

TO THE MOON

The new Lürssen *Moon Sand* combines big thinking and luxurious details,

Photography DAVID CHURCHILL

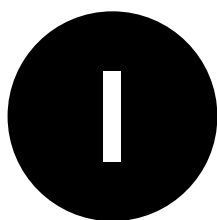


proving that superyachts come in all shapes and sizes, says *Risa Merl*

AND BACK

Cover boat





It's a dull, rainy day in London, but along the River Thames there is a glimmer of excitement in the form of a boat. The new 55.5-metre Lürssen *Moon Sand* is moored at Butler's Wharf, the grandly ornate Tower Bridge serving as a regal backdrop to her graceful lines, inspired by none other than the classic yacht *Carinthia VI*. Years prior to the inception of *Moon Sand*, Bannenberg & Rowell Design had worked on a reinterpretation of the 71-metre *Carinthia VI*. Launched by Lürssen in 1973 and now renamed *The One*, she was designed by the late, great Jon Bannenberg, so it's a fitting continuation of his legacy that his son's firm would breathe new life into her iconic lines.

"*Moon Sand* has an unusual sort of heritage," says Simon Rowell, her designer. "It grew out of a mini-*Carinthia* notion. When a yacht is deemed to be among the most beautiful in the world, you really don't want to muck around with that, but iterating through to a more contemporary design was rewarding."

Bannenberg & Rowell had also designed the owner's previous *Moon Sand*, a 44-metre built by Feadship. When it was time to step up in size, he

met the designers in their London office and saw the sketch of the modernised *Carinthia* concept hanging on the wall. The drawing caught the owner's eye – it was just what he was looking for, though he wanted a smaller LOA of around 50 metres. The designers said it was a project they had been working on with Lürssen.

"Apparently, the client said, 'Don't they only build bigger boats?'" says Michael Breman, Lürssen's sales director. Over the years, Lürssen has garnered a reputation for building 100-metre-plus behemoths – of the top 25 largest yachts in the world, 13 were built by the German yard. It had been a decade since it had launched a "smaller" yacht, the 61-metre *Lady Kathryn V*.

"You build big boats and you get noticed; it has its advantages, but it also has its disadvantages," says Breman. "People think we build only large boats, but actually we have built by far more boats under 90 metres than above. We believe the very large yacht market is an occasional business and it's important for us to stay in touch with the core of the market – it's where there are the most buyers." In recent years, Lürssen had been exploring how to reconnect with the middle of the market. The builder wanted to make sure it had a presence here and was not just seen as an outlier that only builds very large yachts.





Below: exterior sculpting reflects light and adds dimension, resulting in a profile that's timeless and eye-catching in its details





The Preciosa light fixtures in the main saloon (above and far right) appear matt, but at night they look more translucent and give a sense of movement on the ceiling. The blue armchairs were chosen by the owner's wife

It was a perfect confluence of events that Lürssen was already looking to move in this direction and that *Moon Sand's* owner was captivated by a *Carinithia*-inspired yacht. The concept went through half a dozen iterations before settling on what would become the new *Moon Sand*. The elegant silhouette with sharp, straight lines running bow to stern is paired with well-sculpted superstructure curves that are noticeable up close. In the final version, the designers introduced a much softer and curvaceous bulwark.

The owner's brief for *Moon Sand* wasn't to have more rooms on board but to enlarge the living spaces he already had. It's very much a family boat so it was vital that it retained a homely atmosphere. The owner regularly told his team that he didn't want a big boat. The project started at 51 metres, then went up to 53 and finally to 55.5, which was the owner's upper limit. "He was very conscious that he didn't want to grow too much in size – you know, starting at 50 but ending up at 60 metres. It's easy to get carried away during a custom build," says the owner's rep James Hutchinson of Hutchinson Yacht Consulting. "When we were trying to find

more space, he was the one reining us back in, saying 'No, I want to be strict on myself because I don't want to feel lost in my own boat.' The feeling of cosiness was important."

Despite being firm on the LOA, the owner had no hard and fast rules for the volume, leaving it up to the designers to shape things. "We designed this yacht from a blank piece of paper, so rather than having an envelope that the interior works within, we were able to make sure everything in the interior was optimised with the structure," Rowell says.

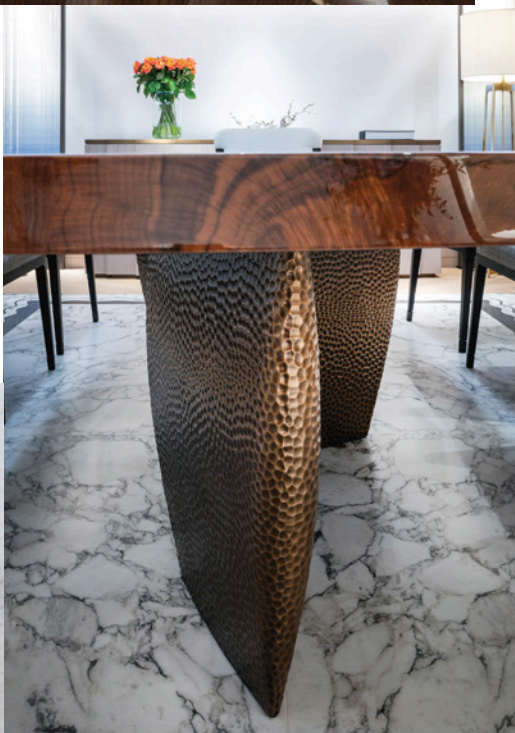
But the owner knew that, if he was going over 500GT, it needed to be a worthwhile step. At 835GT, the yacht has gained larger lower deck guest cabins, an expansive master with a walk-in closet, a much better gym and expanded exterior areas. "One huge upgrade is the [main] aft deck," says Rowell. "The previous *Moon Sand* also had a pool, but it felt a bit too cramped and close to the exterior stairs leading to the upper deck." The bottom of the pool raises to be flush with the faux teak deck when not in use.

The beam is just one metre wider than the earlier *Moon Sand*, but the saloons feel much bigger thanks to her massive windowpanes.





Above: the stunning dining table features silver leaf detailing and a complicated "propeller" edge. It is just one of the many artistic furniture pieces made by Pollaro for Moon Sand



PIECES OF POLLARO

Moon Sand would not be complete without her amazing furnishings, many of them created by Pollaro Custom Furniture, working closely with designers Bannenberg & Rowell and the owner. Master furniture maker Frank Pollaro has crafted pieces for two of the owner's previous yachts.

"Our relationship has deepened over the past 10 years, and we have come to understand the client's needs and dreams intimately," he says.

The owner enjoys exotic woods and mixing materials. Pollaro's challenge here was to create a visual balance while combining colours and exotic grains. Among the numerous pieces Pollaro has crafted for *Moon Sand*, are the main saloon's sofa in Macassar ebony with stainless-steel details and a cocktail table in lacewood with a hand-laid eggshell top and patinated bronze details. In the upper deck saloon, a sofa in ziricote faces a coffee table in royal ebony with polished bronze inlays while blue eucalyptus complements stainless-steel details on the bespoke desk (*see overleaf*) and credenza. However, the pièce de résistance is the dining table, made with claro walnut crotch, black walnut end-grain rounds, redwood end-grain rounds, French walnut and dyed sycamore. "The dining table was the most challenging, as well as being my favourite piece," says Pollaro. "The top comprises 381 pieces of hand-cut and hand-taped veneer." Silver leaf fills in the cracks in the wood as a nod to the Japanese art of *kintsugi*, a technique used to mend broken pottery, often with powdered gold. "[The table] has a very complicated geometry," says designer Simon Rowell. "We've asked [Frank] to drape or waterfall finishes along that edge, which is a pretty challenging thing to do." The result is stunning. "When a team works together so seamlessly, it's like an orchestra playing a symphony – each person performing at their best and adding to the richness of the piece," Pollaro says.







"Though she's only a 55-metre yacht, the yard said the pieces of glass, particularly those in the upper deck lounge, were among the biggest pieces they had ever fitted because there are no mullions," Hutchinson says.

The lack of mullions meant that Lürssen put some serious R&D into creating a surrounding structure that could support the panes without any flexing. In the main saloon, the designers wanted to dress the windows without using drapes, so they are bordered by glass frames over an ombré mesh – while sheer blinds lower when privacy is required. "The boss was nervous he was losing window real estate," says Dickie Bannenberg. "We walked a tightrope between having a softening edge to the windows without blocking light."

The interior living spaces are also arranged differently, with fewer visual disruptions and an open-plan feel. "The main saloon is amazing," Bannenberg says. "Main saloons can be transit spaces, but they actually use it." The saloon has two seating areas, and the pièce de résistance in this space is the dining table, just one of the complicated custom furnishings built by Frank Pollaro (*see previous page*). Many of the other furnishings come from Silverlining and Linley.

The interior styling is unabashedly bold, which speaks to the owner's taste for interesting details. "He's always given us free rein," says Rowell.

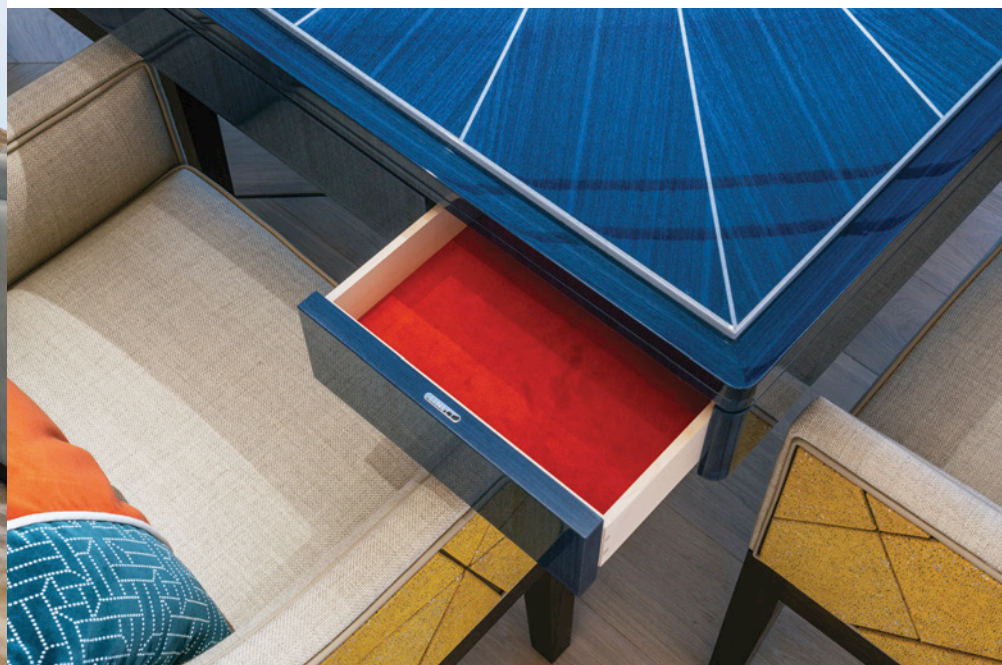




The upper deck saloon is a multifunctional space with a bar customised to conceal bottles, a desk by Pollaro (opposite page, bottom), a card table by Linley, paired with chairs by Silverlining (left) and doors that open wide to the outdoors dining area



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The owner's suite is a true retreat, with an office, large walk-in wardrobe and his-and-hers en suites. The owner's wife chose the pink stone surrounding the bathtub (above) during a trip to Italy to select marbles. The furnishings are custom-made to have thoughtful features, such as a hidden drawer for storing the remote controls



“EVERYTHING DOWN TO THE
SMALLEST DETAIL HAS A HOME.
EVERYTHING IS HERE FOR A
PURPOSE. THAT’S WHAT BUILDING
A CUSTOM BOAT IS ALL ABOUT”



The owners favourite colours are blue and yellow, the latter of which can be seen in bronze detailing, such as the base of the stools in the guest cabins (opposite page). Another accent colour sprinkled throughout on a smaller scale is coral, which is seen in some of the guest cabins and the armchairs on the upper deck



“If someone is brave enough to commission a bespoke boat, you want to take advantage of that on their behalf.” Yet it is purposefully more subdued than the previous *Moon Sand*. “We proposed a less claustrophobic scheme. We told the owner, ‘We can make it a calmer backdrop, but still have a lot of fun,’” he says. The owners are glass collectors and at first wanted a Chihuly chandelier, but the designers thought it might make things too busy. Instead, Rowell suggested petal-shaped white glass fixtures by Preciosa. These adorn the main saloon and dining area, affixed on the drop ceilings, which are finished in a subtle blue-sky fresco.

The owner’s preferred colour palette is blues and yellows, the latter of which the designers have drawn out with the use of bronze and brass detailing, instead of just splashes of colour in the soft goods. An example of this can be seen in the bronze detailed chairs Silverlining designed and built for the upper deck lounge. This saloon is the owner’s lair; it’s the place he spends the most time on board. Rowell says it was the most challenging space to design because it’s really four rooms in one – a games area, a lounge, an office and a bar – and is divided as such. The lounge has an eclectic pairing of woods – a coffee table in white “ebony Royale” is set against a custom-designed sofa with a ziricote wood base and built-in end table.

Hutchinson has worked with the owners for nearly two decades, since they owned *Sunseekers*. “They moved from production boats to custom, so they like all the little things you can do because it’s a custom boat,” he says. “Because we had done several boats with them before, we knew what they wanted. Everything to the smallest detail has a home; everything is here for a purpose. That’s what building a custom boat is all about.” This includes having power units hidden in upper saloon furnishings to charge iPads and a drawer built into the master cabin dresser that is there purely to hide the Crestron remote control.

Regulations that come with going over 500GT that might put other owners off, such as more allowances for fire doors and space for crew, wasn’t an issue. “He actually wanted more space for crew and made a point of telling me there should be big showers for the crew, a comfortable mess and a large galley,” Rowell says. “It was refreshing, because the crew areas are always the spaces that get pinched.”

The captain, engineer and chief stew have all been with the owner for many years, so they were able to guide decisions. “Having worked with them for seven years, you can better tailor the spaces,” says chief stew Katy Mijatovic. All the china is hand-washed, so there was no need for a dishwasher in the pantry, and the owner prefers tea to coffee, so there aren’t any big barista machines. The galley also has a built-in wok on the stovetop.

The technical spaces challenged Lürssen to think differently when returning to building

**“I DON’T THINK IT’S A SMALL BOAT AT ALL;
I THINK IT’S A HUGE BOAT! WHEN YOU’RE
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“small” boats. “It’s harder because you have to fit the same systems of a 100 metre in a smaller volume,” says Lürssen project manager Lorenza Allegrini. The size and placement of the engines, generators and equipment all had to be carefully developed, digging into 3D models. *Moon Sand*’s chief engineer, Bozidar Mijatovic, worked closely with the yard’s team on this. “We found new ways to route the piping and played with every available centimetre – even gaining five centimetres in a passageway was really important,” he says. *Moon Sand* is built to IMO Tier III, and the engineering team decided to maximise the onboard urea capacity so the yacht can travel its entire 5,000-nautical-mile range in low-emission mode.

As we make our way down the Thames to Canary Wharf, *Moon Sand*’s Captain Lorian Smith is in the bridge along with the Thames pilots. The bridge has excellent visibility, despite the stormy English weather. “We took as many mullions out as we could, then we moved from 19-inch screens up to 27 inches. The technology has changed hugely in those years,” he says.

Fortunately, there was much better weather in London when the owners first stepped on board a week before, and they were able to see their yacht for the first time in the glow of sunlight. The owners are very much hands-on and would have been even more so if it wasn’t for Covid-19. Their last design outing was in February 2020 to select marbles in Italy. After that, they weren’t able to visit the boat until it arrived in London. “It was unusual to not have

them see it in the shipyard, but it’s a buzz seeing all the landmarks from the yacht and cruising under Tower Bridge,” Hutchinson says.

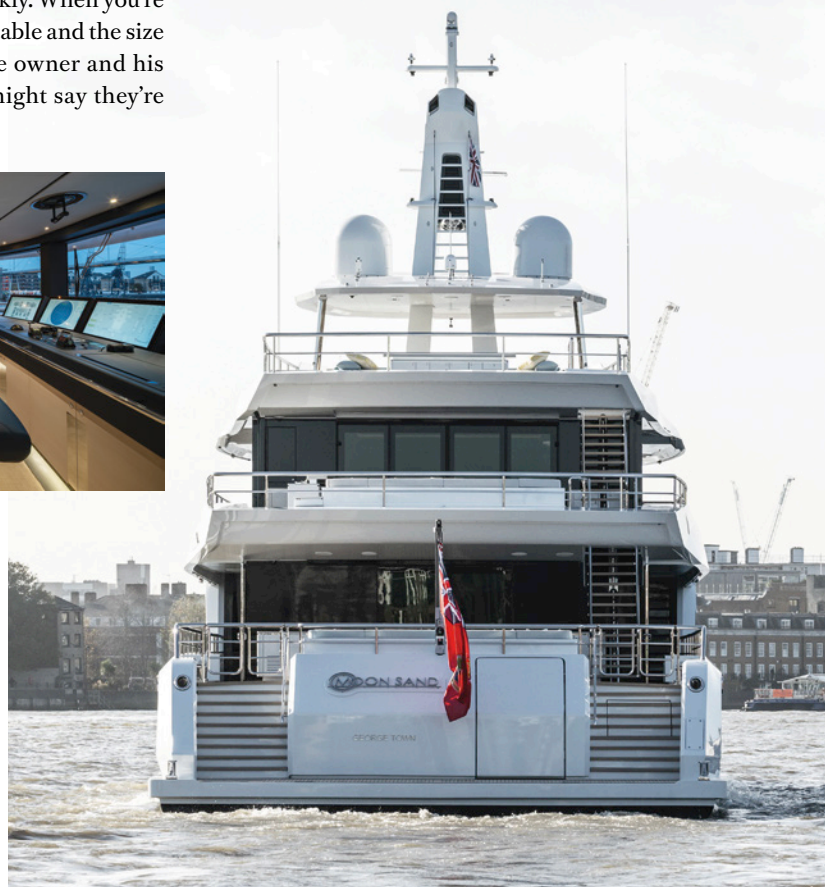
As for Lürssen’s re-entry into the world of smaller boats, the yard reports a healthy order book in part as a result of moving in this direction. Breman is quick to note that though she’s not a 100 metre, *Moon Sand* is far from dinky. “I don’t think she’s a small boat at all; I think she’s a huge boat!” he says. “I’m always surprised that the human mind can get comfortable with size very quickly. When you’re on board she feels very comfortable and the size is good. Most importantly, the owner and his family are very happy.” One might say they’re over the moon. ■



Above: with as few window mullions as possible, the bridge offers the captain remarkable visibility



Moon Sand wasn’t so much about making more spaces as bigger spaces, such as the dedicated gym (above) and a larger pool on the aft deck. The owner sees having a garage as a waste of space so he’s opted for a chase boat as a tender



Moon Sand

Lürssen

Sundeck

Bridge deck

Main deck

Lower deck

The huge sundeck has options for dining with tables that can be moved up or down

There's a Solas-classed rescue/guest tender on the bow

Crew spaces are finished to a high standard and feature large showers

The upper deck lounge doors open all the way to the upper aft deck

The galley has a built-in wok and the pantry is devoid of a dishwasher, decisions made with the crew's input

10m
5m
0m

LOA 55.5m
LWL 51.95m
Beam 10.4m
Draught 3.1m
Gross tonnage
835GT

Engines
2 x MTU 12V 4000 M53R
Speed (max/cruise)
15.45/12 knots
Range at 12 knots
5,100nm
Generators
2 x Zenoro 250kW

Fuel capacity
91,700 litres
Freshwater capacity
19,900 litres
Tender
1 x Pascoe 6.2M DT Solas
Rescue Tender

Owners/guests 10
Crew 13
Construction
Steel hull; aluminium
superstructure

Naval architecture
Lürssen
**Exterior styling and
interior design**
Bannenberg & Rowell

Builder/year
Lürssen/2021
Germany

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