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72m *Stella Maris*



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How technology helps
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from your boat

LUNCH WITH...

The owner who helped
revolutionise colour
photography

INTERVIEW



STELLA MARIS



words: Amanda McCracken; Marilyn Mower
photography: Massimo Listri; Beppe Raso; VSY

BOLD LINES STEMMING FROM A BOLD DECISION TO INCLUDE A SPLIT-LEVEL YACHT FROM VSY AS A DARING AND INNOVATIVE PROJECT. THE RESULT, WITH

INTERIOR AND A FULLY CERTIFIED HELIDECK AFT MARK THIS 72.1 METRE HUGE INTERIOR VOLUMES AND A LUXURY OF SPACE, IS IMPRESSIVE INDEED



The large, HCA-certified helideck doubles as a giant entertaining space – combined with the adjacent sundeck, 100 people can be seated for dinner



Stella Maris is striking in appearance, but her beauty is much more than skin deep. In fact, the yacht is so cerebral that many of her technical achievements, let alone evolutionary systems nuances, are lost to the almost overwhelming physicality of her spaces.

At 72.1 metres and 2,114 gross tonnes, *Stella Maris* is the largest custom superyacht to date from the young Italian yard VSY. It had a very particular vision for a yacht that could be used for all seasons, could incorporate a fully certified helideck and would establish volume, privacy and lifestyle ‘beyond luxury’. The result is daring and innovative.

Drawn by Espen Øino, her lines are radical to some degree, barely hinting at the split deck arrangement of her interior, but instantly proclaiming the supremacy of glass. The idea, says Øino, was to ‘hit the perfect balance between form and function, innovation and technology, comfort and aesthetics’. Her bold, masculine hull colour, DuPont Metallic Grey, balances the height of the topsides with the off-white superstructure. In cooperation with Laurent Giles Naval Architects, Øino has exploited that 2,114 gross tonne hull to its limits, allowing for vast areas, pushing the yard further than it has dared go before.

One expects to see evolution aboard the third yacht delivered by a yard – she follows *Candyscape II* and *RoMa* – but with *Stella Maris* the change is more revolutionary than evolutionary. It started, as Øino says, with a blank sheet of paper and a design brief for numerous floor-to-ceiling windows, 2.7 metre interior headroom and a commercial helideck. The trick would be to make it look right. Øino’s plan, enthusiastically supported by VSY, was to make the helipad a feature rather than to try to disguise it. The tip-off that it exists is that the yacht’s decks don’t inset as they go up – in fact, the helipad itself actually extends outboard of her profile. The scale of the undertaking is impressive indeed: *Stella Maris* is only the fourth yacht to achieve certification by the world-leading Helideck Certification Agency (HCA).



At 72 metres, she is also one of the smallest superyachts to have obtained it, without making any compromises – especially in terms of security. Guests can fly in and out, day or night, whether with side landings or those practiced by the Royal Navy.

Øino created a design vocabulary of sharp, upward angles that are repeated at the base of the helipad, the mast arch and wing stations. It is a nice line, especially when seen from the bow, as it seems to create a sense of lightness or upward movement, rather befitting a helicopter. Moreover, the helideck and adjacent sundeck are of such size that they can host a dinner for 100 people.

The yacht's most arresting features, at least in profile, are the two huge glass-walled aft saloons on her main and upper decks, sitting right below the helipad. The design, engineering and classification for this feature took nearly two years, yet it is so seamless that when a guest steps aboard, he or she is unlikely to wonder how it is possible for such a light and airy unbroken structure to be under a fire zone and a 2.9-tonne helicopter. Knowing that there would be so much glass in the boat from day one, VSY set up a multi-disciplinary approach to structure, vibration and acoustics – smart, as the main saloon and its starboard side greenhouse also sit atop the engine room. The glass walls are sandwich construction for UV and acoustic protection. Staggered decks – six forward and five aft of amidships – actually allow the loads to be distributed quite handily without the need for obtrusive support columns.

VSY had a specific noise target in mind: silence, which was quantified as 46 decibels at 15.5 knots in sea state 2. Because glass can amplify the resonance of the engines, VSY contracted Joe Smullin of Soundown, a US-based acoustic expert. Working with glass specialists, the yard engineered each glass panel specifically for its location.

The main deck amidships is where architectural integrity meets industrial, and where there is so much light and height it stops you in your tracks. The yacht is



Brazilian marble and cool blue tones distinguish the twin bathrooms in the owners' quarters on the upper deck



anchored around a vertical core, which is where all the circulation happens for guests or crew, who also have a superb network of access corridors. This central circulation zone links the spaces fore and aft, port and starboard and vertically around a glass lift wrapped by a wide and gentle staircase. It isn't a lift in the technical sense with a car that goes up and down; rather a platform that slides up and down in a glass tube. The doors are not on the lift, but alternate on the tube at each floor landing due to the staggered decks that would be impossible to manage with a car.

The staggered decks accomplish a couple of things. On one hand they keep guests from having to huff and puff up a full flight of stairs without a landing, and they also accommodate the fact that while the saloons aft have that magnificent 2.7-metre height, the cabin areas forward are

2.3 metres. Øino's particular genius was in masking this on the profile.

The two aft saloons are opposites of each other in concept. On the lower of the decks, the sensation is of being inside and looking out through the full-length windows to the arrival deck. At the swipe of a touchscreen, the aft seating and bar area can be opened to the outdoors, as glass panels melt away and hidden panels deploy to surround and divide the interior dining area. On the deck above, the theory is reversed with the dining table aft and open to the elements, until glass panels are locked into place to create a winter garden, which opens to a seating area farther forward.

‘The design of this project/yacht is all about extending the seasons,’ says VSY. ‘You don’t even have to move [the boat] to the tropics for winter because the windows keep

The owners' deck sits atop the yacht, offering panoramic views from the bed. An Ottoman nestles between floor-to-ceiling wardrobes (right) while the aft entrance door, when closed, helps form a large dressing mirror

‘The design of this yacht is about extending the seasons. You don’t even have to move to the tropics for winter because the windows stop it feeling dark and all the spaces can be heated or air-conditioned’



Another element of future proofing is the system for monitoring and communication. The entire operation runs on a fibre optic backbone, which can be tapped into, to add or change equipment

it from feeling dark and all the indoor/outdoor spaces can be heated or air-conditioned.’

With the biggest luxury the sense of spaciousness, interior designer Michela Reverberi took care not to clutter it with too many things. Even the dining tables are glass to keep them from obscuring the view. One easily overlooked stylistic detail is the saloon lighting, which floods the room with slivers of surprisingly warm-toned, edge-lit LED light, set into the intersection of mullions and overhead beams like glowing L-brackets. ‘In the daytime you have such strong side light coming through the windows, so I wanted a bit of continuity by shooting the light out into the room sideways rather than just having all down-lighting,’ says Reverberi.

The forward part of the main deck is given over to the guest suites: four doubles and two twins. Almost identical in layout, their differences lie mainly in the choice of furnishings and fabrics, meaning that particularly on charter, guests won’t be arguing about who gets which cabin.

The next deck up houses the bridge forward, fitted out with equipment worthy of commercial ships cleverly integrated into a smart leather dashboard, with each of the screens housed in stainless steel casings. Kongsberg K-Bridge was chosen for the electronic charting system, radars and autopilot and a Rolls-Royce system for the variable pitch propellers. From a further three dedicated screens aft of the smart Foglizzo leather bridge chairs the first engineer can monitor the components that make up the workings of the yacht. The command centre ship’s office and captain’s cabin are separated from the aft lounge by a full-beam gym with sliding doors to allow a breeze to sweep through.

Above the bridge is the owner’s deck. From the guest lobby a silently operated panel door reveals a small lobby with an office/day room to starboard. Ahead is a central dressing room with floor-to-ceiling wardrobes and a huge Ottoman blue marbled bathrooms port and starboard. Forward are the modest-sized sleeping quarters where light streams in from a semicircle of floor-to-ceiling windows. Doors on either side lead to a private deck, and because of the large angled overhead eyebrows on each deck, the owners can enjoy complete privacy as well as an unblemished view of the horizon from the bed.

The tender garage on the lower deck is one of those evolutionary steps for the shipyard. ‘This tender bay is completely watertight and self contained,’ says VSY. ‘Below the teak floor is a sump tank, totally separate from the rest of the hull, the bilges and the beach club aft.’ (The tender bay is four steps lower than the level of the beach club aft or the engine room forward.) If water washes into the garage, it is picked up by four centrifugal pumps capable of removing eight tonnes of water in three minutes. The entire tender bay is finished to a high standard and the tenders rest on removable chocks. With the shell doors open and railings in place, it makes a unique party spot, particularly so as a specially designed air-conditioning system with emphasis on dehumidifying the air keeps it from being clammy or musty and quickly dries the tenders and any wet teak decking.

The subtext of *Stella Maris* is future proofing. The vessel platform has been designed and engineered to comply with the Passenger Yacht Code for 13 to 36 passengers, should a future owner want to convert the gym into a pair of VIP cabins to create nine suites. There is sufficient crew accommodation and safety equipment compliance already. Furthermore the helipad can be upgraded to carry a nine-passenger bird.

Another element of future proofing is the yacht’s Centric system for monitoring and communication. VSY calls it the yacht’s neurological system. The entire operation runs on a fibre optic backbone, which easily can be tapped into, to add or change equipment or monitors. As it stands, the Centric system checks or



The guest cabins forward on the main deck comprise four doubles and two twins, and vary mainly in the choice of fabrics and colours. Headroom is an impressive 2.3m. The full-beam gym on the upper deck (right) separates the working areas of the bridge from the aft guest areas



monitors 2,400 'points' on the yacht, which might be a door seal, the temperature of a cabin, the position of a valve or angle of the blades of the variable Rolls-Royce propellers. All data is available and can be called up in milliseconds in a hierarchy to answer questions or deliver commands. 'It is efficient and seamless,' says the yard. 'Say, for example, that the guests have gone ashore and the captain wants to reduce demand on the air-conditioners and thus the generators. With one touch on the monitor, he calls up all the guest areas, taps the menu for temperature and with one tap raises the temperature setting throughout all the areas to 24 degrees. Did someone leave lights on in their cabin? Tap and they are out – no need to have crew check each cabin. Same thing when the guests call the tender to pick them up. One touch and all the cabins are returned to the previous temperature and ambient light is returned to all guest spaces.'

The system is also like an electronic butler. Guests access a menu of services and information from anywhere aboard. 'It's about exceeding expectations,' the yard continues. 'You wake up and think, "What are we doing today?" Tap the screen and it says the boat is en route to Cap Ferrat. We anchor at 1000. The tenders and jet skis will be in the water and available at 1020. The pool will be filled, heated and ready at 1040. Massage openings today are so-and-so. Lunch is served on the upper aft deck at 1300. Would you like breakfast delivered to your cabin? You tap and down comes a menu of suggestions, and it asks what time you'd like it to appear. Your response is routed to the beeper of the right member of the crew.'

The advances don't stop there. 'Green' isn't just a buzzword to the shipyard – during the course of the



The huge volume and impressive headroom in the main saloon means that full-size furniture can be used – a rare luxury on a yacht. The living garden of orchids adds further interest to the space.



Huge floor-to-ceiling windows offer unparalleled views for guests from the saloons, while the 2.7m headroom affords a sense of the residential rather than the yacht

yacht's construction, VSY director Cristiana Longarini assembled an impressive group of scientists, environmentalists and maritime industry professionals for a workshop on yachting sustainability and bringing sustainability into shipyards. In fact, the VSY directives on environmental compliance and the certification standards it adheres to (such as ISO 14001) are remarkable. The yard was also the first European

builder to sign the Wood Forever Pact with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, guaranteeing it will use only timber obtained in an ethical and environmentally sustainable way. 'For VSY, sustainability is not a luxury but a responsibility – and represents a long-term commitment originally made when the shipyard opened and which will see it as an increasingly frontline leader in this field,' says Mrs Longarini. 'For us, sustainability means discovering new routes and – as history teaches – courage and passion alone redesign the maps necessary for new ways forward.



VSY has been active in this sense from the outset, equipping its yachts with various solutions aimed at reducing negative impact on the environment. Among these is the Green Anchoring System – dynamic positioning (DPS) – that can be used where traditional anchoring would damage the seabed and is therefore forbidden.

DPS, along with advanced biological sewage treatment and double soot scrubbers on all exhausts, was what allowed *Stella Maris* to remain in the Cinque Terre National Park for the duration of her photo shoot, while Vienna Eleuteri, a scientist for environmental quality and sustainability, simultaneously conducted research.

Working with Kongsberg, renowned for DPS for the offshore oil and gas industry, VSY developed an integrated system to control the thrust of Voith and Schottel auxiliary thrusters to keep the yacht on station

The large beach club allows guests close interaction with the sea, while the tender garage – set four steps lower than the beach club and the engine room – can also be turned into a party space

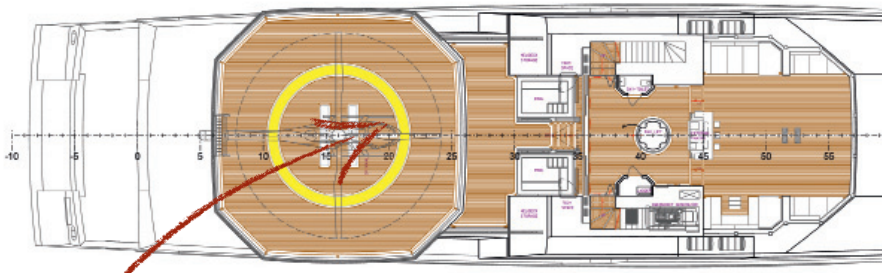


with an extremely tight tolerance of 30 centimetres. Critics of dynamic positioning say it can use a lot of fuel, and it's true that in certain wind and sea conditions, precision comes with a price. But the captain can also tell the DPS it only has a certain amount of power to work with – for example, one generator – and the system will organise itself within that power limit to create a larger drift area.

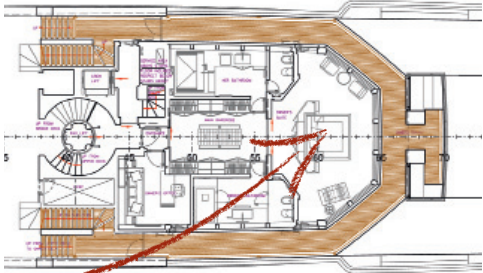
Such a full volume yacht surprisingly has its quiet spaces – the best a hidden area on the top deck. Here, forward of the drama of two pools and the helideck is a semi-sheltered oasis, with huge lounges embraced by the stylised mast base. It is the perfect retreat at the top of the world – an apt metaphor for a yacht named *Stella Maris*.



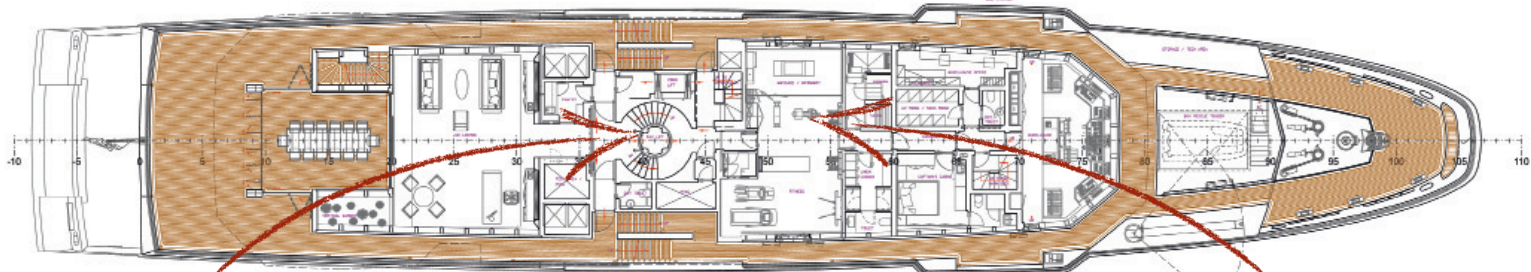
STELLA MARIS



The HCA-certified helipad doubles as a huge sunbathing or entertaining space atop the yacht

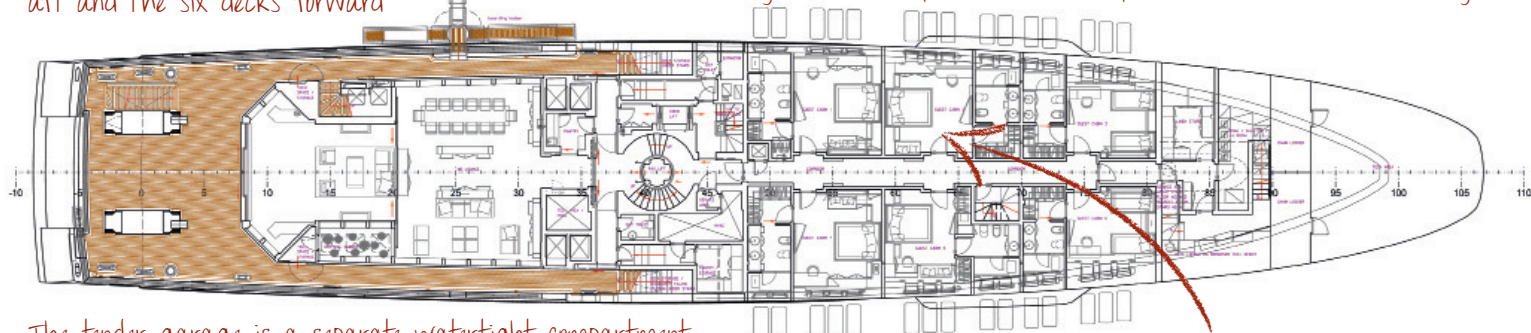


The owners' suite takes pride of place on the top deck, offering staggering panoramic views, even from the bed



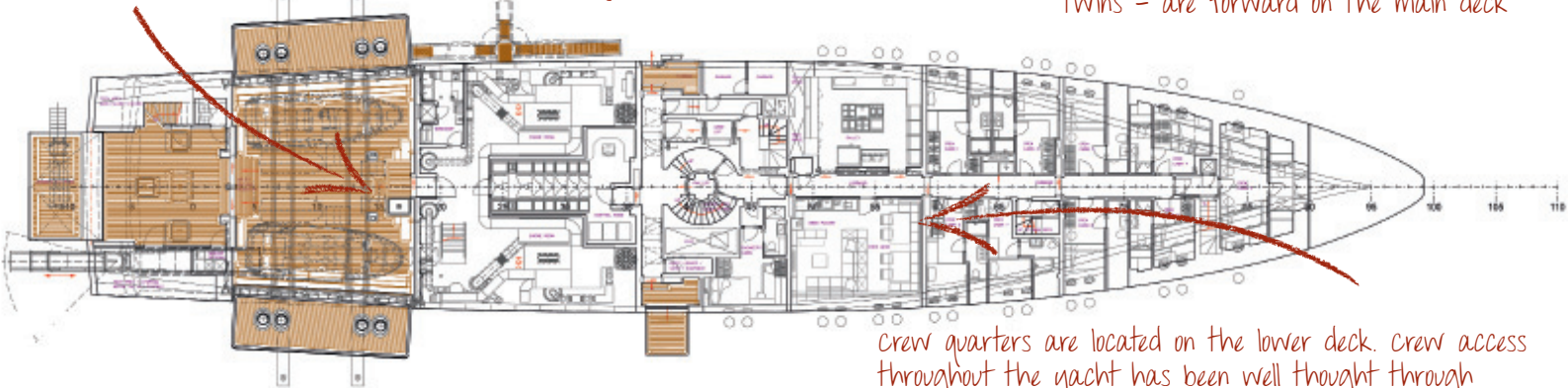
The central lobby with its innovative lift forms the junction between the five decks aft and the six decks forward

A full-beam gym separates the guest areas from the working areas of the bridge and the ship's offices. The captain's cabin is behind the bridge



The tender garage is a separate watertight compartment set four steps down. It also converts to a party space

The six guest cabins - four doubles and two twins - are forward on the main deck



Crew quarters are located on the lower deck. Crew access throughout the yacht has been well thought through

STELLA MARIS VSY



LOA 72.1m
LWL 64.75m
Beam 13.5m
Draught 3.62m
Displacement 1,637T
Gross tonnage 2,114GT
Engines
2 x Cat 3516B HD, 2,000kW

Speed (max/cruise)
17 knots / 12 knots
Range at 12 knots
5,500nm
Thrusters
Voith VIT 1000-300,
260kW; Schottel SPJ 82
RD, 315kW

Stabilisers
Quantum QC 2200 XT
Generators
4 x Lindenberg (LIAG/
MAN) diesel, 290kW
Fuel capacity
170,000 litres
Owners and guests 14

Crew 22
Tenders
1 x 8.2 HTM 82 EFB
limousine; 1 x HTM 82
EFB open
Construction
Steel hull, aluminium
superstructure

Classification
Lloyd's Register EP
notation full compliance
Naval architecture
Laurent Giles Naval
Architects
Exterior design
Espen Øino

Interior design
Michela Reverberi
Builder/year
VSY/2012
Viareggio, Italy
t: +39 058 439 671
e: info@vsy.it
w: vsy.it