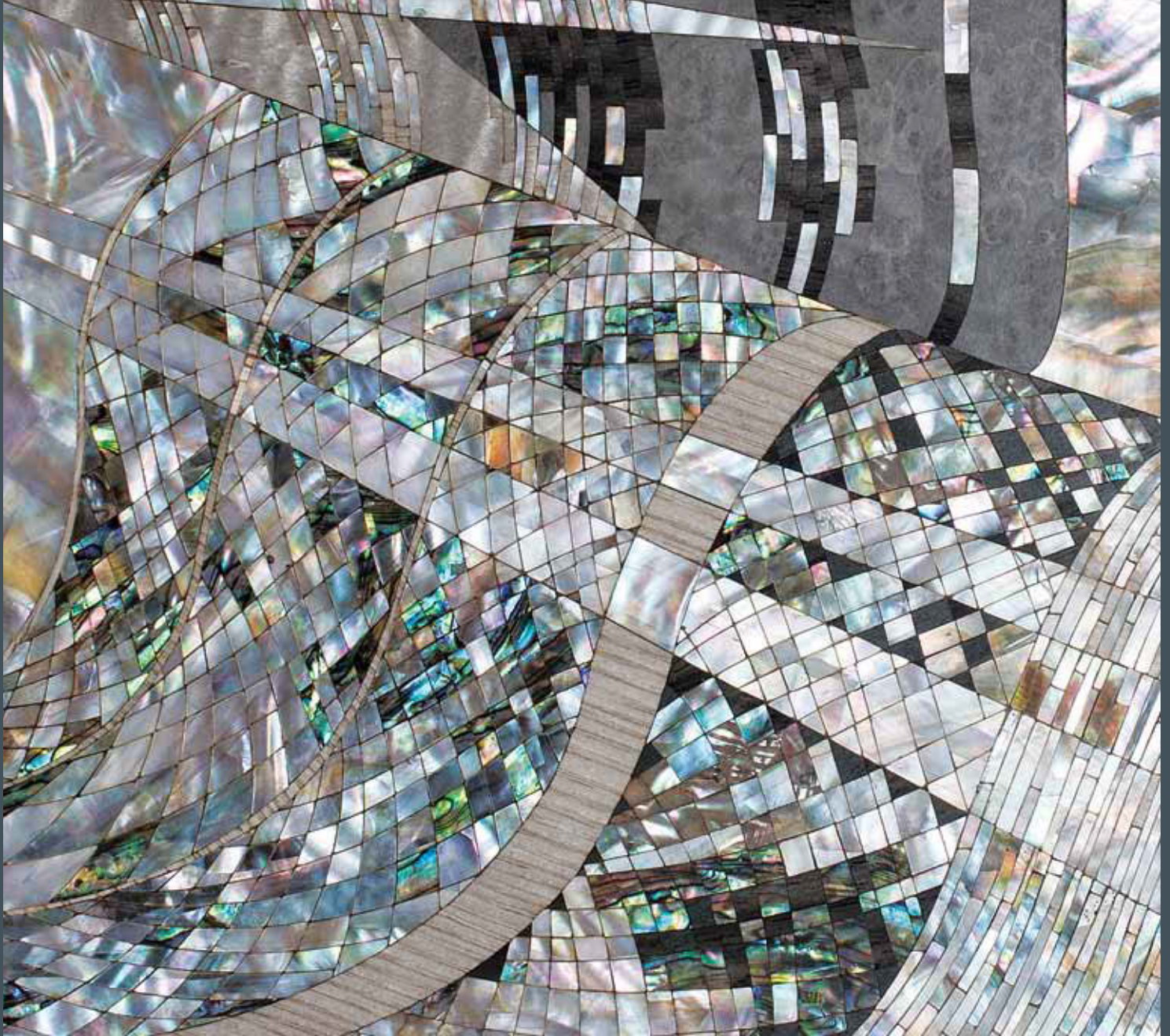


# Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN

EXTERIOR SPACE

CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



# DESIGN

**CASE STUDY**

Espen Øino discusses his design philosophy and reveals his favourite project.

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**DOMUS DESIGN**

Step inside the Australian home designed by Gabriel Bernardi for the owner of *Perle Noire*.

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**MATERIALIST**

New advanced materials will allow designers to push boundaries further than ever before.

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**DESIGN EVENT**

Discover what stood out for Marijana Radovic at this year's Salone del Mobile.

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# DESIGN DEBATE



ADRIEN JOUSSET



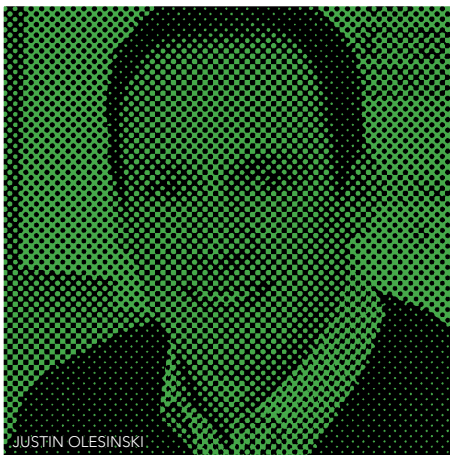
CHRIS WYETH



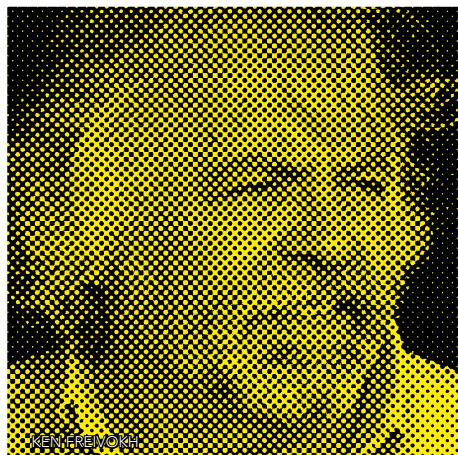
ERWIN BAMPS

# THE PRODUCTION LINE

With shipyards such as Princess, Sunseeker, Oyster and Riva building larger yachts, it seems production and semi-custom vessels are no longer staying within the sub 30m category. Is there more to this yacht type than the financial model that is driving interest? We asked a panel of industry representatives for their opinions.



JUSTIN OLESINSKI



KEN FREIVOKH



MARK BERRYMAN

# Are the differences between fully custom and semi-custom yachts becoming less obvious?



**Adrien Jousset**  
Sunreef Yachts

The main difference between these two types is that custom line interiors and exteriors are fully adapted to the client's needs and expectations. In the case of semi-custom yachts, only the interior is fully customised. Usually the exterior remains standard, but on bigger units, clients tend to be more exigent and every detail is important inside as well as outside. Although the overall deck, hull and superstructure remain similar from one boat to another, they each have their particularities.

The more custom you make your boat, the more expensive it is. Modifying a standard product can require intensive work from the architects, as well as from a production perspective. On small boats, less than 24m for instance, this extra cost can substantially influence the overall cost of the boat.

On larger boats, modifications are less noticeable on the final price. Nowadays, more clients expect to receive a highly personalised product. This is true not only for boats, but also for cars and homes. Car manufacturers have understood this, and you can find hundreds of different options that will make the car unique. However, the investment for the manufacturer to implement numerous options is far less important when you produce thousands of cars compared with when you produce 20. In other words, if you want to reduce the cost, you need to standardise your production.

The difficulty for a boat manufacturer is in reducing its manufacturing time while still offering the most customisable product. The smaller the boat is, the more difficult it is to find the appropriate balance between fully custom, semi-custom and standard.



**Chris Wyeth**  
Chris Wyeth Design

Like good captains, when owners are happy with their yachts they are content to keep it. Unlike captains who can be retrained, once an owner has outgrown their yacht, they will start to look elsewhere. So if a company like Princess starts to lose some of its wealthy clients, as they move above and out of its market sector, it makes sense to try to keep them by expanding its own range from within. With such quality and diversity now available, I think the sub 45m custom yacht will become very niche. There will be special cases where specific owners will want exciting smaller projects, but I would expect the majority of the market to be content with the well engineered and designed semi-custom vessels that are freely available. I always draw a comparison with the automotive sector: most customers will be content with the choice of an exterior colour and interior materials. It allows enough customisation to make the yacht personal, without making it less desirable for charter or resale.



**Justin Olesinski**  
Bernard Olesinski  
Naval Architects

Without a doubt the differences are becoming far less distinguishable. The common platform concept, adopted by shipyards producing fully custom yachts to reduce cost and time to market, is very similar to the production process of Princess. I believe the semi-custom market has moved towards the custom market and vice versa. The result leads to a yacht that benefits the clients by delivering a custom interior within a shorter timescale.



**Erwin Bamps**  
Gulf Craft

That is our experience, indeed. Customers seem more willing to compromise on their request for fully customised yacht design in favour of shorter delivery time and the more attractive price tag that comes with semi-custom building. Additionally, customers comprehend the better resale value retention of vessels that are not fully customised, but built around a proven and tested design.



**Ken Freivokh**  
Ken Freivokh Design

There is a definite coming together of the traditional production yards reaching up to the semi-production—semi-custom level with larger models—which their customers are allowed to customise. Indeed, apart from our work on the core model or platform for Sunseeker, we have been commissioned to develop custom interiors for specific customers for models such as the Predator 130ft and the 40m from the Yacht range.

The differences are indeed closing, although discerning customers will find that yachts from shipyards such as Heesen or Amels—although based on a standard platform—show their custom heritage and attention to detail, particularly regarding the sophistication of systems and engineering. On the other hand, the semi-custom offerings from production yards will inevitably show a lack of large yacht experience to some degree. However, the price may reflect their production approach and economy of scale, which has kept them competitive in the production yacht market.



**Mark Berryman**  
Mark Berryman Design

I feel there is still a big divide. Semi-custom yachts have evolved from the production ranges at shipyards such as Sunseeker and Princess. The problem, however, is that building a production boat—the detailing, construction and manufacturing techniques—differs from custom boats due to time constraints and price. The profit margin on larger custom vessel production is greater. Production yacht companies are fighting for every penny and this really shows. We have seen detailing suffer and corner cutting that affects the quality of the production. I understand why it is done, but is it giving the potential client the best boat possible?

# Where do you see opportunities for innovation in the build of production yachts?



**Adrien Jousset**  
Sunreef Yachts

As I mentioned in my previous answer, one of the major opportunities for innovation is in making yachts more personalised for each client. At the same time, manufacturers need to be innovative in the way they offer products in terms of the time it takes to produce. Clients are exigent and always request to have their boat ready for the next season.

Clients expect to have reliable equipment and want more energy-saving solutions rather than expensive complicated systems. Architects play an important role here, as they need to design more optimised hulls along with lighter hulls and superstructures. A weight-saving strategy is a progressive method to implement in which numerous solutions exist for manufacturers to predict weight distribution. However, more solutions are needed, as extra weight often means extra energy consumption. Similarly to the car industry and home appliances, boats will become more computerised, as on-board systems become key in delivering information to the crew or owner. However, solutions are needed to make the boat more user-friendly, as boats are still too complex to use and maintain.



**Justin Olesinski**  
**Bernard Olesinski**  
Naval Architects

Innovation will be in structural and material design evolution. Composite production has the advantage that it is continually being developed to reduce weight and improve range. Structural glazing will also become more commonplace allowing the owner to see 'widescreen'.



**Chris Wyeth**  
Chris Wyeth Design

Advanced construction methods and materials are always raised when discussing innovation, but we are rapidly approaching a point when these factors will not simply influence, but direct the final design. Production vessels have the scope to retain the wow factor without needing to be a custom or one-off. Opportunities for innovation will be provided by the extra length, as present sub 30m vessels are limited by the packaging and the need to tick all the relevant boxes to meet class standard. This new extra length will allow more semi-customisation for the owner and greater scope for design, especially with interior spaces. Glass is always desirable and *Venus* has proven how far a yacht can be pushed towards architecture. The largest area for innovation is probably the incorporation of more floor-to-ceiling openings on smaller yachts, which have typically suffered from large styled surface areas and limited views from the interior.



**Ken Freivokh**  
Ken Freivokh Design

From a designer's perspective, we would be interested in working with the yards to ensure that their platforms are indeed optimised to offer maximum flexibility; to achieve unique details and overall treatment, and to ensure that they look and feel like custom yachts while having the benefits of a well-researched and reliable platform.



**Erwin Bamps**  
Gulf Craft

Propulsion systems of superyachts are still rather traditional, and in light of growing concerns over fuel consumption, environmental impact and sheer performance, we see great opportunity in the redesign of these existing systems. At the same time, with the introduction of more bells and whistles in on-board technology and amenities, there is a continuous challenge to keep all these high-tech toys and features user-friendly in terms of their interface and reliability in marine environments. Electronics manufacturers and system integrators alike need to innovate faster to overcome these present-day limitations in ruggedness and ease of operation and maintenance.



**Mark Berryman**  
Mark Berryman Design

We are finding that a lot of clients buying production or semi-custom boats are very quickly moving up from 35m and 40m yachts to 70m and 80m superyachts. They seem to enjoy the experience and want bigger boats. Most production lines are produced in-house, and I feel more influence from external sources would be a step forward. There will always be a market for production boats, as pricing is very competitive. We have found the interior volume in some 40m yachts produced at production yards to be fantastic, but all the exteriors are beginning to look similar. A choice of exterior styles across a range of sizes would be a positive and welcome move.

Construction and installation techniques also need to be looked at in order to allow interior spaces to be adapted from a layout perspective. For instance, modular systems that can be altered in appearance would work well, while giving flexibility to an interior. Anything the yards can do to make the client feel like they are getting a bespoke product, even if it is semi-custom, will be a good thing.

**Adrien Jousset**  
Sunreef Yachts

In order to compete with fully custom boats, manufacturers need to produce faster. More time needs to be dedicated to research and development. It is not rare to have a shipyard invest a year in development prior to launching a production. During that phase, you need to foresee all the possible modifications that may be needed and implement anything that might allow further modifications or for optional equipment to be easily fitted in the future. In other words, production manufacturers will need to offer numerous options on their yacht in order to make the client feel that he is getting a custom boat but without having the downside on the production floor.

**Erwin Bamps**  
Gulf Craft

In the past, we saw a producer-driven market that was mainly focused on the sub 30m-yacht market. When the mid-size yacht market collapsed in the onslaught of the global financial crisis, a number of semi-custom yacht builders promptly developed the capability to enter the less affected 30m-plus yacht market. The resulting wider choice with ambitious new players in the 30m-plus market can only benefit potential customers.

**Justin Olesinski**  
**Bernard Olesinski**  
Naval Architects

Time to market is a real benefit to clients. We see clients' expectations are high when it comes to delivering a boat quickly and on time. As the same yacht crew builds only one model, quality and production speed can be optimised. If a client has to wait five years for his yacht he will quite often be pressured to refit a yacht as a temporary solution. With years taken off the deliverable time we can deliver the client what he wants sooner. The interiors are still client specific, so visually the yachts can be individual and unique. I believe we are very similar to the aviation industry—take a great design and personalise it rather than redesign the whole product.

## How can production yachts above 30m compete with fully custom yachts of equivalent size, aside from the bottom line cost?

**Chris Wyeth**  
Chris Wyeth Design

In most markets, a potential customer would prefer to buy a well-built mainstream product over a niche item. The heart always prefers to be an individual, but the brain dictates that the safe choice is for the tried and tested option. A custom design for anything provides a greater chance for error. At the lower to middle end of the market, owners would probably rather have the reassurance of a more secure investment. A production yacht allows them to buy into a model plan, where off-the-shelf parts are far more readily available and overall maintenance costs can be kept down. I believe it is in the aftermarket sector where an owner truly reaps the advantages. From a design point of view, the best sales technique is allowing a customer to see what they want and experience it. A scale model is a lot more evocative than just an image and having the finished yacht provides first hand what a potential customer could own.

**Ken Freivokh**  
Ken Freivokh Design

A production approach to the build process can help shorten the development cycle, and hence bring forward delivery times. Given that more often than not the client will be given the opportunity to come up with their own decoration and finishing touches, the end result will—at least superficially—be very similar to that of custom shipyards. Clients must, however, ascertain the production shipyard's credentials at the larger end of the scale, as quite often the systems and installations needed are different. For example, an air conditioning solution that relies on individual fan coil units may work well up to 30m, but may not be the ideal solution for a yacht where the volume has increased exponentially and could benefit from a full central system.

**Mark Berryman**  
Mark Berryman Design

The biggest problem seems to be that production boat yards find it difficult to deal with influences from outside their organisation, but they know they need to open their doors to a potential client's interior designer. The more they can embrace designers and listen to their experiences, the more they will learn and be able to compete with others in the market. I'm not saying designers know everything, but we consider it important to listen to what other people in the industry are saying. A positive step forward would be to take the approach of employing an outside design company to create one of their interiors and to give a set number of options for materials and finishes. This way the client feels like they are getting a bespoke service, but the yard doesn't feel like they are losing control of the project with a designer taking over. Obviously if a client has unlimited funds then anything is achievable.