

## **Today's Superyacht Interior Trends, a Focus on Nature**

Superyachts are the quintessential symbol of wealth and luxury. They are intended purely for their owners and passengers to relax and unwind on the seas and to experience a part of this world that few others can. While they have existed, in concept, for almost as long as civilization itself, modern superyachts, which gained their name in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, are certainly far removed from the pleasure ships of ancient times. In fact, even in the past few years, there have been many marked changes in design preferences for yachts. Today, superyacht owners are tending towards more environmentally connected vessels. Of course, this involves sustainability; but even the design of the yachts is intended to make them feel more at peace with the environment.

### **Prevailing Trends in Superyacht Design**

In general, superyacht interior design has trended towards extremely modern and minimalistic concepts. This idea is reflected in the large spaces that many boats feature which often open out to the exterior of the yacht. Furthermore, designers have focused on soft color palettes, natural light, and simplicity in order to create an elegantly understated feel throughout the most recently launched vessels.

Similarly, the finishes used on many new superyachts is aimed at creating a more natural feel. Gone are the days of high-gloss finishes throughout boats. Instead, most wood has a matte look and the upholstery is generally chosen to match. This creates an aesthetic that blends more seamlessly with the environment, resulting in yachts that seem more a part of their surroundings, rather than bastions of opulence floating on the ocean.

Nonetheless, there is certainly no lack of luxury. From furnishing to technology, these ships have everything their owners need to enjoy the lifestyles to which they are accustomed.

### **Open and Connected Interior Superyacht Layouts**

Many modern superyachts have emphasized diminished distinction between interior and exterior spaces. While older vessels tended to be somewhat like floating mansions with decks, newer designs seek to seamlessly integrate the entirety of the yacht into large outdoor spaces. This connects with the overall focus on modernity

and simplicity, taking superyachts from the dated design motifs that have dominated previous builds.

For example, the superyacht *Entourage*, which has been shortlisted to compete for the International Yacht and Aviation Awards' interior design honor, has garnered a lot of attention thanks to its impressive open-format spaces.<sup>i</sup> Similarly, through the use of glass and natural light, it creates the illusion that the entire ocean is part of the vessel.

One of *Entourage*'s competitors for the award, *Stella Di Mare*, has similarly focused on openness. In particular the designers for this Italian superyacht created the illusion of space through the use of light and soft, smooth color choices throughout the interior.<sup>ii</sup> In fact, the ship was designed around the concept of the search for lightness.



Figure 1: Columbus 40S Hybrid

In the 2014 ShowBoat Design Awards, almost all interior categories were dominated by vessels that made significant usage of open floor plans.<sup>iii</sup> The winner in the largest category, the *Chopi Chopi* was designed to offer modern and minimalist style in the social areas. This idea lent itself to large rooms divided by furniture and function rather than walls.<sup>iv</sup> On the *Chopi Chopi* the designers allowed the majority of social interior spaces to open out to the exterior

of the vessel, creating continuity and a pleasant, natural feel throughout the entire ship.

Another yacht recognized during the awards, the *Columbus 40S Hybrid*, had a similar focus on open design. Despite its relatively short length, it creates the feeling of large interiors by using significant headroom.<sup>v</sup> Furthermore, the yacht has large windows that create a constant feeling of connection to the sea.

## Natural Interior Aesthetics in Superyachts

Much like the overall trends of superyacht interior designs, the choices in finishes for boats have shifted away from the gaudy and over-the-top selections of the past toward simpler and more natural options. As such, many designers are opting for

simplistic matte finishes over glossier alternatives.<sup>vi</sup> This lends itself well toward the comforting, warm, and relaxing feel that most passengers and owners want to enjoy while cruising on their yachts.

For example, the Columbus 40S Hybrid features light wood and white throughout both the interior and exterior of the vessel, all with matte finishes.<sup>vii</sup> This focus is intended to reflect the environmentally conscious theme of the yacht. In fact, the materials for the interior are all sourced for sustainability and nearly everything is recyclable.

The Stella Di Mare is another prime example of matte finishes used to compliment a simple and natural color palette<sup>viii</sup>. Another prime example of this approach is the YOLO, a humorously named vessel that, while slightly darker than the 40S or Stella Di Mare, has a matte finish throughout. Again, this yacht is very much focused on feeling natural within and the designers took care to create a tactile<sup>ix</sup> finish in the interior.



Figure 2: Modern Yacht Interior

Of course not all yachts are completely focusing on natural colors; some instead prefer to strive for contrast and boldness. For example, the Entourage features an entire design scheme based on high contrast between dark and light colors.<sup>x</sup> Furthermore, while most of the finishes are matte, particularly the flooring and the upholstery materials, certain sections of the wall feature a glossier finish to make them pop out. The Chopi Chopi also follows a similar design scheme with much of the walls and floors featuring simple, natural colors and the furnishing and a dark wood accents adding contrast and boldness. One of the guest rooms on board is a combination of lighter wood and bright blue highlights.<sup>xi</sup> Nonetheless, even with these bolder examples, the contrast is achieved by the heavy use of light natural colors with a few accents.

## Complex Technology to Create Simplicity

While the technology aboard yachts has certainly not gotten any simpler over the years – nor will it likely ever – it is being leveraged to create a more serene and

modern environment. Crews will continue to be a part of the yacht experience, but the overall trend is pushing towards the use of technology to streamline service interactions and reduce the apparent presence of crew members.<sup>xii</sup> This means that yacht owners are increasingly able to enjoy the luxury of being catered to by a full-crew, without the trouble of staff being ever present.

One way that technology has made life easier for the wealthy owners of yachts, as well as everyone else, is automation controlled by touch devices such as tablets and smartphones.<sup>xiii</sup> These give direct control of systems like television, sound, lighting, and climate control in the form of an attractive and multi-functional device.

### **Superyachts in the Skies**

Many of the trends seen in superyacht interiors are not dissimilar to those of another type of vehicle reserved for the super-wealthy: private jets. In fact one Boeing 747-8 was recently converted into a truly massive personal airliner and has been nicknamed the superyacht of the skies.<sup>xiv</sup> It features natural colors and matte finishes, topped off with the latest in technology and automation. Its spacious interiors and comfortable furnishings mean that it can be used for far more than just practical travel. While the exterior, of course, cannot be integrated with the outdoors like on a yacht, the design still strives to create a feeling of openness through the use of light.

Smaller options are also following similar design choices. The Gulfstream G650, the most expensive purpose-built private jet currently available, features an interior that is reminiscent of superyachts.<sup>xv</sup> Working with limited space, the cabin is one open area that is divided only by the layout of furniture. The color palettes, while not quite as natural-feeling as those of yachts, are still light and matte with a simple, modern aesthetic.

### **Conclusion**

As long as there are oceans and the wealthy, there will likely be superyachts. However, although they keep getting larger and more luxurious, yachts are no longer signs of complete disconnectedness from the world. Instead, both the yachts themselves and the owner's choices in design are trending more towards harmony with their surroundings. With many of the interesting and innovative concepts being

created, the superyachts of the future will almost certainly continue to move into even more connected styles.

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