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Pole stars

Some of the best designers in the world answered Conrad Shipyard's call to create a new 40 metre flagship, Viatoris – the largest yacht ever launched in Poland. Risa Merl reports



"We wanted to create a new design inspired by Apostrophe's silhouette. Viatoris has quite a sporty look by comparison – she reflects a more modern, up-to-date style"



Hakvoort's 2013 build Apostrophe, the work of Diana Yacht Design and Reymond Langton, was the inspiration for Viatoris, after the owner saw her at the Monaco Yacht Show that year



The design brief given to naval architects Diana Yacht Design and exterior designers Reymond Langton was for an elegant yet aggressive yacht, and there is certainly something edgy about the lines of Viatoris



Imitation might be the sincerest form of flattery, but to consider Conrad Shipyard's 40 metre *Viatoris* to be a mere facsimile of anything that has come before would be missing the point entirely. The story of *Viatoris* stretches back at least a decade and is a tale of an owner and builder evolving together – one happy to fly under the radar and the other with everything to prove.

"He's a modest guy – this [yacht] is not a toy," says Conrad CEO and chairman Mikołaj Król of *Viatoris*'s owner. "This is a home on the water; something very private to be enjoyed with just family and friends." *Viatoris*, Latin for "traveller", will be used for family sojourns from her base in Croatia.

It was in 2008, during the doldrums of the global financial crisis, when this owner and Król began talking about what would one day become *Viatoris*. He owned a 20 metre Conrad 66 sloop-rigged sailing yacht and a Princess 58 motor yacht but was ready for a larger motor yacht.

Conrad, based in Gdansk, Poland, was formed in 2003 by its parent company, the commercial shipbuilder Marine Projects Ltd, and in 2005 launched its first motor yacht project, the Bill Dixon-designed 27 metre *Escape S*. Later, it launched two semi-custom Conrad 66s, and it is a testament to the yard that both of these owners went on to order custom projects nearly twice the size. One ordered Conrad's 2013 launch, the 35 metre motor sailer *Lunar* designed by Frank Neubelt, then with Newcruise, while the other created *Viatoris*.

When *Lunar* made her public debut at the 2013 Monaco Yacht Show, she was moored near a 40 metre Hakvoort called *Apostrophe*. If *Viatoris* seems similar to the Dutch yard's creation, it's no coincidence. Her exterior is by Reymond Langton Design, with naval architecture by Diana Yacht Design – the same team that created *Apostrophe*. *Viatoris*'s owner liked the classic silhouette and long overhangs of *Apostrophe* and thought it was a style that would work well in his plans for a 30 to 35 metre yacht.

But owner and yard soon found this wouldn't be as easy. "We tried to pack everything in, but if you want to have the second staircase for crew, for instance, there was no extra space," says Król. "And the proportions of the boat weren't elegant [at 35 metres]."

The design slowly crept up to the 40 metre mark, which the owner was reticent about, having planned to go no bigger than 35 metres. But as Król tells it, the owner justified the extra length when he noticed that the waterline length would be only 35 metres. "It's still not above my limit," he was able to tell himself," says Król.

When it became time to create the new yacht, Król went straight to the source, contacting Diana Yacht Design and Reymond Langton to ask them to take on the project. "I have to admit, I was wondering if Andrew [Langton] would say, 'now that I build 80 metre boats, I'm not going back'," says Król, who candidly recounts the story of another famous yacht designer who had been reluctant to work with Conrad, despite its history with well-known designers such as Dixon and Neubelt. "[The designer] had doubts as to whether Conrad could build his boat without his name being tarnished," Król says, and so he was happily surprised when Langton said yes.

"It's always nice when people like your work, but at the same time you always want to push design on," says Langton. "We're a company that never does the same thing – even yachts built quite close together, like *Lady Lara* and *Aviva*, look quite different. We're always trying to move forward. We wanted to create a new design inspired by *Apostrophe*'s silhouette. *Viatoris* has quite a sporty, racy look by comparison – she reflects a more modern, up-to-date style."

Viatoris's exterior is incredibly sculptural. "We tried to design in 3D – we have shapes that go from one to another that are continuous, and we cut forms into the superstructure," Langton says.

Reymond Langton has created undercuts and arcs that emphasise the length of the boat and also create visual tension. It's a technique borrowed from another, much larger, design – 91 metre *Lady Lara*. The chiselled effect creates a highlight on the upper surfaces while the undercuts give a nice play of shadows and pick up the reflection of the water.

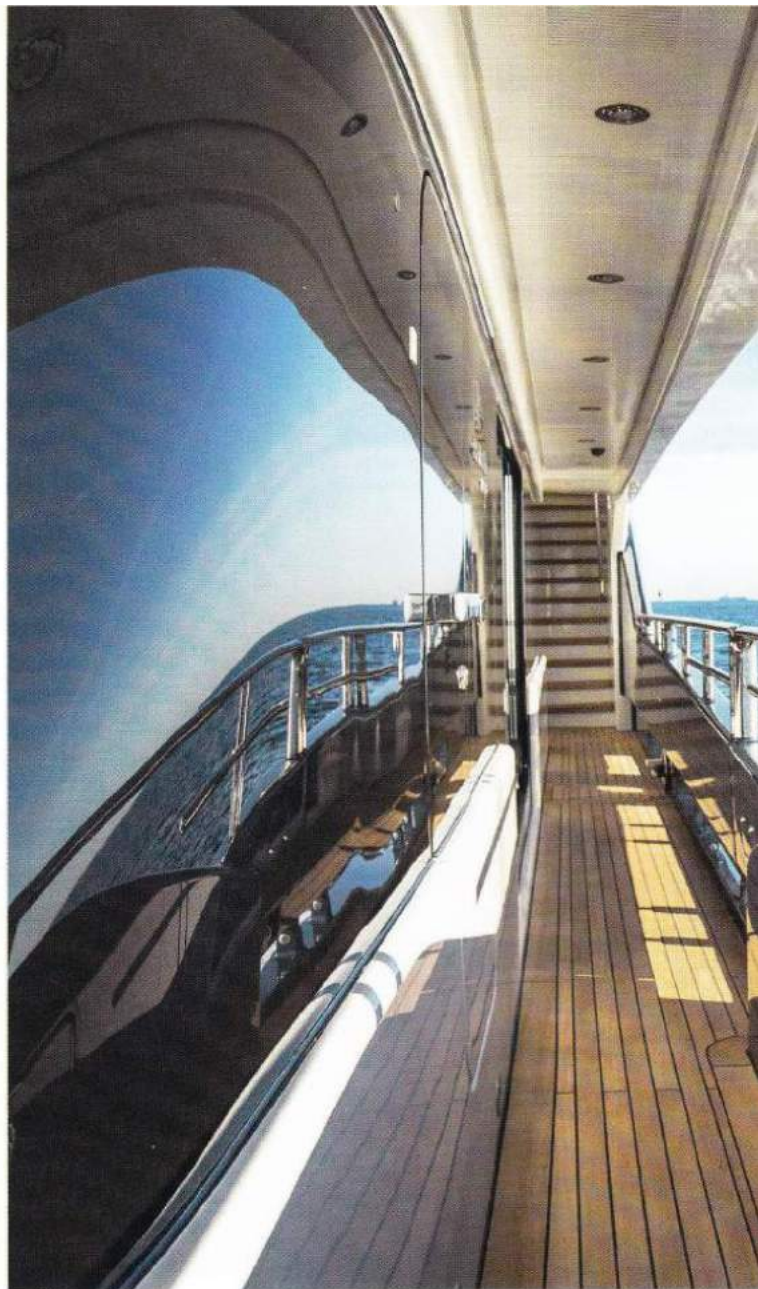
These sculpted good looks add an extra dimension to the engaging exterior lines, which are perhaps most pronounced amidships, where a line flowing down from the superstructure intersects with one rising up from the bulwarks, creating a signature "X" shape. It was even more visible on an all white paint job before the steel grey hull colour was chosen, which shifts from grey to blue shades in different light. This was just one of more than a dozen designs that Reymond Langton proposed to Conrad and the owner.

"That's the way we work – Jon [Bevan, Reymond Langton designer] and I will both start sketching profiles, sort of competing with each other," Langton says with a laugh. "We play off each other and pick up details from each other, and we try to experiment with things. I think Jon won in the end. Mikołaj really liked the X shape, but the owner was worried it was going to be too much of a definitive feature." The owner is so low-key that he was concerned about standing out too much, or being "that X boat", but eventually he came round.

Usually, Reymond Langton would visit a boat during a build to see how the design was being executed, but this was a slightly different arrangement and once the design was agreed and the 3D plans delivered, Langton and Bevan didn't see the boat until her debut. Standing dockside staring up at the sculpted exterior, the designers were impressed by Conrad's ability to bring their design to life so perfectly, and they credit this to the fact that Król himself is an architect. In addition to running the shipyard and managing the project, he also designed the interior of *Viatoris*.

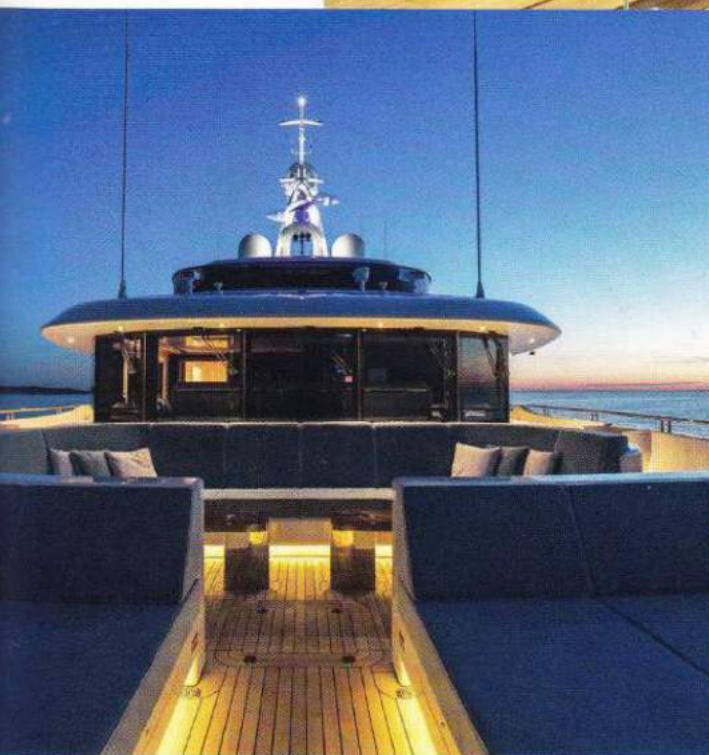
The brief was to create an elegant yet comfortable interior and extremely liveable exterior spaces. The owner was clear on exterior attributes he required, especially on the sundeck, which has a unique layout for a 40 metre yacht. He wanted a pool up high at the front so he could see where he's going while in the water, and he wanted it flanked by big sunpads. There is a flush teak deck and an infinity effect, so it feels like a pool.

More unusual was the owner's request for a glass sauna on the sundeck, creating an interesting challenge for the naval architects at Diana Yacht Design. It added extra weight to an already top-heavy sundeck – with the pool and gym up here as well – and considerations for fire insulation. The floor of the sauna is raised to create space for this insulation, so there's limited headroom, but it's not especially needed as one will be seated or reclining when inside. But the views from this glass house will be immense, watching the world roll by as you sweat.



Top: side decks on the main deck connect via stairs to the upper foredeck lounge area. Above: steps lead up to the infinity-effect pool. It is located forward on the sundeck because the owner wanted it positioned so that he could see exactly where the boat was heading while he was in the water

This page, clockwise from right: the glass-walled sauna on the sundeck was a special owner requirement; loungers, steps away from the sauna; the upper deck's al fresco bar area; main deck aft; the foredeck seating area





From an architectural point of view, adding all this weight on the top deck meant having to compensate on the lower deck. "If you put heavy items, like batteries, near the bottom they work as a counterweight, then you can have these extra-heavy items up top," says Hans-Maarten Bais, Diana Yacht Design's creative director.

The brief also called for bulwarks and balconies opening in the saloon and master to let fresh air in, as the owner doesn't care for air conditioning. But Conrad didn't want to use the typical sliding doors, instead opting to create their own rugged doors of the same heavy-duty quality that might be seen on their ships.

"This could be found on a boat even more than 500GT - they are solid," Król says of the thick stainless steel and glass doors, which fold accordion-style to reveal the descending bulwarks. The floor-to-ceiling doors are mirrored on either side of the saloon, creating an open, breezy living area. Rather than pushing sofas up against walls or windows, a gathering of low love seats and armchairs, in a periwinkle blue, is set in the centre of the room, all facing inwards to create a cosy lounge.

The owner is a fan of oval elements so oval cabinets and ceiling trays can be seen throughout, such as the main deck aft foyer, with the oblong credenza. This entryway is narrower than the saloon, as stairs to the upper deck or ventilation

are hidden on either side, masked by curved joinery and backlit onyx inside the foyer.

Król selected all the stone seen on board, and the mix of black and white marble finds harmony in the orange-copper veins that run through each. "I purposely didn't choose perfect stone or try to mirror it," he says. "Stone is stone, it needs to look natural." Myriad wood choices are tied together through staining. The saloon has rosewood and stained oak, the latter of which is carried through the corridors, while the floors are natural oak.

The foyer to the master has a small office that looks out of a wide window - just enough space for the owner to work solo. The wow factor in this nice-sized master suite comes in the balconies, which have an ingenious design created by Król himself. The glass doors fold open, which then act as a rail and a windbreak, while the balcony folds down and a loose railing is added in front for safety. The owner can do it all without the help of crew. There are two balconies on either side, creating an amazing cross breeze and two big chairs on either side can swivel out and look over the water.

But it's not all about big features. The doorknobs, for instance, were specially made by Turnstyle Designs - Król splashed out £100 per knob, saying those with plastic latches on the inside, seen even on yachts from the top shipyards, didn't meet his standards. He designed

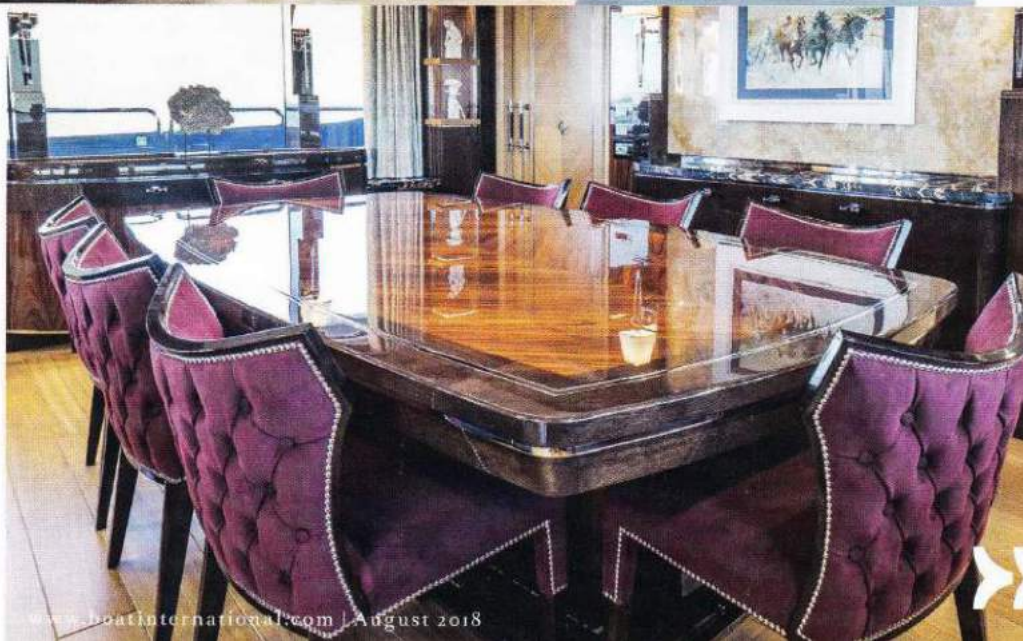


From top: the upper saloon is designed for use as a cinema, with reclining sofas and refreshments on hand via a dumb waiter; the owner's suite features spectacular fold-out balconies on either side; even the small office has a large window

The floor-to-ceiling doors are mirrored on either side of the saloon, creating an open, breezy living area. A gathering of low love seats and armchairs is set in the centre of the room

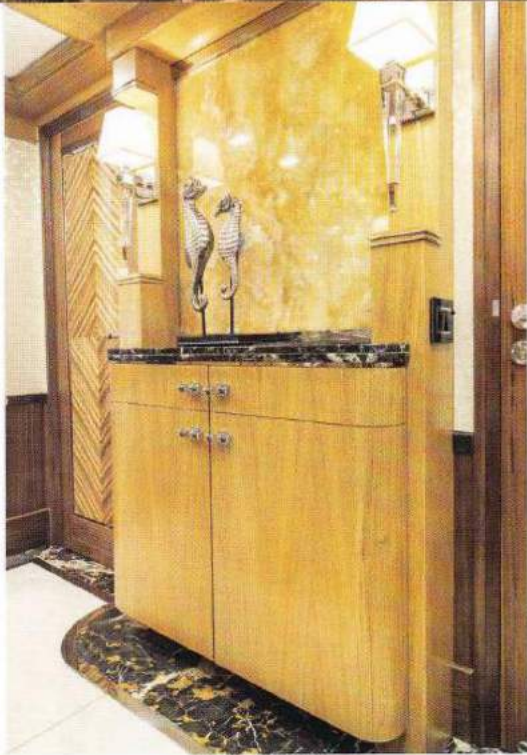


This page, from top: the convivial two-stool bar area forward on the port side of the upper deck; the main deck saloon is set up as a cosy lounge between doors that open to fold-down balconies; the dining area forward in the main saloon





The owner is a fan of oval elements, so oval cabinets and ceiling trays can be seen throughout, such as the main deck aft foyer, with the oblong credenza





The central staircase and the owner's suite, top right, feature crystal light fixtures by Masiero, based in Treviso, Italy. Conrad's CEO and chairman Mikotaj Król took a hands-on role with Viatoris, being responsible for the interior



his own style of knob that Turnstyle created, a blend of click-lock and turning, so the doors and drawers are especially secure.

Lamps in the master, inspired by tree branches and painted silver, were created by a Dutch artist, while the door handles throughout the accommodation are hammered chrome, which give a subtly reflective look. Leather headboards are by Marine Leather.

A crystal light fixture created by Masiero hangs over the bed in the master – a partner to three others found on board in the saloon, dining room and a grand hanging fixture at the staircase.

The guest rooms are interlinking in pairs and can be had in multiple layout options depending on the room, such as a lounge, double bed or twins. It's a great solution so that when the owner cruises with two other couples, as is often the case, each can have their own VIP suite with a bedroom connecting to a lounge area. It would certainly make a fantastic charter yacht asset, too, though *Viatoris* is planned to be private.

The upper lounge is the epitome of leisurely living, designed to be a cinema with comfortable reclining sofas and darkened at the touch of a button. A dumb waiter, cleverly hidden behind the joinery, brings food up from the galley for movie snacks or dinner on the upper aft deck, with an expanding table.

The owner wanted to create zones on this

deck, so it has the feel of a much larger yacht with the dining area, a boomerang-shaped bar to port and a seating area to starboard. Ahead of the bridge is a vast foredeck lounge with a seating area and sunpads, another request from the owner.

This is Diana Yacht Design's 67th yacht, and the company considers each to be an evolution, using concrete data collected from each design to inform the next. "This boat is also equipped with a bulbous bow to make her more efficient, and we just saw during sea trials that she was only using 65lph at 10.5 knots, which is really efficient," says Bais. "And her captain says she manoeuvres 'very nicely, turns like a car'."

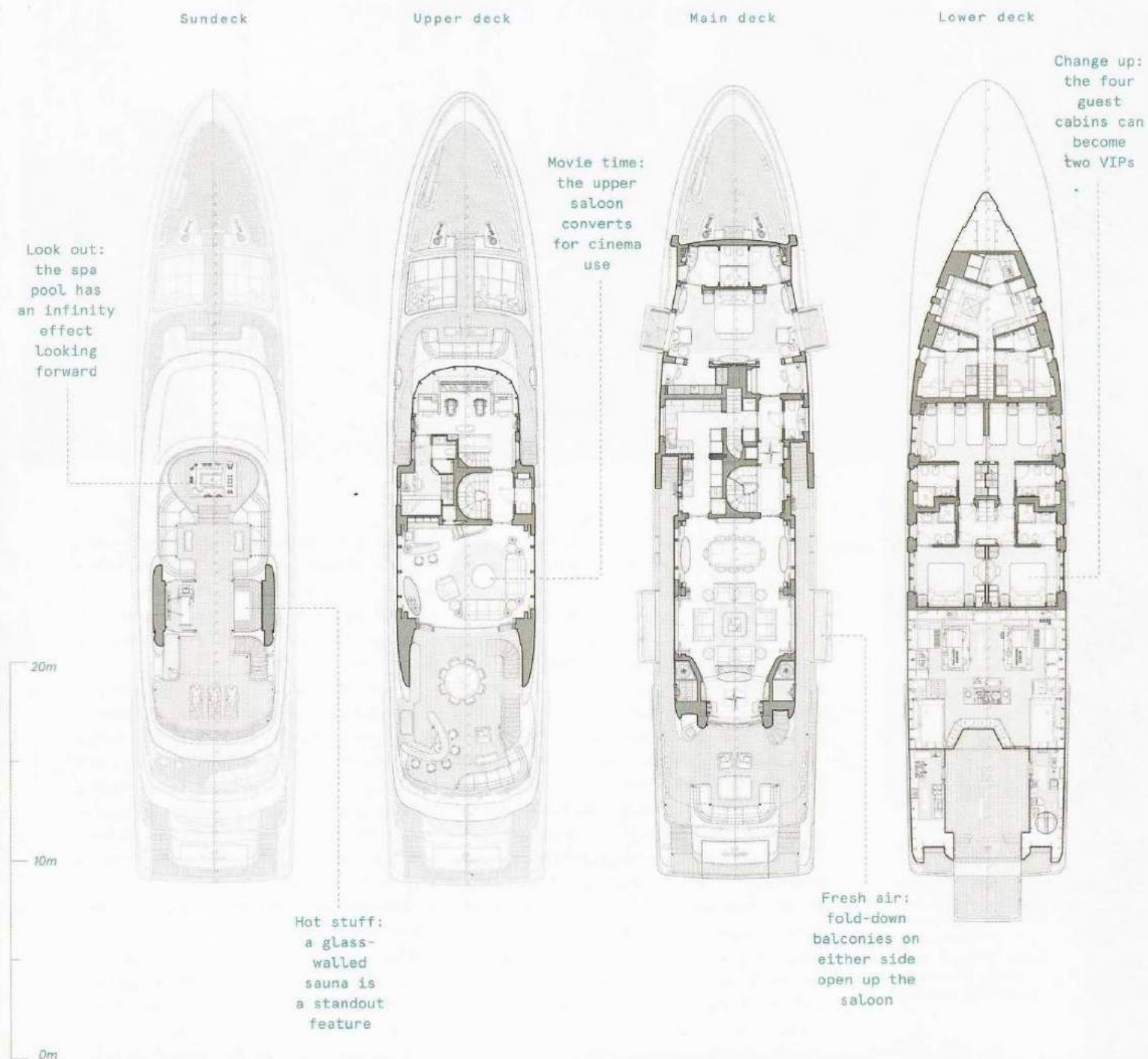
Viatoris is quiet under way, even when down below. "The clearance between the props and the hull is very important," says Bais. "You can put in all the insulation you want, but if the foundation of the engine and propeller and layout isn't correct, you'll never get a quiet boat."

It's further evidence of the lengths Conrad has gone to on this new 40 metre. "The Polish mentality is to show we can do it," Król says. The Polish locality, meanwhile, means that you're getting a northern European build without northern European prices: on the water with all its features, *Viatoris* cost €16.9 million. And that's for a superyacht coming from some of the best designers in the business. ■



VIATORIS

CONRAD SHIPYARD



LOA 40m
LWL 35.5m
Beam 8.3m
Draught (full load) 2.65m
Gross tonnage 393GT
Engines 2 x Cat C18 ACERT

Speed max/cruise 13/11 knots
Range at 10.5 knots 4,000nm
Generators 2 x 99kW Cat C4.4
Fuel capacity 48,600 litres

Freshwater capacity 10,500 litres
Tenders 1 x 5.1m Castoldi JT16;
1 x 3.8m Williams Turbojet 385
Owners/guests 10

Crew 6
Construction Steel hull; aluminium superstructure
Classification LR * 100A1 SSC YACHT MONO G6, * LMC, MCA LY3

Naval architecture Diana Yacht Design
Exterior styling Raymond Langton Design
Interior design Conrad Shipyard

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