

ALL INCLUSIVE DESIGNER

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interviews
Massimo
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designer for
Permare Yachts.



Tell us briefly how you got involved in designing yachts.

I came from a completely different set of studies. Imagine my final thesis which took a year to prepare had to do with simulations of the impact aircraft can produce when crashing into nuclear plants. To support myself while studying now about twenty years ago I began to work in a small studio led by one of the "gurus" in yacht design. That is exactly where my passion for recreational boating and yachts was born. It wasn't only the love I have for the sea that guided me. What was very fascinating was the possibility to develop and co-ordinate a given project for a boat as a whole from hull lines, hydrodynamics, right up to the interior layout to a much lower level than I would have done for other vehicles like planes and cars, but in every case with a lot of job satisfaction for the all inclusive designer. Project work on a car or airplane means that any one designer is responsible for the design of just one component or sub-system. In yachts even nowadays it is still a consolidated practice for the competent designer to work at practically every detail for the entire product. That's where craftsmanship in yacht construction, even when seen by some as a handicap, is still source of great satisfaction for the project designer involved. And that's how I decided to dedicate myself entirely almost to this unique world of yachts.

You come from a technical engineering background, when and how did you deviate towards a different type of project work which is strictly more one of design?

Well till just ten years ago I never even thought I'd get so involved in design since I was so utterly absorbed in the analysis of hull profiles, forms and hydrodynamics, use of composites and more: It was that acquired experience which served me well in consolidating my position in the field. Then one day of ten years ago Fernando Amerio from PerMare asked for my opinion concerning some preliminary drawings of the external lines for his new boat. "Well I'm an engineer and I don't know how authoritative I am on the subject" was my reply. His reply was the following: "Beauty is a thing of beauty, irrespective of who designs it or who appreciates it". That answer took me aback and I decided from that very day to try to come up with some drawings and sketches of my own.

Which are the phases characterizing your work?

The work flow is at times complex and varies in function of the type of project. The main aspect and reference point is in every case the initial design concept, the cog around which everything else revolves and is at the base of every success. The most challenging initial phases of the whole project design work, in the case of a given line for serial production are best expressed in the capacity to pinpoint market requests, or owners' requirements when dealing with fully custom tailor-made projects. The ensuing project work for the technical and design aspects is performed side by side and then integrated into



production by establishing a close working relationship with the shipyard which entails spending much of our time there during construction. Since a sound project and good construction flow means having full knowledge of every phase.

How do you mould together the technical with the design portion?

From a purely technical but managerial point too they go hand in hand meaning they are equally important to me. I try to make sure the technicians and designers understand each others' language by getting the technicians to reason things out like designers would and vice versa. The curious thing is that I for one often pursue the opposite during the concept's creative phases of the project. Essentially I try to forget I'm an engineer when I draw and postpone worrying about technical detail to another moment. Obviously I'm careful not to come unstuck by drawing the impossible as I sometimes see happening to non expert designers.

In your opinion which are the advantages and disadvantages of representing both the engineer as well as the designer?

As far as the client and owner are concerned I can only see advantages. In the past I fulfilled the position of technical director in various yards and often enough we wasted much time in getting designers and engineers to agree with each other rather than spending that time in developing project work in a concrete way. In our case there's no problem. The disadvantages I've endured were only of a personal and commercial nature: it was difficult to put across the fact I could credibly carry out both roles. But a few awards and a successful track record lend a hand. Nevertheless it is very difficult to introduce oneself as an engineer to shipyards overrun by designers.



Do you still put pencil to paper or do you use CAD? What advantages are there in three dimensional drawing? Which are CAD's limits, and which are the good sides to drawing by hand?

I can say I was practically born opposite a computer and that I'll probably die with a pencil in my hand. CAD for me at least was the starting point. My CAD drawing phase was passion inspired for the programme when still many at least in yacht design didn't know what it was. Three dimensional modelling was a real passion for me which started in the early nineties while I was trying to get the best out of the available technology till I realized that CAD modelling took away much of my mental resources since I'd be thinking about the product 50% of the time and the other 50% was taken up by the technicalities concerning modelling shapes in 3D. Today I focus 100% on the product especially during the initial layout phase. If Gordon Murray winning designer for a Formula 1 hyper-technologic car with virtually unlimited resources thinks as I do there must be a reason why..

It's a different ball game altogether when considering the development phase of a given detail. CAD become indispensable especially for 3D a "must have".

You often pay perMare a visit. We know you've drawn the yard's new Amer 100': can we talk about the yacht to explain your work better? Let's start from the beginning when you draw preliminaries, the very first ideas that come to you mind.

The idea of a 100' Amer sprung up two years ago during the darkest period of the crisis, on the wakes of the award winning 116' and 92' yachts, which was the time when the only sellable boat was for the next years to come a displacing small ship. I was personally convinced that to target an important market segment the boat should and had to be attractive and sporty. The idea was to clothe the interiors like a small ship would, with sportier external lines for a concentration of different potential clients. Once

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we identified this concept design as the right one it was rigorously drawn up by hand alone. The following phase entailed delivering details of the styling and engineering aspects. Once the goals were set we blended spaces with classic lines, and a very good performance to lower fuel consumption. The same policy was extended to the technical characteristics which entailed designing a hull which could plane effectively but one that could also cruise slow thus guzzling less fuel per hour. The external lines recalled the Amer 92', as if this were a griffe but with elongated lateral window panelling.

Which was in your opinion the most captivating part of the Amer's 100' project?

The main challenge was to increase the spaces dedicated to the owner by adopting a wide-body solution, as well as deploying V-Drives which are uncommon on a sporty performing yacht. In addition to this we managed to remain within the EC 24 metre mark so as to have the yacht registered in the small ships registry. The tricky bit was to harmoniously blend the external lines and allow room enough for the enhanced interior volumes on an all weather efficient hull.

Did you study and install avant - garde technical solutions? For example The deployment of CFD technology?

We put our experience to work but also called for external resources like the engineers from EnginSoft (with 80 engineers) which is one of the largest engineering companies with whom we work in other sectors as well. They provided much useful data in determining calculus for structures and CFD as well. We also adopted several very interesting options which were expressly prepared for the Amer 100' like balconies, an open air pool in the bow, with access to the command control station through a side entrance with a gull-wing door. In view of optimizing the best trim the distribution of weights too has been carefully planned, as well as the dimensioning of structure to better exploit every small space on board the Amer 100' while specific appropriate materials were installed to dampen noise and vibrations where required.

Have you any further information on this yacht you wish to share?

The Amer 100' can offer up to 3 guest cabins and 5 for the crew, a large galley, a 60 square metre fly-bridge, and as is typical of perMare the interiors are all custom built and the materials are chosen as always by the owner. The 100' can cruise 24 hours on 24 on just one engine at 12 knots with a fuel consumption of 24 litres/nm. But it can also reach a top speed of 29 knots by exploiting two 1,925 HP engines.

We believe that Amer 100' currently represents a unique niche product of her segment and which will give us great satisfaction.

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