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JULY/AUGUST 2013



A BOAT INTERNATIONAL MEDIA PUBLICATION

**GLASS PALACE**  
VSYS RADICAL 237'  
STELLA MARIS



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PHOTO BY BEPPE RASO



on the cover  
Vicem's *Vulcan* by  
Alberto Cocchi

July/August 2013



# Stella Maris

VSY PUSHES THE ENVELOPE FOR ITS THIRD CUSTOM BUILD,  
TURNING OUT A TRULY REVOLUTIONARY YACHT.

TEXT BY **AMANDA McCracken** AND **MARILYN MOWER**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MASSIMO LISTRI, BEPPE RASO** AND **VSY**





*Stella Maris may be 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 237 feet and 2,114 gross tons, *Stella Maris* is the largest custom superyacht to date from the young Italian yard VSY. The shipyard started with 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 color, DuPont Metallic Gray, balances the height of the topsides with the off-white superstructure.

In cooperation with Laurent Giles Naval Architects, Øino has exploited the hull to its limits, allowing for vast areas, pushing the yard further than it has dared to go before.

One expects to see evolutionary progress aboard the yard’s third yacht—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, eight-foot, 10-inch 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 try to disguise it. The tip-off that there is a certified helideck is the fact that the yacht’s decks don’t inset as they go up—in fact, the helipad itself actually extends outboard of her profile. The reason for this is pure logic; in a worst-case scenario, the helicopter would be able to slide off or be pushed into the sea rather than fall on the deck beneath it.

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 sun deck are of such size that they can host 100 guests for dinner.

The yacht’s most arresting features, at least in profile, are the two huge glass-walled aft salons 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-ton helicopter. Knowing that there would be so much glass in the boat from day one, VSY set



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Espen Øino’s exterior styling can best be admired on the sun deck (left), where the radar mast’s sharp, upward angles are mimicked in the helipad’s shape (bottom left). Two pools flank the space forward of the landing pad, and the best spots to cozy up are two bed-like loungers under the mast’s base (below).



up a multi-disciplinary approach to structure, vibration and acoustics—smart as the main salon 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.

The shipyard 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 actually amplify the resonance of the engines, VSY contracted Joe Smullin of Soundown, a Fort Lauderdale, Florida-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 anchored around a vertical core, 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 elevator wrapped by a wide and gentle staircase. It isn't actually an elevator in the technical sense with a car that goes up and down, which would be impossible to do with staggered decks; rather it is a platform that slides up and down inside a glass tube. The doors alternate on the tube to line up with each floor landing. 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 salons aft have that magnificent nearly nine-foot height, the cabin areas forward are seven-and-a-half feet. Øino's particular genius was in masking this on the profile.

The two aft salons are opposites of each other in concept. On the lower deck, 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



The build started with a blank sheet of paper and a design brief for numerous floor-to-ceiling windows, nearly nine-foot interior headroom and a commercially certified helideck.



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On its own mezzanine deck, the owner's apartment has commanding views forward and a private deck that is well hidden from neighboring yachts by the overhead eyebrows (above). The suite's wardrobe (far right), naturally lit by a skylight, creates an entrance hall on the centerline with his and her bathrooms outboard (left).





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 yacht’s design is all about extending the seasons,” says Lorenzo Cerulli, VSY’s sales and after sales manager. “You don’t have to move [the boat] to the tropics for winter because the windows keep it from feeling dark and all the indoor/outdoor spaces can be heated or air conditioned.”

With the biggest luxury being 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 salon 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,” Reverberi says.

The forward part of the main deck is given to 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’s 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 Foglizzo leather bridge chairs, the first engineer can monitor the components that make up the workings of the yacht. The Kongsberg system monitors 2,400 “points” on the yacht from doors and valves to fluids and propeller-blade pitch. This network runs on a dedicated hardwired circuit to avoid interference. The command center 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

Her lines are radical to some degree, barely hinting at the split deck arrangement of her interior, but instantly proclaiming the supremacy of glass.



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The nearly nine-foot floor-to-ceiling windows add to the sense of wide, open space in the main salon (above). Hidden glass panels can close behind the sofa, turning this seating area, with its two-story vertical garden, into a climate-controlled winter garden open to the aft deck. The staircase surrounding the elevator (left) is constructed of brushed stainless with aluminum treads covered in textured leather to save weight.





Four steps lower than the beach club, the tender bay is watertight and self contained. Four centrifugal pumps can remove eight tons of water in three minutes.



If water washes into the garage, it is picked up by four centrifugal pumps capable of removing eight tons 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, especially since a custom 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 13-36 passengers, should a future owner want to convert the gym into a pair of VIP cabins to create nine staterooms. 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 A/V, HVAC, blinds and lighting controls and communication. VSY calls it the yacht's neurological system. The entire operation runs on a fiber-optic backbone, which easily can be tapped into to add or change equipment or monitors. 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 Cerulli. "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 seventy-five 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," Cerulli 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 will 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 are so-and-so. Lunch will be served on the upper aft deck at 1300. Would you like breakfast delivered? You tap and down comes a menu of suggestions, and what time would you like it to appear? Your response is routed to the beeper of exactly the right crewmember."

The advances don't stop there, though. Green isn't just a buzzword to the shipyard. During the course of the yacht's construction, VSY director Cristiana Longarini assembled an impressive group of scientists, environmentalists and industry professionals for a workshop on



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The tender bay's shell doors and the beach club's stern platform fold out over the water. When the tenders are deployed and rails are inserted, the bi-level area becomes party central. The specially engineered air conditioner dehumidifies the air and quickly dries the tenders and teak sole for added comfort.

lobby, a silently operated panel door reveals a small vestibule with an office/day room to starboard. Ahead is a central dressing room with floor-to-ceiling wardrobes and a huge ottoman. The wardrobes are flanked by two stylish Brazilian blue marble 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," Cerulli explains. "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.)



yachting sustainability and bringing sustainability into shipyards. In fact, the VSY directives on environmental compliance and the certification standards it chooses to adhere 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 that it will use only timber obtained in an ethical and environmentally sustainable way. For VSY, sustainability is, above all, not a luxury but a responsibility and represents a long-term commitment made when the shipyard first opened. “For us, sustainability means discovering new routes and—as history teaches—courage and passion alone redesign the maps necessary for new ways forward,” Mrs. Longarini says.

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)—which 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 scientist Vienna Eleuteri took water samples for the “Charting Sustainability” study about environmental health indicators.

Working with Kongsberg, renowned for providing DPS for the offshore oil and gas industry, VSY developed an integrated system to control the Voith and Schottel auxiliary thrusters and keep the yacht on station with a tolerance as tight as one foot. Critics of dynamic positioning say it can use a lot of fuel, and it is 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 organize itself within that power limit to create a larger drift area.

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

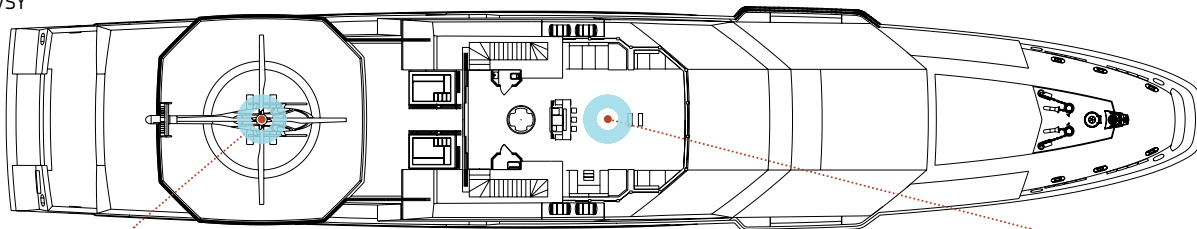
SB ENHANCED DIGITAL CONTENT ON THE IPAD APP

The Centric system is like an electronic butler. Guests can access a menu of services from anywhere on board.



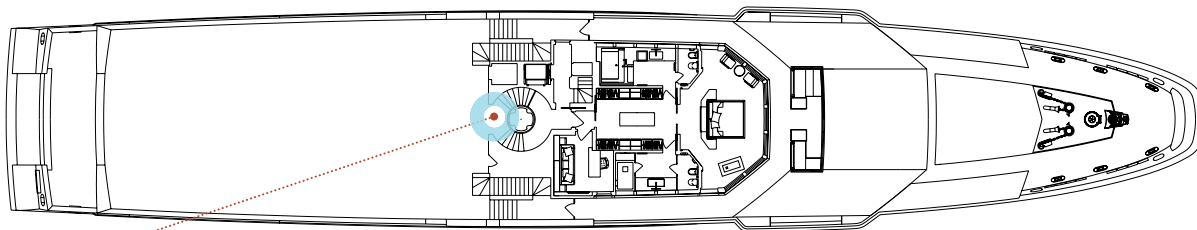
these pages  
The versatile upper  
salon (above) has  
sofas with electrically  
movable backs so they  
can be configured into  
a cinema arrange-  
ment. Aft of the upper  
salon, the al fresco  
dining area (far left)  
can be enclosed by  
hidden panels that  
lock into place.





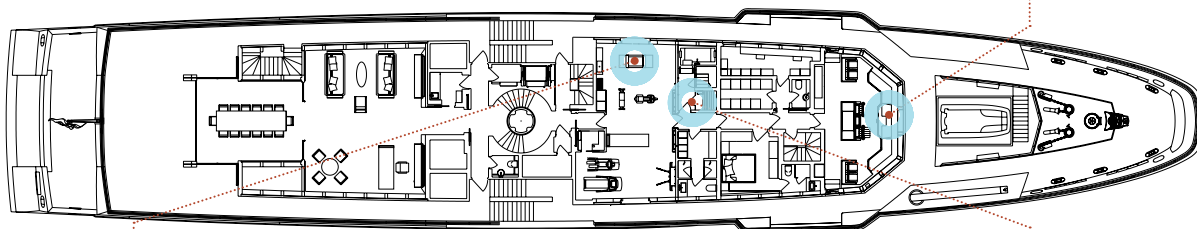
**HELIDECK:** *Stella Maris* is one of only four yachts worldwide with a helipad certified by the Helideck Certification Agency.

**PARTY READY:** With a bar, two pools and plush built-in seating, the sun deck can accommodate at least 100 guests for parties.



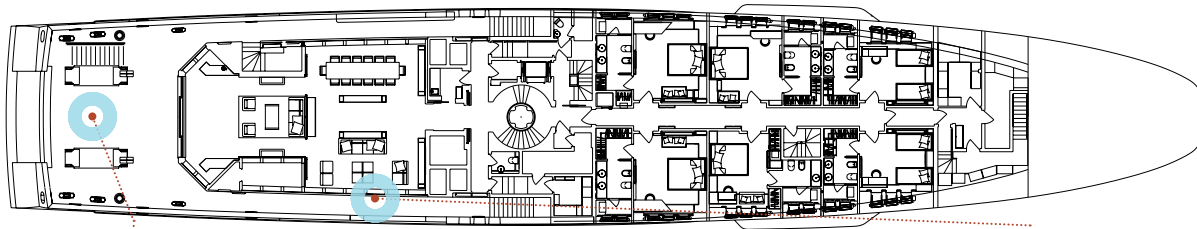
**OWNER'S DECK:** Thanks to the staggered decks forward, the owner's apartment enjoys complete privacy on its own deck.

**FLEXIBILITY:** The yacht's Centric system runs on a fiber-optic backbone that allows for quick changes to lighting, temperature, etc.



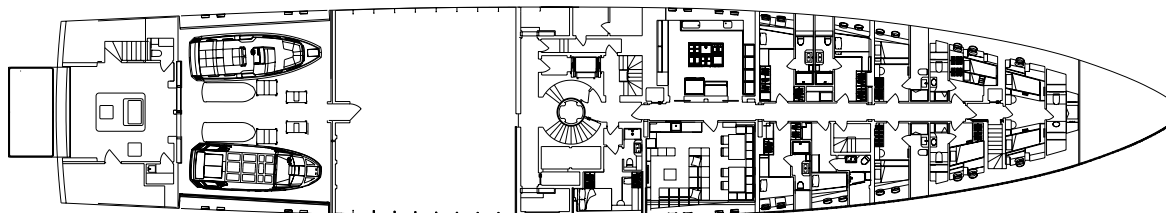
**GYM:** A folding partition on the full-beam gym's port side creates a private massage room or infirmary.

**AMENITIES:** Forward of the gym is a sauna and steam room. A future owner could convert the entire wellness area into two VIPs.



**PRIVACY:** A cockpit-style was used on the main deck aft to keep this notoriously exposed area private.

**ENGINEERING:** Each panel of glass was engineered for its given location to attenuate sound, vibration and weight.



## Specifications:

**Builder:** VSY  
Via dei Pescatori 56  
55049 Viareggio, Italy  
Tel: +39 0584 39671  
Email: [info@vsy.it](mailto:info@vsy.it)  
[www.vsy.it](http://www.vsy.it)

**LOA:** 236' 6" (72.1m)  
**LWL:** 212' 5" (64.75m)  
**BEAM:** 41' 4" (12.6m)  
**DRAFT (FULL LOAD):** 12' 2" (3.7m)  
**DISPLACEMENT:** 1,637 tonnes  
**GROSS TONNAGE:** 2,114 GT  
**ENGINES:** 2 x 2,682-hp  
Caterpillar 3516B HD Tier II  
**SPEED (MAX/CRUISE):** 17/12 knots

**RANGE:** 6,500 nm @ 10 knots  
**THRUSTERS (BOW/STERN):**  
260kW Voith/315kW Schottel  
**STABILIZERS:** Quantum QC 2200 XT  
**GENERATORS:** 4 x 290kW Lindenberg  
**FUEL CAPACITY:** 44,909 U.S. gallons  
**OWNER AND GUESTS:** 14  
**CREW:** 21

**TENDERS:** 27' HTM 825 limo, 26' HTM 825 Open  
**CONSTRUCTION:** Steel, aluminum  
**CLASSIFICATION:** Lloyd's Register, LY2 compliant  
**NAVAL ARCHITECTURE:** Laurent Giles Naval Architect  
**EXTERIOR STYLING:** Espen Øino  
**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Michela Reverberi