

YACHTS

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THE INCREDIBLE TALE OF
A YACHT THAT LOVES TO CRUISE


DESTINATION
YACHTING:
THE ROYAL
ISLAND BEACH
CLUB TAKES ON
THE WORLD

AN ILLUMINATING
TALENT:
FRANCESCO PASZKOWSKI

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FRANCESCO PASZKOWSKI

AN ILLUMINATING TALENT



Francesco Paszkowski's effusive fascination with haute yacht design sees him being courted by, and collaborating with, some of Europe's leading shipyards. The prestigious names of Baglietto, Canados, Sanlorenzo, ISA, Heesen and many more appear in his glittering portfolio, each recognising the Italian's all-consuming desire to attain and maintain exacting standards of perfection.

By **Alain Brousse**



A leading light in contemporary yacht design, Paszkowski's glazed offices reflect his visionary thinking.

From the moment we arrive at Francesco Paszkowski's glass encased offices on the outskirts of Florence, Italy we're struck by how his intensity and focus influences those around him. As he speaks, his gaze wanders for a second, then fixes on the horizon, as if riveted on a goal only he sees. It leaves the impression of one continually driving forward, striving to achieve higher standards of excellence. Fleeing the distractions of the metropolis, a decent GPS is required to locate the office amongst the rolling Tuscan hills. "The location was actually recommended to me by Luca Dini," Paszkowski smiles as he welcomes us. Dini and Paszkowski's relationship is close, having common experience working with Mondo Marine and Baglietto. The latter yard, Cerri-Gruppo Baglietto's recent travails appear to have been remedied through its purchase by industrialist Beniamino Gavio, head of Italy's second-largest highway maintenance and management group. The acquisition has a pertinent influence on this story... but we get ahead of ourselves. Back in converted greenhouses Paszkowski and his permanent team of four have a clear view of both the inspiring natural habitat that surrounds them, and the direction the company is taking. Led by Paszkowski, who devotes "300 percent of his time" to design, their mentor himself was in turn inspired by his father, a graphic designer who now devotes his time to creating the contemporary artworks that adorn the office walls. Paszkowski senior will still on occasion to pass comment on his talented son's work; "My father's judgement is very autonomous," he smiles. "But, his remarks are invariably accurate and I value them highly." Commencing his studies in the early 1980's, Paszkowski's early ambitions were in the field of automotive design, but the regimented constraints of function over form wasn't compatible with his philosophy of "if an object deserves to exist, then it should be created to be as beautiful as possible." Automotive's loss was the yachting sector's gain. Introduced and "inoculated with the yachting virus" by Pier Luigi and Tommaso Spadolini, Paszkowski found his feet in the marine industry between 1986 and 1989. A meeting with Michael Bremman in 1989, then Vice President at Baglietto, proved to

be an important waypoint in Paszkowski's career and his future course was set. Bremman and Paszkowski's 'sympatico' was instant and they immediately set about motivating each other to achieve greater things. Setting up his independent studio in 1990, Paszkowski's first project announcement came in the form of a 28m Baglietto, which was physically realised in the launch of Opus in 1994. The yacht sports a distinctive aggressive exterior profile of great purity, leaving no doubt as to its enviable performance. The launch sent shockwaves through the yacht design world, and with his very first project Paszkowski had established his influence on the sector. Now well on the radar, the burgeoning designer's next assignment is the creation of a new range of 20m to 30m yachts for the Canados yard. Baglietto, however, is a yard that is never far from Paszkowski's soul, so when Baglietto's owner Gian Piero Moretti called upon him again, together they collabora-

ted on the sleek 30m tri-deck Charly Boy, launched in 2000. With his reputation established and the bit now firmly between his teeth, Paszkowski's next waypoint came in 2005, working in cooperation with Massimo Perotti, owner of Sanlorenzo. The relationship produced yet another masterpiece with the 2007 launch of the imperious '4H', an all-aluminium 40m with its retractable terraces. The groundbreaking vessel collected the prestigious World Yachts Trophy for Design. Now a household name throughout the industry, Paszkowski's portfolio expanded with work for many of Italy's leading shipyards like Baglietto, Canados, Sanlorenzo, ISA and CRN. His work, however, is not limited to his home country, as his clean lines and eye for detail impressed Nordic builders and the large northern shipyards. When the owner of Opus decided to

The automotive industry's loss was yachting's gain...





upgrade to a larger aluminium yacht, he again placed his confidence in Paszkowski and together they worked with Heesen.

Demonstrating his versatility, Paszkowski quickly adapted to the new country, different business culture and exacting standards of the Dutch yard, who were so impressed with his talent and professionalism they recommended him to the owner of an upcoming project. The 50m commission, which the owner desired to be influenced by his passion for the Lamborghini Aventador, was a dream project for a designer who early in his career harboured automobile design ambitions. Even today, his office sports reproduction models of influential racing cars. It's when discussing this project that Paszkowski begins to open up about his relationship with clients.

"My role is very much that of a permanent silent partner and a diplomat," he muses. "Listening always, speaking less. Occasionally, it is necessary to gently convince the client of the direction that we need to

Currently under construction, Francesco drew the exterior design for 65m Tankoa in 2009. Demonstrating a passion for environmental responsibility it will be 'Green Star' rated.

Baglietto: An unalterable truth

The relationship between Francesco Paszkowski and Baglietto is one of true affection. The designer was on hand to create their first large Open yacht, the 29m Opus that exceeded 40-knots. Four years later, they collaborated on the landmark 30.5m tri-deck Charly Boy. With its distinctive silhouette, it set a precedent for the 'sportsfly' genre. In the same breath, one would also reference Apache II, a masterpiece with a maximum speed of 30-knots that leaves an impression on everyone who sees her. Between 2000 and 2011, Baglietto manufactured no less than 36 units from 29m to 53m, of which 30 were conceived through the talent of Francesco Paszkowski. The shipyard, which suffered badly in the crisis and was placed in receivership, has thankfully been rescued by an Italian industrialist who once again intends to breathe life into the venerable brand.

Baglietto is the shipyard Paszkowski often references. His work for them included the 53m Blue Scorpion, and the Blue Princess a 34m capable of 35-knots.



The Sanlorenzo 40 Alloy was an experimental yacht for Francesco. With its gull-wing hatches and balconies it proved to be a milestone in yacht design.

Milestones

- 1963 | Born in Milan
- 1966 | The Paszkowski family settles in Florence
- 1982 | Studies architecture at University
- 1986 | Forms a research department with Pierluigi and Tommaso Spadolini
- 1994 | The launch of the 29m Opus by Baglietto
- 1996 | Commissioned by Canados to develop a range between 20 to 30m
- 1997 | Francesco completes the external design of Opus II for Heesen
- 2000 | The launch of the superb 30.5m Baglietto CharlyBoy
- 2001 | Baglietto Thunderball receives plaudits from the international press
- 2005 | Paszkowski begins a serious collaboration with Sanlorenzo
- 2009 | The Sanlorenzo Alloy 40, a true masterpiece, is launched
- 2011 | The interior design and lighting system for Papi du Papi, a 50m ISA
- 2011 | Sanlorenzo present their new SL94 in Monaco with a Paszkowski interior

move together in, but always with the goal of developing the end product." To fully achieve a yacht that 'fits' a client, however, requires a special relationship. "It's certainly a development of a lasting relationship based on trust as we're fusing a professional relationship with access to the owner's private and family life. To create their ideal yacht, we need to dissect their lifestyle, tastes, influences and desires. A bond of friendship is invariably created, but it is still necessary to draw boundaries as this is a relationship based on business interaction."

So immersed in the yachting culture is Paszkowski, it's hard to imagine him switching off the flow of ideas, but when he does, it is with his wife and three children that he retreats. An ideal day is spent with them; following an afternoon touring antique dealers and a dinner that includes his favourite dish of pasta and white truffles, they build a roaring fire and relax.

Grand designs for the future. The 38m Explorer for Sanlorenzo and a contemporary 50m for CRN. Plus there's talk of a 60m...

Projects: a new philosophy

If one is seeking out Francesco Paszkowski, one need look no further than beside Massimo Perrotti at the world's leading boat and yacht shows. The charismatic owner of Sanlorenzo is so enamoured with his compatriot's work, he's entrusted him with the rejuvenation of the yard's Navetta SD range, both exterior and interior design. Work on the 94 and 104 have already been completed, with the 110 due for launch in 2013, followed by the 118. The interior of the first SL94 was entrusted to Paszkowski and there's also word that the two are collaborating on the design of a 38m Explorer yacht. Not tied to one yard, however, the Florentine studio has also completed the external design of a 60m yacht for the Ferretti Group's CRN shipyard, which is in the final stages of construction. There's also the matter of an interior for a 50m Heesen in typical Paszkowski contemporary styling, making full use of oak and Zebrano woods. But even though he enjoys a full work schedule, Francesco's eyes are still firmly fixed on the horizon, on the future and that goal of constant progression. Believing speed is no longer a critical factor or essential criterion (Paszkowski judges that the majority of owners' interest is now in vessels producing between 15 and 17-knots), he now concentrates on efficiency and fuel economy. Yachts with ranges of 2,000 miles are sufficient for cruising the Mediterranean and the occasional Atlantic crossing, which we guess is why navettas and explorer style vessels currently occupy his drawing boards. In Paszkowski's opinion, it is these style of yachts in the 24-30m and 30-40m range that will be the healthiest market sectors. Who are we to question the man with his finger on the pulse and his eyes fixed on the future?

The Trophy cabinet

- 2007 | World Yachts Trophies, Best Ergonomics for the Sanlorenzo SD 92
- 2008 | World Yachts Trophies, Most Innovative Design for Sanlorenzo 40 Alloy
- 2009 | World Superyacht Awards, Best Semi-displacement and Best Exterior Design for the Sanlorenzo 40 Alloy
- 2010 | Best Semi-displacement for the Sanlorenzo SD 122 "FX"
- 2011 | Sanlorenzo SL94, Yacht of the Year



PASZKOWSKI'S FINAL WORD

“It is imperative future yacht design respects the environment...”

What do you believe is in store for the yacht market in the coming years? Which other designers excite you?

Without question for me, my number one is the person who influenced me so much with my career; Pierluigi Spadolini, the father of Tomaso. Then I would readily reference Pininfarina, Giugiaro, Chris Bangle, Gerald Gilgenost and Jon Bannenberg.

With regard to external yacht design, what trends do you envisage over the next five years?

I do not think that anyone can truly predict a precise trend. Now that designers work for international clients, including those from emerging countries, different cultures will influence design. The same style now comprises several versions.

Would it appeal to you to meet with other designers, once a year for example, to discuss the evolution of yacht design?

Events, like the international yacht and boat shows and trade exhibitions, offer plenty of opportunity to meet with other designers. There are occasional forums and seminars with a 'design' theme, but from a more formal exchange point of view, I would be favourable to a regular symposium.

Can a designer work simultaneously on several projects of different origins and how do you then guarantee confidentiality between competitor shipyards?

For me, this does not pose any problem at all. Confidentiality is a dominating criterion for professional designers. It is natural to make personalised proposals for each shipyard and propose completely different projects.

Are there challenges of scale in yacht design? For example, does designing a 100m present twice the challenge of a 50m?

There are no such hard and fast rules in design, everything depends upon the requirements of the client.

Which comes first; the exterior design and then an interior to fit it, or vice-versa? For me, success is determined by the perfect harmonisation of the external and



interior design. Thus one works simultaneously, creating one project comprised of two elements.

What is your favourite memory in terms of design?

Since I've been creating yachts for almost 20-years, I have a memory full of many stunning units and, arguably more importantly, meeting some very interesting people. One stand out memory, however, is when I unexpectedly received a prestigious prize at an awards ceremony. The same year, in 2006, my project "Blue Princess", a 34m Baglietto was also rewarded.

Have you ever disagreed with a client on a project to the point where it didn't continue?

Absolutely. In fact, I discovered rather quickly that no affinity existed between the client and myself on the project. I had to explain that in my opinion if we were to continue the only possible result would be abject failure, so it was preferable for all involved not to pursue the project any further.

What do you think will be the best direction for the future of Baglietto?

Since 1992 I have worked with Baglietto and enjoyed a very beautiful experience. That time resulted in many positive reports and launches. I truly hope the future is secure and I'm sure the new owner will apply the adequate measures to rejuvenate the brand.

If you could design a yacht for yourself without financial constraints...?

I don't own a yacht yet, but I hope to... one day perhaps! I'd design a unit with a very modest engine and simply styled. It would also be very respectful of the environment.