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THE FIRST SUPERYACHT PROJECT TO BE UNDERTAKEN AT ITALIAN YARD FINCANTIERI YACHTS WAS FULL OF AMBITION AND TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY. BUT THE RESULT – AN INTIMATE HOME ON THE WATER WITH UNDERSTATED INTERIOR DÉCOR AND PERFECTLY PROPORTIONED EXTERIOR LINES – IS ONE OF THE FINEST YACHTS AFLOAT

Seen from afar with few points of reference, it is hard to gauge the scale of the 134 metre yacht *Serene*. Perhaps this curious optical illusion is thanks to her svelte and graceful lines, drawn by the Espen Øino studio and featuring subtle curves within the blue hull and white superstructure elements. That she comprises seven decks is scarcely believable, so perfect are her proportions. But standing next to her on the quayside in the old port of Imperia, Italy, under the late summer sun, one thing is very clear – *Serene* is a very, very large yacht indeed.

She is the largest yacht ever launched in Italy, and eighth on the list of the world's largest private yachts. With a volume of over 8,000 gross tonnes, she boasts more than 2,500 square metres of luxury floor space. She has a 15 metre swimming pool in the aft beach club and five guest tenders, along with a custom-built submarine. She features an astonishing 11 hull openings, and as a result is one of the most technically advanced yachts ever built.

That all this was achieved as a first superyacht project for her construction yard – Fincantieri Yachts – is testament to the yard's engineering skills, and the translation of its experience from commercial and naval shipbuilding to complete a yacht finished to the very highest standards. Fincantieri was able to bring in the very best of the best of contractors and equipment in every area of the yacht, from the six interior fit-out companies, to the systems and individual components, ensuring that every single element of the yacht, down to the last bolt, is of the very highest quality. Moreover, it is interesting to note that until she emerged from her build shed, virtually nothing was known about the project. This is one advantage of building at the Fincantieri yard in Muggiano – as a naval contractor security is extremely tight around the facility, ensuring prying eyes are kept well away from the work being done within.

For all her impressive numbers, *Serene* retains an intimate and personal feel. This is no cruise liner, nor flashy grand statement, but rather a comfortable home at sea to be

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enjoyed by family and friends. Her seven decks offer a variety of guest and private areas, from the grand dining room aft on Deck Three and the library with log-burning fire on Deck Five, to the plunge pool flanked by hot and cold spa pools on Deck Seven and the vast beach club on Deck Two.



Central to her interior is an impressive spiral staircase to starboard that ascends through six decks. A large skylight at the top floods the stairway with natural light, with glass segments at every landing ensuring that light is carried right down through the yacht. Elegant foyers on each deck provide a start point to explore the decks themselves, while a beautifully realised guest elevator offers an alternative mode of access.

Guests enjoy comfortable suites on Decks Three and Four, all with en suite bath or shower rooms, many of which offer spectacular views from their bath tubs. A total of 12 suites in all allows for a party of 24.

For those on board, a grand entrance awaits at the aft end of Decks Two and Three. Here, a formal dining room on the main deck is overlooked by a cocktail lounge with grand piano, the areas connected not just by two sweeping staircases at the forward end of the dining room, but also by a large opening in Deck Two's ceiling. 'This is a refined and elegant grand entrance to the yacht,' explains Pascale Reymond from Reymond Langton Design, the studio responsible for *Serene's* interior design. 'It reminds me of the cruise liners of the

1920s and 1930s. There is something theatrical about it, but it is subtle, and the décor, while influenced by art deco, includes shapes which are somewhat alien – a pure contemporary element. It was the first sketch we did for the project, and it has remained largely unchanged in its finished form.'

A contemporary gas fire, contained in a large glass cylinder, flickers at the forward end of the dining room, and similar fires feature in the cocktail lounge above and in the forward saloon on Deck Four. This saloon offers a variety of comfortable seating areas and a bar, and as the area overlooks the helideck forward,

guests enjoy extensive panoramic views and can watch flight operations.

There is also an additional seating area, with settees atop a large circular platform that can be rotated. Situated to starboard, this allows either for guests to face inboard, where they can view a large-screen television, or face outboard through opening glass doors for a view of the ocean. Further, business meetings can be undertaken in a large conference room that features a leather floor, and the room – and table – can be divided to make two smaller meeting rooms if required.

Up on Deck Five, the master suites are spacious and the forward master offers access to a private seating terrace forward. Moreover, for a truly indulgent soak, the sidepod to port has been pressed into service as a spa pool. Suspended over the water, this spot offers not

The foredeck, in front of the main helipad, offers a spacious additional seating area (below). A large screen can be erected at the forward end of the helipad to create an open-air cinema for guests





only exceptional views to the ocean, but a glass bottom gives a thrilling sense of being suspended high above the sea.

The deck includes a comfortable study to port forward of an aft saloon, and inboard from the office lies a circular library-cum-cigar room, with leather armchairs and a real log fire – a room reminiscent of a Dutch gentleman's club. 'Every space has a function,' says Reymond Langton design partner Jason Macaree. 'You know where you are,

and there is no superfluous decoration.'

Deck Two is a real treat. A guest corridor heading aft bisects the upper level of the engine room, with large glass windows offering a view of the immaculate mechanical spaces. 'Serenne is not just a home, she is a machine,' says Reymond. 'You can see the very heart of this yacht, which was a very important part of the brief.'

The systems include diesel electric drive, with eight MTU generators providing power for propulsion and domestic



systems. Main drive is delivered through fixed shafts and variable pitch propellers, with manoeuvring assistance provided by two forward thrusters and two stern thrusters. The yacht also features a full dynamic positioning system.

The guest corridor through the engine room leads to the main aft garage, which houses an extensive collection of tenders including a 50-knot, 10 metre Pascoe, a Safeboat RIB used as a fishing tender, two Ocean Marine custom nine-metre boats – one a limousine tender, the other a dive support boat – and a custom-built GSE submarine. There is also a Nautilus dive support system here.

If the garage hints at some of the activities guests can enjoy, the aftermost areas of this deck show the luxurious relaxation they can indulge in. Aft of the garage to port is an extensive gymnasium, while next door is a fully equipped hair salon. Opposite, to starboard, there is a spa area offering his and hers changing rooms, a *bamam*, a massage room, and a sauna overlooking a large shell door that opens to form a secondary beach platform on the water – perfect for taking a dip after a spell in the sauna. One of the two extraordinary surprises is also located in the spa – a snow room. With one wall dressed to mimic a rock face, this room recreates wintry conditions to an extreme degree. ‘We can get three to four inches of snow in here,’ claims *Serene’s* Master, Elliot Bibby, proudly.

The most impressive area of this deck, though, is saved for the aftermost section. The beach club itself, with its



several seating areas surrounding a 15 metre pool that can hold 90,000 litres of water, is impressive enough, but this space represents one of the most technologically complex areas of any yacht. To either side of the pool, shell doors open to create large balconies on the sea, while aft the stern door opens up to complete the beach. Above, giant glass doors in the deckhead, which form the dancefloor on the main aft deck, open to the sky, while opening up the stern completely turns the pool into an inboard dock for the tenders.

It took close to three months of FEM analysis and calculations by the yard’s technical office to engineer the structure around the openings. ‘We

increased the thickness of the structural detail to have no critical elements,’ explains Mauro Parodi, the yard’s project manager for the build. ‘As a result, we had everything approved by Lloyd’s, and there is no limitation on the number or sequence of the shell doors that can be opened – the yacht can have everything open at the same time.’

The midships part of Deck Two offers two more delightful areas. To starboard lies the sea cabin, intended to offer a comfortable space to sleep when the yacht is on passage. Designed in a contemporary Balinese style, the deckhead above the aft-facing bed mimics the underside of a Balinese hut’s thatched roof, while forward of the bed’s floor-to-ceiling partition headboard lies an indulgent open plan bathroom. To the side, another shell door opens to create a waterside balcony. ‘The vision of the sea cabin is the coolest one,’ enthuses Reymond. ‘It’s so earthy, and you

The forward saloon (below) overlooks the helipad; the dining room chandelier (opposite), along with other artworks on board, was realised by one of the world’s top glass sculptors. It took eight months to complete, and was all polished by hand







The large beach club (opposite bottom) features a 15m pool; the upper pool (opposite top) converts to a second helipad. Exterior lighting was designed by three of the world's best lighting design studios

can meet your everyday needs from here. You have the galley next door so you can make a midnight snack, and aft you have access to the spa and beach club.'

It is this sense of coherence that marks *Serene* out as a special yacht. It is not just the décor that is understated, the very essence of the yacht, the way the areas flow together, all combines to create an interior that appeals not as a collection of show rooms, but as a whole that can be lived in. 'With everything connected, including the private elevator, it takes a small boat feature and puts it in a big boat,' Reymond explains. 'It is a large yacht, but it is made up of many small yachts. You feel like you can live in it.'

The galley is an example of this comfortable essence. A guest galley, with a table overlooked by a bank of glass-fronted fridges offering cold meats, cheeses and the like, looks into the professionally equipped main galley through giant windows, so guests can enjoy wine from two nearby cellars while watching a culinary display from the head chef. On many yachts the galley areas can feel off-limits to guests; *Serene* positively encourages interaction with the chef, the crew and the food itself.

The deck spaces are no less



impressive. The main deck aft comprises two bars, seating areas and informal tables under the deck above and around the giant glass doors in the deck that offer a view down into the beach club. These doors, when closed, form a dancefloor to the large bandstand located right aft, and the whole exposed area can be shaded by an awning. Up one level, there is a further large aft deck seating space, but the prime area for guests to enjoy alfresco dining is on Deck Five, where a table that can seat 20 is also served by a bar and cook station aft that offers a barbecue, pizza oven and teppanyaki grill. Aft on the bridge deck above is a circular pool surrounded by sunpads with individual drinks tables – the floor of the pool can be raised to create an additional touch-and-go helipad.

The very top of the yacht offers not only spectacular views, but also a further plunge pool flanked by hot and cold spa pools. The foredeck, in front of the main helipad, is pushed into service too, forming a spacious yet intimate additional seating area. From here, a large screen can be erected at the forward end of the helipad to create a unique and spectacular open air cinema, with the bow seating area becoming the stalls.







The helicopter hangar is in the bows, with crew access from forward on Deck Two. The Eurocopter 145 is deployed via a rising platform; the hatch doors above slide outboard, forming the outer wings of the fully certified helipad. To get the helicopter from fully stowed to being deployed and ready for flight operations takes a maximum of one hour.

Either side of the hangar space is additional garaging for the many toys on board, including jet skis, Laser sailing dinghies, dive gear and windsurfers. Moving forward again takes you into the forepeak area, which forms the mooring space and which includes opening hull balconies on either side for docking and anchoring operations. The tank system for the jet fuel is also here.

There is more to *Serene*, though, than is seen at a superficial viewing. Take the private elevator and you descend to the double bottom deck; here *Serene's* second big surprise awaits. As a watertight door withdraws, a cosy room is revealed with walls and deckhead finished in copper plate with accentuated giant rivets. A daybed beckons, providing a perfect spot to relax and look at the sole – here, two large, 70cm thick glass windows through the ice-classed hull offer a view of the underwater world beneath. It is no wonder that this – dubbed the Nemo room – is a favourite spot for everyone. There is even underwater lighting rigged in the hull to attract and illuminate fish and other aquatic creatures for a sensational night view.

From the grand dining room aft to the beautifully realised Balinese sea cabin, and from the beach club with its snow room to the wonderful Nemo room, *Serene* is a sensational yacht in every respect. Her understated and considered décor projects a modesty within its elegance. That her spaces retain an intimate and coherent, homely feel in spite of her incredible size and volume is testament to the thought that has gone into her design and this, combined with her technical achievements, surely makes her one of the finest yachts afloat today.



The glass lift (above) and the staircase that spirals through the decks (opposite) typify the understated elegance of the interior. Glass landings ensure natural light filters down from the skylight at the top of the stairs





SERENE *Fincantieri Yachts*

LOA 134m

Beam 18.6m

Draught 5.5m

Gross tonnage >8,000 GT

Engines/generators
8 x MTU 16V4000 M40B

Propulsion motors

ABB, 2 x 5,200kW

Speed (max/cruise)
>20 knots

Range at 15 knots
>6,000nm

Bowthrusters
2 x 400kW

Sternthrusters

2 x 160kW

Stabilisers
4 x zero speed

Fuel capacity
800,000 litres

Water capacity
145,000 litres

Owner and guests 24

Crew Max 62 in 30 cabins

Construction
Steel hull, light alloy upper decks

Classification
Lloyd's, SOLAS

Naval architecture

Fincantieri

Exterior design
Espen Øino International

Interior design
Reymond Langton Design

Builder/year

Fincantieri Yachts / 2011
Muggiano, La Spezia, Italy
tel: +39 0187 543238
email: fincantieriyachts@fincantieri.it
web: www.fincantieriyachts.com

The guest corridor through the engine room offers a view of the beating heart of the yacht (below left); the galley has viewing windows so that the chef can entertain onlooking guests with flamboyant displays of culinary art (below right)

