





Hakvoort *Snowbird*

Art Afloat

Snowbird's high standard of construction and seaworthiness are well known to anyone familiar with Dutch shipyard Hakvoort, but her interior décor is among the most memorable to enter the charter market in years. She is like a floating museum of contemporary artwork, a space that has been wholly designed in tune with the art itself.

STORY Kim Kavin **PHOTOS** Bruce Thomas



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ow hair is softer on the feet than you might think.

I know this because my mind was intently focused on how my bare toes felt as tufts of the stuff poked between them aboard the 127-foot (39-meter) Hakvoort *Snowbird*. The cow-hair flooring in the belowdecks foyer soon gave way to far more traditional, dark-stained French oak in the guest cabins, where the closets may have lacked the same stingray-skin upholstery that adorned the closet in the main-deck master, but where the wall paneling included white alligator skin that I just had to reach out and touch. And all of it was very different from the mother-of-pearl wall covering elsewhere on the yacht, which almost escaped notice. I was too busy looking around whatever bulkhead stood in my way, trying to catch a glimpse of the next piece of artwork that I might discover.

Such is the experience of being on board *Snowbird*, whose interior décor created such a buzz for management house Edmiston & Company during the May 2011 MYBA charter yacht show in Genoa, Italy, that the previously unknown yacht was fully booked for the summer season less than a month later.

“I think there are plenty of other boats with nice artwork on them, but none that have



artwork displayed so cohesively as this one,” says interior designer David Ostrander of Illuminus Design Group. “To me, boats that are unique in a good way have the most marketability. Neutral is a term that’s overused. It can often mean a lack of vision. I think that color is what makes life interesting.”

Snowbird is the first megayacht whose interior Ostrander, who also happens to be the owner’s son, has designed. The family bought the yacht near the end of the build process when the original owner abandoned the project for financial reasons. Hakvoort had completed the interior to the original specifications, including the installation of fixed furniture. *Snowbird* never left the yard, Ostrander says, because his family immediately ordered an additional 3.5 million euros’ worth of work.

Much of it was based around Ostrander’s vision, which stemmed from the piece “Shipboard Girl” by American Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein.

“I was flipping through a catalog of all his works, and I thought the image portrayed such an interesting emotion,” Ostrander says. “I’m into the bold, bright, primary colors, and this woman’s face is just pure ecstasy. I thought, ‘This is what we want people to feel when they’re on the boat.’ I know it’s how I feel when I’m on a boat.”

It took nearly two months of searching worldwide before Ostrander and his family’s art advisor found one of the limited-edition prints, and from there, the rest of the yacht’s artwork and furnishings were chosen. Only one of the pieces on board, by American Color Field painter Kenneth Noland, is from the family’s

ABOVE: Following the principle that color is what makes life interesting, David Ostrander uses it liberally in the playful skylounge (left), main salon and dining room (above)



ABOVE: The owner's suite, located on the main deck, features vintage pieces as well as contemporary design and, of course, several original art pieces

original collection. The rest of the *Snowbird* collection was purchased specifically for the boat. Ostrander spent about a week measuring walls at the shipyard and determining color palettes, then another 10 days searching worldwide collections for pieces that fit the space as well as the theme. He wanted the art to be the starting point for everything else on board, from loose furniture to carpeting to fixtures. The décor was to work in tandem with the artwork, as opposed to simply having artwork hung on the walls.

"My hope is to be able to use this same process with yacht owners who like all kinds of art," he says. "We started this particular collection from an artist I knew and a print that I loved. But you don't have to know anything about art to create a cohesive décor this way.

Another way is to show people different things in a museum or a gallery and ascertain not just what they like, but what really pushes their buttons. A lot of people look at art as decoration on the walls, but other people look at it as something that enhances their lifestyle. We're aiming for that."

Ostrander says he chose prints instead of painted canvases because prints are usually covered with hard acrylic, and thus are better protected should a charter client still getting his sea legs bump into them. The designer also used a great deal of 3M's Dual Lock, a silicone product that works similarly to Velcro, but that can be used on wood surfaces without creating any damage.

"We have a lot of objects that look like they're loose on *Snowbird*, but trust me, they're fastened firmly," he says.

“It’s the number one thing that people have to consider when placing artwork or pieces of any kind aboard a yacht. Everybody worries about climate control, but with boats like these, it’s the fasteners that are usually the most important consideration.”

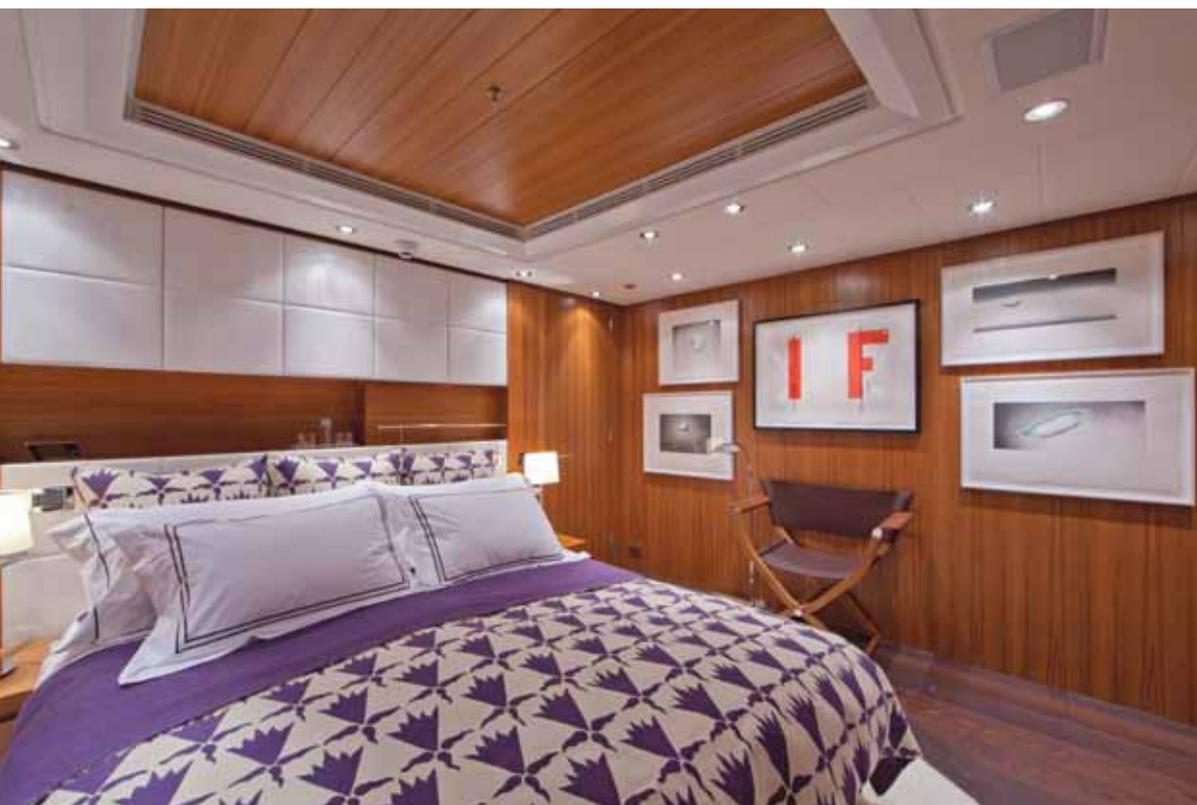
One of the most interesting pieces that isn’t nailed down, so to speak, is a leather game cube that was custom crafted during a four-month process by Geoffrey Parker in London. By simply flipping a cube that is the size of a small cocktail table, guests can play Backgammon, Monopoly or Scrabble. The cube created for *Snowbird* sits in the skylounge and includes an embossed version of the yacht’s logo.

Just a few feet away is a bar that Ostrander had

custom-made specifically for the pleasure of charter guests. “The yacht originally didn’t have a bar, and we’re not big drinkers in my family, but we thought a bar would be a nice thing to have,” he says. “All of the leatherwork is custom on that, too. I had the leather on the barstools done by the same supplier that Ferrari uses.”

What’s most exceptional about the *Snowbird* interior is that it manages to be highly personalized without being personal. In the charter world, “personal” is a four-letter word, one that implies a client could never feel at home because the yacht is too representative of its owner’s tastes. *Snowbird* is certainly, and entirely, about Ostrander’s tastes and favorite things—as well as his mother’s love of Hermès orange—but the yacht has

BELOW: The guest suites, located on the lower deck, share a consistent design theme centering around color and comfort



Form does follow function, but the 128-foot Hakvoort *Snowbird* also proves that lifestyle can follow Lichtenstein



ABOVE: Outdoor dining is reserved for the aft bridge deck; the designer wanted to keep a number of intimate spaces that invite interaction

been designed in a way that somehow feels instantly comfortable to people coming aboard for the first time. *Snowbird* makes guests feel as though they are living within a truly artistic environment, as opposed to feeling like they are staring at somebody else's most prized possessions.

Some of that ambiance, Ostrander says, is a function of the actual space with which he worked. While trends point toward ever-larger motoryachts, Ostrander believes

Snowbird is close to an ideal size for creating a perfect onboard experience.

"I'm passionate about boats," he says, "but I'm not the biggest fan of gigantic boats. I don't see the need for anything bigger than 46 meters. There's a difference to me between yachting and cruising, and I think some of these bigger yachts are starting to feel like cruise ships. I want a boat that lets me achieve everything that I want to do, but that still has intimate and personal spaces." ■



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Hakvoort *Snowbird*

LOA: 127ft. 11in. (39m)
BEAM: 26ft. 3in. (8m)
DRAFT: 8ft. 3in. (2.55m)
TENDERS: Novurania Chase 31, Novurania 430 DL RIB
ENGINES:
 2 x Caterpillar C18 DI-TA
SPEED (MAX.): 12.7 knots
SPEED (CRUISING): 10.5 knots

RANGE (MAX): 5,500 nm @ 9 knots
STABILIZERS: VT Naiad Marine
CONSTRUCTION: steel hull, aluminum superstructure
FUEL CAPACITY: 11,889 gal. (45,000L)
FRESHWATER CAPACITY: 2,642 gal. (10,000L)
CLASSIFICATION: Lloyd's Register, MCA

NAVAL ARCHITECTURE: Azure Naval Architects
EXTERIOR STYLING: Cor D. Rover Design
INTERIOR DESIGN: Illuminus Design Group/David Ostrander
BUILDER: Hakvoort
CHARTER AGENT: Edmiston & Company

*Original dimensions are provided in the metric system