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superyacht
built for
scuba*



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DIVE RIGHT IN

The new 64-metre *Atomic* is bold outside and beautifully textural within. It's also the perfect platform for her avid diver owners, as *Cecile Gauert* discovers

Cover boat



Photography JIM RAYCROFT



The owner of *Atomic* dived into the superyacht world a few years ago with the commission of a 45-metre. What first got this outdoor-loving family into yachting was a passion for scuba – and not long after taking delivery of his first boat, the owner concluded that he would eventually need to go bigger to accommodate a professionally set up dive centre.

“Very quickly, we talked about a larger yacht,” says Jean-Claude Carme, who worked with Sunrise Yachts when he met the owner and has since joined TWW as a new-build broker.

The search for an ideal diving platform led the owner to the Italian shipyard VSY, where a 64-metre built on spec was ready for someone’s personal imprint.

“They built the hull and superstructure and waited for a client, but they did not do much marketing, so it stayed there for a few years,” says Carme. “When my client said he’d like to build a new yacht, we spoke about various options and then I mentioned this hull.”

VSY had appeared on the yachting scene in 2004 with the ambition to rival the quality of Northern European shipyards. “And it’s true that the specifications were there. It had dynamic

positioning and a complete navigation system by Kongsberg, a bow thruster from Voith with no moving parts, quiet azimuthing thrusters from Schottel, a large electric capacity and Caterpillar engines. This seduced my client,” says Carme.

For this hull, built as a sistership to *Candyscape II* (now *Sealyon*) and *Roma*, VSY had made significant updates. By the time the yard delivered the 72-metre *Stella Maris* in 2012, owners were asking for better water access, says Lorenzo Cerulli, who was then VSY’s sales and after sales manager. “On this boat we could not have a beach club, so I suggested that if we take away the transom, put sofas to face the water and create one nice staircase instead of two, then you could sit there and watch your kids playing in the sea. It’s not a beach club, but it is close.”

Revised by Laurent Giles Naval Architects for seakeeping and Espen Øino International for the styling (vertical windows replaced slanted ones), the platform now had a bulbous bow and was stretched to 64 metres.

At this size, the owner of *Atomic* could create a professional dive centre and still have room for a good-sized tender garage (*Atomic* also tows a 14-metre Grady-White centre console with the latest 600hp Mercury engines), as well as ample space for guests, a personal office and a gym.





The colour scheme, windows, open transom and balconies distinguish Atomic from her sisterships. Opposite page: the pilothouse features an integrated bridge system by Kongsberg. The captain added SOLAS-approved window shades



But the owner's team made several more changes that distinguish *Atomic* from her sisterships. "I proposed that we do fixed balconies. I love them: they do not require complex mechanisms or the intervention of the crew. Also, they can create a design feature that enhances the exterior styling of the yacht," Carme says. That design feature was refined further by Øino's team.

The original layout was also modified – with the addition of an owner's office and a child-friendly air-conditioned saloon on the top deck. However, the most challenging modification was raising the ceiling height of the main deck. "[The owner] was used to high ceilings on his previous yacht and could not understand he would get less height on a larger yacht," says Carme. The shipyard obliged.

With all these planned modifications and with a commitment from designer Franck Darnet, who had worked on the previous *Atomic*, to join the team once more, the owner was ready to green-light the project.

The founder of Darnet Design, based in the breezy Atlantic coast town of Nantes, is a graduate of Paris's prestigious art college École

Boulle and an avid sailor. It bears repeating because, although the studio has done quite a bit of work in the yacht sector, it flies under the radar. This discretion translates into their designs. Darnet and his team know how to produce refined and elegant work without going over the top. This ability dovetails perfectly with what these owners were looking for in their home away from home. The brief was simple, Darnet says: "They wanted warm, cosy and easy-going; nothing showy."

Refining the layout was another important part of the studio's task. Taking advantage of the extra width created by the balconies, Darnet created a reading nook in the owner's suite that overlooks the ocean. From this comfortable perch on the starboard side, the eye also has unobstructed views all the way across the suite to a glass-enclosed shower that looks directly onto the water. Stepping into the shower feels a bit like you're stepping outdoors, only you're not.

The other half of each balcony is outdoors, accessed from the suite via folding doors and has a large enough footprint for two armchairs and a coffee table. Leaning over the rail, one can admire the angular features of this strong-looking



Left and below: the owner selected coral-coloured tiles for the pool.
Bottom right: its glass bottom sends colourful waves down to the upper aft deck's dining area (here)





Ascensori, while forward is an outdoor lounge surrounding a gas-fed fire pit.

The design studio has worked extensively on the lighting plan inside and out, to create ambiances for any time of the day or night. Captain Victor Elzerman says there are roughly 2.5 kilometres of LED light strips on board. Outside, the light underscores the yacht's strong features, including the prominent mast; inside it highlights the warmth of the decor, which combines cotton rugs hand-knotted in Nepal, buttery leather, caramel-colour walnut veneer and touches of nickel.

To create a horizontal stripe effect on the bulkheads – which is known to be more relaxing than vertical patterns – took quite a bit of patience. At first glance, it almost looks like teak with very few knots interrupting the pattern. “We chose the wood, leaf by leaf, to avoid any knots,” explains Darnet.

Nearly all the furniture is custom made, including a slightly curved cabinet with nickel trim that Darnet describes as “sensuous” – a fitting word as its smooth line invites touch – and an interesting light fixture in the dining room. Designed by the French studio and realised

vessel, which was given the dual exterior paint the designer had always envisaged. While her sisterships are white, *Atomic*'s hull is painted an attractive Awlgrip's Kinston Grey embellished with a Monaco Red stripe, all protected by a lustrous clear coat.

The owners' handsome split-level suite includes a spacious office with large windows a few steps below. Just aft of the office and on the level of the main saloon are two VIP suites, while two more guest cabins and the children's fun bunk room are below.

But not all the customisation was inside. “We worked hard to create a new atmosphere on the sundeck,” says Darnet. “The client wanted a bar and we designed a U-shape bar, did custom bar stools with rather high backs. It's one of the yacht's great areas.”

At one end of the sundeck is a large spa pool with red mosaics and a glass bottom that allows colourful waves of light to bounce around the outer dining space a deck below. In the centre of the deck is the enclosed playroom/saloon, which is served by a glass-sided lift from Bertazzoni



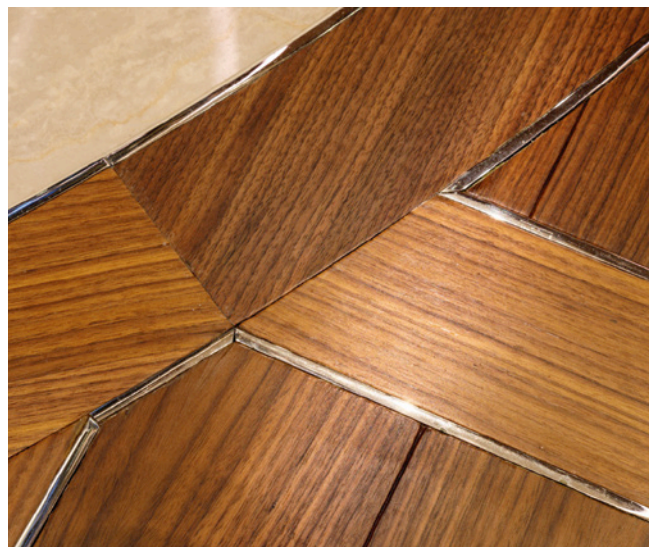
Red, the owner's favourite colour, is used sparingly to enliven the exterior spaces, including a cosy lounge with a gas fire pit on the sundeck's forward area (bottom left)



“We worked hard to create a new atmosphere on the sundeck. The client wanted a bar. It's one of the yacht's great areas”



A U-shaped bar, surrounded by high-backed custom seats, was added to the sundeck, adjacent to the pool



As a design accent, nickel trims the bespoke walnut furniture and is inset into the main saloon floor aft in the shape of staghorn coral (top centre).



The owners chose comfort over luxury for their diving platform. Bright coral-coloured and sea-life-themed accessories are peppered throughout the interior

A layout change was the addition of an owner's office with sleeper sofa, which provides a private entrance to the owner's cabin. Below; the main-deck formal dining area features a custom designed OLED light fixture



by Blackbody, it is made with 161 OLEDs inside tubes in blackened stainless steel. "I think it's magical," says Darnet.

The mural behind the dining table is an artistic representation of the ocean floor showing the Atlantic Ridge between renditions of the European and American continents. Based on a design concept by the Franck Darnet studio, it is made by Metal Composite in a metal-finished carved wood.

This panel, of course, is a nod to the owner's passion for diving. More references to the underwater world are found on the back of the main saloon sofa and on door handles, where the wavy pattern recalls the surface of brain coral. It's also used as a subtle and helpful guide for guests trying to find their way around the voluminous yacht - handles on doors leading to guest areas have the coral pattern, while the ones opening doors to crew areas do not.

It is a different kind of coral, staghorn, that inspired the design of a nickel inset in the wood floor at the entrance of the main saloon. Stepping into the yacht, guests will feel the different sensations of wood and metal on their feet.

Texture in general is an important element of the design. "We do a lot of design taking into

The brief was simple:
"They wanted warm,
cosy and easy-going;
nothing showy"





Horizontal wood slats and a neutral background are a leitmotiv in the main saloon (above) and the upper deck saloon (here). The wood is American walnut and the soft cotton carpets are from Nepal

“I proposed that we do fixed balconies. I love them: they do not require complex mechanisms or the intervention of the crew”



Balconies flank the owner's suite (above). Right: a mirrored ceiling and bas-relief are eye-catching features in the main-deck guest corridor. Opposite page, top: the sundeck's enclosed saloon



consideration the sense of touch; the banister, for example, is wrapped in leather. We try to generate emotions through design,” says Darnet.

No small part of the emotion a design can create stems from lighting. The dimmable lights on the interior have several settings but even the “all on” feels subtle. Strategic light accents also create a scene. In the main deck corridor, at the end of the hallway, downlights reveal the intricate carvings of a bas-relief finished in a golden bronze colour. The coral-inspired sculpture is the work of self-taught abstract artist Thierry Martenon. Amplifying the lighting effect and the sculpture is a mirrored ceiling by Mitsubishi.

Backlighting is perhaps at its most spectacular on the main staircase. Strips of wood create a horizontal pattern, and the dimmable light that emerges from behind them is reflected in the jewellery finish around the glass lift. “When you take the lift, you feel like you are on a magical journey,” the designer says.

In the owner’s full-beam bathroom, backlighting further enlivens curved art glass from Ateliers Bernard Pictet. The natural-looking light serves as a backdrop for a bathtub in the shape of a half egg – enveloping and soothing. The designer created the ambiance, again, for someone who loves to read in the bath.

Work began in earnest after the sale was signed and sealed in October 2016. It was to be a two-year build, but the shipyard ran into financial difficulties. In June 2019, after VSY launched the yacht and conducted a sea trial, the owner made the difficult decision to take the yacht out of the shipyard.

Cerulli, who had left VSY by then, accepted the owner’s offer to become his project manager and assemble a small but competent team to take *Atomic* to the finish line. Then Covid-19 hit.

These hurdles did not take anything away from the result. The small team, including Captain Elzerman who had experience on sistership *Roma*, reached the lofty goals the shipyard had set: to meet the highest standards and present the owners with the best version possible of their dream yacht.

Cerulli accompanied the crew on *Atomic*’s first transatlantic journey for delivery to the owners. Except for rough weather at the beginning of the voyage – and some period of adjustments with the complex Kongsberg integrated system – the crossing was uneventful.

The shipyard had been right about the changes they’d wanted to make on the platform. The bulb improved seakeeping and fuel consumption compared to the sisterships, according to the captain. “We did the crossing at 12 knots and used

The VIP cabins enjoy nice-sized windows and beautiful lighting. Bottom left: the owner's bath has a backlit glass wall by Bernard Pictet. Bottom right: the owners decided on a gym, rather than an extra guest cabin



330 litres per hour with engines and generators. Overall, she can do 5,300 nautical miles at 12 knots," says Elzerman, who jokes that the ease of manoeuvring the yacht's Schottel propulsion is making him "a bit lazy".

Using the thrusters alone, the yacht can be moved quietly and exhaust-free from one anchorage to the next. Classification society ABS bestowed its ENVIRO notation upon *Atomic*. The dynamic positioning system is also part of it, as it allows the exploration of sensitive areas without

causing damage to the sea floor – a real asset for an active diving programme. It works very well too, the captain says, keeping this solid yacht in position in "up to 30 knots of sideways wind".

Atomic's solid looks and feel meet a comfortable and pleasing interior. She's an impressive sight and her classic look will age well. "She is like a very good-looking lady that had a difficult time," says Cerulli. And from where we stand, it looks like for this good-looking lady, great times are ahead. ▣

"We try to generate emotions through design... We do a lot of design taking into consideration the sense of touch"

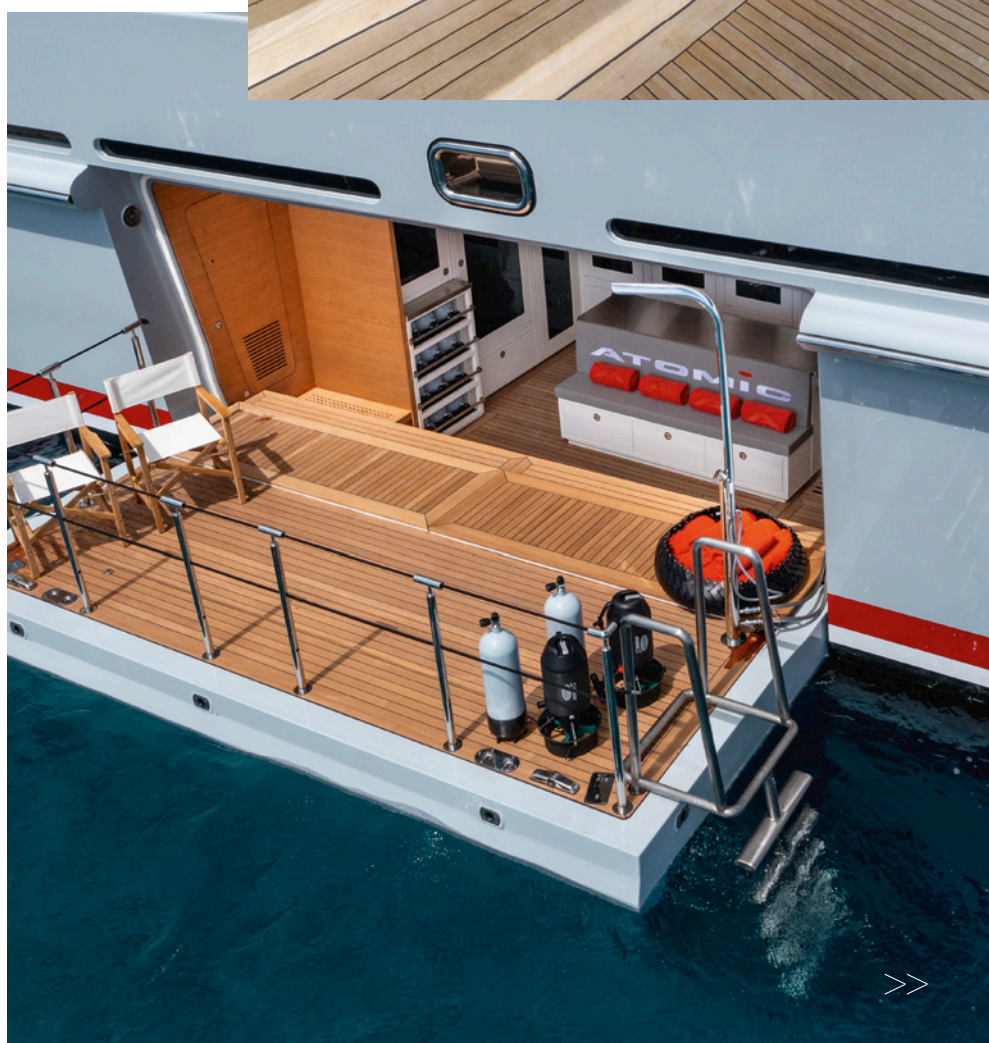




The life aquatic

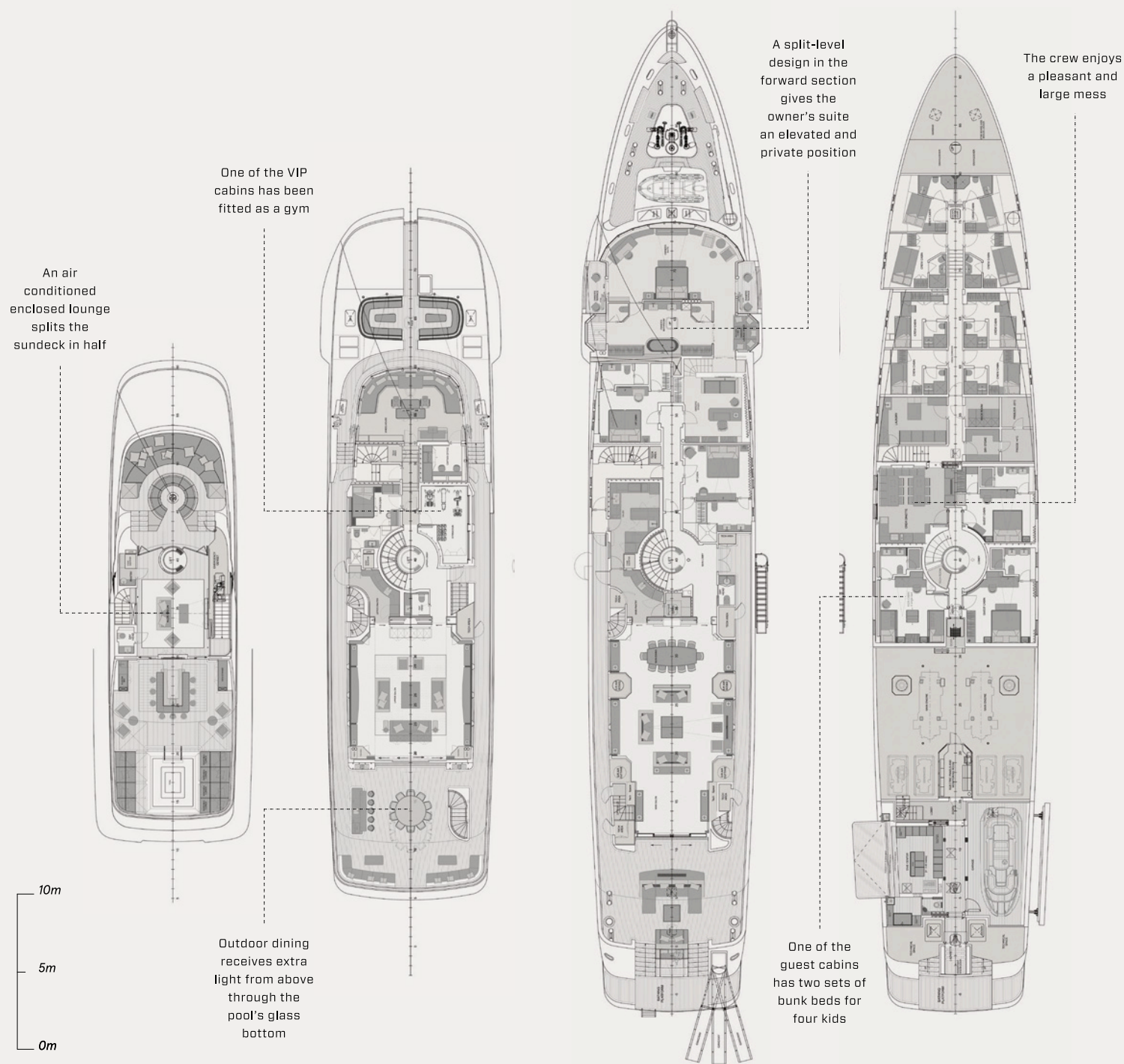
A professional dive centre was a primary part of the owners' brief, and Moondog Dive Outfitters in Fort Lauderdale was consulted to make the most out of the space. Designed for two to three dives a day and for use by adults and children, the space is functional and aesthetically pleasing. Custom-built lockers have glass doors and built-in lights to reveal the equipment inside, which is kept dry with constant ventilation and drip trays. Their keylocks had to be approved by class. The custom-built Nitrox system is water-cooled and there are three filling stations for up to 22 tanks, neatly stowed along the walls. Moondog also built the custom compressor using parts from German specialist Bauer. The owners specified an extra-large sink to rinse the equipment whole, a central island with bench seating and storage below for equipment easily accessed by children. The result is part high-tech lab, part showroom and elegant beach club, with an immaculate white finish and teak flooring.

An open transom and one single staircase provide water access while a balcony opens up the dive centre



Atomic

VSY/owner's team

SundeckUpper deckMain deckLower deck**LOA** 63.8m**LWL** 56.9m**Beam** 11.6m**Draught** (full load)
3.15m**Gross tonnage**
1,100GT**Engines**2 x 2,682hp Caterpillar
3516-B**Speed** max/cruise
17/15 knots**Range at 12 knots**
5,300nm**Generators**

4 x 200kW Caterpillar C9

Fuel capacity
163,000 litres**Freshwater capacity**
39,000 litres**Owners/guests** 14**Crew** 16**Tenders**13.7m Grady-White Canyon
456; 6.3m Williams
DieselJet 625**Construction**Steel hull; aluminium
superstructure**Classification**
ABS**Naval architecture**Laurent Giles
Naval Architects**Exterior styling**

Espen Øino International

Interior design

Darnet Design

Builder/yearVSY, owner's team/2021
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