

Romulus,
Remus
and...

...RoMa

Viareggio SuperYachts'
latest launch



Early last year, *TYR* was the first yachting magazine to visit the nascent Viareggio SuperYachts shipyard to monitor the build progress of its two 62-metre sisterships designed by Espen Øino. Metal cutting had begun back in 2004 and after what seemed like an interminably long time both C001 and C002, named *Candyscape II* and *RoMa* respectively, hit the water within days of each other last April. The delay was understandable for a new yard that started building its first hull on spec and then had to field potential clients and deal with late change orders, especially with regard to the interior layout and design. VSY claims to be chasing north European build quality, so when *TYR* returned to the yard just after the yachts had been launched it was to verify this bold statement and see whether the yard had achieved its declared mission of “building the next difference”.



ALTHOUGH THEY ARE SISTERSHIPS BASED ON a common hull form and engineering platform, there are some technical variations and many aesthetic differences between *Candyscape II* and *RoMa* that are worth looking at more closely. Both hulls were built in Pisa by Fratelli Rossi, the steel specialists sub-contracted by many of the top Italian brands (VSY now has a commercial partnership with Naval Mare in La Spezia), and one unforeseen advantage of having the first hull in the shed for so long was being able to go over the welding with a fine-tooth comb to eliminate any remaining pinholes.

Originally intended for the shipyard's owner and founder, real estate developer and publisher Eduardo Longarini, this first hull was then acquired by British owners, who – given the yacht's name – can now be revealed

as brothers Nick and Christian Candy of the Candy & Candy design agency. As experienced owners (the previous *Candyscape* was a 44.76-metre Benetti) who also happen to run an internationally renowned firm of architects and designers, they were astute and demanding clients.

One early change concerned classification. RINA charter class had originally been envisaged, but the new owners' decision to register the yacht with the Cayman Islands meant modifications to comply with LY2 provisions. Most importantly, the sundeck could no longer be used as a helipad. This meant Espen Øino had to modify the superstructure profile to bring the radar mast further aft, which in turn changed the mast itself, the teak layout, the fold-down handrails, the run-offs and the like.

Another challenge facing the shipyard was incorporating the owner's requests regarding the interior. Although structural bulkheads are unchanged, the guest cabins (with the exception of a VIP suite) were relocated to the lower deck to leave the main deck free for the owners' use. Considering the shipyard had already laid much of the insulation, cable runs, piping, fan coils and air-handler units, these changes impacted on the overall build time. The original interior design by

Marco and Cristiana Portone had been relatively uncomplicated and traditional with simple electronics and little in the way of mod cons. The new owners brought with them their own Candy & Candy design team and a set of much more personalised solutions. They also requested a Crestron system that integrated every aspect of remote control from lighting and audio-visual to A/C and window blinds.

During my first tour of the two hulls, VSY Marketing & Communications Manager Alex Jacopozzi was very clear about the company's commitment to quality: “We aspire to being the best in Italy”, he said, “and that means buying the best.” Part of that commitment involved bringing in the German interior outfitter Oldenburger for *Candyscape II*. “This is not your average Italian interior”, claimed Project Manager David Morgan at the time. “We all agreed that it had to be a north European supplier. The client agreed to pay the premium and that was fantastic news for VSY as it takes us one step up the ladder.”

Indeed, the quality of the Art Deco-inspired dark-wood joinery, set off by brushed and polished stainless-steel accents, is plain to see in the flawless finish and precise tolerances. A sign of VSY's willingness to please was when they agreed to dismantle the finished helm station so that the joinery

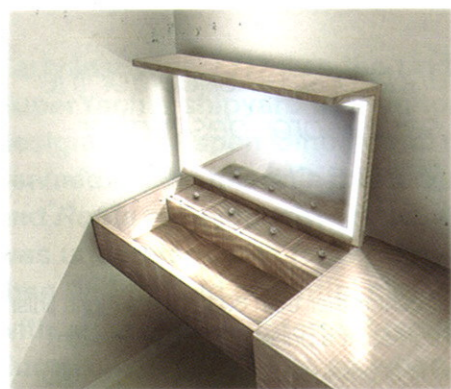


A glance at the standard spec sheet for the 62-metre “mini series” provides further evidence that VSY is a cut above your average Italian yacht builder.

could be polished to a 100 per cent rather than 80 per cent gloss finish. This sort of attention to detail comes at a price, of course, and Alex Jacopozzi broadly reckons the final product costs about 30 per cent more than VSY's main Italian competitors, but at least the same amount less than the top northern European builders.

The list includes Vosper zero-speed stabilisers, Tenfjord Rolls-Royce steering gear, Wärtsilä props and shafts, silent-mounted Brunvoll bow thruster, Schottel jet stern thrusters and a Kongsberg integrated control system developed in conjunction with engine supplier Caterpillar. Other intelligent features that both yachts share is the air-conditioned half-deck under the wheelhouse for housing the bridge systems and walk-through access fore and aft at tank level.

The technical specs are broadly the same (although *Candyscape II*'s hull has a housing for a Farsounder mounted on the bow), but changes to the first hull became apparent on closer inspection during my initial tour with David Nelson. For example, the original designs provided for a combined gravity and evac black-water system, which has been substituted with a full evac system. The issue here, he pointed out, was that gravity pipes have a larger circumference, so the question was whether to take out the old pipes or simply run the new ones alongside. In the end the whole system was re-installed in accordance with VSY's quality mantra; a time-consuming and expensive decision maybe, but one that sets out to improve the final product rather than cut corners.



RoMa, on the other hand, clearly benefited from the lessons learned aboard its neighbour with most jobs only needing to be done once. "If we have to choose between a cheaper or more costly, easier or more difficult solution, we will always choose the more costly and difficult one", I was told by Project Manager Lorenzo Cerulli. As an example, he pointed out the catalytic converters for the engine and generator exhausts.

During the build there was a certain amount of friendly rivalry between the two project managers, which can only be a good thing for extracting the best out of the workforce. When comparing "gadgets" aboard their respective projects, David pointed to the space for a 103" plasma TV screen in the main lounge and the gyroscopic sunbed on the top deck linked to a sun finder, whereas Lorenzo enthused about the Altobridge system that allows guests and crew to use their mobile phones anywhere on the world's oceans and the sophisticated night vision system. A simple yet sophisticated touch aboard *RoMa* is also the iroko wood-lined chain locker to deaden the sound when raising the anchor.

RoMa's interior (opposite) could not be more different from her more traditional sibling. Katharina Racek, partner in the Hamburg-based Newcruise design firm, has come up with an exceptionally clean interior design that, despite its crisp contours, avoids soul-less minimalism. Built by another German outfitter, this time Gehr GmbH, the predominant veneer is curly maple with high-gloss macassar ebony accents, combined with occasional satin gloss anigré, dark walnut parquet and even papaya wood. Pearlised leather and hand-woven silk or cotton upholstery fabrics in cream and ivory tones, combined with bronzed accessories, lend the interior spaces a light yet warm and calming ambience.

"The owners had seen 777 (the 66-metre yacht launched by Nobiskrug in 2006 with an interior by Newcruise – Ed) and liked the atmosphere", explains Racek. "They were looking for something similar with a hint of the classic, but also the clean, linear style that has become something of a Newcruise signature. He wanted it to be warm and glamorous, but in a soothing way."

German orderliness and Italian *laissez-faire* are not always the best bedfellows and (by her own admission) Racek is something of a perfectionist. But the shipyard has made heroic efforts to meet her exacting standards on behalf of the owners. The Portuguese marble in the owner's bathroom, for example, was rejected when it came back from Germany because the adhesive used to fix it to the substrate was too dark and showed through the translucent marble. Another block was purchased and the work started again. This time it was finished in Italy, but again the result was deemed inadequate. Eventually, it went to Austria for reworking and final polishing.

Another example can be found in the upper deck lounge, where coral-motif fretwork disguising the AV system required repeated painting samples (it was eventually done by computer at the Gehr facility in Germany) before the quality was considered up to scratch. The smoke detectors, although sourced in Italy, were also sent to Germany to be perfectly paint-matched, reassembled and sent back to Viareggio. When I visited the yacht in the outfitting stage a worker was carefully passing his silk-gloved hand over the dark fabric panelling of the cinema room on the main deck to detect and clip back any of the optic fibres that provide a night-sky effect behind the panels.

One of Racek's favourite features is the three-dimensional, laser-sculpted MDF panelling that covers the full height of the main stairwell with concentric circles that resembling the circles of a Zen garden (overleaf). Manufactured by Gehr, the outfitters worked on it at night to remove any imperfections made more visible by torchlight and polished it by hand. Another intriguing design feature is the "lightbox" panels in the owner's suite supplied by the Godrich Design Collective in London and created by drilling out thousands of tiny holes to form an almost photographic image of tree trunks and branches.

Curiously, many of the natural materials are so flawless as to appear almost artificial. An example is the onyx and maple dining table in the main deck saloon whose lack of visible grain, veining or normal imperfections makes it look more like Corian than wood. This might be a case of taking perfection a step too far, if it weren't for the fact that the eye is drawn in by the cool sophistication of the interior design as a whole rather than by distracting details.

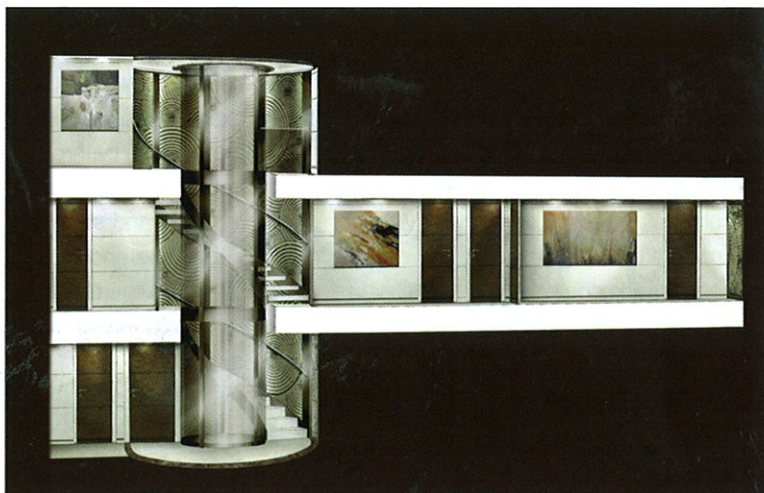
As the owners have retained much of the crew from their previous yacht, they were keen to provide them with spacious and comfortable accommodation finished to an unusually high standard. The layout of the galley, however, leaves something to be desired. It is located on the lower deck with no natural light and is served by a full-size service lift that can take a trolley or wheelchair. This is an uncommon feature on a yacht of this size, but it opens into the middle of the galley rather than the pantry area.

As part of its commitment to quality, VSY has pursued a "green" policy since its inception. In fact, the yard was one of the first shipyard's to enter discussions with RINA for Green Star notation for *Candyscape II* (before Mondomarine started building *Tribù*, launched in 2007), whereas

RoMa is both Environmental ABS and Green Star Plus Gold certified (the “Plus” annotation is in view of extra anti-pollution measures that are used to evaluate the vessel’s “Environmental Index”; there are three levels within this Index: Gold, Silver and Platinum). Moreover, for the sea trials of both yachts the company purchased carbon credits through Yacht Carbon Offset. “As a company, we have taken up the challenge of building superyachts to the highest environmental standards”, says Federico Bennewitz, VSY General Manager. “*Candyscape II* and her sistership show just what can be achieved with state-of-the-art technology and innovative design. And in our own operations, we are always looking for new ways to minimise our impact on the environment.”

But the company’s green policy goes further. Metal cutting has started on a new 72-metre project that illustrates how building a “green” boat begins at the very start of the design process. “Our technical office went to great lengths to design a system of seacocks on deck for recycling rainwater for washing the decks,” explains Alex Jacopozzi. “The dirty water is then recollected and scrubbed clean for reuse. This not only means detergents are not washed overboard, but less energy is consumed for making fresh water.”

Other energy-efficient features include double A/C ducting in the cabins; one for pumping cooled air in and another for rerouting the air to where it is most needed, say, to the main salon during the day when the cabins are empty. Although the yacht will have traditional diesel propulsion, variable pitch propellers and shafts means that during long crossings just one shaft can be used to optimise engine torque while a feathering prop on the other shaft reduces drag. The result is less noise and maintenance combined with an increase in range of over 500 nautical miles. Another seemingly minor yet innovative feature is the decision to install drinking fountains in the crew areas to reduce the consumption and recycling of plastic bottles. The owner should still have his San Pellegrino mineral water, but perhaps the same concept should also be introduced in the guest areas?



RoMa’s launch on 21 April happened to coincide with the city of Rome’s official birthday. According to legend, the traditional date of the founding of Rome is 21 April, 753 BC, when Romulus became the city’s king – a lucky coincidence that surely bodes well for the yacht and her owners (although come to think of it, he took sole command by beating his brother Remus to death with a shovel!). In July a third 62-metre hull arrived to take its place in the vacant shed in Viareggio. Has VSY achieved its goal of “building the next difference?” In terms of technical specifications, naval architecture and designer pedigree, probably yes. In terms of workflow and execution, not yet. But in light of the progressive improvements achieved with C001 and C002, there is no reason why similar gains cannot be made with C003. Already the predicted build time is down to 42 months, while building on spec allows the yard to reduce the waiting time for the client to about 20 months. In terms of the marketplace, however, VSY is in a unique position to provide the qualitative “missing link” between Italian and north European build quality and price.

Justin Ratcliffe

Images: courtesy of Viareggio SuperYachts

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