



THE AMERICAN WAY

Dutch-made and American-owned, the 119ft Moonen Botti proves she has transatlantic range in more ways than one, says Kevin Koenig



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oonen is a quintessential Dutch yard. Boutique and discreet, it turns out just a couple of boats a year, building its vessels to last with high-tensile steel hulls on proven platforms. While it stands firmly by its choices, it offers myriad customization. The brand tends to attract a clientele that prefers to go to a smaller yard than a big marquee (not unlike a student who gets into Harvard but chooses to attend Williams College instead) with the assured confidence that the right people will understand why.

Such is the case with the owners of 119ft *Botti*, part of the yard's Martinique series, developed with Dutch designer René van der Velden.

"We could have gone with a Feadship," Jacelyn Botti says. "We wanted Feadship quality, but a 150ft or 170ft [yacht] didn't make sense for our family. Our kids are dating but they aren't married and we don't have grandkids. We wanted the highest-quality yacht but in a slightly smaller package and Moonen produces that. *Botti* is like a Bentley; those larger boats are more like a Rolls-Royce."

Jacelyn and her husband, Jack, are seasoned yacht owners who split their time between New Jersey and Palm Beach and, although previous Moonen owners, they are the first American owners for whom Moonen has built a new boat. They have lived aboard previous yachts they've owned and had a lot of knowledgeable input to offer when designing their newest boat. Or should we say, Jacelyn did. She took the reins on the design during the difficult years of the pandemic when travel was all but impossible. And she had the boat delivered to the docks in Palm Beach amid a cacophony of bagpipes and the engine noise of a small plane flying a sign that heralded the boat's arrival, nearly as a total surprise to her husband.

When he stepped aboard for the first time, he recognized a style that was all her own – equal parts old Florida and modern Americana. It's hard to look around *Botti* and decide if the boat is classic or cutting edge, and one soon comes to the happy conclusion that she is both at once.

"I was going for a look that wouldn't be dated or trendy," Jacelyn Botti tells me as we walk around her Palm Beach neighborhood with her King Charles cavalier spaniel, Maximilian. "And it wouldn't look like my

Following her delivery last year, *Botti* crossed the Atlantic to her US cruising grounds on her own bottom. Although she is part of the Martinique series, the yard allowed the owners to make extensive customizations

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARL VAN ROOY – RED CHARLIE MEDIA





Owner Jacelyn Botti describes the yacht's style as a mix of edgy and contemporary with a dose of old-school Palm Beach. It's both classic and cutting edge

grandmother owned the boat. What I wanted was a little edgy and contemporary with some animal prints and artwork, but also a little dose of Palm Beach – not too much though.”

To achieve this goal, Botti looked to London-based interior design firm Studio Indigo. The choice was kind of a no-brainer. Studio Indigo’s creative director, Mike Fisher, designed and owns *Botti’s* award-winning sistership *Brigadoon*. These Martinique series yachts are designed with a shallow draft for access to the skinny-water destinations in the Bahamas and the Caribbean.

“From the beginning, Jacelyn had strong ideas about what she wanted for this boat,” Fisher says. “A lot of it had to do with where the boat would stay in Florida and the Caribbean. She wanted strong colors and boldness in the interior. And also she wanted the boat to be fun – that was important. They do a lot of entertaining, so they wanted their guests to be able to walk from room to room and go on a





In the main salon (left) a distinctive chandelier and exotic materials like stingray and buffalo bone add glamour. Below: a huge television anchors the winter garden

journey. And of course, it had to be glamorous because [Jacelyn] is quite a glamorous lady.”

Some of the design elements she picked out jump out at me as I step inside *Botti* in her slip at the Safe Harbor Rybovich marina in West Palm Beach, with Captain Matthew Curtis. The first thing I notice is a chandelier over the forward dining table that twists and glitters in an infinity pattern that reminds me of a roller coaster. The table that the chandelier so playfully illuminates is inlaid with stingray and buffalo bone. “We like that combination of materials because the stingray has bits of bone in it that play off the buffalo, and also the buffalo fits in well with the cowboy theme that exists in other parts of the boat,” Fisher says.

It would be remiss of me to describe *Botti*’s salon without mentioning the underlit onyx counter that spans most of the starboard side of the room.





With the lights flicked on the stone comes to life, dancing in a swirling, nebular pattern of golds, grays and purples, resembling the night sky the moment a bolt of lightning sets it ablaze.

The cowboy theme that Fisher mentions is most apparent in the owner's suite, forward on the main deck. A starboard-side passageway sandwiched by two pieces of art Botti picked out – one a painting, the other a sculpture – leads to the cabin. The first thing one observes is the king-sized bed, which faces aft, and more specifically, its headboard. The headboard is made from cowhide applied in a zebra pattern.



Both the main deck (below) and bridge deck (left) offer outdoor dining on the aft deck



A custom headboard in cowhide is the standout feature in the owners' main deck stateroom. The en suite employs dramatically veined marble, expertly matched



"It came from sketches of my own," Botti says. "Lyne [Arbid, associate director at Studio Indigo] sourced the cowhide, we picked out chips of rawhide to match the right color, and then they followed my sketches. And remember this was all done by Zoom. I must have spent thousands of hours on Zoom with Lyne. I only met her once because of Covid-19, on a few-days trip to the yard, and then I met her again once the boat was delivered."

Twin light fixtures featuring horsehair, among the most striking elements on the entire yacht, complement the headboard. "We used an American designer, Kyle Bunting, to do the headboard," Fisher explains. "He is really clever at book-matching hides and whatnot, and the clients loved that we were working with an American designer because they are very patriotic. And we had another company, Apparatus, do those fantastic horsehair light fixtures. It all plays with this interesting idea of cowboys herding their cattle in Texas, which is all very American."





Botti's floating interior ensures very low noise and vibration levels throughout the yacht. The four guest cabins on the lower deck enjoy particular isolation thanks to thick insulation in the bulkheads with no air gaps

Another coup in *Botti's* interior is found in the yacht's en suites – both in the owner's suite and the four staterooms down below. There, Studio Indigo used vein-matched marble, cut in large slabs lined up perfectly with one another, to create a sense of glamour.

"I've never seen veining like they did in the bathroom with the marble," says Botti, who has had a long career in real estate. "I've never seen anything like that even in a house."

Elsewhere on the yacht, another highlight is the "winter garden" on the bridge deck. This space, which can be opened up nearly completely and serves as both an interior and exterior entertainment area, is done in bright colors and light woods reminiscent of the style seen in many of Palm Beach's poshest lounges, clubs and homes. Another notable light fixture, this one meant to evoke flower petals floating on the surface of the sea, hovers lightly over the room.

A huge television is one feature that the craftspeople at Moonen found remarkable. "To us, that seemed like one of the most American things about the yacht," Nicky van Zon, Moonen's technical director, says.

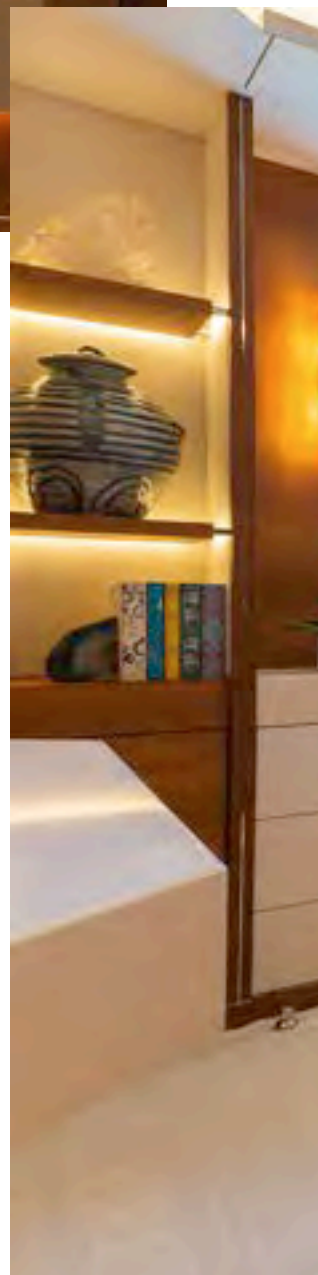
Despite all of *Botti's* treasures in her interior, she isn't simply a floating palace, and van Zon is all too

happy to espouse the vessel's seafaring bona fides. She made the trip from the Netherlands to America on her own bottom and has a range of 4,000 nautical miles at 10 knots and 1,400 nautical miles at 14 knots. And she travels all that way quietly.

"We designed this boat to have low noise levels and low vibration," van Zon says. "We pay attention to every detail in that regard. The engine rests on rubber construction mounts, and our entire interior is free floating from the rest of the ship; it sits on a layer of foam so sound and vibration doesn't transfer into it. And between cabins, we have thick insulation with no air gaps; we are very careful about that because any gap will immediately become a source of noise."

Van Zon is quick to tout another less glamorous aspect of the yacht: the crew space. When I toured the boat, one of the interior crew I met in the crew mess told me that the crew space on *Botti* is better than the 148ft vessel she had worked on previously.

"The main purpose of a yacht is to make the owners happy," van Zon says. "And there is the old saying that a happy crew means a happy owner. So we tried to make use of and maximize every inch of space, be it in the bunks, by the laundry, the eating space, whatever.





The guest accommodations comprise two twin-berth staterooms and two doubles, all equitably sized



MAKING A SPLASH

One customization the Bottis asked for on their boat was a 10ft extension of the sundeck. The owners originally envisioned it to shade the al fresco dining and entertainment area just aft of the winter garden. However, it had the happy additional function of making enough space to add a custom, seven-person Jacuzzi on the after portion of the sundeck, complete with an infinity waterfall that splashes down onto a menagerie of stones — all designed by Jacelyn Botti. Moonen felt the new feature was such a success that it will be offering it on future launches in the Martinique series.



An extra-long sundeck both shelters the al fresco dining on the bridge deck aft and makes room for a Jacuzzi with water feature on the top deck

And you know, every crew bunk has its own TV – it’s an American crew and it keeps them smiling.”

Stowage in the crew area is abundant as well, with a generous bilge space running beneath the entire area, as well as a creative lofted stowage space reachable via a ladder.

Another ladder that Botti particularly likes is the custom, linen-upholstered step that Moonen made

for Maximilian, so he is able to get up into the bed in the couple’s stateroom.

He no doubt was comfortable there as *Botti* sailed north from Florida to the owners’ favorite summer cruising grounds in New England. There the yacht spent the season among the Yankees. And for what it’s worth, most linguists will tell you that the word “Yankee” stems from Dutch origins. ■