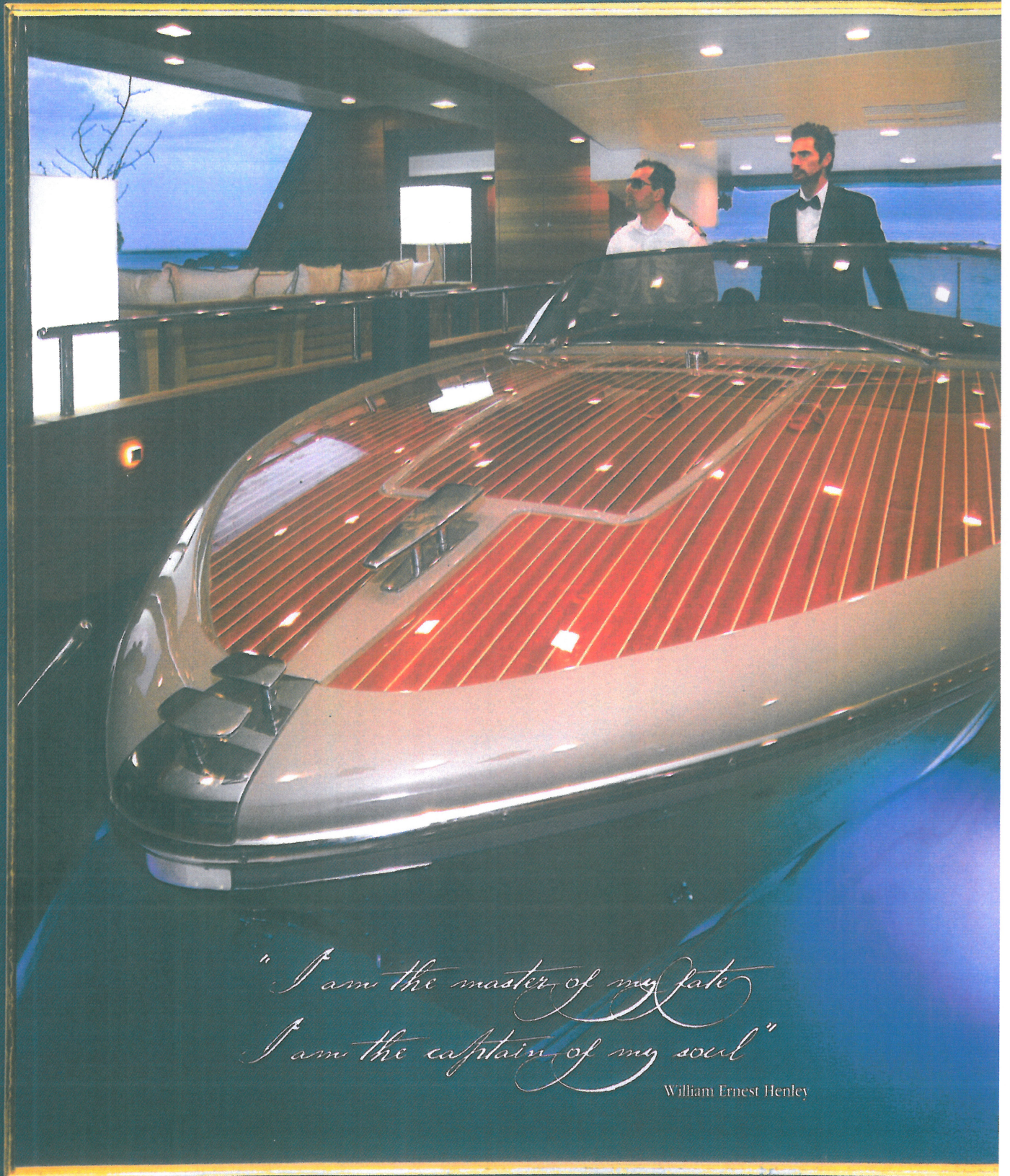


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Issue 3 - Spring 2011

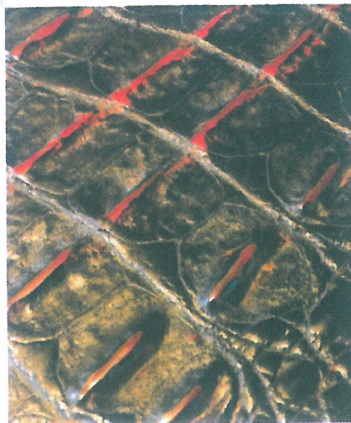
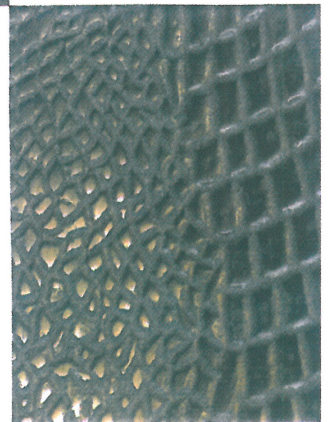
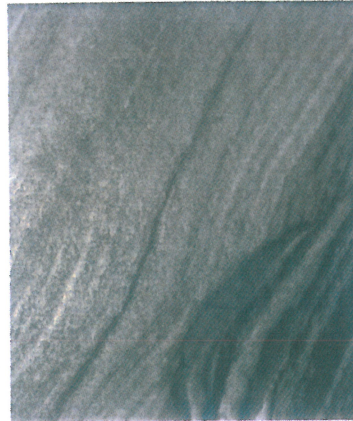


*"I am the master of my fate
I am the captain of my soul"*

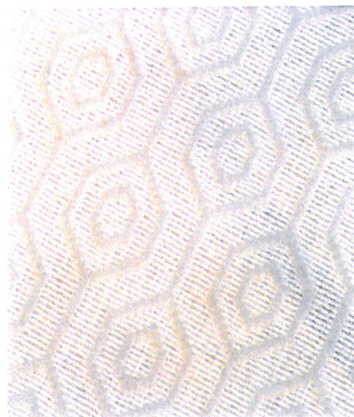
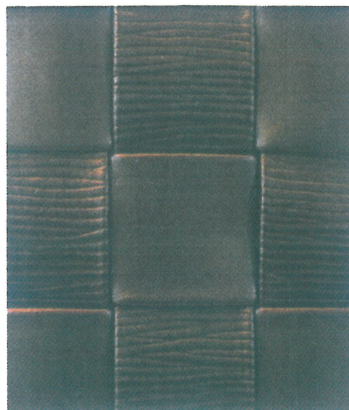
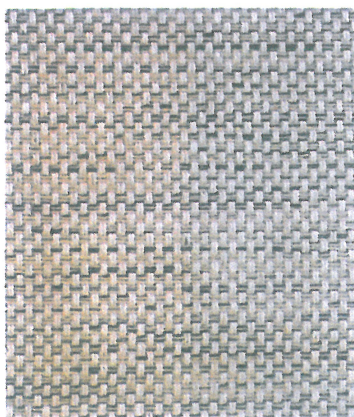
William Ernest Henley

By Invitation Only

INTERIORS



INTERIORS

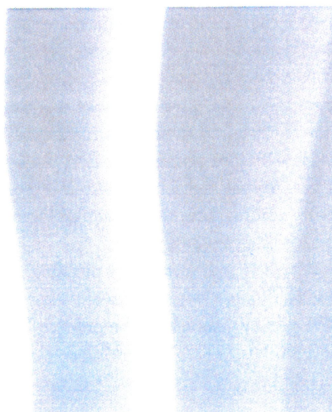


WESTPORT 130

BY: CRAIG BARNETT
PHOTOGRAPHY: ARNAUD FINISTRE

MATERIAL GIRLS

As North America's most successful superyacht builder of recent years, Westport is a yard that could be forgiven for taking a safe and conservative route when investing in 'spec' builds in a slowly improving climate. Ever mindful of progress however, their latest 130' sports a contemporary interior design rather than traditional décor. We sat with the yard's interior design team to discuss the philosophy behind the design and how they achieved it.





Taking pride of place amongst the impressive line-up of yachts on Westport's display at the Miami Boat Show in February was the latest edition of their successful 130' model. Given the remarkable consistency of north America's most successful superyacht builder, and that hull #4009 represents the 9th of new 40M (but 37th of 130's) launched by the yard, one could have been forgiven for glossing over it. But stepping inside, we discovered Westport had courageously built this spec boat with a contemporary interior, something of a departure for the yard and a testament to its ever-progressive policy. We were so intrigued by the investment and direction taken by the yard, we met Westport's resident design team to discover more.

From the moment Teresa Francis and Amy Halfman bound onboard, their enthusiasm and joie de vivre is infectious. As a charismatic double act they are worthy of their own TV show, and their intuitive relationship is immediately apparent. "Oh we're very close," smiles Teresa. "In fact sometimes we find ourselves..." she pauses briefly to plump up a cushion, "finishing each other's sentences," grins Amy. Both look at each other and giggle, raising their hands in mock exasperation. "It's the result of working

together for 14-years," Teresa explains. "We met while working for separate companies at Elliott Bay Marina," continues Amy, "we worked next door to each other, but didn't really get to know each other until we started at Westport."

Having returned to study residential and corporate design after an early career in teaching, Amy's formal training, allied to a love of yachts, led her to her current role. In contrast, Teresa's route was determined by a passion for decoration and interiors. "Working at Elliott Bay I'd see all these yachts coming in and figured someone must be designing the interiors, so I investigated the opportunities and here we are today." Like any close relationship, one suspects it is the balance of shared interests and contrasting experiences that creates a perfect equilibrium. "Our first project together was hull #1512," recalls Teresa, "which was about 80 boats ago," finishes Amy. "We've completed interiors across the board, from the 65s, 85s, 112s, 130s and the 50m yachts."

To achieve such an extraordinarily prolific output means both designers head up several projects of their own at the same time, but collaborate closely throughout the process. "Our various skills balance each other, but we're working so closely that we're on the same page 90 percent of the time," explains Amy, "there are no egos involved whatsoever." Teresa picks up the narrative; "There are so



Amy Halfman (left) and Teresa Francis are together responsible for the interior designs of over 80 Westport yachts.





many occasions that we'll work on separate yachts, but will later find we've either both been working from the same inspirational product, stone or fabric we've 'discovered' individually, or chosen the same elements." With one of the key attributes of the Westport yard being consistency, this harmony of design philosophy and like-mindedness fits seamlessly in the yard's ethos.

When discussing where their inspiration comes from, Amy and Teresa have an interesting method. "It can be as simple as piece of stone," says Amy, "or a piece of fabric," finishes Teresa. "Right now there's a tile that we're using on one of the boats, and in our back office we have a table that we'll keep adding different elements to. Some mornings we'll go straight to the table, before getting bogged down by emails at our desks, and go through some ideas." Amy adds, "There's a 50m on the table right now, so after the show we'll gather all the elements and distill the interior design, and that'll be done." Remarkably, and perhaps as a product of the studio and yard's prolific output, the designers skip the usual sketches and renderings stage, simply placing orders for the materials and passing on directions to the workshop. "Given the number of boats

Inspiration from the stone selected for the fireplace in the skylounge (p.413) set the tone for the rest of this contemporary 40m.

we build, we know exactly how much stone, fabric and timber is required. For the day head for example, we know it takes 15 yards of wall liner. So we can just send the shipyard a stone package and Powerpoint presentation that goes up on the production board, so everyone knows what materials to use."

Completing the designs, purchase orders and considerable administration doesn't allow as much time as the pair would like to travel to trade shows and research new products. But visiting the shipyard once every couple of weeks from their studio in Seattle, Teresa and Amy collect input from the craftsmen on the factory floor and are always open to new ideas. "Our designs are intended to appeal to a wide cross-section," Amy starts, "so feedback is always welcome. This wide appeal also helps owners who wish to charter their yachts." Teresa adds that the input from the engineering department helps define and develop their awareness; "We may have completed 80 yachts, but we still learn with every project." Being highly organized and having an almost photographic



**SILVER TEXTILE WALL LINERS, SINGLE DROP BLINDS
AND FLAT PANEL CABINETRY CONTRIBUTE TO THE
FRESH CONTEMPORARY DESIGN... HIGH-END
MATERIALS ENSURE A LUXURIOUS AMBIENCE.**

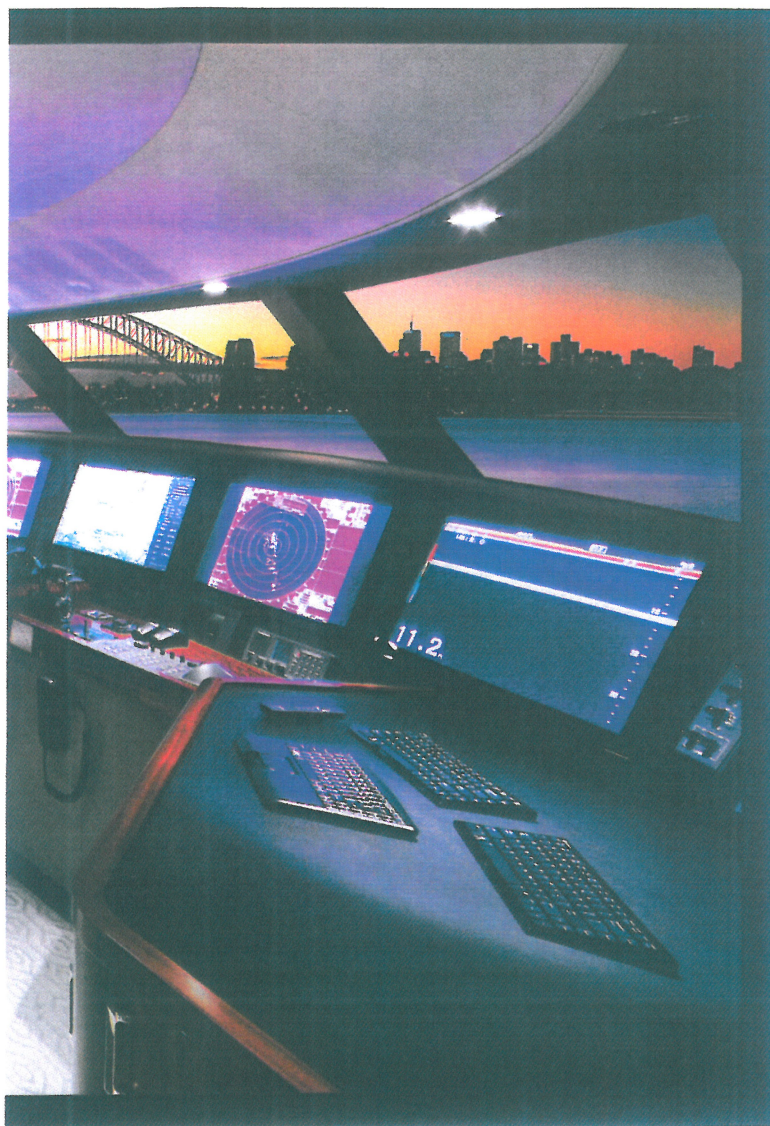


WESTPOR



memory of each boat, "which we know by hull numbers rather than names," allows Teresa and Amy to instantly identify what lights, trim and stone was used on each boat they've designed. Given that the 130 presented at the Miami Show was built 'on spec', we had to ask how working 'for the management' compared with working with a client on a commissioned build? "We always like to work with clients," the girls laugh together. "But in honesty it all depends on what stage the client comes in, sometimes the boat is nearly finished before it is sold," says Amy. "Most Westport owners have owned boats before," continues Teresa, "so they know what they like. Many are also repeat clients, so we have a great relationship and understand their individual tastes and yacht use." Directing the conversation back to the new 130, Teresa explains how the confidence placed in them by Westport's management allows them free reign. "Phil Purcell or Daryl Wakefield will drop by the office as the project progresses and we'll update them on the direction we're taking. It's only if we go really crazy and too 'personalized' will they really pull us back." Amy continues by revealing how the core principles of their design philosophy remain 'family friendly'. "We aim to design interiors that

immediately feel homey, and chose materials so that mom's aren't worried when a younger guests spills a drink. We're moms ourselves, so we want interiors to be elegant and timeless, but also where you are comfortable enough to kick off your shoes and relax on the couch." Teresa adds how the allowances they are provided for interiors are very generous; "There's no skimping on materials at all, we use only extremely high-end products and furnishings, so the luxurious element is very much maintained." As testament to this, the management set no boundaries for the completion of the new 130's interior and exterior decoration and furnishing. As Amy and Teresa lead us around the 130, they point out how the interior differs from the traditional interiors Westport aficionados are familiar with. "The stone for this fireplace in the skylounge was the initial inspiration," smiles Amy, stroking the leather textured sequoia granite. "And to ensure we achieved the contemporary styling, we went with flat panels on the cabinetry," says Teresa pointing out the low cabinets. They sit under glazing shaded by simplistic single-drop shades, rather than ruched roman blinds. The edge details are cleaner too, and the silver fabric wall liners are something new for Westport. Departing from the traditional high gloss teak furniture,



As Amy and Teresa take care of the interiors, exterior deck spaces and even the pilothouse, a harmonious atmosphere runs throughout this new 40m.

this 130 also sports stainless frames in the skylounge, and funky loungers on the aft deck. Natural materials still prevail, but with imaginative use. We particularly liked the petrified wood occasional table in the main salon as one notable example. In the upper day head, concealed behind the fireplace of the skylounge, we find a metallic handbasin that is far from traditional. This compliments the polished finish of the stainless door furniture. "We've used the same carpet throughout to simplify the design," explains Teresa, while Amy points out the custom fabric used on the furniture. While the changes in décor are obvious for all to see, the devil is really in the detail: a shallow drawer concealed in a bureau, a woven wood lattice partition and leather liners on handrails that are hand sewn with such precision they are reminiscent of a Bentley's steering wheel. Some accents are concealed, while others are more obvious, but all engender a true depth and texture to the design. Bearing in mind Westport's famous turnkey yacht solution, where "the owner need only bring their luggage and toothbrush," the level of detail Amy and Teresa go to is astounding. "From the linen to the glassware, flatware to kitchen appliances and cutlery, everything is carefully selected to

maintain harmony in the design," they explain. Down in the oversized lobby on the accommodation deck, Teresa waves her hand around the open doors of the four guest cabins and points out the same color palette has been used for each. "See, minimalist doesn't have to be all white," she enthuses. "We've not splashed 20-different colors in each cabin, instead by minimizing the colors used and decorating all the cabins the same, it minimizes the impact and is cleaner and more contemporary. Obviously slightly obsessed with perfection, Teresa scoots off to straighten a bed cover, while Amy draws our attention to the quality of the marble work in the en-suites, the light fittings and the surfeit of stowage space they've incorporated into the design.

Heading to the flybridge to finish our tour, the pair describes their delight at seeing the complete yacht for the first time at the show. "When you think about it, this is a rare opportunity for us," says Amy. "Obviously prior to a yacht being shipped everything is stowed, covered and carefully packed, so it's not often we get to see our work all laid out in its full glory. We don't have renderings so everything exists in our minds eye and the hands of the craftsmen." The heavy metallic sunloungers supplied by Summit, complimented by composite occasional tables are a particular favorite of Teresa's and another example of Westport's flexibility in using traditional or modern materials. Mid-flow, Teresa stops and quickly takes out her iPhone to snap a shot of the Fontainebleau Hotel. "Sorry," she laughs. "That's just an example of how we find inspiration everywhere: that architectural panel in the building would make such a cool tile floor!"

Infectious in their enthusiasm and bubbling with charisma, there's no wonder Westport is as successful as it is. Yachts that touch your soul are not the product of a perfect computer aided design package, but reflect the personalities of those involved in creating them. If this is the case, in the hands of Amy Halfman and Teresa Francis the yard's continued success is surely assured. With their contemporary interpretation of Westport's traditional values in an interior that will appeal to US, European and Middle Eastern clients alike, and the yard willing to invest in a spec yacht outside of their 'safe zone', Westport isn't resting on its laurels. In their partnership, which exemplifies the loyalty engendered amongst Westport employees, they fulfill the sentiment of Henry Ford: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." ■