

Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN

EXTERIOR SPACE

CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



DESIGN

DESIGN DEBATE

A look at the impact the IMO Tier III NOx requirements will have on the design of the lower decks.

CONCEPTS

Exploring the ideas, materials and technology that are likely to influence the projects of tomorrow.

PRODUCT SPECIAL

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**DOMUS
DESIGN**

SEYMOUR
DIAMOND

EXPERIENCE = KNOWLEDGE

With their respective backgrounds in interior and exterior yacht design, Fiona Diamond and Steve Gresham bring an eye for detail and customisation to residential projects that only years of experience in the superyacht industry can provide.





Thanks to a new generation of owners looking to replicate their lifestyle at home on their yachts, there is more cross-fertilisation between residential and nautical design than ever before. This has led to less 'boaty'-looking interiors on board superyachts, sometimes created by their owners' preferred residential architect or designer.

The trend works both ways and established yacht designers are also devising residential interiors for their yachting clients; but most of them would argue that custom yacht design is the more specialised discipline.

"You cannot design a house then walk on to a yacht and think you can do the same," says Fiona Diamond, founder of London-based interior design studio Seymour Diamond. "Practicality is critical. Yes, it has to be beautiful, but there is so much more to consider than just the owner's needs, such as the crew services and operational requirements of a moving vessel. You can knock down a wall in a house, but you don't have that freedom on a yacht, and knowing if a general arrangement will work or not only comes with experience."

Fiona knows what she's talking about: Her varied résumé includes managing the asset portfolios of HNWIs, designing luxury homes and hotels, and working for Terence Disdale Design. More recently, she created the interior of the 92.5m Feadship *Royal Romance* delivered last year. Her time spent with Terence Disdale Design means she

understands—and thoroughly enjoys—the minutiae of how large yachts are designed and built. She is a firm believer in built-in furniture on yachts, for example, which is safer than loose furniture and provides much-needed space for routing electrical wires and cables.

"You never show a wire—it's always routed through the legs of tables, chairs or cabinets," she explains. "That knowledge is ingrained in me now and I bring it into my residential projects, so you have a tidier-looking house without cables hanging off the furniture. On a yacht you have to think at least a year ahead because if you leave it too late the build has moved on and you can't go back and rewire the boat."

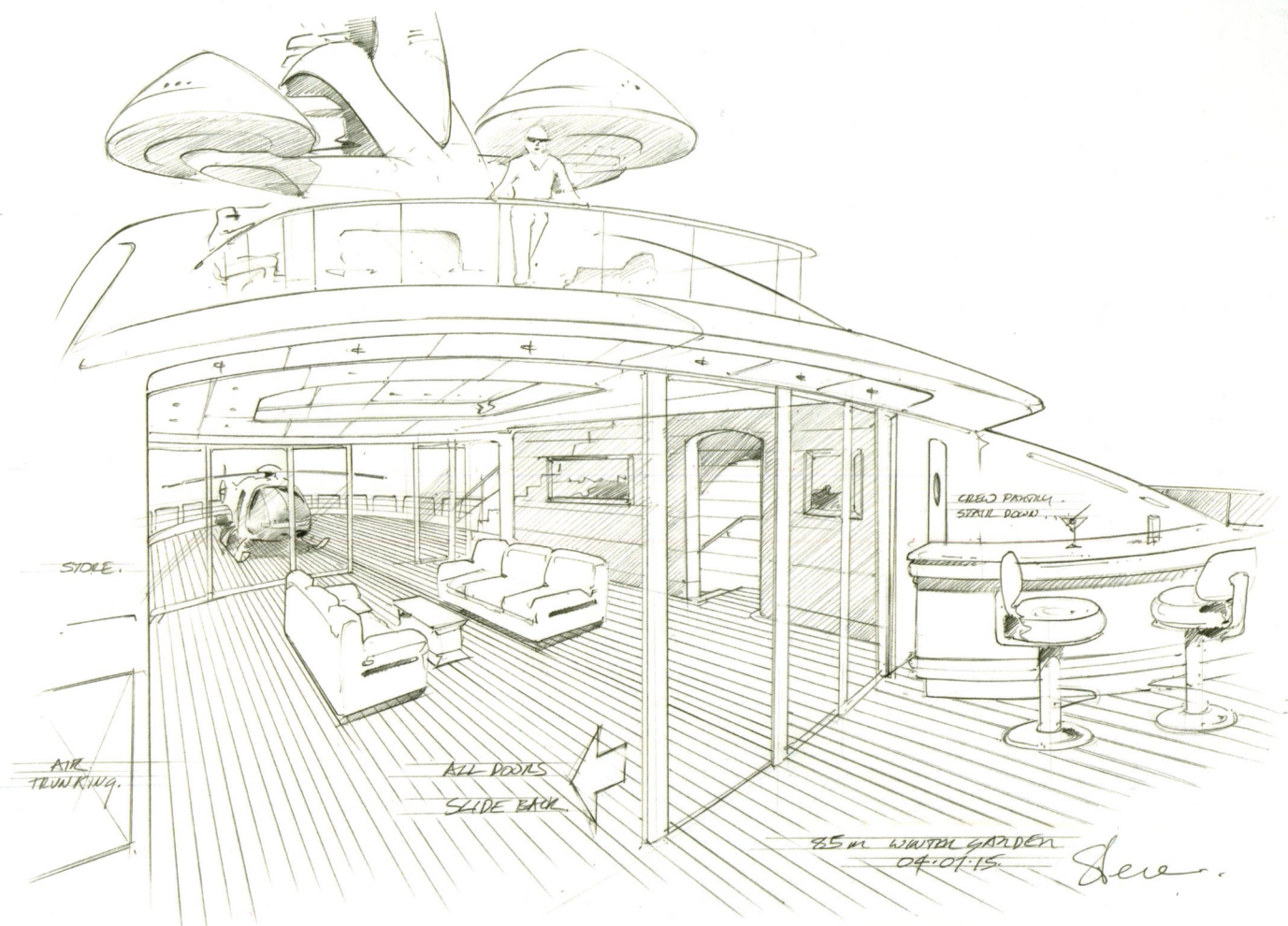
Steve Gresham brings further technical know-how to the table. After years spent consulting for other yacht designers, he set up Gresham Yacht Design to focus on his own exterior designs (his latest project is an

87m motoryacht for the Yachtley shipyard in Turkey). But he also revels in the complex engineering and systems architecture of yachts—knowledge that was picked up through early hands-on experience working for naval architects Don Shead and Tony Castro.

"I'm not an engineer, but I love the technical stuff and having served my time in the industry I know how boats are built," he says. "It's all very well to create a beautiful exterior profile, but what you don't see is just as important. It has to be done right, otherwise the boat won't function as it should."

Gresham is adept at AutoCAD, model-making and sketching—skills rarely found in a single individual that allow him to communicate ideas quickly during client meetings and then follow up with detailed technical drawings. So it seemed only natural that what began as a romantic liaison ▶

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when he met Diamond at the Monaco Yacht Show in 2011 has developed into a working relationship as well. The first opportunity to pool their skill sets came when Diamond won the interior design contract for a 2,000sqm residential development in central London. One of their first steps was to bring in a leading outfitter of superyachts as the interior contractor.

“I wanted the same attention to quality and detail that you find in custom yacht building, which is hard to find in the residential sector but makes all the difference in terms of finish and feel,” says Diamond. “That means tolerances measured in millimetres rather than centimetres and mechanisms that provide the smooth sense of luxury you get on a yacht.”

The entire property has been designed to superyacht standards: there is a

pantographic door, for example, galley-style kick plates in the kitchen and fitted panels instead of traditional plaster on the walls and ceilings. The latter is standard practice on a yacht, but it required a learning curve for the residential suppliers working on the project.

“The air-conditioning contractor was placing the fan coils between panels, so you had to remove two of them to access the units for maintenance,” explains Gresham. “The reflected ceiling plan clearly showed where we wanted them to go, but his initial reaction was that we should revise the plan. He eventually realised we were doing it that way because that’s the way it should be done, not just because we can.”

Other examples of the designers’ determination to achieve a superyacht-style finish are the glass fire doors. They sourced a high-end certified product that was available

off-the-shelf, but the expansion strips were visible and detracted from the overall aesthetic. Their solution was to ask the manufacturer to add slim frames of polished stainless steel around all the doors to cover the black mastic.

A perfectionist at heart, Diamond will fight her corner if it is in the best interests of the project, or at least demand a very good reason if the objection is that something can’t be done. But she also insists that people have to rise to the challenge before they can make things happen—and make them work.

“Understanding superyacht quality can be hard for residential contractors, but just one faulty junction can make everything look tired,” she points out. “I know when I’m being fair and won’t be bullied into something that’s not the right solution. You need experience to do that, of course, which is what makes all the difference.” ■



JUSTIN RATCLIFFE

FIONA DIAMOND

Fiona began her career in asset management, but after graduating from the Chelsea School of Art as a mature student, she spent three years honing her skills before launching her first design company specialising in commercial and residential interiors. A temporary job with Terence Disdale Design turned into 16 years with the design studio, by the end of which she was managing director of the company. Working with Terry Disdale on some of the largest yachts in the world, including 162m *Eclipse*, provided invaluable experience for when she set up Seymour Diamond in 2011 to work on her own luxury yacht and residential projects.

“After working in the superyacht industry, almost everything we do now in the residential sector is bespoke,” says Fiona. “Luxury today is not about walking into a home and recognising a brand—it’s all about materials and textures, and if they’re not unique you’re outed in seconds.”

Following the delivery of 92.5m *Royal Romance*, her first solo yacht project, she is working on other yacht proposals with Gresham as well as various high-end residential projects.



JUSTIN RATCLIFFE

STEVE GRESHAM

Steve Gresham studied transport design at Coventry University. Early work experience in the automotive industry and wind-tunnel testing for the Williams F1 race team led to collaborations with Don Shead Yacht Design, Tony Castro Yacht Design and, latterly, H2 Yacht Design. He set up Gresham Yacht Design in 2013 and divides his time between his studio in Hampshire and the Seymour Diamond office in London.

Among his many projects launched, in build or conceptual, he cites *Maryah* as his most challenging to date. He penned the layout and exterior lines of the 125m megayacht, built in Greece for H2 Yacht Design, devising innovative solutions to conform to SOLAS regulations in the process.

Steve’s technical knowledge, drawn from 20 years in the industry, combined with his sketching ability, allows him to explore concepts with an eye on feasibility. “I have fun doing my work and it’s a pleasure and an adventure every day when I pick up my pencil,” he says. “I look forward to pushing the boundaries of yacht design and creating more original designs in the future.”