

INVICTVS

STUDY





LURSSSEN 279': **MY SOLANDGE**

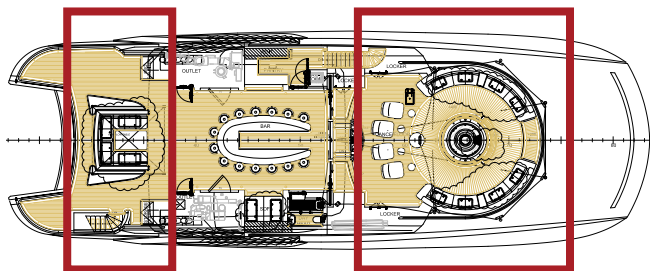
BY: CRAIG BARNETT
PHOTOGRAPHY: KLAUS JORDAN

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS...

...and what we found there. In Lewis Carroll's enduring and endearing contribution to 19th Century literary nonsense—Alice in Wonderland—the Cheshire Cat fades until it disappears entirely, leaving only its wide grin. Having just returned from St Thomas, USVI's after an enchanting day aboard Solandge, our grin has yet to fade. Available for charter, has the yard once again produced a classic that will be treasured for generations to come?

LÜRSSEN 279': MY SOLANDGE

→ SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 279'2" (85.10m)**LWL:** 242'1" (73.50m)**BEAM:** 45'3" (13.80m)**DRAFT (LOADED):** 12'3" (3.90m)**CONSTRUCTION:** Steel/Aluminum**DISPLACEMENT:** 2,899 GT**CRUISING SPEED:** 15-Knots**RANGE @ 12-KNOTS:** 6,000 NM**ENGINES:** 2x CAT 3516 @ 2.000 KW**GENERATORS:** 3 x CAT C18 DITA (1x 570Kva, 2x 440Kva)**EMERGENCY GENSET:** 1x MAN 240 kva**GEARBOX:** 2 x Reintjes WAF 863**PROPELLERS:** 2x Piening 5-blade high skew FPP**BOW THRUSTER:** Schottel, 240 KW**WATER JET PROPULSION UNIT:** Brunvoll, 240KW**FUEL CAPACITY:** 47,550 US Gal (180,000L)**FRESH WATER CAPACITY:** 10,566 US Gal/day (40,000L/d)**STABILIZERS:** Quantum QC 2600 XT Fins**AIR CONDITIONING:** Heinen + Hopmann**CLASS:** LRS. ✠ 100A1, SSC Yacht (P)**MONO ✠ LMC, G6 UMS****GUEST ACCOMMODATION:** 12 in six cabins**CREW:** 29 in 15 cabins**BUILDER:** Lürssen Yachts**EXTERIOR DESIGNER:** Espen Oeino**INTERIOR DESIGNER:** Aileen Rodriguez

“To keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood,” is the admirable ambition of the title character of Alice In Wonderland. Stories, tales, fables and literature should always fuel our imagination, transport us to fantastical places and place us at the heart of wondrous adventures, because the moment we no longer dare to dream then

something intangible, and yet exceptionally valuable, is lost. Embarking the latest delivery from Lürssen—the 279' (84.10m) MY Solandge in St Thomas—we were immediately swept up in wishful reverie of weeks spent at anchor off paradise islands. Bedecked with enchanting luxury this dream ship immediately whisks one away on a flight of fancy.

Enter the interior and one is through the looking glass, tumbling headlong into a world of glowing crystal walls, curious grottos with ceilings of shimmering stars, humorous adornments, exquisite golden detail and craftsmanship of almost mystical prowess. There's even a Tree of Life that ascends to the heavens while through each deck fine art, classical music and cultural references weave a spellbindingly subtly continuity of detail... but more of that later, for as Alice ponders when first introduced, “what is the point of a book without pictures or conversation?”

Being enthusiastically welcomed onboard by the full compliment of 29 crewmembers was a royal experience afforded during our visit, and

it's one that is sure to create a dramatic first impression on any charter party. After handshakes all round we were guided on our magical mystery tour by Captain Brett Fillis, who had recently joined after his role as build Captain of the 290' Oceanco Nirvana. Also joining us was Chief Engineer Travis Ludbrook who, having spent two years aboard Polar Star for Solandge's owner, relocated to Kiel and played an instrumental role in her build at the Rensberg shipyard. Being a 'fairly straightforward' project, with no particular engineering challenges, Travis told us the build team and yard concentrated on pushing the envelope in terms of development and refinement.

Solandge represents the sixth delivery between 275' and 288' (84-88m) in the last four years for Lürssen, suggesting the German shipyard has not only found a sweet spot in the market but have also created an efficient naval architectural and engineering

Solandge's sundeck (right), as with her other exterior spaces, was inspired by a 'Nikki Beach' style concept for relaxing and partying.

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LURSEN 279': **MY SOLANDGE**



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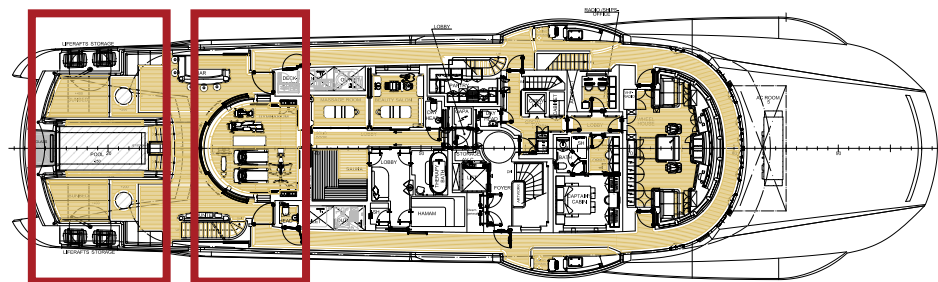


The aft section of the owner's deck (left), designed to stimulate and invigorate.

package that offers the attractive benefits of reduction in development lead time and costs for owners. The hull form and engineering may be the footprint upon which this line of yachts stands, but in no way can they be considered 'a series' as each is entirely custom and possesses a unique individual character. The briefest of comparisons between the yachts Valerie, Solandge, Pacific, Ace, Phoenix II and Quattroelle confirms this. Admittedly this shared platform approach is not a new one—indeed it is quite common—but what is interesting is the interpretation of each owner and their designer's yacht within the same basic parameters, plus the inevitable engineering evolution that such an approach delivers. "The fine tuning and engineering progression is of course quite natural," concurs Travis. "There are ideas, systems or equipment that each build introduces and then becomes a standard for subsequent projects. For Solandge we opted to include a third water maker to provide capacity for ballast and wash down. She could operate on just

the two watermakers but we believed the additional for redundancy was important for a yacht approaching 3,000GT; Quattroelle then adopted the same approach. It can also be fairly simple things, like we hinged the quarter-inch diamond-cut baseplates that create the sole of the engine room. It's much easier and more efficient than undoing four screws and having loose plate scratching the gunmetal grey finish we used. This has now been adopted as standard practice at Lürssen."

The exterior design and arrangements are the work of multi-award winning Monaco-based designer Espen Oeino. From his prolific pen have flowed the lines for some of the world's most recognizable yachts from the most revered yards, and we'd wager this is another that will raise his stock even higher. Solandge announces her presence with considerable aesthetic appeal and viewed from any angle there are numerous facets that encourage one to savor her design. Her livery has been cleverly imagined with a facet in contrasting Matterhorn



NUTS AND BOLTS...

TRAVIS LUDBROOK

SOLANDGE'S CHIEF ENGINEER

LÜRSEN 279': MY SOLANDGE

At what stage were you involved in the build project Travis and how was the experience at Lürssen?

This was my second build and I am familiar with the owner's requirements having also served aboard Polar Star, so I was involved right from the start. Once we started engineering I move with the family to Kiel, Germany to be close to the Lürssen yard in Rendsburg. We were provided an office on-site during the engineering stage and once the hull and superstructure were married we moved into another office in the shed, to be right on the spot. The level of professionalism at Lürssen is really remarkable and the build team and the yard really pushed each other hard to achieve what I believe is a very special result.

You certainly ensured your working environment was well catered for in the build!

The engine room really is superb and we put a lot of effort into making it somewhere the owner would be proud to show his guests around, but there's other inclusions that make the engineers jobs more efficient too. The dedicated workshop is one example, its so well organized and well equipped it makes our life easier. The control room is another great environment to work in and we spent a lot of time on engine room design, arranging the systems around the perimeter, rather than in modules around the space, ensuring easier access for service.

A happy crew is a happy boat, so what other considerations were made during the build to make life easier for the crew?

The owner is experienced and specifically requested that as much space be made



available as possible for storage, knowing it is a primary concern for crew. So when we were studying the GA we looked for any little spot that we could use for storage space and found a lot... they have some really amusing names for identifying them too, but not for printing! The crew also enjoys a great mess area, their own TV lounge and of course Chef Jason ensures we eat remarkably well onboard... since the earliest days of sailing 'rations' have been a key to crew moral.

Despite being on generators at the dock there's no discernable noise even in the tender garage...

We don't have shorepower converters and the boat is run on European power, so once out of Europe we run on the gensets that can produce 1.2-megawatts of power rather than shore power. She has a 120-watt transformer fitted for the sockets around the boat however, so guests with US electrical appliances can charge and use them while onboard. Regarding noise and insulation we invested a lot of extra

time and money on insulation prior to the vessel being completed, so Lürssen and ourselves were really pleased when the reports came back that they were the lowest results achieved by the yard in the cabins.

Where there any particular challenges during the build?

It was actually quite a straightforward project, one of the advantages of the yard already having built a number of yachts based on the same naval architecture and engineering package. Obviously the installation of 'The Tree of Life' was a nervy moment, craning in such a delicate 50' object that runs through all decks with just a 2mm clearance in places, but that's a testament to what Lürssen can achieve. We're really quite proud of some of the smaller solutions we designed and fabricated, like the removable dancefloor over the sundeck Jacuzzi. It's easy to fit and stow, with pieces slotting into the round frame like slices of pizza. For such a large yacht the whole process was truly enjoyable.

THE 'TREE OF LIFE' IS A STUNNING 50' TALL CONVERSATION PIECE THAT CONNECTS SIX OF SOLANDGE'S SEVEN DECKS...

white cleverly highlighting the sweeping contour of her Flag Blue hull. Aft coamings and vertical surfaces have also been finished in blue, so the white upper decks are picked out with a delicacy that avoids the heavy 'wedding cake effect' prevalent in so many marinas around the world. From the extension of the forward overhang of the owner's stateroom, to topping out with the rakish radar mast and stainless-steel funnels arrays, Espen Oeino has infused his exterior design with balanced measures of elegance, grace and pace.

Given Espen's proclivity for including large glazed areas for wide panoramas and natural light provision—as most recently on Stella Maris—we were initially surprised by their absence in Solandge's primary social areas... but once one appreciates the vast exterior spaces and the nature of Aileen Rodriguez's interior design, it all makes sense. The exterior encourages guests to enjoy the water, outdoor lifestyle and evening entertainment; the interior lends itself to creating intimate and memorable family moments.

Included in the exterior design is a neat cutaway in the aft overhang of the owner's deck, so swimmers in the jet-flow pool and occupants of the sunpads can bathe in solar rays. The cutaway also creates two highly attractive Juliet balconies on the sundeck, additional vantage points from which to watch the world slip by while leaning on the comfortably wide cap rails. It is the sum of these small details, like the space behind the sundeck's fixed banquets that allows crew easier service, that are indicators of the sophistication of Solandge's design and the care taken to ensure guest comfort. The aft decks also benefit from sail-like canvas biminis, shading guests and providing privacy when deployed. Reinforcing the point made earlier regarding progressive development, the owner declined fitting bimini shades in the foredeck area after the owner of Quatroelle suggested they were rarely used and caught the wind when at anchor.

As in the horology sector, modern yachts are now being measured by the sophistication of the engineering 'complications' they incorporate, and Solandge doesn't disappoint on this score either. Hull openings are included in bow and amidships for crew convenience—anchor watch and service respectively—while dual lateral terraces are deployed in the aft section to reveal a remarkable tender garage. Why so remarkable? Mindful that the owner's party and charter guests will spend considerable time in the area—enjoying the vast array of toys Solandge secrets within her hull—the space has been completed along the lines of an upscale watersports center. The overhead gantry cranes that launch and recover the fleet of toys are so well concealed it takes a moment or two to realize they are there, while detailing like the leather cladding of the structural supports—complete with baseball style stitching—elevates this space beyond 'garage'.



TIME WITH...

RICHARD MASTERS

OWNERS REPRESENTATIVE COMPANY AND YACHT MANAGEMENT

LURSSSEN 279' : MY SOLANDGE

Congratulations on the successful management of a wonderful build, how do you judge the overall experience for yourself, the build team and the owner?

It was a pleasure to work with Lürssen, exterior designer Espen Oeino Design, Rodriguez Interiors and Dolker&Voges in a creative and solution orientated environment. Always striving to give the Owner his dream, with her striking exterior lines and her unique Interior

Any particular challenges faced?

One of our challenges was the idea of a Perspex dance floor, which was easy enough to imagine, but then we had to figure out how to lock it in place, store it, and oh-by-the-way give it a railing so no one would fall off. We managed to figure it out and the unique, floating sundeck dance floor area has been one of the most popular attraction at all the parties held on Solandge so far.

Let's concentrate on the charter aspects of Solandge, what is her weekly rate, itinerary and availability for the forthcoming seasons?

Solandge is €1-million per week, she is available in the Mediterranean this summer and will go wherever the client desires. She's also currently available for the month of July, so we'd be very interested in hearing from anyone who has requirements for that time.

Are there any plans to venture beyond the Mediterranean and Caribbean in the future?

Yes most definitely, it would be wonderful to have Solandge venture wherever she can allow herself to go and wherever a client desires her to be. This is when the owners are not obviously utilizing her for private charter.

Very briefly, what do you consider as Solandge's primary unique selling points with regards charter?

Solandge is like no other superyacht, she is a stand alone brand. Imagine, she is one of the most luxurious exclusive hidden islands where a once in a lifetime experience awaits you and every dream comes true. You will discover new exciting ways to spend quality time with your loved ones and guests onboard, then allow her to showcase the ultimate in luxurious living and outdoor entertainment that you have ever imagined. Every inch of Solandge has been considered to allow new and exciting discoveries and surprise and delight all who comes onboard.

Crew play a vital role in the charter experience, has any special emphasis been placed on this in terms of selection or training aboard Solandge?

The owners are very passionate about the crew on Solandge, they are part of the family. Every crew member has been hand picked and selected specifically to ensure the highest possible service is given to the owners and their charter guests. The emphasis on training is a very strict one, the Captain ensures the crew have

consistent training across the board and the owners also encourage the crew to utilize their free time in investing in their career path and future onboard superyachts.

You're creating a whole brand surrounding Solandge, what will this involve? It's also quite a unique approach, what's the thinking behind it?

The owners want to create a brand, a brand that allows others to enjoy their creation. Solandge, as does any superyacht, deserves a personality and a brand identity just like a company for instance. This logical but creative approach allows the long-term success of the company and gives the brand positioning in the luxury market. Solandge has this and more, we are currently creating a brand that has a brand strategy and marketing strategy to give the company a foundation and platform to specifically target the Solandge consumer directly. This also allows other luxury market consumers to engage with a luxury superyacht brand, currently there is a gap and we want to build a bridge with Solandge to fill that gap. We have a Brand and PR team who are creating and managing this process and we are looking forward to the successful outcome that this will bring for the brand.





A yacht's toy inventory is a primary consideration for charter clients and Solandge's is amongst the best in the business. Three Yamaha Waverunners and a stand-up Superjet, three Seabobs, a jet RIB, fishing equipment, and a Centurion tow-boat for wakesurfing, wakeboarding, waterskiing and tubing ensure there's plenty to keep one occupied on the water. For scuba enthusiasts Solandge doesn't just possess a dedicated dive room with enough equipment to kit up her full complement of 12-guests, she's also a fully certified PADI Dive Centre so the uninitiated can enjoy expert tuition and gain fully accredited certification during their charter. Easy access to the ocean is provided by the inclusion of a transformer staircase in the bathing platform, so there's no undignified flopping about in heavy equipment either.

Attentive to the fact guests have requirements beyond zipping around the ocean in wet boardshorts, Solandge also offers a 36' Fjord tender, so dinners ashore can be attended with sartorial dignity intact when the situation demands. Usually towed behind the yacht during shorter passages, we asked Travis the Chief Engineer what was the thinking behind the selection of this particular stylish launch? "Obviously she's dry, easy to board/alight and offers a cuddy-cabin, so is useful as a day boat. But with a price tag in the region of \$300k she's extremely good

Glass panels shelter the al fresco dining area if required, so outdoor dining can be enjoyed in almost any climatic conditions.

value too. Built in Germany by Hanse Yachts the production numbers may be high but her styling still marks her out as an attractive boat, we've been really happy with her." At the time of writing a 32' 9" (10m) Naiad RIB was also on order for addition to Solandge's already impressive personal fleet.

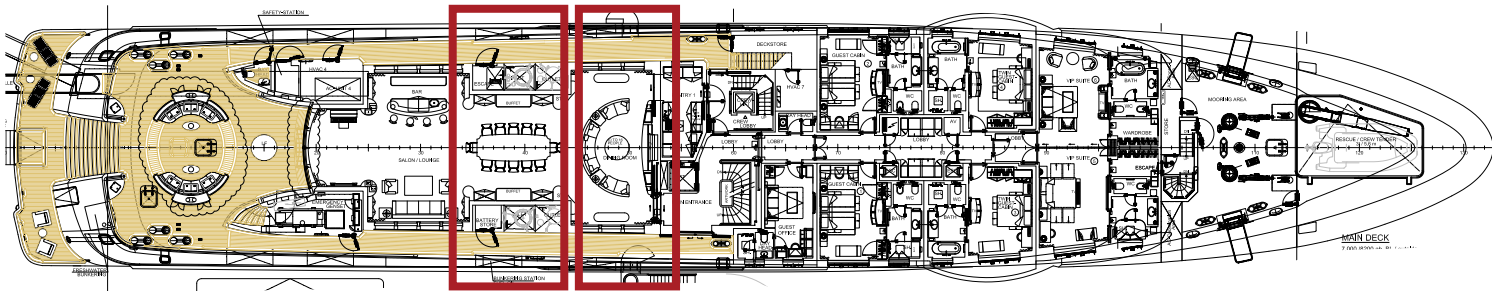
Being experienced yacht owners and having a clear understanding of their personal use, Solandge eschews the fashionable inclusion of an open beach club behind a lifting transom plate. Instead a large watertight door—which ingeniously reveals a rainforest shower when opened—leads down to a self-service pantry in the toy store's lobby. Here, as throughout the yacht, we noticed thoughtful details like the inclusion of a touchscreen display for guests to check air and water



**THE MAIN SALON
DEMONSTRATES INTERIOR
DESIGNER AILEEN
RODRIGUEZ'S CONSIDERABLE
TALENTS IN CREATING A
MAGICAL AND LUXURIOUS
ENVIRONMENT...**



THE FORMAL DINING AREA IS LOCATED ON THE MAIN DECK, BUT MOST OF THE TALENTED CHEF'S CREATIONS ARE ENJOYED ON THE SHELTERED AFT TERRACE OF THE DECK ABOVE...



LURSSSEN 279': MY SOLANDGE





temperature, charts, wind and weather data prior to dipping a toe in the ocean. A sauna has also been included in this area, perfectly convenient for a relaxing wind-down after the day's exertions. The bathing platform also enjoys a natural connection with the cockpit, thanks to the wide central transom staircase; a feature carried over from the owner's previous yacht, Polar Star (also designed by Espen Oeino). It's obviously an arrangement that works well in practice.

EXPANSIVE EXTERIOR LIVING

It sounds obvious, but the greatest benefit of yachting is the ability to visit some of the world's most breathtaking locations, so creating a platform to optimize one's appreciation of the surrounding environment was obviously at the forefront of Espen Oeino's mind when penning the exterior spaces. The natural connection between the ocean and cockpit ensures its use extends well beyond simply being an impressive reception area. In the cockpit we met Chef Jason MacDonald and after a brief introduction and promises to join us for post-lunch coffee, he headed below to his galley as we ascended one deck and enjoyed an aperitif at the bar in the primary exterior dining area.

While aboard the family and charter guests usually opt for a buffet-style lunch, with the crew laying out an array of dishes on the display pedestals flanking the dining table, but during our visit we were treated to a full seven course menu that quite simply surpassed all Michelin Star restaurants I've visited to date. The quality and inventiveness of the dishes were sublime. From crab salad and caviar

Dining is a key element of any charter experience. Solandge's Head Chef, Jason McDonald, ensures your time onboard is exhilarating and memorable.

amuse bouche, through seared ahi and scallops, foie grass crème brûlée and wagyu beef so delicate it surrendered before the razor-sharp Japanese folded steel Samurai-steak knife even touched it (I stopped taking notes after the second course)... an apparently endless stream of delights poured forth from the galley. True to form, each course was expertly paired with fine wines and champagne from the yacht's 900-bottle cellar.

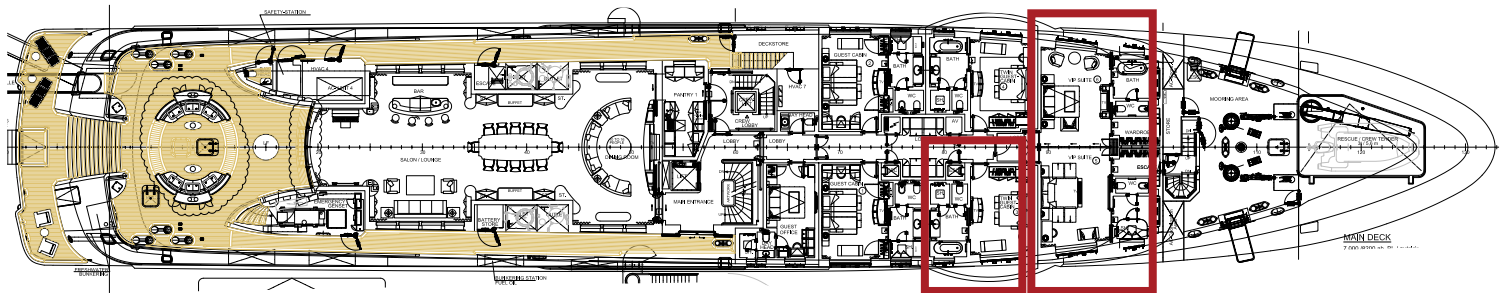
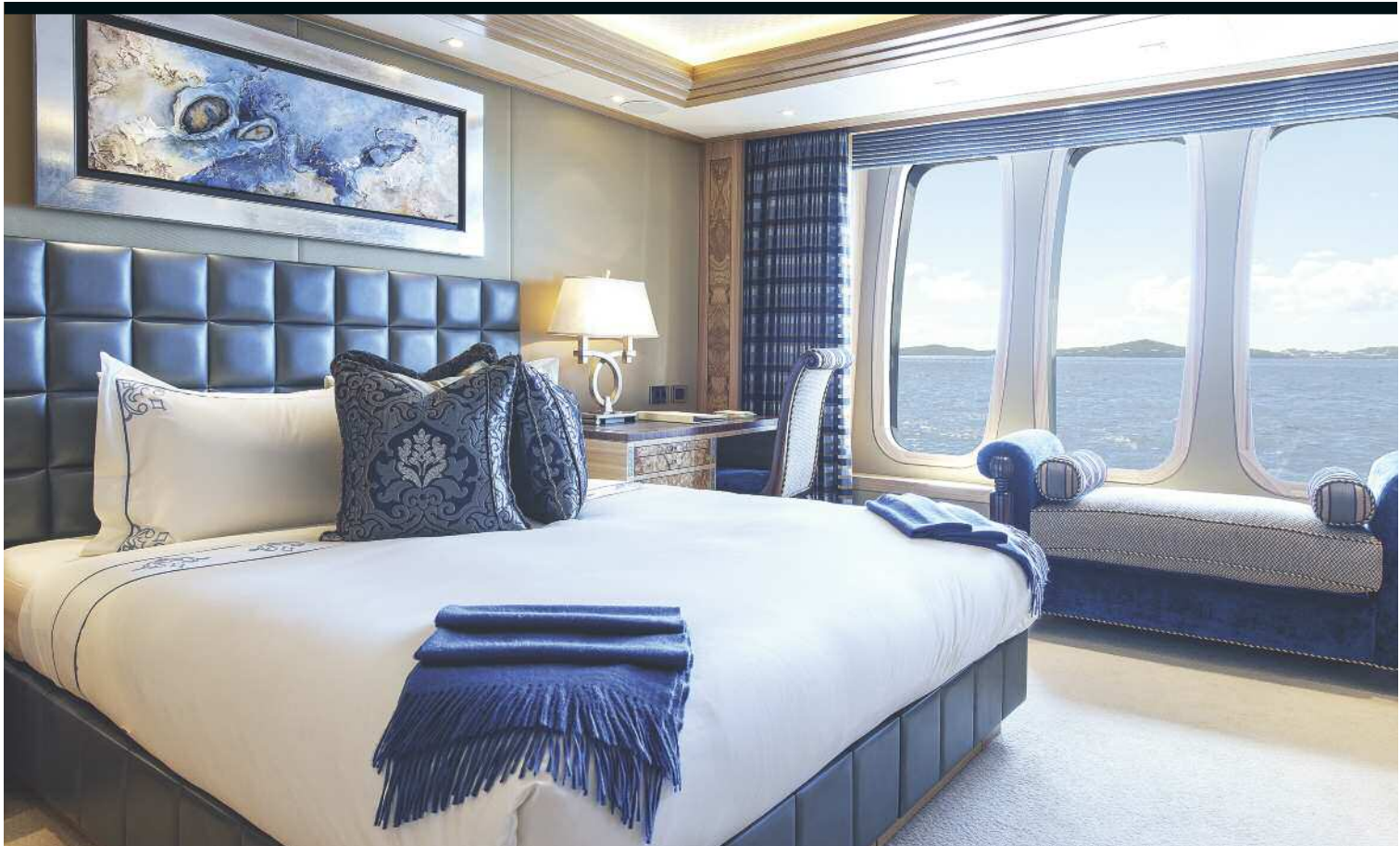
Arriving to join us just as the popping-candy deserts exploded in our mouths prompting instant regression to childhood, Chef Jason held court with an infectious enthusiasm for his art. During his ensuing whirlwind tour of the epicurean world, with stop-offs for the best ingredients in dozens of countries during a variety of seasons, we knew we'd found Solandge's soul. As much as no captain would like to hear it, for charter guests the crewmember that will have the biggest input into their experience is the chef, and in that regard Solandge has one of the best. The al fresco dining area he paints his masterpieces on is a worthy canvas too, as the ability to partially enclose this area with glass panels creates a controllable environment without inhibiting the grand panorama.



LURSSSEN 279': **MY SOLANDGE**




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Coupled with air conditioning al fresco dining can be enjoyed aboard Solandge in most climatic conditions. A yacht naturally swings bow to wind while at anchor, so the breeze over the dining area can also be moderated using the glass doors that divide the deck from the lateral walkways. This is particularly useful in the evening as the likelihood is you'll be enjoying dinner here too—in reality the interior formal dining areas are rarely used on yachts—and this is when Solandge's remarkable lighting design demonstrates its ability to transform the ambience. Under-tread lighting on the staircases, backlit surfaces and inserts in support pillars, plus the prolific use of full-spectrum RGB LED strip lighting all combine to glorious effect. Nowhere is the effectiveness of Solandge's night-light show more evident than on the sundeck, which transforms like a chameleon to match the energy of the required. The oval bar area beneath the hardtop glows through a full range of colors at night, while protected from the wind by glass picture windows that lead up to the forward area also makes it a great place to hang out during navigation. Those desiring intimacy can retreat to the padded





The image shows a high-end hotel suite. A large bed with white linens and a striped skirt is the central feature. Behind it is a dark wood headboard. To the right, a dark wood dresser with a marble top holds a large lamp with a pleated shade and a vase of flowers. The room has a curved wall with large windows and decorative glass panels. A large, ornate crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The floor is covered in a patterned carpet. The overall atmosphere is one of luxury and elegance.

THE OWNER'S SUITE,
COMPLETE WITH
PANORAMIC GLAZING,
TWO PRIVATE FIXED
BALCONIES AND
A TERRACE WITH
JACUZZI... IT'S
SENSATIONAL.



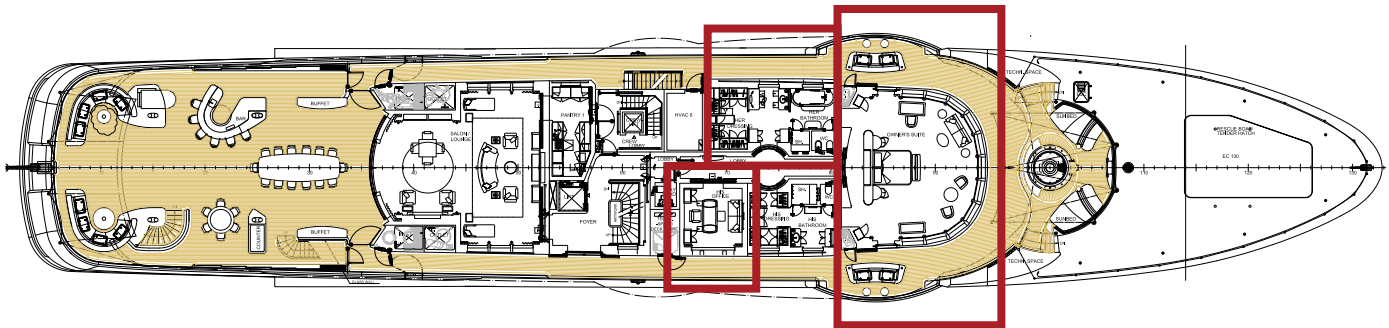
area of a snug alcove that twinkles with a celestial light show at night, while hedonists with energy to burn can ascend to the forward area with its fully equipped DJ booth and specially designed circular dance podium that covers the hot tub. It's quite the party pad! Our tour of the exterior spaces wrapped up with the owner's private terrace, a secluded retreat occupying the forward section of the upper deck it is accessed directly from the owner's staterooms. Incorporating the two fixed lateral balconies that make Solandge's exterior profile so distinctive, one imagines these unique additions are well used. Reclining over the ocean on their oversized banquettes, with feet up and book in hand during the day, or one's favored nightcap and a good cigar before retiring, the owner or primary charter client could only sigh with ultimate satisfaction. The terrace continues to wrap around the forward section where two large daybeds flank a Jacuzzi tub, protected by high bulwarks users can enjoy this space with a degree of privacy. Ahead lies the vast acreage of the foredeck, beneath which the rescue tender is concealed,

and the wide expanse doubles as a touch-and-go helipad with direct access to the owner's staterooms. When required guardrails can be quickly erected but during normal operation these are removed to preserve the purity of Solandge's sheerline.

ELEGANCE AND INDULGENCE...

Matching the remarkably high standard set by Espen Oeino in his successful creation of exterior spaces, Aileen Rodriguez's breathtaking interior design is an exercise in elegance and indulgence. Having undertaken several previous projects for the owner, Rodriguez has faithfully translated their brief while pushing herself to stimulate and excite them through her attention to detail... and the depth of detail is truly astounding. Representing a refreshing antithesis to the stark minimalism employed in so many contemporary yacht interiors, Solandge offers an interior that keeps on giving. Like a great piece of art one discovers enthralling new facets, details and themes woven into her grand design every time

LURSEN 279': MY SOLANDGE



one walks through a space.

The entrance lobby to the main salon sets the tone. Standing between the glowing walls of backlit amethyst the eye darts between the gold leaf-lined headliner alcoves and the interlocking design of the onyx bordered parquet flooring, drinking in the rich detail of everything contained between sole and ceiling. A Bechstein piano here, Venetian console there, display cases with antique musical instruments, a plush bar with purple velvet upholstery and matching stonework, rich regency furniture and Schonbeck chandeliers that drip with crystals of rose amethyst. The progression from lobby to bar, formal dining area to snug saloon is a natural one and the journey elicits many delights along the way.

From the swirling grains of the book-matched walnut veneers spring forth Rorschach-esque images and depending upon one's personality you may spot a kindly face, intricate tree or mysterious map hidden within the patterns. Tactile soft furnishings and sumptuously cushioned banquettes engender the sense of a Venetian drawing

**THE OWNER'S EN-SUITES
INCLUDE A DECADENT
PINK ONYX BACKLIT
TUB IN HERS, WHILE
HIS FEATURES
A STYLING MORE AKIN TO
A GENTLEMAN'S CLUB...**

DRAWING TOGETHER... **ESPEN OEINO** *EXTERIOR DESIGNER*

LURSSSEN 279': **MY SOLANDGE**



Espen, what was the initial brief from the client for Solandge and to what level were you involved in the design? How much easier is it to design for a client the second time around?

We were very much involved throughout the entire process, from the exterior lines, the general arrangement, the exterior deck layouts... the full package really, except of course the engineering and naval architecture which came from Lürssen and the interior by Aileen Rodriguez. Although we designed Polar Star, it was for a different owner who then went on to build Northern Star, so he sold Polar Star to the owner of Solandge, so in reality this was the first new build for us with this owner.

There were obviously some features from Polar Star that resonated with the owner though, the central transom staircase for example. Did they request any other features were carried over?

It's true, he really liked Polar Star and the easy access to the bathing platform was something he wanted retained, along with other features like the discreet access back into the yacht through the transom door. There are others too, like the arrangement of the owner's deck aft is very similar. Throughout the layout we've included formats that they've found suits their lifestyle and way they use the yacht from their time on Polar Star.

In some of your recent launches large expanses of glazing and a connection between the interior and outside environment have been focal points

(Stella Maris particularly), not so much on Solandge, why was this the case?

In places there is more expansive glazing, like the sole-to-ceiling windows that enclose the owner's stateroom, with uninterrupted views ensured by the glass bulwarks of the terraces. The owners did want a cozy atmosphere in general though and we were not experimenting with a new concept in this regard as we did on Stella Maris.

Having said the above, the exterior deck spaces of Solandge do encourage guests to spend considerably more time outside... The two fixed balconies for the owner's staterooms are a signature of Solandge. What inspired them over the current trend for retractable terraces?

The very low bulwarks and glass inserts provide uninterrupted views, even while the owner lies in their bed, so it's about creating clear vistas. The idea was also to create balconies the owners could enjoy all the time, even while under navigation, which one wouldn't do with retractable balconies. There's also the added advantage of less moving parts, less engineering and less to go wrong with fixed geometry. It's a development of what we included in our design of Valerie—also built by Lürssen, they've turned out to be a very successful feature.

There's another couple of great 'Juliet balconies' created by the cutaway in the aft section of the sundeck, was this a happy accident?

We always try to create maximum headroom above the pool and leave it open to the sun, so that's the prime reasoning behind the cutaway. It does however create these wonderful intimate private spaces overlooking the pool and enhances my desire to include that romantic 'standing at the rail of a cruise ship' element, which is why I think wide section capping rails are so important.

We loved the sundeck and features like the snug alcove, cutaway aft section, sheltered bar and forward party area with dance floor and DJ booth... with the advent of the beach club, is there now a transition to the sundeck being primarily reserved for night-time use?

Yes and no. Throughout the Med in the summer, in St. Tropez and Ibiza for example, you'll notice how the party now starts much earlier. By four in the afternoon the party starts, DJ banging out the tunes and champagne is in full flow. Parties are now an important element of the yachting lifestyle as the sophisticated lighting and sound systems, and integrated DJ booth



as on Solandge, attests. So the sundeck is becoming the focal point for partying, but not reserved solely for the night. The sundeck is also used during the day while underway when you cannot use the traditional beach club.

Knowing the yacht would be used for charter, where there any specific design inclusions for this aspect of her use?

While she was designed around the family's use, we believe being able to offer charter guests a 'new experience every day' is a great plus in attracting that business. So there's versatility in the exterior spaces. Rigging a tent for a 'Nikki Beach' style afternoon, arranging the furniture to have lunch in a different place, sunbathe forward one day, or having a siesta aft... it's all about

creating different experiences daily for charter guests.

Solandge is the sixth yacht built on the mid-80m platform for Lürssen, is there friendly rivalry or any exchange of ideas with the other designers who've produced yachts on the same platform? What are the benefits and challenges too?

(Laughs) I'm obviously friendly with the other designers, but I must admit we've not discussed any comparisons or bantered with regards to competition—maybe we should! There is commonality in the engine room, naval architecture, shaft lines, etc. but I didn't consider it a limitation at all. With regards to time, and therefore money, savings as a result of building on a plat-

form, that's a question for the shipyard to answer, but there is definitely an advantage of building on proven engineering and the reliability benefits of doing so.

What were your personal highlights of the Solandge project?

Definitely working with owner, building that relationship with someone who really wanted to push the boundaries and come up with a design that is really quite aggressive. When we started the project back in 2007/08 it was with a more conservative initial design, but he was always willing to go further and pushed us to include the knuckle lines and styling that make her so exciting. I really enjoy working with owners who take an interest and have a passion to push harder.

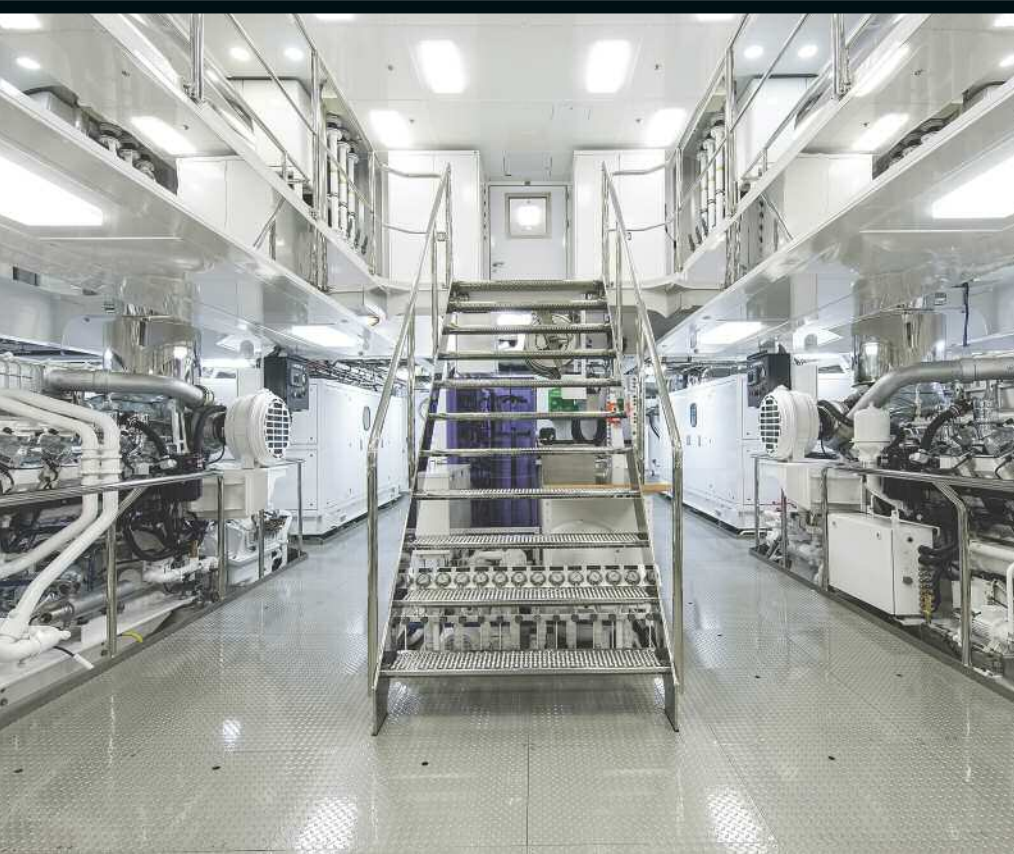


room, while flatscreen TVs are concealed behind works of art. Solandge's audio-visual and domotic system is Crestron-based and has been future-proofed through the installation of fibre-optic network architecture. The latest movies and a huge music library is uploaded prior to each owner's visit or charter. The piece de resistance of Solandge's interior however has to be "The Tree of Life," a 50' high sculpture that runs through the center of the staircase that connects six of the yacht's seven decks. Finished in gold and featuring no less than 1,200 glowing flowers, the delicate conversation piece was lower in as a single unit with just 2mm of clearance to play with, providing some insight into the precision achievable by Lürssen's craftsmen. The same level of attention was lavished on the day head serving each deck, unique in design their luxurious appointment with backlit stonework demonstrates the art of creating the spectacular in limited space. Guest accommodation occupies the main deck's forward real estate, with four guest cabins radiating of the central passageway. Each is naturally lit by three huge portlights that provide inspiring views of the surrounding environment and can be identified by its own color scheme. En-suites and dressing rooms compliment the generous proportions and two of the four cabins can be quickly converted between twins and doubles. While guests will no doubt be impressed by their accommodation, the forward VIP suite is the equal of master staterooms on many yachts of a similar length. Stretching the full

beam and entered rather grandly through a double door, the open plan salon and sleeping area is served by two equally large en-suites and two dressing rooms. This clever arrangement allows the crew to fit a central partition if an additional cabin is required, so each has a separate entrance and matching facilities.

Enjoying the privacy of an entire deck the owner's accommodation is suitably grandiose, with the complex of staterooms including a separate day head, aft salon and games room, private office, two palatial dressing and en-suite areas and a vast forward cabin. Wrapped in a semi-circle of floor-to-ceiling glazing from the elevated berth the occupants can enjoy panoramic views from their floating apartment. Her dressing room is significantly larger and glass fronted display cabinets that line the walk-in wardrobe will make outfit choice easier. Dressed in backlit pink stonework her en-suite boasts an oversized marble spa tub, while his en-suite and dressing room is finished more in the style of a gentleman's club, dark woods and stainless steel and a double shower in place of a tub.

Spa facilities, wellness and pampering are all important parts of the luxury cruise and charter experience, and to this end Solandge's guests enjoy some of the best afloat. Above the owner's deck the spa enjoys full run of the bridge deck aft of the wheelhouse and boasts a beauty salon, party-sized hammam and sauna, therapy bath and a



The sundeck in party mode (far right) with custom dance podium. The engine room was finished to a standard that will impress engineers and guests alike.

massage room complete with soporific bubble walls. It's a suite of facilities to match any five-star hotel and once coiffured, primped and pampered to perfection, guests can address their physical wellness in the comprehensively equipped gymnasium. Post work-out routines should always involve a warm down, which can be completed with a swim in the flowjet pool on the aft deck, before rewarding oneself on a job well done with a juice smoothy at the bar and a snooze on the sunpads. Coupled with watersports and fine dining how could one not return from a charter feeling recharged and refreshed?

NUTS AND BOLTS

For the owner's guests and charter parties alike, Solandge's facilities and the attentiveness of crew are more important than a yacht's performance, but behind the scenes a great deal is going on to ensure your safety and comfort onboard. All but eliminating any risk of seasickness Solandge is fitted with an advanced Quantum twin-fin stabilizer system, with extra-large fins and the supplier's new largest ram size. Chief Engineer Travis explained twin fins were preferable on yachts under 328' (100m) as under certain conditions the aft fins of four-fin system can sometimes begin 'steering' a smaller yacht. In terms of propulsion fixed pitch propellers were selected over CPP (controllable pitch propellers) for simplicity and to dispense with the additional equipment required, while a bow and stern thruster have been fitted to enhance slow speed maneuvering and provide an 'Anchoring Assist' dynamic positioning system. Classed as DP-0 it isn't the full DP-1 certified system, but will still hold the boat head to wind in about 20-knots and provides the captain with 'hands-free' assurance when making final preparations to enter a marina. Up in the wheelhouse Captain Brett Fillis enjoys the reliability and familiarity of tried and tested navigation, communication, monitoring and engineering systems, eliminating the chance of failure from new

SOLANDGE'S TOY BOX



- 36'1" (11m) Fjord (2x 300hp diesels)
- 32'9" (10m) Naiad RIB (2x 300hp diesels)
- 23'11" (7.30m) Centurion Wake Boat
- 20'6" (6.25m) Fassmer Rescue Boat
- 3 x Yamaha WaveRunner VXR
- 1 x Yamaha Superjet stand-up
- 9'2" (2.8m) Narwhal Jet Boat
- 3 x Seabob, F5
- Brownie's Explorer Third Lung Hookah System
- Dive resort certified scuba diving facility
- 1 x RDT Unit, Advanced medical equipment



SERVING UP... **CHEF JASON MCDONALD** *SOLANDGE'S HEAD CHEF*

LURSEN 279: MY SOLANDGE

That was an wonderfully sophisticated seven-course lunch, from the foams, foie gras brulee and crab amuse-bouche through to the dehydrated raspberries... is this the standard fare guests enjoy aboard Solandge daily?

Today you've enjoyed a fine dining experience, but in all honesty that's not what we create everyday or indeed what's happening in the marketplace. All my mates with fine dining restaurants are giving back their Michelin Stars and turning them into steak houses and bistros. Thai street food, authentic simple dishes, is all the rage, funky food with slick flavors in a 'shabby chic' atmosphere is the current vogue. Fine dining is too much for everyday consumption, so simpler buffets with amazing fresh flavors is the staple diet our owners enjoy. If you ate fine dining every day you'd be dying for a simple sandwich at the end of the week.

So more simplistic buffet is the way forward, catering for guest's specific tastes and requirements?

Of course we always listen to the client's preferences, but we also aim to inspire and introduce them to new things. There is no typical buffet and Mediterranean and seafood can get passé, so we mix it up with ethnic influenced dishes from Moroccan, Spanish, Middle Eastern, to Thai or Japanese for example. I was at a new place in NYC last week opened by a couple of guys who left 11 Madison Park, of the five starters on the menu four were vegetarian, all delicious. When I go to a restaurant I let the chefs express themselves and make me what they want, the owners of Solandge trust me to do the same. It's at lunch when we have our fun.

So surprise and delight is an important element?

Absolutely, sometimes it may be as simple

as pizza, but dough made with just flour and water and topped with really fresh ingredients. We want them to start imagining ahead of time, start getting excited about what we may serve before they even sit down. This is helped by my guys in the galley; Robbie the 'SuperSwede' is half Swedish-half Indian, and Scandinavian cuisine is the hottest food around right now, while Brenda is from Belize so brings the central American, Mexican and Caribbean influences. She went to school in New York and mastered in Sushi, cooks incredible Thai and Indian too, so it's a real melting pot in the galley there!

The food provides such an important element of a charter experience... how much is sourced locally when in port?

I like to think charter guests simply entertain themselves with the other stuff between meals, so that's fun for us in the galley. In terms of sourcing, while in St Thomas for example everything for your lunch came from here, except for the fish; I flew in the scallops, tuna and halibut, and the prawns and crab came in from Norway. This was short notice, so everything else we picked up at the local market. But we love creating under pressure; in Venice I had a call at 2am to say to expect 43 people in a couple of hours, it's the drama we thrive on.



You take care of Solandge's wine cellar too?

Oh, every chance I get (laughs)! I collect wine everywhere I go, being a bit of a Bordeaux fan myself. We're almost through the 09's so are stocking up the 2010's which was a great vintage. Down below we have around 600 bottles, but there's also a cellar on every deck. When we're in full service we'll carry a couple of thousand bottles, plus the charter guests usually send a couple of hundred bottles ahead. When the entire crowd of Jimmies is invited back we can go through 60 bottles of champagne and serve breakfast for 80 in pretty short order!

Is there somewhere you'd like the passage plan to include in to explore from a culinary point of view?

I explore a lot when we're not in service. The people we're entertaining eat in the finest restaurants in the world, so it's up to me to get out there and stay up to date. We need to exceed what these guys are doing and have fun with it as well, we may have a charter for a month so keeping them surprised is something we challenge ourselves with. In terms of geography I'd like to cruise South America, Columbia has some amazing food, Chile and Argentina too would be wonderful. Between the galley we have onboard and this protected al fresco dining area I don't think there are many better tables in the world.



untested technology.

Down in the engine room two huge Caterpillar 3516 engines produce 2,000kW when the throttles push them up to 1,600 rpm, enough to ensure Solandge's top quoted speed of 17-knots can be enjoyed when being whisked between anchorages. During longer cruises and delivery passages the Captain will throttle back to 12-knots for economy reasons, extending Solandge's range to 6,000 nautical miles, in theory allowing a return trip across the Atlantic without refilling her 58,600 US Gal fuel tanks. Three generators power the onboard systems—the exhaust for the larger 570kVa unit exits from the center of the radar array, while the two smaller 455kVa units vent through the yacht's two distinctive stainless steel stacks. As previously mentioned there's no danger of Solandge running short of freshwater due to the 'belt and braces' approach of fitting three watermakers.

CONCLUSION...

Built by an experienced owner, with an experienced team of designers, engineers and project managers, by the world's most prolific builder of large yachts, on their most successful platform in recent years... one would rightly expect Solandge to tick all the boxes she does with such aplomb. Aside from issues with the quality of her paint finish—an element subcontracted out by the yard—which takes an

experienced eye to spot and in no way inhibits the enjoyment of guests onboard, Solandge is a credit to those involved in the project and a highly impressive addition to the global charter fleet. Her onboard amenities, comfort level, design and engineering ensure all those who are privileged enough to spend time aboard her—and the 1-million Euro a week charter fee—will enjoy a memorable experience. An attentive and professional crew, plus the quality of fare created by Chef Jason's galley, will undoubtedly contribute to that. From the exhilarating watersports facilities and cosy cinema on the lower decks, through the entertaining exterior spaces and spa suite, right up to the party scene on the sundeck, Solandge offers a space for every social occasion. Inside meanwhile, Solandge's versatile VIP and guest accommodation, munificent owner's staterooms and luxurious salons are imagined in a way one could never tire of the environment. As with relationships—business, personal or pleasure—the litmus test for any boat must be how one feels when walking away from her, and we must admit we missed her instantly and longed to be back onboard before even leaving the marina. One day onboard simply wasn't enough, Solandge fires the imagination with the possibilities and adventures one could have onboard and leaves a lasting impression one longs to revisit time and time again. A holiday aboard Solandge? She's available in July... dare to dream. **1**