

cover boat
CLOUD 9

Photography - Maurizio Paradisi for CRN

Sky high

Artfully adapted from a stalled project, CRN's new 74m Cloud 9 has left her owners floating on air in more ways than one

Words - Cécile Gauert



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he exact origins of the phrase “cloud nine” have been lost to the mists of time, but it has become synonymous with a state of supreme elation and happiness – the perfect name, in other words, for a new superyacht with an emphasis on family relaxation. The yacht represents a considerable achievement considering its builder, CRN, wasn’t exactly in a place of supreme elation and relaxation when it learned its original client for the 74 metre hull would not be able to finish the boat he had on order. Enter a new owner, with his design and build teams, who was able to find the silver lining and turn CRN’s second largest yacht into a stylish and comfortable cruiser – and one eminently worthy of her moniker.

The adventure began with a phone call in January 2014. Captain Colin Boyle was in Singapore where his yacht, the 60 metre CMN *Cloud 9*, was based. “One night at about 10pm the owner called and asked: ‘Can you get on a flight to Rome at 1am?’,” Boyle recalls.



“He said, ‘There is a boat I want you to look at to see if it’s worthwhile.’” Burgess, who had represented Boyle’s owner on the previous build at CMN, knew he was looking to build a larger yacht. Here might be an opportunity to get one that was already well under way, but Burgess and Boyle knew it had to be the right fit.

From Rome, Boyle travelled to Ancona, Italy, where CRN project 131 was in stasis. The metalwork of the 74 metre hull and most of the superstructure were substantially completed, and the majority of major machinery installed. Underwater, it shared lines with award-winning predecessor *Azteca* and, higher up, styling similarities with *Chopi Chopi*. Structurally and mechanically it had great potential but the layout required substantial rethinking. As Bernardo Zuccon of exterior design firm Zuccon International Project puts it, this “forced the shipyard and the designers to rewrite the story with a new owner”. As it turns out, it is a story with a very happy ending.

“We had three months to replan and redraw it: staircases out, staircases in, top deck off, raise it up, rework the naval architecture,” the captain says. Then, once the layout and exterior details met the owners’ expectations, he gave his team and the yard 30 days to get to a mutually agreeable contract. “We signed in June 2014,” notes Boyle, and the new *Cloud 9* was under way.

“The *Cloud 9* project was born with a well defined will to meet the concept of timelessness that we always

value,” says Zuccon. He also uses descriptions such as “maturity” and “substance together with a great attention to the human being” about the styling. Inside and out, and in spite of her size, *Cloud 9* feels utterly approachable, even from the stern platform, where the massive fold-down door forms part of a sprawling beach club.

Stairs flank a 10,000 litre spa pool with a glass bottom, which is at the heart of a recreation area on the main aft deck. Privately, the owners like to call their new superyacht “*Cloud 9 Plus*” and stepping through the doors that slide open into the main saloon, it’s immediately apparent how her



Above: a massive fold-down door at the stern of the boat forms part of the beach club, which boasts an espresso bar and a seating area that can accommodate al fresco dining. Light streams

down from the pool above, bouncing wave patterns all around. The beach club is connected to the port garage via a passageway to give ready access to the MasterCraft ski boat and toys





The main indoor dining area is partly enclosed by glass doors and features a large circular wooden table that can be expanded to accommodate more guests or removed to provide a dance floor



The main saloon ambiance is open, casual and sunny. The space has a 3D porcelain panel that features a striking cloud design, and the 1.5m deep sofa is sufficiently large for a leisurely lie down
CORRECTION: The 'striking cloud design' is in fact a painted mural by DKT Artworks.





Above: the magnificent owner's suite features wraparound windows that look out on to a private terrace. The thick carpet absorbs the sound of footsteps and features a pattern that mimics the ripples of sand in shallow water, giving a sense of relaxation



Within minutes of being aboard, warm lighting and silence have melted away my stresses. Heavy, layered doors to the cabins, with soundproofing, shut with a muffled click. It may not be concert hall quiet but it is pretty close

owners came up with the nickname. Their first *Cloud 9*, penned inside and out by Winch Design and delivered by French shipyard CMN in 2009, had an attractive blue hull and décor blending sunny sand hues and gradations of blue. That beach house feel helped attract many charter guests. Here Winch Design has again used sand tones, vibrant blues and a treasure trove of decorative shells, corals and agates placed inside multiple niches. Brushed Douglas fir and limed oak – two of some 50 surface materials used on board – also convey the idea of the beach house, but realised on a larger, more luxurious scale.

The new yacht measures around 2,218 gross tonnes, which is about twice as many as the first one. This extra volume translates into generous dimensions, apportioned in comfortable spaces that flow neatly from one to the next.

Devoid of a conventional dining area at her owners' request, the main saloon ambiance is open, casual and sunny. A 3D porcelain panel "cloud" by British artist Fenella Elms adds movement and depth to the central bulkhead along with two Vortex sculptures by Tim Royall. "The sofa in the saloon (and the one on the aft deck) is 1.5 metres deep. It's a lie down sofa, which is what you want to do when you watch a movie or come up from the swimming pool," notes Mark Mämpel, the designer in charge of the project for Winch Design.

Winch Design received carte blanche from the owners to come up with an interior concept adapted to their family needs and future charter guests. The final result was kept a secret at the request of the husband to surprise his wife, although the 3D renderings

produced at the onset are uncannily similar to the final result. The main saloon encompasses one of two cinemas on board; the other is outdoors, at the aft end of the 400 square metre owners' deck. Another element courtesy of the new yacht's extra volume is a hair salon/massage room on the main deck, featuring oak décor with a woven effect and a folding hull door that creates a balcony. This yacht also has a spacious gym flooded with light, which at the time of my visit was temporarily converted to a schoolroom.

Moving around the guest areas feels easy and natural. Forward of the main saloon is a foyer with an eye catching central glass and steel elevator – in Winch design language, it is meant to represent a waterfall from sundeck to beach club, connecting the exterior blue stripe to the interior. A long, wide corridor leads to six cabins (including two staff cabins finished as guest cabins, which could be used for nannies or teachers). Each door has a nameplate engraved with the name of a *Star Wars* character. They are removable, in case the next guests are not fans of the films, and underneath are elegant numbers in stainless steel.

Captain Boyle leads me through the yacht's six decks (counting the technical deck dedicated to stores, laundry room and machinery spaces such as the pump room), patiently answering questions about his new charge in soft speech with the hint of a Scottish accent. A concert musician who studied and taught at London's Royal Academy of Music before embracing a new career at sea, he stepped on to the first *Cloud 9* eight years ago and aboard the new one in May 2017.

Within minutes of being aboard, warm lighting and silence have melted away my stresses. Heavy layered doors to the cabins, with soundproofing from specialist Cergol Engineering, shut with a muffled click. The yard achieved a 48dB(A) level in the master suite at cruising speed and 45dB(A) at anchor. It may not be concert hall quiet but it is pretty close.

Subtle curves throughout contribute to the sense of well-being. The interior needed to be friendly to children, so there are no sharp corners or angles. Curved support columns are clad in limed oak veneer with thin stainless accents on the windows, door frames and nearly all of the bespoke furniture. "Easy to





The owners didn't wish to use the helipad for its intended purpose so they converted the open space of the upper deck into an entertainment platform, with a tent to shield guests from the elements



draw, very hard to realise," observes the captain, who was an integral part of the team managing the build. This team included technical consultants from Burgess who ensured compliance with the owners' wishes (and class rules), blending their modifications with the pre-existing project. Ed Beckett, the naval architect on the Burgess team, scrutinised the technical details and equipment, elevating some of the technical focus and integrating the new interior. Based in Scorze in Venice and part of the Ferretti Group, Zago Interiors worked with outside suppliers to produce all the yacht's polished steel details, which amount to around 4,500 metres for the guest areas alone.

What sold the yacht to his boss, the captain says, is the owners' deck, which contains a magnificent suite with wraparound windows looking on to a private terrace and helipad on the deck below. These owners don't intend to use the helipad, so they decided to turn the vast open space into a grand entertaining platform instead. Andreas Iseli, responsible for exteriors at Winch Design, came up with the idea of a large tent that can be installed there to shield guests from weather while they dine al fresco. It's become a favourite spot for karaoke, too.

Other important modifications included adding an interior crew staircase and creating a beautifully finished fire- and soundproof passageway through the engine room's top level to connect the beach club with the port garage for the MasterCraft ski boat and other toys, and the guest arrival lobby to starboard. This highly practical lobby also exemplifies the whole interior design philosophy.

"The biggest challenge mastered by CRN was to combine, in balance, the interior and exterior design



Right: the main deck features a hair salon and massage area with a folding hull door that creates a balcony. Below: there is also a spacious gym that gets flooded with light



The interior concept was adapted to family needs and future charter guests. The absence of sharp corners and angles makes the yacht more child friendly, while the beach house feel helps attract charter guests





From a distance, the profile view reveals little of the massive decks and numerous recreational spaces within, or the true scale of the yacht, which has a 4,000nm range at 15 knots

with the functionality required by the owner,” says Raffaele Giannetti, the project manager in charge of the build for CRN.

“We made that entrance lounge into a space of waves,” Andrew Winch says. From the bright sunlight, guests move into a quiet, soothing space that allows the eyes to adjust gradually after bright sun. To achieve this effect, the design team created a bespoke teak and holly design with wave details carved into it and repeated all

around the room. “We wanted it to be an envelope, a cocoon. It’s the same pattern on the ceiling and on the floor,” Winch says. “That is an ongoing story on the boat, to give you a sense of relaxation.” On the whimsical side, Winch Design interior decorator Rebecca Johnstone added table lamps with a Picasso-inspired painted design and white curtains with blue ombre that recall sky and sea.

Aft is the beach club, which has an espresso bar

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complete with a professional machine and a seating area with wonderful views. Light streaming through the pool above bounces wave patterns all around. The owners so enjoy the space that they often like to dine al fresco there. The primary outdoor dining area is on the upper deck, protected from wind by sliding glass panels, adjacent to the main indoor dining area which is semi enclosed by glass doors. Both areas feature large circular wooden tables that can be expanded to accommodate more guests, or removed completely to make room for a dance floor or corporate event. This may be the space that best exemplifies the goal of both Zuccon and Winch studios to merge indoor and exterior spaces.

“Certainly, the exterior spaces of the boat – in particular the cockpit on the main deck and the bow area – are key elements that testify how important it is, despite the dimensions, not to forget the real reason why boats are designed: to live on the sea in its purest form,” Zuccon says. “The work of Winch Design has been strategically important for he was able to create a perfect

dialogue between the experience lived outside and the one felt once entered.”

For his part, Andrew Winch is very pleased with what he calls the “on-water house”. “I think that Zuccon designed a beautiful yacht... his style signature on this boat is pure, and I find it very lovely. I think it is a very chic, elegant exterior and we were happy to work with him to fit into it all that the owner required.”

The good partnership between designers made the work easier, says the captain, and has left a lingering feeling of goodwill on board. Yet another reason for guests to feel that they are on cloud nine, when they are on *Cloud 9*. ■

“Winch created a perfect dialogue between the experience lived outside and the one felt once entered”



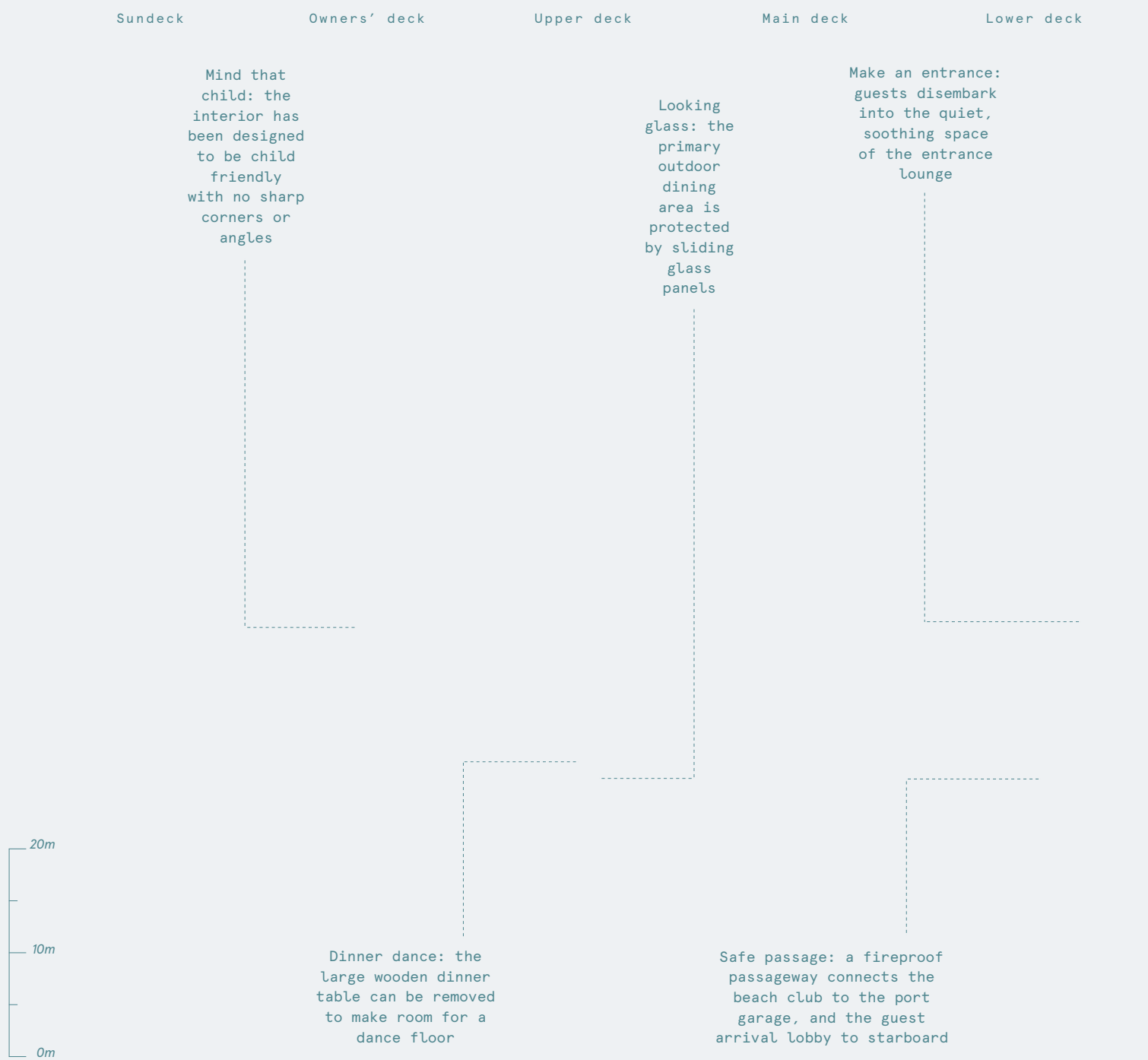
In spite of her size, Cloud 9 feels utterly approachable and perfectly adapted to humans. Privately, the owners like to call their new superyacht “Cloud 9 Plus”



S P E C S

CLOUD 9

CRN



LOA 74m
LWL 65.7m
Beam 13.5m
Draught (full load) 3.2m
Gross tonnage
 2,218GT
Speed max/cruise
 16.5/15 knots

Engines
 2 x Caterpillar
 3516 2,000kW
Range at 12 knots
 6,000nm
Generators
 2 x Caterpillar
 C18 ACERT 301kw
 1,500rpm;

1 x Caterpillar C9
 189 kW 1,500rpm;
 1 x C6.6 ACERT
 125kW 1,500rpm
Fuel capacity
 250,000 litres
Freshwater capacity
 40,000 litres

Tenders
 1 x 9.5m Novurania;
 1 x MasterCraft X20
Owners/guests 16
Crew 22
Construction
 Steel hull;
 aluminium
 superstructure

Classification
 LR Class *100A1 -
 SSC Yacht Mono G6 *
 LMC, UMS
Naval architecture
 CRN Engineering
Exterior styling
 Zuccon International
 Project

Interior design
 Winch Design
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