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December 2021

LUXURY GIFT GUIDE

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EXCLUSIVE

HEAVEN AWAITS
ON BOARD HEESEN'S 50M ARKADIA



FROM HONG KONG TO MIAMI, THE BEST CITY STOP-OFFS BY BOAT

Cover boat

TOY STORY

The second hull of Heesen's 50-metre Steel series has been tweaked for an active family. *Sam Fortescue* steps on board in the South of France and marvels at a plethora of playthings

Photography
David Churchill





Humankind has been longing to return to the golden age of pastoral innocence since first climbing down from the trees. The Greeks identified this simple happiness with the wild Arcadia region of the Peloponnese, where it was all about shady arbours, quietly grazing sheep and fearless, bathing maidens. Now, the striking 50-metre *Arkadia* has become such an oasis for one fortunate American owner.

No sheep, babbling brooks or dryads here, though. *Arkadia* is a different vision of a perfect world where family counts for everything and there is an activity for every hour of the day. “She’s a very stylish boat,” says Thom Conboy of Heesen USA. “It’s a tough-looking design if you look at it from the dock or at sea – a really masculine kind of boat.”

As with most Heesens, this story is one that started long before there was a buyer for the boat. Equipment was ordered back in 2017 and the Dutch yard got to work building the 49.9-metre hull on spec. It was completed in late 2019, whereupon it caught the buyer’s eye. Then Covid-19 hit, and she spent some time lying alongside at the yard in Oss. “Things got strange for two or three months,” Conboy says. “The dialogue kept going, but only seriously resumed in June when things started to open up in the States.” There was talk of a larger yacht for a while. “Then it evolved back into the 50 and we sold it in the fall of 2020.”

The owner’s thinking was straightforward. “We wanted to keep it under 500GT and have not too large a crew to keep things on the simpler side,” he says. “And we wanted north European pedigree, especially coming up from an Italian build.”

But *Arkadia*’s story goes back further still. She is the second in Heesen’s 50 Steel series that was inspired by a custom one-off build called *Ann G*. Launched in 2015, she won a series of gongs, including a nomination at the World Superyacht Awards. Much of her DNA has been passed down to *Arkadia*.



Opposite page: the boat’s styling is elegant but clearly masculine with a powerful flare to the topsides and a purposeful forward rake to the bow that is mirrored in the supports of the superstructure. Left: designer Clifford Denn wanted to create a sense of lightness at the same time, with the gently curved steps to the upper deck and the mirrored stainless-steel slats in the fin that supports it



“SHE’S A VERY STYLISH BOAT. IT’S
A TOUGH-LOOKING DESIGN IF YOU
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A prime entertainment space is the sundeck, which stretches to nearly 20 metres, and includes seating and dining options, a spa pool, bar, plus a capable audiovisual system



Furniture on the sundeck aft (above) is free-standing and can be moved to make space for parties. The sofas aft on the main deck (left) are built in. Both showcase the same neutral upholstery with a sprinkling of bright cushions



**“THE SUNDECK IS
AWESOME – AND VERY
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“The general arrangement of *Ann G* was heavily influenced by the owner, who wanted a big entrance and less steep stairs,” says exterior designer Clifford Denn. “He wanted it to be more grandiose and spacious.” The original idea had been to put the tenders on the bathing platform, but the owner called for a rethink. “The tenders were moved from the aft deck to the foredeck to free up space for the beach club, so we had to raise the wheelhouse by 300 millimetres,” Denn adds. “We raised the bulwarks too, but raked down the bow so the captain still gets a good view.”

With the boat measuring nine metres on the beam and 50 metres in length, Denn had to use some sleight of hand to keep her below 500GT. The way the bow drops off, with a hefty wave breaker protecting the tenders, shaves all-important volume off the interior, as well as favouring sight lines forward.

There are no volume concerns with the sundeck above, however, whose open design has allowed Denn to maximise the space without contributing to the gross tonnage. And the key to that lies in the workmanlike reverse angle of the trawler windows on the bridge below.

“With pitched or curved windows, it becomes a greenhouse,” says skipper Jamie Farnborough. “And you’ve got the problem of reflections.”

Heesen yachts must be able to fit through a series of bridges in the Netherlands to reach the sea, which constrains their proportions. They are therefore always sleek boats without excessive beam or air draught

HEADROOM AT HEESSEN

You won’t find a Heesen with more than three decks, and there’s a good reason for that. To get from the shipyard at Oss to the sea at Rotterdam, Heesen yachts must pass under no fewer than seven bridges, the lowest of which is just 9.7 metres above the water and 13 metres wide. It effectively limits the height of Heesen’s yachts to 9.5 metres. “We include a safety margin of 10 to 20 centimetres as there is some tide on the River Maas,” says Heesen’s head of design and development Peter van der Zanden. “We have to pass at low water.” To get round the problem, the yard builds its big boats with a mast structure that unbolts 80 to 90 centimetres above the sundeck. “We do all the harbour acceptance tests beforehand, then take off the mast and put it on a barge,” van der Zanden explains. “The boat sails to the sea and the barge follows. Then we need just a crane to put it on. We reconnect the electricity plug and bolt it all together.”

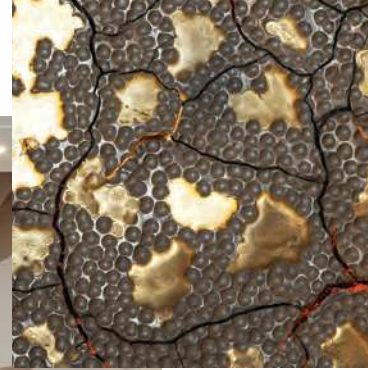
But bigger yachts make for a more testing job. The 80-metre *Project Cosmos* is currently in-build, and its 30-metre hardtop structure will be removed. More challenging still is another 60-metre project, which has accommodation on the sundeck. “We permanently install parts like the flooring and the lower cabinets,” says van der Zanden. “We also install ceilings in the part that will be disconnected. The rest is prepared, installed so we are sure that it fits, and then removed to be reinstalled close to the sea.”

The bridges have had a lasting impact on Heesen’s design. “This is why our boats are always so streamlined and not like wedding cakes,” says Sara Gioanola, the company’s PR manager.





The design of Heesen's 50m Steel was adapted from the custom yacht Ann G, which featured a grand staircase and impressive lobby. The interior design, however, is a complete departure, at once warm and modern but also adaptable to various tastes



Reymond Langton styled the interior before the buyer came in. Then Dickie Bannenberg sourced a large piece of art (left) for the main lobby from DKT Artworks in the UK. "It is cast liquid metal with metallic and gold highlights," says Bannenberg



"HEESEN ASKED US TO CREATE A CONTEMPORARY AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT THAT WAS [ALSO] A HIGHLY ELEGANT SPACE"

"[There's] none of that with trawler windows," Denn says. "Rain doesn't get to them either, and you get the extra length overhead." He has put those extra metres on the sundeck to good use. A hardtop amidships offers shelter for a well-specced gym, complete with rowing machines, weights and bikes. Fore and aft the deck can be shaded with awnings and there is a bar, sunpads, spa pool and a lounging area. A removable carbon davit serves to lower the gym equipment down a deck when you need the extra space for a party. "This deck is awesome – and very well used," says Farnborough. "Having so much space is quite unique on this size of boat."

Here *Arkadia* makes a departure from the previous boat in the line with the addition of an opening glass panel that encloses the forward end of the hardtop. It provides wind protection without adding to the gross tonnage. "The glass door was the captain's idea," Farnborough says. "It stops the wind from blowing through. The owner really wanted a gym on board and this was the only place we could really put it."

Tenders and toys are the other things the owner wanted – and heaps of them. "We were looking for a go-anywhere steel-hull yacht that could sleep up to 12, with lots of storage for toys," the owner explains, "including a beach-lander dinghy, Mastercraft wakesurf boat and a jet ski that we use for deep-water kiting sessions, among other activities. Also, [there is] an assortment of canoes, SUPs, bikes, kites and diving gear, not to mention a 15-metre water slide and a large inflatable beach and pool for the kids."

Even as we tour the boat, the captain takes a couple of calls relating to a new Mastercraft NXT20 wakesurfing boat and a custom 5.6-metre Ribeye that are on the way. Farnborough determined after a *Tetris*-like calculation that there is just enough space in the tender



The private saloon aft on the bridge deck has been recast as an occasional guest cabin with a luxurious sofa bed. The dayhead here was built out into the room so that a shower could be added. It brings the guest complement to 13



well if the Solas launch is jettisoned (it isn't necessary on a private boat) and the existing Ribeye is replaced with the custom boat. The latter has been designed to be a few centimetres narrower, giving a slim 100-millimetre clearance on each side. It also packs diesel inboards instead of outboards, to reduce its storage height. By a stroke of good fortune, the existing tender crane can handle the new boats without any modifications, thanks to its two-tonne rating.

"I'd still like to get rid of these beams down the side of the tender well," says Farnborough, tapping one with the air of a builder sizing up a job. "Are they structural?" he asks the designer with a twinkle in his eye.

Denn responds with a poker face. "I don't think so." Then, looking at me, adds: "A happy owner is a happy design."

Coming to the project after its completion, the incoming owner could only make limited changes to the design. Inevitably, most of them were cosmetic and related to the interior. The single exception came in the saloon on the bridge deck, which has been given a second identity as an extra guest cabin. A sofa that serves as a bed was put in and the dayhead was extended further into the room to include a shower. It allows up to 13 guests to stay on board. "We're a very busy boat," the captain says.

Other than a few tweaks by Bannenberg & Rowell, the interior is wholly designed by Reymond Langton. And, being built on spec, there's a careful balance to the design. "The brief from Heesen was simple," says studio co-founder Pascale Reymond. "They asked us to create a contemporary and comfortable environment that was at the same time a highly elegant space adaptable to a big range of clients."

Accommodation is spread across a full-beam master cabin at the forward end of the main deck, and four double cabins on the lower deck, all with true island beds. Some of the doubles can also be converted into twins by lifting out the night stand and sliding the beds along a hidden track.

Materials are in muted natural colours: light Tanganyika wood contrasts with dark American walnut and Carbalho; Crema Marfil marble with Brown Armani; bronze and velvet wool carpets. There's also plenty of veneer, natural leather and a durable patterned faux leather made by Majilite in wall and ceiling panels.



Interior designers at Reymond Langton have repeated an organic, curved pattern throughout the boat. From headboards and wardrobes to lobbies and coffee tables, the styling helps to break up the regular geometric shapes of the internal spaces. Indirect light and the copious natural light from the large windows have been well used to make generously sized cabins and bathrooms feel even bigger. The owner's suite naturally runs the full beam





And as you'd expect from the Dutch yard, the finish is outstanding.

"All these materials are really interesting even if not too exotic; we think it is not always necessary to use extravagant finishes to obtain an interesting and elegant space," Reymond says. "We mixed materials in contrasting colours and patterns, combined together following linear shapes to create an interesting and featured environment that was at the same time a canvas for the future owner to add their touch and preferences."

Soft indirect LED lighting strips are hidden all over the boat to add atmosphere: under beds; in the sky lounge bar; and in the bronze frame of the decorative panel by the owner's office. Reymond describes this technique as key, "to give a cosy and relaxing effect and possible different scenarios for any occasion".

The main saloon is the ultimate exponent of these design elements. Big windows and uncluttered furniture layout make it a bright, calming space with glorious views out to either side. Glass bulwarks aligned with the sliding glass doors to the side of the Fendi dining table make this a particularly luminous spot. The feel of the yacht is one of clean lines and volume. Entertaining spaces are restrained and comfortable. It is not about projecting power or showcasing exotic or unlikely materials. This is a boat - belonging to a man, for sure - but designed for the use of a family.

And nowhere is this clearer than when you visit the beach club. Currently undergoing the endless cycle of maintenance, this huge space was absolutely filled - choked - with toys that ranged from racks of kite surf wings to dive gear, wakeboards, jet skis and more. Barely a square inch of floor space was free. It takes an effort of imagination to picture the transom door swinging open and the swimming platform dotted with loungers, the deep blue of the glass





Arkadia has been kitted out for an active owner, featuring toys from foiling kiteboards to dive gear. Captain Jamie Farnborough uses an inflatable dock aft to extend the beach club and tether the equipment



FIVE FOILING TOYS

Inspired by Arkadia's endless inventory of watersports toys with foils, here are five of the best

Foiling dinghy

This German creation stows down to 3.9m by 1.6m. Designed for one person, this little rocket will foil from 10 knots but has been clocked at 27 knots. foilingdinghy.com

RRD Pocket Rocket

Y26 foil board

Designed for a windsurf or kite rig, this carbon board's shorter length helps it take off earlier, with enough buoyancy to raise the sail. robertoriccidesigns.com

Lift3 eFoil

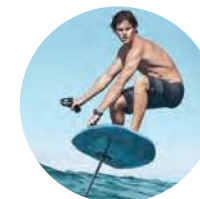
This is newly shaped for a smoother and more stable ride but, being small, it is super responsive in the carve. It has up to two hours' ride time with a mix-and-match foil selection. efoil.com

Manta5 Hydrofoiler XE-1

This New Zealand-built foiling water bike has 460W of pedal assist for speeds of up to 11 knots manta5.com

Starboard Hyperfoil

This stand-up paddleboard has a foil to get you flying downwind or down the surf. star-board.com



When it isn't turned over to storing toys, the beach club area provides a lot of extra space. The sofa and seating is free-standing and can be moved into the sun to watch the sports action aft. There's a capable bar and a sauna to complete the facilities in here

bar sparkling in the reflected light from the water and people spilling out of the sauna and heading for the sea. "We also put a huge inflatable platform aft," the captain says.

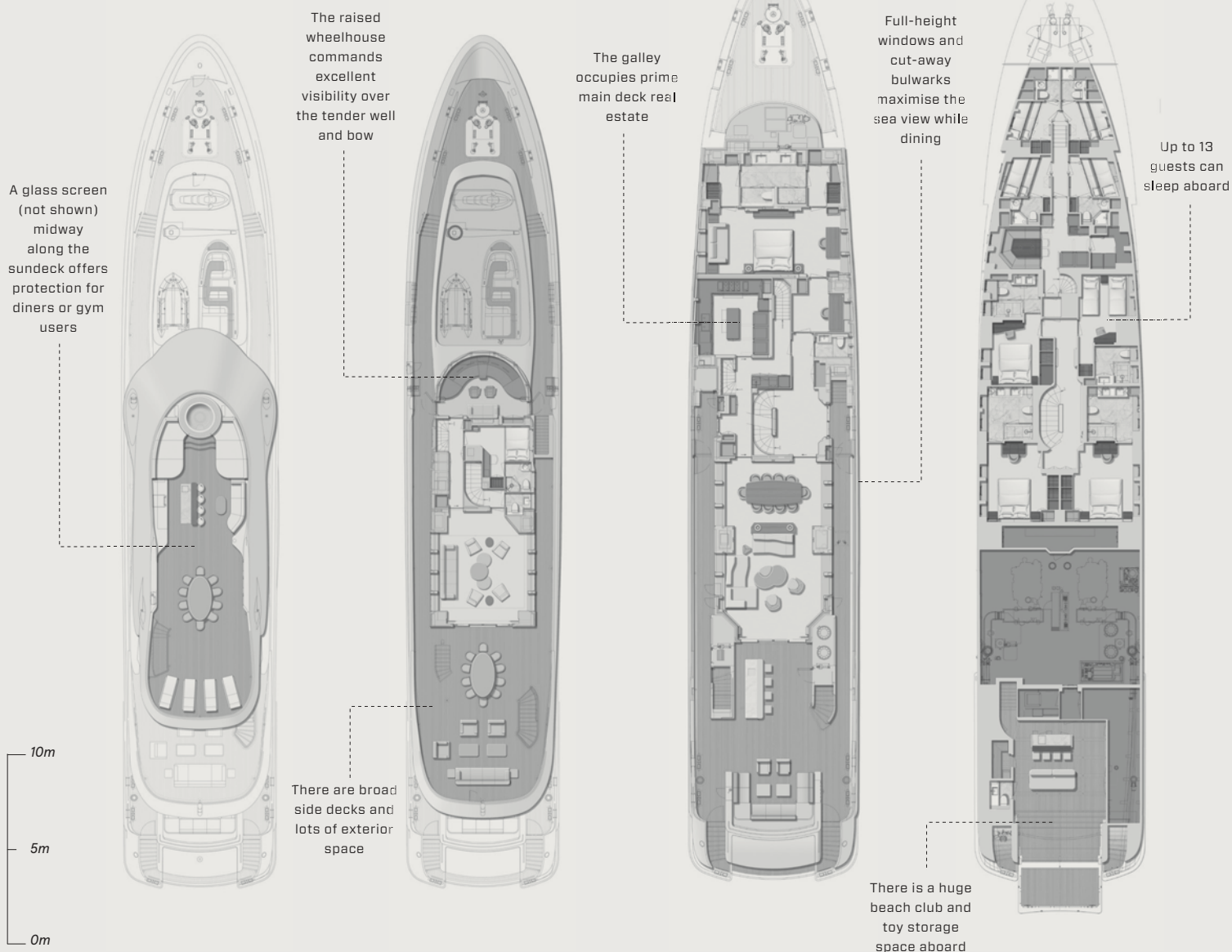
But whether your programme is diving, dining or seeing the world, Heesen's Steel 50 offers a really capable platform. Twin MTU 8V 4000 engines give her a respectable top speed of 16 knots, but more interesting is the 3,800-nautical-mile range at 14-knot cruising speed. Twin Naiad fin stabilisers keep her comfortable, and she has the fridge and water capacity to go for weeks away from port. "She goes to sea very well," says Farnborough, who has already sailed her with 60-knot winds across the deck. "We can leave the boat set up as is to cross oceans."

And cross oceans she will with this owner, who has cooked up some ambitious plans with his captain. "I see it as part of my job to get the owner excited about the boat and thinking about new destinations," Farnborough says. And as he reels off some of the draft itinerary, it is amply clear that he is as keen as anyone to get off the beaten track... off in search of his own Arcadian cruising grounds. ■

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: VISIONS PHOTOGRAPHY, AST/SØREN HESE, SAMUEL TOMÉ, RIDER: FRANCESCO CARPUZZO, SØREN HESE

Arkadia

Heesen Yachts

SundeckBridge deckMain deckLower deck**LOA** 49.9m**LWL** 43.4m**Beam** 9m**Draught** 2.75m**Gross tonnage**
499GT**Engines**

2 x MTU 8V 4000 M63

Speed (max/cruise)
15/11 knots**Range at 12 knots**
3,800nm**Generators**

2 x Zenoro 125kW

Fuel capacity

60,000 litres

Freshwater capacity
20,000 litres**Tenders**

1 x 6.1m

Owners/guests 12**Crew** 9**Construction**Steel hull; aluminium
superstructure**Naval architecture**

Heesen Yachts

Exterior styling

Clifford Denn Design

Interior design

Reymond Langton Design

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