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A DESIGN FOR THE TIMES

She's a Christensen unlike any you've ever seen before.
Chasseur shows a different side of the American yard.

Words - Mark Masciarotte
Photography - Jeff Brown/Breed Media



Teak floors and light wood create a seamless transition between the interior and exterior. Bar surfaces (top and opposite top right) are made of backlit crystal agate and mirrored glass.

Moored in the peaceful calm of her builder's marina on the Columbia River, in Vancouver, Washington, *Chasseur* stands in stark contrast to all but one of her predecessors built by Christensen Shipyards. As I walk into the salon, there is a moment when certain words rush to mind: Light. Sleek. Clean. It is this last one that embeds itself.

Great contemporary design is clean, unfettered by extraneous decoration. It draws the eye, holds it, invites us to think. It is the work of Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright. *Chasseur* has this quality, like Norman Foster's *Izanami*. But if *Izanami* was Zen, *Chasseur* is svelte.

Tonya Lance, owner of Varo Interior Design and *Chasseur's* principal designer, says that it was the 160-foot *Odessa* that inspired *Chasseur's* owner to commission a new build with longtime friend and business associate Henry Luken, who has since become Christensen's majority shareholder. Lance says that Donald Burns, her client, saw a template in *Odessa*. Burns confirms it, but notes that the process involved in getting from inspiration to launch day was not as direct as that sounds.

"A few years ago, [during] a very difficult financial time,

Henry had contracted with the yard for the construction of three vessels," Burns says. "At that point, *Odessa* had launched, and I really thought she was one of the most attractive products that the yard had ever produced – a much more contemporary interior, and a very fresh look.

"Just conversationally, I said to Henry, 'I would really consider getting back into boating if I could own a vessel that was more like *Odessa*.' And he said, 'Well, as a matter of fact, I have one laid up right now,' and he offered to let me assume his contract for that vessel."

The contract to which Burns refers was for Hull No. 37. Yet, *Chasseur* is Hull No. 40.

"Christensen approached me and said they had a buyer that wanted a quick delivery, and asked whether I'd be willing to give up my rights in Hull 37, so they could sell it to the *D'Natalin* owners," says Burns. "They made me an offer, and I accepted. Then, I commenced work on what is now *Chasseur*."

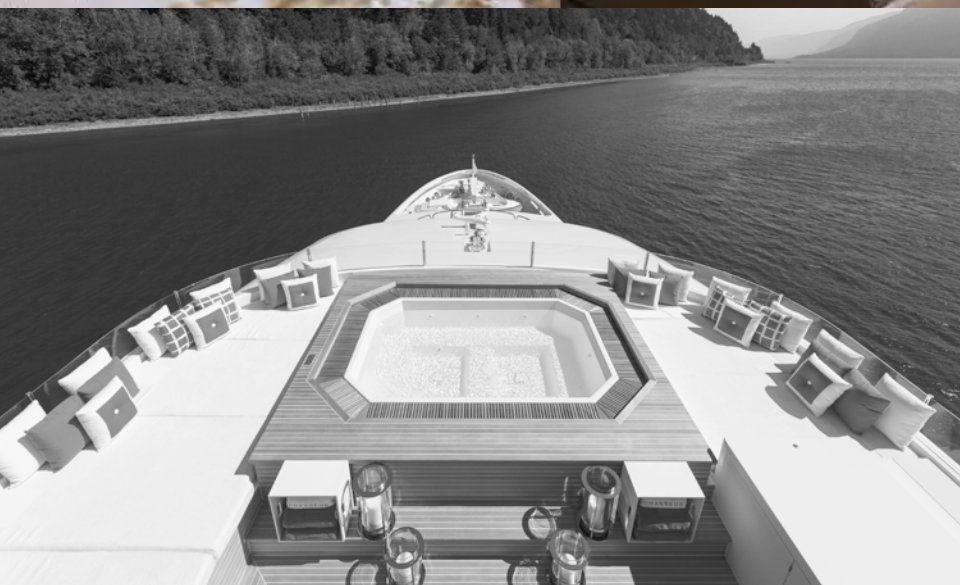
The time between the purchase of Hull No. 37 and the purchase of Hull No. 40 was put to good use, says Lance, giving client and designer time to tour, analyze and discuss several yachts to help clearly define Burns' vision.



It was a successful collaboration. "We really worked very, very carefully," says Burns. "Not having Tonya just [create the] design without owner input, which happens quite frequently, frankly...or, then, the other extreme, the owner dictating precisely what he wants in every single thing.

"I had a very clear vision of what I wanted in the vessel," he adds, "but I really relied heavily on Tonya to present things to me in a series of meetings. She had seen the recent examples of my home décor, and I gave her some writings on the subject. And then, in meetings, she would present options, a palette of three different things, and I would give her immediate feedback – really concise. I [recall that] some of the original sycamores tended to read a little red, and I said, 'No, we need to keep it really in the milk tones, as opposed to having any sort of pink in the species.'"

The design brief, says Lance, was straightforward. "One of our main objectives was to create a seamless flow between the interior and the surrounding exterior environments. It was important to us that the transition wasn't a stark shock to your system with huge variations of color, tone and light. Also, the high-gloss ceiling panels



Above: A large Jacuzzi sits forward on the sun deck. Top and right: Both natural and state-of-the-art lighting in the main salon and formal dining area were important aspects of the design brief.



display beautiful reflections of the water,” she says.

To attain this result, *Chasseur’s* spaces strike a balance between minimalism and modernism that takes full advantage of the natural light streaming through vast expanses of glass on the main and bridge decks. Throughout the boat, the watchword is rectilinear. Lines are clean and spare, shapes geometric. No zaftig here. It’s svelte all the way.

Bulkheads, doors and casings of what Lance refers to as “milk-glazed” sycamore land on contrasting soles of matte-finished teak and holly. Casegoods are executed in Santos Rosewood; some, such as nightstands and dressers, paired with ebonized oak. Other pieces are adorned with natural materials: shagreen, woven leather, capiz shell. Furniture — a Hermès chair or Armani Casa table — is used as both accent and statement, taking pride of place where appropriate.

Burns “spared no expense to fulfill his luxurious vision,” says Lance. That vision, as it so happens, follows through to his residences as well.

Speaking from his house in Nantucket, Burns says, “Well, broadly, my tastes have evolved over the years. [This house] is an extraordinarily contemporary home, and I’m in the process of trying to do the same thing in my home base of Palm Beach.

“Beyond that, boatyards around the world really weren’t producing contemporary products, and that’s true with very few exceptions. Boats are generally still quite heavy in appearance, the interiors are generously adorned. I guess it would be best to say they just [have] sort of a heavier look than I was interested in. Frankly, I thought *Odessa* was quite dark and a little visually heavy. But the lines were nice.”



Burns explains that he set out to create an interior that was more in keeping with his current tastes for décor, and, where possible, improving upon the general lines of *Odessa*.

“And that,” he states, “resulted in the interior that we have today with the teak floors, the lighter species of wood, better lighting and really fantastic technology.”

The better lighting that Burns speaks of became a significant part of the overall design concept. It was a collaboration in which many people played a role.

“I really pressed the yard hard on technology and on lighting,” he says, adding that he believes that many previous Christensen owners hadn’t spent much time on either. “Tonya was very frank with me. She said, ‘You know, I don’t have a lot of experience [with special architectural lighting], and, certainly, the yard doesn’t have a lot of experience.’

“I happen to have a personal friend, Nathan Orsman, who is a very well recognized lighting designer, so I brought him in on contract to review the lighting of the vessel from stem to stern. I think the product’s outcome speaks to that.”

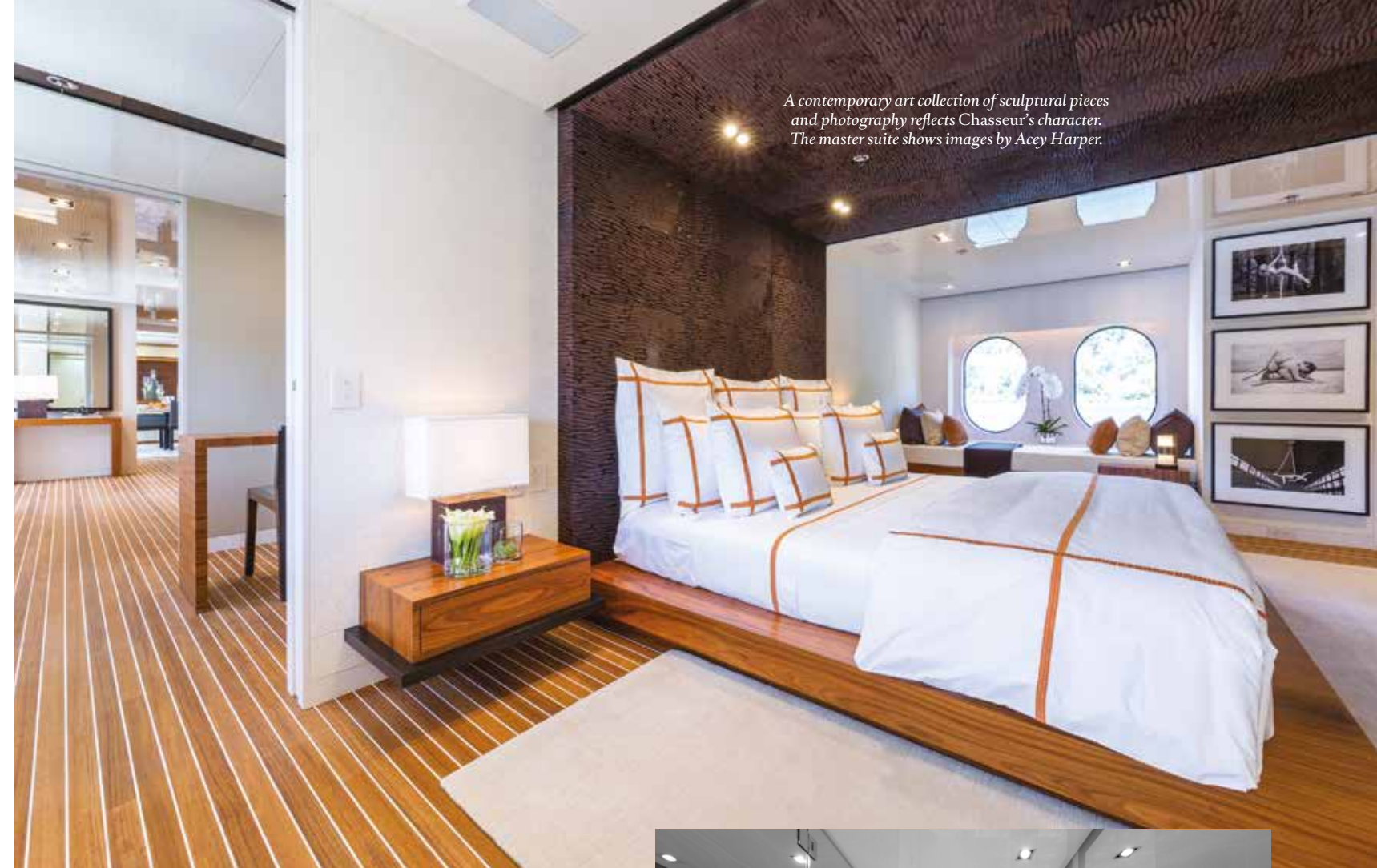
Orsman’s lighting plan also plays an important part in the presentation of *Chasseur’s* collection of art, a thoughtful assemblage that comprises nearly two dozen important photographs and several contemporary sculptural pieces. The direction, says Lance, took time, although, she admits, the search was quite enjoyable.

“It was really an evolution,” says Burns, “because, again, some of the art on vessels tends to be quite heavy, and I wanted something that reflected *Chasseur’s* character and level of light, and how I wanted to use and enjoy the vessel. So, the art that we ultimately chose, whether it’s the Christian Liaigre piece in the foyer — the monolithic wood — or the photography or [other works], seemed to really complement the feel I was trying to get.”

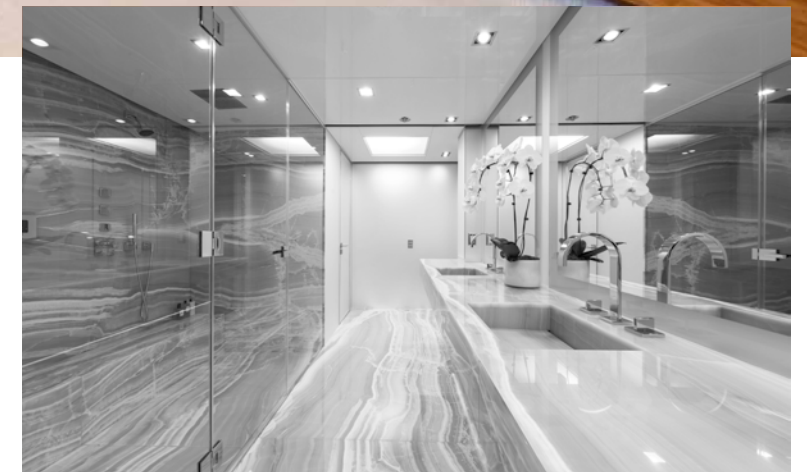
He selected some pieces for their specific location. “I really think they add to the overall feeling that I was trying to achieve, and they do it much better than some of the oils



Chasseur's spaces strike a balance between minimalism and modernism that takes full advantage of the natural light streaming through vast expanses of glass on the main and bridge decks.



A contemporary art collection of sculptural pieces and photography reflects Chasseur's character. The master suite shows images by Acey Harper.



I have in my homes, for example. Yes, they are contemporary ...and they do a great job at complementing the décor."

Having looked at a number of boats before deciding to sign a contract with Christensen, Burns felt that most of them, even many recent builds, would not please the new generation of yacht owners. He was greatly concerned that the aesthetic he envisioned not become dated.

"I was trying to achieve the longest life cycle on the décor that I could," he says. "As I said, my boat is probably more spare than other Christensen products, but I was trying to look into the future. I think glass ages well, and I think the natural materials will all age very well."

In addition, he was careful to not customize the yacht to an extent that would turn off charterers or, more important, buyers when the time comes to sell.

"I wanted to do it the way I wanted to do it," he admits, "but I didn't want to take it so far that it was overly personalized, because I think [boats that go that way] don't do well."

"I think I struck a good note," he says confidently.

After enjoying his maiden trip to St. Barth's this fall, Burns plans to offer *Chasseur* for charter, making the boat available in the Mediterranean during the summer season and the Caribbean during the winter. It was not a decision taken lightly.

"I'm much more pragmatic at my age than I was when I was younger," he acknowledges. "When I was younger, I wouldn't have heard of it, but I think it's better for the crew and the vessel, and I think it will also be very good for the yard to get her exposed."

Legendary interior designer Albert Hadley once said: "Decoration is really about creating a quality of life and a beauty in that life that nourishes the soul, that makes life beautiful."

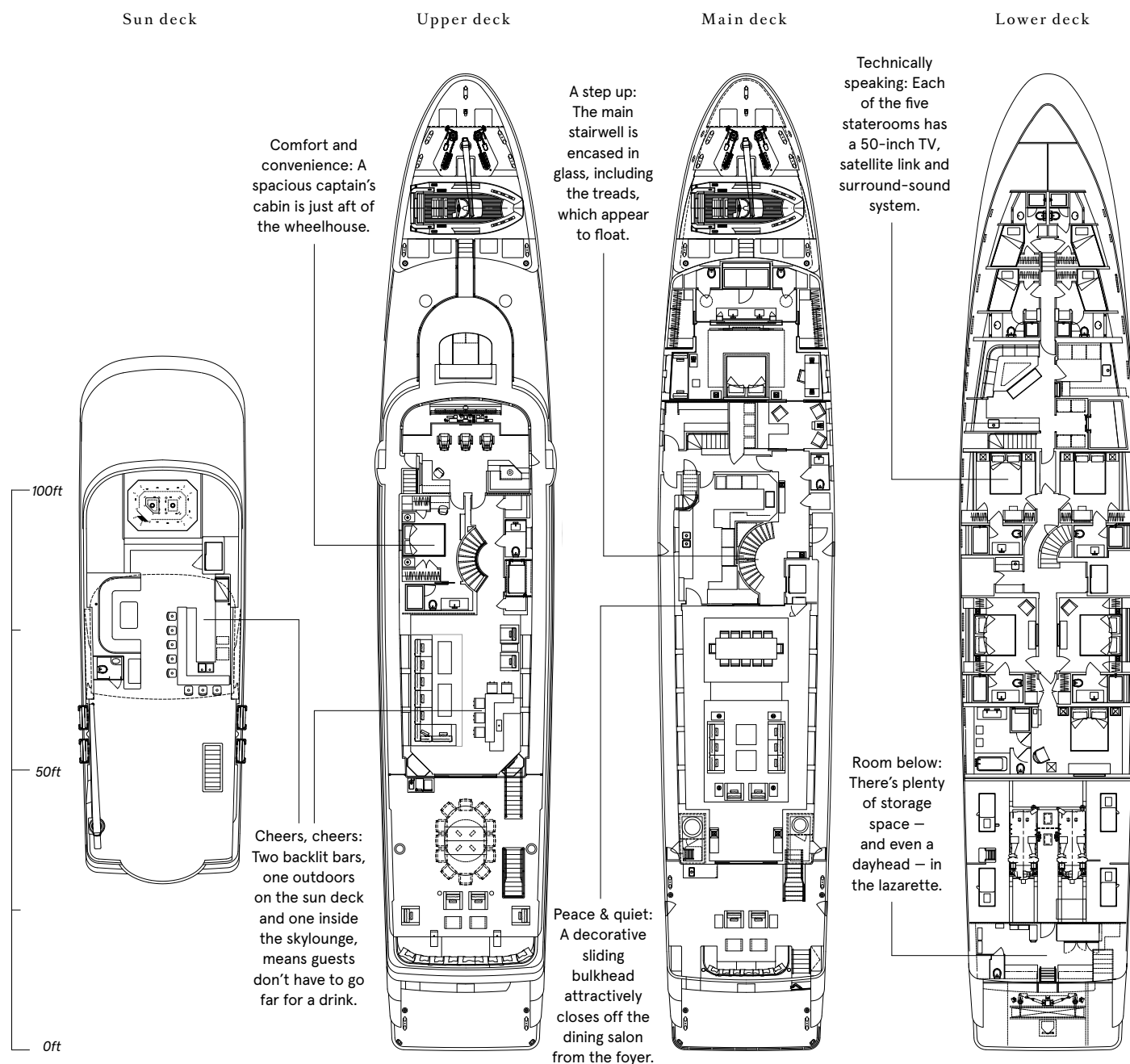
There is absolutely no doubt that *Chasseur* will accomplish that for Donald Burns. ■

See more on the iPad edition



A light, modern interior was realized using "milk-glazed" sycamore, rosewood and teak paired with natural materials, which, the owner points out, age well.

Chasseur – Christensen Shipyards



LOA: 160' (49m)
LWL: 142' 5" (43.4m)
Beam: 29' (8.8m)
Draft (full load): 8' (2.4m)
Gross tonnage: <500 GT
Displacement (full load): 440 tons

Power: 2 x 1,650-hp Caterpillar 3512C series, C-rating
Speed (max/cruise): 16/14 knots
Range: 4,000 nm @ 14 knots
Fuel capacity: 15,500 U.S. gallons
Generators: 3 x 99kW Kohler

Freshwater capacity: 3,600 U.S. gallons
Stabilizers: Quantum QC-1800 Zero-Speed
Bow thruster: ABT TRAC
Construction: FRP
Tenders: 23' Novurania LX-750, 18' Novurania EQ-540 I/O

Owner and guests: 12
Crew: 10
Classification: ABS ✕ A1 Commercial Yachting Service ✕ AMS; MCA LY2 compliant
Naval architecture: Christensen Shipyards

Interior design: Varo Interior Design
Builder/year: Christensen Shipyards/2016
 Vancouver, Washington
 t: (360) 831-9800
 w: christensenyachts.com