The image shows the interior of a luxury yacht cabin. A large, cylindrical lamp with a white shade stands on a polished wooden surface. In the background, there are large windows with dark frames, offering a view of the sky and the sea. A staircase with a metal railing leads up to a higher level. The overall atmosphere is one of sophisticated and modern luxury.

THE NEW LUXURY

Recent trends in interior design suggest that less really *is* more.

BY MARY SOUTH

As forecasters in fashion, music, art, and manufacturing know, industry trends flow like tributaries from the great river Zeitgeist. And as worldwide economic woes (which seem to be easing, at last) have had their turn at center stage, they've done more than dominate headlines and keep those hardest hit awake at night: They have caused a mass shift in perspective that seems, well...seismic. The ultimate luxury, no matter your income bracket, has become time—and spending it with friends and family.

Even in the world of superyachts—interior designs show a trend toward simplicity. But exactly how is this being reflected in superyacht décors? And is there anything for owners of yachts in the 60- to 100-foot range to learn when their interior starts looking dated?

THE OVERALL LOOK

"There's a huge migration toward less is more," says Ft. Lauderdale-based designer Patrick Knowles, "a trend to a simpler environment, less clutter. People understand that you do not have to have clutter to have things."

Marty Lowe, of Marty A. Lowe, Inc. Interior Design, also in Ft. Lauderdale, put it this way: "Minimalism is hard. What is in view has to be perfect." Beauty is in the details, in exotic leathers, stunning joinery, the perfect alignment of architectural details."

The ornate, palatial approach is out. Spare furnishings and natural materials are in. This is reflected, overall, in an interior aesthetic that's contemporary and clean, sometimes described as Zen or minimalist.

"This speaks to flooring, fabric, bulkhead materials—it applies to everything, including bed linens and silverware," says Knowles.

"Our clients really use their boats," says Lowe. "They're active and family-oriented, so they want an interior that's luxurious, yet conducive to life on the water. Above all, it's about appropriateness and suitability."

"We do slipcovers in beautiful washed linen, even cashmere slipcovers," says Lowe. No matter how luxe the fabric, though, it comes off so the crew can keep it looking good. "We place a huge emphasis on luxury bedding with high-thread-count linens—often with intricate embroidery, pique bedcovers, and duvets with silk-filled inserts." Lowe says that even scent is used in creating a sense of soothing luxury aboard.

Without a single structural change, a smaller yacht can be dramatically transformed just by applying this new aesthetic. Get rid of the striped silk drapes, the Regency furniture, the objets d'art. Bring in a neutral palette, natural fibers, and a couple of treasured possessions or pieces of art that say something personal.

GETTING BACK TO THE SEA

Another reflection of time as the ultimate luxury is seen in a trend toward connecting with the water.

"First it was flush sterns, where a traditional transom didn't connect with the water; then there was an awkward ladder down to a swim platform; then a staircase to a larger transom area or swim platform. Now it's a dual staircase down to a beach lounge," notes Knowles.

If you've been to a boat show recently, you may have seen superyachts whose transoms open to reveal massive stowage areas for tenders and water toys. But the latest designs go a step further to create large beach deck areas. The idea is that once the yacht is anchored and the tender and toys are deployed, this space becomes much more than a garage. Lounge furniture and built-in bars and grills, all situated at water's edge, create the ultimate gathering place for friends and family.

Knowles has a 63-meter yacht being built in Italy that will have sand spread on the large swim platform and ultra-sheer drapes that pull across the open area and flutter in the breeze. Chaises and comfortable seating complete the lounge effect.

The most dramatic expression of this trend is the new Wally Herès WHY (See "Design," page 22) that is first and foremost a massive,

PATRICK KNOWLES



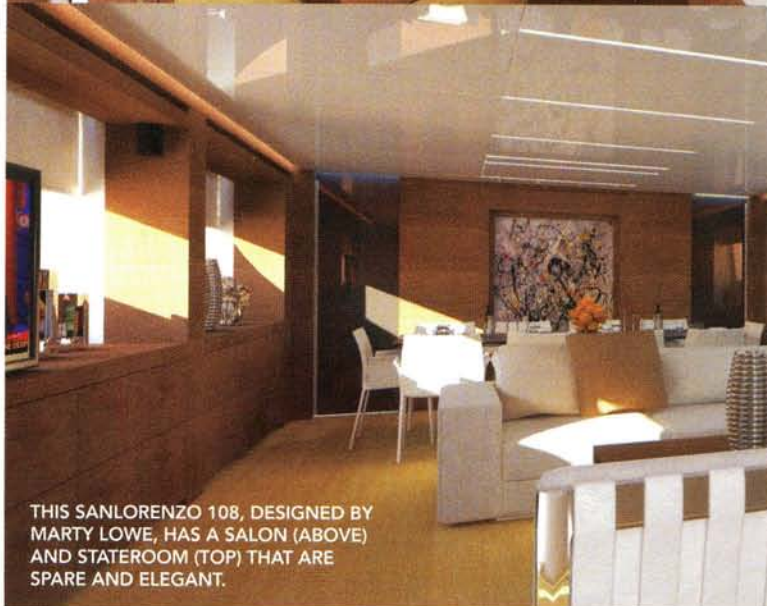
Burger, Delta, Hatteras, Christensen, Nordlund, Palmer Johnson, Trinity Yachts...it sounds like a who's who of American yacht builders. In his 21 years as a designer Patrick Knowles has worked with them all. Recent projects include the 160-foot Trinity *Blind Date*, the 94-foot Burger *Best N Show*, the 164-foot Trinity *Mine Games*, and the 161-foot *Mustang Sally*. He has also designed over 35 aircraft interiors. *Patrick Knowles Designs, (954) 832-0108; www.patrickknowlesdesigns.com*

COURTESY ISA SHIPYARD, ANCONA, ITALY

water-level sun lounge—the ultimate aquatic escape.

But not all the action is beach-oriented. "We're seeing a lot more al-fresco galleys. Large grills, ice makers, refrigerators, very much like the residential trend toward summer kitchens," says Lowe. "Another trend, even in midsize yachts, is to relocate the galley aft." An aft galley is closer to the cockpit, which means it's also closer to the water.

Even if your boat doesn't have this kind of dramatic swim platform or tender stowage area, chances are you could do something similar on a smaller scale. Maybe there's room to install a wet bar or grill and keep collapsible furniture tucked away? Is there another spot where your tender could be stowed while underway?



THIS SANLORENZO 108, DESIGNED BY MARTY LOWE, HAS A SALON (ABOVE) AND STATEROOM (TOP) THAT ARE SPARE AND ELEGANT.



THE MASTER SALON, WITH OBSERVATION LOUNGE TO RIGHT, OF THE NEW *BLIND DATE*, A 160-FOOT TRINITY DESIGNED BY PATRICK KNOWLES.

DANA JIMKINS



A PATRICK KNOWLES DESIGN FOR A GARAGE THAT CONVERTS TO BEACH DECK SPACE. SHEER DRAPES AND LOOSE, COMFORTABLE FURNITURE WILL ADD TO THE SEASIDE LOUNGE FEELING.

Talk to your builder or a reputable yard about structural changes that could move the galley aft or create a larger stern area for fun that's closer to the water.

LARGER OWNER AREAS

Another strong trend involves larger master staterooms and private sundeck areas.

"There are definitely more master suites with dedicated lounge areas," says Knowles. "Often there's a lower-level sleeping area and then a step up to a lounging space, with comfortable furniture, a desk, an observation area—a place for more dynamic activities."

One possibility for owners of smaller master staterooms involves assessing how much you use a nearby guest stateroom. Do you really need that cabin with the twin berths now that the boys are grown? Talk to your builder or a naval architect about whether that bulkhead can be moved.

"Today's buyer understands the compromises involved in choosing the correct layout. Is the master on deck or below deck? It's definitely on deck these days, but that may also mean a smaller galley," Lowe points out.

If you don't have the room inside, there may be other ways of claim-

ing more private areas. "The master suite and the skylounge are the two areas an owner spends the most time enjoying," says Knowles. "Tenders and toys that were stored here are being repositioned to create more space for private lounging, with multiple seating areas, swimming pools, and private access through the master suite to the deck." This private area off the master has even been renamed the "resort deck," in some instances.

Smaller yachts are following this trend. Even without a Skylounge deck, there are creative ways to reclaim deck space. Can the tender or PWC be relocated to the foredeck? Knowles reports seeing more captain's quarters being moved up or down a deck in order to carve out added private loung-

ing space off the master. "This is very prized real estate for owners."

HAPPY CREWS

"In 1980, when I got into this business," remarks Lowe, "the crew's quarters was a closet. Now, their quarters have a lot more space. They have flatscreen tvs, and galleys, a laundry...a happy crew makes a happy owner." And let's not forget that a lot of owners let their captain help with the shopping when it's time for a new yacht. "If the captain is running around a boat show compiling the short list of yachts for the owner to see, why would he include one that doesn't have good crew quarters?"

This is an important consideration for owners with yachts under 80 feet where crew's quarters can be especially tiny. If you're not running the yacht yourself, and you want to attract or retain a good captain, maybe it's time to find a little more living space for the crew.

If you're basically happy with the vessel you have, consider taking a lesson from the big boys. Whether you decide simply to streamline and unclutter your décor, or are prepared to bring in a designer or naval architect to get inventive with your swim platform, master suite, or private lounging areas, there's a lot to be learned from today's superyacht trends. □



K.T. MERRY

MARTY LOWE

Marty Lowe has worked with Sanlorenzo, Customline, Marquis, Maritimo, Azimut, Sea Ray, and Bertram. She has also designed residences, corporate offices, and private aircraft. One of Lowe's recent yacht projects was *Retro Blue*, a very traditional yacht created for George Jousma of Sanlorenzo. "I think a weak economy makes people return to nostalgia and traditional styles, as evidenced by the response we've had to *Retro Blue*," remarks Lowe. "But I also have a new 108 under construction which is extremely contemporary and minimalistic. I feel very lucky that our client base lets us do so many different styles." Marty A. Lowe, Inc. Interior Design, (954) 462-9750; www.martylowe.com