



The light fantastic

The refashioning of 55-metre *Spirit* shows just how transformative a “light-touch” interior refit can be. *Sam Fortescue* explores a bright, airy home on the sea

PHOTOGRAPHY: DORRIS MCVEIGH





Exterior deck spaces saw the fewest changes. Dôme has added some colour with new cushions and the careful use of plants



PHOTOGRAPHY: THIERRY AMELLER; KRISTINA STROBEL

It takes a certain level of bravery to gaze on the top-quality interior of a yacht and dream of gutting it all. But that's just what Dôme Project Interiors did with its first ever superyacht project, the 54.3-metre *Spirit* from Amels. In a refit that began with ambitions simply to move the furniture around, the small Swiss designer ended up stripping the interior back to bare walls and floors. And the most impressive part? It took just three months, at the height of restrictions over Covid-19.

Built in 2011, *Spirit* originally had an interior by the renowned Nuvolari Lenard. "It was extremely masculine," says Dôme founder Cécile Demole. "It was a boat designed by a great designer for a

man. But you didn't have the feeling of being on a boat – you had the feeling of being in a flat. It was dark and all the lines were very square."

The new owners were clear on their brief. "We wanted to have the real feeling of being close to the water with the sea codes like coral and sea horses, while keeping some masculine touches like the outside seating," they tell me.

So Demole, whose previous projects run from Belgravia townhouses to villas on the French Riviera, chose soft, calming colours and blended them with natural materials. "Blues, greens and whites combine to reflect the many different hues of the ocean," she explains. "Decorative seashell accents bring the beauty of the marine world inside. Coral is also a distinct part of the design scheme, with its colour or shape echoed on throws, cushions and bespoke silk carpets."

She also redesigned the way the boat is lit. First of all, the use of lighter colours in panelling and upholstery reflects and magnifies the natural light that pours in through *Spirit's* large windows. "The shimmering reflection of sun on water is drawn into interior spaces," she says. Then she commissioned numerous bespoke lamps, reflecting the marine theme.

If light and the ocean were two of the guiding themes of the refit, family life was another, as the new owners plan to cruise widely with their family, and the yacht is also chartered through Y.CO. Dôme installed completely new audiovisual equipment from Mr Smith in each cabin and in the main saloon to improve family film nights. They also made sure that there was space for a huge range of new toys in the cavernous garage.

Remarkably, the whole refit was accomplished





Every item of new furniture has been custom designed by Dôme and built by one of their long-standing subcontractors. Owner Cécile Demole says that the solidity of these relationships meant there was no price inflation due to the superyacht nature of the work. This trust also allowed design and building work to progress despite the Covid-19 lockdown

during lockdown. The initial work – mainly gutting – was done by three technicians who crossed the Atlantic with *Spirit* in February. Thanks to a long-standing relationship between skipper Marc Damette and Monaco Marine, the yacht was then moored in La Ciotat, even though all the work was done by Dôme's external contractors. It took rigorous planning to keep things proceeding safely, and at first, people came by themselves. "To protect the crew from coronavirus, we had to be instrumental on how people would work and how they would interact," explains Damette. "There were all the extra precautions with masks and taking



temperatures in the morning."

Thanks to the "military operation", the boat was ready in the first week of June. Then it was just a case of unpacking the furniture and soft furnishings, all of which had been readied

remotely by Dôme. Damette says it would not have been possible without his tight-knit crew. "I've been with most of my senior crew for seven years. We all knew what to do and how to do it."

With her soul now reinvigorated, it seems as if the boat's explorer spirit is set to get a work-out too. The owners were able to enjoy four summer weeks of cruising around the Côte d'Azur, Corsica and

Sardinia. But they also plan to unleash the boat's globetrotting potential. "Our next destinations are definitely Alaska and Galápagos," they tell me. "Not to mention the Exumas in the Bahamas that we love so much." ■

Throughout the boat, darker tones (above) have been replaced with pale blue velvet upholstery and pearly ivory silk carpets (top and opposite page)

PHOTOGRAPHY: STUDIO BORLENGH; DORRIE MCVEIGH





PHOTOGRAPHY: THIERRY AMELLER; DORRIE MCVEIGH



Coral motifs recur on this boat, from objects that catch the eye on shelves and occasional tables to the crockery, silk carpets and upholstery. Dutch artist Pieter Adam was commissioned to

design lamps throughout the boat, including a sculptural piece in the dining area of the main saloon. This has intertwined branches like a giant coral finished in pressed silver





Nowhere has benefited more from Dôme's efforts to harness natural light than the master suite. Pale woods, leather and upholstery have softened and brightened this space very effectively. Glossy silks and glimmering, delicate metal tables amplify the light that pours in through the large windows

The master suite saw some of the biggest changes, with its rich, grained wooden panelling replaced with a much lighter grey wood



While dark wood (above) was removed, there were few major layout alterations, as "the volume was already well used," says Cécile Demole. The exception was the addition of two baths (right)



PHOTOGRAPHY: STUDIO BORLENGHI, DORRIE MCVEIGH



Large night tables in the cabins were ripped out and replaced with smaller units covered with textured shagreen from farmed stingrays



Besides the all-weather Safe 36 aluminium diesel jet tender, the star among the toys is the 6.5-metre Ski Nautique GS20 wake boat, but there are also a pair of VXR Waverunners from Yamaha and an electric foiling board from Lift. “During a recent charter, the teenagers spent from 9am to 6pm on the e-foil,” Demole reports



A gloriously open sundeck can be shaded with awnings, and offers a spa pool, acres of sunpads, a dining table and a cosy bar with the best views on the boat



PHOTOGRAPHY: KRISTINA STROBEL; DORRIE MCVEIGH



Spirit

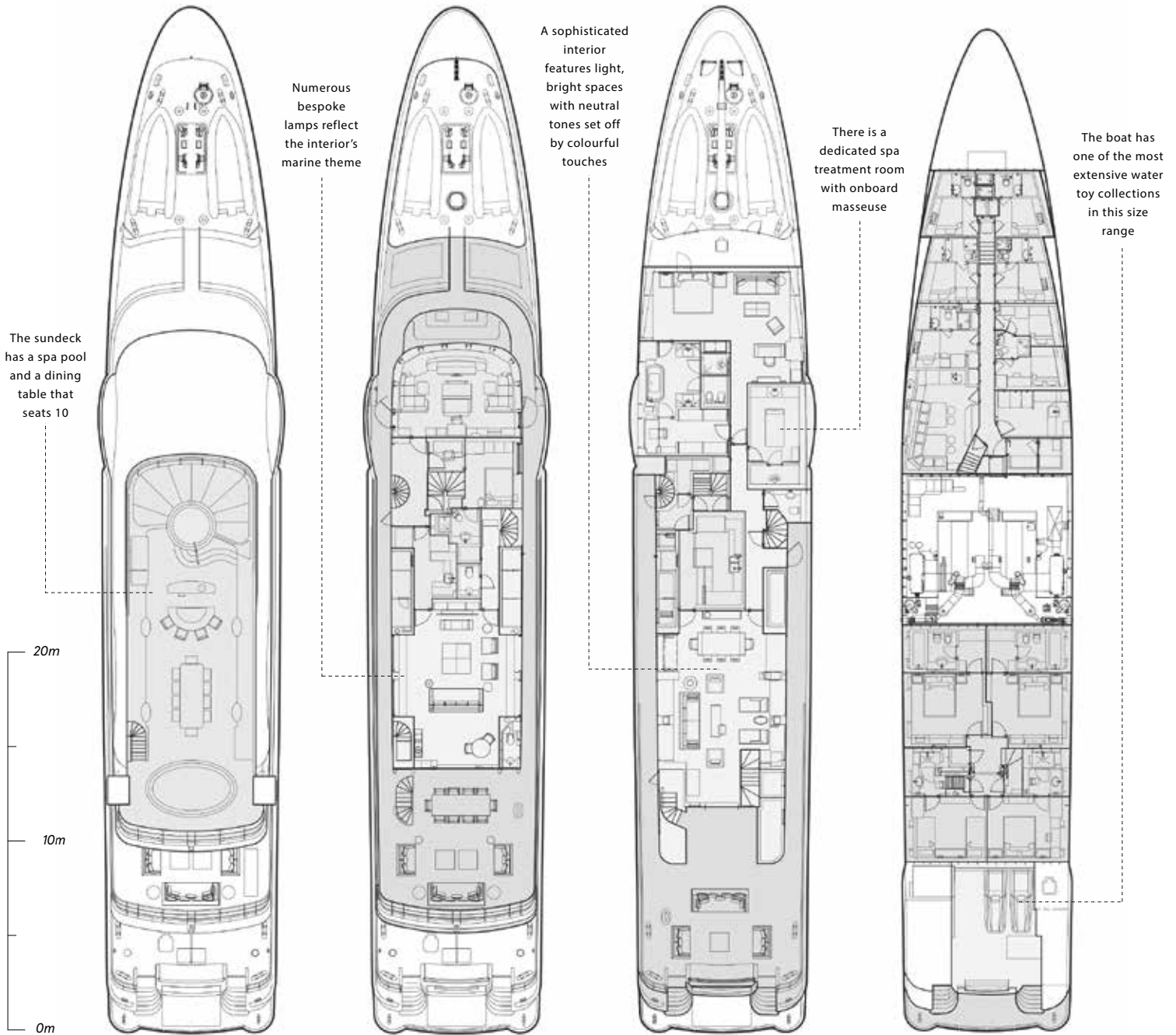
Amels

Sundeck

Bridge deck

Main deck

Lower deck



LOA 54.3m
LWL 49.6m
Beam 9.5m
Draught (full load) 3.35m
Gross tonnage
656GT

Engines
2 x MTU 2,100hp V16 2000
Speed max/cruise
15.5/13 knots
Range at 13 knots
4,500nm
Generators
2 x Northern Lights
M1066H 155kW

Fuel capacity
115,000 litres
Freshwater capacity
17,460 litres
Tenders
1 x 12m Safe Boat tender;
1 x 6.2m Pascoe RIB;
1 x Nautique GS20

Owners/guests 11
Crew 13
Construction
Steel hull; aluminium
superstructure

Naval architecture
Amels
Exterior styling
Tim Heywood
Interior design
Dôme Project Interiors

Builder/year
Amels/2011
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Refit year
2020
For charter
Y.CO