

AN EXTRAORDINARILY COMPLEX
CUSTOM YACHT, FEADSHIP'S 62
METRE CAPTURES YACHTING'S
TRUE MAGIC

SEA OWL

words: Cecile Gauert
photography: Courtesy of Feadship



Personal and enchanting, this yacht is a portal to a different world, one where children learn as they play and where adults can enjoy family time, work or relax miles away from any land



'No one can fly unless the fairy dust has been blown on him. Fortunately, one of his hands was messy with it, and he blew some on each of them, with the most superb results,' wrote JM Barrie of Peter Pan. A fair amount of fairy dust, as well as a great deal of skill and experience, went into the build of the new *Sea Owl*, a 62 metre custom Feadship.

Personal and enchanting, this yacht is a portal to a different world, where children learn as they play and adults can enjoy family time, work or relax miles away from land. Aside from her one-of-a-kind fantasy inspired interior, the yacht has a sophisticated custom-designed security system to allow her occupants to venture far afield in safety. Her bespoke carbon tenders, built at Hodgdon Yachts of Maine and named *Hatchling* and *Fledgling*, are capable of great speeds. Adventure is built right into this stately yacht's design.

Sea Owl's lead designer, Andrew Winch, grew up near Kensington Gardens

Influenced by fairy tales and other literary works, the interior contains 90 exquisite animal carvings along with murals, inlays and glass art (above) to achieve a personal and magical finish

in London, where a bronze statue of Peter Pan has bewitched generations of children since it mysteriously appeared in 1912. Peter Pan's sculptor, Sir George Frampton, depicts the eternal boy playing the flute while balancing on a tree stump moulded with fairies, mice and squirrels. These small figures are not unlike a few of the 90 exquisite animal carvings found aboard *Sea Owl*. Among them are a delicate mouse sitting on a piece of Swiss cheese, a squirrel swinging by the tail from the bridge deck bannister and, of course, many owls.

Peter Pan is only one of several fairy tales and scholarly books that have inspired the décor, as the designers worked closely with family members to personalise each room and encourage the children to explore real and imaginary worlds. On the bridge deck is a staff cabin decorated with frescos of fossilised seashells that a young Charles Darwin identified during his first trip on *HMS Beagle*. This will double as a

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classroom, allowing the children to learn about Darwin as the yacht explores the Galápagos Islands. On the lower deck is a delightful pirate-themed room, complete with a barrel shower and a treasure chest that doubles as a desk, while next to this is one of the daughters' cabins with scenes from *Alice in Wonderland*. On the sundeck, a toothy shark grins on the walls of the freshwater spa pool, while colourful tiles give the impression that it has been strewn with jewels. Three decks below, a book painted on the ceiling appears to be defying the laws of gravity to fly away from the library wall – it's Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, naturally. While the décor is playful, it is never kitsch, reaching a level of artistry even grown-ups can appreciate.

The results surprised the yacht's owner. 'Although I was tangentially involved in the design of the boat and kept abreast of how the build was progressing, I was truly astonished by the level of craftsmanship and tastefulness that distinguishes every nook and cranny,' he says, adding that this success 'is largely due to the close collaboration between the design team at Andrew Winch Designs (AWD) and my wife and daughter who are endowed with both exceptionally good taste and exceptionally strong opinions.'

The relationship between the owners and AWD began in 2005. After seeing *Whisper*, a 35 metre Holland Jachtbouw sailing yacht whose classic interior AWD

designed, *Sea Owl's* owners visited the designer's riverside studio in Mortlake, London. The relationship developed from there. The owners retained the designers to do the interior of their 43 metre Burger, which is classic, with a touch of whimsy and a few woodcarvings.

The Burger's green hull and white superstructure colour scheme was shared with the new yacht, which is painted in an appealing combination of the Awlgrip shades Jade Mist and Oyster White.

Soon after starting construction of their 43 metre, the yacht's owners realised they would need a bigger boat to accommodate their growing family and, in 2007, began discussing the new yacht with AWD and Anthony Sands of Edge Yachts, their representative. The first sketches of the new yacht depicted *Sea Owl* in Venice (a theme transmuted into the dining saloon, which has a mural of Venice and a Venetian glass chandelier). A bid to build the new *Sea Owl* went out to seven shipyards, and a contract was signed with Feadship in 2008.

Construction began two years later on what may be, at close to 1,500 gross tonnes, the biggest 62 metre yet built. 'We knew from the very start that *Sea Owl* was going to be an extraordinary vessel, but also one that would pose challenges in her design and construction due to the high aesthetic standards the owners were trying to achieve, coupled with the yacht's cutting-edge technological sophistication,' Sands says. 'The experienced *Sea Owl*



team from Winch Designs, including senior designers Andreas Iseli, Nick Priest and Selina Waters, knew that the yacht's exterior and planning was the answer. It's to the entire team's credit that we achieved on all counts, including construction deadlines and budget.'

Sea Owl was built on the picturesque island of Kaag in The Netherlands, set amid freshwater lakes, but only a few metres away from the mainland. Winch was happy with the choice of shipyard, in part because of the island setting. 'There is something magical about this island,' he says. Winch also has an excellent relationship with the shipyard and its experienced craftsmen, who performed their own brand of magic.

As I walk the decks in his company, a large team from AWD and Feadship works on finalising myriad details before the yacht's handover; it is clear that, while children

The sundeck (opposite left) and bridge deck (above right) offer open spaces for the owner's large family. Touches such as the Chihuly chandelier and baby grand add glamour in the main saloon (top)

were the inspiration for this project, making this dream happen was anything but child's play. Winch, who has designed seven Feadships to date, including the recently delivered 99 metre *Madame Gu*, says *Sea Owl* was one of the most complex projects he has ever handled.

Part of the complexity resides in the number of details in this high-volume explorer. There are those you can see, such as a silk and wool carpet hand-knotted in Nepal, the Dale Chihuly chandelier made of Venetian glass, or the basin carved like a gem from a single block of crystal. And there are the ones you don't – security cameras with a 360 degree view at the waterline, fingerprint-recognition keypads and a sophisticated entertainment system.

A detailed description of this interior would fill a book but a few details are enough to illustrate the yacht's

'I was astonished by the level of craftsmanship and tastefulness that distinguishes every nook and cranny of the boat'



spirit. The central stairway features a mural, carved from Peruvian mahogany, of a magical tree rising four decks high in one continuous design, the roots grounded in the lower deck's sole and branches reaching the sundeck. The guest lift is much less noticeable from the outside but on its inside walls are *trompe l'oeil* murals depicting, among others, a garden scene and the family dog, Charlie, awaiting a treat.

The owner, gifted with a mathematical mind, has an office where he can be introspective behind closed doors but find inspiration in the oceanscape unfolding in front of him. This room is part of the owner's private suite. Its centrepiece is an exquisite copy of an 18th Century French desk by French furniture designer Serge Mirochnikoff, who created several other special pieces on board. On the ceiling is one of many frescoes commissioned by AWD, this one a depiction of a world

The owner's suite (above) has a grand cabin, and a bathroom with varnished wood bath (opposite right). Meanwhile his nautical office has a copy of an 18th Century French desk (above left), with sea view to aid the thought processes

map circa 1800, and on the walls are replicas of candle brackets found aboard Royal Navy ships during Horacio Nelson's career. The owner's love of mathematics and puzzles has inspired the marquetry in his cabin and a timepiece in the saloon.

Such details bring character to a yacht that the owner wanted to serve as an ideal holiday home for his large family. They wanted big spaces and wide-open vistas but within the length of 62 metres, which while generous by other measures, proved challenging when it came to accommodating all the family's wishes. This puzzle was left to AWD to resolve. The experienced team designed a yacht that is exceptionally beamy (12.2 metres overall) with a very large superstructure. The sundeck is partially enclosed, to create a light-filled dining saloon, with an adjacent pantry that occupies a good part of this interior on this

While there is absolute logic and practicality in the way the decks are organised, few linear patterns are on board

deck. Winch and his team, which gave the yacht elegant and classic lines, used the wide beam to maximum effect. The owners value privacy and security. Hence access points are limited to what's necessary and the accommodation stretches across the full beam where convenient. On the bridge deck, a light-filled Caribbean-inspired upper saloon stretches between windows, while forward, two balconies unfold to offer up panoramic views to guests.

Throughout, Winch pursued an organic design. 'Symmetry makes the environment feel controlled,' he says, which was far from the desired effect. The layout is very different from the rigid patterns found on many yachts. While there is practicality in the way the decks are organised (the layout is being kept private at the owner's request), few linear patterns are on board. The main dining table, set in front of a Venetian fresco, for instance, is off centre. Glancing forward from the saloon, you get an open view up to a library wall that

conceals the owners' walk-in wardrobe.

As amazing as what you can see, is what you do not see. It is not obvious that the custom-made furnishings, most built in-house by the Feadship craftsmen, are all sea-fastened for safety. The custom rosewood self-playing Steinway baby grand piano in the main saloon is not only affixed to the deck sole, but also interfaces with the music library and can play any piece of music stored in the Kaleidescape audio visual system. The yacht features WiFi throughout for iPad use, while most tables, including those on the outer decks, have hidden power sources to recharge tablets or laptops.

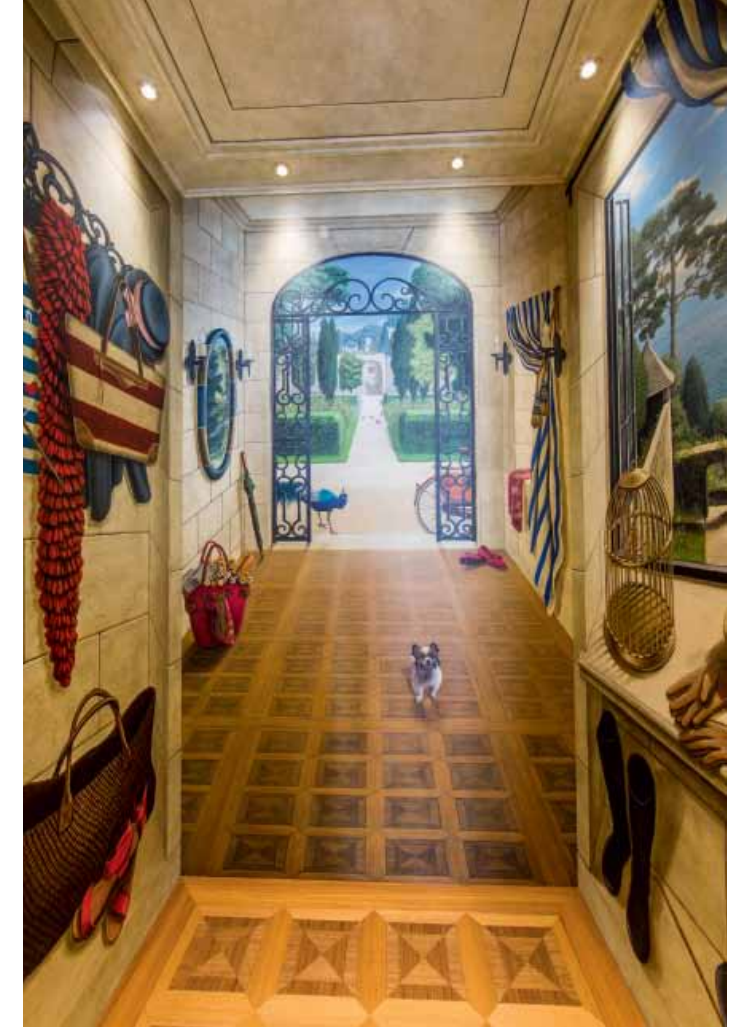
The entertainment system itself is housed in a chilled, carpeted and dedicated electronics room, located on the bridge deck. Behind the spacious exercise room with pilates equipment and chin-up bar, plus an adjacent hair salon and massage room, is a comprehensive medical room that can be set up to handle emergencies.

At least two of the cabins on board can be used as





Sea Owl's interior is a wonderland of intricate design work. A book (opposite top left) painted on the ceiling appears to fly away from the library wall. Exit your guest cabin and (this page) an astonishing corridor awaits. Inside the lift (opposite top right), the family dog awaits a treat





The pirate-themed children's cabin (above) includes a barrel shower and a treasure chest desk. An Alice in Wonderland theme is realised in art and carvings next door (opposite)

safe rooms, their doors discreetly reinforced with steel and heavy-duty hinges. 'A well-planned security system need not be obtrusive or interfere with the enjoyment of passengers aboard a yacht,' says the owner. 'On the contrary, when you have a comprehensive system and a fully trained crew, it is far easier to relax and enjoy the boat whether at sea or in port.' He and Sands entrusted the yacht's thorough security system to Brian Peterman, president and CEO of Command at Sea International; he is a former US Coast Guard commander with a team of former Secret Service agents. '[The owner] wanted to have a yacht that had global capabilities,' says Peterman. 'His is a very practical approach to security.'

The security consultants worked closely with the shipyard up to the last few days before delivery, and while the effective and discreet security system does not distract from the magic of the décor, accommodating it added a layer of complexity – one that even the experienced Feadship shipyard acknowledges. 'It added weight on the boat, which we had to account for and balance with the class requirements,' says Koos Zitman, sales director at Feadship. 'You can only assign the space once.'

Asked what design features were borrowed from other Feadship projects – perhaps the large windows, the saloon door that recedes to fully open the upper saloon to the aft deck or the twin tender bays forward – Zitman says the project was entirely owner driven. Even the large radar mast, which is accessible through steps in the coaming, was done at the owner's request.

The owner's team deferred to the shipyard in one

design area. 'They left the technical aspects to Feadship,' Zitman says, with one request for a specific piece of equipment, which was a zero-discharge sewage system. Conscious of their surroundings and the pristine areas they want to discover, the owners also opted for a dynamic positioning system, which

allows the yacht to stay in place without deploying anchors. The system works in conjunction with the bow and stern thrusters and the engines to readjust position as needed. It was tested in 40 knots of wind and proved most effective in holding the yacht in place for 17 hours. Sea trials in the North Sea were more than satisfactory. Alarms, almost a fact of life on most motor yachts, never went off. 'We had to trick them, to make sure they were working,' says Sands, clearly pleased with the results.

In early July, the yacht and her crew of 18 set off on the first of her extended journeys to the Norwegian fjords after a handover ceremony in front of Amsterdam's National Maritime Museum. The yacht's on-time delivery is a concrete positive result. What is less definable perhaps is the emotional response *Sea Owl* seems to illicit from all involved. There was a sense of cheerfulness as the team pulled together to meet the deadline. As I explore the yacht, a young man in a crisp Feadship uniform walks into a room. Extending his open palms in front of him, he asks the designers, 'Does anyone know where this mouse goes?' On his hands is the small mouse on a slice of cheese. A burst of laughter greets his question. Happiness. That is where the fairy dust comes in.



Security consultants and the shipyard worked to accommodate an effective and discreet security system that would not distract from the magic of the décor



SEA OWL *Feadship*

LOA 62m
LWL 54.2m
Beam 12.2m
Draught 3.7m
Engines
 2 x MTU 16V 4000 M53R,
 2,038hp

Speed (max/cruise)
 16.3 knots/12 knots
Range at 12 knots
 5,700nm
Fuel capacity
 150,000 litres
Water capacity
 35,000 litres

Thrusters
 200kW Jastram/Elma
 bowthruster; 150kW Veth
 (retractable) stern thruster
Generators
 3 x 310kW MTU 8V
 2000M, 50A
Owner and guests 12
Crew 18

Tenders
 1 x 8.5m Hodgdon Yachts
 limousine custom;
 1 x 8.5m Hodgdon Yachts
 crew tender
Construction
 Steel hull; aluminium
 superstructure

Classification
 Lloyd's ✳ 100 A1, SSC,
 Yacht (P), Mono, G6,
 ✳ LMC, UMS, EP
Naval architecture
 De Voogt Naval Architects
**Interior and
 exterior design**
 Andrew Winch Designs

**Owner's project
 manager**
 Edge Yachts
Builder/year
 Feadship/2013
 Haarlem,
 The Netherlands
 t: +31 23 524 7000
 e: info@feadship.nl
 w: feadship.nl