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A Sum of Parts

A fleet owner selects Admiral for his first new build: the 213-foot *Life Saga*.



The master stateroom on the main deck forward showcases interior designer Mark Berryman's penchant for brushed veneers and Japanese motifs. The cladding on the pillars is Murano glass.

story Justin Ratcliffe

The 213-foot *Life Saga* rests at anchor.





The decision whether to build new or buy pre-owned is a tough one, not least because the freedom to customize a superyacht is offset by having to wait the three years or more for the finished product. It was a compromise the owner of the 213-foot (65-meter) Admiral *Life Saga* was willing to make. He already had a fleet of yachts of various shapes and sizes, including a pre-owned 138-foot (42-meter) Heesen of the same name and the refitted shadow vessel *Mystere*, when he was lured by the promise of a brand-new, shiny toy.

"The owner had always bought used yachts and refitted them to his own purpose, but we'd been talking about a bigger boat for a couple of years, and he wanted something that was more his own," says Chris Delves, the owner's fleet captain. "We were looking for a pre-engineered platform, and I spent a lot of time traveling around Europe as far north as Norway, talking to shipyards and sea-trialing various yachts. But towards the end, it became obvious that Admiral could give us what we wanted."

Admiral, part of the Tuscany-based Italian Sea Group, agreed to heavily modify its C Force platform. The shipyard had previously launched *Ouranos*, a 164-foot (50-meter), sub-500-gross-ton version of the C Force. *Life Saga* is more than twice the volume at 1,150 gross tons, but the shipyard was ready to pull out all the stops to make it happen.

"For me, it's less about the terms of the contract and more about the old-fashioned idea of a handshake, that your word is your bond," says Giovanni Costantino, founder and chairman of the Italian Sea Group. "That means meeting the expectations of the owner by delivering on what you promise."

The defining exterior feature of the C Force concept, originally penned by Uniellé Yacht Design in Slovenia, is the break in the upper-deck bulwark amidships. This design element removes the side decks, but adds visual impact when the fold-down balconies on the main deck are deployed and the yacht presents a striking expanse of glass extending over two deck levels.

"Substantial changes were made, and there's not much left of the preliminary deck plans," Delves says. "Even after production had started, we were able to introduce an elevator between the main and upper decks, mostly for resale purposes, as the owner has no intention of chartering the yacht."

Early on in the design phase, the galley was shifted from the main deck to the lower deck (and later swapped sides with the crew mess from port to starboard). The move left space amidships on the main deck for a VIP stateroom with a private lounge that can convert into two ensuite staterooms.

The lower-deck layout was rearranged to have the tender garage between the engine room and the beach club, which has gym, sauna, steam bath and—an unusually—an indoor hot tub. Instead of a transom door that opens to create a swim platform, which is subject to wave-slapping, Admiral engineered a system by which the transom door slides up and into the deckhead, under the sun lounger on the main deck aft.

Silent cruising was also a priority. In addition to the standard damping and soundproofing, the two Caterpillar main engines are mounted on steel beams that wrap around the engine-room bulkheads and overhead, forming a closed circle that helps to dissipate noise and vibrations.

The aft section of the main-deck superstructure is a semi-open space that functions as an outdoor cinema with a bar-lounge area and a professional disc jockey station. A covered continuation of the open aft deck, this space can be closed off by concertina-style glass doors that fold into side



Left: The largest of the yacht's three pools, on the sundeck. **Facing:** The signature break in the bulwarks creates a two-story expanse of glass.

LIFE SAGA

LOA

213ft. 3in. (65m)

BEAM

34ft. 9in. (10.6m)

DRAFT (full load)

9ft. 6in. (2.9m)

CONSTRUCTION

steel and aluminum

GROSS TONNAGE

1,250

SPEED (max./cruise)

16/14.5 knots

NAVAL ARCHITECTURE

Italian Sea Group

EXTERIOR STYLING

Uniellé Yacht Design
GMC Architecture

INTERIOR DESIGN

Mark Berryman Design

BUILDER

Italian Sea Group

compartments. The watertight doors required for seaworthy classification are forward, at the interior lounge bulkhead.

The master stateroom on the forward main deck went through various revisions. The bathroom, for example, originally took up the whole port side, but was relocated to between the bed and forward bulkhead, to make best use of the vertical windows. The owner, however, prefers to use a second master stateroom on the upper deck that takes advantage of the glazing amidships. That stateroom is about the same size as the two guest staterooms on the lower deck, but the living area includes a private library-lounge, sushi bar and wine cellar—as well as the owner's favorite foosball table.

A circular capstan-style dining table by furniture maker Fletcher Burwell-Taylor in the United Kingdom is between the salon and the open aft deck. Using a layering system, the table expands radially by manually turning it through 120 degrees, until it can seat 12 guests. Two sets of curved, sliding glass doors allow for inside or outside dining. In similar flexible fashion, a sofa in the lounge on main deck can be used for watching a movie on the 75-inch screen or can swivel to become facing sofas in a conversation area.

"The owner's favorite word is optimization, and he's a big believer in multifunctional design, so he didn't want a dining table inside and another one outside," Delves says. "For the same reason, we didn't specify margins in the teak decking around the exterior furniture, in case he wants to move them around."

Britain's Mark Berryman was brought in when construction was well underway to revise the interior design. Berryman, who also did the interior of the 446-foot (136-meter) Lürssen *Flying Fox*, is known for a subdued style that eschews high-gloss bling, focusing instead on soothing and tactile finishes.

"The owner wanted something relaxing and calming with some impressive and surprising elements," Berryman says. "There are lots of

very beautiful, opulent and embellished yacht interiors out there where I would feel nervous sitting on a sofa, in case I crease it; a yacht should feel like a home away from home, a place where you can kick off your shoes and not be afraid to rest them on the coffee table. He made one comment that struck a chord: He said, 'Think of my interior like a cappuccino ... just add a little more milk in some areas, and not so much in others.' And that just summed it up for me."

The result is an easygoing, yet elegant ambience based on hand-brushed oak and teak with contrasting accents in darker woods, such as wenge and walnut. Balancing the natural woods and leathers is a selection of stones that range from travertine—a Berryman favorite—and nut brown limestone to Emperador marble and sunset onyx.

"One of the themes that runs through the yacht is the Japanese-style circular motifs with horizontal and vertical battens," Berryman says. "The circle is an important symbol in Japanese architecture, but here, it helps break up the straight lines. The owner specifically asked for elements that are repeated throughout the yacht that you may not notice, but if you do, it provides a little more pleasure and appreciation."

By all accounts, the owner has been overjoyed with *Life Saga* since taking delivery in summer 2019, although he is still getting used to all the extra space. On his previous boat, Delves never once saw him use the hot tub. On the new one, he has three. ◊

For more information: admiral-yachts.com

