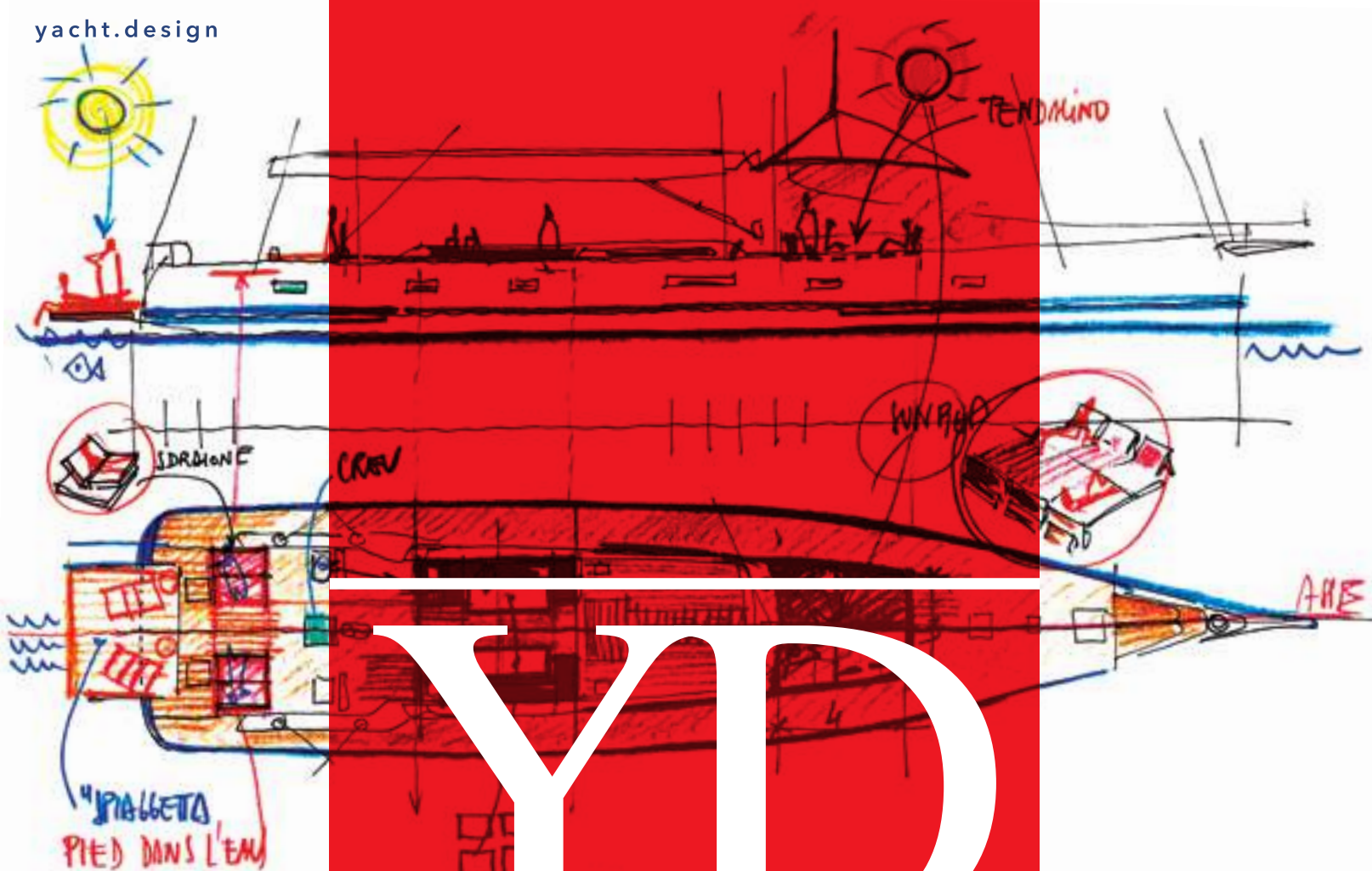


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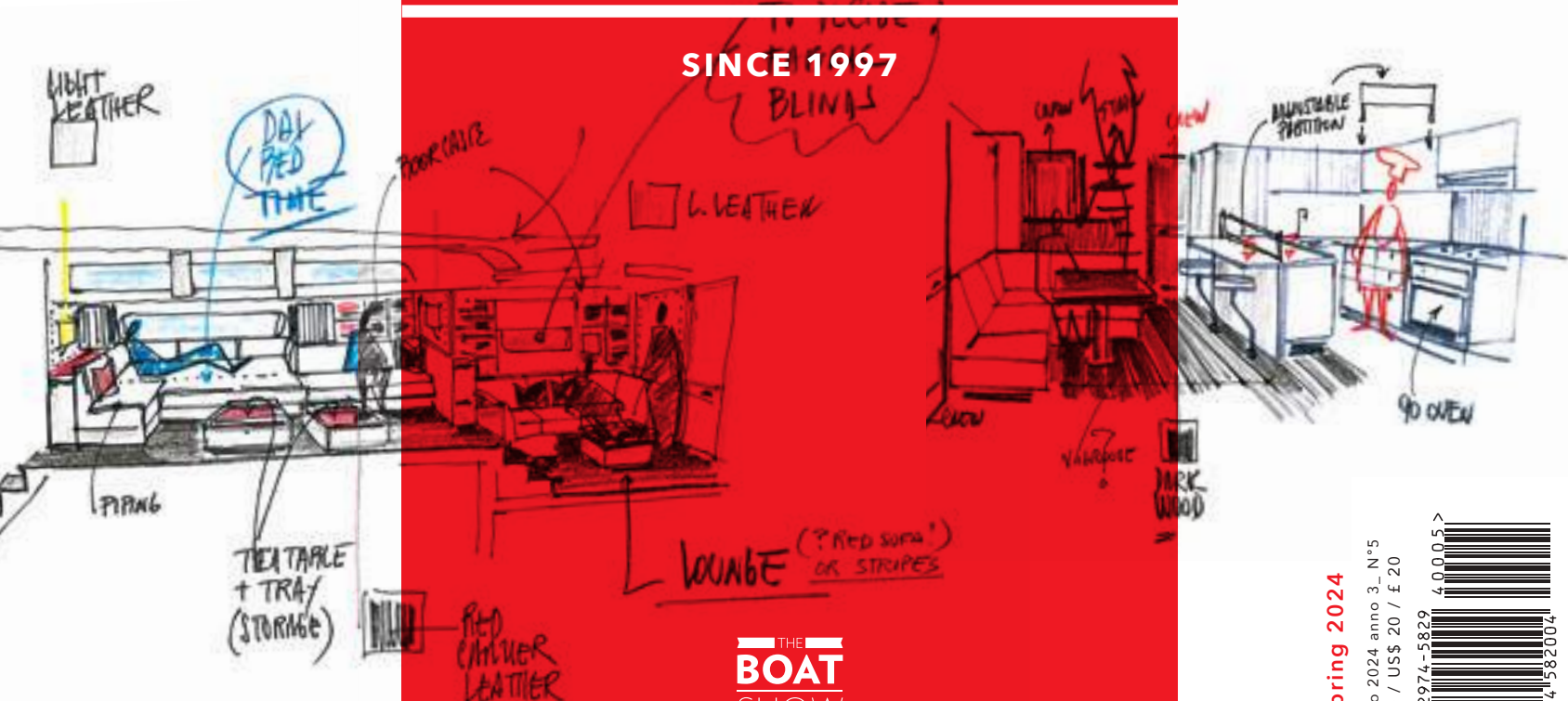
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«Classic styling in yacht design will never grow out of fashion because it creates yachts with timeless looks that retain their value», says Andre Hoek from the Hoek Design headquarters in Edam, the Netherlands. «All our designs are optimised for performance using specialised in-house software and huge hardware systems», says managing partner Ruurt Meulemans

by Gigi Radice

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A TIME- LESS PASSION



Andre Hoek (left)
and Ruurt Meulemans
behind model of *Blue II*,
a 56 meter expedition
superyacht in the Hoek
Design headquarters
in Edam.

For almost 40 years, this iconic naval architecture practice has been designing some of the most attractive and recognisable super-sailing yachts afloat. Its success is derived from a combination of passion, performance and perfection, with each yacht uniquely developed and extensively optimised.

The company's two managing partners, Andre Hoek and Ruurt Meulemans, have used their deep experience of sailing, designing and racing Dutch traditional yachts to produce more than 250 leeboard yachts, laying a foundation to enable them to branch out into almost any discipline of modern naval architecture. Responsible for some of the great super-sailing ketches like *Adele* and *Marie*, new J-Class yachts like *Lionheart*, *Topaz* and *Svea*, Hoek Design's ability to apply classic lines to any yacht whether it be a superyacht, dayboat or mid-sized cruising yacht is unsurpassed in contemporary design.

«There is an enormous amount of history in classic yacht design both nationally and internationally and I think any sailor will appreciate the aesthetics of these yachts which, today, can be combined with excellent performance», said Andre Hoek. «The J-Class yachts have certainly inspired me personally. As I look back at the early days of yacht design and as an avid sailor, I have always admired these absolutely stunning and amazing yachts», he continued. «It's not only a matter of beauty, there are definitely advantages for an ocean-going yacht to possess long overhangs for performance in heavy weather. They behave phenomenally well in big seas and tend to be much more comfortable in those conditions than modern sailing yachts,» he explained.

We meet Andre Hoek in the Hoek Design headquarters, based in a beautifully restored 16th century orphanage in Edam, the famous cheese producing city just north of Amsterdam. Originally built in 1560, the building remained an orphanage for 400 years until 1960. «I bought it from the municipality in 1988 and we have been here ever since. The meeting room has 18th century floor to ceiling oil paintings which are still in great shape, including a very valuable painting from the famous painter Kuiper, commissioned for the orphanage», says Hoek.

«When I bought the building in 1988, it was a huge mess! Basically, the municipality did not do much to restore it, but we did a lot of work to make it the way it is right now. Initially, we only occupied the ground floor, but as our business expanded we eventually occupied all four floors to make it the advanced design studio you see today», says Hoek. He and Ruurt Meulemans are justifiably proud of what they have achieved, not just with their business, but also with their historic offices. «Ruurt has been with us for 25 years and we are equal partners in the business now», explained Hoek. «The yacht design business is very exciting, but also challenging, something that we both enjoy. For the last 25 years, Ruurt and I have worked together in great harmony and we share the responsibilities and work very professionally», he said.

Classic lines, like good art, will never go out of fashion

Andre Hoek: The revival of classic styling is not only visible in yacht design, but also in other industries such as cars, real estate and art. In yachting, the classic styling revival started in sailing yachts and we now see it in motoryachts as well. When you look at the sailing superyacht market for yachts over 30m in the past 25 years, the majority have been designed with beautiful, timeless classic styling. In the time that we have been working on these designs – almost 40 years – there have been huge developments both in styling detail, sheer lines, hull shapes, sail and deck plans and accommodation lay out. Motoryacht design is now starting to follow suit, something that will definitely invigorate the market when clients recognise the advantages of looks, performance and value retention. There has been type-forming in modern motoryacht design that has led to yachts looking similar. We have tried to break the mould, to make our designs genuinely different. We believe they are more detailed, designed and built to an exceptional level of perfection using modern materials and optimised for the best performance. We are currently designing a number of classic motoryachts between 30m and 75m which reflect these characteristics. The recently launched motoryacht *Blue II* is a good example of a special-



We do naval architecture, exteriors and also interior design. It's much easier for the client. Everything is under the same roof with short communication lines. We are very involved in the whole process although we have done projects with an outside interior designer as well

Right, Ruurt Meulemans (left) and Andre Hoek under the sailing model of *Elfje*. Above, *Elfje*, a 46 meter Pilot Classic ketch. The structure was modelled in 3D and analysed for stiffness and rigidity with Finite Element Modelling techniques. *Elfje* has a lifting keel with a trim tab, a carbon bowsprit with integrated UD furlers, and an integrated code zero furler, resulting in a low tack and clean look.





Classic design is different. You need specific research to make sure that the tools available to optimize yachts are dedicated for the typical classic yachts as well. Meantime, we have done many different designs with shallow draft, deep, wing and lifting keels



Although never built in the '30s, Lionheart's (right) design was very promising. The yacht has been extensively optimised with VPP and CFD software for racing under handicap and line honours. Front page, the J Class Topaz is very fast in light airs and downwind in all conditions. This design has the lowest wetted surface and highest keel aspect ratio of all Js.



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ist expedition vessel with timeless looks. She is ice-classed and possesses styling with a hint of ocean-going tugboat, combined with extensively optimised exterior and interior detail. We are working on various designs in different sizes similar to the yacht *Blue II*. Apart from that we are working on yachts styled similarly to the famous motoryacht *Talitha*, but smaller in size. The Hakvoort yard in the Netherlands is building a 45 meter retro motoryacht designed by us. In terms of looks she's quite different to what you would normally expect in this size range. The renderings of this yacht show a clear departure from what you might call normal style.

Can classic lines and good performance work together?

Ruurt Meulemans: Classic styling above the water can be blended perfectly well with a very modern, highly-optimised underwater hull shape. This has been demonstrated in the 150 or so ocean-going yachts we have designed. Good examples are the highly successful 55m ketches *Adele* and *Marie*, the 54m sloop *Anne*, the 50m ketch *Meraki*, the 48m sloop *Wisp*, the 46m ketch *Elfje* and the 60m schooner *Athos*. These all combine highly researched and optimised underwater hull shapes with high sail area, displacement and sail area, wetted surface ratios.

A.H. Many of our designs can be seen competing successfully on the classic yacht racing circuit. Many have won their class in regattas or the overall trophy in events like Superyacht Cups and Bucket events which have become popular for superyachts. We have been very involved in the J-Class racing scene and have designed the three latest J-Class yachts: *Lionheart*, *Topaz* and *Svea*.

How can you improve performance?

R. M. In the early days we did a lot of tank and wind tunnel testing and optimised performance using velocity prediction (VPP) computer programs developed by us in conjunction with various universities. Today, most of our boats are optimised using computational fluid dynamic software (CFD). This enables us to optimise not only hull shape, but also keel and rudder design. For the J-Class yachts we undertook a huge research project to establish what would



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Blue II is a really good example of motorboat. We decided for a digital electric propulsion and a single propeller while everybody was against it. Now people are realizing it was not a bad idea



In these pages, *Blue II*. The key driver in this motoryacht concept has been to combine a retro style above water with a hypermodern underwater configuration. Such an approach is actually rather radical for the powerboat world. *Blue II*'s hull shape

was extensively optimized with Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) programs in order to create a yacht with low resistance and low fuel consumption.





potentially be the best performing hull allowed under the J Class Association regulations. We tested twelve different hull shapes with a specifically developed VPP for long keel yachts like the Js with long bow and stern overhangs. This VPP was optimised with tank test data from a 6m-long J-Class model and wind tunnel data derived from a typical J-Class sail plan. All twelve yachts were assessed with this VPP and the five best performing yachts were then analysed with CFD software. We could then clearly see why a certain hull was better than another by analysing wave making, the longitudinal centre of buoyancy and distribution of the volume of the underwater body. The first yacht that we built was the J-Class *Lionheart*. She became world champion in Newport, Rhode Island USA in 2017 and remains so to this day. Our second J was *Topaz* and the third, the famous *Svea*, has recently been dominating the J-Class racing scene.

Can you use such research in other designs as well?

R. M. We currently optimise all our designs in a similar way using VPP and CFD software. Our designs usually have a high sail area to displacement ratio with a very powerful sail plan. Underwater design tends to produce a more modern, rounded section and usually a deep keel and spade rudder. This combination results in very good performance, especially in light winds.

How did Hoek Design start?

A.H. I grew up in a sailing family and started sailing from the age of five. My family owned a typical Dutch boat with leeboards and shallow draft that we used for cruising and racing. I have raced on many different boats over the years starting in an eight-foot clinker-built dinghy, then Flying Juniors, 470s and many others. From a young age I always tried to optimise my boats for performance, including the family-owned leeboarder.

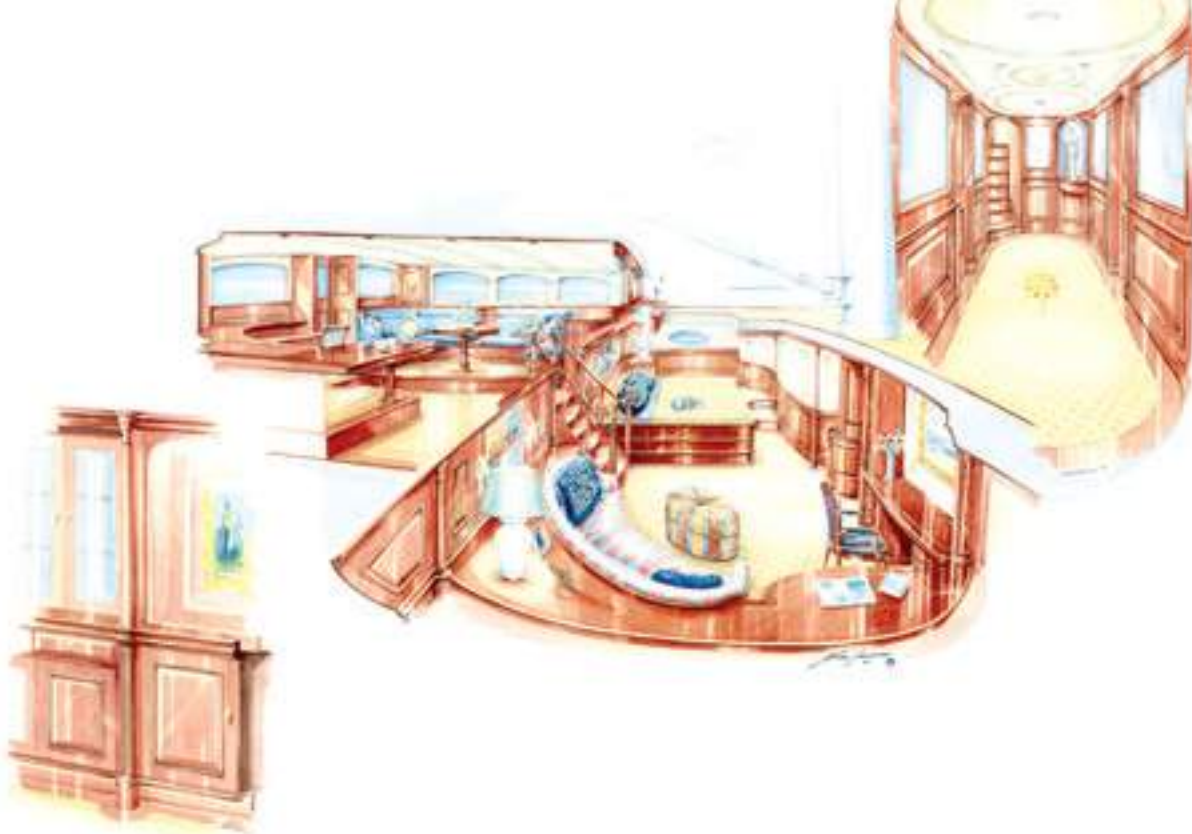






Launched in 2005, Adele has an aluminium hull, a fin keel with bulb and a rudder with fixed skeg. The owner of this 180ft ketch was attracted by the concept of having a separate aft section all to himself, including a stateroom, deckhouse and cockpit. Previous page: Anne, a 175ft sloop. The hull design shows generous overhangs reminiscent of the J class yachts, with a modern round-bilged canoe body and deep fin keel. The keel has a 3 meter wide bulb.





Clients come in and we try to find out what they are looking for. They have a dream and we have to put it on the paper. We have to find what the dream is

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How did you start as a designer?

A.H. From the age of about eleven I knew I wanted to become a yacht designer. I studied naval architecture in the Netherlands and then worked at the design office of C&C Yachts in Canada for a year in 1979. That was where I learned how to design a sailing yacht, because in those days there was no real university or college specialising in sailing yacht design. From 1980 to 1986 I worked for a company specialising in salvage work and the transportation of drilling platforms on submersible ships and barges. During those years I designed, optimised and raced aboard many leeborders, but also enjoyed racing on the IOR and IMS circuits. In 1986 I opened Hoek Design and two years later we moved into the office in Edam. The design practice started with typical Dutch leeboard yachts such as *Lemsteraken* and *Skutsjes*, yachts that I also raced extensively over many years. In 1987 we began to design classically-styled ocean-going sailing yachts. The first was a 70ft classic sloop with a wing keel and spade rudder. She was quite a radical yacht in those days. Nobody was designing anything like this, as far as we knew: there was no internet at that time. Later on, I found out that Bruce King in the States was doing something similar, but in a different style. The 70-footer was quickly followed by a ketch-rigged sistership, and from then on our office grew big time in ocean-going classic sailing yacht design.

Ruurt, how did you get involved?

R.M. I came to Hoek Design with a lot of theoretical background. I studied aeronautical engineering and then naval architecture. I finished aeronautical engineering when the Fokker factory, the Dutch aircraft business in Holland, went bankrupt and closed. All the students were looking at new opportunities. I have been a sailor since I was a kid cruising around the oceans, but I never really thought about yacht design. Switching from planes to boats was not difficult because many things in aero- and hydrodynamics are similar. In yacht design I thought I could work on a complete design instead of just optimising small parts of, for instance, an airplane wing. In the office we do the complete design of a yacht and do everything involved with the hull lines, appendages, keel, rudder and often the general arrangement.

Has your sailing experience influenced your design work?

A.H. Absolutely. Both Ruurt and I have sailed a lot on the J-Class yachts and many other superyachts that we designed. We have joined many races where everything comes into play and it is very valuable to bring that experience back to the office and realise what works and what doesn't.

How do you balance your designs?

A.H. Balance is important in everything in life and certainly in the design of yachts! The proportions of freeboard and length, beam and length, the height of deckhouses and superstructures and also the balance of weight and stability are all important. The sheerline is probably the most important design element in any yacht, regardless of whether it's a sailing yacht or a motoryacht. We put a lot of effort into the detailing of the sheerline, hull shape and the exterior joinery – basically, everything that is part of the styling. Helm balance is affected by a combination of the sail plan, the underwater body shape, the keel and the rudder. Again, we spend a great deal of time balancing the boat for upwind and downwind conditions, so that she is easy to steer and fast on all points of sail.

How do you translate all this experience in motoryachts?

A.H. That is a good question. We started designing motoryachts approximately twelve years ago. We could see that the sailing superyacht market was unfortunately declining. We also realised that our clients who owned big sailing superyachts would, at a certain point in their lives, change to a motoryacht and would not necessarily be interested in the modern motoryachts being built today. In response we designed a classic-looking, timeless, very efficient motoryacht aimed at our clientele. We made a speculative design of what we thought our clients would enjoy owning. That design was picked up by one of our clients years later and resulted in the yacht *Blue II*. She is 56m long, an expedition type motoryacht that is ice-classed with diesel electric propulsion and a single propeller. Many people questioned the single propeller, but after she was built, it was quickly realised that her fuel efficiency was amazing. Many commercial ships have a single prop because there are definite advantages to such a drive train, especially when you have back-up propulsion using a large battery bank that drives an electric motor that in turn drives the propeller. This system is well proven and very efficient. *Blue II* has won several design awards and behaves extremely well in ocean-going conditions. It has been a very rewarding project because it has produced variations on the theme in smaller and larger sizes.



The fractional sailplan of Grace, Truly Classic 128ft, should provide her with a sparkling performance in light winds. The spreaders are swept back, so that only one set of runners and checkstays are required. Front page, Halekai, the fourth of the Truly Classic serie designed by Hoek.



The real strength is always in the team working on it. You need skillful people to get everything right and we are very happy and proud to be able to work with so many talented people





The 45 meter retro style motoryacht under construction at Hakvoort Shipyard in the Netherlands. She will be launched in late 2026.

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What do you do differently in motoryacht design?

A.H. Our styling is unique and we combine CFD optimised hull shapes and propulsion systems to improve the speed and fuel consumption picture. Our office can produce the complete design package including naval architecture, structural engineering, exterior design and interior design. Unlike many other design offices, we have a specialist, in-house interior design team which ensures very short communication lines with the client. We are very happy to work with external interior designers and have achieved that successfully with a number of projects.

What project are you working on presently?

A.H. We have various yachts under construction. Hull number five of the very successful Truly Classic 128 design is presently nearing completion and will be launched mid-summer, this year. Four of these yachts have been built to date, *Atalante*, *Vijonara*, *Halekai* and *Grace*. A 33m Classic motoryacht is due to launch when this article goes to press - both yachts are being built at SES Yachts in Istanbul. At Hakvoort Shipyard in the Netherlands a 45m retro style motoryacht is under construction and due to be launched in late 2026. Another very exciting project is a 69m Classic ketch, a further development of the iconic yachts, *Adele*, *Anne*, *Meraki* and *Wisp*. She is under construction at Vitters Shipyard with exterior and interior design by our office. This yacht is also heavily optimised for performance using VPP and CFD software and data gathered from previous yachts we have designed.

Two 45m sailing yachts are in development as well as three motoryacht designs between 35m and 40m. Apart from that our design office is heavily involved in designs of yachts that are being built by production yards such as Eagle, Performance Classic Yachts and Wally. ■■■■



*Scan the Qr code
and look at the video
of the interview
with Andre Hoek.*



Sailing yachts are a passion for the owners, the same is to us working on them: you need to have the sailing bug in your veins and you put more into it. We are proud that people recognize from a distance a Hoek design boat

Above WallyNano, is the stylish 37ft day sailer by Wally and Hoek Design: she pairs timeless lines with the most advanced construction technology, design techniques and sailing features. Right, Vijonara the second Truly Classic 128. The new yacht shares the same hull lines and keel but is extensively customized.

