



Solaia



(on board >



Initiative, creative flair and practical sense ensure Solaia is seaworthy, attractive and rather unusual thanks to a few cunning design tricks. Report by Roger Lean-Vercoe. Photography by Bugsy Gedlek



Main picture:
curvaceous lines dominate the upper deck saloon, making it the perfect place to relax
Right: the sophisticated bridge area with guest seating
Above: the owner's private office





Ten miles to the north-east of Amsterdam lies the picturesque town of Monnickendam. Before the Zuider Zee was closed off from the open waters of the North Sea by a dyke, this was once a prosperous fishing community and, although the town still has a thriving harbour, it is mainly the haunt of yachtsmen and tourists.

But, for those who explore the northern limit of the harbour where the sheds and offices of the Hakvoort Shipyard are located, the town's ancient maritime tradition remains a reality. Here, there is often a large vessel or two moored beside this family-owned company which, founded in 1880, built up an enviable

reputation as a builder of high quality, offshore fishing and trading vessels. Change was forced upon it, however, in the years following the building of the North Sea Dyke and the subsequent decline of the fishing industry when the yard's output changed to ocean-going superyachts. Today it delivers an average of one vessel per year, but old habits do die hard and the reputation of the company's craft is as high as ever, while the quality surpasses anything the founding Hakvoorts might have dreamed possible.

Recent visitors to the town might have seen the 40m, *Solaia*, lying alongside the Hakvoort quay. Designed by Diana Yacht Design, with exterior styling and interior by Felix

Buytendijk, she was delivered to her European owner earlier this year. Like the majority of Hakvoort's builds, *Solaia* is a traditional, round-bilged displacement yacht with a steel hull and aluminium superstructure. The hull's prettily-flared bow, attractive sheerline and stern, which integrates a spacious bathing platform, is topped by a pleasantly-rounded, double-decked superstructure and streamlined mast, all of which are harmoniously blended in a style which unites the best elements of modern and traditional design.

Although *Solaia* has quality accommodation for a crew of eight, including the captain, the intention was to run her with just six – three dedicated to the interior and galley and the rest



assigned to her decks. This policy called for a low maintenance finish, especially on the deck spaces, where the Australian captain, Nicholas Brettingham-Moore, who gave invaluable input as the owner's representative during the build, declares himself quite ready to give a hand with routine chores such as washing down. As a result of this, the one classical component missing from the yacht is varnished, exterior brightwork which has been largely replaced with stainless steel and high quality Awlgrip paintwork from sub-contractors Klaver, while further maintenance reductions have been made using synthetic materials in areas such as the deckheads beneath overhanging decks. There was a limit to these labour-saving substitutions, however, and teak decks, immaculately laid by local sub-contractor Kersholt, were considered essential.

When it came to designing the external routes around the yacht, a somewhat radical decision was taken to eliminate outdoor

staircases joining the main deck with the bridge deck. The underlying reason was that, with the tenders positioned aft on the main deck, guest access to the prime outside area on the bridge deck would be made by means of the interior stairs, while a separate interior crew staircase uniting the two decks, both ringed by exterior decks, allowed optimum crew movement. This decision also meant the saloon was not intruded by external stairs and security would be enhanced for guests.

Access from the aft portion of the bridge deck up to the sun deck is by external stairs which conveniently rise directly from the former deck aft, rather than a side deck. At the highest deck level, the owner and his guests have a magnificent panorama from a sun deck that also has a spa pool flanked by two huge, cushioned sunbathing areas and a bar and barbecue positioned centrally in the extensive shade of the mast. Just forward, a couple of semi-circular settees face each other across

occasional tables, while two forward-facing pilot seats are provided for those guests who like to feel the wind in their hair. More shaded lounging, together with formal open air dining at a burgundy granite-topped table ringed with eight Gloster teak chairs, are found at the aft of the bridge deck, where double sliding doors open forward into the upper saloon.

The main deck aft stores the tenders, both RIBs, a 5.5m Stingher with a 90hp Honda four stroke outboard, together with a smaller 4.5m Stingher with a 50hp Honda, that are stored well outboard to port and starboard and launched over the inwards-folding bulwarks by a pair of beam cranes. This leaves a clear central walkway which runs from the head of the bathing platform stairs to the main saloon doors, running between the four oval pillars that support both the crane and the deck above. Such positioning means guests can make little use of the main deck aft while in harbour or under way but, because the deck is

either overlooked from the quayside or just plain noisy on these occasions, this is a very good solution to a much discussed problem.

When the tenders are in use the deck is a pleasant annexe to the bathing platform at the foot of the central stairway that descends from the aft deck. Cleanly integrated into the hull lines, with direct access to the large lazarette and diving store, this is a lovely base for swimming as well as an ideal dock for the tenders. When the yacht is under way or in harbour guests can enjoy the views from an upper deck free from tenders without suffering the noise of the wash or engines or, indeed, the wind-blown exhaust fumes that can mar the enjoyment of the main deck aft.

The owner's design requirement for the yacht's interior incorporated two lounges, comfortable owner's stateroom, three equally cosy guest staterooms, gymnasium and lift uniting the three deck levels. This was done against a classically-panelled background of stained mahogany and cherry on the main and upper deck, while on the lower one, pear wood replaces the mahogany to make best use of available light. Responsibility for the interior



Below: the dining room on the main deck caters for a dinner party for eight

Far left: separating the main deck saloon from the dining room is an audio-visual entertainment cabinet with sliding doors





joinery was divided between Hakvoort and the specialist furniture manufacturers, De Ruyter, each being responsible for specific decks but it must be said that the quality is particularly high and, at the same time, quite seamless, while on every deck the joinery is livened by choice fabrics, accessories and furniture.

The division of the interior space was made on traditional lines with a saloon and dining room positioned in the aft portion of the main deck, both divided by a central audio-visual entertainment cabinet from which sliding doors extend outwards to divide each compartment. Particularly solid construction of the doors and their running mechanism ensured there is no need for a lower runner, thus permitting an

unbroken run of carpet between the two rooms. Forward of the dining room, the space is shared between the galley on the port side, a well laid out area lined with functional stainless steel, and a passageway to starboard running forward past the day head to the owner's stateroom.

As the main boarding point for the yacht was considered to be the bathing platform, a prominent starboard-side lobby was replaced by an athwartships passageway with elevator. Doors open on to both side decks from the ends of this passageway, to port into the crew lobby and side deck and to starboard out on to a manually-operated, side-boarding ladder which gives access to

the yacht when lying side-to in harbour.

One deck up, *Solaid's* upper saloon can be seen as an indoor, air-conditioned extension to the bridge deck aft, the two being almost united by electric sliding doors. Laid out on a circular floor plan, with its huge vistas and comfortable seating it is, by night, an ideal place to retire for after dinner drinks at the bar or, by day, a place to escape from the crowd. Here, curved lines dominate – the bar is a gentle arc topped in marble and fronted by round bar stools; the seating occupies a semi-circle to starboard; even the television is stored in a round cabinet. Without doubt, the *piece de resistance* is the low central table – a circle of Australian River Red Gum tree cleverly constructed so the outer



bark creates a rough-edged circle at the table's centre – this void being filled with clear resin and a darker wood to give an amazing 3-D effect to the table's surface. Quite remarkable!

Just forward of this saloon on the starboard side is the owner's office which offers a leather settee, ample desk space and comprehensive communications to the outside world. Conveniently, it has two entrances, one from the upper saloon and the other from the upper lobby to where visitors may be escorted without passing through the guest saloons.

On the main deck, filling the fore part of the deckhouse, the owner's stateroom is amply proportioned and incorporates a king-size bed set back between a pair of wardrobes, a quarter

circle settee and large dressing table. At the foot of the bed the audio-visual entertainment system is housed in a cabinet, its large flat screen concealed by a sliding panel in similar fashion to that in the main saloon. On either side, doors open into very hedonistic, en suite bath and shower rooms. Her's, much the larger, to starboard, offers a big, marble-trimmed Hoesch spa bath as well as a separate shower compartment incorporating a handy seat, while his, to port, has just a shower. Naturally, both have marble-topped washstands and include heads and bidet.

Three large guest staterooms are found on the lower deck, opening from a lobby that is accessed from stairs descending next to the elevator shaft. Aft, two twin-bedded staterooms, identical but for their fabrics and marble, share the beam of the yacht, each provided with a leather-topped writing desk, chest of drawers and a splendid en suite shower room, whose entrance way, with wardrobe, forms a small dressing room. The third stateroom has a queen-size bed but is otherwise comparable in size and style. Instead of a fourth stateroom, the space has been given to a gymnasium with entertainment system. In sympathy with the labour-saving design of the decks, the adjacent shower room, with steam shower, connects through a watertight door to the crew quarters in the bow, ensuring the cabin staff have direct and easy access when servicing the staterooms.

If there is any one design fault that creates an unhappy yacht, it is surely poor crew accommodation and working facilities. In this respect, *Solaia* is a shining example of how a yacht should be divided to ensure both guests and crew are well provided for. The captain is



The spacious owner's stateroom, which is found on the main deck, incorporates a huge bedroom and intricately worked his and hers en suite bath and shower rooms





well set up with an excellent cabin just abaft the bridge. So good, in fact, its entrance is from the upper guest lobby so that it could be utilised as an additional guest stateroom. Three twin-bunked but pleasantly spacious crew cabins, with en suite shower rooms, are positioned on the lower deck forward, together with a sizeable mess area and laundry. An escape ladder gives access to the foredeck where there is a crew settee and widened stringer built into the flare of the bulwark, which also doubles as a convenient seat.

The availability of sufficient storage space is usually an issue aboard yachts – less so on displacement vessels like *Solaia* – but even so she is notable among her breed. An ample storeroom, brilliantly racked out and fitted with storage freezers, is positioned beneath the crew quarters just aft of the bowthruster. A 700mm high void between the tank tops (neatly encased with a durable self-levelling mastic) and lower deck level runs aft to the engine room, giving ready access to additional storage areas when lying on a low trolley. As a spin-off, the floors of the guest staterooms can be kept free of access hatches.

Needless to say, the bridge, trimmed with mahogany and its fascia upholstered in green Maglite, is both an elegant work place and one fitted with ergonomically-positioned, state-of-the-art equipment. Forty hefty manuals of documentation, prepared by Nauticum Ship Systems, fill a bookcase on the aft bulkhead to port of the semi-circular guest settee, while the yacht's office and communications room opens from the starboard side. The 125-point monitoring and alarm system, built by CSI, is available on a computer terminal attached to a local area network that extends to the office, owner's office and engine room, where the engineer has been provided with an enviable, air-conditioned control room. Soundproofing and vibration control were major issues in the yacht's construction and prompted a well insulated engine room and separate generator area. Control and generator rooms both eat up space, but the engine room itself, with its pair of 720hp Caterpillars, is big enough to allow

railings around the engines and a sizeable workshop area. This and the full beam lazarette abaft the engine room are showcases of engineering excellence rarely exceeded.

Solaia was built under Lloyd's survey but not MCA classified as the owner did not want to charter. Yet, where practical, requirements were implemented. The attention to detail by

her captain and project manager Dirk Kloosterman, together with Hakvoorts' skilled craftsmen, ensured *Solaia* is well built, has state-of-the-art equipment and enough redundancy to eliminate possible system failure. Her guest rooms and excellent crew areas make her a prime example of what is achievable on a 40m displacement yacht. □

SOLAIA

LOA

40m (131ft 3in)

LWL

36.40m (119ft 4in)

Beam (moulded)

8.60m (28ft 2in)

Draught

2.70m (8ft 9in)

Displacement (light ship)

390 tonnes

Propulsion

2 x 720hp Caterpillar

Propellers

Lips FP

Steering

Tenfold, hydraulic

Speed (max/cruise)

13.5 knots/12.6 knots

Fuel capacity

70,000 litres

Range at 10/12 knots

8,400nm/4,200nm

Electricity generation

2 x 80kW

Power converter

Northern Lights M668TH

Stabilisers

Atlas 75kVA

Stabilisers

Koopnautic

Anchor windlasses

2 x Steen, type 23 9, 2 speed

Capstans

2 x Steen type 59 9

Bowthruster

Jastram 60kW, electric

Watermakers

2 x HEM 25 series, 5,000lpd

Cranes

Technoship, recessed

Fire control system

gentry type

Fire control system

Thorn Minerva Marine T1008

Sewerage system

Microphor toilets

Sewerage system

Hamann treatment system

Exterior paint

Awigrip

Air-conditioning

Marine Air 350RC

Chilled water

Communications

2 x Nera Mini M, Sailor

Satcom C,SSB, GMDSS

Navigation

2 x Furuno radars, B&G

wind, 2 x Leica GPS,

American Pioneer sonar

Walker type 4040 log

Furuno Weatherfax

Transas Chart Plotter

Autopilot & Gyrocompass

Plath Navipilot V HSC

Entertainment systems

Sony, SeaTel Digital Sat TV

Galley equipment

Miele, Foster fridges

Owner and guests

8 in owner's, double &

two twin-bedded

Crew

8 – in captain's double &

three twin-bunked

Construction

Steel hull & aluminium

superstructure

Classification

Lloyd's #100A1, SSC Yacht

G6, LMC

Exterior & interior design

Felix Buytendijk

Naval architect

Diana Yacht Design

Builder/Year

Hakvoort Shipyard/2001

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