



JEWELLERY
SPECIAL

Boat Life

Celebrating exceptional style and design

Stones of beauty

Signature jewellery pieces
that are a cut above the rest

*Ombelicale
necklace with
diamonds in
white and yellow
gold, POA,
buccellati.com*



Floating treasure

Superyacht designers are looking at *haute joaillerie*-inspired finishes for high-impact decor, says *Claire Wrathall*

Last October, at Phillips Hong Kong, an 18k gold cuff inset with emeralds and two large peridots sold for \$30,000 (£22,400). Created in 1965 by Jon Bannenberg, the man who arguably invented the superyacht, it was made for Wenda Parkinson, wife of the society photographer Norman Parkinson, and is an early instance of a yacht designer turning his hand to *haute joaillerie*. How else was a designer of boats to use materials of such scarcity and value?

Half a century on, however, and you're almost as likely to see precious metals and stones on the walls of a yacht as you are on the wrists of its guests. Take the jewel-box interiors of the Heesen-built 49.6-metre superyacht *Ann G*, designed by Reymond Langton, which features mosaics of blue agate, white onyx and iridescent labradorite. Or the spa floor of another yacht that the same design studio created the interiors for, an arrangement of tesserae cut from turquoise, tiger's eye (a type of chalcedony), onyx and agate, this time a vibrant purple.

"Using precious metals and precious and semi-precious stones is certainly very popular with some designers," says Guglielmo Carrozzo of DKT Artworks. The London- and Prague-based studio made that floor and counts



numerous other top superyacht designers among its clients, notably Terence Disdale, Harrison Eidsgaard, Nuvolari Lenard, RWD and Winch Design. "It's a way of making artworks even more beautiful by drawing the eye to certain details." From lapis lazuli to Swarovski crystals, "the main factor when selecting stones is the desired effect", he says. "But, of course, cost also needs to be taken into consideration. You could potentially use diamonds, and for sure it would be beautiful." (Last year, a 1985 octagonal table designed by David Linley with an ebony frieze inset with diamonds came up at auction.) "But at the end of the day, it comes down to budget."



A gold cuff designed by Jon Bannenberg in 1965; above: the jewel-box interiors of *Ann G*

Jade is another popular option for inlay, and lighter-weight natural materials such as amber have a kind of glow when set on a ground of gold leaf. But it's not just about stones and fossilised resin. Precious metals usually more associated with jewellery – from comparatively inexpensive Dutch metal leaf, a malleable form of brass composed of copper and zinc that looks like gold, to palladium – are also increasingly to be found in yacht interiors. "When using gold, we usually use 23kt," says Carrozzo. "But again, there are all sorts of colours and types of leaf." Each are subtly different in the way they gleam and reflect light. "If you want something striking you go for a classic gold, but if you want calm and relaxing, maybe you go for a champagne or rose gold, which are less bright yet reflect the light beautifully," he says.

Perhaps inevitably these interior finishes also call for jewellers' skills, from carving exquisitely detailed bas reliefs in mother of pearl to crafts such as plating, gilding to annealing. This is a

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process used in silversmithing that the Wrexham-based bespoke furniture maker Silverlining uses to inlay silver in its rarefied tables and commodes.

As Jim Birch, its head of design, explains, "Annealing is a process whereby metal is heated to make it softer and then manipulated with pliers and gently hammered into grooves or channels that have been laser-cut into the wood." Once the metal has been tapped flush with the wood, "we sand it back and polish it. It's quite unusual in furniture because it's such an intricate process." It's then lacquered to protect it and to prevent the metal from tarnishing, but also because "It enhances the colours [of the metals] too, so that they really jump out when they're alongside less reflective materials like timber", says Birch.

It also uses plated metal inlay to extraordinary effect as on its remarkable Cosmic dining table, which was made for a superyacht. Mounted on a sculptural bronze pedestal, its 4.6-metre-long burr-walnut top is inscribed with a map of heavens in which the planets are textured bronze inlay, their satellites mother-of-pearl and the laser-cut paths of their orbits traced in inlay of Dubai gold plated on to a substrate of brass.



For Solange, DKT Artworks created a gold gilded floral piece with mother-of-pearl inlays (detail below)



Above: this mosaic by DKT Artworks is made of precious and semi-precious stones, Orsoni gold leaf and marble

If that's a comparatively discreet use of gold, other owners prefer to channel Midas on their yachts. Witness the 40,000 sheets of gold leaf that were applied to the walls, ceilings, even the floor of the upper deck bar and the surfaces of the occasional tables on the somehow misnamed 49.9-metre Benetti *Platinum*. As the man who commissioned her said with no understatement, "I wanted [her] to feel special. The gold leaf gives her a unique atmosphere. It is light but also warm."



Silverlining, which makes museum-quality pieces, was founded by Mark Boddington of the famous brewing family

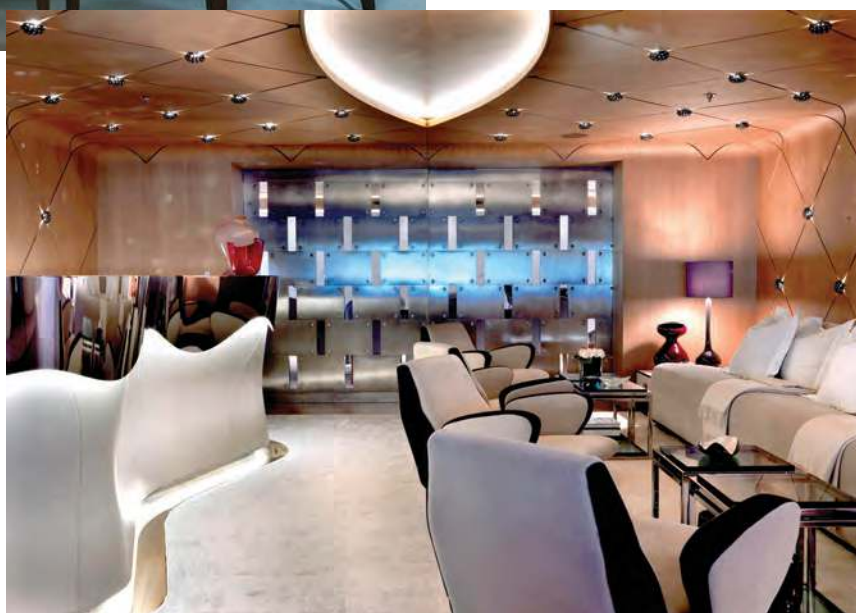


Endeavour 2's designer used an alloy known as German or alpaca silver for an antique effect

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Palladium and titanium leaf also reflect ambient light in a way that the cabinet-maker-turned yacht designer Rémi Tessier finds “very warm and welcoming”, hence his use of those metals on the 48-metre *Rossinavi Aslec 4*. Architect and furniture designer Achille Salvagni has a taste for the silvery alloy of copper, nickel and zinc sometimes known as German silver or alpaca silver, which he used on *Endeavour 2* and *Numptia*, where its subtly reflective qualities remind him, he says, of antique French and Venetian mirrors.

London based Officina Coppola is another creator of jewel-like bespoke wall panels, finishes and furniture, and a pioneer, in the words of its founder, Donato Coppola, “of liquid metal, ground limestone and resin” that he used to produce sculptural abstractions of nature and



Above: *Numptia*'s feature wall of German silver. Below: panels of liquid metal and ground limestone on *Ngoni*



aerial views of the earth. They have been used to spectacular effect notably in the cabins aboard Royal Huisman's 58-metre *Ngoni*, whose interiors are the work of Rick Baker Ltd.

They also feature a lit-from-within bar with a countertop of black onyx, a visual reference to the boat's black mast and rigging, which are made from carbon fibre. The miraculously strong yet lightweight wonder material is increasingly used in yacht construction, if not decor – and, as it happens, fine jewellery. For in the same exhibition that featured the Bannenberg cuff was also a selection of pieces by the Italian jeweller Fabio Salini incorporating pearls and precious stones set in titanium and carbon fibre, the intense matt blackness of the latter an ideal foil for diamonds both aesthetically and symbolically – for aren't diamonds the purest expression of carbon? It's yet another indication that when it comes to designing yachts and jewellery, there's an unexpected synergy at play. ■