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FEADSHIP'S 203'  
*Sea Owl*

**5 TOP CHARTER YACHTS** SECRETS OF THEIR SUCCESS



# SEA OWL



AN EXTRAORDINARILY COMPLEX CUSTOM YACHT, THIS  
203-FOOTER TRULY CAPTURES THE MAGIC OF YACHTING.

TEXT BY CECILE GAUERT



“All the world is made of faith, and trust, and pixie dust,” wrote J.M. Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan. A fair amount of faith, trust and pixie dust, as well as a great deal of skill and experience, went into the construction of the new *Sea Owl*, a 203-foot all-custom Feadship.

Personal and enchanting, this yacht is a portal to a different world, one where children learn as they play and where adults can enjoy family time, work or relax miles away from any land and in all safety. The yacht, aside from her one-of-a-kind fantasy-inspired interior, has a sophisticated custom-designed security system to allow her occupants to venture far afield. Her bespoke carbon tenders, built at Hodgdon Yachts of Maine and named *Hatchling* and *Fledgling*, are capable of great speeds. Adventure is built right into this stately yacht’s design.

*Sea Owl*’s lead designer, Andrew Winch, grew up near London’s Kensington Gardens where a bronze statue of Peter Pan has bewitched generations of children since it mysteriously appeared near the duck pond in 1912. Peter Pan’s sculptor, Sir George Frampton, portrayed the eternal boy playing the flute while balancing on a tree stump carved with fairies, mice and squirrels. These small figures are not unlike a few of the 90 exquisite critter carvings that are found aboard *Sea Owl*. Among them are a delicate mouse sitting on a piece of Swiss cheese, a squirrel swinging by the tail from the bridge-deck banister and, of course, many owls.

Peter Pan is only one of several fairy tales and scholarly books that have inspired the décor, as the designers worked closely with family members to personalize each room and encourage the children to explore real and imaginary worlds. On the bridge deck, a staff cabin decorated with frescos of fossilized seashells that a young Charles Darwin identified during his first trip on *HMS Beagle*, will double as a classroom, allowing the children



to learn about Darwin as the yacht explores the Galapagos. On the lower deck, next to a delightful pirates’ room, complete with a barrel shower and a treasure chest that doubles as a desk, is one of the daughters’ cabins with scenes right out of *Alice in Wonderland*. On the sun deck, a toothy shark grins on the walls of the freshwater Jacuzzi strewn with jewels while, three decks below, a book, defying the laws of gravity, flies away from the library walls—Newton’s *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, naturally. While the décor is playful, it is never kitschy, reaching a level of artistry that even grown-ups can appreciate.

The results actually surprised the yacht’s owner. “Although I was tangentially involved in the design of the boat and kept abreast of how the build was progressing, I was truly astonished by the level of craftsmanship and tastefulness that distinguishes every nook and

cranny of the boat,” he says, adding that the family yacht “is largely due to the close collaboration between the design team at Andrew Winch Designs and my wife and daughter who are endowed with both exceptionally good taste and exceptionally strong opinions.”

The relationship between the owners and Andrew Winch Designs (AWD) began in 2005. After seeing *Whisper*, a sailing yacht AWD designed with a timeless classic interior, *Sea Owl*’s owners dropped by the designers’ riverside studio in Mortlake, London. The relationship developed from there. The owners retained the designers to do the interior of their 142-foot Burger, which has warm teak and a classic interior, but also a touch of whimsy and a few woodcarvings. The Burger’s green hull and white superstructure color scheme was shared with the new yacht, which is painted an appealing Awlgrip Jade Mist and Oyster White.

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One of many painted murals on board graces the main salon (above), with the Chihuly piece over the dining table echoing the mural’s theme. Full of clues for the children to explore, the mural also serves a practical purpose as it conceals storage for the china and silverware. A single piece of crystal carved into a diamond shape (left page, bottom right) is one of many design gems on board. The AWD-designed carbon Hodgdon tenders, finished to perfection, also have a fine jewel quality.



Soon after starting construction of their 142-footer, the yacht's owners realized they would need a bigger boat to accommodate their growing family and, in 2007, began discussing the new yacht with AWD and Anthony Sands of Edge Yachts, their representative. The first sketches of the new yacht depicted *Sea Owl* in Venice, Italy. A bid to build the new *Sea Owl* went out to seven shipyards, and a contract was signed with Feadship in 2008. Construction began two years later on what may be, at close to 1,500 gross tons, the biggest 203-footer yet built. "We knew from the very start that *Sea Owl* was going to be an extraordinary vessel, but also one that would pose challenges in her design and construction due to the high aesthetic standards the owners were trying to achieve, coupled with the yacht's cutting-edge technological sophistication," Sands says. "It's to the entire team's credit that we achieved on all counts, including construction deadlines and budget."

*Sea Owl* was built on the picturesque island of Kaag in The Netherlands, set in the middle of freshwater lakes, a few feet away from land. The island is almost within arm's reach but you have to board a ferry to reach its shores. Winch says he was happy with the choice of shipyard, in part because of the island setting. "There is something magical about this island," he says. Winch also has an excellent relationship with the shipyard and its experienced craftsmen, who performed their own brand of magic.

Walking the decks in his company, as a large team from



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The owners' suite exemplifies the level of detail and personalization given to the yacht. The office (left, top) is very much the Admiral's room, offering privacy and great views, as does the stateroom decorated with remarkable marquetry and carvings. The master bathroom (right) features stunning mosaics and a bathtub made of varnished wood set in a single block of stone.



AWD and Feadship works on finalizing myriad details before the yacht's handover, it is clear that, while children were the inspiration for this project, making this dream happen was anything but child's play. Winch, who has designed seven Feadships to date, including the recently delivered 325-foot *Madame Gu*, says *Sea Owl* was one of the most complex projects he has ever handled.

Part of the complexity resides in the number of details in this high-volume explorer. There are the details that you can see, such as a silk and wool carpet hand-knotted in Nepal, the Chihuly chandelier made of Venetian glass, or the basin carved in the shape of a gem from a single block of crystal, as well as the ones you don't—security cameras with a 360-degree view at waterline, fingerprint-recognition key pads and a

sophisticated entertainment system.

A detailed description of this interior would take a book but a few details are enough to illustrate the yacht's spirit. The yacht's central stairway features a mural carved from Peruvian mahogany of a magical tree rising four decks high in one continuous design from the roots, grounded in the lower deck's sole, to branches reaching the sun deck. As you climb up and down the steps, you discover more and more creatures emerging from every part of a tree teeming with life. The yacht's guest elevator is much less noticeable from the outside but take a peek inside and you are literally transported. On its walls are *trompe l'oeil* murals depicting, among others, a garden scene and the family dog, Charlie, awaiting a treat.

The family's elder, gifted with a mathematical mind, has an office where he can be introspective behind closed doors

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW WINCH DESIGNS (TOP)



but find inspiration in the oceanscape unfolding in front of him. This Admiral's room is part of the owners' private suite. Its centerpiece is an exquisite copy of an 18<sup>th</sup> century French desk by French furniture designer Serge Mirochnikoff, who created several other special pieces on board. On the ceiling is one of many frescoes, commissioned by AWD, this one, a rendition of a world map circa 1800s, and on the walls are replicas of candleholders found aboard her Majesty's Navy ships during Lord Nelson's command. The owner's love of mathematics and puzzles has inspired the marquetry in his stateroom and a timepiece in the salon.

Using a formula of his own, Winch eschewed symmetry in favor of a more organic design. "Symmetry makes the environment feel controlled," Winch says, which was far from the desired effect. Indeed, one of the owners' requests was to create an ideal holiday home for his large family. They also wanted big spaces and wide-open vistas but limited the length to 203 feet, which while generous by other measures, proved challenging when it came to accommodating all of the family's wishes. This puzzle was left to AWD to resolve. The experienced team designed a yacht that is exceptionally beamy (40 feet overall) with a very large superstructure. The sun deck is partially enclosed, with a dining room filled with light and its adjacent pantry occupying a good part of it.

Winch and his team, which gave the yacht elegant and classic lines, used the wide beam to maximum effect. The owners value privacy and security. Hence access points are limited to what's necessary and the accommodations stretch across the full beam where convenient. On the bridge deck, a light-filled Caribbean-inspired skylounge stretches between windows, while forward, two balconies unfold to offer up panoramic views to guests as they exercise or study. Winch designed a layout



that is far different from the rigid patterns found on many yachts. While there is absolute logic and practicality to the way the decks are organized (the layout is being kept private at the owner's request), there are few linear patterns on board. The main dining table, set in front of a Venetian fresco, for instance, is off center. Glancing forward from the salon, you get an open view until your eyes come to rest on a library wall that conceals the owners' walk-in wardrobe.

As amazing as what you can see is what you are not meant to see. It is not obvious that the custom-crafted furnishings, most built in-house by the Feadship craftsmen, are all sea fastened. The custom rosewood self-playing Steinway Baby Grand in the main salon is not only affixed to the deck sole, it interfaces with the music library and can play any piece of music stored in the Kaleidescape system. The yacht is also wired for iPad and most

tables, including those on the outer decks, have hidden power sources to power tablets or laptops. The entertainment system itself is housed in a perfectly chilled, carpeted and dedicated electronics room, located on the bridge deck. Behind the spacious exercise room, complete with Pilates equipment, exercise bar and adjacent hair salon and massage room, is a comprehensive medical room that can be set up to handle emergencies.

At least two of the cabins on board can be used as safe rooms, their doors discreetly reinforced with steel and heavy-duty hinges. "A well-planned security system need not be obtrusive or interfere with the enjoyment of passengers aboard a yacht," says the owner. "On the contrary, when you have a comprehensive, well-planned system and a fully trained crew, I find it is far easier to relax and enjoy the boat whether at sea or in port." He and Sands entrusted the yacht's thorough and layered

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The chill, chic Caribbean-inspired skylounge is one of many extraordinary rooms, blending an indoor feel with outdoor views and fresh air via a wide opening aft door. All the custom furniture is sea fastened, as is the desk in the skylounge (left page, bottom right), which is discreetly affixed to the teak flooring that blends with the aft deck.



security system to a former U.S. Coast Guard commander and his team of former Secret Service agents. “[The owner] wanted to have a yacht that had global capabilities,” says Brian Peterman, president and CEO of Command at Sea International. “His is a very practical approach to security.” (See the iPad edition for more on the complex, yet nearly invisible security system.)

While the security consultants worked closely with the shipyard up to the last few days before delivery, accommodating an effective and discreet security system that would not distract from the magic of the décor, added a layer of complexity that even the experienced Feadship shipyard acknowledges. Practically speaking, it is additional equipment. “It added weight on the boat, which we had to account for and balance with the class requirements,” says Koos Zitman, sales director at Feadship. “You can only assign the space once.” When asked what previous design features were borrowed from other Feadship projects—perhaps the large windows, the panoramic salon door that recedes to fully open the skylounge to the aft deck or the large twin tender bays forward—Zitman says the project was entirely owner driven. Even the large radar mast, accessible through steps in the coaming, was done at the owner’s request.

The owner’s team deferred to the shipyard in one design area. “They left the technical aspects to Feadship,” Zitman says, with one special request for a specific piece of equipment, which was a zero-discharge sewage system. Conscious of their surroundings and the pristine areas they want to discover, the owners also opted for a dynamic positioning system, which allows the yacht to stay in place without deploying anchors. The system works in conjunction with the bow and stern thrusters and the engines to readjust position as needed. It was tested in 40 knots of wind and proved most effective in holding the yacht in place for 17 hours. Sea trials in the North Sea were more than satisfactory. Alarms, almost a fact of life on most motor yachts, never went off. “We had to trick them, to make sure they were working,” says Sands, clearly pleased with the results.

In early July, the yacht and her crew of 18, set off on the first of her extended journeys to the Norwegian fjords after a handover ceremony in front of Amsterdam’s Maritime Museum. The yacht’s on-time delivery is a tangible positive result. What is less tangible perhaps is the emotional response *Sea Owl* seemed to illicit from all involved. There was a sense of cheerfulness as the team pulled together to meet the deadline. As I visited the yacht, a young man in a crisp work uniform walked into a room. Extending his open palms in front of him, he asked the designers, “Does anyone know where this mouse goes?” On his hands was that small mouse on a slice of cheese. A burst of laughter greeted his question. Happiness. That is where the pixie dust comes in.

SB ENHANCED DIGITAL CONTENT ON THE IPAD APP



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In the guest staterooms (left page), the sailing ship conceals a sliding panel opening to a mirror image of this little boy's cabin; delicate marquetry decorates the headboard of the *Alice in Wonderland*-themed room; while a more grown-up, but still playful, theme characterizes the third guest cabin. An amazing corridor leads to the cabins, through a parrot cage painted in *trompe l'oeil* (right). Fresh herbs from the greenhouse on the sun deck (far right) add flavor and depth to all the meals, many of which will be served in the upper deck dining salon (above).







**Specifications:**

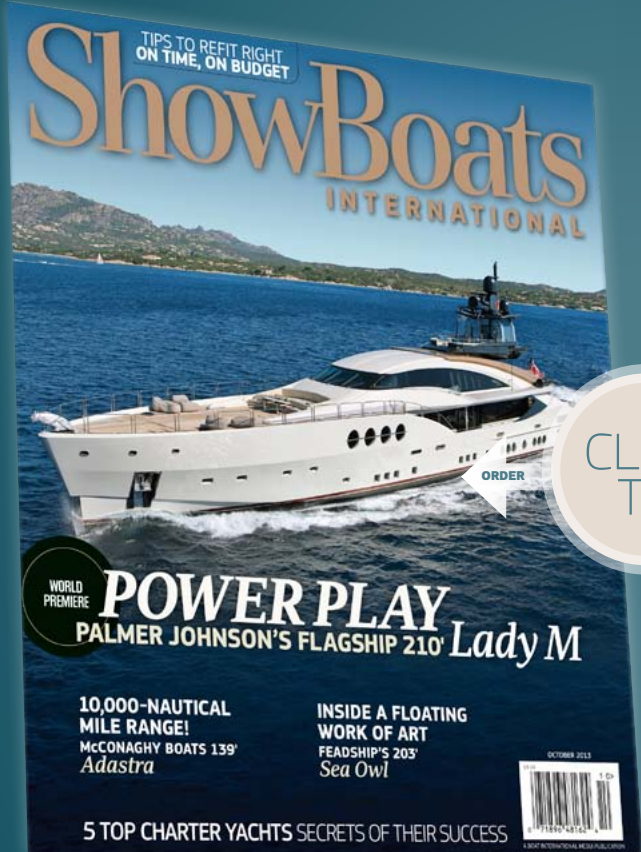
**Builder:** Feadship  
**Leidsevaart 574**  
**2014 HT Haarlem**  
**The Netherlands**  
**Tel:** +31 (0) 23 524 7000  
**Email:** info@feadship.nl  
**www.feadship.nl**

**LOA:** 203' 5" (62m)  
**LWL:** 177' 10" (54.2m)  
**BEAM:** 40' (12.2m)  
**DRAFT:** 12' 2" (3.7m)  
**POWER:** 2 x 2,038-hp MTU  
16V 4000 M53R  
**SPEED (MAX):** 16.3 knots  
**RANGE:** 5,700 nm @ 12 knots  
**FUEL CAPACITY:** 39,626 U.S. gallons

**GENERATORS:** 3 x 310ekW  
MTU 8V 2000 M50A  
**FRESHWATER CAPACITY:**  
9,246 U.S. gallons  
**BLACK/GRAY WATER CAPACITY:**  
2,506/397 U.S. gallons  
**STABILIZERS:** Quantum QC  
2000 XT two-fin Zero Speed  
**OWNER & GUESTS/CREW:** 12/18  
**CONSTRUCTION:** Steel/aluminum

**TENDERS:** 2 x 28' custom Hodgdon  
**CLASSIFICATION:** Lloyd's  
\*100 A1, SSC, Yacht (P),  
Mono, GG, \*LMC, UMS, EP  
**NAVAL ARCHITECTURE:**  
De Voogt Naval Architects  
**EXTERIOR STYLING & INTERIOR**  
**DESIGN:** Andrew Winch Designs  
**PROJECT MANAGEMENT:**  
Edge Yachts

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