

CLASSIC CONVERGENCE

Marilyn Mower explores Blue II,
a unique Arctic cruiser that pairs
the aesthetic of a working ship with
the heart of a classic sailing yacht

PHOTOGRAPHY

GUILLAUME PLISSON FOR TURQUOISE YACHTS

Cover boat
BLUE II

“Blue II looks like it might be from the 1960s, but there are none of the compromises you run into on those projects – no engine room

being in the wrong place for guest accommodations, for example,” says Turquoise Yachts founder Mehmet Karabeyoğlu

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TO EVERY YACHT, THERE IS A BACKSTORY...

...but this extraordinary-looking 56 metre from Turquoise demands one perhaps more than most. People don’t just wake up one morning and announce: “Let’s build an explorer motor yacht in Turkey for cruising polar regions that looks like the conversion of a 1960s ship.” They don’t by chance create a brief for single screw hybrid propulsion or combine a tough ice-classed hull with an elegantly curved sheerline.

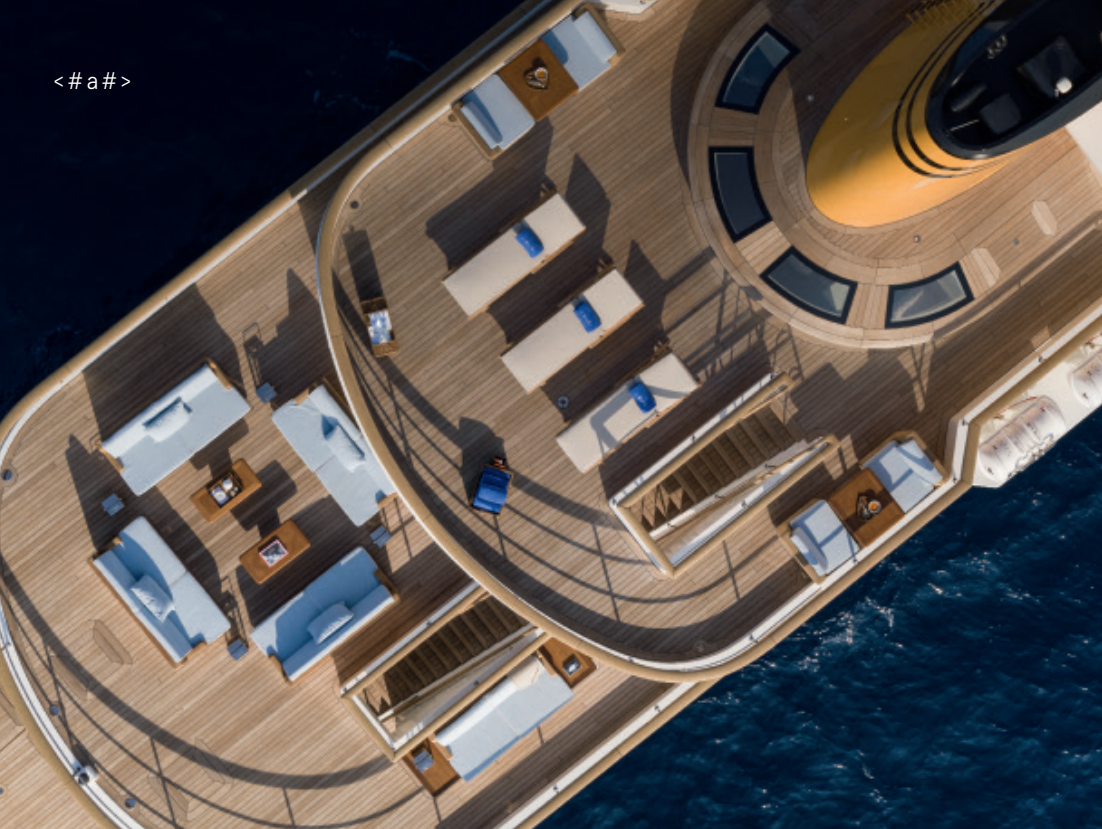
The beginning of *Blue II* might have been half a decade ago, but Dutch naval architect Andre Hoek takes its genesis back much further.

“Years ago, someone I know bought a decommissioned North Sea buoy-laying ship intending to convert it into a yacht. He was going to gut it and asked me what I would [design]. It was a really beautiful ship, and I told him I would do a design on the condition he did not scrap it,” Hoek explains. He created a new profile and a GA with a cruising interior, which the owners liked, but then the project went dark for several years and he heard the hull was for sale. “I had put so much time into it that I thought I should go and look for a client for it.”

And find one he did; an owner ready to cruise further afield in greater comfort and with more amenities than his present 33.5-metre sailing yacht allowed. Yet he did not want a large, white, showy yacht.

Seeing Hoek’s sketches of what the 50-plus-metre ship could become, he was instantly enamoured. The owners, passionate conservationists and active sponsors of establishing marine-protected areas, wanted to build a yacht that could cruise to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Arctic and Antarctic waters, and traverse the Northwest Passage. It should also be able to accommodate a three-person submarine and carry out expeditions. Their wish was for a motor yacht that would break the mould; something completely different, combining a workboat look, a classic motor yacht style and a balanced profile.

The lines Hoek had drawn for the conversion took styling cues from a decades-old Dutch salvage tug style, as exemplified by *Holland*, a brawny boat with huge working decks and a canoe stern, no less. Hoek designed a completely new aluminium superstructure and gave it smart-looking details including teak decks, skylights and



With tenders stored below, the expansive open aft deck is left free for entertaining. On certain expeditions, a small submarine can be carried in one of the tender wells, leaving one of the tenders on deck



ICE QUEEN

Along with the single propeller, other features to facilitate the owner's Ice Class requirement are the use of four small Naiad fin stabilisers instead of two large ones and a near-vertical bow with a sharp 45-degree angle under the waterline so the vessel can ride up on ice and crush it. All raw water intakes are positioned well below the ship's ice belt, and exhausts are routed either up through the stack or past the tender bay to fall below the canoe stern a class-mandated 300mm above the waterline.



A salvage tug informed the canoe stern of the exterior styling, while skylights and teak cladding and caprails supply the yacht aesthetic



brightwork cladding on the upper and bridge decks. Turquoise Yachts in Istanbul, which built the vintage-looking motor yacht *Vajoliroja* (now *Arriva*) and completed a refit of *Haida G* (now *Haida 1929*), and where Hoek had built two classic-looking sailing yachts with yard founder Mehmet Karabeyoğlu, was a logical choice for such a project.

However, the original romantic idea of converting an available ship by gutting the hull and replacing the superstructure was scuttled by concerns over the quality of the old steel plating for the Ice Class these owners required and tankage limitations. "It was better just to start over," says Hoek.

"The owners were disappointed of course, but quickly announced they wanted to proceed with a new-build boat with the stipulation that it look exactly the same as the drawings for the conversion," recalls Karabeyoğlu. "The original hull had a lot of camber and rocker to the decks. It was a very traditional design and, cunningly, Andre kept that." The new-build *Blue II* was born.

The silver lining in this dark cloud was that now the vessel could be a bit longer and wider. These two things, says Karabeyoğlu, removed original compromises to the technical spaces and gave much-needed breathing room to the tender bays

under the aft main deck, although at a maximum beam of 9.55 metres the hull is narrower than typical 56-metre yachts by half a metre or more.

"Large tenders were part of the original brief, as was the owners' insistence on them not being stored on deck. Given the curved sheer and the low freeboard, we could not launch the tenders through a side hatch," Hoek says. By large, he means a limo tender of nearly 10 metres – quite the support boat for a 55.9-metre yacht. The owners' tender and the crew tender/rescue boat, plus their crane, would have to deploy through hatches in the aft main deck. US-based Nautical Structures, which has been supplying cranes to Turquoise for 20 years, created the custom six-tonne capacity articulating crane that stows invisibly athwartships as well as the 10.4-metre-long hydraulic hatches that close seamlessly with the curved deck.

Richard Masters, whose CV includes conversions similar in nature to the original concept, acted as the owners' representative. He gave the Turkish yard high marks for rolling with the change from conversion to new build. "I love building in Turkey, where the workers are extremely resourceful and think out of the box," he says. The new hull also gave Hoek Design the opportunity to apply CFD to the hull,

optimising its efficiency. However, the new hull would require that the vessel meet IMO Tier III certification with selective catalytic reduction on engine exhausts.

The owners and Hoek had agreed from the beginning that the yacht would operate with a single propeller as is common on commercial ships. "One large prop is more efficient and better for operating in ice than twin props farther from the centreline," notes Hoek. The owners wanted the yacht to have a small environmental footprint, thus the development of a full diesel-electric propulsion system with modern exhaust gas treatment.

In contrast to this 21st-century system beneath *Blue II*'s skin, when the principal owner committed to the new hull, he was adamant about maintaining the original styling aesthetic from near-vertical bow to curved sheer and low profile. They gained 50 centimetres in the beam of the lower deck, which allowed them to improve the staircase to the guest lobby and enable a hidden passage from there to crew spaces, but there was no increase in overall height or between deck space.

The yacht's GA is particular, with in essence two master suites – one each for co-owners who have been business partners for 30 years. The

While Blue II looks like a converted classic motor yacht, she is brand new, with an optimised hull design and IMO Tier III-compliant diesel-electric propulsion system. The near-vertical bow and curved sheer ensure the classic look

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“RELAXING AT THE MAIN DECK TRANSOM SEATING AND LOOKING DOWN HER AFT DECK TO THE BEAUTIFULLY PROPORTIONED SUPERSTRUCTURE IS A JOY EVERY DAY”





Maximising the storage opportunities around the yacht, Hoek Design's team even added cupboards to the wooden exterior seat backs on deck



BALANCE OF POWER

Besides building to Ice Class on this project, among the firsts for the Turquoise yard was the use of Tier III-compliant diesel-electric power. Both the main engines and three generators can supply power through a water-cooled frequency converter to a pair of 800kW ABB electric motors turning a single shaft.

"You can put all five engines online at one time if you want," says Turquoise founder Mehmet Karabeyoğlu, "but the boat does not need so much power. It's an excellent hull and the canoe stern has less drag. For normal cruising, the boat gets about 11 knots out of just one Cat C32 and there's enough power to supply household electricity to the ship as well. At anchor, one Cat 100kW C7.1 generator powers the whole boat, two if they are manoeuvring with the 360-degree Veth pump jet."

He's a fan of the system, especially for long-distance yachts such as *Blue II* with her range of 6,000nm. As for its efficiency, the fuel burn is just 140 litres per hour at 10.5 knots – including household power.

"Electric motors just run and run and don't break down. A pump-jet is perfect for a diesel-electric package," says Karabeyoğlu. "So much better than thrusters and two propellers for dynamic positioning. If you foul the main prop, you can activate the pump-jet so you can get to safety to clear it, or it even functions in an emergency as a 'get home' engine powering the ship at four knots. There's nothing fancy about it; it's used in commercial applications all the time. I like to use standard off-the-shelf parts for easy maintenance, although the engineer on a yacht like this needs to be a bit more electrician than mechanic."



The exterior furniture echoes the teak, blue and white scheme inside, and is largely fixed. The owner wanted many seating areas but not loose furniture, which would detract from the classic yacht style

spacious master on the main deck forward is adjacent to the sauna, hammam and gym/massage room. The upper master features 180-degree views across the raised bow with its array of skylights and outdoor seating. Tastefully finished in blue and white, its entry area contains a surprise circular staircase to a cosy, private office behind the bridge above. While there is a watch berth in the ship's office adjacent to the bridge, the captain's cabin is on the lower deck to allow the rest of the upper deck space for guest use, including a handsome lounge/games room.

Typically, there are no overhead beams on a steel and aluminium yacht's deckheads as they aren't structurally required, but the principal owner and his wife, who designed many details themselves, asked for beams as part of an overall classic look.

The interior design was led by Hoek Design and supported by British designer John Vickers. Andre Hoek says he has rarely worked with owners so intimately involved with all design details. "They said the ship is really about how they feel and how they live their lives. The owners have designed their residences themselves. With *Blue II*, they wanted to again take the lead in all aspects, from structural aspects to sofa proportions. Above all, they wanted something timeless. We kept a very simple palette of gloss-finished teak, white paint and soft beige upholstered panels."

Self-sufficiency isn't just a maxim for the yacht's equipment, but a way of life for the owners as well. Vickers points out the walk-up bar and coffee station in the saloon. "The owners like to be able to look after their own drinks or coffee. You can help yourself to things. They are very relaxed on the boat."

If chic and cosy are the bywords for the interior, the main deck saloon is about as cosy as they come, with a wide-plank oak floor and durable faux sisal rugs, dining on port and a

sitting area to starboard. Both areas are anchored by a full-height bookcase forward on centreline, which creates a sense of symmetry. Behind the bookcase is a television viewing area with overstuffed seating. However, the bookcase can rotate 360 degrees so that the screen can face the larger area of the saloon as well. This kind of adaptability will be welcome during long cruises and makes the boat look larger than its length or 706 GT internal volume would imply.

Vickers also introduced a few tricks to make the interior seem more spacious, including cantilevered desks in cabins and the upper deck lobby, which don't take up any floor space. Double doors to the baths for the VIP and two largest guest cabins seem to enlarge each of them.

The sundeck features skylights that fan out around the classic steam ship funnel, ushering light into the upper saloon below. As with their homes, the owners drove every design decision, from sofa proportions to ceiling heights



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THE OWNER'S PASSION FOR DESIGN AND DETAIL IS APPARENT

THROUGHOUT THIS HIGHLY PERSONAL YACHT





The neutral upholstered wall panels found throughout the interior break up the large white-painted surfaces and provide acoustic relief as well. Rather than the typical engineered hardwoods used in marine applications, the owners requested a solid oak floor in the main saloon, complete with knots and fixed with butterfly inserts to prevent the planks moving





Blue II has two master suites: one on the main deck (below), which is adjacent to a gym (above), sauna and steam room. The upper deck master (opposite page) has 180-degree views over the foredeck and striking orbicular granite tops and floor in its bathroom (left). The owners requested that the masters have beams across the ceilings to reinforce the classic look and feel of Blue II

“ABOVE ALL, THE OWNERS WANTED SOMETHING TIMELESS”





VICKERS INTRODUCED A FEW TRICKS TO MAKE THE INTERIOR SEEM MORE SPACIOUS



The owners chose the colour scheme and selected some fabrics and window treatments while Dols & Co Interiors of Amsterdam worked with the owners to select boldly patterned accent fabrics. The joinery and built-in furniture are the work of long-time Turquoise supplier Ulutaş.

The same teak, blue and white colour scheme continues outside, where the owners requested a lot of seating areas but not a lot of loose furniture, which he believed would take away from the classic look.

Masters says the owner's passion for design and detail is apparent throughout this highly personal yacht. "After being aboard for a while he told me that he 'appreciates how every space is unique. You always know where you are.' He finds the pleasure of relaxing at the main deck transom seating and looking down her aft deck to the beautifully proportioned superstructure a joy every day."

For Hoek, creating *Blue II* has been an equally fruitful journey and is the largest volume yacht for which the studio has provided naval architecture, exterior styling and interior design. "This design is a sensible step for us from our sailing superyachts," he says. "We thought about this for quite some time: what type motor yacht would our sailing yacht owners want? It is modern below the water yet displays classic lines. It will not be quickly outdated but will still look great in 10 to 20 years. There is definite value in classic lines."

And as her owners rack up adventures on board, as the years roll by she'll have an even more interesting story to tell. ■



The owners were closely involved in many design details, including the interior colour scheme, and worked with Dols & Co in choosing fabrics and window treatments. There is a separate office (above left) behind the wheelhouse, accessed via a circular staircase from the main deck master suite

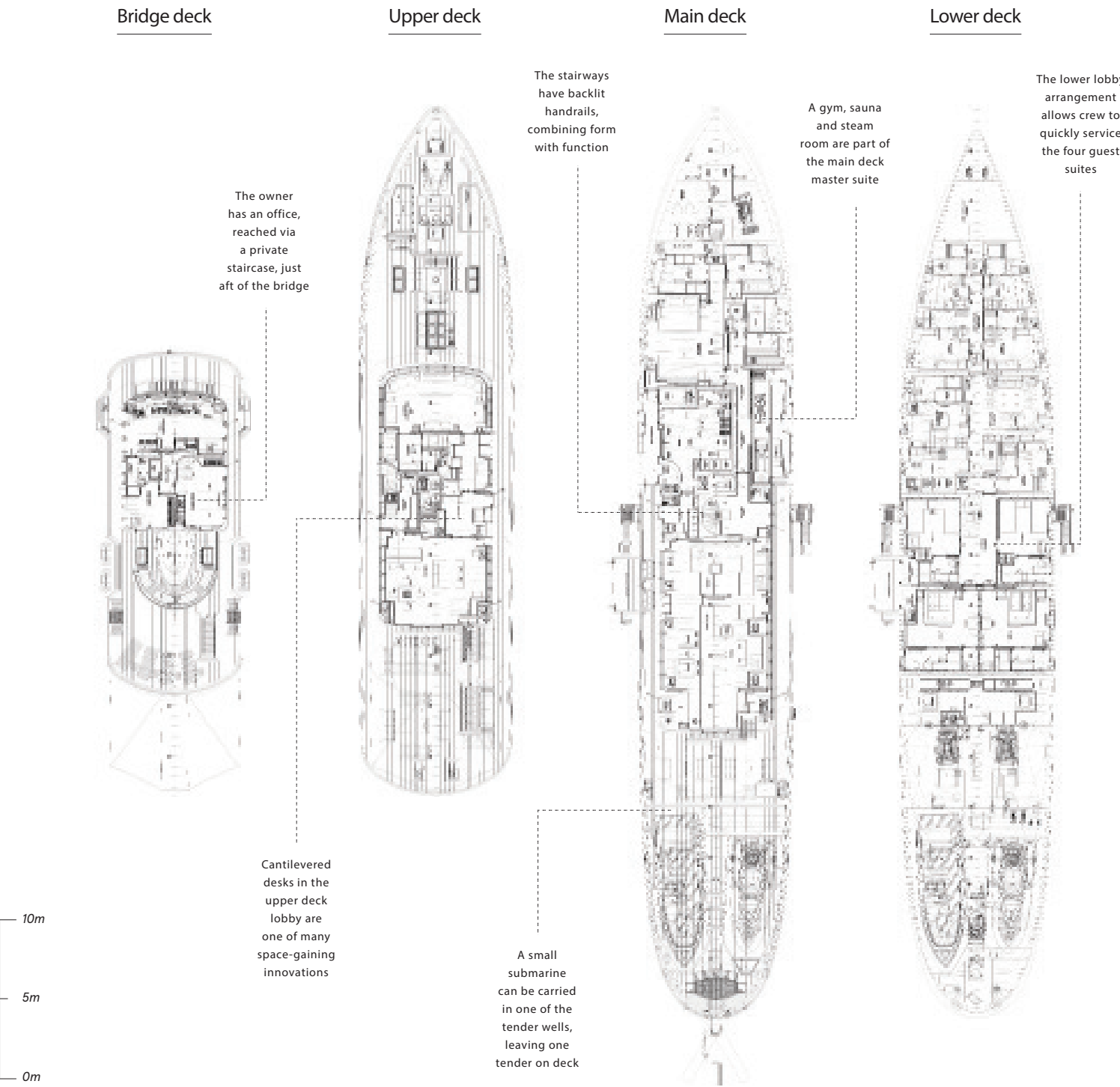


Blue II combines classic looks and the latest technology, and this is seen to great effect with its vintage funnel sitting alongside satellite communication domes



Blue II

Turquoise Yachts



LOA 55.99m	Engines 2 x 800kW diesel electric; 2 x Caterpillar C32 830ekW	1 x Caterpillar C7.1 117ekW	Owners/guests 12	Naval architecture Hoek Design	Builder/year Turquoise Yachts/2020 Istanbul, Turkey
LWL 51m		Fuel capacity 100,000 litres	Crew 11	Exterior styling Hoek Design	t: +90 216 493 8248
Beam 9.55m	Speed (max/cruise) 15/11 knots	Freshwater capacity 44,000 litres	Construction Steel hull; aluminium superstructure	Interior design Hoek Design/Vickers Studio/Dols & Co	e: info@turquoise yachts.com
Draught (full load) 3.4m	Range at 11 knots 6,000nm	Tenders 1 x 9.5m Novurania Chase 31; 1 x 7m Pascoe rescue/crew	Classification RINA C * Hull. Mach YCH Unrestricted Navigation EFP; DMS; Ice Class 1B		w: turquoiseyachts.com
Displacement 876 tonnes	Generators 3 x Caterpillar C7.1 100ekW;				For charter Burgess burgessyachts.com
Gross tonnage 790GT					