

EUROPEAN ROUND-UP

Will trade wars and uncertainties spoil the party?

Pages 14-43



BUILDING AN ICON

Chris-Craft CEO Steve Heese on how the brand is evolving under new ownership **Page 70**

SOUTH AFRICA REPORT

Big cat demand and weak rand provide boost but systemic challenges remain **Page 44**

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◀ The 24m Amasea 84 is designed for offshore sailing, with 2,000 miles of autonomy

When yachtsman turns yachtbuilder

DUTCHMAN JACK WIJNANTS'S DREAM TO CREATE HIS ULTIMATE CATAMARAN IS ABOUT TO BECOME REALITY. HE REVEALS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE AMASEA 84

WORDS: OLIVIER VOITURIEZ

Yachting's appeal is unique – its allure can captivate both leisure sailor and industry professional – architects, designers, builders – in equal measure. Few recreational pastimes elicit such passion that can blur the boundaries between work and play. Little wonder then that avid leisure sailors can often find themselves on the opposite side of the customer/supplier equation. The refrain: “I didn’t find exactly what I was looking for, so I decided to build it,” has almost become something of an industry cliché – where sailor decides to become not only builder, but also designer and financier of the boat of his dreams.

The project may be bewitching on paper, but

will require a good dose of energy, imagination, tenacity, not to mention serious financial clout to bring it to reality. Belief, business acumen and guts

“ Construction will take 15 months. The plan is then to build seven or eight models a year. After that? Wijnants has his eyes set on a 40m ”

must define anyone that enters such an arena. Step up Jack Wijnants – a Dutchman living in Monaco and a passionate sailor since childhood. His dream? To build a luxury 24m tri-deck catamaran in aluminium. It is an ambitious challenge, costing around €8m, and will hit the seas in roughly two years’ time.

Wijnants was born into a family of steel manufacturers, has worked as a distributor of marine electronics, and has even built military patrol launches in Malta. With a tidy sum in his pocket which made him ➔

independent, it was the right time to self-finance a new challenge. His boat is called Amasea (a blend of the Italian 'amare' and English 'sea'), is 24m long and 11m wide, with three bridges. Its selling price will be between €6.5m and €7.5m excluding taxes. In Monaco, under the gilded façade of the Hotel Metropole, Wijnants invited the European nautical press to admire his 130-tonne baby.

INTERNATIONAL TEAM

To run such a large and tight ship, the engineer with an electronics background, was supported by an international team. Naval architect Albert Nazarov is Russian. Communications are handled by Sand People, the well-know Italian public relations firm. The hull and superstructures of the catamaran will be built in a Turkish boatyard. The finishings will then be handled in Europe, either in Italy or in the Netherlands.

"Nobody knows me. I am a new player in yachting," says Wijnants, who launched the project two years ago when he sold his Belgium-based electronics distribution company. He needed the time to choose the best professionals, both as regards the quality of their work and their ability to adapt to his ideas. Having control was fundamental for Wijnants, who chose not to look for partners to finance his project so that he would remain captain of the enterprise. Build work will begin by the end of the year, whether a final customer has been found or not. If Wijnants finds a buyer he will be pleased, but if he doesn't, he will be equally happy to own the first Amasea.

BOLD AMBITION

The Monaco preview of the Amasea 84 revealed a modern design with an imposing and robust shape. It is focused on off-shore sailing, with 2,000 miles of autonomy, and the ability to navigate six weeks without returning to port. The engines (2 x 1,920hp MAN) are good for between 8kt and 18kt. The interior is fully customisable to the owner's brief. The boat features a lounge of 63m² in the main bridge, next to a 15m² kitchen, and two guest cabins of 15.7m each. The master cabin is 33m² on the upper deck, next to the 23m² wheelhouse. And then the panoramic view deck is almost 45m². The crew's discrete quarters are in the two hulls of the catamaran, providing room and privacy for everyone.

Construction is expected to take at least 15 months. The plan is then to build seven or eight models a year. After that? Wijnants has his eyes set on a 40m-long Amasea. **IBI**

THE AMASEA TEAM

JACK WIJNANTS, FOUNDER OF AMASEA



What made you want to design your own catamaran?

I was looking for a 20m-25m catamaran to go around the world, but I couldn't find what I was looking for. They were very expensive, with little scope to fit out the interior. Moreover, the materials used were mediocre quality. And then there was little privacy for the guests, with the crew using the same galley. So I decided to go back to the design table and draw up my own catamaran. When I showed it to my yacht broker friends, they told me I should commercialise it.

What is your link with yachting and industry – the two factors you brought together when creating Amasea ?

My family has always owned Dutch yachts from 20m-24m. My grandfather had a large steelworks, and a garage. When we were kids, my brother and I developed a passion for sailing. At the same time, we learnt all about mechanics and requirements for obtaining a quality product or solution. I graduated as an electronics engineer, but my brother continued to work in high-precision machining of mechanical parts.

ALBERT NAZAROV

Naval architect and designer



Doctor Albert Nazarov graduated as naval architect from the naval technology faculty at the University of Sebastopol in 1996. In 1999 he won an award in an international competition for yacht design in the United Kingdom. The Russian naval architect then opened his own naval engineering firm. In May 2004, he completed a doctorate on the manoeuvre and performance of sailing vessels, which led to new simulation software on the behaviour and manoeuvrability of sailing boats. Nazarov also studied art and design for five years, which explains his particularly aesthetic approach to sailing. A keen sailor (sail and motor), he has a yacht captain's licence and a skipper certificate for IYT Bareboat. He is manager of Albatros Marine Design (located in Thailand), and has designed some 50 catamarans and fast launches for the Asian market. He also designed the XP980, the press boat for the finish of the Volvo Ocean Race in Stockholm.



SPECIFICATIONS AMASEA 84FT/25M

- LENGTH (EXCLUDING HULL)** 25.45m
- LENGTH OF HULL** 23.76m
- LENGTH** 10.98m
- DRAUGHT** 1.79m
- AIR DRAFT** 12.31m
- WEIGHT** 130 tonnes
- ENGINES** 2x 1920hp MTU 10V2000 M96
- PASSENGERS/CREW** 20
- PRICE** from €7.5m

