

## L U X X

## FLOATING PALACES

Shemara (main image and below) by Studioliise



ONCE IMMERSSED IN the superyacht world, the concept of “good taste” becomes somewhat redundant. When an interior takes a minimum of three years to create – and so many man-hours have gone into every embroidered cushion and every polished finish – one’s own personal preference pales in comparison with such feats of design. That doesn’t mean to say that I don’t have favourites, and were I ever to win the lottery and buy a yacht, of whatever size, I know exactly who I would choose to help me do it up.

Last year when the motoryacht *Joy* was delivered to its owner there was a collective gasp from the industry. As well as tasking Feadship (the superyacht equivalent of Aston Martin) with creating a yacht that challenged architectural norms by making the 70m space feel “cosy” via light-filled rooms and teak exteriors, its young owner also defied yachting norms by choosing Studio Indigo to create his interiors.

The company, which is rooted in architectural design and had never done up a boat on this scale, is led by Mike Fisher, who says that he was asked to create a “non boat-like” interior, by which he means the antithesis of a floating villa with vast beige internal spaces. The resulting style is hard to

pigeonhole, but Fisher describes it as “vintage without being overtly fashionable”. Each room brims with colour and texture, and started with a single item for inspiration.

The building block for the owner’s quarters, for example, was a single Yastik cushion in “the most beautiful teal blue in the shape of a crescent moon”. The colour was then replicated throughout, such as on the straw marquetry chest at the end of the bed, and the shape was echoed in details such as the handles of the elliptical bedside tables. Although spacious, some rooms on the boat are not huge, and so clever design tricks have been employed, such as using a relatively limited palette, which encourages the eye to see the space as a whole, and slivers of mirror between the windows, which add to the sense of space and light. The upper deck is an airy expanse of teak, coral fabrics and low-slung lounge furniture – the kind of outside space that I would want in my accompanying fantasy Malibu beach house.

At the other end of the scale, were I to refit a classic yacht then I would make sure that I had Ise Crawford on speed dial. This is a bit like saying that your favourite fashion designer is Coco Chanel (ie not very original), but Crawford’s refit of →

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LUX YACHTS



*Shemara*, Sir Charles Dunstone's 65m classic motoryacht, is a hybrid between Nick Jones's Babington House and a luxurious stately home – only on water and without the dog hair. Where Studioilse, Crawford's design house, has been so clever is in its restoration of the original 1930s design wherever possible (the original decking is reused as floorboards, for example, and every former screw hole was plugged with a wooden peg) alongside making the yacht feel like a really well-built home, with freestanding antique furniture, marble fireplaces, Chesterfield sofas and colourful children's rooms.

Lastly, if I were to buy a sailing yacht, and were brave enough, then I would give Rémi Tessier a call. The French designer turns potential clients down on account of their taste, and has been known to ask clients to sign a contract agreeing that he personally approve any art that they want to hang in their yacht once he has designed it. As he recently said: "I will not work for a person who will just put whatever on the wall, because it would ruin my reputation." He is, however, responsible for some of the most stunning interiors on the sea today, including *Squal*, *Nahlin*, *Satori*, *Vava II* and *Grace E*. Although his motoryachts are just as spectacular as his sailing ones, I would choose him for the latter because of his profound love of wood, thanks to his early years spent as a cabinet-maker, and his exceptional ability to blend materials.

When it comes to design, the sky is the limit at this end of the market, and how to choose is the only real challenge – and a pretty nice one to have.

Sacha Bonsor is the editor-in-chief of *Boat International Media* ●

**HIGH SEAS**  
Joy by Studio Indigo  
(above and right);  
Grace E by Rémi  
Tessier (below)

