

[MEGAYACHT]

Audace

This 42m belongs to a very creative and proactive owner who tailored her to be his perfect explorer vessel. Or rather is still tailoring her because, after her maiden season at sea, he has asked for some major upgrades to this Floating Life design built by CdM Cantiere delle Marche

by Bianca Ascenti - ph. by Scooby Art





Carrying the many standout characteristics of an explorer vessel designed to confidently negotiate sea and weather conditions of all types with the on-demand luxury of an ultra-sophisticated superyacht is no easy task. Particularly if the craft in question happens to be relatively compact. This is why M/Y Audace is such a milestone and source of pride for the Italian yacht building industry. She is not just yet another superyacht dressed up as an explorer but a genuine luxury vessel designed, like the rest of the K-Series, by a seasoned sailor, Andrea Pezzini, with naval architecture developed by Mauro Sculli. She came into being in a mere two years thanks to a concerted team effort. Audace's owner and former Indesit chairman, Andrea Merloni is a single fifty-something with no children who wanted a round-the-worlder with plenty of character yet versatile enough to ensure he could have fun aboard with his friends yet have his own space too. Pezzini, who owns Floating Life, a well-established yacht design, chartering, sales and management services company,



suggested a 42m from the K-Series and Merloni was sold. He then chose the world's leading builder of 100' to 140' CdM Cantiere dell Marche to do the construction. What emerged from that process was a genuinely ground-breaking vessel. Audace, as her name suggests, has vigorously muscular explorer lines while her gunmetal grey livery gives her a naval vessel sobriety. Two big fire-engine red cranes (one capable of hoisting 8,890 kg) add a working vessel aesthetic too and, in further twist, the presence of a Land Rover Defender, a BMW GS 1200 motorbike, tenders and other toys on deck call to mind a chase boat. Add to all this an impressive fuel reserve of 62,000 litres and Caterpillar C32 Acert engines and you get a powerful expedition vessel with a range of around 5,400 nm at 10 knots. But it doesn't take long to realise that the "tank of the sea" and the luxury superyacht are, in this case at least, one and the same. Andrea Merloni took a very hands-on approach at every stage of the design and build process. He was particularly meticulous when it came to the interiors on which he worked with architect Alessandra Negrato, marking off the whole of the top deck for his own private use. In fact, guests can only venture up there from the upper deck by invitation. In fact, a door, intercom and stairs help avoid uninvited visitors. The 100 sqm master suite itself includes a panoramic saloon with office, a bathroom and galley as well as an outside deck area with a Jacuzzi. The upper deck beneath is home to the ergonomic wheelhouse island with integrated Boning/Furuno bridge, the captain's cabin, a media room with wide screen TV, and al fresco living area with 14-seater table. Down on the main deck, the enormous and exceptionally striking 170 sqm cockpit is used to stow the tender on passages. However, when free, it converts to a living area and even a discotheque at times. Moving into the interiors, we find a pantry and two double VIP staterooms. Two symmetrical stairs lead down to the lower deck which has a stern platform that can double as a swim ladder or a passarelle. There is also multipurpose space that can be used as a second disco as it is soundproofed with professional audio-visual systems, a DJ station and 98" Samsung TV. Amidships are two further guest cabins with fold-out balconies and the gigantic Marrone restaurant-style professional kitchen where two chefs can cook for up to 250 guests. The bottom deck is probably where the explorer vessel vocation of this Large Commercial Yacht Code-classified yacht is most obvious. The under-lower deck has good headroom to allow every inch to be inspected safely and comfortably. The technical, engine and equipment rooms are all down here. Audace even has large dry and cold storage areas, the latter being particularly huge. For next season, Merloni has planned several upgrades to the master suite, the bathrooms, the saloon on the upper deck (which will include indoor dining) and the stern (a 1.5m extension) as well as furnishings and layout. Two lifts will be installed too and the private stairs between upper and owner decks will be removed.

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The hull's gun metal grey livery and imposingly muscular lines give Audace a distinctive naval vessel look. She began life as a tri-deck but her owner decided to add a top deck. Opening page, the 170 sqm cockpit covers the whole aft section of the main deck and includes a dining area, various conversation clusters and a sun pad





The interiors have a casual sober elegance. Above and right, one of the two guest staterooms on the lower deck with fold-out balconies and, also on the lower deck, the soundproofed space (left) with audio-visual and DJ systems, and a 98' large-screen TV. Top left, the lounge on the upper deck



Andrea Pezzini, Floating Life CEO



Let's start at the very beginning: I know Andrea Merloni well because Floating Life has been managing his yachts for years. So when he decided to build himself a new yacht, we met up and began sketching out a design with Mauro Sculli, who later did the naval architecture. Andrea Merloni is extremely particular and also a great font of ideas so he really pushes people around him to achieve things they never thought were possible. His vision was for a seaworthy, self-sufficient round-the-worlder and that chimed perfectly with the K-Series which I had designed. All we had to do was tailor it around his requirements. But that wasn't as simple as it sounds because the yacht had to combine technical requisites with owner's requirements - he absolutely did not want to compromise on privacy, comfort or social spaces. He also wasn't going to give up his favourite water toys! Audace was designed like a ship and, thanks to my long experience in building and testing yachts, I was able to add in some extras that I felt were essential: the possibility of compartmentalising every section of the hull so that it can be inspected and, if required, worked on without impinging on navigation, roomy technical areas with good headroom, vertical windows in the wheelhouse for better visibility, an island console... Audace started off as a tri-deck but as the work went on, Merloni decided to add the owner's deck and insisted that the interiors and exterior were designed to meet his requirements. However, he does spend a lot of time aboard: this year, he joined her in April and didn't leave until October and he is always surrounded by friends. This is essentially his home and he wants to be absolutely comfortable. Audace is a one-off yacht and I am particularly proud of her because she is, to all intents and purposes, a ship. She is certified to sail anywhere in the world and if required, she could be easily

converted to an Ice Class to sail iceberg-strewn waters (but Merloni hates the cold). I'd also like to emphasise that we significantly reduced the amount of filling on the hull to a minimum threshold of 4.8 millimetres. That means that when, in the far distant future, Audace has to be broken up, disposing of the materials that she is built from will have less of an impact on the environment. Working with Andrea Merloni is very stimulating because he is an owner who doesn't like things to stand still for long, particularly aboard. Audace is a work in progress in that regard. After the summer, for instance, he decided to make some fairly major upgrades: the installation of two lifts, some modifications to the interiors and also to extend the stern by 1.5m. In terms of the K-Series' future, I have another 40m that is at the advanced stage of its design and a fractional-ownership 43m that I will personally be managing.



Right, Andrea Pezzini and Audace's owner Andrea Merloni. Below, one of the guest staterooms. Opposite, top: the aerial photo, reveals a large area on the foredeck for an off-roader, a motorbike and a jet ski, while the tender is stowed in the cockpit when Audace is underway. Two cranes with a total hoisting capacity of around 11,100 kg do the heavy lifting



Interior Design

Andrea Pezzini, Project Manager

My job as project manager is to be the intermediary between the owner and interior designer, which was Alessandra Negrato of Studio Sculli in this instance. Andrea Merloni was involved in every stage of the process. He provided a very detailed brief on what his “floating home” should be like: chic but not over-the-top, plenty of social areas both inside and out on deck, but also capable of guaranteeing him complete privacy. She had to be completely self-sufficient in terms of water, fuel and provisions, etc. too. The fly deck, for example, has been replaced by Andrea’s own private owner’s suite. This is the most spectacular area of the boat with panoramic views and complete privacy. The remainder of the spaces are extremely eclectic and versatile: they can be converted to living areas, dancing areas, sunning areas, TV or media rooms... Andrea also loves good food and wine so he wanted separate temperature-controlled red and white wine cellars, and a professional galley that two chefs could comfortably work together in. After his first season with Audace, as often happens, new requirements emerged. So he decided to make some major upgrades to both the décor and, partly also, to the layout. The first thing he wanted was two lifts: the first capable of taking a restaurant-style food trolley from the galley all the way to the upper deck. The second will go from the upper deck to his own private suite. This meant losing the private stairs and revising the layout by moving bathrooms. The colour scheme of his saloon was also redesigned and now features darker wenge-type tones. It has been completely refurnished too. All of the sole in the owner’s

suite is being redesigned to be openable and to be fully heated. The floors in the guest bathrooms are being changed to Corian as it is easier and more hygienic than wood. The saloon on the upper deck will be getting an extendable table too so that guests can eat inside also. Another major change is to the windows which Merloni now wants completely transparent and double-glazed, which is not a simple thing to do on a yacht....There are no empty spaces aboard Audace because the owner loves filling up and giving a function to even the smallest areas. There is a lot to do but by next summer, Audace will be ready for another long cruising season!



Vasco Buonpensiere, CdM Sales & Marketing Director

Building a yacht of this size, meeting the owner's requests and still managing to stay under the 500 GT threshold was far from simple. Audace took around 200,000 man hours to complete and that meant 30-70 people working on her every day for almost two years. CdM's experience in the explorer sector means we can deliver on even the most unusual requests, including, in this instance, having an stowage area for an off-roader, a motorbike and a couple of water toys, on the foredeck. To ensure everything would fit in, our technical office designed a removable carbon mezzanine-style platform that allows the toys to be stowed on different levels. A 2,200kg crane does the heavy lifting. The big tender on the aft deck, however, is hoisted by an even bigger crane with a 8,890kg capacity. Audace really is a ground-breaking yacht: the size of the cockpit on the main deck is well outside the norm, for example, as is the layout which doesn't have a classic saloon but very large spaces both interior and exterior, designed and kitted out as a discotheque. What can I say about the top deck which

is the owner's private deck and completely off-limits to guests? We build yachts of undisputed quality and we also offer an incredibly high standard of personalisation for explorers from semi-custom series, such as the Darwin Class, the Nauta Airstars and, more recently, the MGs and Flexplorers. I don't want to blow my own trumpet but right now we have no real rivals on the scene. The quality of CdM's yachts is well on a par with the finest Northern European builders. Because we were familiar with the market, we didn't come in to try pick up the crumbs left by the bigger groups. We pinpointed a specific type of craft, the explorer vessel, and within a few years, we brought it into the spotlight by focusing on build quality and design. The very great majority of our clients is made up of expert owners, great sea lovers, what are often referred to as "mature owners". We'll be launching three craft this year: a 40m custom designed by Tommaso Spadolini, the MG129 which is the first explorer in the MG series designed by Francesco Paszkowski, and the first Flexplorer penned by Sergio Cutolo/Hydro Tec.





The large wheelhouse has vertical windows for improved visibility and an island console. Top, the CDM's team: from left, Vasco Buonpensiere with Ennio Cecchini (CEO) and Bruno Piantini General Director. Opposite, Audace underway