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# BOAT

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**THE  
ONE MILLION  
MAN-HOUR  
MAKEOVER**

**How an owner created  
a new yacht with a  
100 metre rebuild**

YACHTING







# Attesa IV



words: Marilyn Mower  
photography: Neil Rabinowitz







DENNIS WASHINGTON LOVES REBUILDING YACHTS TO HIS OWN VISION, BUT AFTER A SHIPYARD FIRE AND A HANDS-ON INSPECTION OF THE OLD STRUCTURE, HE REALISED ATTESSA IV WAS HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE



People who don't know Dennis Washington wonder why he rebuilds yachts instead of building new custom ones. It's a question he used to try to answer. Now, having finished his fourth massive rebuild, he just shrugs off such inquiry. You either get it or you don't.

There isn't a yard on the planet that can build custom enough for Washington, or a yard that could function with an owner as involved in the build process. Full disclosure: I've seen every one of the *Atessa* rebuilds, starting with the conversion of the 39.6 metre Kong and Halvorsen *Yecats* in 1991. For Washington, who made his mark in heavy industry, a good hull is his version of a clean sheet of paper; on it he builds his dream along the principles of what he perceives as the best of Dutch boat building. Large mechanical objects and companies in need of a turnaround are his particular talent.

Redoing yachts is Washington's passion, pleasure and relaxation. It gets his creativity flowing and provides him with the ultimate group activity. His projects combine the talents of Seattle-based designer Glade Johnson, Washington's wife Phyllis, and his captain Ted McCumber, who joined the band as captain of the first *Atessa*, when

the yacht was just a few weeks old. McCumber has been managing the projects since. In Washington's portfolio are companies that work with stainless steel and hydraulics, and since that first boat he's purchased ship repair facilities and with it, highly skilled marine tradespeople.

Yacht broker Merle Wood, who has represented Washington on a number of purchases, set the current rebuild in motion in the spring of 2007, by telling him that Chang Yung-fa, chairman of the Taiwanese Evergreen Group was ready to sell his 91 metre yacht *Evergreen*. Chang had the yacht designed by Diana and built at a commercial yard in Japan. It was a conservative yacht for a different type of cruising and culture, but Wood saw it had something in common with all the previous *Atessas* – good bones and a challenge.

'I knew chairman Chang from shipping (one of Washington's companies launches a new container ship every 45 days) and I knew the boat was as Dutch as could be,' says Washington. 'They called it a Japanese-built Feadship. I flew over with Glade to have a look. Once we decided it would work, the negotiations took about half an hour.'

About one million man-hours were required for the entire rebuild. The wheelhouse (above and below) features ballistic glass, much of it retained from the original yacht. The aft saloon (right) on the multi-purpose guest deck, is followed by an alfresco dining space further aft













'My job was to envision spaces and create architecture to suit the size of the yacht,' says Johnson. 'We never had a spec and no concepts were value engineered.'



A month later *Evergreen* steamed into Vancouver via Hawaii.

Vancouver Shipyards – where Washington companies repair tugs, ferries and cruise ships, has a corner devoted to Washington Yachting Group. It was here that a 30 x 90 metre floating shipyard was constructed on a barge, while engineering drawings were being made for *Evergreen's* revival. The two-storey barge, complete with offices,

machine shops and tool storage, would support much of the work being done while the yacht was alongside. Diana was retained to survey the hull and condition of the systems against the original documentation, while Greg Marshall was hired as the naval architect for the new decks and superstructure.

One September morning McCumber awoke early as usual and padded into the kitchen for a cup of coffee;











The concept was ambitious: new bow, new stern, new foredeck tender garage, new spa, new superstructure shape, all new helipad, and totally new interior layout

from that vantage point he saw smoke rising from the direction of the shipyard. By the time he got out the door and down the hill, some Washington employees had already discovered the fire was coming from the barge and were fighting it with hoses.

'The two boats (yacht and barge) were firmly lashed together stern-to-stern and I could see the crew fighting the fire from *Evergreen's* aft deck,' recalls McCumber. 'Our first priority was to get the yacht away from the quay. The boss's tug arrived as we cut the lines to the barge. The tug pulled *Evergreen* away from the burning platform with the crew still pouring water on the blaze. On the other side of the port, Washington had seen the smoke and roared over in his tender to investigate. He and the tug captain directed traffic, keeping *Evergreen* upwind of the flames while the yacht's crew and shipyard fire team battled the blaze for half an hour until fire trucks arrived.

Fortunately no one was injured, but the barge with tools and shop equipment was a total loss. 'The next day we started bringing in work trailers and scaffolding to erect a work zone next to the yacht,' McCumber says.

Step one, dismantling the existing yacht, took nine months. Giant waste containers were filled 200 times. In the course of the demolition, they discovered that as well as featuring weapons (rocket launchers and machine guns), the yacht had been made bullet proof. Its steel hull and superstructure were backed with Kevlar and the windows were ballistic glass.

'We left it in and where we replaced glass, it's ballistic as well,' says McCumber. 'You never know.'

Washington's concept was ambitious: new bow, new stern, new foredeck tender garage, new spa, new superstructure shape, all new helipad, and totally new interior layout, including crew areas. The yacht originally had a large karaoke bar, 15 owner and guest cabins and room for 21 crew in rather packed conditions. While the main deck and above were gutted to the shell, McCumber planned to perform only maintenance on the engines and leave the engine room intact, but Washington found a decade of use had taken its toll. In addition to overhauling the mains and generators to zero hours, virtually every bolt and wire was replaced, engines re-bedded, fuel tanks moved, flume tanks removed and the space stripped, soundproofed and painted. The boat was formerly ABS classed but is now Lloyd's and MCA.

'The boat was similar to SOLAS class before,' says McCumber, 'so the only big change was adding the Hi-Fog fire system.' That and reconfiguring the crew areas, extending and widening the bow section, adding the folding mast, a forward tender garage with gull-wing doors that can be operated in a full gale, bulwarks that slide down and aft simultaneously to allow the large tenders – an 11.5 metre Novurania Chase and a 10 metre Riva – to be launched over the side, and the huge aluminium stern door that disappears completely from view down and under the aft deck sole.



On the guest deck, side walls pinch in to create sheltered spaces (above). The stairs (top right) spiral through five decks, and are divided by a fore and aft passageway, making a landing and foyer at each deck. The forward dining saloon (bottom right) on the guest deck is a cosy spot – with storage cunningly concealed behind hinged bookshelves











'It wasn't required to be a watertight door because the next door and bulkhead to the interior is watertight, but we made it that way. I don't like seeing open doors sticking up in the air,' says Washington.

Washington, as noted, liked the yacht's size and overall structure, but thought it looked entirely too commercial, like a cruise ship. The puzzle he worked on was how to keep such a large vessel intimate, both inside and out. To control the vastness of the space, he envisioned the yacht having a waist at the area of the central ventilation and exhaust trunks amidships, and flares to widen the side decks fore and aft.

'Working with Dennis is an exchange of ideas. He gives direction, we do concepts,' he reacts,' says Johnson. Johnson first makes sketches of the spaces by hand to capture his client's vision, then has them rendered in 3D using the Rhino modelling software. 'Dennis really pushed me on this one. He didn't want a particular style; however, I knew that Phyllis Washington, who is an antiques dealer (as well as a professional interior designer), would be putting a lot of distinctive pieces on board, so my job was to envision the spaces and create architecture

to suit the size of the yacht. We never had a spec and none of our concepts were value engineered.' Once the space planning and architecture were approved, the 3D Rhino models went to Washington Yachting Group, where a team of 10 specialist engineers checked calculations before turning the work into shop drawings.

Indeed, the space is a vast canvas with 2,322.5 square metres of interior, including 1,672.25 square metres in owner and guest areas. From day one, the yacht was going to have a grand entrance area and stunning central circulation. The stairs, spiralling through five decks, are split into pairs of semi-circles divided by a fore and aft passageway, making a landing and foyer at each deck. The forward bulkhead of the stair column is a 14 metre-high wall of gold waves applied using a patented process that applies cold sprayable metal to almost any surface. These panels shimmer above a stunning sole and stairs of white Botticino marble with Verde Rameggiato border and diamond-shaped insets, and stair rails in polished stainless steel with gold detailing. Each of these landings and lobbies is uniquely decorated.

The show-stopper, however, is on the deck above



The owner's wife, an antiques dealer, placed a lot of pieces on board (above). The spa (middle, far right) on the lower deck, leads to a gym and swim platform. The main deck cinema (right) also has a lounge and bar at the rear





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'My husband loves classic movies,' says Mrs Washington, 'so I made this match what Jean Harlow's bedroom would have been like.'

main, called the guest deck, where this lobby becomes an athwartships passage, as well as offering access to the walk-around side decks and side terraces. If the view itself, through the floor-to-ceiling windows and doors port and starboard, isn't arresting enough, this lobby features three Botero sculptures.

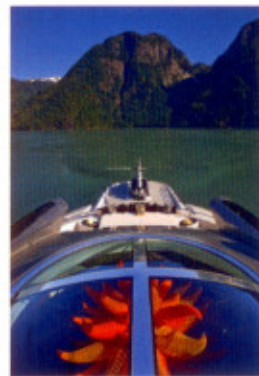
The side terraces incorporate what Washington calls 'flare-outs', a series of graceful curves on each deck to eliminate the slab-sidedness of the original profile and remedy the straight deck sightlines. On the guest deck, the flare is amidships, on the bridge deck there are flare-outs forward, adjacent to the wheelhouse and aft for the owner's private deck exterior seating. The sweeping shapes increase the beam from 13.1 metres at waterline to a maximum of 16.1 metres aloft and create drama from any angle as well as useful space. At the foyer on the guest deck, the side walls pinch in at the area of the flares, creating sheltered space for *chaises* on either side.

There are four large, elegantly decorated guest suites on this level and with the dining room/library forward and a saloon aft, followed by an alfresco dining space and sun pads, it is a deck with enough varied spaces and activities for an entire day. The forward dining saloon is worthy of particular note, as it is one of the cosiest spots aboard. Originally, the room in this position had a window overlooking the foredeck, but since *Atessa IV*

would feature a garage here for the 6.7 metre crew tender, jet skis and kayaks, this window was enclosed with storage concealed behind hinged bookshelves. The room is reconfigured as an octagon with the dining table at its centre under the largest dome Johnson could create out of the 'tween-deck space. So large is the room, that beyond a huge round dining table surrounded by Albert Pinto chairs, there remains room for tables and reading areas with overstuffed chairs next to the windows. The room has as its secondary focus a 19th-century English fireplace with bronze detailing. As with all the fireplaces aboard *Atessa IV*, the flames are a hologram.

The master suite is one deck above. Here the stair column on port is the backdrop for Washington's desk, which is adjacent to large windows. There are entrances port and starboard to the master stateroom, which is an homage to the glamour of Hollywood in the 1930s.

'My husband loves classic movies so I made this match my idea of what Jean Harlow's bedroom would have been like, with a white-on-white shimmering silk theme, Lalique mirrors, crystal Toro sconces and a gilded headboard,' says Phyllis Washington. The fireplace is an ultra romantic 19th-century English piece with statuary marble. A large bath and dressing area separates the stateroom from its sitting room, which features the contrast of sapele joinery and leather chairs and another fireplace, this one a 19th-



The master suite (top) is an homage to 1930s Hollywood, with a shimmering silk theme and a gilded headboard. The lower deck (right) offers two more guest suites and two twin cabins, as well as the spa area





century French, Louis XV-style in verde marble. The colour scheme of the sitting room is primarily green as a bridge to their private aft deck lounge done in navy blue and green tones.

Originally, the deck above was going to be a sundeck, then the Washingtons' son bought a Chihuly chandelier at a charity fundraiser. It is a famous piece, more than 2.2 metres tall, and was part of a Chihuly exhibition in Venice in 1996. As it was hung near a fishmonger's shop, it became known as *Mercato del Pesce*. Searching for a way to incorporate the piece in *Atessa IV*, Washington and Johnson hit upon the idea of enclosing the sundeck with a composite superstructure and bumping up the centre with a dome five metres above floor level. The space and

the piece seem made for each other and in fact this multi-function room, called the Chihuly Lounge, is one of Washington's favourite spaces in the yacht.

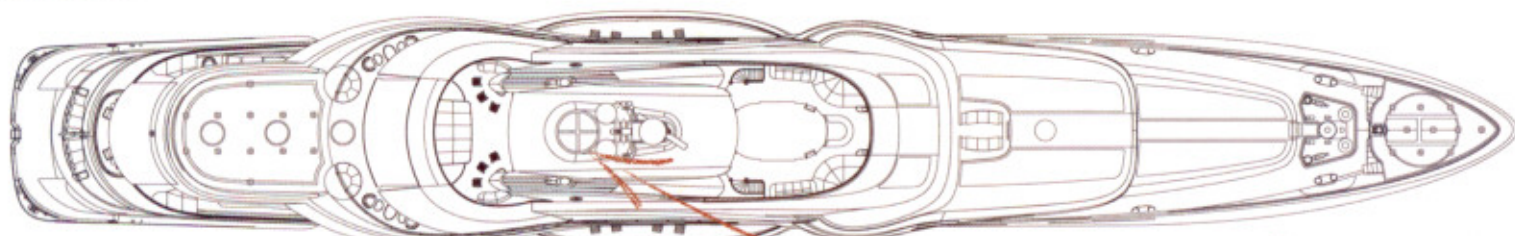
Another favourite is the spa on the lower deck, where numerous treatment rooms and a sauna lead to a gym and out onto the swim platform. Just forward of the spa are two more guest suites with king-size beds, and a pair of twin cabins Phyllis decorated for her grandchildren. And then there is the main deck cinema with its 3D capability and lighthearted adjacent lounge and bar.

'The boat definitely evolved as it went along, and became much more sophisticated in its complexity. I know how every inch of this boat is built,' says Washington, as if to sum it up. 'It's really custom.'

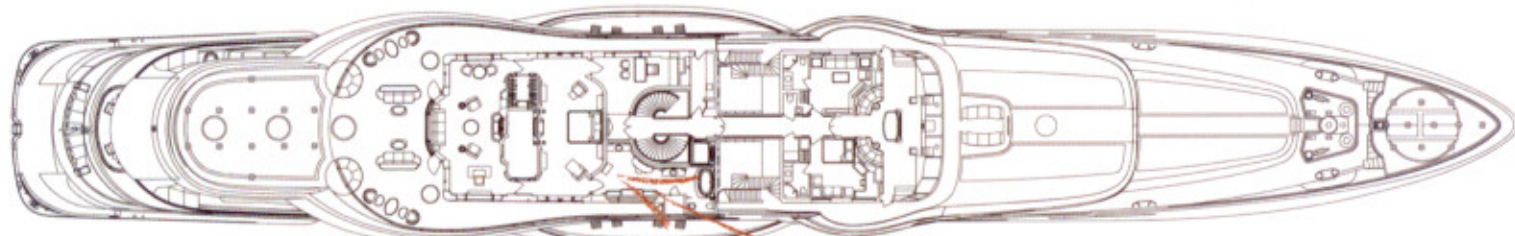




ATTESSA IV

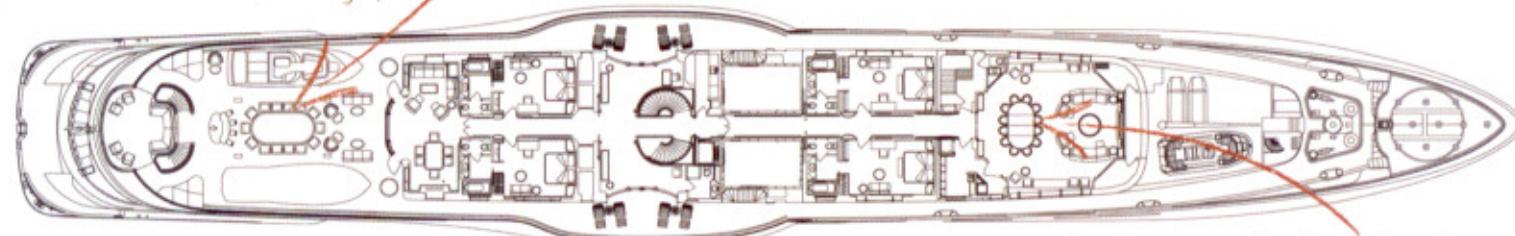


The composite dome of the enclosed sundeck reveals the chintzy chandelier



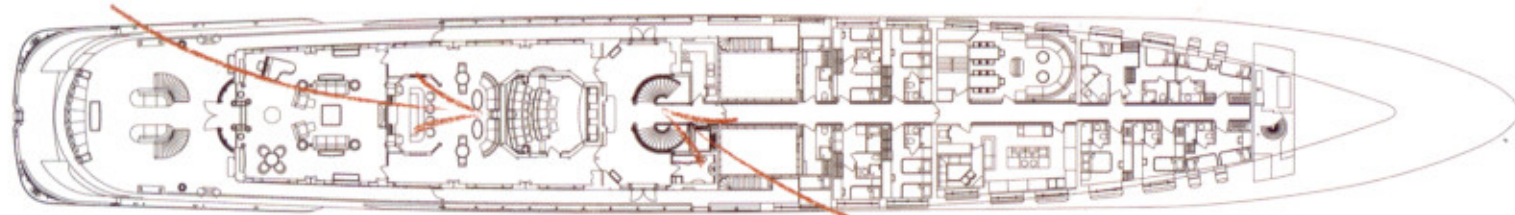
Aft of two of the four guest suites on the guest deck are a saloon and dining space

A large bath and dressing area separates the stateroom from the sitting room



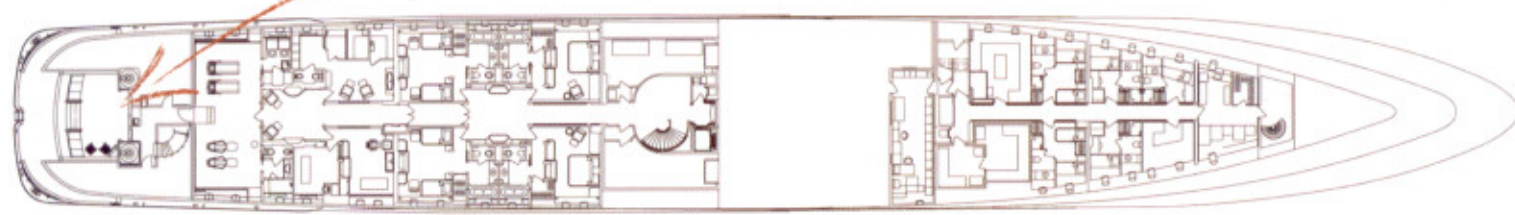
The main deck cinema has an adjacent lounge and bar

In the dining room, the forward window is enclosed to hide views of the crew space



The gym and spa on the lower deck lead out onto the swim platform

The stairs spiral through all decks and are divided by a passageway on each deck



ATTESSA IV Evergreen Shipyard / Washington Yachting Group

<b>LOA</b> 100m <b>LWL</b> 85m <b>Beam</b> 16.75m <b>Draught</b> 4.6m <b>Displacement</b> 859 tonnes <b>Gross tonnage</b> 2,854GT <b>Engines</b> 2 x Wartsila 12V32E, 14,000hp	<b>Speed (max/cruise)</b> 25/18 knots <b>Range at 16 knots</b> 7,660nm <b>Fuel capacity</b> 399,133 litres <b>Bowthrusters</b> 260hp <b>Stabilisers</b> 2 x Vosper/Naiad	<b>Generators</b> 3x Wartsila 320kW, 1 x Caterpillar C9 @ 250kW <b>Freshwater capacity</b> 105,000 litres <b>Owner and guests</b> 18 <b>Crew</b> 28 <b>Tenders</b> Aquariva, 2 x Chase Novurania	<b>Construction</b> Steel hull, aluminum and composite superstructure <b>Classification</b> Lloyd's # 100 A1 SSC, Yacht, Mono G6, LMC, UMC, UMS/MCA <b>Builder/year</b> Evergreen Shipyard/1999	<b>Refit yard/year</b> Washington Yachting Group/2011 <b>Naval architecture</b> Diana Yacht Design/ Greg Marshall Design <b>Yacht design</b> Greg Marshall Design <b>Original exterior Styling</b> Felix Buytendijk	<b>Refit exterior styling</b> Glade Johnson Design <b>Refit interior designer</b> Glade Johnson Design <b>Owner's project manager</b> Ted McCumber
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