

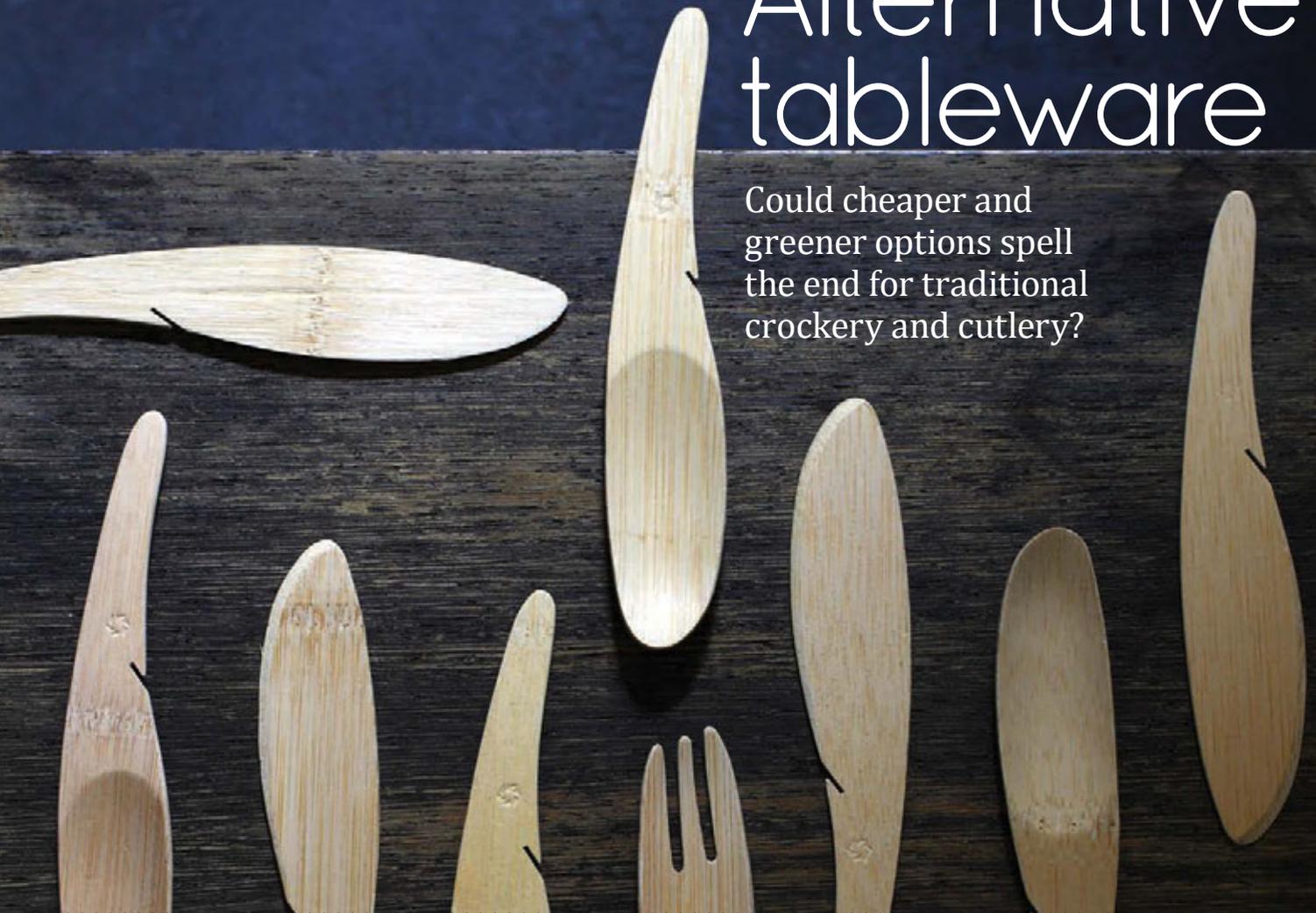
Marine Catering

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

OCTOBER 2014

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Superyacht owners, charterers and guests expect five-star dining. The question is, how do you design and deliver a state-of-the-art, restaurant-quality kitchen within the confines and constraints of a superyacht?



“In general, owners who are willing to invest in good working spaces and galleys also have the best chefs – and subsequently the best food – on board”

TOP TABLES

by Felicity Landon

Let's start with one of the worst-case scenarios. Guido de Groot, a yacht design specialist, says, “The worst situation I have seen on a yacht was that the chef had to sleep in the galley, because there wasn't enough crew cabins.”

Clearly, that's an extreme example of where things can go wrong, but undoubtedly the challenge of designing – and fitting in – the ultimate galley and its facilities are many. De Groot, whose company Guido de Groot Design, based in the Netherlands, specializes in interiors and exteriors for yachts, says, “When I am on board yachts, I always like to talk with the crew and chef to see how they use the workspace and how we can improve the working areas for future projects. In general, owners who are willing to invest in good working spaces and galley also have the best chefs – and subsequently the best food – on board.”

Marnix Hoekstra, a director of naval architect firm Vripack, has similar views: “There isn't a school that teaches you about galley layout and function. You have to get it from real life – and we have learned things from being at sea or speaking to chefs. One of the most vital factors is, we believe, that the chef should really have his own workspace. That means you won't find a passage through the galley in our designs. I always say to the owner who suggests we could gain some space in that way, ‘Would you like it if your secretary walked straight past your computer in the office?’ I think it is very strange to have a chef preparing a 5-star meal and to have people passing through in the middle. Owners are demanding very high quality from the chef; you should give them room.”

Some owners do tend to assume that food just ‘appears’, says Hoekstra – but having said that,

attitudes vary hugely between owners. Galley design must take into account the routing of the chef and also of the staff who are serving the dishes. He says: "Where the chef does preparation, you have to have a hot countertop to keep food warm and then a single route to serve out and a different route to get back into the room in a safe manner, as you are used to in a restaurant."

However, Paulo Passalacqua, president of Precetti, the Genoa- and Miami-based megayacht galley design specialist, says, "The general truth for any kind of catering application is that you may never get a chef that has the same ideas as another. Once you start running around the chef's requests, however many Michelin stars they have, they all have their different ideas and approach. It's a big task to fulfill 100% the request of each individual – everyone has their own perspective."

Keeping everyone happy

"You have to balance all the requests with what is feasible and possible – and also consider timing," he says. "Megayachts have a tendency to take a longer time to be finished – it's a long period of construction and outfitting, and we find there are changes coming along all the time. Then, at the last minute, the shipowner or chef wants to include something different – perhaps there are changes in the final idea for the use of the vessel, or there's a change of chef – and that can create upheaval."

Passalacqua says a megayacht new-build project would normally take three years from start to finish, but Precetti has seen examples of projects that have dragged on for 10 years as ideas are chopped and changed. And the company also works with a different type of challenge – conversions of older ships into new megayachts. "In these cases, the challenge for galley design is even more difficult because you are dealing with pre-existing boundaries and design, and have to work with the space, systems and machinery already in place."

In both new-builds and conversions, the solution is about compromise and getting the very best solution that you can, says Passalacqua. The owner may have all sorts of fancy ideas at the start – it's the Precetti team's job to develop those to a final design that actually works in the space given and in terms of technical interface with the rest of the ship, including electricity, water and air-con systems, and so on. The design must also meet all the regulations and gain the necessary approvals.

The most important things in a galley are the workspace and user-friendliness of the equipment, says Marcel Degner at Roland



Space saving

Marcel Degner, project leader and chief operating officer at German superyacht outfitter Roland, says one of the main challenges in galley design is to integrate all the equipment the owner wants, while also enabling easy service, in an area that looks like a stainless steel household kitchen.

"That's why we developed the Roland Furniture range in 2002 – this system enables us to integrate everything nearby and is as flexible as possible," he says. "For example, we will have an icemaker that is completely integrated and can be pulled out on drawers for cleaning and service, or we make special cabinets to store machines such as a slicer – so that these gadgets you don't use all the time are not blocking the worktops."



“Also, you can change equipment. For example, we delivered a baking oven to a project – four months after launching, the chef asked if he could change it to a pizza oven. No problem. We sent one guy down to Barcelona and it was done in one hour’s work.”

That flexibility is clearly appreciated, says Degner. But what would he describe as the best in galley design? “There is no ‘general’ design for a galley. It depends on several options – the size of the yacht, how many galleys, the number of crew and guests, the nationality of the owner. But the most important things in a galley are the workspace and user-friendliness of the equipment. We always try more or less to separate the galley into the dishwashing ‘dirt’ area and the cooking and preparation area. It’s important that the dirt area can be reached without walking through the preparation line.”

Overall, the galley has become more important for owners in the past few years, he says. “And if food is important, they will name a chef who will work with us. In many cases, the chefs will get what they want.”

A few owners even have such a good relationship with their chefs that they cook together, he adds. “Or the owners like to cook themselves – so the galley and the material has to look clean every time. To get the home kitchen feel, we have worked on the coating of the cabinet fronts – this can be a powder coating, or the new trend is to film it. With film, we are able to color parts of the equipment or the furniture that you cannot powder coat.”

New innovation

Another innovation Roland has been working on is outside furniture. “Bars will need special

Money saving ideas

An important point, says Degner, is that while most restaurants need to earn money, galleys do not. “When factories do construction, they use solutions that are designed to save as much money as possible – because this is the usual way for restaurants. At Roland we do our own construction, which means the quality of the system is always the same and every detail is according to the Roland rules.”

The advantage of this is that designs and individual items can be easily changed, says Degner. “The interior is not fixed to the exterior. So if the chef wants to have a door on a cabinet and then after three months he wants to have drawers – no problem. The changes are so easy that we just send the new drawers and they can be put in by the crew.



he innovations come thick and fast in the area of superyacht galley designs. “Materials that are both easy to clean and great-looking – such as Amtico, Silestone, Hi-Macs and Corian – have been improving these past couple of years,” says Marco Boom at Guido de Groot.

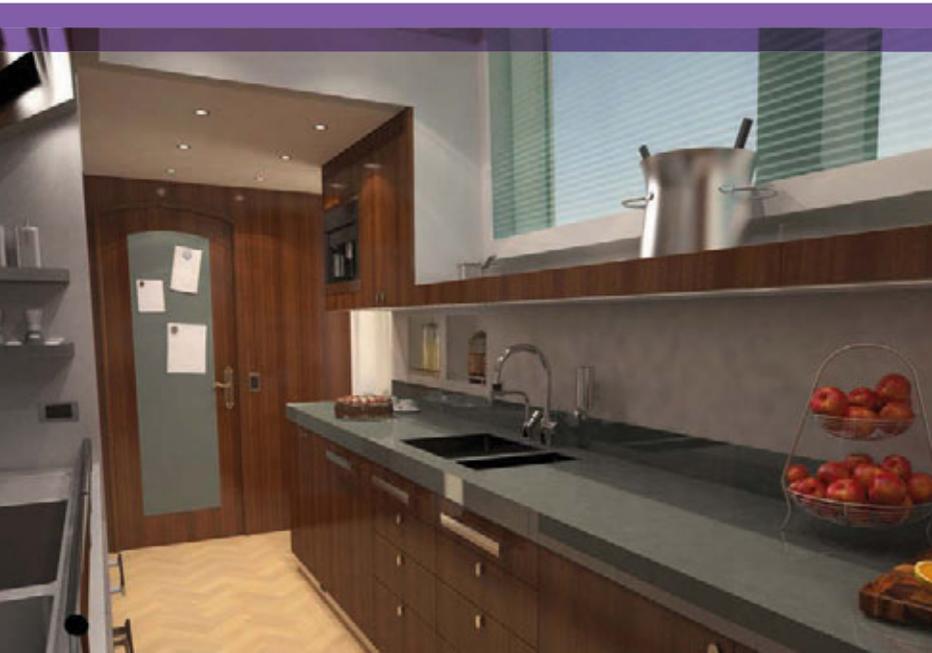
Appliances have been improved, he says, becoming quieter and more energy efficient, which is significant for yachts in reducing noise levels and putting less demand on generator capacity.

“In addition, a lot of new developments in domestic kitchens have been adapted for yacht projects. These include Quooker, for

WHAT’S NEW?

instantaneous boiling water, and exhaust units that can be installed in countertops.”

An intriguing new trend highlighted by Marnix Hoekstra at Vripack involves putting in small herb and vegetable gardens, really something they never had before. Obviously they had little pots of basil and so on, but this is a small garden. You can’t put it outside on deck because of the salt air – so you are getting into solutions using vertical gardens on the inside of the boat.”



Materials that are both easy to clean and great-looking have been improving, says Marco Boom at Guido de Groot

equipment that is resistant against sea water,” says Degner. “Our outside equipment is moving into the next generation this year and can be completely integrated into the wooden furniture.”

Marnix Hoekstra at Vripack also emphasizes the need to keep dishwashing and cooking separated within the galley. “You don’t put the dishwashing station in the chef’s workspace,” he says. “Obviously it needs to be in the galley compound, but it should not be in the triangle of cooking, cleaning and collecting from stores. You don’t want someone preparing a nice juicy steak and next to them someone starts to wash the dishes.”

Galleys on superyachts need a lot of work surfaces combined with the right appliances and enough storage, says Marco Boom, designer with Guido de Groot. “We normally try to fit in several fridges and freezers combined with ovens, steam ovens, fryer, induction hob and teppanyaki grill,” he says. “Coffee is a very personal decision – some clients prefer a small Nespresso machine, whereas others prefer a built-in coffee machine that uses fresh beans.

“Besides this, we try to combine the materials and details of the interior with the practical demands for the galley into a great looking area where both guests and crew will feel at home.”

As well as this, icemakers and additional fridges are often required throughout the yacht, for cool drinks, fruit and snacks, says Boom.

Paulo Passalacqua at Precetti says satellite food preparation areas are increasingly

important. “As well as the central point of preparation, and its design to provide what the chef requires to serve extensive menus, also important are the various areas around the yacht to serve the shipowner or guest. These are provided with a complete range of equipment so that they can provide any kind of request right on the spot without having to run back to the main galley – bear in mind that these ships are more than 100m long, so you could otherwise be moving considerable distances between the main galley and the place where you are serving the food.”

This isn’t just about flambéing at the table, he emphasizes. “It’s a small area outfitted in order to supply food – with fixed equipment, to act as satellite food preparation areas. They are equipped for food storage and catering to serve anything that could be requested.”

Additionally, if the yacht is to be used for conferences or to invite a large number of people on board while in harbor, then the catering facilities must be equal to that.

Specific requests

Another trend Passalacqua has noted is specifically separate areas. “Many of our customers in the past few years have been based in the Middle East and they have specific requests for food storage and preparation areas. They have a lot of food brought from their own country and want to have it stored completely separately from anything else on board. So you have a situation where you are doubling the space needed, because you need to divide up facilities, not only for storage and refrigeration, but also for preparation and catering.

“Also, you normally have a separate galley for the crew – possibly using the same equipment as the galley for the owner’s food, but still separated physically.”

A superyacht galley is just part of the whole hotel function, in which cold store, dry stores and freezer must all be nearby and easily accessible, says Hoekstra. “Like any luxury hotel, there is a whole additional function you need to have in order to prepare very good food. But stores are different to a traditional restaurant. Chefs will require daily storage near the galley and then two to three weeks’ storage somewhere else. Generally, the chef will stock up from the vessel’s own provisions each day, collecting frozen and other foods as required.

“Of course, there are always some limits in terms of the perfect design – but if you take care of this as part of the initial design of the yacht, and don’t just leave the galley as a blank space while you fiddle around with the saloon, there is no real reason why it should not be equal to the best restaurant in town.” ●

Overall, the galley has become more important for owners over the past few years





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A successful marine catering system company must offer design, manufacturing, turnkey installation and after sales in-house, says Paolo Passalacqua, president of Precetti. "It is very difficult to have all the above aspects in operation at one place, and we are probably the only company that has done so since the 1970s."

Precetti was formed in 1979, and Passalacqua joined the family business in 1982. At that time, the company was mostly involved in cruise ship refits and new-build cargo ships. In 1987, Fincantieri awarded Precetti its first major order for a build project on board a new cruise ship. Since then, the company has delivered turnkey projects for almost 60 major cruise ships at several shipyards around the world. "As a company, we have gone through many changes and developments to cope with challenges that we have faced in this industry – it has been quite a ride," notes Passalacqua.

Over the past seven years, the Italy-based company has implemented an additional in-house solution that is

relevant to every project where front-of-house cooking or serving is in place. "I refer to buffets, bars and any catering operation that requires finishing touches and decoration. A lot of our customers face the problem of not knowing who is in charge of the catering side and who is in charge of the interior architectural side. We now have an in-house department that can provide design selection and options; engineering and renderings; make fabrication with exotic decorative materials, such as special wood essence, marble, stone, mosaic and glass; and take



The president of cruise and mega-yacht catering system designer Precetti talks energy saving, green galleys and cultural requests

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by **Bunny Richards**



All components, installation, technical testing and initial training are guaranteed by Precetti, to minimize any 'after sales' maintenance intervals



care of the on-site installation down to the last details," says Passalacqua.

On top of all this, Precetti also provides the same service for the mega-yacht sector of the industry. "Mega-yachts require a completely different approach. First of all, time is not the first issue you face, compared with working for the cruise industry," he says.

The company normally gets involved in designing galleys and professional catering systems for mega-yachts of over 90m in size. "The combination of limited spaces, aesthetic requirements, high-quality finishing, extreme custom-made details and PHS construction and operation is the Mount Everest of catering construction. You can't have



An undercounter fridge unit built into a mega-yacht galley, in accordance to US PHS standards (above left)
Resin floors are ideal for mega-yacht galleys (above right)

anything more challenging than the above combination. We have done this type of project, and it was the most painful, but rewarding project we have ever been involved in, and I now wish we could have more of these jobs.

Mega-yacht owners are private and often have unusual requirements about food and the organization of the galleys.

"For instance, in the Arab culture, men and women live in different zones of the vessel, with their own provisions, galleys, restaurants and laundries. This means we design a lot more smaller, but complete, catering systems on board," notes Passalacqua.

Normally for mega-yachts you don't have reference ships or consolidated

All units are manufactured with stainless steel AISI 304 or 316 LANA and comply to the latest US PHS marine standards

standards to follow, as you do with cruise liners. "Because the owner will also be the main user of the vessel, his personal taste and ideas must be taken 100% into consideration," says Passalacqua.

With the industry trying to create the 'green galleys', where is the mega-yacht industry with this? "Green operations involve energy saving, chemical limitations and waste management. It remains a challenge.

"You have less equipment to control and less waste to handle – and budget is not the top priority for clients on mega-yachts. Results are also gained by implementing the latest innovations in the market even at a late stage. That is one of the reasons why timing and scheduling can sometimes get moved back when building a mega-yacht," says Passalacqua.



"As a company, we have gone through many changes and developments to cope with challenges that we have faced in this industry – it has been quite a ride"

Cooking equipment and technology has dramatically improved over the years, not only in terms of creating an energy-efficient galley, but also in respect of improving manufacturing, compact design, easier cleaning and ways of prevent maintenance issues. "European manufacturers have done most of the innovating, whereas the US brands have kept more traditional designs. The European companies were challenged to be more innovative because of the high demands



SAP management software and quality insurance systems are in place to optimize the production process

coming from the cruise ship industry," notes Passalacqua.

So what trends will change in the years to come in this industry? "I don't expect anything will change in the basis of our business and I feel that what we have already learned in terms of customers' approach and satisfaction will remain in place," Passalacqua concludes. ●

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