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Eco-aware and luxurious: behind the drawing board with Umberto Fossati

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Georgia Tindale

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Superyacht designer Umberto Fossati hails from the vibrant northern Italian city of Turin. In this former royal capital of Italy, firmly rooted past traditions blend with the dynamism of industry, creating a unique cosmopolitan metropolis. Spending most of his spare time in the antique and interior design family business located in this same city, the young Fossati soon developed a taste for fine arts and antique furniture which would inform his future career, with a particular interest in pieces which have a history to tell.

MAIORA YACHTS FOR SALE (20) →**STRAVAGANZA**

✓ In operation

Length	Volume	Year
25.72m	68 GT	2008

€1,500,000 (VAT Paid)[View](#)**LIGHEA**

✓ In operation

Length	Volume	Year
42.95m	469 GT	2005



€6,950,000[View](#)[See all 20](#)




After sharpening his eye for detail through his architectural and interior design studies at the universities of Turin and Milan respectively, Fossati cut his teeth designing luxury interiors for Italian studios before working at two yacht builders in Viareggio to complete his education.

Following his shipyard experiences, Fossati decided to start his own firm, beginning with a superyacht interior design project developed directly for the owner of the 55-metre [Galileo G](#) built by [Picchiotti](#). Since then, Fossati has developed an impressive design portfolio, including the 39.67-metre [CBI Navi](#)-built [Stella di Mare](#) which was delivered last summer. Catching a breath at this year's Versilia Yachting Rendezvous, SYT finds out what's next for this distinctively Italian designer.



ALL MAIORA YACHTS (39) →			
	ESCAPE II		
	✓ In operation		
	Length	Volume	Year
	31.0m	175 GT	2009
View			
	LADY KATANA II		
	✓ In operation		
	Length	Volume	Year
	30.2m	130 GT	1998
View			
See all 39			

CBI NAVI YACHTS FOR SALE (2) →




SOPHIE BLUE

✓ In operation

Length	Volume	Year
41.0m	426 GT	1998

€4,500,000

[View](#)



VIRGEN DEL MAR V



✓ In operation

Length	Volume	Year
26.1m	128 GT	2000

€1,350,000

[View](#)

See all 2

ALL CBI NAVI YACHTS (10) →			
	STELLA DI MARE		
	✓ In operation		
	Length	Volume	Year
	39.67m	430 GT	2018
View			
	ELENI		
	✓ In operation		
	Length	Volume	Year
	33.68m	271 GT	2004
View			
See all 10			




First off, talk me through the inspiration behind the interior design of the Maiora 30m which is under construction and will be delivered this summer.

As with all of our projects, we always start from a blank piece of paper and an empty mind. Our immediate focus is on the person who will have to spend his time on board, understanding how he lives, what his habits are, how he dresses and so on.


After the first meeting with the owner, we immediately asked him for some images that would represent him: not of yachts, but pictures of his house and so on and created a mood board from this. We finalised the windows in collaboration with the shipyard and created the interior architecture which was a re-interpretation of 1970s period style. The interior design is full of details that, at the first view, do not take up too much attention, with a colour connection between them: lacquered wood, leather, oak wood - always with the same nuance and using thin and elegant brass inlays.



PERINI NAVI YACHTS FOR SALE (15) →




GALILEO G			
✓ In operation			
Length	Volume	Year	
55.2m	726 GT	2011	
€19,950,000			View



PARSIFAL III			
✓ In operation			
Length	Volume	Year	
53.8m	460 GT	2005	
€15,975,000			View

See all 15

ALL PERINI NAVI YACHTS (43) →




BADIS I

✓ In operation

Length	Volume	Year
70.0m	887 GT	2016

[View](#)



MORNING GLORY




✓ In operation

Length	Volume	Year
48.17m	309 GT	1993

[View](#)

[See all 43](#)

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The client has an international background which helped us to motivate him towards a more contemporary and fresh style, never losing the elegance, but losing the feeling of heaviness which can be present in some designs. As an example, the only glossy finishing we have on board is found on the lateral ceilings in all of the areas close to the windows with reflections coming in from the exterior scenery.



MAJORE



Photo: Majore

What was your relationship with the owner like on this project?

We met for the first time during the last [Monaco Yacht Show](#) on board [Stella di Mare](#) (our most recently-delivered interior project built by [CBI Navi](#)) and talked about his vision for this project. We immediately feel comfortable with each other and it was his first boat that he ordered. We do not meet many times during the project development or construction due to his busy schedule working all around around the world, but we were always in touch by phone or email and easily understood each other even when issues arose. Our way of working has definitely flowed well.

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Photo: Fossati Design Bureau

What are some of the trends you have noticed in superyacht design?

The superyacht design world is full of trends and these always change much more slowly than in the automotive or residential building world (with which we are also fully involved as a studio). Yacht concepts and designs often follow the trends of car design for the exteriors and residential trends for the furniture and interiors.

One trend is to take out as much natural wood as possible from the onboard bulkhead covering, opting for leather, 3D coverings and so on. The thought behind it is to create not a yacht interior but something as close as possible to a villa or apartment. Nowadays, in general, the owners are younger, more international and confident about living all around the world. The knowledge they have about the yacht design world is deeper than in past years. It is not enough to give them something showy. They are looking for something easier and lighter, with less maintenance and that can be enjoyed in a short time with less preparation and difficulties.



Photo: Fossati Design Bureau

In addition, there is definitely a loss of formalism which is resulting in the onboard spaces changing. Superyacht interiors are no longer closed off or separated from the exterior spaces in order to achieve privacy but are fully transparent, making it possible to connect all of the interior and exterior spaces. Today it is a must to have full windows, an extendible balcony and so on. We have already seen some superyacht projects with these concepts: transparent bulkheads, open galley to the dining or saloons, the wheelhouse opened to the foyer and so on.

Connectivity and continuity of view are some of the top priorities now.

In the interior division, owners do not want to have double areas which have the same principal uses as this is lost space. In the residential world, bathrooms and galleys used to be areas which you would hide, but now, as in yachting, these are areas which are shown to guests with pride.



Photo: Fossati Design Bureau

What has been the most memorable project you have worked on and why?

One project where we definitely didn't follow fashion in the design was [*Galileo G*](#) (built by [Picchiotti/Perini Navi](#)) where we were involved directly by the owner, Silvio Scaglia. He comes from a sailing yacht background and he asked us to develop a 'gentleman's yacht' interior to be both aesthetically and functionally comfortable during his plan to [cross the world by sea](#). The amazing exterior design is by [Philippe Briand](#) and follows the same elegance that the client wanted for his interior.



We developed the interior with mahogany using semi-matte finishing, an all-around bulkhead, and gave a contemporary touch to the ceiling which was striped in slats. The foundation of the project was based on the past experiences of the sea which clients had enjoyed before and that we wanted to bring on board. It was less a design project, but more like a coordinated effort, taking into account his itinerary, from which the interior design styling began.



Name some of your favourite materials to work with as an interior designer

We love to use natural materials which are characterised by imperfection. It is this which makes them alive. We always start from these materials and then we develop the concept through inlays and details. For example, we love using stones instead of marble exactly for that reason because they are cut and cleaned but and not

polished.



The finishing we opt for in general is matte or semi-matte, leaving some glossy touches to enlighten some details or inlays, but in general, we always connect materials and finishing together with gradient scale for a soft effect and avoid any dramatic effects. A clear example of this strategy is our project *Stella di Mare* that has absolutely nothing shiny or glossy on board. It is this natural and smooth effect that makes it so inviting to get on board.



What does 'luxury' mean in superyacht design?

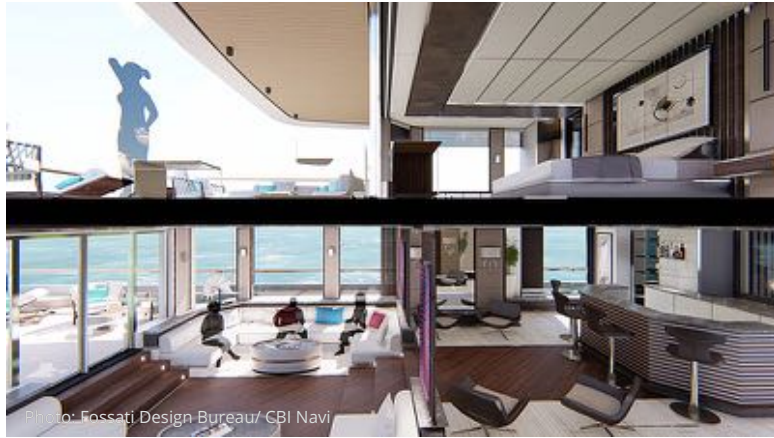
Today the meaning of luxury has changed. Years ago, it was all about materials and branding. We can see now that the name is not enough and materials are no longer the basis behind luxury. Today clients are looking for the real “tailor-made” finish, the real “bespoke” which is seen as a unique piece with no possibility to be replicated. Clients prefer the certainty of quality than the name of the brand.

Custom products also give the possibility to personalize everything, from materials, finishing, design but also on space management. Space and time offer a great portion of the meaning of luxury today.



How do you balance this luxury with environmental awareness?

It is an issue for all of those who are involved in the residential world. We already know that about 70% of the materials we use are eco-friendly, being natural materials and not synthetic but is difficult to obtain a full result for the background work we have in our varnishing and painting and so on. We have been able to convince clients to also use natural finishings, but it is not always easy for us to match all of our projects to these materials.



What else do you have on your drawing boards?

We have developed the interiors of the 35-metre model [Maiora 34](#) Exuma which is under construction, together with the [Maiora](#) Style Centre, and we are currently developing a 23-metre with the shipyard. We also have the [CBI Navi](#) 48-metre Voyager concept and the 84-metre Cook concept.





Photo: Fossati Design Bureau/ CBI Navi

In addition, we have also designed the interiors for a 57-metre explorer concept and we have a new client for a 30-35-metre motor yacht, so watch this space!



Photo: Fossati Design Bureau



Photo: Fossati Design Bureau

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