

Perspectives

Five Questions



Life on the water can be every bit as elegant as on land, says Candace Langan, an interior designer who specializes in yachts.

1 How did you get interested in the field of marine interior design?

I've been around boats all my life. I grew up in a boat-loving, sailing family in New Jersey and worked for *Yachting* magazine for a decade. In college I studied fashion design but discovered I was happiest designing and decorating spaces. After marrying the

yacht designer Bill Langan, I started working with him, designing boat interiors. The combination of my love of boats and my interest in interior design proved to be a great fit. I attended the Rhode Island School of Design, where I studied interior design, then ran my own yacht interior decoration company. Recently I joined the Jamestown, Rhode Island, firm

| INTERVIEW BY ROBERT KIENER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN SOARES |

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Taste Design, where I specialize in yacht interior design.

2 How does yacht interior design differ from residential design?

First, there is the obvious difference in size. No matter how big the boats are, furnishings need to be scaled down. The big challenge is to make a yacht interior feel large, comfortable, and inviting. Also, unlike in a home, everything on a boat—from furniture to cabinetry to beds—is custom made and must be specially designed. And because a yacht is always moving, sometimes in rough seas, everything has to be built-in or fixed. Dining tables, beds, and furniture are all designed to be bolted down. Even window coverings such as Roman shades and blinds need to be able to be secured.

3 Has yacht interior design influenced residential design?

Yachts have long been known for their efficient use of space, and I see that

residential design is adopting the idea that it's important to use every inch of available storage space. Consider that everything yachts carry—from crystal to glassware to cutlery—is organized and stored in custom-fitted shelves or drawers. I am seeing more and more homes that include this type of storage. For example, residential kitchens are using more drawer storage, even in refrigerators or dishwashers; these are ideas that are borrowed from yacht interiors. It all makes for clean, minimal lines. Also the skilled craftsmanship and millwork featured on yachts translates beautifully into custom homes. More teak and mahogany, long a mainstay of yachts, is being used in homes.

4 What trends are you seeing in yacht interior design?

I see some of the same trends we are seeing with residential design. For example, two recent yacht refit projects involved changing very formal main salons, which are similar to a home's living room, into less formal places. Just as homeowners often opt for a great room instead of a living room, boat owners are asking for

more relaxed, informal spaces. Bars are also increasingly popular. Color palettes are changing, too. Admittedly, there are still a lot of blues, but the trend is toward lighter decors with the use of different woods and finishes such as limed oak instead of darker woods. Clients are also asking for sofas and upholstered furniture with more of a residential look than custom built-ins.

5 What are some special challenges of yacht interior design?

In addition to designing interiors that ensure there is a place for everything and everything can be put in its place, we think about things like soundproofing and wear and tear from the salt air and sunlight. Materials on a yacht have to be top of the line. A yacht must have all the comforts of an elegant home, and look like a home, but still be nautical. Also it is important that yacht decor not be overdone. It should never detract from the main view: the beauty that is outside the window. You don't want your design to compete with Mother Nature.

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