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OCTOBER 2017

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HIP HIP HOORAY!
Parametric design by
Patrik Schumacher/ZHA

OCEAN DRIVE

Achille Salvagni decks out the 'Aurora' superyacht for Rossinavi

The world of yacht design is used to high-profile creative collaborations. Aside from the established designers who have been helming superyacht projects for decades, many major architectural studios have also turned their hand to nautical trimmings, no doubt lured by the big specifications, meticulous detailing and generous budgets typical of this demanding industry. While acclaimed practices such as Foster + Partners and Amanda Levete Architects are happy to dabble, other firms have made floating interiors and sleek craft their speciality. One such designer is Achille Salvagni, whose Rome-based studio Salvagni Architetti has garnered a clutch of awards for its work on land and off.

Salvagni's latest creation is a collaboration with the shipbuilder Rossinavi, based in Italy's Viareggio superyacht hub. Founded as the Rossi shipyard in the 1970s, it became Rossinavi in 2007, turning out a small fleet of hulls every year from 45m and upwards. Rossinavi specialises in aluminium, building high-performance boats with generous internal space and hull openings to bring in light and views.

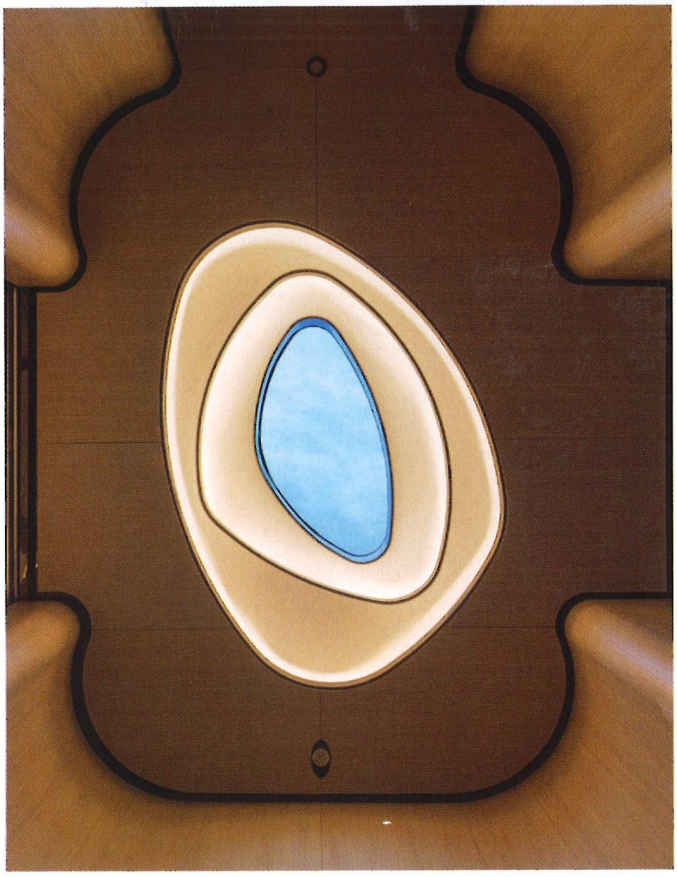
'Aurora' was commissioned by a sport-loving couple who wanted classic transport design – particularly the textures and materials of vintage motor sport – in an impressively scaled package. The naval architect was Arrabito, with exterior design by Fulvio De Simoni. Inside, however, was Salvagni's realm. His brief was to distill the clients' tastes into a coherent whole. 'The owners wanted the design to enhance their dynamic and active lifestyle,' the designer says, referencing what he describes as the 'spatial fluidity' of the living areas in the 49m yacht. Inspiration also came from classical sources, including the spaces shaped by the great baroque architect Francesco Borromini.

'There is a sense of movement that pervades,' Salvagni says, going on to chronicle the levels of detail that typify a yacht project of this scope and scale. 'We decided to contrast the noblest materials in every element of its interior, such as limed sycamore walls, dark polished tineo details, brushed natural teak floors, hand-knotted silk carpets, Carrara Statuario marble, gunmetal bronze and custom lighting.' Armies of craftsmen and women descend on Rossinavi's shipyard, not just to build the hull but also to weave in hundreds of miles of wiring, elaborate materials and finishes, and – most important of all for a yacht – fixtures and fittings that have tolerances more akin to the auto industry than the architectural world. »

WITH LINES INSPIRED BY CLASSIC CARS, THE 49M 'AURORA' HAS AN EXTENDABLE REAR 'BEACH CLUB' AND A SECLUDED PRIVATE DINING SPACE ON THE MAIN SUN DECK

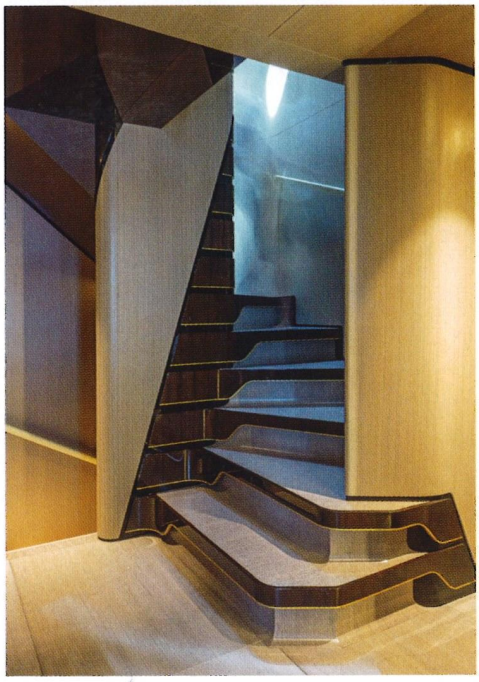
Photography: Tom Van Oossanen

WRITER: JONATHAN BELL



LEFT AND BELOW, THE INTERIORS FEATURE LIMED SYCAMORE WALLS WITH TINEO DETAILS AND GUNMETAL BRONZE ACCENTS

BOTTOM, THE 'BEACH CLUB', WITH ACCESS TO THE SWIMMING PLATFORM



A modern yacht is the equivalent of the grand country seat of centuries past

In many respects, a modern yacht is the equivalent of the grand country seat of centuries past, a blank slate upon which the cultural obsessions of the age can be explored through outstanding craftsmanship. 'These clients are typically international, with multiple homes, are established collectors and have much more knowledge about design. They are sophisticated, with a taste level to match,' Salvagni says. To make a modern yacht a coherent showcase of form and content requires exceptional curatorial skills, not just the ability to give it shape and get the most from materials.

The design and construction of 'Aurora' was a three-year process, and the boat's owners are now taking in a Mediterranean summer before heading off to winter in the Caribbean. No country estate ever had such flexibility – nor would it have had a mechanically extending rear 'beach club', designed to sit flush with the water for easy bathing access. Despite the barrage of tech on display – including a recessed gym, a sauna, a cinema and a wine cellar – Salvagni is keen to stress the importance of having a wood-lined interior, both as a nod to traditional yacht design and to display the craftsmanship that might otherwise be hidden under modern materials. Those fluid lines posed a challenge for the woodwork and the marble, but time and energy were lavished on this project until it was just right.

Understandably, the shipyard itself relished such attention to detail. 'Achille has a high profile not only for his vision but also because of his way of designing everything,' says Federico Rossi, Rossinavi's COO. 'The design is still functional and everything is in harmony with our full custom-building philosophy.' Salvagni's hard work has taken to the waves in a remarkable demonstration of coherence and style.✱

salvagniarchitetti.net; rossinavi.it