

INDOOR FURNITURE

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

Characterful vintage pieces and secret functions in new designs are defining an imaginative approach to interior furniture in 2026

Residential design is looking back to the past this year, with even the most contemporary of designers actively ensuring they fold antiques into their schemes. New pieces, meanwhile, are packing plenty of delightful surprises. Even work time on board is being reimagined for pleasure.

VINTAGE PIECES

The super-luxe Parisian apartments by Olga Ashby always include a few finds from the local flea markets, while Portland-based designer Molly Kidd has a rule that each room needs to include at least 50 per cent antiques, maintaining that they breathe character, charm and personality into her homes. Surprisingly, this approach has started to be adopted by yacht designers too, imbuing this world, until now populated by shiny, brand-new custom-built furniture, with a totally new feel and flavour.

When the design studio Liaigre designed the interior of the 100-metre motor yacht *Pi*, delivered in late 2025, it was populated with pieces from the 1950s. "The owner has done a lot of projects now, and for this one, she didn't want what you might call a classic yacht design," says Guillaume Rolland, principal at Liaigre. "Instead, she wanted

vintage pieces, mostly 1950s Danish design and some Brazilian classics, items like Jean Prouvé chairs. Her thinking was that she wanted the yacht to feel cosy, more homely than how they often do, and having these familiar pieces helped to evoke that sense." Designers like antiques so much because their aged beauty and occasional time-worn markings give you permission to relax a little. And that is perfectly in keeping with how owners want their boats to feel in 2026.

"THE STARTING POINT FOR GOOD DESIGN SHOULD BE ABOUT HOW FUNCTIONAL IT IS, AND THOSE DANISH PIECES GOT FUNCTIONALITY PERFECT"

point for any good design should be about how functional it is, and those Danish pieces got functionality perfect – they're as comfortable to use as they are beautiful to see." He says that the studio's collection of outdoor furniture for Sutherland was inspired by Danish shapes, and for indoor pieces, look to the Scandi-style slender legs and gently tilted backrests of Parkway's dining chairs and the rounded shapes of Paola Sorio's Olympia tub seating. It's a retro look that never gets old.

Right: furniture on board is increasingly multifunctional, like the 47m Sanlorenzo M, with interiors by Studio Indigo. The designers included concealed trays, moveable tabletops and even pop-up bars built in to create moments of delight

PHOTOGRAPHY: PREVIOUS PAGES: DAVID CHURCHILL, THESE PAGES: NICK ROCHOWSKI



tandem with the right wall colour and scent, it cocoons the user, creating a moment of respite from overstimulation, which is vital. When you know how to control sound and materials, you can layer in subtle acoustic solutions so that the space feels both lively and serene." Her approach extends beyond tactile solutions to narrative-driven sensory curation. "We never start projects with visual preconceptions or Pinterest boards," she says. "Instead, we research, create a narrative, a story, a line or even a song that embodies how we want the space to feel. All the aesthetic cues then come later; the sensory experience, how people feel and react, comes first."

Paris Albert from the design studio 1508 London echoes this holistic philosophy. "When we start designing, we map every sensory input: touch, temperature, light, air quality. We explore reflection, ritual and reverie - the way bathing, mirrors and spaces of daydreaming affect the senses. Lighting is paramount, and working with specialists to enhance how it interacts with materials is crucial to evoke the desired mood. Tactility is layered and intentional; the edge of a table, the texture of stone, the feel of a leather armchair - all these details create a subliminal comfort. People often think of the five senses, but there are primal ones too, like temperature or balance. These subtleties are what make a space feel alive."

Interior designer Anahita Rigby of her eponymous studio also places the client's emotional journey at the forefront. "Sensory design is ingrained for me," she says. "It's about the feeling when someone first walks into a room. Even formal spaces have their cues - a polished marble surface suggests not to perch, a small bench signals transience. You guide people subtly through a space, whether in a hotel or a home. Understanding the client, how they live, what they aspire to on a Friday night, is essential before aesthetic decisions even begin. Once you know their habits and desires, you can craft a space that is both beautiful and intuitively functional."

This focus on human perception and experience aligns closely with the research of Professor Charles Spence, a leading neuroscientist and lecturer at Somerville College, Oxford University, who has long studied multisensory design - and is now leading the field of neuroaesthetics, an

updated design buzzword that is beginning to take hold. He has explored why humans are so visually dominant and what the other senses contribute to our perception of space. He highlights the Proustian effect, in which smell, texture and sound trigger memories and emotions far more effectively than sight alone. In architecture and interior design, Spence argues, "understanding these subtleties allows designers to orchestrate spaces that resonate on an emotional and cognitive level, ensuring that materials, lighting, acoustics and scent work together, rather than in conflict, to create an experience that feels cohesive and personal." The interplay between tactile and visual cues, he notes, can enhance the perceived quality of a material - smooth marble may feel softer underfoot than it looks if you "trick" the mind by combining it with plusher textures like linen, which create a more cossetting environment.

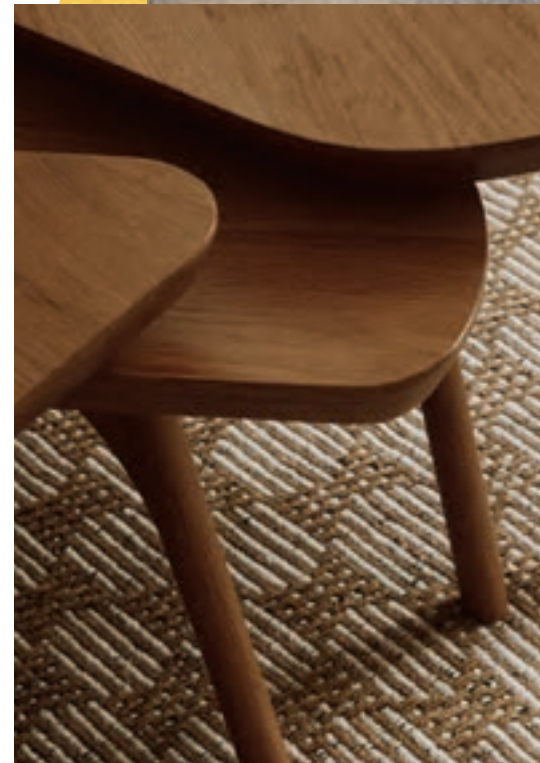
Acoustic treatments, meanwhile, can make even the largest room feel intimate and inviting. "By calibrating the senses thoughtfully, designers can avoid overstimulation, introduce playful contrasts or craft spaces that are entirely personalised," he says.

The result of all this attention to sensory detail is an environment that engages people on multiple levels

simultaneously. On yachts, it is amplified by the natural setting: the shimmer of sunlight across the water, the rhythmic sound of waves against the hull and the gentle breeze carrying the smell of salt and seaweed. Designers are learning to compose around these external cues, treating them as integral to the onboard experience rather than competing with them. Every surface is selected with care, every texture chosen to invite touch, every sound and scent orchestrated to support mood, relaxation and connection with the water. In this way, sensory design transforms yachts into spaces that are simultaneously luxurious, comforting and emotionally resonant, extending the human experience of the sea itself.

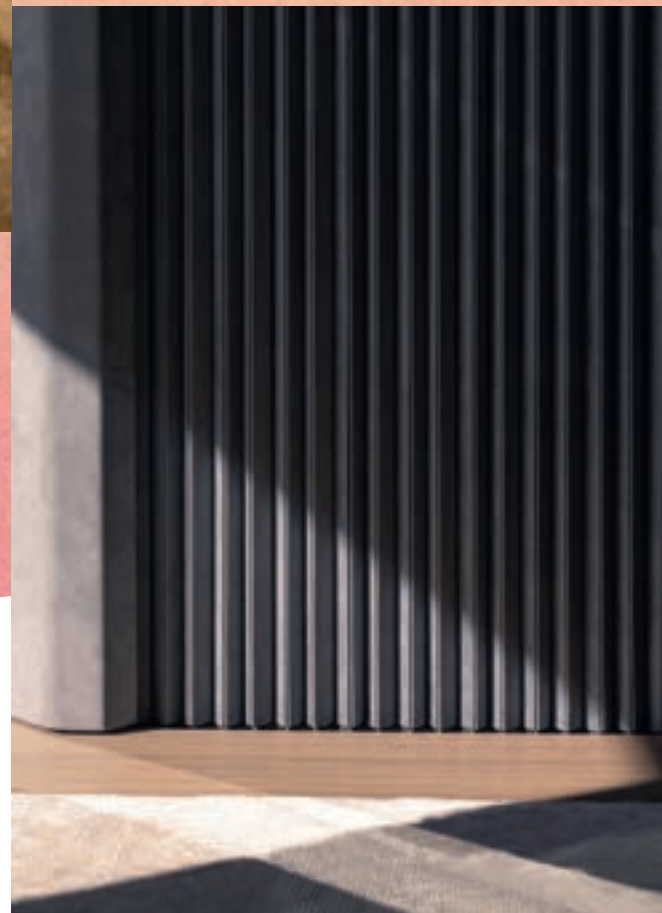
In residential and commercial interiors, these principles are mirrored, sometimes on an even more intricate level. Soundproofing, tactile layering, lighting manipulation and scent curation allow architects and designers to sculpt moments of pause, reflection and engagement, giving each space a character that is subtly understood rather than overtly stated. This is sensory design as a

LIGHT PLAYS A STARRING ROLE. ONCE USED TO DRAMATISE INTERIORS, IT'S NOW REFINED TO ENHANCE ATMOSPHERE AND EMOTION



Above and bottom left: Studio Indigo completed the interior design on 47m Sanlorenzo explorer yacht M, which won a 2025 World Superyacht Award. Left: a bathroom design by London-based Anahita Rigby. Below: texture detail on the Azimut Grande Trideck, with interiors by mzatelier

Top: Hands of Peace custom sink created for Regina D'Italia, by mzatelier for Codecasa. Above: detail from a Pirajean Lees residential project



PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK ROCHOWSKI PHOTOGRAPHY; MICHAEL SINCLAIR; OLLIE TOMLINSON; LORENZO PENNATI; COURTESY OF AZIMUT



WALLS & FLOORING

NATURAL
CHARM

A pared-back approach to wall and floor treatments is making a feature of untreated surfaces, showcasing a calming, subdued aesthetic and championing textural detail

Yacht interiors are embracing a lower-key luxury for 2026, defined by texture, warmth and natural beauty. Designers are favouring stone-clad walls, matt finishes and richly grained woods, creating spaces that feel calm, tactile and deeply connected to the materials themselves.

TEXTURAL PANELS

The phrase “quiet luxury” sums up much of how designers are approaching yacht design in 2026. There remains an emphasis on quality materials, high-end finishes and a sumptuous sense of comfort, but nothing is too ostentatious – palettes are calmer and more neutral, and the pieces chosen aren’t always the first thing you notice as you walk in. They don’t shout. Central to this aesthetic is stone, now being used to wonderful effect as wall panels.

“I love to use rough stone as inserts in walls,” says Nicolò Piredda, founder of Piredda & Partners. “It can be the edge that isn’t smooth, or perhaps there is some texture to the surface, but it gives a little extra tactility, and a lot of soul. The stone tells a story, shaped by winds over the ages and with its own singularity for each panel. It’s like a painting by nature, something rich and

wonderful and calming to look at but not always the focal point of the room.”

Pi is a 100-metre motor yacht delivered last year with an interior designed by Liaigre’s principal Guillaume Rolland, who took the textural panels trend higher. “We used white leather panels on the ceiling as they reflected a lot of light,” he says. “The fact that they were a different texture from the walls

around them helped to create a very soothing blend, with a slightly Asian inspiration.” Key to this approach, Rolland says, is how subtle those texture shifts are, how they invite you to lean in and look closer, to reach out and touch. “Nothing is ever overstated,” he says. “Everything is very low key. It means the whole effect is softer on both the eye and the hand.”

LOW-SHINE FINISHES

Windows on boats are getting bigger – a trend we reported on in last year’s *Interiors* book – and that fact, coupled with a desire for a more relaxed ambience, has led to a rise in matt finishes. With more light pouring in from those larger panes of glass, the polished surfaces that were previously in vogue are being eschewed to avoid an overly blingy gleam. “I’ve been designing yachts for over 20 years, and I’ve never seen such

Right: designers are spotlighting materials’ natural qualities, like this example on 47m Sanlorenzo M, with interiors by Studio Indigo. The yacht won a 2025 World Superyacht Award

PHOTOGRAPHY: PREVIOUS PAGES: JEFF BROWN/BREED MEDIA, THESE PAGES: NICK ROCHOWSKI PHOTOGRAPHY





VINTAGE
PIECES



Far left and left: Benetti's Oasis 40M Kahala was designed by Bonetti/Kozerski Architecture. Below: Jean Prouve for Vitra Fauteuil de Salon Chair, Germany, £2,800, 1stdibs.com. Below, centre: the Liaigre interior of the second Sanlorenzo SD118



Q & A
SIMON ROWELL

Co-founder, Bannenberg & Rowell

HIDDEN FUNCTIONS

Just as the demand for greater flexibility in how people use boats grows, modular furniture has become more popular. Lyne Arbid, Studio Indigo's director of interiors, believes indoor pieces have to work harder – and do more – than ever before. “We’re seeing more and more pieces have hidden functions integrated into them,” she says.

The 47-metre *M*, designed by the studio, scooped a prize at the World Superyacht Awards in 2025, and it was full of little surprises. “Dining tabletops were moveable, secret trays were planted into sofa arms that could hold champagne buckets at a moment’s notice and there was even a button so that a bar popped out of the sofa. The theatre of these moments was very important; moments of delight that people want in their boats right now.”



Above: Paola Sorio's Olympia armchair, POA, paolasorio.com. Below: designer Molly Kidd's Bay Area project elevated the traditional interior while also using vintage furnishings

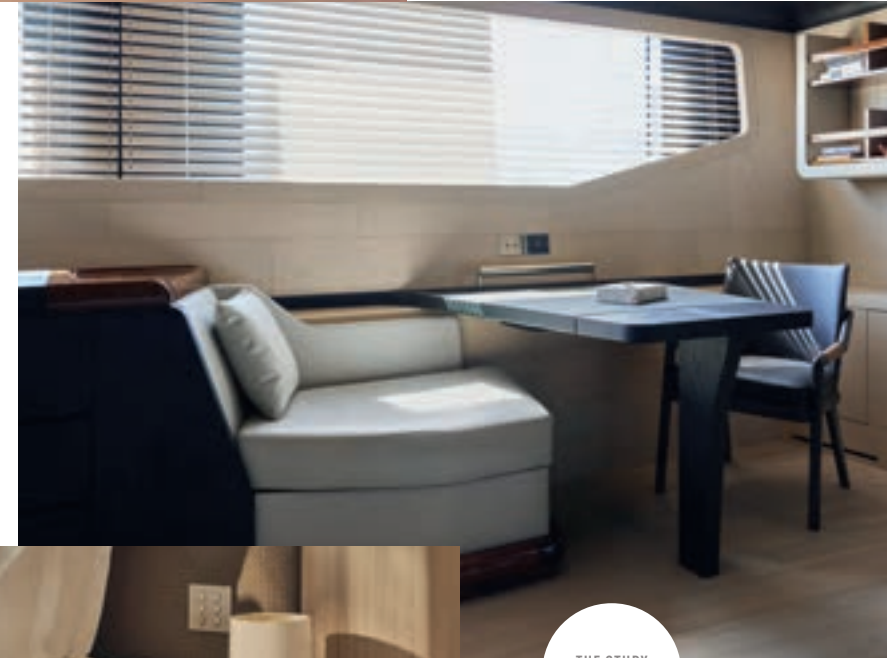
THE STUDY-SNUG

It's not just how people live on yachts that's changing, but how they work. “We haven't done a ‘regular’ layout with a classic dining room setup for about two years,” says John Vickers, founder of Vickers Studio. “Clients are young and want something interesting – they never want to eat indoors so there is no point giving them a formal dining space. Instead, part of that footprint becomes a study, but even that is evolving – it now looks more like a snug than the office you might have once seen on a boat. Most of these clients run businesses from their laptops and WhatsApp, so all they need is a comfortable sofa, a table that can double as a desk, a TV screen and an interesting background for video calls. It's homelier and cosier than ever before.”

Nicolò Piredda, founder of Piredda & Partners, agrees that the study-snug hybrid is essential to modern yacht design. “The perfect office is a small ecosystem with everything you need – a small sofa, an armchair and enough space and light in it so that you are able to breathe and relax,” he says. Longhi's customisable Hug sofa would be ideal for this cocooning vibe next to one of DFN's boucle armless chairs. “I'd also suggest a coffee machine and mini fridge, so it's as convenient as it is comfortable.”

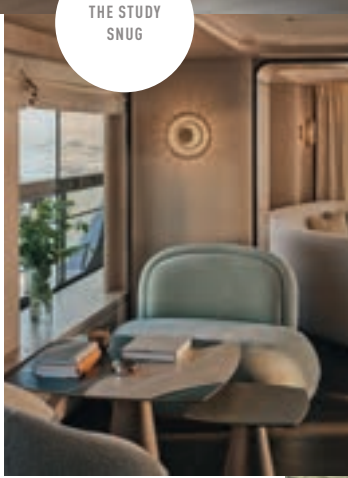


PHOTOGRAPHY: SARGENTINI, NICK ROCHOWSKI. COURTESY 1ST DIBBS. COURTESY BANNENBERG & ROWELL, MARK SELEN



HIDDEN
FUNCTIONS

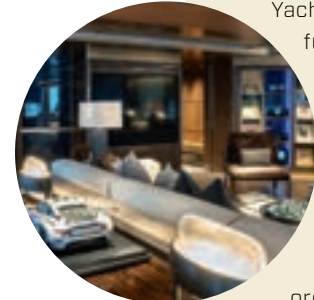
INDOOR PIECES HAVE
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THE STUDY
SNUG

Above, left and above left: Studio Indigo designed the interior of 47m Sanlorenzo M. Right: the customisable Longhi Hug sofa

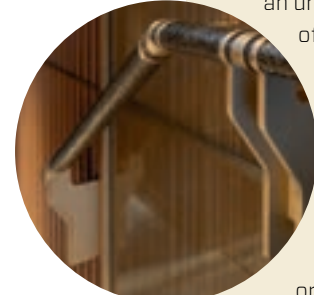
What sort of requests are you getting from clients at the moment?
Many clients today are more design-savvy, at least superficially, thanks to modern communication.



Yacht interior furniture has come a long way from simple wooden blocks with rounded corners, and clients are open to more complex organic forms, angles and 3D solutions that work within light-filled volumes.

Are you finding yourself turning to certain textures and colours more than others?

There has always been an urge on the part of designers and clients to make the most of the fact that perhaps 80 per cent of furnishings are custom-designed or customised from existing pieces. Even so, we prefer a restrained palette of timeless finishes, beautifully curated so art or furniture pieces have space to breathe. Our 80-metre *Valor* (pictured here), just delivered at Feadship, is a good example: oak, bronze,



carefully selected stone and leather. The concept is deceptively simple, yet the result is possibly our most elegant interior, where bespoke pieces – a Pollara table, an Andy Warhol, Silverlining furnishings – can shine with depth and character.

Windows on boats are bigger than ever before. Does that affect indoor furniture choices?

Glass engineering delivers fresh, well-lit interiors and allows the outdoors to flow inside. But challenges arise when a saloon has full-height glazing on two sides, glazed partitions with doors to the aft deck and a forward wall crowded with a television, pantry doors and circulation routes. With no conventional wall space to furnish against, every element must be carefully sculpted. The key to success is collaboration: the interior and exterior designers (ideally Bannenberg & Rowell in both roles) must work hand in hand to ensure the final result is cohesive, functional and visually harmonious. bannenbergandrowell.com

