



*Ester III's forthright
and muscular lines hint
at the 66 metre Lürssen's
performance – but
she has a lot of brains
to go with that brawn*

Ester III

Right: Ester III's bold exterior belies its many sociable and fun-loving aspects (below). After all, she's designed for an owner whose family spends a lot of cruising time outdoors

Special clients make for special boats – it's true," asserts naval architect Espen Øino as he explains *Ester III*. "The owner asked me to design an exterior that looked unique, aggressive – but not in a mean way and different from everything he had seen before." As a result, although *Ester III* is one of the smaller Lürssens launched in recent years, she is jam-packed with originality in looks, layout and technology.

Øino and the couple who commissioned *Ester III* are friends, having met in Monaco a number of years ago. Friendship, the designer says, is both an opportunity and a risk. "He gave me a free hand in design, but I always knew he was looking over my shoulder. Actually, sometimes he was the one who was a little too experimental or futuristic and I would pull things back a bit," Øino recalls.

The owners have been on a steep yachting learning-curve, beginning with chartering one month a year, then buying a 35 metre Falcon and next a Codecasa that was built for an extremely knowledgeable owner. They loved that yacht and appreciated all the thinking the owner had put into what was his seventh vessel; but eventually they outgrew the Codecasa four years ago and decided it was time to create one of their own. As I'm guided through the yacht on a beautiful Bahamian afternoon, it's clear how much the new yacht reflects these owners' personalities and their family's lifestyle, and how perfect the arrangement is for a family that plans to spend 16 weeks a year or more on board.

Lürssens sales director Michael Bremen recalls with pleasure the satisfaction of building a boat strictly for family use: "When they came for the blessing of the yacht, I happened to be in the saloon when she walked through, although she didn't notice me. She sat on the couch, let out a sigh and said, 'It feels like home.' That was our mission."

The decision making started at where to store the tenders and land the helicopter. Putting the tenders forward on the main deck in a yacht this size makes sense, according to Øino,

because it has the effect of pushing the accommodation farther aft into a more comfortable area.

The tender garage opens with gull-wing doors. This is a very substantial and well-finished space for the eight metre custom Windy limo tender and the crew boat. The emergency generator is located in a separate soundproof space, protected from a salty environment and away from the well-organised and well-lit workspace for the tenders and spare parts. Garage access is from the deck, forward of the Portuguese bridge. Its hatch hinges at the forward end, exposing a

safe run of stairs. Because of the bow's shape, the drop of the tender to the water is short, relatively straightforward and easy to monitor. If the sea is rough, the captain simply uses the dynamic positioning system to create a sheltered area for the tender to be launched.

The forward position of the helipad was next, as the working deck is covered and this has the added benefit of not disrupting the lifestyle on the aft deck during helicopter landing or take off. Moving the tenders to the bow, meanwhile, also freed the aft lower deck for more general use, in particular the owner's gym, which has direct access to the swim platform. "I did not want the gym to be on the upper deck taking up valuable real estate for something that will only be used an hour a day," says the owner. The gym and entire spa area, which also includes a



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massage room that doubles as a hair salon, a changing room, dayhead, a sauna and a steam room are accessible from the main saloon and have great views of the sea, even if the stern door is shut. Colourful mosaic designs and a large bas-relief impression of an ancient Assyrian sculpture dominate the scene and give it masculine energy.

The saloon itself is gently arranged in three sections, the aft-most of which is a transitioning lounge with bar focusing on the aft deck where the spectacular pool reigns supreme. In fact the large glass doors separating the deck from the saloon can fold and disappear completely. The centre section narrows between the plenums for the engine room below and creates a cosy sitting area that on one side faces a fireplace and on the other a TV.

At the forward end is a stunning dining table by Silverlining and the whole area is surrounded by velvet curtains. Tooled leather on the ceiling, upholstered walls and amboyna joinery with hints of gilding introduce the French classical theme. The joinery throughout the yacht is all satin finished for a patinated or hand-rubbed look. Taken together, the style is classic yet light enough to encourage relaxation.

"We knew from our experience that we did not want the dining area divided because we don't use it that much. This way it just enlarges the

size of the entire saloon," says the owner's wife. The interior design is by Reymond Langton, a firm more known for its art deco sympathies, but *Ester III* is definitely not deco.

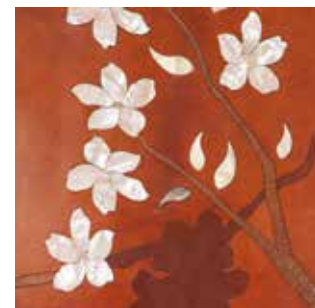
"We interviewed several designers and in conversation with Pascal (Reymond) and Andrew (Langton), they mentioned my favourite textile designer, Sabina Fay Braxton and I sensed a connection... If they could just take it back to a more classic style," she says. In fact, there is something about Braxton's colour palette and her atypical medieval fabric techniques that establishes the design vocabulary and provides a background for custom hardware: the onyx that appears throughout, new custom furniture and a few treasured antiques.

The entrance to the owner's domain begins with the foyer. Its floors are stunning: vanilla onyx banded in black granite and tiger's eye. At the corners, the black granite has been carved out in a small floral design and inlaid with gold for very understated elegance. The foyer features a lift wrapped by a grand staircase with a carved leather surround, also by Silverlining, which features cranes in flight and a bronzed banister.

The suite proper begins with a study and then a dressing area with laudable his and hers wardrobes. The full-beam suite, they agree, is one of their favourite places aboard. Gold leaf, bronze detailing, thick silk



Reymond Langton worked with specialist fabric designer Sabina Fay Braxton to create fabulous and unique designs, most notably in the main saloon (middle bottom) and upper saloon (below and opposite). They complement the use of onyx, custom furniture and antiques here



Left: the huge full-beam master suite is one of the owners' favourite places aboard, offering an ornate sense of detail bathed in light from large windows. Gold leaf and bronze detailing are to the fore, given breathing space by 2.4m ceilings. Right: the main saloon offers multiple seating options in one great through-space



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carpets, ornately detailed classical furniture and an overhead height of 2.4 metres give it grandeur. Her bath is finished in ivory onyx and his in white onyx, both with the showers positioned outboard providing views out large windows. Suites for the children and nannies are below and while they carry forward a classical look, each has a different colour scheme, with the family's two daughters indulged with the opportunity to choose colours and fabrics.

As the boat is at anchor with two gensets running, it's easy to assess the sound levels throughout and the at-anchor stabilisation. Every boat should be so quiet. Typical luxury displacement yacht standards for sound levels were expected by the owner and written into the contract by project manager Scott Wightman. The actual levels the builder achieved are notable, however: 42.28 dB(A) in the guest cabins, 44.53 in the upper lounge, 45.5 in the saloon/dining area and an unbelievable 37.33 in the master suite, which has extra insulation to isolate any noise from the tender garage and helipad. What is equally noticeable is the lack of whooshing air-conditioning. The air outfalls in the rooms are very subtle and large so that there is no wind sound or sensation of cold air. Packing such sophisticated HVAC in a boat of 66 metres is a remarkable achievement and shows progression from even the Lürssens of just a few years ago.

But while the interior is lovely – installed as it was by German firm bsw yachtentrichter – the family practically lives outdoors. The main

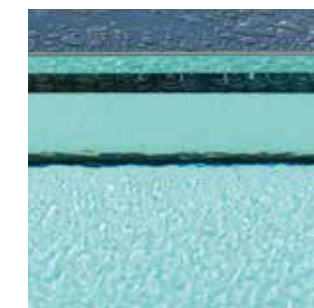
pool deck area is surrounded by sunpads for keeping an eye on the younger children. In fact the pool itself is on two levels with a shallow end and a swim-up seat. Equal consideration has been given to food and hospitality. On the bridge deck, aft of the main TV lounge, is the yacht's main alfresco dining area shaded by an overhang and awning. Well-positioned serving stations as well as a large hidden pantry support elegant service.

The top deck dining is less formal and is organised around a barbecue and a teppanyaki grill arranged with an outdoor kitchen fronted by a bar. This is a fantastic hangout space with a drop-down cinema screen for use at night, when all of the sunloungers make great theatre seating. The space is also wired to become a full-blown discotheque with built-in sound system and plug-ins for a DJ station. Opaque glass panels port and starboard light up in seven colours to create a party atmosphere.

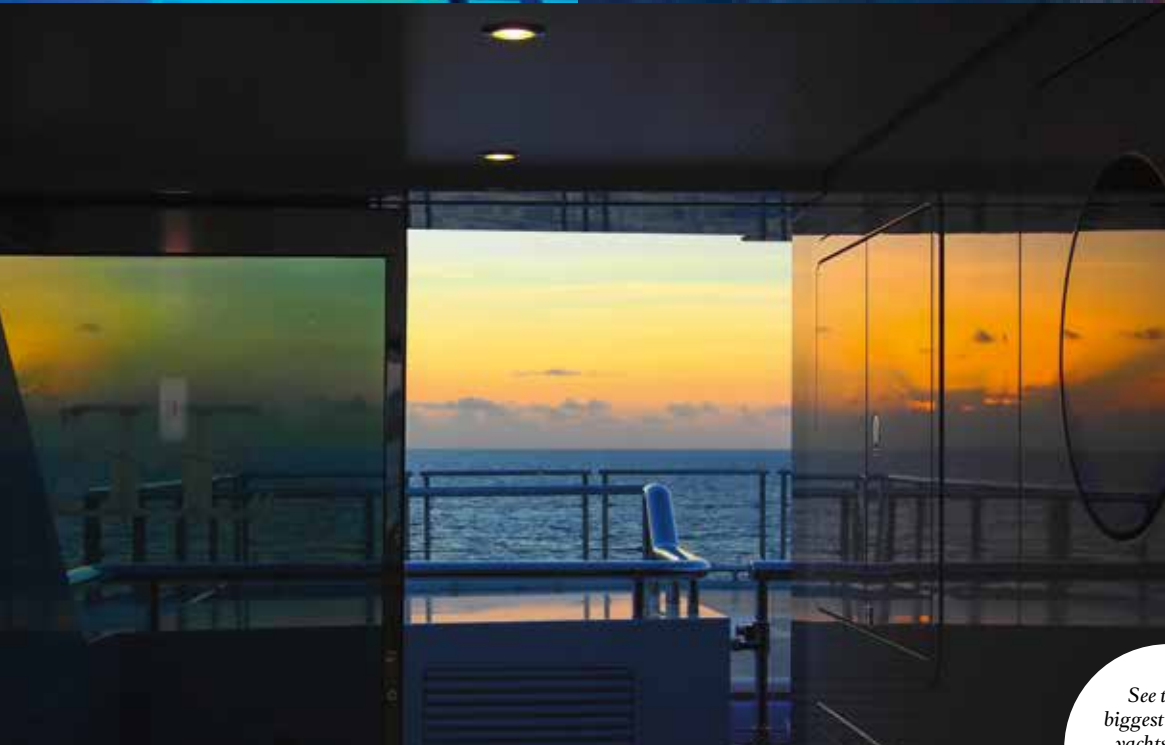
Some of the best spots, however, are the two "snugs" hidden behind the grillwork that make up Ester III's mast arch. They can be configured as little dining spots with U-shaped seating around a table, or the table can be lowered and filled with cushions to make a spectacular nap or reading space hidden from view yet open to breeze. Sliding windows can enclose the space in cold or rainy weather.

Rather than micromanage the build, the owner says he made just two or three trips to the Rendsburg yard during construction,

Great attention was paid to the enjoyment of exterior areas on Ester III: even the gym has direct access to the bathing platform, and the swimming pool is on two levels, with a swim-up seat



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As bold as she looks, Ester III is also about intricacies and subtleties

choosing instead to trust his designer, Wightman and five of his crew – all department heads – from *Ester II* to advise on the new build.

The galley, for example, was designed by the owner's personal chef and together with its service pantry is quite smart: it is out of the traffic flow to the crew quarters below but has easy access to the hull door on the lower deck for bringing large amounts of stores aboard. The galley also features a large centre island, numerous owner-specific pieces of equipment, deep sinks, a soft, non-skid floor, and day fridges and freezers. A food lift reaches all decks and is convenient to the dry store, wine storage and walk-in fridge and freezer on the lower deck. The laundry is a pleasant surprise: it has two spaces with machines, which feature folding space in one and ironing boards, a mangle and hanging space in the other.

Ester III's bridge was arranged by the yard but the details were left to captain Gino Battaglia. Large for this size boat, it has a dedicated ship's office with a second computer station for the interiors department. Visibility from the wheelhouse is very good due to vertical windows and a large overhang forward to shelter the seating area of the Portuguese bridge. The star features are

the wing stations. Due to their outboard placement and the tapering shape of the wheelhouse, they have spectacular views fore and aft and diagonally across the bow. Recessed into the exterior overhead is a large monitor that shows the captain lots of data, but he generally leaves it on rudder angle(s) and manoeuvres with just the single control for angle and amount of thrust. The boat has the ability to make the rudders respond independently or in sync.

As bold as she looks, *Ester III* is also about intricacies and subtleties. The complicated angles and accent colour of the deep silver exterior create a panoply of features that reveal themselves as the light angle changes. "Many times, when there was a decision to be made, he would say, 'Just do it as if the yacht was for you,'" says Øino. That's a brief hard to resist. ■



Opposite and above: although the owners entered a steep learning curve when considering *Ester III's* design, plenty of charter experience, a sharp eye and good advice has resulted in a yacht that is original, unusual, yet always well thought-through

S P E C S

Ester III - Lürssen

Sundeck

Upper deck

Main deck

Lower deck

Food and drink: catering options up-top include kitchen, grill and bar

Drink in the view: upper saloon bar is in front of large windows

Extensive: master suite includes his and hers dressing rooms and bathroom

Amidships: central lift serves three guest double cabins and two twins

Tenders elsewhere: now room for pool treatment gear, gym, salon and toys

Under the awning: alfresco dining for 18 aft

Standout feature: the dual-depth pool, surrounded by sunpads

20m
10m
0m

LOA 65.99m

Beam 11.6m

Draught 3.4m

Displacement
1,388GT

Engines
2 x MTU 12V 4000 M63,
1,500kW @ 1,800 rpm

Speed (max/cruise)

16.5 knots/12 knots

Range at 12 knots

4,000nm

Generators

3 x Kilopak, 208kW

Stabilisers

2 x Quantum zero speed

Fuel capacity

120,000 litres

Freshwater capacity

18,600 litres

Owner and guests 12

Crew 17

Tenders

1 x 8m Windy limousine;

1 x Zodiac rescue boat

Construction

Steel hull; aluminium superstructure

Classification

≠100A1 SSC Yacht Mono,

G6 ≠LMC UMS

Exterior design

Espen Øino International

Interior design

Reymond Langton

Builder/year

Lürssen/2014

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