetti in the main saloon, featuring a marble top that connects thematically to the travertino romano floor, which is itself meshed with a white oak inlay. Bronze and satin gold details have been used as accents against the white walls to create gentle and inviting spaces – a theme that carries throughout the superyacht.

At the time of our visit, the owner’s choice of carpets were being put in place; they are the only personal items to be supplied by him. They have been carefully positioned in all the areas that the owner will enjoy, including the owner’s suite, his private upper saloon and the main saloon.

Four double en-suite guest cabins are accessed via the lift, with the outer casing finished in a melted bronze effect. It ascends five decks from the lower deck to the sundeck, with its seven-metre pool including a spa pool and waterfall. Each cabin, with a double bed aligned athwartships, contains a dressing room and an elegantly finished en suite. Details such as the Porta Romana side-table lamps, cream

headboards by Dedar and touches of mahogany veneer in combination with bronze and satin gold accents create a warm and inviting space. The same is true of the VIP suite, which has varying shades of gold and bronze finish to add intrigue.

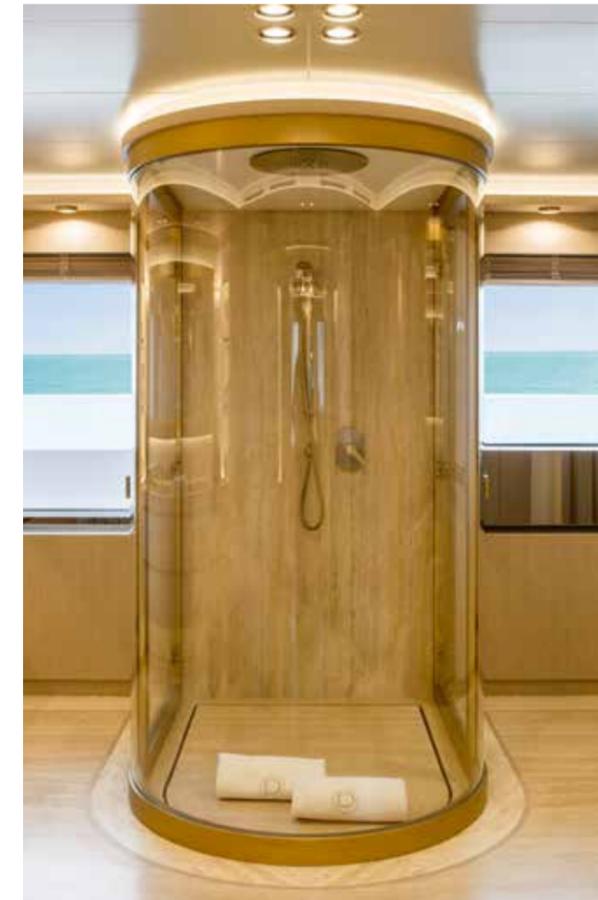
“You will notice throughout the boat that the use of stainless steel is limited and that’s because the owner doesn’t like this at all,” says Lapenna. The Italian points out that the only place where the material can be seen is on the frame of the main exterior aft doors, and here the shiny metal is partially obscured by the glass mounted to it. “When you look at the glass balustrades, again there is no stainless steel – except on the main deck, but it is a structural piece painted in the same colour as

the boat. It is the same story with the handrail on the main deck corridor, which is in white. When that was first installed it was polished stainless steel and so we’ve painted over it.”

The upper deck is dedicated to the owner. The saloon includes a desk and meeting table along with sofas by Ventura, coffee tables by Porta Romana and a bar. The owner’s suite forward, meanwhile, is spacious and light, a feeling heightened by the 180-degree view. It all suggests the owner’s intent to use this superyacht more than once a year. “We only made one modification to the owner’s deck,” says Lapenna. “At the beginning there was a Jacuzzi in front of the owner’s cabin, and this was something that the client decided he didn’t want.” One area that has largely remained true to the original concept is the 200-square-metre beach club with fold-down platforms. This relaxed and open space includes a large bar, hammam, sauna, sunloungers and chairs



With the owner favouring warm finishes, the decor has bronze and gold accents instead of stainless steel. The master suite (bottom) has 180-degree views



PHOTOGRAPHY: GIORGIO BARONI



PHOTOGRAPHY: GIORGIO BARONI - PALUMBO SUPERYACHTS

From the main deck aft (above left), a vast gathering spot for large groups, to the sundeck's centrepiece, a seven-metre pool with waterfall (top), Dragon embraces outdoor living over five decks



The golden ratio

When *Dragon* was commissioned, so too was a custom 9.5-metre limo tender, designed by Hydro Tec and built within Extra Yachts' facilities, one of the four brands under the Palumbo Superyachts banner, together with Columbus Yachts, ISA Yachts and Mondomarine. Custom tenders that resemble the mothership are nothing new. In fact, the Italian studio had designed a tender for an earlier project, the 40-metre *Stella di Mare*. However, *Dragon* is double the length – the longer the yacht, the more challenging to achieve similarity between the mothership and tender, as principal designer Sergio Cutolo explains. "This is especially the case when you are working

on an almost one-to-10 scale ratio," he says. "When we were working on the 40 metre, it was easier to achieve a design that worked for the tender but on the 80 metre it is more complicated." The challenge is one of height, as longer yachts have more decks. On a tender, you can't pile up decks in the same way. "Therefore it is harder to catch the real style of the mothership," he says.

The design team ended up narrowing in on the distinctive styling of the bulwarks of the upper deck to draw inspiration. The result is a limo that embraces the look of the mothership, while offering the owner a dry and stylish voyage between the shore and *Dragon*.

THE LONGER THE YACHT, THE MORE CHALLENGING TO ACHIEVE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE MOTHERSHIP AND TENDER



by Tribù. Colour is injected into the space by three backlit blue agate panels that draw the eye in and visually connect to the sea.

The challenges the team faced are clear, and yet the shipyard was able to deliver a fully custom 80-metre superyacht in just 27 months, while noting where they could improve along the way. "Our own captain highlighted something to me the other day, which was in the captain's cabin: instead of having a window, as it is currently, we could have put a door, leading straight out to the wing station," says Lapenna, a feature most captains would welcome. "It is a shame it's not on this boat but it is something to include on the next one."

Dragon has been an exciting project for the Italian shipyard and an important one for its position in the market, as the Columbus 80 metre becomes its biggest delivery yet. While it may not be possible to buy time, for builders such as Palumbo Superyachts planning and preparing for clients in a rush can make the difference between winning and losing a contract. And with a platform that can cater to sizes between 65 and 80 metres, the shipyard is open to some very big opportunities. ■



Dragon

Palumbo Superyachts

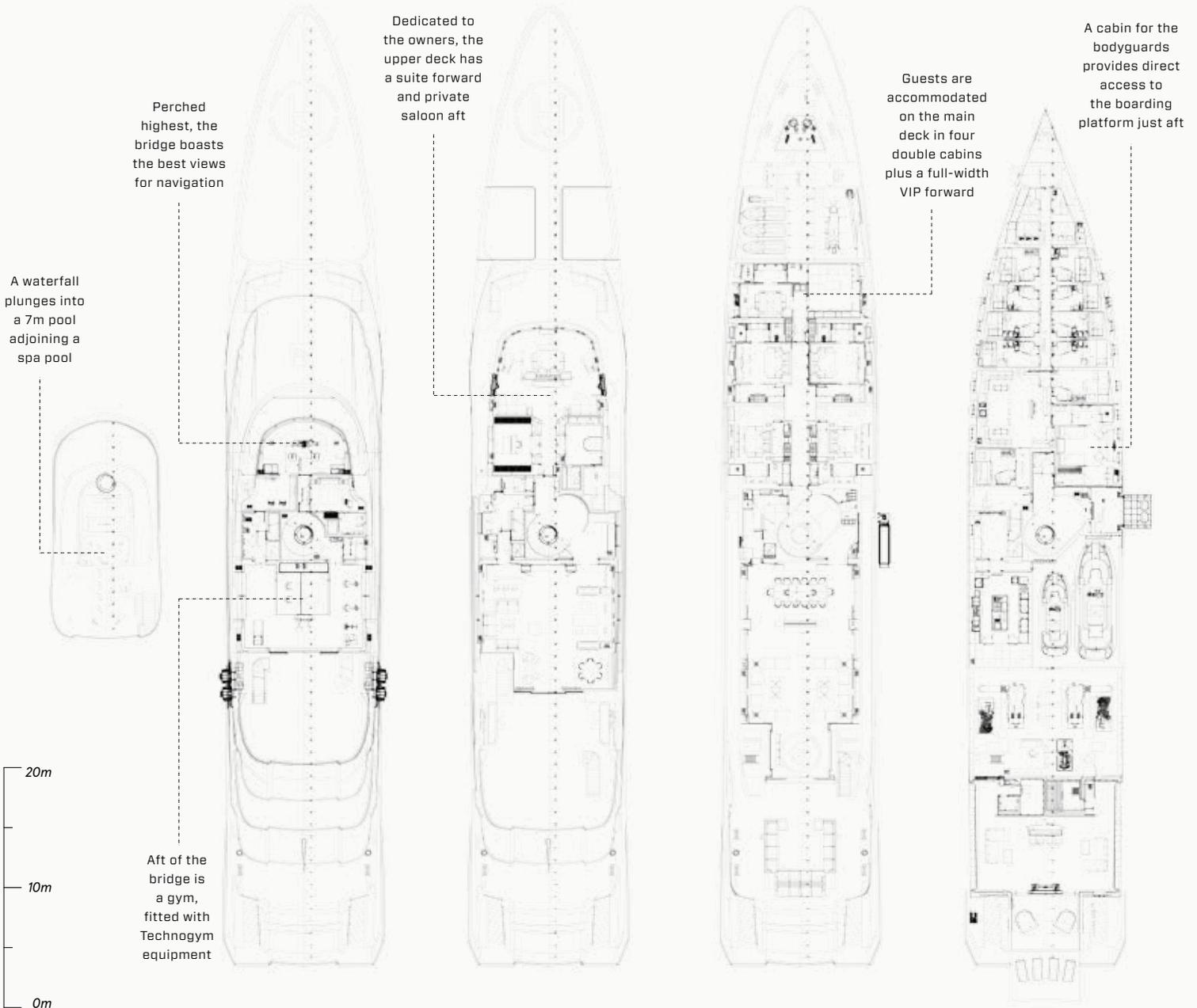
Sundeck

Bridge deck

Upper deck

Main deck

Lower deck



LOA 79.9m

LWL 69.47m

Beam 12.8m

Draught (full load) 3.65m

Gross tonnage (approx.)
2,300GT

Engines

2 x 2,240kW MTU 16V
4000 M63L

Speed max/cruise
17/12 knots

Range at 12 knots
6,200nm

Generators

2 x 360kW, 1 x 250kW

Fuel capacity

219,000 litres

Freshwater capacity
53,000 litres

Tenders

1 x Novurania Equator 500
1 x custom Columbus
Yachts 9.5m limo tender

Owners/guests 12

Crew/staff 19

Construction

Steel hull and aluminium
superstructure

Classification

ABS ✖ A1 ✖ Commercial
Yachting Service / ✖ AMS
✖ ACCU

Naval architecture

Hydro Tec; Palumbo
Shipyards

Exterior styling

Hydro Tec; Palumbo
Shipyards

Interior design

Guida Design

Builder/year

Palumbo
Superyachts/2019

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