

A CLASSIC PUZZLE

Launched in February 2014, *Wisp* is a 47.6m sloop built by Royal Huisman for an owner who knew what he wanted, leaving no room for compromise. The project, managed by Nigel Ingram at MCM, demanded intelligent engineering solutions and fresh thinking from naval architect Hoek Design and interior designer Rhoades Young. *SuperyachtDesign* was invited to Palma de Mallorca for a day of sailing and to meet the team behind the cutter-rigged classic.





“When we first met, we began to talk about the boats he had seen, what he liked and didn't like,” explains Andre Hoek at Hoek Design, who was introduced to the owner in 2010 following an encounter with one of the Dutchman's earlier projects, *Erica XII*. “He gave us a brief and we did a sketch, which was developed over a period of six months. He wanted something with only two cabins in order to make more space for the owner's area.”

This idea rapidly developed into three cabins following the commission of English studio Rhoades Young, which created an interior that would tie in with the classic exterior styling achieved by Hoek Design. With the owner's suite aft and two guest cabins opposite, a double en suite was included ahead of the lower salon, adjoining the galley. This dual-purpose room is the captain's cabin, which is vacated to accommodate friends or family when needed.

“Owners don't often bring a lot of guests on board and so to have this adaptable space, where you don't feel put out as a guest, is a good solution,” says Jonathan Rhoades, director at Rhoades Young. “On a lot of our boats, such as *Lady B*, depending on where the client is going, he will often bring a specialist who knows the area. When this occurs, the captain moves out and the specialist stays here.”

Complete with a desk and shower room, the cabin is finished in a lightly stained oak and features a door with ripped green silk panelling and a custom-made black handle. Constructed by Royal Huisman using a 3D model supplied by Rhoades Young, the handle—fitted to every door—was inspired by the faucets chosen by the client for the dayhead and owner's en suite. With an understated elegance, the handles have to be robust to meet the heavy requirements of the three-pin locking mechanism and drop



JONATHAN RHOADES



CORY SILKEN

“This boat was a complete jigsaw and it took time to integrate such a complex 3D puzzle.”



LOWER SALON

CORY SILKEN

seal imbedded within the doors. “Drop seals have been applied to all of the doors, making sound levels on this boat extraordinarily low,” says Rhoades. While other artisans were considered for the fabrication of the handles, the shipyard was the obvious choice, having supplied the majority of fixtures and fittings.

As we walk towards the lower salon, the designer reveals how the team squeezed more than would be expected into the interior thanks to engineering solutions such as splitting and reducing the size of the engine-room air ducts. “One of the big differences between this yacht and others of this type is the way in which the engine-room air ducts were designed,” comments Rhoades. While previous Royal Huisman projects have single air intake and outtake ducts aft of the deckhouse, on *Wisp* these have been divided fore and aft with ▶



MAIN DECKHOUSE LOOKING AFT



SHREDDER IN THE OWNER'S DECKHOUSE.

CORY SILKEN



ANDREW JOHANSSON



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CORY SILKEN

CAPTAIN/GUEST SUITE

the outtake ducts located forward of the deckhouse to keep unwanted odors away from the cockpit. It is a feature seen on *Adele*, *Marie*, *Erica* and *Athos* but the team developed the idea further to reduce the dimensions of all ducts as much as possible.

The result is a strong and open connection between the upper and lower salon, with the latter offering a lounge area and formal dining table that can seat eight. Carefully considered storage solutions such as tiered cutlery draws and wine storage within the leather-finished pouffe in the lounge add to the practical elements of the yacht. The upper salon includes additional lounge space, a navigation station and staircases that lead to the engine room and owner's suite—which includes a private

deckhouse and cockpit. The layout pushes the main cockpit forward, giving the owner 10 to 20 per cent more living space on deck compared to a modern flush-deck arrangement.

To meet the client's wish for a layered owner's suite, Rhoades Young modified the original GA to allow the owner to close off sections of his suite, including the bedroom, bathroom, walk-in wardrobe, TV/office room and deckhouse. "The owner gets up early and wanted a separate area where he could go while his wife sleeps," explains Rhoades. "The idea being that they can reveal spaces as the day progresses rather than having a single open area."

At the foot of the owner's private deckhouse is a rotunda with faux-painted marble plaster walls and dome, and painted seahorses are featured on the base of the circular ceiling. This area of the boat presents yet another example of the design team's creativity with the inclusion of a concealed refrigerated drinks drawer, pop-up TV and shredder. "We also had to include a printer and managed to fit it underneath the seat of the shower of the bathroom in the front," says Rhoades. "This boat was a complete jigsaw and it took time to integrate such a complex 3D puzzle."

Using the owner's home study as reference, oak and walnut are used ▶



OWNER'S TV LOUNGE/LIBRARY

CORY SILKEN



OWNER'S CABIN



OWNER'S ROTUNDA

on the walls and floor throughout the yacht. The inlays and various shadows on the wood were achieved using differing levels of staining. This process was favoured over the more traditional approach of inlaying knotted ropes, which the owner wanted to avoid.

"The client wanted the wood to be absolutely flat and to have no colour differences," says the designer. "It had to be perfect with no wild grains and so we opted for a veneer that comes from a dark place in the middle of Germany where you get extremely slow-growing oak. These trees are big, which means the grain is really close together, and because it grows over a long time, they are straight. Unlike traditional oak supplies, which have a lot of life in them, this type is flat and calm."

It was important to the owner that the interior was not fully filled and panelled as one would expect from the exterior, nor did he want a modern finish that would fail to communicate with the outside look of the yacht. It set Rhoades Young an interesting challenge that would see them use marquetry instead of raised and fielded panels, for example, to achieve a more modern feel while retaining some of the language of older-looking finishes. The use of marble in the dayhead forward and light green Costa Smeralda marble in the owner's suite also help to convey a more contemporary feel.

Forward of the vessel are three twin crew cabins, the crew mess and galley—above which is a crew cockpit on deck. Opposite the galley is a low-height utility area

located underneath the captain/guest suite, which is used for laundry, storage and the refrigerators. It also provides access to the reel winches and connects to the front of the engine room. "On this size of boat, you wouldn't normally get a separate laundry room and so the crew love it," adds Rhoades.

The level of thought and careful consideration that has gone into this project is evident as you move around *Wisp*. The success of the build was as much to do with the approach by Royal Huisman, Hoek Design and Rhoades Young as it was the owner's drive to explore new ideas and to push the team to achieve something special. ■



CARLO BARONCINI

A NEED FOR SPEED

While some owners may not consider racing at the start of a project, there is always the chance this could change down the line. It is a scenario that Andre Hoek has encountered on previous projects and strived to avoid on *Wisp*. The naval architect discusses some of the features included to ensure competitiveness on this sloop.

The owner is a cruise-oriented sailor and the racing he does is more of a gentleman's approach, and as such racing performance was not a priority. However, we know from experience that he will most probably want to race in regattas and other similar events in the future, as owners are often competitive. When we designed *Marie*, I asked the owner several times during the build, "Are you going to race this boat", to which he replied, "No, it is a family boat that I want to cruise and perhaps charter". I asked him four or five times and got the same answer. The boat wasn't even in the water before he said, "By the way, we are going to race in St Barths". The problem was *Marie* was never designed for that. Learning from this project, it was important to convince the owner of *Wisp* to include the elements needed to race should he wish to in the future.

We've included a removable inner forestay with overlapping genoas for racing and we can also have a blade—a sail that fills the foretriangle—sheeted more inboard on a separate track. The owner didn't want to do this initially but we strongly advised him to go ahead with it as it can't be added later and the sheet loads on a blade are much higher than on a normal yankee

sheet. We also had to increase the size of the captive to a 12.5-ton unit to be able to sheet the blade. The result gives a fantastic sail in locations such as St Barths, Antigua and Loro Piana.

Wisp has a fixed keel with an extremely wide bulb and she has a wide beam of 9.5m, which is the same as *Adele* but she is almost 25ft longer than this boat. It was the only way to meet the owner's wish for a large interior volume and it helps with stability. He likes to sail in an area with 25 knots of true wind and in those conditions you want a stable boat that won't heel over 30 degrees. However, you end up with a hull shape that is tricky to get right and will produce a big stern wake.

This is where CFD (Computational Fluid Dynamics) programmes become really

useful in trying to optimise the shape of the hull in such a way that you can have a stable boat that is still performance-orientated. The wide beam ensures a high righting moment and allows for a tall mast with a lot of sail area, making *Wisp* a good sail in light winds as well.

The rudder is a fixed skeg, which is stronger and safer than a rudder without one as it will hold better if impacted by debris. The boat also tracks well thanks to a balanced rudder and will continue straight when you let go of the helm. It has manual cable steering and the response is really direct—you don't have to move the wheel much to change course. We also made the rudder deep, which makes steering lighter, and the boat will never broach.



ANDRE HOEK AT WISP'S HELM

ANDREW JOHANSSON